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Socialist Organiser

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FUND

£170 from a Christmas bazaar in Oxford, £48 from Tunbridge Wells, £60 from East London, £35 from Sheffield, £20 from Manchester, and many other contributions from local groups kept our heads above water last month.

But with the New Year we face many new tasks—all costing money. We produced thousands of leaflets for the Ford mass meetings.

We'll be campaigning in next couple of months for the trade union democracy conference we've sponsored for March 6

Help us agitate, educate, and organise. Send contributions to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.



THE POLISH working class is continuing its determined resistance to the Martial Law introduced three weeks ago.

Despite the shooting dead of seven miners and many unconfirmed deaths, prison sentences of many years for strike and union leaders, and at least 12,000 people interned, the workers' struggle continues.

Many occupations have been physically defeated. 3,000 Silesian miners came up on Christmas Eve after staying underground for two weeks. But despite the defeat of these major actions, most reports say that workers are continuing to disrupt production in other ways.

Solidarnosc has called for continuing disruption, and the one major Solidarnosc leader who has evaded arrest — Zbigniew Bujak, leader of the Warsaw branch — has called on troops and militia-men not to follow orders.

Only this Monday, 4th, did the regime venture to reopen the Gdansk shipyards and the schools. (Universities may reopen this week). At Gdansk, reportedly only half the workers turned up, the rest having refused to sign a statement disavowing Solidarnosc.

The military has just announced massive food price rises. Sugar and salt for example are to rise by 300 per cent. The hostility of virtually the whole country to Martial Law will become even more bitter.

Repression

Despite the bureaucrats' continuing talk of compromise, there is a risk of repression escalating even further.

Jaruzelski was supposed to be a 'moderate' replacement for Kania. As economic chaos, and a breakdown of political control, developed, he was pushed, probably by the Kremlin, into his clampdown.

But the economic situation will now get worse.

Jaruzelski cannot yet get the Western debts rescheduled. In fact talks have been 'suspended'.

The Western banks are looking to Russia to pay the interest due. But even if the Kremlin gives the money, it will as always make sure it is paid for by the Polish workers.

Although the Western banks are no doubt happy with the military takeover, they will only stay happy if they get their cash — i.e. if the Polish working class is further squeezed.

So when deputy prime minister Rakowski says in West Germany that the reforms will continue, it is a mockery.

Rakowski knows that if the Solidarnosc activists are released, they will be determined to fight to overthrow the bureaucracy. They will realise more clearly what a deadly enemy they face.

While the Iron Heel is attempting to crush workers, the bureaucrats still want to keep open promises of reform. The Church, worried about nothing but getting a better position for itself in Polish society, is cooperat-

ive. The Pope's emissary was allowed in and out of Poland and politely omitted to ask to see Walesa.

Lach Walesa is being pressurised and has reportedly agreed to negotiate with the government.

But what compromise is possible?

The regime has announced that Solidarnosc will not be allowed to function again as an 'anti-Socialist political opposition' (read: independently). It has suggested exile for Solidarnosc leaders, and at the same time announced the beginning of talks including Solidarnosc 'activists'

(read: stooges or peop broken by the repression) — perhaps with the idea of reconstituting a sham Solidarnosc controlled by its own people.

The regime knows it is isolated. Even two of its ambassadors (in the US and Japan) have defected. At the moment it is even having to purge the Communist Party of Solidarnosc sympathisers. Although one Politburo meeting has taken place, no statement came from it. They have not been able to call a Central Committee meeting because of hostility within the CP.

Ten million organised workers cannot be imprisoned. Walesa is reportedly demanding the release of the Solidarnosc leadership before he will cooperate, and the other leaders would no doubt demand the release of yet other members before they would compromise.

So the risk remains high of a 'bloodbath' — an attempt by the bureaucracy

to risk remains high of a 'bloodbath' — an attempt by the bureaucracy to eradicate Solidarnosc from the minds of the working class.

Jaruzelski is obviously quite scared of this. But if he can't make the Martial Law stick, then it is clear that he will look to the Kremlin and the Warsaw Pact forces.

In Poland the working class are no doubt learning that you cannot coexist with the bureaucracy. A political revolution is required to overthrow its parasitic rule.

Many Solidarnosc members must now realise that the path of compromise taken by Walesa was wrong. Just before the coup he told Playboy magazine: 'We cannot let the party become very weak'. With prompting he said it would 'do a good job'.

These illusions helped defeat the Polish working class.

The best elements, now in prison or working underground, will no doubt be the basis for a new revolutionary party. They may even be joined by some of those now resigning from the Polish CP.

Outside Poland there have been many forms of hostility to the regime.

Demonstrations have taken place worldwide — 50,000 in Chicago, 7,000 in Britain. Many of these demonstrations have been led by reactionary anti-communists.

At the demonstration in London there was an alternative labour movement platform. Socialist Organiser is appealing to other organisations of the labour movement to help us develop a labour movement campaign on a class basis (see page 3).

Actions such as the blacking of Polish ships (not food or medical aid) should be taken — on the basis of workers' solidarity with the Polish working class.

The TUC has correctly tried to put pressure on the Polish authorities. This should be followed up by action. The trade unions should break links with the police-state unions, as an act of class solidarity not anti-communism. It is our responsibility to help the spread of Solidarnosc and the formation of trade union independent of the bureaucratic regimes throughout Eastern Europe.

The labour movement should declare its opposition to any Kremlin or Warsaw Pact invasion, and support self-determination for Poland.

And we must explain our alternative: for Polish soldiers to support Solidarnosc and not shoot on the workers, for the working class to arm itself, for workers' power based on genuine workers' councils, and for an independent socialist Poland.

Down with the Martial Law! Release all political prisoners! Defend the workers of Poland!

Solidarnosci FIGHTING FOR ITS LIFE!

Call for labour movement solidarity—p.3

World News

POLAND: AN OPEN LETTER TO THE COMMUNIST PARTY

IN POLAND, Lech Walesa, the elected leader of the ten million strong organisation Solidarnosc has been arrested, scores of the union's leaders have been jailed, and others like Zbigniew Bujak have had to flee underground.

In three quarters of the country's 49 provinces, concentration camps have been established, and tens of thousands of the working class's leading militants and activists have been interned in conditions reminiscent of the political ice age under Joseph Stalin.

Many unarmed workers have been shot down in cold blood resisting the armed forces. Hundreds have been injured, and miners and other workers have been killed in demonstrations, heroic occupations in the mines, factory sit-ins, and strikes.

And in these dark hours, the CPGB wrings its hands and appeals for "solidarity with the Polish Communist Party and people" (Morning Star, December 19) — solidarity with the Pinochets of Poland and their working class victims!

The British CP has rejected the position of French CP leader Georges Marchais, accepting the repression as "the best possible decision, or, conversely, the least evil" (Morning Star, January 4). But has it clearly sided with the Polish workers? No.

The MS's first editorial after the clampdown bemoaned "on the one hand" the government's call for a ban on strikes, and "on the other hand" Solidarnosc's failure to "assist the search for compromise" adequately.



'Compromise' is indeed a key word in the MS's comments. It proposes: 'establishing through dialogue a political partnership between the PUWP, Solidarity, the Church and other institutions. But this can only be a genuine partnership if it is a partnership of independent bodies' (Gerry Pocock, MS, December 19).

So the impasse could be navigated by the refloating of some type of 'National Council' representing all classes and groups in the country.

In the West such alliances have often been tried — under the title 'Popular Fronts', and on every occasion the workers' independent interests were sacrificed to those of the bourgeoisie.

The Polish bureaucracy is not a class like the bourgeoisie under capitalism. But it is an unnecessary parasitic imposition on the nationalised economy, a cancer fulfilling no progressive role.

It shares with the capital-

ists the same savagely anti-working class sentiments. It has more in common with the bankers than with the proletariat it claims to represent.

Indeed, the fact that it is an usurping mafia, rather than a class with a definite historic role, makes it more brittle and incapable of major compromise.

The MS talks piously of democracy — but even a prominent CPGB member, David Aaronovitch of the National Union of Students, was refused entry to Poland last year because he was carrying typewriters for the independent union movement. What sort of democracy is that?

Most of the Polish CP leaders wanted compromise (which they hoped would allow them to gut Solidarnosc gradually). Many of the Solidarnosc leaders, like Walesa, wanted compromise (which they thought would allow a gradual extension of democracy).

But coexistence between the bureaucracy and an

independent workers' movement was impossible. That's the lesson of events. And that makes the MS's pleas for compromise worthless as any sort of solidarity with the Polish workers.

When the MS says, for example, that special powers for the army might be necessary but should be voted by the Polish parliament (December 19), it is no help to the Polish workers. Elections to that Parliament have been completely controlled by the people who are now beating them down with guns and armour. For decades that Parliament has served as a rubber stamp for the very people against whom the workers' revolt was directed.

In France, CP minister Anicet Le Pors has distanced himself from the CP's support for Jaruzelski — no doubt wishing to placate the CP's critics from the Right. The Italian CP's round condemnations of the whole political system in the USSR and Eastern Eur-

ope — whatever truth they contain — are aimed at improving its relations with the Italian government parties. (At the same time, the Italian CP accepts NATO).

The MS's appeal to the Polish Parliament can only serve similar purposes. None of the criticisms and condemnations is linked to a programme for real workers' power in Eastern Europe. But surely it is clear that the issue in Poland is not parliamentary good manners. It is an irreconcilable conflict between the workers and the bureaucracy.

In all the MS coverage it appears as an unquestioned axiom that the Polish CP has a right to rule and that it would be wrong for Solidarnosc — i.e. the organised Polish working class — to reach for political power.

It is 'reactionary', it seems, to demand workers' control of the factories and the economy, it is reactionary to demand that the PUWP give up its political stranglehold.

It is reactionary to demand the organisation of a referendum for the establishment of a provisional government. It is reactionary to demand the withdrawal of Poland from the military straitjacket of the Warsaw Pact, which makes a mockery of the rights of Polish self-determination.

The MS insists on the danger of 'anti-socialist elements in Solidarnosc'.

In truth, no section of Solidarnosc (as far as we know) has demanded the break-up of the nationalised property relations. In fact the statutes drafted by Solidarnosc on workers' control continually stress the social nature of industry and the economy.

Solidarnosc was not prepared to accept was the Party's control, veto and appointments in the economy, but their alternative was control by the direct producers themselves.

The tragedy is not that the radical wing of Solidarnosc was reactionary, but that they did not seriously and clear-mindedly prepare for winning these demands and for the backlash.

The CPGB is trying to serve too many masters — trying to placate the Right, not to offend the Kremlin too much, and at the same time to show some solidarity with the Polish workers. But for militants who really support the Polish workers, the CP offers nothing.

We urge them to discuss with the Socialist Organiser Alliance and to join with us in building an independent labour movement campaign of class solidarity with the Polish workers.

ALEXIS CARRAS
MARTIN THOMAS

Spread of Khomeini campaign

THE Khomeinyite repression which still continues in Iran is being spread internationally.

Supporters in Britain of the PMOI (Mojahadeen), one of the main Iranian opposition groups, have recently stated that the regime is using agents—diplomatic staff or 'students'—to spy on opponents or to attack them.

On December 13, two Khomeiny agents were killed when a bomb they were carrying in their car exploded. The driver, who survived, was a former employee at the Iranian Consulate in London.

The Daily Mail reported, "Police believe the men were taking the car to Speakers Corner . . . Every Sunday afternoon dozens of anti-Khomeiny Iranians meet there."

This follows many other incidents. Some months ago two pro-Khomeiny Iranians were killed while making a bomb.

Anti-Khomeiny demonstrations, and individual Iranian activists, have been attacked with clubs and fists. Student union meetings discussing Iran have been disrupted.

Moreover, the Iranian foreign ministry has decreed that anti-Khomeiny students should not have their passports renewed—so they will be liable for deportation and execution.

£6.5 million has been allocated to pay Khomeiny agents abroad. And letters have been sent to British colleges asking for names of Iranian students.

Student unions and the labour movement should organise to help provide defence for anti-Khomeiny demonstrations, to demand complete non-cooperation by British colleges with this persecution, and to oppose any deportations.



Khomeini

Reagan's sanctions: bark but no bite

ON TUESDAY 29 December US President Reagan announced a series of economic sanctions against the Soviet Union, in response to the Polish crisis. The most important of these sanctions were suspensions of future export licenses for electronic equipment, computers, other high-technology materials, and oil and gas equipment.

In themselves, the sanctions will not hurt the Soviet Union very much, especially since grain sales under current authorisations—the bulk of US exports to the Soviet Union—will continue.

Reagan felt compelled to bark at the Soviet Union over Poland, but his measures don't have much bite.

Despite Reagan's rhetoric, he obviously is not upset about the suppression of Solidarnosc. US imperialism routinely supports repressive regimes all over the world from El Salvador to Chile to South Africa, Israel and South Korea.

Privately, Reagan undoubtedly supported the suppression of Solidarnosc. From his point of view, too, it had gone "too far". Its actions threatened to set off movements that might



Reagan

topple not only the Stalinist bureaucracies in Eastern Europe but also a few capitalist governments in Western Europe.

Apart from their political motives, the Western imperialists had strong economic motives for wanting Solidarnosc suppressed. Poland owes the imperialist banks some \$27 billion. Only a Poland under Stalinist "law and order" might be able and willing to pay this money back.

Even if he privately sympathised with the Polish and Soviet bureaucrats, Reagan

LETTER FROM DETROIT

by Peter Johnson

was quite happy to exploit the Polish crisis to justify even more militarism in the US. And he was quite pleased to have a foreign diversion to try to take American workers' minds off the growing economic crisis in the US.

Bandwagon

Reagan's sanctions have received enthusiastic support in the US not only from Republican but also from Democrat party politicians from "liberal" Senator Moynihan to conservative Senator Byrd. The American labor bureaucrats have also jumped on the bandwagon, with the AFL-CIO misleadingly demanding even stiffer sanctions!

The same forces rallied to support President Carter's more drastic sanctions during the Afghanistan crisis two years ago.

Despite the apparent "public consensus" of the politicians and union bureau-

crats, Reagan is limited in what he can do.

American workers do not want war with the Soviet Union. They do not support Reagan's policy of increasing arms spending while cutting social services. They oppose the draft and military intervention abroad.

Since 1982 is a critical congressional election year in the US, Reagan must move cautiously.

Also, there is little Reagan can do to the Soviet Union directly. Militarily, the Soviet Union is too strong to attack. Imperialist military moves into Poland would be suicidal.

Favours

Nor is there much US imperialism can do to the Soviet Union economically. Carter's sanctions had already cut American exports to the Soviet Union in half. Of the remaining annual \$1.5 billion, two-thirds consists of agricultural

exports.

Reagan will be extremely reluctant to eliminate them, since he owes many political favours to US grain interests.

High technology exports to the Soviet Union make up about \$100 million, and oil and gas equipment make up about \$400 million. Most of these could and would be made up by West Germany and the other advanced capitalist countries.

In particular, West Germany is certain to supply the equipment needed for its \$9 billion gas pipeline from Siberia. It needs the pipeline in order to be less dependent on American imperialism, which dominates the capitalist world's oil and gas supplies.

Reagan's economic sanctions could only be effective if they included American grain and were backed up by the other imperialist powers.

But despite some sympathetic words from British Prime Minister Thatcher and French President Mitterand,

the US's "allies" not surprisingly, seem unwilling to go along with sanctions that would hurt them worse than they would hurt either the US or the Soviet Union.

The fact that Reagan's bark is worse than his bite over Poland must not blind the international workers' movement to the fact that the imperialists are united in their underlying hostility to the collectivised economies of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

They generally want to keep up military and economic pressure on the non-capitalist countries, even though self-interest and weakness may limit what they can do.

The imperialists all, to one degree or another, want to exploit the Polish crisis to justify their own militarism and to divert attention from their own economic and political problems.

In Britain, the US, West Germany, France or Japan, the workers' main enemy is at home.

Solidarność

For labour movement solidarity!

Since the clampdown in Poland, the scene has been dominated by right-wingers like Frank Chapple making noisy efforts to brand the repression as a natural result of 'communism', urging Reagan and Thatcher to act against Poland, but doing nothing to help the Polish workers. Socialist Organiser appeals to trade union branches and Labour Parties to take up this call for CLASS solidarity.

The Polish workers are still fighting the junta of General Jaruzelski. Miners have been shot, thousands arrested and interned in concentration camps, and many more have been sacked by the authorities.

This fight against the Polish armed forces and the bureaucracy which has ruled so corruptly and incompetently is a workers' fight. It needs the immediate and unconditional support of all workers East or West.

The labour movement needs to organise its own class solidarity with the Polish workers, completely independent from the cold war politics and actions of Reagan and Thatcher.

Build labour movement demonstrations, rallies and meetings. Build under-



Jaruzelski: The workers, not Thatcher, will settle with him

standing and support in the unions, Labour Parties, and communities for the Polish workers' fight

End martial law. Free Lech Walesa. Release all political and union prisoners. An end to all restrictions on Solidarność.

No Warsaw Pact intervention.

No to the state unions: build links with the underground workers' resistance. Send money, food and literature to these organisations.

Unconditional support to the Polish workers' fight.

(Signed):

Reg Race MP
Jonathan Hammond (Vice-President, NUJ)
Oliver McDonald (Labour Focus on Eastern Europe),
(all in personal capacity)

Socialist Organiser Alliance
London Labour Briefing
Socialist Challenge

Trade union conference

DEMOCRATISE THE LABOUR MOVEMENT!

WHERE: Lanchester Poly, Priory Street, Coventry.

WHEN: Saturday March 6, 11-4.30.

INITIAL SPONSORS: Socialist Organiser Alliance and London Labour Briefing.

WRITE TO: Democracy Conference, c/o SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

THE struggle to democratise the Labour Party has sharply exposed the lack of democracy in the trade unions. Tony Benn's deputy leadership campaign was met by a refusal of most union leaders to consult their members, a farce of a 'consultation' exercise by the TGWU, and evidence of the failure of NUPE's left-talking leaders to translate their words into rank and file involvement. Industrial struggles

too show the need for an accountable leadership. At BL, eleven General Secretaries stepped in over the heads of the Joint Negotiating Committee to fix a sell-out. And AUEW leaders flouted their union's rules to withdraw official support from the Laurence Scott fight in Manchester.

Meanwhile growing numbers of working class women have taken up the demand that the labour move-

ment be transformed to meet their needs.

The conference called on March 6 by Socialist Organiser and London Labour Briefing will discuss these issues, exchange experiences, and work out a common platform.

Labour movement organisations are invited to co-sponsor the conference or send delegates. Individual observers are also welcome. Credential fee £2.



Communist Party's role in negating 39hr week

by Tony Richardson (TGWU shop steward, BL Cowley Body Plant)



CP convenor Jack Adams: and what happened about the 39 hour week at his factory?

THE MORNING Star, daily paper of the Communist Party, carried in its issue of December 22 the results of a survey it had done on the implementation of the 39 hour week in the engineering industry.

This revealed that "almost every area in the country reports attempts to negate the 39 hour week".

Methods range from cutting tea-break or washing time to arbitrarily increasing productivity targets and abolishing time-keeping bonuses.

The Star quotes Ken Brett, Assistant General Secretary of the AUEW, as saying that this will only be resisted by "determined leadership".

The article then goes on to say that many people feel that "leadership has been lacking at national level" and says, "local strength has been the decisive factor".

A number of CP members and 'Broad Left' supporters from around the country are quoted on the way they have defeated [or, in some cases, partially defeated] the employers' attacks.

But what is left out of the article is what happened at BL. The article says that the dispute there "high-

lighted" the employers' attacks and was only "the tip of the iceberg".

But the reality is that it was at BL's Longbridge plant that the employers and the government took their key stand. That was the test case for the whole working class over the 39 hour week.

It was also the place where the working class showed it was not wanting in determination to defend its conditions.

The four week strike reportedly lost BL £80 million: but the workforce was defeated.

Every employer in the

country was strengthened by the victory. Every trade unionist — whether in the rest of BL or elsewhere in the engineering industry — is now fighting a rearguard action in defence of conditions.

It is no wonder that the Morning Star article never mentioned what happened. It is true, of course, that at Longbridge "national leadership" was "lacking" [this formula is the standard Stalinist term for sell-out].

But the decisive role in the sell-out was played by leading CP member Jack

Adams, the convenor at Longbridge.

Not only did Adams end up recommending and fighting for a deal worse than the original offer, but even before the strike started he was offering to get 40 hours' work in 39 hours.

The only difference between the 'Communist' Adams and the management was over the method by which the company would get its extra hour's work. He was completely in agreement with negating the 39 hour week.

Socialist Organiser supporters will of course defend any CP members or others fighting the employers' attacks over the implementation of the 39 hour week. But we make it quite clear that the CP has played a decisive role in the employers' getting away with their attacks.

The 39 hour week should have been a stage towards shortening the dole queues as part of the fight against unemployment.

Every CP member who supported the 'People's March for Jobs' or the 'Jobs Express' or in any way declares their opposition to unemployment, should be asked where they stand over Jack Adams and the 39 hour week sell-out.



BY GERRY BYRNE

Planning to nuke China

IN CASE you thought M. Thatcher had a monopoly on lunacy, secret documents of the 1951 Labour Cabinet, released under the 30 Year Rule, will disabuse you. A letter from the then Foreign Secretary, Herbert Morrison, to the US Secretary of State, Dean Acheson gives the go-ahead for the US bombing of China during the Korean War.

It wasn't as if he or the Labour government were unaware of the possible consequences. For he wrote that an attack on Chinese bases would "involve serious risks of an extension of the war, perhaps even into a global conflict, but the consequences will have to be faced and shared by all of us"; and later, "The consequences (which may be general war) are so grave that the decision must be subject to confirmation by us at the time."

We have full confidence

in the President and the Administration and are sure that the decision would, as you say, be taken 'soberly and seriously'.

Margaret Thatcher couldn't have put it better herself.

Tories and taxation

Like Mussolini's trains, the one thing you could always say for the Tories was that they keep taxes down. Now even that's not true. Treasury figures show that in the last two years of Tory government the tax burden for the average "family man" has almost doubled. For a man with two children earning only

Cosy!

PETER Neivens (OBE) has just retired as Deputy Assistant Commissioner at New Scotland Yard. Not for him, though the gardening trowel and slippers in front of the telly: he's already lined himself up a nice little number with Trident TV as executive director of its casino division.

His job there is to ensure the threatened licences for its Playboy casinos are renewed.

Nor need he worry that he'll be in strange company. The majority of the Gaming Board's [the licensing authority] inspectors are ex-policemen, with ranks up to chief inspector and at least the same number of ex-cops work for the casino companies.

Very cosy, all these old pals inspecting and licensing each other. Must make for some very thorough investigation!

half the average wage, the percentage of income paid out in tax has risen from 6.6% in 1978-9 to 11.79% this year.

A single man on twice the average wage [i.e. £297.50 per week] actually pays a smaller percentage of his income now than in 1978-9. Great thing, this redistributive taxation.

World News

Dogan Tarkan campaign

VICTORY!

ON DECEMBER 20, Turkish left winger Dogan Tarkan, who had been threatened with deportation from Britain and probable death at the hands of the Evren junta, received official notification from Home Office Minister Timothy Raison that he has secured political asylum in Britain.

This marks the successful outcome of a defence campaign promoted by the Turkey Solidarity Campaign, Socialist Organiser, which has supported the TSC, spoke to Dogan Tarkan on the lessons of the struggle.

How successful was the campaign in winning support in the labour movement?

We were probably a bit lucky. We were able to go straight into the TUC Congress and the Labour Party conference, as well as campaigning around the country.

We got a resolution from the TUC and support on a national level from ten trade unions. 34 Labour MPs and ten MEPs — including MEPs from France, Belgium and Denmark — signed the appeal, together with over 50,000 other signatures.

Very many union branches and Labour Parties passed resolutions. And a lot sent them not to use but direct to the Home Office. So the final figures could be as much as double what we know of.

Every time we phoned the Home Office they complained about the number of signatures and motions we were sending them — even at times when we had been holding some back to make more impact.

The campaign was particularly successful in Scotland, and we made good contacts with the Scottish TUC and Labour Party: a number of Scottish unions and Labour Parties affiliated to the TSC and a new committee was built in Stirling, as well as one in Cambridge.

During the whole campaign the TSC spoke at over 40 union or Labour Party branches, revealing a concern not only about my case but also more generally on the situation in Turkey.

Did you intend to campaign only through the Turkey Solidarity Campaign? What was the attitude of the Campaign to Defend Democratic Rights in Turkey (CDDRT)?

At first I and my comrades from Kurtulus went both to the TSC and to the CDDRT. Both promised to help.

But when we called a picket on Downing Street a few days later the CDDRT refused to attend. Then on September 12 they would not let me speak at their meeting. They argued that the speakers had been fixed months in advance — and that anyway there were hundreds of people being hanged in Turkey, so one individual case made little difference!

We have tried to achieve unity with the CDDRT. At their conference in December we even won the vote to unite the two campaigns — but they failed even to report this in their conference statement!

What makes unity almost impossible is not the British left but the Turkish left — and in particular Iscenin Sesi, who dominate the CDDRT. They will not unite with others.



Dogan Tarkan: saved

For instance in Germany last year there was a 20,000 strong rally in Turkey: but their group called their own separate meeting of 2,000.

But we must use the new opportunity to reach the labour movement and mobilise the labour movement to force unity of the two campaigns.

In the meantime we are supporting the CDDRT's week of action (6-13 March).

What are the next steps in the TSC campaign? How do you see the DISK trial in this?

We will be sending an open letter to all those individuals and organisations who supported the campaign in my defence, thanking them and asking them to affiliate to the TSC. We are also asking them to sponsor a speaking tour by leading members of the DISK union confederation at the end of March.

The DISK trial is of course important. But we must not simply see the campaign as a defence of DISK. The important thing to understand is that the junta is attacking the revolutionary and anti-fascist left wing in Turkey.

Hanged

200 DISK leaders face trial: but there are 45,000 political prisoners in Turkey — and number of the DISK leaders are on trial because they are left wingers.

Recently eight members of the Dev-Yol organisation were hanged simply for being members of the group. This opens the door to more executions. We (Kurtulus) have a comrade currently in prison who has done no killing or robbery but is likely to be hanged as a member of our organisation.

The left wing teachers' organisation Tob-Der, which has 200,000 members — 60 per cent of all Turkish teachers — has been closed down and its leaders all sentenced to nine years in jail. This union has been more heavily attacked because it was linked to the revolutionary left.

This is why we must campaign in defence of the whole Turkish left, as well as DISK.

AFFILIATE!

We urge readers of Socialist Organiser to press with their Labour Parties and union branches for affiliations to the Turkey Solidarity Campaign, which can be contacted at BM Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX.

At the same time, sponsorship should be sought for the speaking tour, which

will follow approximately this programme: March 24-25, London; March 26, Glasgow; March 27, Edinburgh; March 29, Newcastle; March 30, Liverpool/Leeds; March 31, Manchester/Sheffield; April 1, Oxford/Cambridge; April 2, London.

INTERNATIONAL ACTION

DISK TRIAL BEGINS

by Jack Johnson

THE TRIAL of DISK trade unionists in Turkey started on December 24.

In a cynical and cowardly move by the military rulers, the trial was timed to coincide with the Christmas break, to minimise the publicity in Europe and the West.

2,000 trade unionists and some Republican People's Party MPs and officials are to be tried in successive separate court proceedings. The first of these proceedings includes 52 leaders of DISK: the military prosecutor is demanding the death penalty for all of them.

The military judges have agreed to classify the trial under wartime regulations, reducing the rights of the defence, restricting the number of defence lawyers, ruling out opposition to the judges, and closing the door to any appeal against the final sentence by the judges.

In the first two days of the trial, a number of defence lawyers were banned from the court proceedings. On two occasions, all the defence lawyers walked out of the court room in protest

at the decisions of the judges, but the trial continued without them.

These moves by the military authorities demonstrated the determination of the regime to go for heavy sentences against DISK, in a short, sharp trial.

Second

DISK was the second biggest trade union federation in Turkey before the military takeover on September 12, 1980, with a membership of up to one million workers. It organised the most militant and conscious sections of the working class in Turkey.

The military prosecutor alleges, in a 118 page document, that DISK was a 'Leninist' organisation with the intention of overthrowing the Turkish state and establishing a Marxist-Leninist regime. It goes as far back as 1970, when DISK organised a general strike against the new industrial relations act which was intended to outlaw DISK. Since that general strike there have been two military takeovers.

New 'International Committee' fails test of French struggle

by Martin Thomas

THE ELECTION victory of the left in France has sharpened the political situation and led to serious crises in the French Communist Party. Militant discontent is emerging in the Socialist Party ranks, too.

But the political shake-up has also extended to the revolutionary left, not only in France but internationally. The 'Fourth International (International Committee)', one of the major would-be Trotskyist international groupings, has split after a dispute over the attitude of the French OCI-

one of the two biggest organisations in the FI(OC) — to the government.

Confines

Nahuel Moreno, leader of the Argentine PST, the other big group in the FI(OC), said (with some justice, as far as I can see) that the OCI was being soft on the government. It confines itself to general statements of the desirability of the government taking anti-capitalist measures, not clearly denouncing its pro-capitalist character and exposing the presence in it of bourgeois ministers.

Explosive

The disagreement was particularly explosive because of the bureaucratic and sectarian nature of the OCI. OCI members supporting Moreno's criticisms were quickly booted out on various pretexts, and the international grouping split, formally over 'how to organise the discussion'.

Since October or November the various national groups affiliated to the FI(OC) have been choosing sides. The British Socialist Labour Group, it seems, has sided solidly with the OCI.

To organise internationally is a longstanding

principle of the socialist movement, though one now honoured in practice only by small revolutionary minorities. And since the difficult years of the 1950s, even the revolutionary internationalists have suffered political disarray and fragmentation.

International groupings have often been little more than diplomatic alliances of one or two relatively strong national groups, surrounded by smaller satellites.

The FI(OC) originated from a crisis in the Trotskyist movement in late 1979 after the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua.

The USFI (the international grouping to which the IMG in Britain is affiliated) lapsed into passively hoping that the Sandinistas would go forward to socialism (despite their declarations that they would stay within capitalist limits).

Split off

Two factions in the USFI — the Bolshevik Faction, centred in Latin America and led by Moreno, and the LTT, centred in Europe and very close to the OCI — criticised this policy, split off, and linked up with the OCI and its international co-thinkers.

At first they promised a Trotskyist open conference,

Certainly shortly before the summit, in a speech Kuweit, the PLO leader made his support for the plan clear.

With Saudi Arabia funding the PLO to a large extent, a blanket refusal would have been difficult.

At Fez, the PLO's diplomatic representative Farouk Quaddoumi, denounced the plan as compared it with Sadat's treacherous visit to Jerusalem exactly four years before. Nevertheless, one of the key words in his denunciation was 'inopportune'.

"It would be criminal," said, "to play our best card that of recognising the state of Israel, in the firm knowledge that the latter had the slightest intention of returning the occupied territories or permitting establishment of a Palestinian state."

But European pressure on the PLO failed to shift to playing its 'best card' now, while US pressure Israel did not get it to make the necessary gestures.

Syria seemed key to locking the situation. Weight in the Arab world past hard-line positions its ability to lean on Palestinians (above all Lebanon) all made it a target of Saudi pressure.

Russia, another supporter of the Fahd Plan, weighed in on the Saudis' side. A no avail: Israel would not make a placatory gesture.

And what did Israel The opposite.

Having rejected the Fahd Plan on paper, Begin went ahead to tear it up in practice. Annexing the Golan Heights — a move changes little in terms of day life in the area — ensures that for a period Syria will find impossible to back a 'plan' that doesn't directly of returning Golan as a precondition.



Yassir Arafat: funded by Saudis

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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.

OCI leader Lambert

Women in struggle



Heavy cost of women's unemployment



by Anne Connell

At the Wood Green Job Centre in Haringey, one out of three women interviewed there between April and July 1980 was not registered as unemployed. This figure rose to 3 out of 4 in a survey of local parents.

A great deal of social provision (not to mention Janet-and-John style reading books!) is based on an 'average' family of Mum, Dad and two kids, with Dad out at work and Mum at home all day. A Child Poverty Action Group study recently found that only 5% of wage-earners headed households which fell into this 'average' category. This ties in interestingly with the finding that in Haringey 32% of women were the sole earners in their families or households, and the corresponding figure in Lewisham was 31%.

Serious

Clearly, unemployment is affecting women and their families drastically. So why is the problem still so often seen as less serious than male unemployment?

For a start, unemployment is no new experience for women. Because of the assumption that a woman's primary duties are domestic, employers have always regarded women as a pool of reserve labour to be called upon when necessary and chivvied back to their kitchens when they are no longer needed. It's assumed that

women are forever popping in and out of jobs, and continually having periods out of work, for one reason or another. So, even in times when unemployment generally is low, women themselves have much lower expectations.

Desires

But expectations should not be confused with desires. The Haringey/Lewisham survey found that, whereas most women did not really expect to be in a decent, well-paid job for most of their lives, this did not mean that they did not want to be.

Employers know that whereas women need their jobs, they still have to fit them round domestic commitments, and hence are overwhelmingly more likely to accept part-time, casual or home work. All these categories are notoriously open to exploitation. Once a woman has lost even the pathetic job she did have, she will be much more likely to take a job on any terms.

A perfect example of this was cited by a Lewisham woman. At one time she had a waitressing job with a local engineering firm, but was made redundant. Two months later, the catering manager asked her back, but on a casual basis. She needed the money, she needed to work short hours, close to home, because of a child at school, so she accepted.

Men, of course, are also exposed to these dangers in

non-unionised firms, or where organisation is weak. But as men are being forced to take less stable, less skilled jobs, so there is a 'shift downwards'. Women's jobs have often been seen as the boring, repetitive undemanding ones. As the men are being forced into these, so women are being pushed yet further down the scale.

Far from women taking men's jobs, it could almost be argued that it is the other way round!

Women, too, come off badly in terms of training. In Haringey, the same numbers of women as men had received some post-school training. But this rather comforting statistic hides the fact that for one-third of the women their only training was on the job - 'Sitting next to Elsie'. This kind of training is often of very short duration, and specific to a particular firm. It is not of much use once a woman leaves her job. Only 18% of the men received on the job training. Conversely, more than 4 times as many men as women had apprenticeships, leading to a recognized qualification in an industry-wide skill.

Heap

And right at the bottom of the heap, of course, come black women. The survey demonstrates quite clearly that, whereas black women, on average, left school with more qualifications, and had

greater previous job stability, they were more likely than white women to be made redundant, and more likely to remain out of work for long periods.

The conclusions to be drawn from this rather gloomy picture are manifold. Chief among them is that expanding the economy and controlling capital alone will simply not do as a remedy for the problems women face. The goal of 'full employment' has always tacitly assumed full male employment, and this is a concept which must be challenged at every level.



Fightback in the unions

IN March, two years ago, Women's Fightback held its first conference. It had been called by a small group of women, with the support of two dozen other campaigns, to respond to the Tories' attacks on women: the cuts, the Corrie Bill, the Immigration Rules, the curtailment of maternity and trade union rights, and, most centrally, the attack on our right to work.

In March 1982 we will be calling another vitally important conference. Against the background of these Tory attacks - and many more since then - and with the experience we have gained in two years' campaigning, Women's Fightback will be bringing together hundreds of women trade unionists.

This conference is not intended simply as a grand get-together to air our grievances. Most of us are well aware what's wrong: the union leaderships are conservative, passive except when defending the bureaucratic status quo, largely unelected and unaccountable - and on top of that, totally unrepresentative of their women members.

Women who have organised themselves and

engaged in bitter and difficult struggles are not only sold out, but patted on the head and insulted to boot. And then these male time-servers have the nerve to boast of their efforts to 'bring women forward'.

We have to build a movement of women in the unions that actually represents our interests and fights against the vested interests and privileges that men - not all

of them officials and bureaucrats - have built up around themselves.

Such a movement cannot simply focus on the democratic rights of women in the unions, because no-one ever organises in a vacuum. The spur to organising must be the issues and the problems we face and our needs as women which have been ignored for so long by the trade union movement or even made worse by its male domination.

We hope that in a number of unions, the afternoon workshops will enable women to set up permanent links for further action. We would also like to publish a detailed record of the conference so that many more women can learn from the experiences of others.

The conference is open to women either as individuals, or as delegates from any group, workplace organisation, branch or women's group at local, regional or national level.

There will be an all-day creche up to the end of the bop.

Leaflets are available now, so you can really start getting organized for the conference in your union. An advice sheet of things to do in preparation for the conference will be sent out shortly to local Women's Fightback groups and anyone who writes in for it.

Conference fee £3.50, £2 low-waged or unwaged non-delegate. To: 41 Ellington St, London N7.

- SATURDAY MARCH 27**
- 10.00 Registration, Coffee
 - 10.30 Plenary, introduction to conference
 - 11.30-1.15 Workshops on various topics under main groups: Pay; public sector and the cuts; Jobs: Fighting sexism; Racism & Third World. Workshops include: The Family Wage and the Right to Work; Sexual harassment; Childcare: community, workplace, and creches for meetings and conferences; New Technology; Gay Rights at Work; Low Pay; Working part time; Tebbitt's Law; Homeworkers; Positive Action; Young women, apprenticeships, TUs and training boards, YOPs; Job-sharing, flexible hours; The NHS; Maternity and paternity; Language and behaviour; Status, gender and promotion; Benefits, unemployed and unwaged women; Health hazards; Media images; Manual Trades.
 - 1.15-2.30 LUNCH
 - 2.30-4.15 Workshops grouped by trade union - how to take up these issues in your own union, and how to organise together after the conference.
 - 4.15-4.45 TEA
 - 4.45-5.30 Closing plenary
 - 5.30-7.00 BREAK
 - 7.00-9.11 FILMS: 'It's Just a Compliment, Luv' - Australian film about fighting sexual harassment at work; and 'The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter' - award-winning film of women in war-time US industry. Followed by discussion led by women working in manual trades.
 - 9.11 Bop

LABOUR LEFT

Leeds Labour Left meeting, Sunday January 10, 7.30, at Leeds Trades Council club.

Inaugural meeting of Rochdale Broad Left. Speakers: Bob Litherland MP, Jim Allen (author, 'United Kingdom'). Wednesday January 13, 7.30pm, at the Castle Inn, Manchester Road, Rochdale.

IRELAND

Bloody Sunday Commemoration demonstration, 31 January in Coventry: called by Sinn Fein. Help build the London contingent for the march. Mobilising committee meetings: South London - 4 January 1982, 18 January 1982, 8pm Room 2, Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton, North London - 5 January 1982, 18 January 1982, 8pm Camden Labour Club, 4 Carole St, NW1. Further details, phone 274 3951. Called by Smash the PTA Campaign.

'IRELAND - TIME FOR TORY POLICIES TO GO'. Labour movement conference organised by Labour Committee on Ireland and Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland. Saturday February 27, starting 11am at The Theatre, 309 Regent St, London W1. Delegate's or observer's credentials £2 from 1 North End Road, London W14.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER MEETINGS AND FORUMS

LAMBETH: Sundays at 7pm. For venue phone 609 3071. Jan.31: Stalinism. Feb.28: The origins of the Labour Party.

LEICESTER: 7.30 Sundays at the Socialist Centre. Jan.10: Sylvia McNamara: Women and the Third

World'. Jan.17: Jim Marshall MP on 'The crisis in the Labour Party'. Jan.24: Film, 'The Patriot Game'.

LEIGH: Every other Sunday 7.30 at the 'White Lion' (opposite the market). Jan.10: Organising the Left: how and why? Jan.24: Iran - what has happened and what's happening now? Feb.7: Women's liberation. Feb.21: Afghanistan and the Soviet invasion.

SOUTH AFRICA

Broadsheet on the Car Industry in South Africa, published in an effort to extend the campaign to win basic rights for South African workers' by the Welsh Anti-Apartheid Movement - 33 Romilly Road, Cardiff.

MARXISM

London Workers' Socialist League classes on basic Marxism: a fortnightly series, alternative Fridays from January 8. First classes: The French Revolution: The Communist Manifesto: Sectarian Socialism and Working Class Socialism. For details of registration and venue, write to PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

Critique Conference: The New Cold War? January 15-16, at University of London Union, Malet

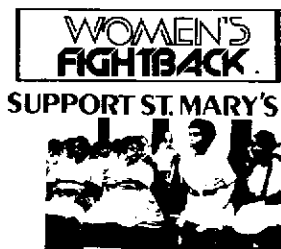
St. London WC1. Registration £3 the weekend or £1.50 per session from Critique, 31 Clevedon Road, Glasgow G12 0PH.

'The Socialist Society': Foundation Conference, January 23-24, Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1. More details c/o 7 Carlisle St, London W1V 6NL.

WOMEN

Action Committee for a Woman's Right to Work: National Organising Conference. Feb.20. Contact: 181 Richmond Rd, London E8.

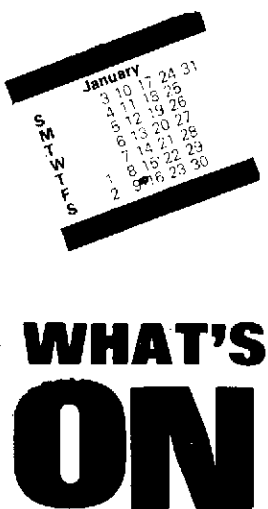
Sexual Politics Conference: Feb.6-7, at Edinburgh University. Sponsored by NUS Scotland. Open to all interested. Starts 10.30am Saturday. More details from Glasgow School of Art, 041 332 0691.



Women's Fightback - 10p plus postage from 41 Ellington St, London N7

ANTI-FASCISM

Brons out... now! Andrew Brons, NF chairman and politics lecturer and Harrogate College FE. Anti-fascist demonstration assemblies college main building, 12.30 Wednesday January 27. Details: Nick, 0904 56603.



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.



Misreporting helps Right

by John Bloxam

The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy AGM in December passed resolutions in favour of the left continuing to organise for democracy and an accountable leadership, and defeated proposals that we should take a step backwards and seek an accommodation with the right wing. Probably decisive in this outcome was the fact that the right wing had already launched a 'civil war'.

Some reports of the AGM, however, have painted a somewhat different picture. Instead of votes being mainly determined by events in the Party and the political arguments over recent months in the CLPD and on the left, (not least in the pages of Socialist Organiser), the outcome, we are told was the product of a small meeting and "a large Trotskyist vote" (New Statesman), "careful organisation by the SCLV" (Tribune), or "... pushed through by members of Socialist Organiser" (Financial Times).

Similar

The argument, of course, is remarkably similar to the right wing's dismissal of Labour policy as the product of unrepresentative meetings packed by well-organised 'outsiders'.

Similar in content, and in their lack of concern with the facts.

The 1981 AGM was not an unusually small meeting—about 120 attended this year against the figure of "over 150" in 1980. The weather and the London Labour Party Special Conference certainly had an effect but on supporters of both sides of the argument. As an issue has been made of Socialist Organiser supporters, it is worthwhile pointing out that there were fewer attending than at the 1980 AGM.

Downgrade

That fact doesn't fit the picture, and nor would the fact (not emphasised, and not even mentioned in some reports) that one of the most contentious resolutions was moved by Wood Green CLP.

Socialist Organiser has no reason to disavow whatever influences our arguments might have had. But these reports are not concerned with the correctness or otherwise of our ideas, so much as with an attempt to downgrade the significance of the results of the AGM as being unrepresentative, to discredit them, and perhaps to evade having to abide by them.

This widely publicised conspiracy theory of the AGM, in which Trotskyists (and the weather) are the main element, has of course a significance well beyond the internal debates of the CLPD today.



'Trot-hunting' is grist to the mill of Hattersley and the Right

Similar ideas, including the view that majorities are legitimate as long as they don't involve Trotskyists, are not new on the right or left of the Party. To push them at a time when there is a witch-hunt based in part on the idea that Trotskyists are alien forces, is at best to provide the right with ammunition.

The arguments about the AGM give direct assistance to the witch-hunt. Having 'established' that the votes of the Trotskyists in Socialist Organiser and the Socialist Labour Group were decisive, Patrick Wintour in the New Statesman makes clear his view that there is a basic

difference between the "average constituency left-winger" and the "ultra-left", that they must "chart a course between (the) two extremes", and that not only are "Trotskyists and other hard liners intent on a battle to the end", but also that "Trotskyists have no interest in the party".

Aberration

So Dennis Healey, Roy Hattersley and Shirley Williams were right after all! Wintour's article might be nonsense but it is not an isolated aberration. It fits very closely with the call by the Clause 4 dominated maj-

ority on the LCC Executive for an open register of groups in the Party, and Nigel Stanley's appearance on the TV Eye programme against Militant.

There has yet to be an assessment of the AGM in CLPD. As last year, it should take place alongside the implementation of the decisions reached.

It should also distinguish itself from the reports mentioned above, by being based on facts and not conspiracy theories, and by being firmly rooted in the policy of the CLPD to unequivocally and firmly oppose any witch-hunts.



MPs back Tatchell

NINETEEN Labour MPs have signed a motion endorsing the views expressed in London Labour Briefing by Peter Tatchell, in the belief that "nothing in that article is inconsistent with our support for democratic socialism and parliamentary democracy".

The nineteen are: Race, Maynard, Huckfield, Richardson, Litherland, Mikardo, McTaggart, Benn, Cryer, Ernie Roberts, Allan Roberts, Skinner, Lamond, Ross, Atkinson, Ellis, Canavan, McKelvey and Meacher.

The names were collected in one afternoon, and it is hoped that at least another 20 MPs will add their names when Parliament resumes later this month.

The Labour Coordinating Committee is collecting the names of prospective candidates in

order to issue some kind of solidarity statement, and all candidates at selection meetings should be asked whether, if selected, they would be prepared to write to the NEC expressing their agreement with the views of Peter Tatchell.

A full-page Labour Weekly advert, signed by MPs, prospective candidates, councillors and others, may also appear in the near future.

If large numbers of MPs and prospective candidates publicly endorse Peter Tatchell's article, not only will the heat be taken off Bermondsey, but the action of Michael Foot and the NEC will be exposed for what it really is — an attempt by the Right to force out good democratic socialists and pave the way for a coalition between a right wing Labour rump and the SDP.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

EXPLAINING GAY SEXUALITY

Paul Fairweather contributes this week's column from the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights

IN THIS article I want to focus on one of the issues raised in Chris Beer's articles about police harassment of gays—the question of gay men having sex in public places.

For while there is growing acceptance of the idea that the "Personal is the Political", there is still often a sense that certain issues are "too" personal for open discussion in the labour movement and are of marginal political importance.

I would argue that by doing this the left is failing to integrate into its political practice one of the crucial discoveries of the gay and women's movement—the need to understand and relate to people's experiences of sex and sexuality.

Area

By looking at one specific area of gay men's experience I hope to show that it is not only possible, but essential, for socialists to work politically to lessen the repression gay people encounter in their daily lives.

Cotting is the term used colloquially among homosexual men to describe using public toilets as a place to meet other men for sex. Both before the partial law reform in 1967 and since, it has been the only source of gay sex for many thousands of men.

If we want to look for

reasons why men cottage we need to see it in the context of a society which denies gay people the right to live openly and form relations publicly. We also need to understand how men experience their sexuality and how this differs from women's experience in this society.

As an easy and anonymous way to have sex, cotting is attractive to many men, to young men discovering their sexuality, to older men who are married and isolated and to men who will not think of themselves as gay but who experience homosexual desire.

In Manchester, the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights has been discussing this issue because we were aware from our own experiences that the explanations usually given for cotting were over simplistic. But we were also responding politically to a situation where there was a dramatic increase in the number of prosecutions for gross indecency and importuning.

This was most noticeable in Stockport where in 1980 187 out of a total of 461 cases in the whole of Great Manchester took place.

For weeks the local paper carried headlines announcing the borough as the City of Shame and saying that soon it would be the San Francisco of the North West!

In LCGR we were concerned that Chief Constable Anderton was increasing the police surveillance of public toilets in order to alarm the public about the apparently growing number of homosexual men in the area and to create a moral panic about the dangers of "innocent people" being lured into homosexuality.

And when challenged on using police to hide in broom cupboards and peep through spy-holes he argued that it was all essential because of the number of "responsible" people, i.e. school teachers, civil servants etc., who had been apprehended.

Protector

Anderton was giving himself the role of public protector, and the implication was that gays should not be in public service.

And in Stockport this strategy seemed to be meeting with some success, for soon the Council were holding emergency meetings to discuss how to deal with the "corruptive" menace of homosexuals.

By focusing on an area which causes most embarrassment to both gay people and the general public, that is sex in public toilets, the police hope to encourage a backlash which will drive gays back under-

ground, losing even the small gains we have made over the last ten years.

One problem we encountered when raising the issue with people in general, and specifically in the labour movement was how to overcome ignorance about the reality of many gay men's lives. We were also unclear about what specific demands we should be making.

In practice we tended to concentrate on the waste of police resources and stress that this is very much a crime without a victim.

We had a useful meeting with some left Labour councillors in Stockport who had instinctively challenged the actions of the police but had felt unable to explain why there were suddenly men all over Stockport doing rather "peculiar" things.

The Labour chair of the Greater Manchester Police Committee met us and stressed that we should make representations to the committee which when under Labour control would push for greater accountability and encourage oppressed groups to come forward and present their views.

But while we demanded an end to police surveillance of toilets, no use of agent provocateurs and better publicity for the existence of gay centres and gay social groups, we were aware that we were not actually changing the situation for

many men who went cotting.

In Amsterdam, for example, the police routinely refer men found cotting to the gay clubs and saunas, and in this country, some groups have tried to get the police to do the same.

Wardens

But it is not simply a question of asking the police to act as sexual traffic wardens directly people to suitable sexual outlets, for if you are unemployed or fifteen (to take two examples) the gay scene can present enormous obstacles.

And while the gay scene remains concentrated in the centre of large cities, for many men cotting will remain the only way to make emotional and sexual contacts.

Men involved in the gay scene and gay movement experience sexual desire no differently from anyone else and for some of us cotting is one of a whole range of valid locations for sex.

For once you move away from an uncritical acceptance of the heterosexual norm you can begin to have a greater choice in determining the way you structure your sexual relationships.

And if you find that some of your most fun and interesting sexual experiences are taking place in public toilets, you may want to change the situation for

and sexual encounters are taking place in Lewis's basement, it is more difficult to retain socialised notions of love, monogamy and meaningful relationships.

I am not arguing that men into having lots of casual sex are in the vanguard of sexual liberation but attempting to counter the common idea that impersonal sex is necessarily degrading and unrewarding.

Ideally I would like to have a wide range of sexual relationships based upon sex as an extension of my friendships.

But while working towards building a society where this is easier to achieve, we have to recognise that cotting does provide a place, however unsatisfactory, where some people can affirm their sexuality and explore their emotions.

Space

The labour movement should be providing more space for both gay and non-gay people to talk about their sexual feelings and fantasies. And the placing of these in a political context and the working out of strategies to combat sexual oppression must be seen as a central political task of the labour movement.

Not to do so means

misery and wasted potential which sexual repression causes in this society.

In Canada recently, and especially in Toronto, police raids on gay saunas and bars have sparked off a massive community protest with thousands of gay people taking to the streets.

The demand for the right to privacy has succeeded in uniting gay men, feminists and the left in defending the right of gay men to have consensual sex.

A deeper understanding of gay men's experience is necessary if a similar unity is to be achieved in this country.

The labour movement has to move beyond seeing gay rights as being only about equal rights for lesbians and gay men towards a recognition that gay liberation is about challenging fundamentally the dominant ideas about sex and sexuality.

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

Tebbit and the bosses' offensive



NEW ANTI UNION LAWS BUILD ON PRIOR'S FRAMEWORK

by John McIlroy

THE usefulness of the law as a weapon against trade unionists can be seen from 12 months of the Employment Act.

When an injunction was granted under the Act against workers picketing Chloride Batteries, the TGWU called off the picketing.

When an injunction was granted against lorry drivers picketing the Liverpool docks the picketing was halted, the court order accepted.

Norman Tebbit's proposals for a new legal offensive against trade unions were published in December and are an essential part of Tory economic strategy.

Building on the framework laid down in the Employment Act, these proposals are intended to add new pressures to:

*galvanise the employers to move further from old style incorporation at plant and company level and take more direct measures against union organisation;

*to use the union leaders as policemen to destroy the attempt of workers to resist redundancy, cuts and the onslaught on wages and conditions.

Injunctions

These two aims are to some extent contradictory and represent a longstanding tension in Tory thinking about law and trade unions.

Whether the unions will be able to exploit this in the same way as in the early seventies, however, is

another question.

The new proposals are intended firstly to further weaken union organisation which is already feeling the impact of membership loss through unemployment.

The Tories now wish to stimulate a loss of members with jobs.

Tebbit now proposes to make it more difficult for an employer to maintain a closed shop. An employer will only be protected if the closed shop was arrived at after a ballot in the last three years in which at least 80% of those covered by the closed shop voted for it.

This applies to all existing closed shops.

Tebbit then attempts to make it worthwhile for potential scabs to rip up their union cards by offering compensation of over £25,000 to workers dismissed if these conditions do not exist (or even if they do if the worker objects to union membership on grounds of conscience).

He goes on to attempt to frighten trade unionists into not opposing this type of scabbing by allowing the dissident to involve workers threatening industrial action to defend 100% membership in a tribunal case, so that

these workers could have to pay all or most of the compensation awarded.

Secondly the new proposals attempt to further limit the ability of workers to take struggles outside their own workplace or company—an increasing necessity in today's disputes.

Workers would not be legally protected where a dispute related only to matters outside Great Britain, outlawing action, for example, against the regimes in South Africa, Chile or Poland.

Even more important, the Employment Act's prohibitions on secondary action are taken further so that the proposals state that lawful trade disputes are to be restricted to 'disputes between an employee and his employer'.

If this was so, any blacking or picketing outside the direct company would be open to injunctions and damages.

The law will also be tightened up to make it easier for an employer to sack workers on strike.

Thirdly, the proposals attempt to strengthen certain tendencies already operating in the unions to concentrate power at the top and weaken internal democracy.

If a legal wrong is committed, whether it is workers picketing another workplace, calling for blacking or defending a closed shop, the employer will have the right to sue the union, not just the individual involved.

Compensation could go as high as £250,000.

Unions could only get off the hook if they disowned the action, probably going as far as disciplining members who stood out against them, or if the members do not have authority to take action under the rules.

The tendencies in a union like the AUEW to undermine the powers of stewards committees and District Committees may well be strengthened and unions like this may attempt to revise rules and credentials.

The aim is not to bankrupt unions. It is to inject even more, new, approved cowardice into the backbones of those who appear to be able to act with conviction and decision only when breaking strikes.

The rank and file are obviously weaker than when the Industrial Relations Act was swept away. We need more centralised action.

There are some healthy signs. The union leaders dislike the straitjacket that the

unpredictable law places on their manoeuvrability, whatever the appetites for collaboration, and may be pushed into at least initiating some moves.

To defeat the Tories' legal offensive we need to fight to get the TUC to:

*Stop talking to the Tories, not only about the Act but by withdrawing

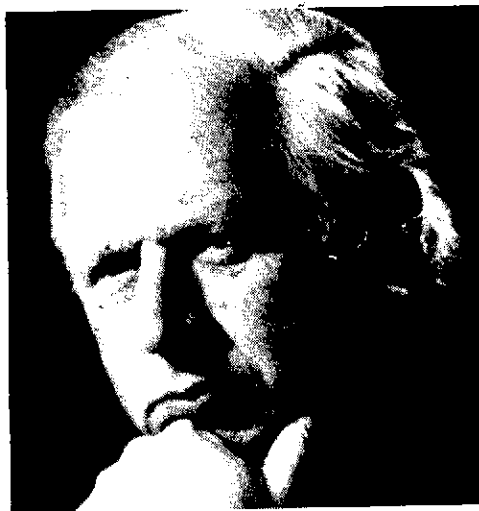
from all other collaborationist bodies;

*Stop talking to the bosses. Withdraw from all joint union-employer bodies.

*Strike action to stop the proposals reaching the

statute book;

*A pledge from the TUC of national strike action in defence of any union victimised by the new legislation if it reaches the statute book.



Prior



Tebbit's Bill: a new blow to solidarity pickets

Leyland Action Conference

THE sell-out of the November 1 wage review at BL revealed more clearly than ever before the massive gulf which exists between the shop floor and national trade union officials.

Meanwhile the all-out management offensive against the work-force is going on with even greater intensity: the company's drive for speed-up and demanning now directly threatens basic shop floor organisation.

The tasks facing militants in BL centre on these chronic problems of leadership at all levels of the unions. The Leyland Action

Committee, which played an important role in the preparation of and during the wages strike, has called a conference to discuss the new situation in BL and the practical steps necessary to defend workers' interests.

As well as reports from factories in BL Cars there will be a first-hand report on the situation in Leyland Vehicles from a delegation of LAC supporters in those plants.

An important part of the agenda will be organising resistance to the company's new procedure document.

All BL workers who support the general aims and objectives of the LAC are urged to attend.

The Conference will be held at Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham, on Saturday January 23 1982 from 10.30 to 5.00 pm. Conference fee will be £1.

Cashing in on the recession

CAPITALIST slump is never a time of shared sacrifice. Indeed, the Tories now are dropping even the pretence.

They say, more or less bluntly, that the slump is a time for capitalists to improve their position and roll back concessions they made in boom time. By doing so the capitalists can be better placed to make big profits when trade recovers.

BL boasts of a 30% increase in productivity in one year. Overall, British manufacturing productivity went up 9% in the first nine months of 1981.

Unemployment has allowed the employers to impose this speed-up. It has also helped them beat down wage demands. And standing ready to be used against workers who fight back are the anti-union laws—Prior's Act and Tebbit's Bill.

That is the bosses' plan for the slump.

It can be beaten, as was most spectacularly shown by the miners when they defeated the Government over pit closures last February. But the top trade union leaders steer away from a fight. They say it

is hopeless. TGWU leaders, for example, are saying that Ford workers—a strong group of workers, in a wealthy company—can expect no better pay rise than 7.4%, at a time of 11% inflation.

The union leaders play on (and contribute to) workers feeling depressed by the depression. In combatting official sabotage, militants must be able to put forward a clear political alternative to the bosses' plan.

AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT: work should be shared out, under workers' control and with no loss of pay, on the basis of cutting the hours. Factory closures can be fought by occupying, retaining workers' control, and demanding nationalisation without compensation.

A major programme of public works and retraining at union rates, together with reversal of the social spending cuts, could end the dole queues' waste of resources. Money should be taken from the arms budget to start it.

AGAINST SPEED-UP: fight for workers' control of production.

**Socialist
Organiser
EDITORIAL**

AGAINST WAGE-CUTTING: the demand for automatic monthly pay increases, in line with a cost of living index computed by working class committees, can unify the labour movement.

AGAINST UNION-BASHING: fight for the independence of the trade unions from the state. But this independence cannot be realised without democracy in the trade unions—regular election and right of recall of officials, who should be paid the same rate as the members they represent, and control by elected committees and mass meetings over all negotiations.

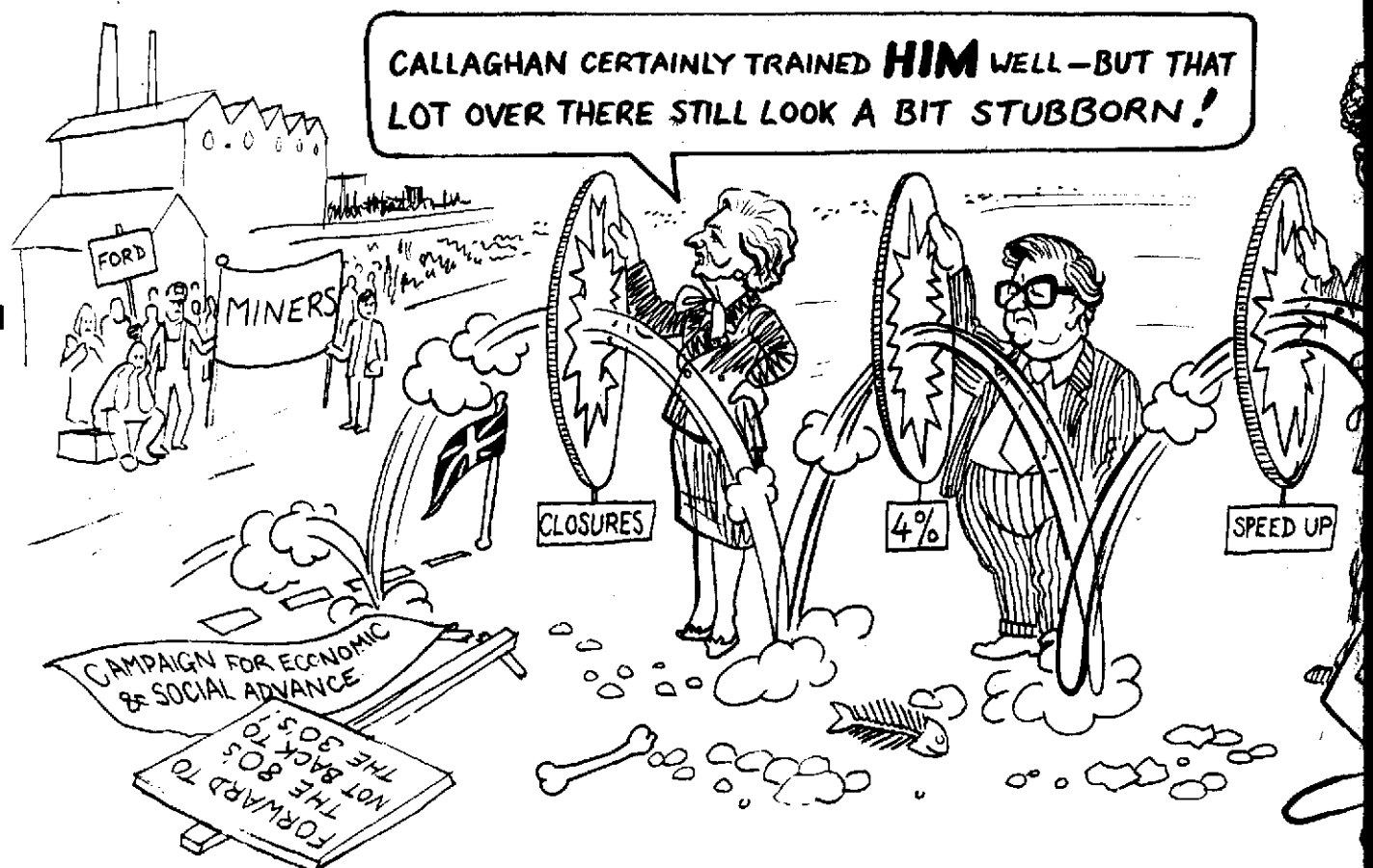
DEFEND THE PICKET LINES: organise pickets to defend themselves against the police, organise strike action in support of any pickets victimised under Tory law.





Tebbit and the bosses' offensive

Bill Peters looks at the combination of government measures and management attacks confronting the working class.



PUTTING THE SCREWS

DURING HER election campaign in April 1979, Margaret Thatcher ranted on about her determination to put an end to "wreckers who go on strike, indulge in secondary picketing, or have demarcation disputes". Lord Denning backed her up with statements about trade unions being "the greatest threat to the rule of law".

A Parliamentary majority of 43 seats gave Thatcher the ability to establish the most single-minded and determined anti working class government this century. She was soon identifying "wage levels, manning levels, and non-viable factories" as the most important problem to be tackled.

In contrast, Callaghan's strategy for capitalism's survival had been largely based on class collaboration.

He sought to attack the working class through first drawing the bureaucrats into 'participation' and the Social Contract.

Thatcherism short-circuited such niceties. Under her the Tory government set course for confrontation with the unions, seeing the use of mass unemployment as key to breaking the resistance of the working class and fundamentally changing their working conditions.

Branded

Thatcher's actions over her first two years are branded into the consciousness of the working class. Within weeks of the election, she began to make even the actions of her Tory predecessor, Edward Heath (architect of the Industrial Relations Act and the jailer of the Pentonville Five and the Shrewsbury six) look moderate.

Among her first actions was to raise the pay of the police and the army.

Thatcher was strategically prepared. Her approach to the 1979-80

pay round was to offer 5 per cent to BL workers and 2 per cent to steel.

It was a deliberate attempt to provoke a confrontation, and resulted in the 13 week steel strike, which was in effect a direct clash between the Tory government and its economic policy and the working class.

The strike was sold out by Bill Sirs and the leadership of the ISTC, who fought to confine the strike to the issue of wages. They were aided by the trade union leaders and the TUC who fought to ensure its isolation and to prevent a generalised political confrontation with the Tories.

By May 1980 the first year of monetarism had produced not only rising unemployment, factory closures, and 20 per cent inflation, but, on top of this, a harsh budget by Geoffrey Howe designed to directly hit working class families.

In November 1980 Thatcher imposed a six per cent limit on wage increases. This move was met by total paralysis at the TUC and among the main trade union leaders.

When BL workers opposed the six per cent and voted for an all-out strike, they were quickly urged to 'think again'. A second vote was then taken on the same offer, with a recommendation to accept.

The TUC entered into talks with the Tories, claiming that the trade union movement "had to live with the government".

1981 saw 'official' unemployment figures (i.e. heavily doctored figures) rise to almost three million. It saw further massive cuts in the public services, and riots in the inner cities.

The major Left-dominated Labour councils capitulated in front of Heseltine, and the trade union leaders actually increased their determination to avoid any confrontation which could bring down the government.

In November their blatant sell-out of the

powerful BL strike became a watershed in the life of the Tory government, and significantly shifted the political situation against the working class and to the advantage of Thatcher.

In fact, throughout 1981 the Tories had stepped up their attack on the working class. But the routing of the 'wets' in the autumn reshuffle marked a new stage. It created a cabinet completely controlled by hard-line monetarists.

Tebbit

Most importantly, Norman Tebbit was installed as Employment Secretary and a four per cent wage norm was announced.

The significance of this turn was not just at government level. It represented a hard-line turn by the ruling class as a whole, with the strong support of the big employers.

The turn was made in spite of splits and divisions in the Tory party and panic among those sections of the employers likely to go under to monetarism.

Yet regardless of these divisions, added to by by-election defeats, Thatcher set her face firmly towards the clear class objectives which had characterised her administration from its inception - to substantially increase the rate of profit extracted from the working class in Britain.

That is what made the BL strike so central. In defeating BL workers through the treachery of their leaders, Thatcher sought not only to impose her four per cent policy on the working class, but to gain the authority to press home her attack on all fronts with a new urgency.

After the BL sell-out there was a collapse among the trade union leaders on the pay round. NUPE and the G&M claimed 7 per cent as a 'victory' for local authority manual workers.

By the end of the year, it was clear that Thatcher

was very close to holding wages to her original target - probably a bit above four per cent.

From the point of view of the ruling class, her tactics have been good. Instead of fixing a legal limit which would have obliged the government to hold the line in every sector, she chose to set a 'norm'. This gave her the flexibility to duck confrontations which the Tories want to avoid, while picking particular battles which they then must win.

It is certainly true that the wage round is not yet over. Pressure has built up since the December mini budget which took £5 out of the pockets of the average working class family.

Nor is the willingness of the working class to fight in question, given leadership. That is demonstrated by the Ford vote, the Scargill victory in the NUM, and the likely vote for strike action by the miners in the absence of an improved offer from the NCB.

The problem remains one of leadership. The efforts by union leaders to ensure a sell-out of the Ford workers, which are painfully evident as we go to press, show that the trade union leaders are just as determined to knife that strike as they were at BL.

Despite the nationalistic arguments the leaders used to back off from a fight against Edwardes, they are no more willing to fight an American multi-national if it is likely to start a confrontation with the Tories.

A successful Ford sell-out would give Thatcher increased authority, not just completing her success on wages but enabling her to press home the next stage of her attack, the anti union laws.

Tebbit's Bill, which is to be presented to the next session of Parliament, has implications which go far beyond its legislative aims. It is far more dangerous than Barbara Castle's In Place of Strife, Edward Heath's Industrial Relations Act, or Prior's Employment Act.

The removal of immunity at law for engaging in strike action which is 'mainly political' would take the trade union movement back to before the infamous Taff Vale judgment in 1901. There the Taff Vale Railway Company was awarded £23,000 damages against the union for losses resulting from the strike.

Under Tebbit, fines are linked to membership figures, and this allows penalties of between £¼ million and £12½ million. Sums of this order would quickly render even the biggest unions bankrupt.

By penalising the unions' central funds, it gets over the problem of enforcing the six picket limit, a problem which has become obvious with militant mass pickets like the BL strike.

Nor would it be difficult for the courts to 'prove' that a strike was 'mainly political', particularly if the government was the employer concerned. In a recent TV debate with Tebbit, David Basnett asked him if he would regard the recent threatened strike against the privatisation of gas showrooms as political? Tebbit didn't hesitate. "Of course it would be", he said.

Victimised

In addition, immunity is removed if a strike is over a 'personal' matter. Again, it is for the courts to interpret the meaning, and there is little doubt that this would affect strikes in defence of victimised workers and shop stewards.

On top of this is the attack on the closed shop. This requires ballots to establish or maintain a closed shop, and provides for massive compensation for anyone sacked for refusing to join a union.

The Bill amounts to direct support for the employers in victimising militants and smashing the unions. They cut very deep into the trade union move-

ment at shop floor level.

Already managements feel the strength of a hard-line government behind them, and are acting accordingly. The logic of monetarism is forcing the weakest of them to the wall, and forcing them to attack the workforce.

At the same time an army of unemployed outside the gates are used directly as the stick to beat those still at work.

On top of this, the employers' offensive has become increasingly organised and directed. Pat Lowry utilises his 12 years as Personnel Director of BL in his new capacity as ACAS chief to tour the country giving tactical advice to the employers.

He recently, for example, told a meeting of engineering employers to use the recession to negotiate the kind of agreements and conditions which will be to their advantage when trade picks up.

In many industries this kind of policies is resulting in the most ferocious attack on shop floor workers. Not just through the creation of mass unemployment, but directly on working conditions, work effort, agreements, and trade union organisation.

Michael Edwardes, the man who apparently pushed Lowry out of BL because he was not tough enough, is undoubtedly the most advanced representative of Thatcherism at management level in British industry.

Initiatives

BL production lines are like battlegrounds. Everyday (literally every day!) there are new initiatives from management - every one attacking established working conditions and practices.

Seniority agreements which control mobility and prevent supervisors using the hardest job as a form of discipline against

militants or those they don't like are under constant attack. The agreements are disregarded. If there is resistance sometimes management will back off, but only to attack again the next day from a slightly different angle.

Demarcation agreements which define which jobs will be carried out by a given grade or category of workers are constantly attacked in the same way by a management who intend to settle for nothing short of full flexibility.

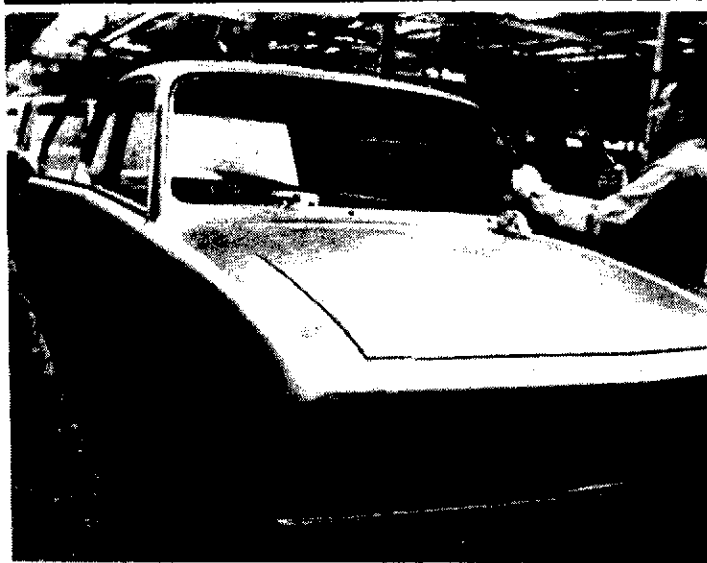
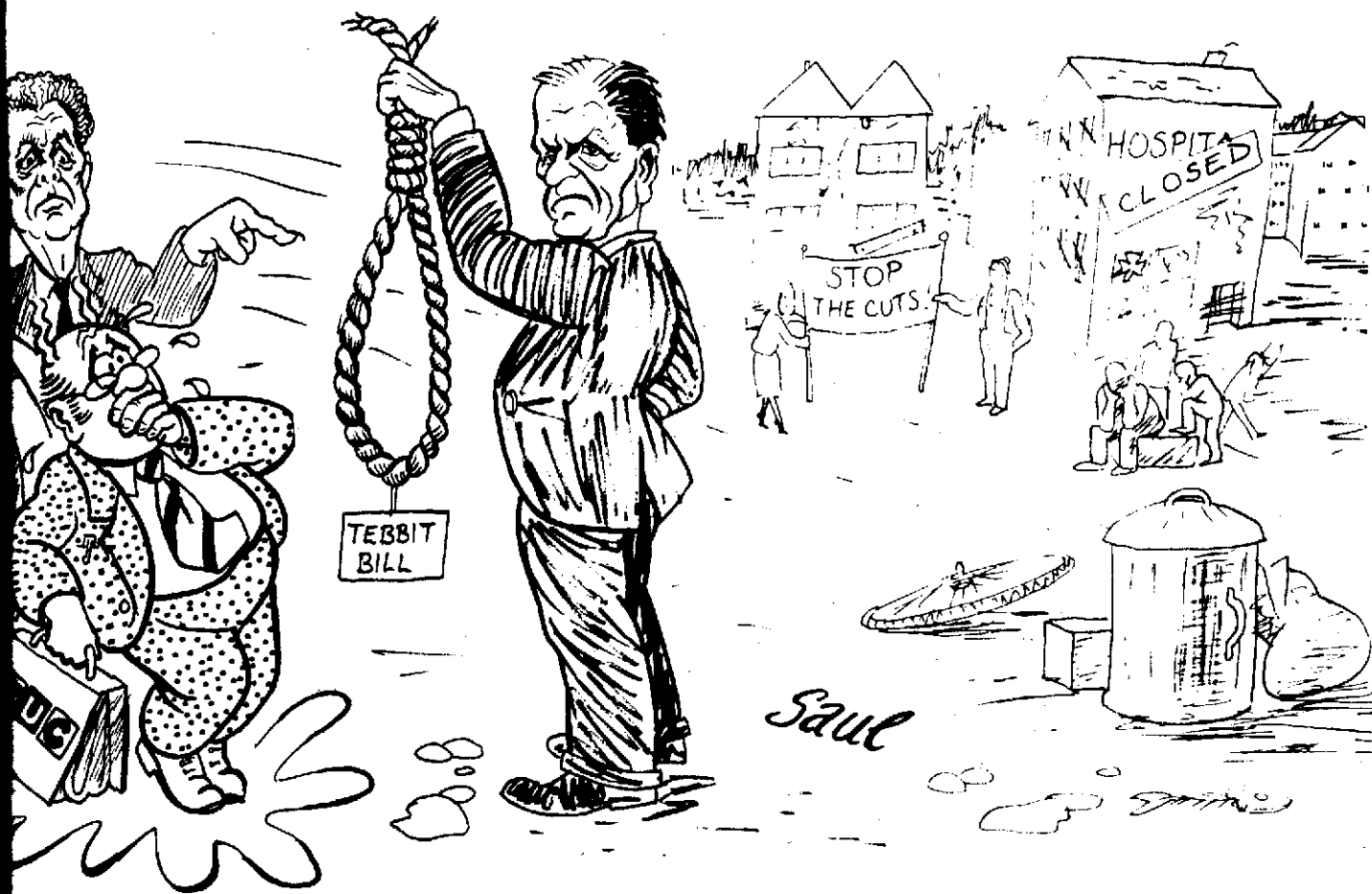
Production workers are pressed to do their own sweeping. Rectification workers are pressed to do their own inspection. Inspectors are pressed to do their own driving. Welders are pressed to do their own gun fitting. The list is endless.

Undoubtedly the most relentless drive is on work effort, or more precisely speed-up. Work assignment sheets are constantly tightened up by industrial engineers (IEs). The 'Longbridge agreement' resulting from the recession out of the relaxation allowance strike gives management the right to time and allocate work at 101% BSI rating (as against the present 100). This demands more than 60 minutes work in the hour!

On top of this the sell-out deal from the November wage review strip gives management the right to restudy each plant to get an even higher standard, which the de-terms 'audited status' (which means you work a lot harder).

This gives management the right to bring in new teams of super IEs to do the job. Already this has begun at Jaguar Browns Lane.

It is now management practice to disregard what they term the 'niceties' sticking to agreements. This is a sharp change from BL's previous attitude which was to pretend that they respected agree-



ON THE SHOP FLOOR

ments in order to work with officials and hold workers to agreements that were to management's benefit.

Now anything goes. Sick relief agreements are cut. Slip relief agreements are cut. Processes are rationalised and jobs are contracted out at even cheaper rates.

Top managers patrol the tracks intimidating stewards and pressing workers to do more work. The pressure comes from the top and managers and supervisors who are not prepared to be ruthless are sacked on the spot.

Having established a corporate bargaining structure, BL are out to destroy the shop stewards movement in the individual plants. Full-time facilities for senior shop stewards which have been the basis of organisation in the car plants are being systematically ended by management.

Senior shop stewards are being sent back onto their jobs i.e. "released as and when required". The reality of this is management control. They will release a steward when it suits them and block it when it doesn't.

BL intend to destroy any effective shop stewards movement whatsoever. Every cut in manning levels and relief personnel makes it more difficult for stewards to get released for trade union work. In some plants, management have gone into procedure for a direct reduction in the number of stewards.

Constant threat

Victimisation of shop stewards is now the order of the day. Derek Robinson and the Longbridge 8 were only the forerunners of today's conditions where stewards are under constant threat.

Alan Thornett, an elected deputy convenor at the

Cowley Assembly Plant, who has remained unrecognised by BL for the past 8 years, was again refused recognition at a National Conference last month.

Amongst the reason given for maintaining this position was Thornett's attendance at a picket line outside a non-BL plant during the works holidays.

These hard-line methods of management are being extended throughout manufacturing industry and beyond in what has become known as the

"Edwardes syndrome".

The strings on the current Ford offer come straight from BL. They want complete mobility of labour, the ending of all local agreements and flexibility such as production workers doing their own sweeping. The productivity proposals are to be monitored by a BL-style joint committee. Even the sell-out seems to be going along BL lines with acceptance of the deal being recommended by a BL-style body dominated by national officers and full-time officials.

Guinea pigs

Yet how can such a state of affairs prevail when the working class is so strong? How can the workers be used as guinea pigs when their strength was shown so clearly in the mass pickets and the militancy of the 3-day strike?

To ask the question is to answer it. As the economic crisis of capitalism deepens the trade union leaders who reject a perspective of fighting to end capitalism and establish a socialist society become ever more craven in their capitulation to it.

In case anyone thinks that is jargon, they should look very closely at the editorial of the December issue of the AUEW Journal. And when they read it they should remember that Johnny Boyd is not a freak. Not only is he General Secretary of the second largest union in Britain, but when it comes to a sell-out of a major dispute there is not much to choose between him and the rest.

He makes the following points:

"I trust our 1¼ million members will bear with me when I utilise this last 1981 editorial to comment on the recent BL crisis, in which I played a not unimportant role in preventing it being a national catastrophe."

He goes on to openly praise Edwardes:

"This company was bankrupt, finished, until Michael Edwardes, having been appointed by Tony Benn to the NEB, was thereafter transferred by Eric Varley to BL to try to save it."

"It thus became a nationalised industry, with a board appointed on behalf of the Nation to be stewards of our first publicly owned group of car plants".

He goes on: "I strongly urged Sir Michael Edwardes to be more repentant and pragmatically gracious regarding the offensive letter his Board issued over his signature, but he wasn't; nevertheless, having regard to all the circumstances and the resoluteness of the Government not to interfere by feeding in more money for wages — their intention being to let the Company be dismantled if need be — I decided on balance to recommend the workers to accept, which I did — clearly and unequivocally."

"Whatever happens in BL [Cars] makes national and international news. Many powerful people and institutions, both here and abroad, would like to see it fail."

"Sir Michael Edwardes and his board don't. The organised British Working Classes can't afford to let BL [Cars] fail."

"Thus the new opportunities which the agreement gives to have Shop Stewards fully participate in strategic planning, together with a new procedure agreement, must be fully exploited now, and a new relationship forged between the stewards of the Nation's assets [the Board] and the Trade Union Stewards, under the guidance and control of their union executives."

"If for any ideological reason, individual representatives from either do not wish to participate, then they must be cast aside. This great experiment in

this important section of industry cannot be allowed to be retarded by anyone, whatever their position."

Does any more need to be said? It is a complete capitulation to everything from the viability of BL to the victimisation of his own shop stewards. Boyd is fully behind Edwardes who is leading the assault on the trade union movement in Britain.

It is no wonder that the TUC is doing nothing to stop Tebbit. They have not called a conference until March and appear to favour a policy of supporting any union which becomes a victim of Tebbit after his bill becomes law.

The case for the development of revolutionary leaders in the trade unions — who will stand by the interests of the trade union members they represent — could not be made more strongly.

It is not an easy task but it must be tackled now and urgently. It involves developing an alternative leadership, not just of principled people, but people who know where they are going and have a programme adequate to meet the needs of the working class under such conditions.

Conferences

It also involves a fight for democracy in the unions. Proper elections on a principled basis. The right of rank and file militants to be heard on the committees which at present are dominated by the right wing, the fake lefts and those who refuse to confront either capitalism or the Tory government.

Important steps in the fight for such a leadership will be taken at both the conference of BL workers called by the Leyland Action Committee in Digbeth on January 23rd and the conference on Trade Union Democracy called by Socialist Organiser and London Labour Briefing



SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY

JOHN O'MAHONY
opens a discussion



Stalin: enemy of democracy, enemy of socialism

THE CRY "For Parliamentary Democracy: the Trotskyists are the enemy of democracy" is — perhaps predictably — the political standard under which Labour's Right and soft Left are trying to rally forces for a counter-offensive against the serious Left.

The direct target is the revolutionary Left. But the main target is the much bigger serious reformist Left.

The slippery Neil Kinnock, eager to preserve a 'left' appearance for himself, has focused on this issue. The obvious intention is to confuse and divide the Left which, when united, secured the victories of Brighton and Blackpool, and which, if it can restore its unity, can still stop and beat back the present right wing offensive.

Here, as when he sabotaged Tony Benn's campaign for deputy leader, Kinnock does the direct work of the Right.

Coercion

In fact Kinnock merely follows in Shirley Williams' footsteps. Mrs Williams' own commitment to democracy didn't stop her voting against abortion in Parliament — that is, voting to use state coercion to impose conduct dictated by her own Catholic religion on those who don't believe in it. But she tried, back in 1977, to raise a hue and cry against those she slandered as 'the anti-democratic left'.

Williams' attempt to discredit advocates of reform of existing democratic institutions, or of their replacement by other democratic institutions (workers' councils), as being against democracy per se, was meant as a preemptive move then. Now it is the chief tool of the witch hunters, fighting to regain the ground they have lost — having also lost Shirley — since then.

Today, though the Right has the union leaderships and the help of the media, it is very weak among the rank and file of the Labour Party.

83 per cent of the Labour Party's individual membership vote went to Benn for deputy leader. So the possibility of carrying through a purge of the Labour Party which will not gut it and immobilise it as an electoral force for years ahead depends on splitting the Left.

The Right want to isolate and drive out the Marxists, selectively purge the fighting reformist Left, and intimidate the rest of the Left. The attitude to democracy and Parliament is the wedge which (they hope) will not only separate off the Marxists, but also inhibit and intimidate all those who want to struggle now against the Tory government in industry, and

"... The first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy".

Marx and Engels, 1847

"Conservatives do not worship democracy. For them majority rule is a device... Majorities do not always see where their best interests lie and then act upon that understanding. For Conservatives, therefore, democracy is a means to an end, not an end in itself.

"In Dr Hayek's words, democracy 'is not an ultimate or absolute value and must be judged by what it will achieve'. And if it is leading to an end that is undesirable or inconsistent with itself, then there is a theoretical case for ending it.

"Numbers in a state", said Burke, 'are always of consideration, but they are not the whole consideration'. In practice no alternative to majority rule exists, though it has to be used in conjunction with other devices".

Sir Ian Gilmour, Tory MP, in his book *Inside Right*.

"There are things stronger than parliamentary majorities".

Andrew Bonar Law, Tory Party leader, campaigning against the then Liberal Government's Irish Home Rule Bill in 1912.

"The reformists systematically implant in the minds of the workers the notion that the sacredness of democracy is best guaranteed when the bourgeoisie is armed to the teeth and the workers are unarmed".

Leon Trotsky, 1938.

Michael Foot could talk just one year ago of raising an extra-parliamentary 'storm of opposition to the government', and now some of the union leaders are talking of industrial resistance to Tebbit's anti-union laws — only talking — but there are limits. Parliament must rule — even on the bones of the labour movement. That is what the right wing want to say and get the labour movement to accept.

Lying

The first thing that needs to be said about democracy is that they are lying about the Marxists and our attitude.

Those Liberals who 'entered' the Labour Party long ago and made their careers as servants of the ruling class there, and those soft 'Lefts' like Kinnock who seem to believe in the divine right of the Liberals to rule the Labour Party, lie through their teeth when they say that the revolutionary Left is not concerned with democracy or is opposed to democracy, or will not defend democracy and fight for it.

The basic truth of the socialist labour movement, and of unfalsified Marxism concerning the relationship of socialism to democracy, is this: whoever is not a democrat is not a socialist (nor a communist in the sense that Marx and Engels and Lenin and Trotsky

understood the word and the goal) — not a Marxist socialist who looks to the working class as the subject and the agent to realise its own self-rule in socialism, as the only agent of social change and of the future collective workers' power.

The working class needs democracy for the same reason as it needs things like trade unions and political parties — because, unlike the bourgeoisie, it does not own major private property, and can own the means of production and rule in society and in the state only collectively. It can only know its own mind, assess its own experience, set its own goals and adjust them, and take care of all its own affairs, collectively, and therefore only democratically.

This is true of the working class as a force struggling within capitalist society, and to transcend it. It is even more true when the working class is the ruler of society, administering a planned economy.

The capitalist economy could thrive inside a police dictatorship. The nationalised Stalinist economies stifle because of it.

Trotsky compared the function (and the irreplaceability) of democracy for the labour movement within capitalism and after it has overthrown it, to the function (and irreplaceability) of oxygen for an animal.

There are many qualifications (as we shall see), but that is the basic truth



Foot: takes part in secret Labour Government decisions on updating *Polaris*, then calls Peter Tatchell a threat to parliamentary democracy...

about democracy for socialists.

When the Right and the soft Left say the issue is parliamentary democracy, they give it to be understood that the Left are simply undemocratic, and the horrors of Stalinism are evoked, openly or implicitly. They are engaging in a fraud.

For its effect, the right wing's accusation depends on ignorance of what some socialists propose by way of reform of parliamentary democracy, or of what other socialists would replace it by. It depends on identification of 'parliamentary democracy' with democratic rights, as the opposite of tyranny and totalitarianism and the only alternative to them — and the acceptance of what now exists as 'the best in the best possible of all democratic worlds'.

It is a thoroughly dishonest exercise in intellectual card-sharping, dependent on the mental equivalent of sleight of hand.

Court

They define democracy in terms of only one of its historic forms, and try hereby to rule out of court those who would advocate either a different form of democracy or a more or less radical democratic transformation of the existing Parliamentary system.

Now the existing British system has had many different historical stages

of growth and development, and it has certainly not known a steady perfecting of parliamentary democracy to an ideal present condition.

On the contrary, the decline of the direct controlling power of the elected chamber, the House of Commons, has been going on for over 100 years: in parallel to the extension of the franchise after 1867, the ruling class has systematically created parallel levers of power, diminishing Parliament.

The cry that parliamentary democracy is in danger is a truly ridiculous weapon to find in the hands of Labour parliamentarians who — like Michael Foot, for example — have for years and decades, in government and out, allowed themselves to function as so many mere gargoyles, decorating and camouflaging the structure of unelected bureaucratic and military power which has grown to dominance within the facade of Britain's ancient parliamentary system.

Many of them bear direct personal responsibility for the diminishing of parliamentary democracy, for the growth of political cynicism, and for the de facto surrendering of the rights of Parliament to the civil service and the military.

And now they discover that parliamentary democracy is in danger — and in danger from their critics and opponents in the labour movement!

Tony Benn has done tremendous work to bring to the attention of the labour movement the reality that now clothes itself in the traditional garb of the British parliamentary democratic system.

Permanent

The permanent civil service to an enormous extent determines policy and ensures its continuity whatever government is in power: Benn once received a civil service brief marked, "For the new Minister, if not Mr Benn". Prime ministerial patronage ensures that Parliament's role as a scrutineer is undercut and atrophied.

Real control of the armed forces — whose subordination to parliament at the end of the 17th century was the decisive final act in securing parliamentary rule in England — is therefore less and less exercised by Parliament.

The former Chief of the General Staff, Lord Carver, has publicly admitted that in 1974, when the last Labour government was returned amidst massive industrial struggles, there was serious discussion "among fairly senior" officers of army "intervention". The top brass put a stop to it then — but the top brass of the Chilean armed forces who were represented in Salvador Allende's cabinet didn't stop the fascist coup of 1973 which pulverised the Chilean labour movement. They organised it.

In Britain the "fairly senior" officers of 1974 are now probably "senior", or close to it.

Not the British Parliament, but the IMF, decided on the savage cuts introduced by the Labour Party champions of parliamentary democracy when they held power in 1976: when they had the parliamentary majority, they accepted the IMF's dictates.

The list could be vastly extended. The point is that parliamentary democracy is hollowed out, decrepit, enfeebled in face of the permanent state apparatus. The ruling class increasingly exercises its rule through direct ties to that apparatus. And in its international relations parliamentary democracy is subordinate to the dictates of forces not elected by the British people, in fact not elected by anybody at all.

Cripple

Amidst continued economic decline and social decay, the prospects for a revival of health in Britain's parliamentary democratic system are nil. To the degree that social struggles erupt, it will be battered and the ruling class may attempt to cripple it or

destroy it to defend themselves and their interests from the labour movement.

Tony Benn has recently summed up the state of British democracy, basing his assessment to a large extent on his own experience as a member of Labour Cabinets which were supposedly in control of Britain. These are some of his conclusions:

"Despite all that is said about democracy and our traditional freedoms, the people of Britain have much less control over their destiny than they are led to believe... and a great deal less than they had a generation ago.

"In short, the powers which control our lives and our futures have become progressively more concentrated, more centralised, more internationalised, more secretive and less accountable. The democracy of which we boast is becoming a decorous facade behind which those who have power exercise it for their own advantage and to the detriment of the public welfare".

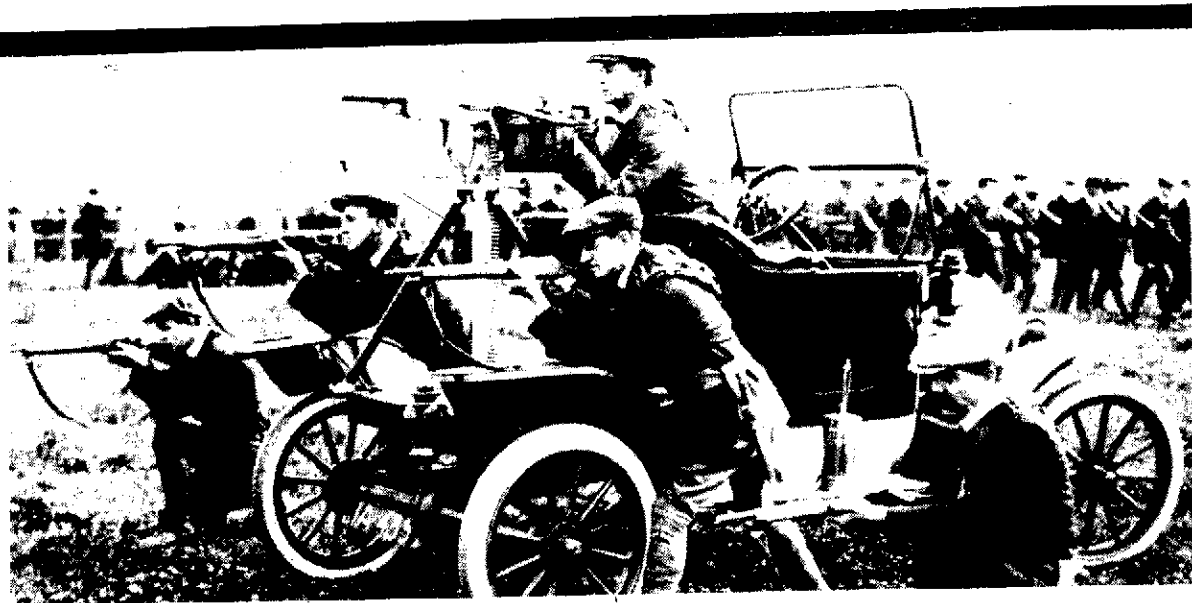
Allegiance

Benn is especially concerned with the loss of British autonomy to the IMF and the EEC. But the following has nothing directly to do with Britain's position in the world.

"A hereditary House of Lords, topped up by the pliable recipients of prime ministerial patronage, still has great power to delay or obstruct the policies adopted by an elected House of Commons. It also has an unfettered veto, in law, to protect itself from abolition. The Crown still retains equally unfettered legal authority to dismiss an elected government, dissolve an elected House of Commons, and precipitate a general election at any time it chooses. To do so it need only call upon its prerogative powers as used by the Governor General of Australia in 1975 when the Labour Government of Gough Whitlam was dismissed..."

"All Cabinet ministers derive their executive authority, in its legal sense, not from election as leaders of the majority party in the Commons, but as members of Her Majesty's Government, formed by the prime minister at the Crown's invitation... But the courts and the armed forces swear allegiance to the Crown and not to the elected government".

Though Benn's writing are of tremendous value opening the eyes of the broad labour movement to the realities behind the parliamentary facade, none of this is very startling to Marxists. For example Trotsky wrote this 'Where is Britain Going' in 1925:



Ulster Volunteers: Tories helped them arm against Britain's elected government

"The royal power", declare the Labour Party leaders, "does not interfere" with the country's progress. The royal power is weak because the instrument of bourgeois rule is the bourgeois parliament, and because the bourgeoisie does not need any special activities outside of Parliament.

"But in case of need, the bourgeoisie will make use of the royal power as a concentration of all non-parliamentary, i.e. real forces, aimed against the working class."

Tony Benn asks what would happen, "if a government elected by a clear majority on a mandate of reform were to introduce legislation to complete the process of democratic advance". This: "The Lords veto, the prerogative of the crown to dismiss and dissolve, and the loyalties of the courts and the services to adjudicate upon legitimacy and to enforce those judgments might all be used to defend the status quo against a parliamentary majority elected to transform it."

Writing not long before Denning ruled the electors of London incompetent to vote for the higher rates and cheap public transport policy on which the Labour majority on the GLC campaigned and won the election, Benn felt obliged to add: "This may seem far-fetched, but at least these forces opposed to democratic reforms could argue that they were operating in accordance with the letter of the constitution, even though in no sense with its spirit... The British constitution reserves all its ultimate safeguards for the non-elected elite."

"The democratic rights of the people can, in a crisis, be adjudicated to be illegal, thus legitimising the military in extinguishing them" (my emphasis: all quotes from 'Britain as a Colony', in 'Arguments for Democracy', 1981).

That Benn's picture of the real condition of British democracy is palpably true



Chile: would the British Army be different in the crunch?

was proved — on a small scale — by the judiciary's veto against the London electors and the GLC's right to rule London according to their electorally endorsed policies. It is one of the most dramatic direct legal interventions in politics in modern history, and a precious warning to the labour movement, which can learn from it what will happen if it ever tries to take drastic measures against the ruling class.

It is the measure of the soft Left, though no more than you would expect from the Labour Right, that just at this point they discover that it is the serious Left which threatens the future of parliamentary democracy in Britain!

It is the ruling class who threaten the democracy we have now. If, from the beginning of mass suffrage, they have consciously erected 'safeguards against democracy' in the form of the civil service and armed forces bureaucracy, and kept a formidable array of powers in reserve outside of the democratic apparatus, this is the period of decline and convulsive crisis in which they will need to use their safeguards and reserves.

Undemocratic

Under the influence of the profound social crisis, the British political system will begin to display its undemocratic side, as, and to the degree that, the ruling class begins to have need for safeguards.

Read what Ian Gilmour says above. Listen to the brutal truth expressed by Bonar Law, Tory leader during a Tory/landlord revolt against a Liberal government (and later a prime minister), quoted at the head of this article.

On the eve of World War 1, sections of the British ruling class and the army, and the entire Tory party, raised a storm of revolt.

There was an officers'

revolt in Army. They armed and drilled a large private army (with German guns).

They succeeded. They forced the Liberal government to abandon its plan to solve Ireland's British problem by way of an all-Ireland Home Rule parliament. Eventually, partition and all that has flowed from it was the direct result of the Tory revolt.

And that was in defence of a section of the landlord class. What when the whole ruling class faces crisis?

Spiral

Under the pressure of the social crisis, British parliamentary democracy can and probably will enter a downward spiral of decline — especially when the working class and the labour movement begin to recover from the effects of the slump and start to fight back.

The reckless distortion and savage misrepresentation of the Left by the Establishment media which is poisoning the political climate in Britain now, is itself a small token of how willing the ruling class is to use the big stick when necessary.

When the labour movement begins to fight back and challenge them, they will attack democracy under the cry of 'defence of democracy'.

Where will the Right and the soft Left stand? For legality at all costs, even legality like Denning's and the House of Lords?

Entrenched

Parliamentary democracy is the alleged issue now. The real issue is how to fight the Tories. A 'democratically' entrenched Tory government is legally devastating the working class and constitutionally trying to beat down the labour movement. How to respond?

When the Parliamentary Labour Party, the Right, and the soft Left, take their stand against the working class and the labour movement on the divine right of a Parliament whose real power is in chronic decline, and when, against the labour movement, the PLP claims for itself the status, respect and prerogatives of the once-sovereign parliament of the UK, then what was said of another historical parody can justly be said of them.

The PLP is turning into the ghost of British parliamentary democracy, attempting to crown itself irremovable sovereign lord of the labour movement while perched atop the near-ruins of that decrepit parliamentary system — a system which it can neither replace, regenerate, reform nor (when it comes to it) defend against the



Denning: judges should vet the voters' decisions

Stand firm for Labour democracy

MOVES are now afoot to undermine and ultimately reverse the democratic reforms of the Party already achieved. The NEC's decision to reject Peter Tatchell as candidate for Bermondsey makes a mockery of reselection of MPs, while the inquiry into Militant and the rejection of Tariq Ali's application for membership are an undemocratic attempt to return to the arbitrary suppression of certain currents of opinion in the Party.

600 resolutions

But the democratic reforms can be defended successfully. The shower of over 600 resolutions and messages already sent to the NEC in support of Peter Tatchell has shaken some of the Right, and made it clear that if the Right continues



Socialist Bookshelf

Books and pamphlets that you should read

Everton Williams introduces 'Out of the Ghetto', Joe Jacobs' account of anti-fascist struggle in the 1930s.

IF YOU only intend to read one book about everything in the world, don't read the Bible, read 'Out of the Ghetto' by Joe Jacobs.

This book deals with all the experiences of growing up Jewish in the East End of London through the difficult pre-war years, particularly the traumatic thirties.

Firstly, it is a human story of the real down-to-earth problems of life. It is well written, humorous in places, exciting as well as sad, describing the anxiety of developing personal relationships and the pleasures you experience. It's so relevant and truthful that you can understand and recognise its strengths.

Secondly, it's about the struggles and experiences of a real class fighter. Joe Jacobs gives you the feelings and situation of an active participant.

The most important part of the book for me was Joe Jacobs' account of his anti-fascist work.

Joe Jacobs joined the

Young Communist League (YCL) and Communist Party (CP), and was secretary of the Stepney branch. However, Joe's loyalty to his class often came into conflict with the party, and he had to resolve and struggle for his politics against it.

The chapter on the battle of Cable Street on October 4th 1936 is the most exciting. I read it crying, swearing, and feeling proud of Jacobs.

Blackshirts

On October 4th, 250,000 workers blocked the predominantly Jewish area of East London to stop Mosley's blackshirts marching through it.

For those of us who have to stand in small numbers at Chapel Market or get beaten up at gigs, you get a fantastic feeling from that chapter.

You realise that the working class will smash the Nazis, and the book gives you a sense of the

power we have to do it. It moves something in your heart, I'd call it proletarian pride.

The book exposes well the myth that it was the CP who mobilised and fought the Nazis. It was partly for this reason that Jacobs wrote the book. He received a lot of pressure from the CP leadership for advocating no platform and building on the streets to mobilise against the Nazis.

He also attacked the CP for its 'parliamentarian' attitude to the unions. It won posts, but did nothing with them.

Jacobs' loyalty to the CP — what he considered to be the real workers' party — was strong though misplaced. He fought against the party line, not to carve out a clique for personal gain, but for the needs and interests of the class.

I love the book because it said many things I hope I would have said and done in the thirties.

Joe Jacobs' book is invaluable reading for any anti-fascist activist. It gives you confidence and guidance in the struggle to alert others to the danger of fascism and against pacifism, abstention, or reliance on the police.

I promise anyone with class instinct a brilliant read. It's clear, simple, and honest.

Books available from Socialist Organiser include:

Cannon, Notebook of an Agitator, £2.20
Trotsky, The Transitional Programme, 30p
Please add postage and order from SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8

Campaign for LABOUR PARTY Democracy

who is eligible for Party membership was denied by the NEC's decision in relation to Tariq Ali's membership.

Finally, the tradition of tolerance in the Party has been jeopardised by the NEC's decision to investigate the activities of the Militant Tendency.

The basis for Party unity must be mutual tolerance of differing views; differences of opinion can only be resolved by argument. Arbitrary suppression of minority views can only produce bureaucratic abuse of power.

We therefore call on the NEC to allow Bermondsey CLP to have the prospective parliamentary candidate of their own choice; to allow the Hornsey Party to retain discretionary powers to decide on the eligibility of new members; and to call off the proposed investigation into Militant.

Raised

Resolutions to Regional Conferences (RCs): The subject can be raised in three ways: ordinary resolutions, amendments to ordinary resolutions, and emergency resolutions.

Ordinary resolutions must be received by the Regional Party Office before the deadlines (which for some regions have passed).

Since most CLPs/branches are holding their AGMs

ions can only be taken if, at the AGM, the branch/CLP resolves to reconvene itself straight after the AGM, as an extraordinary branch/GC meeting to take this resolution. Since the GC will generally not be meeting in time, the Branch should ask the CLP Executive Committee (EC) to consider the motion and send it off to the Regional Party Office in good time.

The next best way of getting the subject debated is submitting an amendment to an ordinary resolution.

For example, in London we are proposing the following amendment to the Paddington CLP motion:

After 'hearing', insert: 'and by the recent refusal by the NEC to endorse a parliamentary candidate properly selected by Southwark-Bermondsey CLP'. Add at end: 'and calls upon the NEC to reverse its decision in relation to Southwark-Bermondsey CLP's choice of prospective parliamentary candidate'.

If the deadline for amendments is passed, the only way to raise the subject is by submitting an emergency resolution. But technically emergencies must refer to events occurring after the deadline for amendments.

NICHOLAS COSTELLO
Asst. Sec. CLP

Note: this article has had to be slightly abridged for space.

Letters

PORN AND CENSORSHIP Take positive action!

I FOUND the points Colin Foster made about pornography (November 26) extremely depressing. He genuinely seems not to know why pornography makes women (not just organised feminists) so angry. He seems to imply that because he cannot make a distinction between 'hard' porn and 'mere' sexist literature, then we can do nothing about them.

The only 'positive' proposals he makes are those of no censorship and the mobilisation of women to fight against their oppression — which does not, apparently, include taking action against pornography.

Surely we should fight sexism in the same way he advocates we fight racism. We should not tolerate the most extreme forms of pornography, and should by positive action fight to impose our own censorship on porn shops, films, strip-tease shows, etc. In this regard we would do well to follow the example set by

Women Against Violence Against Women groups.

It would also be a mistake for us to discount our never being able to force the state to implement the type of censorship we should all want. The working class have through their militancy won several reforms within capitalism. It would be a gross error if we discounted these achievements as merely being examples of bourgeois law.

More subtle, yet no less degrading and exploitative representations of women in the media need to be challenged by such measures as a larger recruitment of women as journalists, training of media workers in anti-sexist reporting, and perhaps most importantly, labour movement pressure on trade unionists and employers who degrade women via the media.

I would like to point out that such action is necessary not just for the benefit of women. Pornography also degrades and dehumanises

men. Which is something they often forget and tend instead to become defensive — feeling themselves to be under attack?

Only when we begin to actively fight against these most extreme forms of sexism will we ever begin to understand the connections between pornography and the way in which all sexuality is degraded by the sex roles we are taught to adopt.

A fight is therefore necessary now (not after the revolution) so that we can eventually start treating each other as human beings.

As things are at the moment, men are like emotional cripples — they gain their strength (read macho-ness) at the expense of trampling on women and feeding off us for emotional support.

Far too many men view sex like a colonial conquest. Hence many men's attitude towards the rape of women they know — anger at the rapist for defiling their

property. This attitude is also sanctioned by the law. A married man cannot be convicted for raping his 'property' namely, his wife.

When men have learnt to love and care for each other, instead of competing to prove their hardness, then and only then will I accept that they have any right in trying to define a new form of 'erotica' which is person-based and not warped by sexism, power, and possessiveness.

Changes could perhaps be made if men actually listened to what women say about their oppression and stopped trying to define our feelings for us.

In the meantime it would be as well if men left women to fight their own battles. We do not need the sort of 'help' that Colin Foster appears to be proposing — nothing!

ZILLA SMITH,
Coventry.

Cliff muzzles Women's Voice

I WAS saddened, but hardly surprised, by your report of the termination of Women's Voice groups (SO 63). The way in which this has been done will add to the already appalling reputation of the SWP in the women's movement.

Members of the groups were given no specific voice, but simply told that 'The future of Women's Voice groups will be decided at the SWP conference in November' (WV, October 1981).

Many have long seen the SWP as the dictatorship of one man. This incident gives further credence to this view for, as recently as a year ago, the SWP stated that the only Central Committee member oppo-

sed in principle to WV groups was Tony Cliff.

Once again the fawning acolytes have come swiftly into line. But what price women's emancipation, if this is the way decisions are taken now?

All along

Yet there must be many women in and around the SWP, who will not simply accept Cliff's belated realisation that his old comrades Ted Grant and Gerry Healy have been right all along, and that in the end women are simply workers who need no specific organisation to fight their specific oppression. Membership of each male guru's particular

brand of revolution is sufficient.

Women who are not prepared to squander the potential gains of the last 15 years and who still believe that 'It is not enough for us to build women's caucus within the revolutionary party or women's caucus with each rank and file movement — we have to build women's movement which stretches out into layers of women that neither these organisational forms yet reaches... the building of WV is urgent' (Joe Smith, International Socialism 100) should seriously look at Women Fightback... and the rest of Tony Cliff's politics.

CAROL HOBBS, Bolton

Support Tariq!

THE QUESTION of Tariq Ali's application to join the Labour Party is much too important to be left to brief comment in the Graffiti column (Socialist Organiser 64). What is at stake is the right of Marxists to be members of the Labour Party.

Socialist Organiser must take a clear stand on this. It must demonstrate that the right of Marxists to be members of the Labour Party has existed from its very origin (the SDF). It must argue that this right is not only a democratic one, it is also a necessary one.

This right is fundamental if the Labour Party is to be an instrument of struggle for the working class. Furthermore it is a necessary prerequisite for the Labour Party to function as a unifier of the working class and oppressed people.

Therefore Socialist Organiser must be in favour of

Tariq Ali joining the Labour Party, and welcome his political move.

Nor is it appropriate to concentrate one's fire against the CP. The action of the Morning Star in fuelling the right wing witch hunt is despicable, but of much greater importance is the campaign by Labour MPs against Tariq Ali joining the Labour Party.

Syd Bidwell has stooped to 'Paki go home' type argumentation. Neil Kinnock has floated the idea — taken up by Foot and used against Peter Tatchell — that agreement with parlia-

mentary democracy being the exclusive method of struggle is a condition for Labour Party membership.

In this situation it is not helpful to speculate about whether Tariq Ali 'has ever actually been a Marxist'.

I would think it likely that Tariq Ali would agree with 'Where We Stand'. This is the case, the political logic would be that Socialist Organiser should seek work together with Tariq Ali in the struggle against the Tories and the right wing.

JOHN WATT
Hackney

Care on NUS

CONTRARY to the last issue of Socialist Organiser, National Union of Students conference delegates did not vote overwhelmingly in favour of a 'strike' over the

level of grants.

In fact, it was an executive decision taken a month before the conference, plan not having the total support of the left members of the executive. David Aaronovitch (NUS president and Communist Party member) revealed the plan to the conference — but after CP members of the executive had already spoken against motion calling for direct action over the question cuts and grants.

Narrowly

This motion, proposed by the Socialist Students Alliance, was very narrowly defeated. It was the most important proposal put to the conference, but the National Organisation of Labour Students joined with the Left Alliance opposing it.

Socialist Organiser supporters should be very critical of this 'strike'. Students have no industrial power. It will be three weeks before half the students notice the strike, a little while longer before the government falls to knees.

Individual student organisations should at least organise alternative lectures and argue for occupations not just of colleges but the DES also.

It is important that students take an active role in any campaign, instead of a passive one. Student organisations should not end their action when NUS's week action finishes.

PAUL LANDON
Manchester



Porn backs up sexism

COLIN Foster (November 26) is surely wrong in criticising Les Hearn's views on sexism.

Les's analogy with racism is a strong one. Whereas 'the left' is rightly outraged by any sign of racism it has not been equally outraged by pornography. Too often it has succumbed to the libertarian argument — allow complete freedom and get it out of the system.

What is pornography? asks Colin Foster. It is the exploitation for profit of women as sexual objects. It reinforces the oppression of women, at the same time it desensitises and distorts men's feelings and emotions.

We would be angry if we saw everywhere about us, cartoons, calendars, films which clearly depicted racial hatred and oppression — we should be equally angry about pornography. In fact we should be more angry, since sexism enters our daily personal life in a more powerful and insidious way.

Pornography plays an important role in reinforcing sexism — it is not a liberating force, and therefore it would be ridiculous to rely on state laws to sweep it away. At the same time, as it is ultra-left to scorn reforms within capitalism, I can see no object-

ion to forms of censorship as part of a mass anti-sexist movement.

The cases of D.H. Lawrence and Henry Miller are quite different. We can surely distinguish between a serious and honest attempt to describe personal relationships — albeit from a sexist viewpoint — and blue films and porno magazines.

On the question of 'patriarchy', Colin Foster is extraordinarily complacent. He takes as though there is some ready-made Marxist analysis of economic and social oppression of women — perhaps he could enlighten with a booklet.

As far as I can see the left has either ignored or jumped in opportunistically on the women's movement (and not of course only on the women's movement!) Theoretically the recent contribution by Marxists has been virtually zero.

It is a question of listening, learning, and discussing in a comradely manner. As I understand Les Hearn's letter, he was suggesting starting in this manner with the concept of 'patriarchy' as developed by the radical and revolutionary feminists. Colin Foster's clumsy dismissal is not helpful.

DAVE SPENCER,
Coventry.

Time for discussion

COLIN Foster's reply to my letter, 'Weakness of Marxists', is headlined, 'How to deal with sexism?'

Well, how indeed? No suggestion whatsoever is made by Colin. He starts with a muddled but nonetheless hurtful accusation of Stalinism because he thinks I want to repress people with reactionary ideas. In fact, I made no reference to such people (though I cannot say I lose much sleep worrying about their 'rights').

Since my original arguments are unrecognisable in Colin's reply, I had better repeat and clarify them.

I said that the dominant left position on pornography was to regard the bourgeois liberal position of 'no censorship, free speech' as the last word on the matter. Colin offers no rebuttal of this allegation. Instead, he assumes that I am therefore in favour of state censorship of porn.

He also manages to misread (?) sexism for racism. I was comparing our response to racist publications with our response to sexist publications — in particular degrading visual images of women.

We don't call for state bans on racist literature,

but neither do we sit idly by and preach on the evils of censorship to black people.

Many women feel that the open display of pornography is a slap in the face — when they themselves organise against porn, we should support them.

We should also be able to find ways of using our positions and influence as socialists and trade unionists to aid the fight against degrading portrayals of women.

But above all, we should listen to what women themselves think of porn. How about inviting contributions to Socialist Organiser from feminists who have written on pornography?

The concept of 'patriarchy' is one I feel we should examine to see if it is useful. What lessons other political currents draw from their interpretation of patriarchy is interesting but hardly relevant when we are suggesting that a Marxist interpretation be developed.

I would like to see discussion of this concept in Socialist Organiser, not just Colin Foster laying down the line.

LES HEARN,
Southport.

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CLP TU

ST. MARY'S: FRONT LINE IN FIGHT FOR NHS

The long struggle against closure and cuts at St Mary's Hospital, London W9, has seen the emergence of a determined defence campaign — and a ruthless management. DETTIE CLINTON reviews the line up after 3½ years.

ON THE management side at St. Mary's is a new breed of careerist administrators who have emerged since the 1974 reorganisation.

They have responded to growing trade union consciousness among health workers by methods identical to those of Michael Edwards and other reactionary employers. A string of victimisations in the London area since 1979 has seen the ousting of militant branch officials and convenors including Geddes, Tissard, Hunt and Xavier.

Type

In St. Mary's W9 a new type of administrator was brought in at the beginning of 1981 specifically to deal with the coming struggle.

The main proponents of the new hard line are administrators Julian Nettal [of St. Benedict's fame], and Mrs. Slaven, the Domestic Supervisor — the domestics being the most militant section of the workforce.

Nettal has now built up expertise in closing hospitals and dealing with resistance.

Wholesale

Following the go-ahead given in September by Health Minister Vaughan to proposals for wholesale cutbacks at St Mary's, Nettal moved to prevent new patients being brought to the hospital. But he was forestalled by the London Ambulance Service unions,



Day of action, December 4

whose convenor Terry Pettifor, called on ambulance crews to ignore the instructions.

Management then stopped booked admissions, and embarked on a programme of transfers of patients: some were even 'kidnapped' from wards.

Disciplinary action was stepped up against militants in a bid to force in speed-up and job losses. This came to a head with the attempt to discipline Rita Maxim, a shop stew-

ard for the orderlies.

The feeling was so high against management on this that the workers considered that the administrator had forfeited his right to run the hospital. Nettal's office was occupied and used as an occupation office.

This was a high point of the struggle, and was popular among most of the workers.

But a court order was quickly obtained and the occupiers evicted.

Then began the management raids on wards. The cynical disregard for the management scabs. Their true faces were clear to all.

Weather

The later occupation of Ward 7 for a while slowed down further bed losses.

Even the weather has resisted the administrators' plans — since more patients have been sent to hospital in the severe winter

conditions.

But they remain determined to close the Casualty, together with further acute beds and operating theatres. And only the labour movement can stop them.

Defence

On the other side of the fight is a defence committee that has also drawn lessons from the struggles and occupations at St. Benedict's and Longworth hospitals.

Like the management, the committee recognise the importance of St. Mary's. It is the first major general hospital to come under threat of closure in London; on its fate hangs the fate of 130 other hospitals in the capital.

However far bigger practical problems have been posed in St. Mary's than in the occupations at other hospitals with mainly long-stay patients.

At St. Mary's it has been hard to unite a large and diverse workforce divided into five major unions. It has been difficult to ensure a constant influx of new patients and to gain support from doctors — many of whom are more interested in their private practices.

The workers' decision in June 1981 to declare an occupation of St. Mary's if Vaughan gave the go-ahead, was a major step in beginning the counter-offensive. It was specially important as both the TGWU and the COHSE conferences were happening at the same time.

Both passed resolutions pledging full support to occupations and supporting strike action against the cuts. COHSE further committed full timers to go to St. Mary's and give all support necessary.

These resolutions gave added confidence to the workers — but were not enough in themselves.

It was many months before the COHSE branch received official backing. The TGWU leadership has not at any time campaigned in support of W9 — not even sending banners on the demonstrations on 3 October or 4 December or fighting for delegations to the picket line.

It has treated the workforce as lepers to be shunned. Official policy or not, the bureaucrats of Region 1 seemed only embarrassed by the actions of their members.

Although NUPE nationally has shown little interest, at least the London Division has made efforts to publicise the fight at St Mary's and to get some other hospital workers to take part in it.

None

But the fact is that none of the unions has mobilised its potential strength locally or nationally to defend St. Mary's.

When picketing began in the summer to monitor comings and goings at the hospital, it lacked the focus of a picketing hut and support was allowed to slip away.

But the firm response from ambulance crews to

management's plans for the rundown gave an important lead. The Ambulance Service is still the key to preventing the closures, and its members are determined to avoid the horror of having to scour London with a sick patient in the back looking for an open Accident and Emergency Unit.

Now is the time for trade unionists to demand their leaders stop sniffing and start using their strength to win these struggles.

The whole London labour movement must take up the cuts fight and not leave it just to health workers.

A boost was given to the campaign with the attendance of Tony Benn and Ken Livingstone at a press conference at St. Mary's on 17 December. Hopefully this will convince more Labour Parties to join in the campaign.

A unified campaign against the cuts will have to be rebuilt nationally and in London to bring together the wide experiences gained in the past cuts fights.

If the Tories have their way, there will soon be only the shell of an NHS left. It is already in a dire state.

The fight to save St. Mary's is a crucial part of the fight to save the NHS. Join in that fight. Come to the support committee every Wednesday at 5.30 pm in the Woodfield wing.

Commit your organisation to send a delegation, money and messages of support through your union, Labour Party and Trades Council.

SCIENCE



Electric valium

DAVY JONES LOOKS AT E.C.T.

ELECTRO-convulsive therapy (ECT) is a fairly common treatment of some forms of mental disturbance. It is often used, for instance, when other treatments for depression have failed.

Seizure

The therapy consists of applying an electrical shock to the brain of anaesthetised patients, in order to induce a convulsive seizure (fit). For reasons which are almost completely unknown, the seizure can help to overcome the depression, though most psychiatrists accept that there is a high rate of relapse.

A problematical side-effect of the treatment is confusion in the hours following a seizure, and the loss of memory, which lasts several months. Current thinking attributes the beneficial effects of ECT to the convulsion, while the confusion and memory loss are due to the electrical current.

The idea, then, is to give as little current as possible, especially to the 'memory side' of the brain, while

still producing the fit.

The public (i.e. you and me) have long viewed ECT with suspicion and distaste, an opinion which has been encouraged by suggestions that ECT has been given as punishment to uncooperative mental patients and to political dissidents in Russian so-called psychiatric clinics.

Class

It is also said that ECT is more likely to be given to working-class patients suffering from depression than to depressives who are middle class. The general suspicious attitude towards ECT has also given rise to stories, such as that in the magazine World Medicine of a hospital whose results from ECT were so successful that the staff didn't realise for two years that their brand new ECT machine hadn't been producing any shock!

In view of the public disquiet about ECT, and its only too real side-effects, you might think that clinicians who prescribe the treatment to patients would be cautious and painstaking

in its application. Not so, as a recent report shows.

In their investigation for the Royal College of Psychiatrists, Drs J Pippard and L Ellam found that up to 98% of British psychiatrists favour ECT, and that in 1979 some 200,000 applications of ECT were made.

Despite the fact that many, many studies show that unilateral ECT (to one side of the brain only) causes less confusion and memory loss, but is equally effective in combating depression, 80 per cent of British clinics use the more severe bilateral treatment.

Over a quarter of the clinics use out of date machines, with no control over the amount of electricity passed through the patient's head. The machines are rarely overhauled, and most ECT treatment is given by doctors with no training in the technique.

The report describes ECT being given in large open dormitory wards with rows of patients lying in unscreened beds and the ECT and anaesthetic

machines being wheeled from one bed to the next. Patients awaiting treatment, or recovering from it, can see and hear the others undergoing convulsions.

Of the staff involved, the report rates only one third of the psychiatrists and two thirds of the nurses as competent.

Nursing staff were found to be bored, apathetic, or hostile to ECT. In some cases, the fact that treatment did not result in a fit (the only aspect of ECT thought to be beneficial) was ignored by the medical staff involved.

In a review of the report, the medical journal Lancet says, "The picture painted is one of ECT being given in many clinics in a degrading and frightening way, with little consideration for patients' feelings, by bored and uninterested staff, with obsolete machines, operated by ignorant or uncaring psychiatrists".

Whether ECT is an effective treatment for certain mental disorders is beyond my competence to judge.

Certainly, there are psychiatrists who deny its usefulness. However, even if we accept that ECT is a useful therapy, the means by which the treatment is carried out is, or ought to be, a scandal in the National Health Service.

If psychiatrists practise such a controversial treatment in this fashion, what about their use of therapies less in the public eye?

Are the ECT revelations just the tip of an iceberg of indifference and hostility with which mental patients are treated?

And is this attitude towards mental patients merely the forerunner of the way in which all patients who do not pay cash will be treated in our rundown and fast-failing health service?

US news: Pres. Raygun has appointed Dr Armand Hammer to run the government's 'War on Cancer' campaign.

And who is this Hammer? He is none other than the boss of Hooker Chemicals, which gave Love Canal to America [and cancer to a lot of Americans]!

Scots smelter shut

WITH A savagery unknown even after 2½ years of Tory rule, British Aluminium (BACO) shut down its Invergordon smelter on Wednesday 30 December 1981.

Only the previous week management had been strenuously denying rumours of any closure of the smelter. Then on Tuesday 29 December they announced that the plant was to be shut down on grounds that the subsidising of high fuel costs made the plant unprofitable.

The closure will be a disaster for the surrounding area, already suffering high levels of unemployment and many of the plant's 890 workers had only recently moved to Invergordon from other parts of Scotland to escape unemployment in their home areas.

There is no way in which "strike happy" workers could be made scapegoats for the closure. Even the local Tory MP condemned the closure.

Workers responded to the announcement of the closure by drawing up plans for a sit-in and for making contact with local power workers, but before they could contact the power workers management got wind of their plans and shut off the power 8½ hours ahead of schedule.

BACO say they are willing to sell the smelter if a buyer should emerge but the possibility of this can be ruled out since the abrupt cut-off of power has caused damage that would cost over £1 million to put right.

If the closure announcement was bad news to workers in the area it was good news for BACO shareholders. Shares rose by over 25% and BACO emerged £67 million better off as a result of negotiations with the government who have agreed to write off massive debts.

S. Yorks strikes against Tories

A 24-hour stoppage and demonstration has been called in South Yorkshire to protest against the Tories' anti-working class policies.

It is organised by the South Yorkshire Engineering and Steel Committee, which has the support of the local Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Unions. They hope that it will be a one-day South Yorkshire general strike. In a leaflet put out by the committee, they emphasise that they are calling on all workers for support.

The leaflet makes the point that a 24 hour stoppage is not the be-all and end-all, but it is a start.

All workers in South Yorkshire should support the call, and in particular support should be sought from the miners.

Bombastic

South Yorkshire is setting a good example for other areas — and for the national leaders of the trade unions, who nowadays seem to believe that the strongest possible action against the Tories is a bombastic speech.

Assemble: 10am, Monday January 26, Carlisle St, to march through the city for a rally.



Industrial News



Miners: go for full claim!

by John Cunningham (Dinnington NUM)

ON JANUARY 14-15 the National Union of Mineworkers will ballot its members on its current wage claim. It is important that the outcome of the ballot shows clearly to the national and local leadership that we want the full claim, and if that means a national strike, then so be it.

It is absolutely vital that we make up lost ground on the wages front. Look at the figures.

In the financial year ending April 1981, gas had gone up 28 per cent, electricity 27 per cent, tobacco 23 per cent, rates 21 per cent and rents 43 per cent. Official government figures admit to an average increase in prices of 10.9 per cent per year, though 15 per cent is probably more accurate.

On top of all this, the recent mini-budget has put another £4 to £5 on our weekly bills.

Yet in last year's wage settlement we received just over 9 per cent, with a bit on the bonus. So ever since then we have been falling steadily behind. We need the full claim of 23 per cent to catch up, and we need it on the basic rate.

The Coal Board's offer on which we are to vote, if accepted, would in actual fact mean a drastic decline in real wages. Surface workers, for example, the industry's 'forgotten legion' as someone rightly called them, will get a rise of a mere £6.95 before tax.

Arguments

This is not even worth thinking about. Let's show the Board and the government that this time we won't be bought off.

The December special issue of the Coal Board's publication Coal News contains a number of arguments in support of the offer which need looking at.

ONE: The National Coal Board says it is the best offer yet made by an industry to any group of workers in the current wages round.

This may even be true. If it is, it only goes to show

that everyone else has been getting next to nothing — and it's necessary for the miners to help clear the way for better rises in future.

Destroyed

The NCB also forgot to mention a few pay rises, like the 101.7 per cent increase for Cabinet Ministers between June 1980 and 1981, or the £2500 a week increase which Prince Charles gave himself not long back. Or the over 20 per cent for our friends in blue, just recently.

TWO: There is the by now familiar cry that the industry can't afford the claim, and that closures will follow if the claim is conceded. This was the old argument used by the Board and the right wing in the union to justify the meagre wage rises throughout the '50s and '60s. Yet it didn't stop the industry being nearly destroyed. The number of pits went down from 850 in 1955 to 293 in 1970.

If anyone still thinks that low wage increases protect jobs, then we can only say they have not learned from history.

THREE: The Board are also claiming that because miners have travel allowances and a fuel allowance, inflation is not hitting us so bad. What a load of rubbish.

Many miners still walk to the pit, and the fuel allowance, welcome as it is, can in no way compensate for the increase in just about every other basic essential. It's time the Board coughed up, and if they won't do it voluntarily, then let's make them.

Forged

If it is a strike, there must be no doubts that a direct confrontation with the Government is on the cards. This is something we should not try to hide or run away from. The Tories would dearly like to give us a good kicking, and if they succeed it would be a great step backwards for the



Scargill working class.

But if we can mobilise the rest of the working class behind us, and there is no reason why we shouldn't, provided we don't take that support for granted but work for it — then there is no doubt that we can win our claim.

Not only that, but a mighty movement can be forged, building up to a general strike which can smash the Tories' anti-picket laws and go on to bring the government down.

SPIRITS STRONG AT SCOTTS

ARTHUR Snipe didn't get the Christmas present he wanted this year — his factory back. A meeting of the Laurence Scotts strike committee last Monday decided to continue the fight to save the jobs of the remaining strikers.

Despite the ending of the picket in Doncaster — beaten by the weather and lack of cash and official union backing rather than by the courts or the police — and

the lull over the Christmas holidays, the determination is still there to carry the dispute through to the end.

"There's still plenty of spirit, so we're pushing on", said convenor Dennis Barry.

The plan now is to make the factory in Louisa Street the focus of activity again. A mass picket of Scotts workers has been organised for this Friday, to show Snipe, and AUEW executive member Ken Cure for that

matter, that the support is still there among the work-force.

More effort is also going to put into getting donations and delegations from factories in the Manchester area.

With increased support from the labour movement, the name of Laurence Scotts should continue giving Messrs Snipe, Boyd and Duffy many more sleepless nights in 1982.

PETE KEENLYSIDE

Enter the "spy in the cab" by ALAN THORNETT

THE tachograph became compulsory on January 1st. It represents a serious attack on the working conditions, and in many cases the wages, of road haulage workers.

It was enforced under the Treaty of Rome, but Britain's employers were very willing. They will mostly take full advantage of what is in every sense a 'spy in the cab'.

Ostensibly it is designed to replace the existing driver's logbook and enforce regulations on drivers' bonus, which remain unchanged at a maximum of 8 hours' actual driving and 3 hours' working time in any 24 hours.

In reality, it goes very much further. The tachograph is a sophisticated instrument, which has created a multi-million pound business for the three manufacturers who supply the British market, Smiths, Veeder-Root, and Lucas. They affect all vehicles in excess of 3.5 tonnes and record speed, distance, driving time, other work, breaks and daily rest periods. It even records idle running, and driving in reverse.

A driver is required by law to operate the tachograph correctly. Even to fail to change the mode from driving to work time or to breaks is an offence. Drivers are subject to spot checks and must be in poss-

ession of the disc for the previous day, as well as the one in the instrument.

Initial TGWU verbal opposition to the introduction of the tachograph collapsed long ago. A ballot was held of the RTC Group a year ago, before many of the drivers had realised the full implications. Following a

Restaurant strike

JUDGING by the prices on the menu at Tutton's you wouldn't think the proprietors would have much trouble getting together enough money to pay their workers more than £1.40 an hour. According to the management, this amount is quite beyond their pockets and they decided last July to reduce the rate to £1.10.

When the staff objected to this the management generously offered to take charge of the tips previously shared out by the waiting staff, and give both waiting staff and non-waiting staff another 20p an hour out of this money.

Staff involved in negotiations to prevent the wage reductions were threatened with the sack. All the people on night shift walked out in support and were themselves promptly sacked. At this, all the workers came out and they have been on strike since 15th December.

At the moment support for the strike is strong from other trade unionists. Other T&G members are refusing to deliver supplies and NUPE refuse collectors have also given their support.

Negotiations are also currently taking place through ACAS. So far management have conceded the reinstatement of all but one worker, to whom they have offered three months redundancy pay. They still want to impose a written agreement bringing wages down to the lower rate of £1.10 an hour with the pooled tip system. They've already advertised for casual staff at the higher rate — so much for their financial straits — but there is a strong feeling on the picket line that the workers can win the right to negotiate their wages.

LINDA GREENE

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 social property, under workers' control. The strength of the labour movement lies in the rank and file. Our perspective must be working class action to raze the capitalist system down to its foundations, and to put a working class socialist alternative in its place — rather than having our representatives run the system and waiting for crumbs from the tables of the bankers and the bosses.

Boilermakers' leader SILENT

Industrial News



AGAINST TORIES: SAVAGE AGAINST LEFT

by Stan Crooke

THE December edition of the Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers' monthly magazine contained a clear and unmistakable message from the union's general secretary for all left-wingers in the union's ranks.

"Many of you I'm sure will share with me complete distress at what is happening in the Labour Party today. Our chances of success at the next election is (sic) being squandered day by day by 'parties within parties'," writes Jim Murray, the union's general secretary.

He continues: "Are we reaching a situation in trade unionism also where we have 'unions within unions' or a 'society within a society'? I am prompted to make these comments reflecting sadly upon a report of a meeting within our Society which has reached my desk and I now publish in full (without correction)."

Murray then wastes a

large amount of space in the union's magazine by publishing an unexpurgated version of the minutes of an innocuous, not to say boring, Broad Left meeting which took place over a year ago.

Threat

But there can be no mistaking the threat to the left in the union contained in Murray's closing comments on these treasonous documents: "I believe this Society cannot afford to have a 'society within a society' and I warn our membership—you will ignore this group at your peril."

In reality of course, it is Murray himself, not the Broad Left, that represents a peril for the ASOB membership. When 900 ASOB and GMWU members struck at the Hunterston yard in Ayrshire in September 1980, it was not the Broad Left but Murray who sanctioned and

organised scabbing to break the strike.

Again it is Murray, not any member of the Broad Left, who is on trial at the moment over alleged ballot irregularities.

And Murray, despite claiming that his opposition to the Broad Left based on his concern for democracy in the union, has done nothing at all in support of the recently launched 'Campaign in Defence of the Right to Picket' (CDRP), which is campaigning in support of Abie Courtney, a former shop steward at Hunterston arrested during the strike there for picketing.

Cold feet

The fore-warning of Murray's offensive against the left in the union, indicated by the above comments of his, underlines the need for all aspects of

democracy and rank and file activity in ASOB (such as the CDRP) to be supported.

Unfortunately however it would seem that some of the Communist Party elements in the Broad Left are already starting to get cold feet about the CDRP.

At the December meeting of Glasgow ASOB branch 11 (the branch which passed the motion that has been used as the basis for building the CDRP), CP member Sammy Barr said he fully supported the campaign's goals, but it would have been better to launch an appeal for funds after Abie's trial.

The CDRP is out to publicise the political issues posed in and by Abie's trial—not just to pass a cap around afterwards to cover the costs and the fine.

Support for the CDRP must be built both in and outside the ASOB. While confronting the Tories, the bosses and the police in their

offensive against picketing rights, the CDRP also represents a challenge to Murray's attempts to transform the ASOB into a second Poland, with himself in the role of Jaruzelski.

For further information about the Campaign in Defence of the Right to Picket, contact CDRP, c/o A. Courtney, 72 Tallant Road, Drumchapel, Glasgow.

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and the

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Gains for left in NUTGW

by V.O'Brien

IN A three-cornered fight for the two Executive seats representing the North West division of the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers, Socialist Organiser supporter Winnie Murphy polled 3,389 votes, just 1,500 votes short of securing election.

This is a big increase over her 1,200 votes when she last stood two years ago.

In a Socialist Organiser interview, Winnie Murphy pointed out that the industry, which was once rife with small private employers, is increasingly dominated by the multi-nationals. This makes it possible to link up workers through combine committees.

It also raises more urgently the issue of economic planning which the national leadership has avoided.

Under the rules of the NUTGW no candidate can issue an election address or openly campaign for votes.

This rule has never been challenged by long standing Communist Party members of the union.

In fact in the space provided on the ballot forms for candidates' biographies, all the CP members who stood left the question asking for political affiliation blank.

So Winnie Murphy's campaign was handicapped by not having the right to put out an election address as well as by the subtle campaigning by full-time officials against her.

The NUTGW badly needs a change of leadership. This was illustrated by the Executive's attitude to the occupation of Lee Jeans by NUTGW members.

It was Socialist Organiser which exclusively reported which Communist Party members had moved that the union withdraw official support from the Lee Jeans workers during the last few weeks of their occupation.

The NUTGW has the largest percentage of women in membership of any British union. It cannot isolate itself from the growing willingness of women to fight for jobs and better wages.

Such militancy needs to be harnessed around socialist policies. In a low paid industry such as clothing, no policy has greater relevance than that for a minimum wage linked to a working class cost of living index.

Winnie Murphy's election defeat is one battle lost but the war to mould the Garment Workers union into a fighting, democratic organisation continues.

Weighell sells out on jobs: lashes out at left

by Rob Dawber (Sheffield NUR)

Industrial action by train drivers starting on January 4 with a ban on overtime working leading up to a national strike on 13/14 January will reopen in many NUR members' minds the issues around the August 1981 pay negotiations.

Then, a national strike by all railway workers was averted by a deal which included two "separate" agreements—one on productivity (which management had wanted linking to pay) and one on pay (which the union leadership said they would not accept being linked to productivity).

The deal made the original offer of 8% payable

from April and the disputed 3% (which management had wanted to make dependent on productivity agreements) payable from January 1982 and backdated to August.

Productivity

The ASLEF leadership has not however agreed to these changes that management wanted from the train drivers and management are now refusing to pay the 3% to the train drivers.

As regards the NUR, however, the 3% will be paid as the leadership of our union has agreed everything that management wanted.

Instead of making a stand against the continuing decimation of the railway industry, these changes could mean up to 38,000 jobs lost, with no staff for the new "open stations", no guards on freight trains, and in some departments week-end working becoming part of the normal working week so as to reduce overtime.

This treachery doesn't stop at simply agreeing to these changes, however. Sid Weighell, General Secretary of the NUR, has launched a witch-hunt against those members of his union who are trying to organise a Broad Left to turn the NUR into a fighting union which defends its members and stops these sell-outs.

Ian Williams (NUR Exec, personal capacity) spoke to Socialist Organiser

SOCIALIST Organiser spoke to NUR Executive member IAN WILLIAMS about the witch-hunting attack launched against him and other left wingers by union leader Sid Weighell. Williams, of course, speaks in a personal capacity.

What was the first you heard about the witch hunt?

In June there was an inaugural meeting of the Broad Left. I was named as a speaker—in a personal capacity.

Sid (Weighell) got hold of a leaflet and wrote to me asking why I had participated in what he called an unofficial circular.

Then he sent out a circular to all branches warning them about unofficial circulars. He invited them to send him copies of any unauthorised material that had come into their hands.

Only about 50 branches out of six or seven hundred replied. And none of them sent complaints—just copies of leaflets.

What was the next development?

Weighell asked me for a written assurance that I "would not continue to break the rules". This was like the old "Have you stopped beating your wife?"

I wrote back saying that I had not broken any rules.

Then came the fight over wages on London Transport. I wrote a letter to Labour Weekly and London Labour Briefing replying to Ken Livingstone's argument that the strike threat was a right wing plot.

I said that if it was right wing to demand a living wage, then Livingstone should examine his own credentials. I called on him to shoulder aside London Transport management.

I received a letter from Weighell asking for an explanation of "unauthorised communication with the press".

It was obvious I was being set up. And I began to get phone calls from branches in my area, asking me about rumours that I was about to be expelled!

How did the inquiry come about?

In September Sid came to the Executive with a 7-page document—more than two of which were about me.

He asked that a special sub-committee be set up to consider this.

It caused a problem on the Executive because if any decision at all were taken it would give grounds for an appeal to the AGM.

In the end the sub-committee was set up. Sid produced more and more photocopies of the Militant—

'proving' that they write about the NUR. He even underlined all the most accurate and pithy parts!

In the last week before the quarterly meeting of the Executive the sub-committee held no less than 16 hours of sessions.

What were the findings?

There were two reports. One, supported by a minority of three on the sub-committee, became known as the 'first report'. It waffled on about unofficial organisations, but most of what Sid wanted had been edited out.

Of the six named people, one—a SWP member from Brighton—had pleaded guilty and promised not to do it again; one had blamed a printer's error; and one had left the industry. Three of us were 'found guilty': I was found guilty of two more offences than I had been charged with!

Were you called or allowed to give evidence?

I was found guilty without any appearance or evidence. We were invited to submit written evidence, but there seemed no point in giving more material to the prosecutor.

Nobody was called before the sub-committee; it only looked at bits of paper.



Weighell is now using the press to splash the story of 'left wing infiltration'.

What was the majority view?

The 'second report' was supported by 5 EC members and basically said that there was no case to answer.

But to save embarrassment, Weighell together with the president, and an Assistant General Secretary added their signatures to the 'first report', even though they had no vote on the sub-committee.

To make doubly sure, the President ruled the majority report out of order. He said that as President he was custodian of the Rules, and since he considered there had been a breach of the Rules he would not accept any report which said otherwise!

But the motion to accept the 'first report' was defeated 17 to 7.

Then Sid said, "I'm not having these people do to my union what they've done to the Labour Party. There will be an appeal to the AGM about this!"

Sid has an easier time at the AGM than on the Executive. Half the delegates are

normally elected unopposed.

I must try to present members with the real facts. But this is difficult because for instance the editor of the union's paper has just died and Sid is acting editor!

How do you see this struggle?

It comes in a context where Sid is trying to 'clean up' the NUR in order to pile the pressure on to Foot to do the same in the Labour Party.

This is why I think it links up with Basnett's moves in the GMWU against Tony Banks—and with Chapple's moves on EETPU branches.

It is a documented fact that these people meet frequently. They are working through the TULV.

I regard myself as to the left of Militant. The fact is that if I get squashed it doesn't augur too well for anyone else in the NUR.



Socialist Organiser

Unions must fight Denning

LONDON Transport unions are discussing a one-day total stoppage against the Law Lords' ban on cheap fares.

The Lords' decision is likely to mean a doubling of fares from March 21 (followed by a further hefty increase shortly afterwards); a 15% cut in bus services; a 3% cut in tube services; and a loss of jobs as a result.

A joint meeting of union leaders on Monday

4 January also suggested a joint campaign committees and a joint mass shop stewards meeting.

Meanwhile Labour Party activists are continuing to press for the GLC to refuse to implement the fare rises and service cuts. They are also planning for a campaign among passengers not to pay the increase, if a lead is given by the transport workers' union.

RESISTANCE TO TODD'S SELL-OUT AT FORD'S

by John Bloxam

THE FORD deal pushed by TGWU negotiator Ron Todd is a rotten sell-out. The immediate strike action in both Halewood and Swansea showed the strength of support for a fight. Where a clear lead was given, the rejection was overwhelming — around 7 to 1 in Swansea.

As we go to press, the final result is still unknown.

TGWU negotiator Ron Todd told the press on Tuesday 5th: "If there is a majority in favour of rejection, then the national committee will meet again to decide on a course of action". But a vote for rejection is clearly a mandate for immediately going ahead with the strike decision unilaterally suspended by Todd.

Ron Todd claimed that the offer represents a significant improvement. Its certainly better than Ford's original insulting offer, but it's nowhere near



the claim. It is virtually the same deal that was overwhelmingly thrown out before Christmas.

* No improvement on the 7.4% offer on the basic. It is still well behind the rate of inflation (over 11%) before deductions and before the effects of the recent Tory budget (National Insurance surcharge; rent increases)

* No concessions on the company's five 'efficiency'

points. Management has made these a condition of the deal, which is not surprising because they will destroy shop floor rights and conditions, and lead to the loss of thousands of jobs.

There is also no change in the proposal that full-time and national officials should jointly police the agreement with management, and do their dirty work. It's no wonder the

officials recommended acceptance of the deal!

The two so-called improvements have been on the question of hours (bringing forward the 39 hour week to June 1st) and negotiations on pensions. But it's not much.

The pension deal is still not as good as Vauxhall. More importantly, the question of hours

is not only incomplete (it still does not include 3-shift workers), but hasn't agreed the basic issue. The question of whether the 39 hours is a real improvement, or something Ford workers will pay for in lost conditions, as at BL, has still to be negotiated.

And they want us to accept the deal!

Todd and the majority on the NJNC have argued that it's the best deal in the circumstances. That's rubbish.

The Ford bosses don't want a strike in one of the few areas they are still making large profits in, any more than the Tory government wants a strike that could link up with the ASLEF action, that could come together with the miners' wage claim (they are balloting for industrial action in 10 days time), that could provide a lead to other workers to rip up this government's wage cutting policies and actions.

If the vote goes for strike action then some points will be vital to victory. And the first one is not to leave control of the strike in the hands of the full-time officials. Todd and the majority on the NJNC should be told:

* No more secret deals and rushed meetings. Mass meetings should make decisions on whether strike action should be called off.

* No selling of jobs; no



negotiations on 'efficiency' and no union participation in policing the membership.

* For the full claim of £20 on the basic. An immediate 39 hour week with no loss of pay or conditions.

It was the secret deal of Ron Todd and J. Whyman that led up to the path to the efficiency package. It was Ron Todd who said last week on independent radio that he would accept the efficiency deal in return for improvement wages, pensions and hours.

They then recommended a sell-out deal, after going off the strike on January 5. It was the sort of people who sold the BL strike.

All the running decisions of the strike must be controlled by the meetings and elected shop committees. They must organise the pickets, shut down all Ford operations; raise money; approach other workers for assistance and solidarity.

BL attack

WHEN the 39 hour week was first introduced at Cowley Assembly plant management did not tamper with it. But following their victory speed-up and cuts in ration allowances (RA) at Longbridge, they announced a cut in RA at Cowley.

RA time is to be cut 10 minutes a shift January 14, though increase in track speed proposed.

Assembly Plant stewards met on Wednesday 6 January and decided to recommend the work respond by unilateral cutting 15 minutes off shift. This proposal was put to a mass meeting next few days.

See inside: page 3 centre page

RAIL: THE CHICKENS COME HOME TO ROOST!

by Steve Good (ASLEF)

THE ISSUES of productivity and sweeping changes in working practices have come to a head in British Rail.

The British Rail Board has pulled out of talks with the train drivers' union, ASLEF, at the Railway Staff Joint Council, without even resorting to the next two stages in the machinery.

The Board has gone to ACAS once again, to try to force agreement on ASLEF over flexible rostering. The machinery of negotiation has been flouted by BR for the second time in less than six months.

The Board is now refusing to pay the second stage of the pay award of August last year. Without 'flexible rostering', ASLEF members will not be paid the princely extra three per cent wage rise.

ASLEF's executive know full well that — despite their denials at the time — in the agreement signed on August 20 last year they made a commitment to negotiations which would lead to the introduction of productivity measures.

Since that time, however, the EC has been backpedalling fiercely because the membership has made it increasingly clear that they do not want 'flexi-rostering'.

What exactly would this new system of 'flexible rostering' entail? Pilot schemes for York depot have now been revealed.

They show a variation in the working week of between 26 and 50 hours for

the same basic 39 hours' pay.

Even a 40 hour week involves, in some cases, four ten hour shifts in the week.

This is nothing like the modest suggestions made by the BRB — that there might be variations in the working day of between 7 and 9 hours.

It is also clear from the examples of the new rosters that a movement of four hours either side of the rostered signing-on time is envisaged.

It is not the withholding of the 3 per cent or the suspension of the new 39 hour week agreement, which angers ASLEF members, so much as the prospect of having to work even more backbreaking and unsocial hours at times fluctuating widely from one day to the next.

Without flexible rostering the BRB know they cannot introduce the other items of productivity — such as the dropping of manning agreements.

From the fight to stop 'flexi-rostering', the fight to throw out other productivity proposals automatically follows.

The EC have now called for a national overtime ban and an end to rest-day working from January 4, leading to a two-day national strike on January 13 and

14.

Already Scottish Region ASLEF members are correctly saying that this is not enough, and are calling for an all-out indefinite strike.

On January 11, Scottish region members will be lobbying the Executive when they make their final decision on the strike. It is vital that this lobby gets maximum support from ASLEF branches in order to put pressure on the EC to stand by the strike call.

Even now, however, the ASLEF EC is meeting with the BRB in an attempt to stitch up some sort of compromise.

ASLEF members must demand that the union pull out of these talks and make January 13 and 14 the beginning of a movement for all-out strike action to smash the productivity proposals of the BRB and the Tories.

Informal liaison committees must be built in the different areas of the rail network to coordinate strike action and to take forward the fight against the productivity proposals if and when the EC backs down.

On a local level, ASLEF branches must start now to build for strike committees in the run-up to a national strike.

Liaison must be sought now with T&G and URTU

road haulier branches to prevent the transfer of rail freight to road.

And the 'divide and rule' tactics of union leaders and management must be combatted: local ASLEF committees should approach NUR members and seek to involve them in a common struggle against BR's productivity drive

which seeks to wipe out 40,000 jobs and impose speed-up across the industry.

Nottingham and District NUR has called for the NUR's agreement to the British Rail productivity plan to be rescinded, and for the NEC to resign. This fight needs to be taken up in other areas.



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