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Socialist Organiser

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1,000 marched in Birmingham last Sunday for Troops Out



LEYLAND

SPREAD THE JOBS FIGHT!

12,000 manual and clerical workers are now entering their second week of strike action against Leyland Vehicles' plan to cut 4,100 jobs at its Leyland, Chorley and Bathgate plants.

The strength and solidarity of the LV workers has clearly shaken the BL bosses who are now spending thousands of pounds on full page advertisements in the local press in a desperate attempt to persuade the workforce to accept the "corporate plan" and call off the strike.

But the bosses' pleas (and their increasingly blatant threats of total closure) seem to be falling on deaf ears. The strikers seem determined to stay out until the corporate plan is scrapped and the redundancies withdrawn.

TUC pleads for new social contract

The TUC's annual economic review, published on Tuesday was the usual package—reflation and selective import controls.

But, introducing the package, TUC general secretary Len Murray said that the TUC was willing to discuss incomes policy if the Tories accepted the plan.

Despite the inadequacy of the package the TUC will only get a flea in their ear from Thatcher.

The real significance of Murray's speech is kite-flying for a new incomes policy under a new Labour government.

But both TUC and Labour Party policy are—as a result of bitter experience—firmly against incomes policy. The new wage controls talk should be scotched now, by the labour movement insisting that our leaders stick to the movement's policy.

Bathgate workers evicted

"AN infringement on the rights of property". For a judge in Edinburgh, that was good enough reason to grant a court order for BL to evict workers occupying its Bathgate plant.

Unfortunately, the action committee occupying the plant responded by immediately quitting. There was no mass meeting or consultation

with the workforce. But picketing is now well-organised and confident. The workers are still determined to fight for the right to work, against the rights of property!

On Wednesday January 27, an all-Scotland shop stewards' conference convened by West Lothian Trades Council gave support

to Bathgate.

Workers from Plesseys electronics factory, also in Bathgate, also occupied in defence of jobs, and now also facing a court order, were represented on the platform.

Messages/money: BL strike committee, c/o West Lothian District Council, Bathgate, Scotland.

The BL Combine Committee has called a meeting for Saturday 6th. This makes it possible to start spreading the struggle to BL Cars.

The corporate plan that the Leyland Vehicles workers are striking against is the same plan that BL Cars workers have suffered under. It is the same Edwardes management—and the same Tory government behind it.

Winning this LV jobs fight means beating Edwardes and the Tories—and that means spreading the fight.

However, there are some serious problems facing the strike. In particular the Lancashire LV strike committee's emphasis on the call for negotiations (rather than on the demand for no redundancies) gives the bosses a valuable hostage to fortune and could be used to undermine the unity of the strikers.

Ron Hancock, LV Chairman, has already said that he is willing to "negotiate" on the union's alternative plan and there is a real danger that the AUEW national leadership could try to force a return to work on the basis of such a vague commitment from management with no guarantee that a single job would be saved at the end of the day.

In Bathgate, new talks are scheduled for Wednesday 3rd—although previous ones have produced no shift at all.

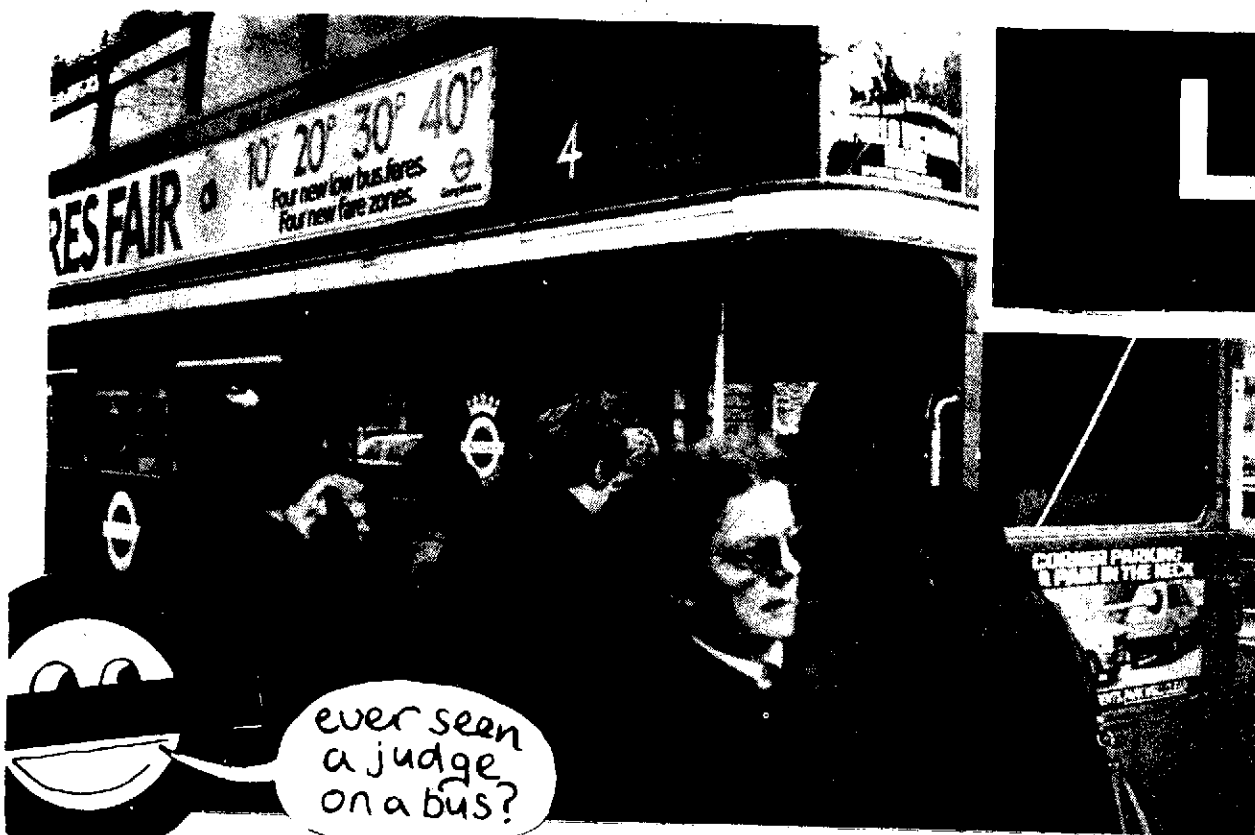
A Leyland Action Committee bulletin distributed at the Lancashire plant this week says:

"No-one should think that victory will be easy. The destruction of Leyland Vehicles is but another stage in the decimation of BL by Michael Edwardes. It is his corporate plan which has got to be defeated if still more communities are not to be laid waste.

"Whilst it is clearly correct to force the employer to talk, there is a world of difference between that and getting a complete withdrawal of management's redundancy plans.

"There should be no question of a return to work without cast iron guarantees that no jobs will go and the strike committee should make this clear immediately."





BUILD FARES FIGHT!

LABOUR should fight the London fare rises — and can still stop them. That was the overwhelming view of a meeting of the London Labour Party left-wing group, Target 82, on Monday 1st.

A motion was carried urging Labour councillors to vote against any proposals to increase the fares in line with the Law Lords decision, and if necessary to vote against this year's budget if the fare rises are part of it.

The Labour Group last month voted to defy the fare rise order. But it allowed a free vote, so the rise went through the GLC thanks to an alliance between the Labour Group minority, the Liberals and SDP, and a few Tories. (Most of the Tories abstained).

Labour Group leader Ken Livingstone was originally for defiance. But now he wants to vote for the fare rises — on the grounds that to vote against would be tantamount to resigning.

Left-wingers in the Labour Group, led by John

McDonnell and Valerie Wise, are determined to stick to the original Labour Group decision.

Last Tuesday, 26th, they voted in the council against confirmation of the fare rises. Since the Tories also voted against (they prefer a different fare-rise package), the confirmation was defeated — though London Transport is going ahead anyway with doubling fares on March 21.

The Labour left-wingers have also launched the 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay' campaign — urging passengers to pay the old fare and give the conductor or driver an IOU for the extra. This action would be illegal — but if millions of passengers, supported by the transport unions, refused to pay, there is no way they could all be prosecuted.

The 'Fares Fight' campaign is also organising a petition, leaflets, and meetings.

The Labour Group leadership is campaigning — though, as many people pointed out in the Target 82 meeting, when you vote FOR the measure

you are campaigning against, it does not convey much hope that you can defeat it!

£200,000 will be spent on the campaign. It will open with the London Assembly on February 27 — supposed to be a gathering of all Londoners of all social classes, workers and business people, Labour and Tories alike. On March 11 there will be a lobby of Parliament; on March 13 a demonstration.

This approach has received some strange (if not unexpected) support from the Newsline, paper of the 'Workers' Revolutionary Party'. In the name of 'unity', Newsline's editorial on January 29 recklessly denounces Valerie Wise's stand.

As Newsline itself recalls, the argument is the same as when the Left opposed Lambeth Council's rate rise policy and Newsline defended it. As Newsline does not care to recall, Lambeth's policy led to big SDP gains, a panic retreat from rate rises... and cuts.

Victor McGear from Holl-

oway bus garage TGWU spoke at the Target 82 meeting on Monday 1st, and made clear his view that the Labour Group must give a lead by voting against the fare rises. He reported that a joint committee had been established between bus and tube unions, and a TGWU Bus Conference has agreed to call a one-day strike.

• Pass motions congratulating the Labour Group left wing on their stand and affiliating to the 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay' and 'Fares Fight' campaigns.

• Circulate the campaign literature. Hold workplace meetings: press for trade union decisions that all members should refuse to pay the fare rises for their journeys to and from work.

'Fares Fight' has called public meetings in Camden (Thursday February 4, 8pm at the Irish Centre, Murray St) and South London (Wednesday February 10, 7.30 at St Anne's Hall, Venn St).

[More information: contact Fares Fight, 267 0757].

RIGHT WING STALL ON MANCHESTER CUTS

by Pete Keenlyside

MANCHESTER faces a huge crisis over this year's council budget. Heseltine has told the council that the most they can spend in the next financial year will be £230 million. Just to keep the services at the same level as last year will mean spending between £260 and £270 million.

To meet Heseltine's target the council must therefore have to make £30-£40 million cuts, or put the rates up by around 40%, or combine cuts and rate rises added to a rent increase of £2.50 a week.

Over the last two years the leadership of the Labour Group surrendered to every demand that the Tories have made, in the hope that better times would come along. Some hope!

Now they have caved in completely. They have forced through proposals for a £2.50 a week rent rise, a 12% rate rise and cuts that will mean up to 4,000 council workers getting the sack.

The council unions' leadership has been scarcely better. Up till now they

have had a deal with Labour Group leader Norman Morris: no compulsory redundancies and we'll support you.

This pact has led to 4,000 jobs going in the last three years through voluntary redundancy, jobs that unemployed youth in the city so desperately need.

Now the town hall unions, having got down on their knees, are about to get kicked in the teeth. In a vain attempt to avoid compulsory redundancies, Roger Jones, secretary of the Town Hall branch of NALGO, has put forward his own package of cuts, voluntary redundancies, natural wastage, rate rises and rent rises.

But Morris contemptuously dismissed this.

A city Labour Party meeting on Sunday January 24 called for the Labour Group to introduce a balanced budget, based on a rate increase in line with inflation, but to declare the Party's opposition to cuts and rent increases and to defer any decision on them. Then after the May council elections a campaign 'to

oppose cuts should be mounted.

The resolution was weak: it didn't actually call for the cuts to be rejected, merely to be delayed, and it didn't commit anyone to vote against them.

Growing

So by the end of Tuesday's Group meeting the City Party position wasn't worth the paper it was written on. And to make matters worse, Norman Morris could go on television crowing that they had in fact carried out Party policy. 'Why, weren't we asked to produce a balanced budget with a 12% rates increase?'

An amendment was put to the resolution by Socialist Organiser supporters which would have committed the Party to calling on the Labour Group to refuse to make any cuts or declare redundancies, to fill all vacancies, to freeze rents and rates and to mount a massive campaign in the working class in Manchester to win support for this policy.

The amendment was overwhelmingly defeated.

with only about ten delegates voting for it. It seems that most people at the meeting weren't prepared to vote for anything that would be illegal or that would lead to a clear break with the right wing majority of the Labour Group. They were obviously worried about the possible implications on the May elections.

This was sheer evasion. There is no legal way out of the crisis that doesn't involve working people making huge sacrifices, and any strategy that doesn't involve complete surrender is bound to lead to trouble with the right wing.

Quiet life

This could have some adverse effect on the elections but one thing's for sure, if Labour go into the election having to detain cuts and sackings, we'll get slaughtered. City Party delegates will have to make up their minds what it is they want — a quiet life in the Party or a fight against the Tories.

by PETE KEENLYSIDE

LABOUR PARTY

Two priorities

SOME people believe that the meeting at Bishop Stortford heralded a new commitment to consensus politics by the Left in the Labour Party. It did nothing of the kind.

No permanent deal was entered into at Bishop Stortford. There was no commitment to abstain from a leadership or deputy leadership contest in 1982. There was no agreement to fudge the policy of the party as agreed by Conference.

But there was something. It was a realisation that tactical questions are important — that we have to decide when we campaign to win the leadership of the party, and when this will have the best chance of success.

Also, there was the clear realisation that only the Left could campaign for the policies of the Party amongst the working class, and that this process could not be trusted to the Right — whose

REG RACE, MP, continues the discussion on where the Labour Left stands after Bishop's Stortford

differences with the SDP were, in some cases, marginal.

Winning the next General Election is important because it would be entirely wrong to abandon the working class to another five years of Thatcher or the SDP.

The right wing of the PLP have, however, to recognise three clear truths. First, they must stop the absurd witch-hunt of Peter Tatchell. Second, they must realise that they cannot have a witch-hunt and a truce at the same time — and, therefore, that any attempt to expel

Militant supporters or other 'undesirables' from the Party will be met with a ferocious and united response from the Left which will make the Deputy Leadership contest look like the Chelsea Flower Show.

And third, any concerted attempt by them to fudge conference policy and construct an election manifesto as trivial as that of 1979 will be opposed fiercely.

What should be our objectives for 1982? Two key issues predominate. First, the recapture of a clear Left majority on the NEC, which even now the Right are planning to neutralise as a support of Party policy. Second, we must mount a public campaign amongst the trade unions and the working class in support of unilateral nuclear disarmament, the Alternative Economic Strategy and withdrawal from the EEC.

Southwark defiant

SOUTHWARK Labour Party has refused to make itself a sacrificial lamb on the altar of the Bishop's Stortford deal.

In December the NEC told Southwark's Local Government Committee (LGC: the joint committee of the three constituencies which is responsible for borough-wide affairs) that it must drop its veto on eight sitting councillors. These eight had been excluded by the LGC from the list from which wards can choose their candidates for the May local elections.

Southwark — sore after the NEC's refusal to accept Peter Tatchell as parliamentary candidate for the Bermondsey part of the borough — refused. So the matter came back to the January NEC.

Bishop's Stortford or no Bishop's Stortford, the NEC voted down by 13 votes to 7 a proposal from Les Huckfield that the Party chairperson be authorised to find some mutually acceptable agreement with Southwark.

Judith Hart was sent to

Southwark with a mandate to insist on the reinstatement of the eight. Then the heat was on Southwark to concede in the interests of unity.

The Southwark LGC, meeting on Friday 29th, refused.

They had followed the set procedures properly, as Hart had to admit. And their objection to the eight was not their political views, but their practical record.

Some had refused to support the Labour candidate in last May's GLC election. Some flatly refused to give any promise to carry out Labour Party policy.

The point of electing Labour councillors is to get Labour policies carried out, reasoned the LGC — so how could these eight be endorsed?

The meeting on Friday 29th agreed to endorse four who had won appeals to the Regional LP Executive — but drew the line at four, including present council leader John O'

WHEN the moves for a witch hunt began in the Labour Party, many on the left argued that they were aimed to clear the way for the next government to be an SDP-Labour coalition.

Now the Labour Right is coming out openly with the coalition proposal.

ISTC leader Bill Sims, writing in his union journal, congratulates Shirley Williams on her victory in the Crosby by-election. And he says: 'We cannot write off the SDP, who could well be part of a coalition with Labour...'

This comes shortly after William Rodgers denounced ASLEF and SDP economist James Meade called for a system of compulsory arbitration, making practically all strikes unlawful.

The labour movement — starting with ISTC rank-and-file members should see that this coalition is scotched now!

Grady, who had lost those appeals.

The NEC has not said yet what sanctions against Southwark it proposes. Between now and the February meeting, local Labour Parties need to flood Waltham Road with resolutions saying, 'Hands off Southwark!'

CONFERENCE

Democratise the labour movement!

WHERE: Lanchester Poly, Priory St, Coventry.

WHEN: Saturday March 6, 11 to 4.30

INITIAL SPONSORS: Socialist Organiser Alliance, London Labour Briefing, Oxford Trades Council, Nottingham Labour Briefing, Manchester Labour Left, CPSA British Library Branch, Kings Cross ASLEF, Oxford CATC.

DELEGATES: and observers invited from all labour movement organisations. Individuals also welcome. Credentials £2.

CRECHE: Available.

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

Coventry March 6

PRESS GANG

SENATOR McCarthy missed his vocation. He wasted his time with an inquiry to weed out Reds from the media and entertainment.

If he had really had his heart in stamping out un-American activity, he would have made the programmes himself, saving a lot of time and expense on undesirables.

President Reagan has not made the same mistake. He knows what the public wants and he knows where to turn when the chips are down.

Orson Welles, Frank Sinatra, Margaret Thatcher... these are the names that made Hollywood great. If this all star line-up has a message about Poland, then the world will flock to listen and watch.

How thrilling to hear

Orson Welles reading poetry in the so-called home which turned a million TV viewers into Sherry winos.

Who better to underline our beliefs in basic freedoms than Frank Sinatra - the man who represents all that is best in American show-business.

What must Frank have thought as he woke up to hear that the military had taken over in Poland and how General Jaruzelski had made Solidarnosc an offer it couldn't refuse.

How he wept! How his whole family wept! Frank said to himself, "There's got to be some way to express her concern and horror at such a fate than Thatcher?"

And so a great show was born.

President Reagan thought about digging up John Wayne. The old soldier would have been sorry to miss this one. He imagined a scene with the whole Polish people riding into the sunset singing "Set my people, free".

On second thoughts he turned the idea down. The President did not want anything that might smack of a gimmick.

In any event, the Iron Lady could stand in for the steel duke. There are said to be 3 million Poles whose jobs are at risk in the threatened collapse of the Polish economy. Who better to express her concern and horror at such a fate than Thatcher?

From France President

Mitterrand clamoured to join in. A good chance to live down those Communist ministers and show basic loyalty to NATO. After all, Western statesmanship crosses those trivial barriers of party division. What's "socialism" when one has the chance to share the screen with the leaders of the Free World?

There is however a sad side to this. Poland could not watch. The Russians jammed it. And Britain. Poor old Britain could not watch. Some ancient befuddled clauses in their TV regulations. Or was it? More likely those pinkies who riddle the British media.

The US knew how to get round it. A special resolution

in Congress circumvented an anachronistic rule which stated that TV could not show programmes made by government agencies. Who invented such anti-democratic rules in any case?

Of course it couldn't happen here! It's brash for British tastes. Admirable in its way, of course, but we don't have that... how shall I put it... direct relationship between the media and the politicians.

It could be, after all, that the brash Reagan propaganda is less effective than its British equivalent. It is true that the British press does not have Frank Sinatra. But it does do it its way.

by Patrick Spilling

Deportation threat

PARVEEN AKHTAR is a working class Asian woman who came to Britain on 28 August 1981 to marry her

fiance Ali Musa Khan, who is settled here. She has been allowed leave to remain in this country only until 7 February 1982 on the grounds that her husband cannot "support or accommodate her without recourse to public funds".

This is a flagrant violation of the democratic human rights of black women. The state is saying that black women cannot live in this country unless their husbands can support them "without recourse to public funds".

Intimidation

Two coaches were diverted by police telling them there were fascists ahead. But the minibus travellers were not told.

At the Stonebridge roundabout, they were boxed in by a coach and minibus. 50 or 60 fascists piled out, threw bricks and smoke bombs at the coach, tried to grab people from it, and attempted to push the vehicle over.

Eventually the minibus got away, but several of the people in it needed stitches and other medical treatment.

The Parveen Akhtar Defence Committee has been formed to wage a mass struggle to force the Home Office to allow Parveen to stay here free from any harassment or intimidation, and has called a demonstration in her support from Small Heath Park, Birmingham, on Saturday 6 February, 1982, starting at 2pm.

The committee is also calling a picket of the Immigration Offices at Birmingham Airport, on Friday 5 February 1982.

The Defence Committee can be contacted c/o 477 Coventry Road, Small Heath, Birmingham 10.



by Gerry Byrne

THE Republic of Ireland, not widely noted for its progressive social legislation, has just outlawed corporal punishment in schools. This leaves Britain as the last bastion of legitimate child abuse in Europe.

To add weight to the mounting pressure to end this disgrace comes an appalling tale from Cornwall.

THE government are offering grants to anti-abortion groups such as Life, provided they tell women about the availability of abortion and of the existence of abortion referral agencies.

But Life was specifically set up, under the wing of anti-abortion groups like SPUC to counsel pregnant women against having abortions. If Life do decide to

Parents are calling for Keith Joseph to order an enquiry into a primary school where they claim children, including those with disabilities, are regularly publicly beaten.

In the latest case the headmaster caned a "quiet, gentle" nine-year-old girl who suffers from epilepsy, in front of her classmates for whispering in class!

take up the government's offer and cover themselves by making mention of the availability of abortion as an option, then you can be sure it will be done in such a loaded way as to be worse than useless.

This move by the DHSS is part of a general departmental tightening up on abortion and sex education.

Derry deaths: not reckless but ruthless

EASTER Sunday last year two Derry youths were run down and killed by two army landrovers driven at speed into a crowd during a minor riot over the hunger strikes.

The first news reports (on the BBC's World Service) carried an eyewitness account from a BBC reporter of the Landrovers being driven downhill at 50 to 60 mph into a fleeing crowd. Later news reports dropped this account and described the incident as a "traffic accident". Now the trial of the two Army drivers has just ended in Belfast with a "not guilty" verdict for causing death by reckless driving and aiding and abetting it.

This, despite several eye witness reports, including a very detailed one from Paul Clements, the BBC reporter, that the crowd was fleeing, and contrary to Army claims, that no stones were being thrown at the vehicle.

Indeed it would have been physically impossible

to aim at the Landrovers which were round the corner from the body of the crowd.

Most alarming though, are the sworn statements given to the NCCL by two people who had tuned into army radio messages that shows that there was a clear intent to draw the crowd

into the path of the landrovers and that the vehicles were held back until the crowd was a sitting target.

And the final exchange after the boys were killed: "We've got a doggo here."

"Good show, good show."

Times a-changing

FREEDOM of speech and comment is a subject close to the heart of the Times. They've been facing certain distribution difficulties due to being owned by the same Rupert Murdoch whose Sun newspaper has been carrying scurrilous attacks on skiving railway workers.

In an editorial last week they fulminated against those intolerant folk who stamp on ideas they don't

like. Including, apparently, High Court judges. Whoops! In the next edition of the same day's paper the offending phrase about High Court judges had been deleted.

Freedom of comment, it seems, doesn't even apply to unfortunate Times leader writers. We await further denunciations from this defender of freedom of newspaper editors who stamp down on opinions they don't share.

Fighting for union democracy

New leaders needed for ISTC

by Ray Davies (Llanwern Action Group)

OUR Llanwern Action Group was formed at the end of the steel strike by a group of steelworkers who were not prepared to accept defeat. Despite the betrayal by our national trade union leaders we recognised the need for strong local leadership which could cut across individual trade union boundaries.

We were also conscious of the militancy that existed amongst rank and file steelworkers on the jobs issue during the strike. We are determined to reflect that militancy in whatever we do and wherever we go in the fightback for jobs.

When, oh when, are we going to have a fightback against redundancies? Unemployment and dole queues are obscenities of Toryism and the society they protect.

These obscenities are the soul destroying instruments of degradation. To the redundant steelworkers they can mean poverty, misery, depression and premature death. There is no such thing as a 'future' for our unemployed, only a heart rending emptiness and a future life without purpose.

Again the Tory henchmen at BSC are preparing for major



plant closures. Mr Bill Sirs and our Executive can be reliably expected to lead us once more into the blind alley of despair.

The pattern is always the same:

1) A closure announcement by BSC.

2) The formation of a works action committee.

3) Declaration by the union leaders that they will fight to

the bitter end.

4) Marches and demonstrations to Parliament.

5) The cold bureaucratic hands of the steel unions divide the workforce into their individual groups, where isolated and dispirited they agree to accept redundancy payments.

This has been the rough pattern at nearly every major steel closure over the last four

years. We have lost 52,000 jobs in steel without one day's strike action. The trade union leadership picks up the militancy of places like Shotton, Corby, Consett and Llanwern and sends it in a direction that leads it nowhere at all. Then at the end of the day they blame the workers for selling their own jobs.

The national trade union leadership has reduced its membership to a grovelling shambles, who pray every week that the next major plant to close will not be theirs.

This is why, as a member of the Llanwern Action Group, I believe that our only salvation lies in changing our union, forming one united steel union, well structured and accountable.

To this end, I will fight to introduce within my own union measures to:

a) Elect trade union delegates who are accountable to their own works/region, not to the various trade sections up and down the country.

b) All full time officials to be elected for fixed terms of office.

c) Executive Council seats should be allocated by proportional representation on the basis of the numerical membership of each Division, and voting should be done by the Division for which the candidate is standing; in other words, all Executive Council seats should be

Divisional seats.

d) All candidates for the Executive Council should set out a statement of their beliefs and circulate this to the voting membership in each Division and funds should be made available to them for this purpose.

e) The president to be elected for a fixed period.

f) Our national conference to be the main policy making body for the union.

These constitutional changes would be the start of making our union more accountable, and therefore more attractive to those of us who hunger for one effective industrial trade union for iron and steel.

Weak, divided trade unions are a barrier to action against the Tories. Unless we get grass roots level demand to restructure and amalgamate our unions, then there will be no membership for our leaders to lead.

Enhance

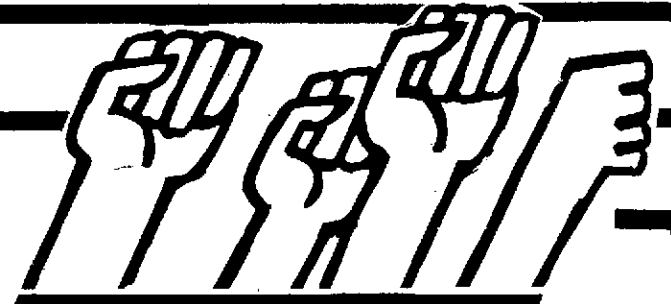
The reforms we are proposing if implemented would bring about something of a revolution in our union, and we believe that this revolution is necessary for the union to survive. With a rapidly declining membership and consequent financial problems, we need to revise our structure to meet the increasing demands being put on the structure by the membership.

The history of our union "Men of Steel" makes many statements in its opening introduction on the subject of leadership. We think that these still have validity, but the status of leaders is enlarged if they are seen to be elected in as democratic a way as possible and if their decisions are put into effect in as democratic a way as possible.

We believe that the democracy in our union can be improved along the lines we have suggested. The effect of this will be to enhance the feeling of solidarity in our union and increase the membership's affinity to the organisation by giving them greater status in the formation of the policy of the union. This will increase membership participation and sense of responsibility to the organisation.

An organisation distant from those whom it represents is a weak organisation and one which, ultimately, will cease to exist. I believe that our proposals will end sectionalism in the union and galvanise the membership.

We believe that they will enhance the status of the Executive Council and all full-time officials by making them more accountable and representative. We believe that this will raise the status of the membership by making them the originators of policy in the union.



World News

INTERNATIONAL ACTION

Anti-Apartheid leaders fear independent unions

FAMILIAR FACES looked down at us from the podium of the Labour Party/Anti Apartheid Movement's third joint conference, last weekend.

They told us how awful apartheid is, with an inexhaustible fund of shock-horror that the apartheid regime should act like an apartheid regime — but much less about how to fight apartheid.

The Labour Party's new spokesperson on Southern Africa, Stanley Clinton Davies, reaffirmed our commitment to isolate South Africa in the eyes of the world community and to impose UN economic sanctions. He seemed to think that it is now in the interest of the British government to tighten the screws on South Africa (despite the fact that the same multi-nationals which dominate the economy here also do so there).

He ended on the ritual note that "ritual denunciations are no use", and that "resolute action is called for".

An occasional embarrassed aside was made about the less-than-resolute record of the last Labour government on following Conference decisions on South Africa. And no mention of how the next Labour government is going to be persuaded to do more than mouth ritual denunciation.

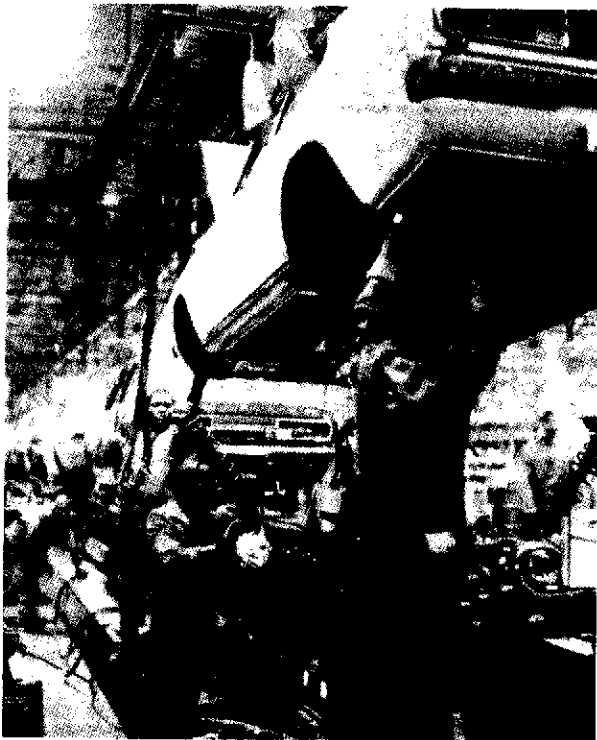
The real debates took place in the workshops. The issue which dominated the ones we went to was our relation with the independent non-racial trade unions.

Thoroughly sectarian

When we asked about ANC's attitude to them, we were told by Ruth Mompoti of the ANC that she recognised the diversity of the trade union movement in South Africa but that it would be dangerous to reveal the ANC's connections with it (this wasn't of course the question).

SACTU representatives were more belligerent. Ronnie Press said that the main task of the trade unions is that of 'unity', and that this means 'unity with the liberation movement' (ANC-SACTU), and that "we cannot have trade unions which are not in favour of the liberation movement".

Beneath the rhetoric of



South African car factory: the same multinationals as here

unity there actually lies here a thoroughly sectarian attitude towards those union bodies, like FOSATU with its 70,000 black members, which have been waging militant struggles but which are both organis-

ationally and politically distinct from the ANC and SACTU.

Later Andrew Molotsane of SACTU put the boot in further by saying that if Ruth Mompoti had revealed ANC's connections with

particular trade unions, she would be "dealt with when the ANC came to power". He dredged up an old allegation originally directed at the Militant's South African Labour Education Project, about the theft of documents from SACTU, seemingly to smear all opposition.

Beneath these wild and irrelevant attacks, there lies a refusal to engage in debate with those who want to broaden the terms of the solidarity movement.

Despise

There were clear rumblings of discontent with this attitude from the floor, which reflect widespread discontent with the leadership of AAM from within as well as without the movement.

Our own view is that the South African liberation movement there exists a longstanding nationalist distrust of trade unions. Outwardly it is because ordinary trade unions are too reformist and only political unions like the exiled SACTU are revolutionary enough. Inwardly they fear the growth of an independent working-class movement, and despise the day-to-day demands of the workers.

Demo planned for May 8

THE PROVISIONAL IRA has offered an amnesty to all informers who declare themselves before February 13. The normal penalty for informers is death, but anyone coming forward under the amnesty will be allowed to continue to live in Republican areas.

OWEN CARRON MP and Provisional Sinn Fein leader Danny Morrison have been expelled from the USA after being charged with attempting to enter illegally. They were made to find \$10,000 each in bail and ordered to appear in court again on March 8.

They were arrested on January 21 when they tried

to enter the US under false names to attend the annual gala dinner of NORAD. They face a maximum penalty of a \$10,000 fine and five years in prison.

'TROOPS out of Ireland' and 'self-determination for the Irish people' will be the slogans of a demonstration called by an ad hoc committee for May 8, in London.

The Labour Committee on Ireland, the Indian Workers' Association, and the Troops Out Movement are among those backing this commemoration of the death on hunger strike of Bobby Sands MP.

GM talks fail

THE plans by the leadership of the US carworkers' union UAW to offer wage cuts to General Motors have been thwarted.

After demonstrations by the "UAW Locals [branches] opposed to concessions" group, the talks between the UAW and GM broke down last week. The UAW leaders said GM was demanding too big wage cuts.

The UAW proposed that wage cuts should be passed on in price cuts. GM must have decided in the end that there were better ways of beating down the workforce

—because they are making the price cuts anyway!

Immediately after the talks broke down they announced price cuts averaging 10%, in an effort to restore drooping sales.

Scheme

But the UAW leaders are nothing daunted. UAW President Doug Fraser said that Ford had a "better attitude" than GM.

UAW has just started talks with Ford, who are demanding wage cuts in return for a profit-sharing scheme.

Farce of Turkish show trial

From the Turkish Solidarity Campaign

All activity by Turkey's Revolutionary Trade Union Confederation (DISK) was banned following the coup of 12 September 1980.

Immediately the military began arresting DISK leaders and shop stewards. On 14 December 1981 15 months after their arrest, 52 leaders of DISK appeared on trial for the first time.

The military prosecutor is demanding the death penalty for all of them. In his indictment he announced that preparations are under way for the trials of 2,000 more DISK members.

There were 75 lawyers to defend the DISK leaders. In his speech the prosecutor

said. On the third day of the trial the judges again dismissed two lawyers. In protest the entire defence walked out and since then have not attended the trials.

The second day the military prosecutor issued the following press statement:

"This is a very important trial. Both Turkish and world public opinion have a great interest in the trial. Everybody is watching us. We must finish it without any trouble. We are adopting the 'war conditions' regulations to finish this trial quickly. This trial will finish soon because there are not any witnesses, and the number of accused is limited. Immediately after this trial we will open the trials for democratic organisations and Republican People's Party MPs. The trials for DISK-affiliated trade unions will follow them"

Searches

An atmosphere of terror pervades the trial. Thousands of soldiers surround the court, and road blocks have been set up throughout a radius of several miles.

People being allowed to attend the trial are severely limited in number, and are subjected to strip searches regardless of their sex, before entering the court room, as are the lawyers. Despite all this, several observers from abroad are attending the trial, including ones from the European Trade Union Confederation, the ICFU, the Greek Trade Union Confederation, the International Democratic Lawyers' Association, the World Workers Confederation and Amnesty International.

Expel

Yet despite this, Labour MEP Tom Urwin, chairman of the Political Commission of the European Assembly who was an observer in the trial for one day, has recommended to the European Parliament 'further consideration' of the proposal to expel Turkey from the European Community.

The Turkey Solidarity Campaign sees its duty to defend DISK and calls for an immediate response from the British Labour and trade union movement.

Save the lives of these people! Raise the issue in your union branch, trades council or Labour Party branch.

Campaign for sponsorship of the Democratic Platform speakers tour organised by the Turkish Solidarity Campaign from March 24 to April 3.



Advertisement

Workers Socialist Review 1

50p

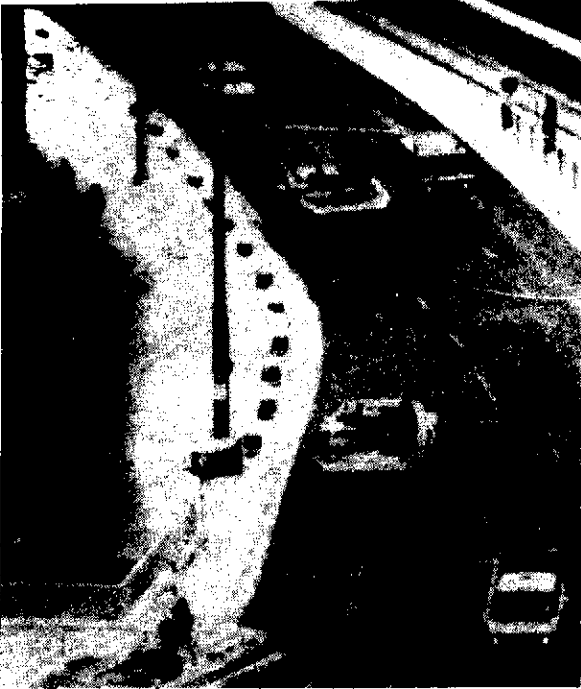
SAVE ST. GEORGES

'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.

CONFERENCE

'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.

POLAND



Resistance to price increases

THE FIRST major fightback against the Polish junta since the initial resistance to martial law two months ago erupted in Gdansk last weekend.

Over 200 people have been arrested, and 14 injured (eight of these cops) in clashes between students and secondary school pupils and the police.

The youths distributed anti-government leaflets and demonstrated outside the Lenin shipyard as one of the shifts was clocking off. The ensuing battles with the police seem to have lasted for over six hours.

As a result, martial law in Gdansk has been extended for an extra two hours, from 8pm to 5am. The use of private cars has been banned. Telephone services have been cut again, and various events have been cancelled.

These clashes were reported in the Polish media, although with a 24 hour delay.

Further unrest is possible as higher prices for basic goods are introduced.

Price increases have been the most explosive issue in Poland over the past decade. They provoked the 1970-71 riots and strikes in the Baltic which left hundreds of workers dead, and the 1976 riots in Radom from which the KSS-KOR developed as a defence committee for persecuted worker militants.

The July 1980 price rises, and the immediate strike wave in response, were the direct prelude to the August occupations and the founding of Solidarnosc.

Although the bureaucracy, and western economists, argue that price rises are necessary so as to introduce greater economic balance, the main reason for the increases is to place foodstuffs out of the reach of the consumer and divert them overseas as exports.

Increased exports, particularly in traditional areas such as meat products, are necessary if Poland is to repay its huge debts to the west.

Repayments will amount to \$ 1,500 billion every quarter for the coming year.

Solidarnosc

Labour rally for March 9

THE LABOUR Party will be holding a Polish solidarity rally, with speakers from the labour movement and possibly Solidarnosc militants, in March.

The provisional date and venue is Tuesday March 9, 7.30 at Central Hall, Westminster.

After discussions between Socialist Organiser and other signatories to the Labour Movement Solidarity Appeal (including Socialist Challenge and the EESC) we have agreed to work together to establish local campaigns, where possible based on

local CLPs or Trades Councils.

These labour movement campaigns should establish contacts with the Polish Solidarity Campaign of a friendly nature, allowing the maximum degree of cooperation.

In Coventry a Polish Solidarity Committee is being set up on Friday February 5. Plans for a meeting with a Solidarnosc speaker, from which a labour movement based committee will emerge, are also proceeding in Northampton.

Such initiatives should be extended throughout the

country.

The Labour Fund Appeal put out by London Labour Briefing, which we publish here, could be a way of getting the ball rolling in your area. The money collected will be going to Polish workers' organisations in Poland, or to the Solidarnosc TU Working Group in the UK.

Invite speakers from this trade union group to visit factories, union branches, Labour Parties, or other meetings. Contact: c/o 64 Philbeach Gardens, Earls Court, London SW5, tel. 01-373 3492).

World News

THE POLISH workers' struggle for democratic control of industry and the right to a free trade union has been attacked many times. Workers have been killed in Posnan in 1956, Gdansk in 1970, Radom in 1976 and now in Silesia in 1981.

Each time the Polish working class has rebuilt its movement even stronger, eventually exploding in the historic Polish August of 1980 and the creation of the 10 million strong NSZZ Solidarnosc.

This appeal for funds for Solidarnosc is going out to the British labour and trade union movement to aid the rebuilding of Solidarnosc

and to help the families of those interned, imprisoned and killed by the WRON. Every penny donated will go to Solidarnosc. We hope every union branch, every Trades Council, every Labour Party branch will support this appeal with a donation.

KEN LIVINGSTONE (GLC)

ERIC HEFFER, MP

TONY BENN, MP

RON KEATING (NUPE)

JEREMY CORBYN

ANDY HARRIS (LLP Exec)

— all in personal capacity.

Donations to: Labour Pol-

and Solidarity Fund, c/o

Coop Bank, 110 Leman St,

London E1.

Solidarnosc

DUARTE'S MURDEROUS REIGN OF TERROR IN EL SALVADOR

While Reagan spouts hypocrisy about Poland, he is propping up a bloody junta in El Salvador. Gerry Byrne reports.

"ABOUT 45 minutes further down the road, we entered another small town. Here the houses were also gutted and looted, but the overwhelming initial impression was of the sickly, sweet smell of decomposing bodies. This was Mozote."

Mozote was a village in the FMLN (guerrilla) held Morazan province of El Salvador. In early December, government troops of the elite, US-trained Atlacatl Brigade launched an offensive on the area. Furina Amaya, a 38-year old mother, who talked to reporters a month later, is the only living human being to survive from Mozote.

Perhaps a dozen other people from the surrounding villages and countryside survived, including two children who watched their families being massacred before their eyes.

Rufina Amaya described to reporters how the whole village, men, women and children, were rounded up in the village square in front of the church and taken off and shot. Reporters describe

If the working people of El Salvador had seen the show, they would have found it pretty sick, too.

The next day after its indignant TV protests against the Kremlin's role in Poland, the Reagan administration announced a trebling of military aid to the junta in El Salvador.

The same day, January 28, that this report of the massacre appeared in the Guardian (reprinted from the Washington Post), President Reagan signed a document certifying that the El Salvador junta were making "concerted and significant efforts" to respect human rights and were in "substantial control" of the security forces.

Rufina Amaya confirmed that the troops who murdered her husband and four of her children, were indeed acting under orders and were in constant radio contact with presumably their superiors.

"I saw the lieutenant then. He was personally machine-gunning people... An order arrived from a Lt. Caceras to Lt Ortega to go ahead and kill the children too. A soldier said, 'Lieutenant, somebody here says he won't kill children'. 'Who's the sonofabitch who said that?' the lieutenant answered. 'I am going to kill him.'"

Because of its concerted efforts to respect human rights, the Salvadorian government will get its \$65 million emergency military equipment to finish off the job it began at Mozote.

As Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Mr Thomas Enders says:

"The decisive battle for Central America is under way in El Salvador. If, after Nicaragua, El Salvador is captured by a violent minority, who in Central America would not live in fear?"

He is right. Except only that the "violent minority" — the Duarte junta — thanks

to US arms and aid, is still just about in control, despite the loss of half its airforce. And the US wishes to ensure that that violent minority who ordered the assassination of babes-in-arms at Mozote retains control. Not, of course, for the professed reasons.

"We must use our assistance to help El Salvador control violence, make land reform work, develop a democratic process, and bring murderers to justice."

This is the almost surreal double-think of US foreign policy. But the real reasons slip out:

"How long would it be before major strategic interests—the Panama Canal, sea lanes, oil supplies—were at risk?"

And there you have it: you may tolerate mass murder, the gunning down of children, you may deny or falsify it, you may even justify it as "bringing down the level of violence", but the one thing that is unimaginable, the ultimate unthinkable, is to put your oil supplies at risk.

Suslov: bloodstained creature of Stalinism

by Alexis Carras

IN THE closed and venerable circle which makes up the Russian Politbureau, Mikhail Suslov, who died last week, held a special place.

He was the sole remaining figure within the Russian gerontocracy who had achieved eminence already under Stalin—and whose political career began during the early civil war years. He joined the Communist Party in 1921.

From a 19 year old recruit to the Revolution in 1921 to the position of "King-maker" in the Politbureau, the man who declined the General Secretaryship of the Communist Party; elevating instead the Brezhnev/Kosygin/Podgorny trio, is a very long way. Much water must have flowed under the bridge, and in Suslov's case it was stained red with the blood of his victims.

Unflinching

Suslov excelled himself in the "organisational work" in the 1930s: the euphemism

for the purges and trials which decimated millions.

He was an inspector in the Communist Party's Internal Control Commission and already at this stage his particular inclination for resolution of ideological issues was coming to the fore.

The extermination of the Trotskyist left and the Bukharinite right in which he personally participated added another feather to the cap of this committed and glacial young man. Soon he was transferred to more demanding tasks—but even in this challenge Mikhail Suslov excelled himself by ensuring the "pacification" of Lithuania in the mid 40s, after three years of Nazi occupation. Thousands perished and one in ten of the Lithuanian population was deported to Siberia. So hated has Suslov remained in Lithuania that the one-time he dared to set foot in the Republic in 1960, bloody riots ensued.

Unflinching service was repaid by entrance to the Central Committee and sub-

sequently to the Politbureau. From then on Suslov, bar a short demotion under Khrushchev in the mid-50s from the Politbureau, was central to the entire Soviet leadership.

Suslov was the perfect, although destroying many of the conquests of the October revolution and raising to power a new bureaucratic elite, pretended to be the natural and beneficent conclusion of 1917.

Mortuary

Suslov as ideological arbiter, provided the political cement keeping the ruling elite together. The "eminence grise"—a latter day Delphic Oracle arbitrating on disputes with the notable difference that little of what he produced had anything to do with the future and the USSR's ever increasing problems domestically and internationally, and everything to do with maintaining a strict contin-

uity with the hideous Stalinist past. He was the guardian of the Dead Sea Scrolls of Soviet "Marxism" and in priestly fashion banished, excommunicated and showered anathemas on the critics of the Soviet elite, critics who emerged increasingly even with the "socialist commonwealth".

If all these "political" methods failed, Suslov was never shy in recommending the ultimate arbitration armed force, for Hungary, Czechoslovakia and in April this year with his trip to Warsaw, urging the PUWP to destroy Solidarnosc. After the coup, Suslov urged the cleansing of the PUWP through mass purges.

Suslov was described once by the British ambassador to Moscow, when giving one of his very rare smiles—"like the glint of moonlight on the brass handle of a coffin."

A fitting description for this henchman ruling in the giant mortuary that is Stalinist Russia.

With Suslov's death—the main personality who was to

negotiate the treacherous transition after the ever-approaching demise of Brezhnev and the new "collective leadership" has been removed. His authority could perhaps have assured some orderly investiture of power onto younger shoulders.

Desperate

What threatens now is perhaps an inglorious and destructive scramble for power in the Politbureau. The rats are aligning themselves for the coming contest a contest which may well sap their ability to rule in their time-honoured way. In that case, entirely new possibilities will open up for the Soviet working class and peasantry.

A desperate desire for change from below an unwillingness to continue living as before will be complemented with an inability by the elite to continue ruling as before. These are the preconditions for revolutionary change.



Women in struggle



Childcare campaign must focus on action

by Mary-Ann Todd and Anne McKinley

Good motions - but no real influence

by Anne Connell



THE resolutions passed on Saturday at the London Women's AGM—most of them unanimously, and all of them supported by the platform—were enough to gladden the heart of any feminist and any socialist.

We called for a properly-run crèche to be provided at every London Labour Party meeting, and emergency resolutions on the new abortion notification forms, calling for immediate Parliamentary and extra-Parliamentary action, were enthusiastically and unanimously supported.

Motions on positive discrimination, anti-sexist education, changes in social security benefits and support for the Women's Right to Work demonstration received similar treatment.

The debate on a group of resolutions dealing with violence against women was at a particularly high standard. The main resolution called for a package of measures including improved street lighting, an investigation of police training and conduct and a call upon the new GLC Police Committee to instigate a thorough survey on violence against women in the capital.

It also requested British Rail and London Transport to re-introduce "women only" carriages late at night. It was this last demand which caused disagreement.

Many women—including incidentally, me—who had initially had a "gut reaction" in favour of this had clearly not fully thought the matter through.

Target

The problem with "women only" carriages is that they are virtually impossible to enforce, can actually be seen as a capitulation on the part of women in the face of male violence and the old, small, BR "women only" compartments actually provided sitting targets.

Moreover, the very existence of women only carriages would probably mean that any women who did not choose to sit in one would be considered fair game.

In the end, the feeling of the meeting was so clear, that the floor vociferously insisted on voting down (unanimously) this particular aspect of the resolution and supporting (unanimously)

the remainder of it.

All good, soul-stirring stuff. Now, of course, comes the "but". The London Women's AGM, like all other sections of the Labour Party's Women's Organisation, has about as much power as a fart in a force nine gale.

Kathy Riley, speaking from the platform about her experience of the London Regional Executive Committee, outlined the Executive's attitude to the Women's Organisation by relaying some choice quotes: "What's wrong with sexist advertising? Some of us like it, you know!"

"If women want to have babies, I don't see what it's got to do with us."

We were informed that resolutions passed at last year's Women's AGM had to wait ten months before even being considered. The full-time officer in charge of the London Labour Women's Organisation is not only a man, but one that is not exactly renowned for his deep appreciation of the subtleties of feminism.

Moving a resolution calling for more information on the Women's Organisation to be made available, a sister

from Hampstead women's section related a Kafkaesque tale of bureaucratic mystification which resulted in no less than seven months and half a ton of mail's delay before they were officially recognised as existing.

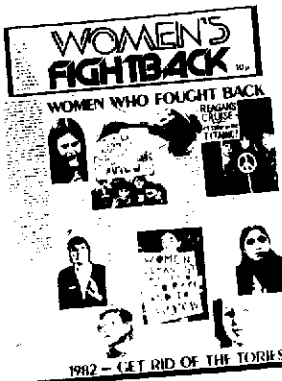
Given this absurd situation, the organisational changes demanded at the AGM were, perhaps, the most important of all. If they are implemented (and it's a big "if") then the London Labour Women's Organisation has a real chance of becoming a radical, campaigning force.

The extent of the growing support for this kind of organisation was evidenced by a lunch-time fringe meeting, called by Women's Fightback, which attracted well over half of the delegates to the conference and which overflowed out into the corridor.

Quiet

Its theme was action, in the light of all the attacks that are being made on working women, and speakers from St. Mary's Hospital Defence Committee, the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign and the Women's Right to Work Action Committee demonstrated on just how broad a front the fightback is needed and is starting to take place.

Next year's London Labour Women's Committee contains several sisters from Women's Fightback, so the committee at any rate, will not be retreating into a quiet backwater for the next twelve months.



The latest Women's Fightback — 10p plus postage from 41 Ellington St, London N7

CONCERN that the National Child Care Campaign is becoming too research orientated and preoccupied with future plans for utopian schemes was evident at its second Annual General Meeting last weekend.

In reality all around us the prospect is the destruction of existing child care facilities which need to be defended.

Yet amongst the six workshops initially proposed, no less than five were on the type of care we should aim at, while only one centred on defending provision. And it took pressure from the floor of the conference to persuade the organisers to add a workshop on the Labour Party.

Indeed it is principally the Campaign's Labour group which has tried to link the theoretical discussions to practical policies, submitting a successful resolution to Labour conference committing it to provision of childcare in the way we want to see it.

The group had also submitted evidence to Labour's Women's Rights Study Group, with proposals for the manifesto, and in several London boroughs, asked prospective Labour candidates to answer questions on childcare. These questions had revealed a profound ignorance among most candidates—who were vigorously enlightened!

Emerge

In the workshop on defence of childcare facilities the most positive thing to emerge was the setting up of a group to campaign actively in defence of childcare and offer advice and experience in opposing the more difficult types of cuts—frozen posts, changed ratios, decreasing full time places, etc.

The group will coordinate work, give support and, on invitation, send speakers with experience to areas where cuts in childcare are taking place.

It was felt that unless this vital work is done the NCCC would lose its membership and impetus. There was agreement to produce a general leaflet asking for a monitoring of cuts taking place, for the NCCC to be informed, and offering a check-list of what needs to be done.

Delegates also felt it necessary to have an updating of the pamphlet Nurseries: How and Why to Fight for Them, as many had found it useful when faced with cuts in their areas.

The Campaign generally is hampered by lack of funds, and many felt that this was one field where the unions should help. They should fund leaflets and hopefully the production of a comprehensive 'Guide to Defending Child Care Provision'.

State

Although many are unhappy with state provision it was pointed out from the Leicester Nursery Campaign—which had staged an 11-week victorious occupation—that what we want for the future is tied in with defending provision.

Many parents have involved themselves in the Leicester occupation and changed aspects of the state nursery of Beal Street play centre, which had continued afterwards.

The Labour Party workshop was started by Reg Race MP who stressed that as far as the policy making machinery of the Labour Party was concerned, conference resolutions were of very little significance.

The resolutions go to the various sub-committees of the NEC, which are the real powerhouses and the only channels through which 'policy' gets pushed through to the party programme.

Model

These committees are meeting in the next couple of months to decide on what goes in and what stays out of Labour's manifesto and programme.

It is therefore essential that CLPs and other groups put pressure on these committees. A suggested model letter to the NEC was drawn up.

"This CLP (affiliated trade union branch) calls on the National Executive Committee to ensure that the aim of a comprehensive, flexible, free and democratically controlled childcare system funded by the state (in line with the resolution carried at last year's Party conference and which is now Party policy) should be a central feature of Labour's programme and the ensuing General Election Manifesto."

It was also stated that the composition of these sub-committees must be changed as at the moment they function very much on an 'old boy' network.

Applications from women members are treated with favour, especially on the women's rights sub-committee and any women wishing to be on it should

write to Joyce Gould to be proposed to the committee.

It was also argued that the NCCC should send a delegation to Joan Lester (the new national Women's Rights Officer) to try and change her attitude to women and children, which by all accounts leaves a lot to be desired.

The other points which came out strongly in this workshop was the role of Labour in initiating savage attacks on nursery provision.

Campaigners from Tower Hamlets and Coventry spoke about their fight to save nursery facilities from the cuts of local Labour councillors, fights equally as tough as those against any Tory council.

It was, however, generally agreed that in order to provide the funding of universal childcare a revolutionary change would need to take place not only in the government but in the whole of society.

Attitudes towards parents, family, women and not least of all children would need to be radically changed. Existing structures are clearly totally inadequate and linked to a set of values that fit a "woman's place" in the home to provide single-handedly in most cases the care and upbringing of bored and frustrated children.

A lot more fighting spirit is needed in the NCCC if it is going to contribute to such a change in our present system.

Has your trade union or Labour Party branch affiliated the National Child Care Campaign? Contact NCCC, 17 Victoria Park Square, London E2. Tel: 01-981 1221.

NATIONAL ORGANISING CONFERENCE

on a WOMENS RIGHT TO WORK DEMONSTRATION

FEB 20 '82

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON UNION
MALET STREET, LONDON, W.C.1

A Conference is being held in London to organise nationally and locally around the fight for A Woman's Right to Work. Workshops focus on Training and Education, Women in the Home, Women in Finance, Women's Rights at Work and Women's

Unemployment, as well as how to organise locally for a demonstration planned for June 5.

More details and credentials (£3.00 waged, £1.50 unwaged) from 181, Richmond Road, London E8.

Women's Fightback Trade union conference

Time and again women trade unionists have come forward to fight the Tory onslaught on their rights and living standards. And each time they have run up against the limitations or outright treachery of the existing bureaucratic leaders.

And they have found a movement which has for decades ignored the issues and problems faced by women.

The March 27 Trade Union conference called by Women's Fightback is designed as a focus for a movement to change the unions and challenge their present leadership.

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 crèche. Workshops on various topics under main groups: Pay; public sector and the cuts; jobs; fighting sexism; racism and the Third World.

The conference fee is £3.50 (£2 for low-waged or unwaged non-delegates). Credentials from 41 Ellington Street, London N7.

MARCH 27

OPEN THE BOOKS AT LEYLAND VEHICLES!



by NOEL HIBBERT

The strikes at the Leyland Truck plants in Lancashire and Scotland against Edwardes' 'rationalisation' plan coincide with the emergence of a new international division of labour in the world truck market.

Indeed most bourgeois economists are predicting that by the mid eighties we will see a significant rise in world demand for trucks as Third World countries undergo industrialisation drives.

Conglomerates

The future period will be characterised by a number of basic features: a colossal expansion in the volume of investment in new technology, plant and machinery; a world-wide regroupment of productive operations, by the big companies, into concentrated assembly plants; a smaller variety of products with interchangeable components; a decimation of those companies unable to compete with the giants; and further, and most importantly for the workers, the introduction of a new framework of industrial relations and control over trade unions.

A vast new level of cut-throat competition is emerging on a global scale which will lead to the complete disintegration of some firms (Chrysler Talbot in the UK) combined with mergers between Euro-Japanese conglomerates (e.g. HINO Trucks) leading to half-a-dozen outfits dominating the international scene.

A drift of investment aid production from the West to the East (Asia, Latin America, Africa) will lead, as the Financial Times said recently, to:

"A whole new gamut of joint ventures, collaborative technology exchange deals, both between European firms who were previously competitors, and between these new conglomerates and Japanese companies attempting to prise their way into the European manufacturing scene."

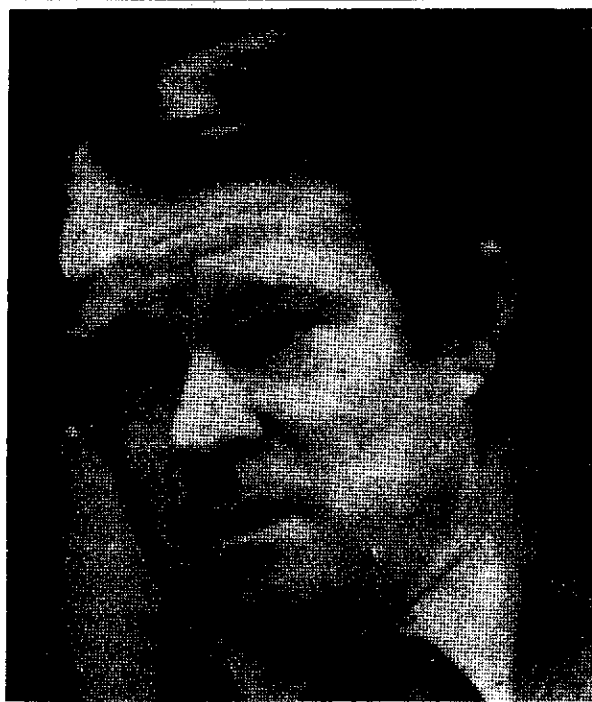
If this analysis is correct, and there is no reason to doubt that it is, then the two indigenously owned UK truck companies, ERF and Leyland Vehicles, have a bleak future indeed.

Moreover, five of the seven UK truck companies are owned by US multinationals and if the logic of Edwardes' Corporate Plan is carried out then either the UK will cease to have a heavy vehicle industry at all - or will simply be an assembly base for International Harvester or Cummins.

Proverbial

The evidence is at hand to prove this. LV management intends to cease engine production at Leyland and buy Harvester's DT 466 engines from the USA and also from International Harvester's large factory at Enasa in Spain.

Similarly, the Cummins engine is to be bought from the US and only assembled in the UK. By "outsourcing" these key items of engineering, Edwardes is destroying not only the UK manufacturing base but also the irreplaceable generation of



skills that goes with it.

It is accepted by everyone that there has been a slump in the world market over the past two years, but compare Edwardes' strategy with that of Cummins, the US giant.

Cummins lost \$6m in 1981 yet they have launched a phenomenal investment programme of £150m per year, in building plant and machinery in expectation of the upturn in the mid-80s.

Indeed this company is backed by the oil giant TENECO Inc which has poured money into trucks.

In contrast the Tory government use North Sea oil revenues to pay tax hand-outs to the rich and unemployment benefit to over 3 million rather than use the money to create jobs.

What is more, the transnational companies are competing with each other to launch the "World Truck" (big brother of "World Car").

Ford and General Motors in particular are far advanced with this project.

Using micro-technology telecommunications systems based in Michigan, General Motors bosses will be able to shuffle standardised designs and components around the world from plant to plant like the proverbial poker player shuffles cards around a table.

The development of the World Truck puts workers everywhere at a great disadvantage, for it gives the employers the facility to build models with components from anywhere in the world while being able to isolate industrial action in particular plants. For the unions it places international leadership at the top of the agenda.

Part and parcel of this redivision of the world market among a smaller number of economic juggernauts, will be the introduction of American-style trade union practices into European plants.

Just recently the President of the United Auto Workers, Doug Fraser,

MAJOR WEST EUROPEAN TRUCK PRODUCERS

	Production location	Output 1979
Daimler Benz	Germany	123,000
Iveco (Fiat)	Italy, France	75,000
Ford	Britain, Holland	45,000
Renavet	France	35,000
Bedford (GM)	Britain	30,000
Volvo	Sweden	28,000
Leyland	Britain	23,000
Saab-Scania	Sweden	22,000
Man	Germany	18,000
DAF (IH)	Holland	14,000
Dodge (Peugeot-Citroen)	France, Spain	13,000
Motor-Iberica-Spain	Spain	11,000
Enasa	Spain	7,000
Seddon-Atkinson (IH)	Britain	5,000
Sleyn-Daimler-Puch	Austria	4,000
ERF	Britain	3,000
Fodens (now US-owned)	Britain	2,000

agreed to wage cuts for his members, no strike pledges, an acceptance of management's prerogative to move capital as of right, and also launched a campaign amongst his members for them to sell their jobs for severance pay, in exchange for guarantees referring to "institutional consultation" over new technology. For his efforts Fraser was made a main board director of Chrysler!

Imagine all British trade unions completely modelled on the EETPU and you get a glimpse of what the US companies would create in the UK.

Meanwhile, whilst the Americans are surging ahead, the European manufacturers are consolidating themselves into a Big Four in order to penetrate the US market:

*DAF (International Harvester);
*Iveco-Deutz (Fiat);
*Saviem (Renault);
*Volvo.

These companies are collaborating in joint ventures together as the only

way of creating the economies of scale necessary to compete with the US and Japanese multinationals. Rationalisation was thus implemented on a large scale in 1973 Europe's leading car and truck makers employed 1.26 million people, in 1978 this was down to 1.19 million. Fiat cut its workforce by 45,000 from 200,570 in five years.

The Financial Times said as long ago as 1978:

"The pressures against them are mounting because of the move towards indigenous production in the developing countries, the increasing competition from Japan and the more efficient design and manufacturing methods of US companies."

The scale of finance involved is massive. The cost of developing a new model is now about \$150 million and that does not include the development of a new engine - which would add another \$400 million or a new gear box - which would add \$200 million.

However, since Ford

Europ (car and truck) has exported \$40 billion (!) back to the USA since 1945 in pure profit, it is clear that the US giants have the finance.

Hence the pressure for joint venture projects - where the costs of both components and vehicles are shared between two or more manufacturers.

Hence as far as Leyland Vehicles are concerned, the historic starvation of investment produced by previous governments and managements have placed them in the position of either ceasing to exist or being bought out by a first division truck producer.

There is a third option, of course, the nationalisation of the whole UK truck industry under workers control - but this question will be decided by the overall struggle.

Japan and Russia have appeared on the horizon too. Hino plants in Eire and Canada are about to export "kits" to Europe (thereby circumventing EEC tariffs) which would be assembled later.

The Soviet government has also licensed Ford to tool up the Kamaz plant in the Urals which should come on stream this year, and will turn out 150,000 trucks per year with a model oriented towards the Western European market.

Interestingly the Comecon countries have an internal demand for 1,000,000 trucks per year. There is no reason why a socialist planned UK truck industry could not orient towards and service this need.

The present government beseeches employers to prepare themselves for the stiff competition of the market place. One could ask what measures Sir Michael is taking to meet this challenge?

They are as follows:
*He cancelled a £30 million order for a new foundry. A new foundry is crucial to produce the new lighter alloy engines - but this is to be "out-sourced" from now on.

*Whilst the Mitsui Bank

in Japan and the Dresdner Bank in West Germany were funnelling long term (low interest) credit facilities to their respective producers, BL was paying over 20% interest on loans last year and 14% on its long term borrowing.

*The policy of breaking up Leyland Vehicles into self sufficient "profit centres" is, for Edwardes, key to making BL profitable. In reality, it is the equivalent of amputating a boxer's arm and then expecting him to win the ABA championships!

Moreover, "privatisation" is nothing new for Edwardes. In a number of cases he has sold off profitable sectors to past or present members of Leyland Vehicle management.

Take Kenaton Engineering: The Leyland Vehicles pattern making department was closed and its machinery was sold off to Kenaton Engineering, a company now owned by a senior member of Leyland Vehicles management. Kenaton now makes patterns for Leyland Vehicles!

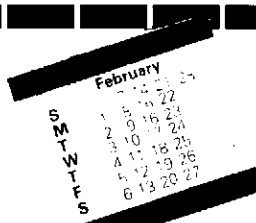
A similar suspicious development has taken place around the selling off of the BL subsidiary Prestcold. This company was sold to Suter Electrical - whose chairman was David Abell, formerly manager of Leyland Vehicles and before that of Prestcold itself.

When he left Prestcold in April 1979 Abell told the Financial Times that he must "publicly take responsibility for their present near financial collapse."

The whole sordid story of BL's mismanagement and hidden financial chicanery needs to be dragged out into the daylight.

The books need to be opened for full scrutiny by the labour movement.

The Works Committee at Leyland are making this demand a major aspect of their campaign, combined with the call for a concerted investment programme that can link the production of buses and trucks with the economic demands of the industrialising countries.



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.

Fight the Cuts: rally and march organised by Birmingham Trades Council Anti-Cuts Campaign. Saturday February 27, assemble 10.30am Chamberlain Square.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER MEETINGS AND FORUMS

LONDON public meeting: 'Stop the Tories in their Tracks'. Speakers: Steve Good (Asst. Branch Secretary, Kings X ASLEF, in personal capacity), Alan Thornett (T&G senior steward, Cowley Assembly Plant, in personal capacity). Wednesday February 3, 7.30 at the General Picton, Wharfedale Rd, London N1

STOCKPORT. 'The way forward for the Labour Left'. Thursday February 11 7.30 at the Manchester Arms, Wellington Rd.

LEIGH: Every other Sunday 7.30 at the White Lion (opposite the market). Feb.7: Women's liberation. Feb.21: Afghanistan and the Soviet invasion.

ISLINGTON: Every other Thursday, 7.30 at the Florence, Florence St. Feb.4: What is Trotskyism?

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

MARXISM

London Workers' Socialist League classes on basic Marxism: alternate Fridays, next class February 5 on 'Sectarian socialism and Working Class Socialism'. For details of registration and venue, write to PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

IRELAND

Labour Committee on Ireland: AGM, Saturday February 6, from 10am at Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham. Voting restricted to LCI members. Paid up for 1981 by January 6, 1982: conference fee £1.50.

Labour Movement conference on Ireland: Saturday February 27, from 11am at The Theatre, 309 Regent St, London W1. Sponsored by LCI and Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland. Credentials £2 from 1 North End Road, London W14.

TRADE UNIONS

Media Freedom and the Right of Reply: conference organised by the Campaign for Press Freedom, 10 to 5, Saturday March 6, at Queen Mary College, Mile End Road, London E1.

London Region CND Trade Union Committee conference: February 6, at Collegiate Theatre, Gordon St, WC1. Trade union bodies in Greater London are invited to send up to three delegates: fee £2 per delegate to 11 Goodwin St, London N4

WOMEN

Action Committee for a Woman's Right to Work organising conference: Feb.20, University of

London Union, Malet St, London WC1. Registration £3 (or £1.50 unwaged) from WRTW, 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 SRC, 041 332 0691.

Oxford Women's Fightback meetings.

WOMAN'S RIGHT TO A JOB: Monday February 8, 8pm, East Oxford Community Centre, room 2. PORNOGRAPHY: Monday February 22, 8pm, same venue.

STUDENTS

Socialist Organiser student caucus: Saturday February 13 in Nottingham. Phone 01-609 3071 for details. Accommodation available on Friday and Saturday.

POLAND

Workers' Power public meeting: 'Revolution and counter-revolution in Poland'. Thursday February 4, 7pm, Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, NW1.

EL SALVADOR

El Salvador solidarity meeting and film show: 50th anniversary of 1932 massacre. Speakers include Salvador Moncada and Jon Snow. Friday February 5, 7pm at the Old Theatre, London School of Economics, Houghton St, WC2.

Rally for International Women's Day sponsored by Socialist Challenge, Revolution Youth. Speakers from the Fourth International. Mary Vinns, United Mine-workers of America. Speaker from Peoples Democracy. Speaker from Nicaraguan women's movement. Camden Centre, off Euston Rd, 7.30pm, March 12. Doors open 5.30pm. Stalls and displays. Entrance £1; 50p unwaged.

The law and the workers' movement



TUC bureaucrats oppose action on Tebbit law

by John McIlroy

NORMAN Tebbit's Bill published last week is the latest fusillade in the Tories' onslaught against the unions.

Apart from changes in timing and amounts of compensation, it represents no real change from his earlier proposals. One development, however, is the establishment of a £2 million scabs' benevolent fund.

Blacklegs who lost their jobs through refusing to join a union over the last eight years will be retrospectively rewarded for their class treachery.

As TUC chairperson Alan Sapper said, "This declaration of war on the working class will virtually destroy the trade union movement if not resisted."

The Bill seeks to:

*Decisively weaken union organisation by breaking up the closed shop;

*Cripple the ability of workers to fight Tory policies by outlawing secondary action and blacking.

*Outlaw "political" strikes and make it easier for employers to victimise strikers;

*Give union leaders the choice of bankruptcy or being conscripted as policemen against their members;

*Decisively undermine union democracy.

Ill-fated

If this Bill succeeds, Britain's trade unions could be turned into tame tabby cats. It provides a greater threat to our unions than In Place of Strife or the Industrial Relations Act. It must be fought and destroyed before it destroys us.

Discussion has already taken place on the TUC General Council as to what policies the labour movement should adopt in fighting Tebbit.

A special Congress is set for April 5.

But the temporisers and collaborators in our ranks are already out in force:

"Several union leaders backed by TUC backroom boys believe they should tread cautiously. After the ill-fated "day of action" against the government's first labour relations bill in 1980, they are worried that the grass roots response will again be disappointing" reports the Sunday Times.

The Financial Times claims that at a heated meeting of the General Council, Len Murray expressed strong annoyance at a proposal that the six General Council nominees should be withdrawn from the National Economic Development Council.

Other leaders such as Terry Duffy are arguing for a joint campaign with the employers. A more helpful approach has been taken by other General Council members such as Bill Keys and David Basnett, who are arguing for all unions in a particular industry to take action if a union is sued by a firm in that sector.

Socialist Organiser believes that it is vital that discussion of Tebbit's proposals should not be confined to top union bureau-



March 9, 1980: steelworkers demand action, TUC leaders spout hot air. Now it's not even hot air, but cold water on any fightback....

crats.

The issue must be raised at every level. We believe that a united response is essential and therefore urge the TUC to adopt a programme of opposition which is binding on all affiliates.

However in the event of the law being used, we urge all trade unionists to fight in their committees and branches for immediate strike action without waiting for the leadership to act.

We urge all readers to discuss the issues in their union bodies and move motions on the following lines as quickly as possible to mandate their executives at the April conference.

Firstly we believe that it is no good waiting for the Bill to become law.

The response if it is used, depends on the campaign we mount now.

It is plain for all to see that protest action and propaganda alone are quite inadequate to halt the Tory attack. It is necessary to use the mass strength of the organised labour movement to resist the Tebbit Bill.

What is needed is the mobilisation of the whole labour movement in all-out general strike action. But such is the weight of confusion created by the betrayals of TUC leaders since Thatcher came to office that it is plain the workers' movement is not ready to embark upon such a course of action.

Awareness

We must call therefore on the TUC to organise a series of one-day strikes against the Bill—strikes reaching every branch and shop floor meeting, every shop stewards' committee, explaining the issues at stake for the whole labour movement.

We must mobilise in opposition to futile protests such as the brainchild of the TGWU bureaucrats—staging silent half-hour protests at lunchtime!

To those who claim that May 14 1980 was a failure the answer must be that we need firm instructions for strike action from the TUC. Such a series of strikes could under certain conditions

create the mass awareness needed to mobilise all-out action.

Secondly, if the Bill reaches the statute book, we want the General Council committed in advance to call an all-out General Strike as soon as the law is used.

The threat of this if it is TUC policy will act as a deterrent to the employers and a stimulus and educator for the workers.

The discussion and preparation of a General Strike should proceed right now.

Whether or not the TUC adopts this policy, trade unionists should in any case fight for a policy of national strike action by individual unions at their annual conferences.

Thirdly, all unions must be instructed on pain of expulsion from the TUC, not to collaborate with any of the mechanisms Tebbit is suggesting.

There must be no state money for secret ballots, no collaboration with closed

shop ballots, no rule changes to safeguard union funds, no instructions to desist from strikes and picketing needed to win disputes, but likely to attract legal attacks.

Fourthly, trade unions must be instructed to withdraw their representatives from bodies such as industrial tribunals and the Employment Appeal Tribunal which will administer the new laws.

As the final say is in the hands of the House of Lords and Court of Appeal (tribunals are bound by their decisions) union representatives give an air of legitimacy to decisions whilst possessing no ultimate power.

These bodies act to derail real struggles by luring workers into the courts and replacing direct action with arbitration by managers, lawyers and union officials.

These people are no more capable of deciding what is a "fair" dismissal than of deciding what is a fair wage

increase.

Finally the TUC should break from the whole range of bodies designed to incorporate the unions in the running of the state that have blossomed like fungi in the last twenty years.

Union representatives should be withdrawn from ACAS and the MSC where they do the government's dirty work for them.

Government money should be rejected, whether for unemployment centres or trade union education. The strings attached limit and deform union purposes.

On the National Economic Development Council, for example, the TUC Big Six sit down every month with the CBI and the Tory Cabinet under the chairpersonship of Thatcher herself.

This body was used to defuse the upsurge against the Industrial Relations Act and to construct Heath's incomes policy.

It was used to inveigle the union leaders into endor-

sing Wilson and Callaghan's disastrous policies. Its notional aim is to discuss and develop economic policy.

In reality, month after month, Thatcher lectures

Len Murray



Len Murray

Murray on basic capitalist economics.

Then Murray whines and blethers inconsequentially and grovels back four weeks later for another tongue lashing.

Once more trade unionists on these bodies legitimise the Tories' policies without influencing them one iota.

Entrenched

This basic programme is not perfect. It will be developed and built on if taken into the movement. There it will meet the opposition of "the backroom boys" and entrenched bureaucrats but can only be strengthened by conflict with them.

It should moreover be raised in the Labour Party as well as the unions.

The NEC support for ASLEF shows the way here. A united effort can see Tebbit off. But the fight has to start right now.

No collaboration with t



Why is Kitson conniving?

A YEAR or two ago in sunny Manchester a certain Mr Kirkham who was a member of NATSOPA decided to take voluntary redundancy.

Now an old trade union principle opposes this on the basis that those lucky enough to be in employment have no right to sell a working class job.

When Mr Kirkham pocketed his slightly more than 30 pieces of silver his branch passed an admirable resolution to the effect that Mr Kirkham could go hang himself and that all those who sold their jobs would not be re-admitted later on as mainstream members of the union.

They would only be eligible for the casual section.

This did not go down too well with Mr Kirkham. Having spent his ill-gotten gains, he made repeated attempts to obtain reinstatement as a regular.

No luck. But then hurrying to his rescue came Jim Prior's 1980 Employment Act.

This gave tribunals and courts the power to decide whether or not unions had behaved "reasonably" in expelling or refusing entry to a worker.

In other words it gave the judiciary—whose view of "reasonableness" is vastly different from that of most trade unionists—powers to rewrite union rules.

Daubed

The Act specifically states that a union should not be held to have behaved reasonably simply because it had followed its rulebook!

The Code of Practice issued with the Act to guide tribunals states, for example, that a union would be acting unreasonably if it disciplined a member who crossed a

picket line unless the strike had been called after a secret ballot and was official.

Not surprisingly the TUC opposed this section as vigorously as the rest of the Act.

Well, opposed it verbally at least! Because what should NATSOPA branch secretary Cyril Brown find when he was hauled before a tribunal earlier this year to justify his members' correct stand on Mr Kirkham?

Sitting there in judgement upon him, large as life, was TGWU District Officer Jack Povey!

The decision of the tribunal was unanimous. Mustachioed Jack "the busman's friend" found himself in happy unanimity with his colleagues on the tribunal—the management representative and the lawyer.

NATSOPA, in fighting redundancy, had, they pronounced, behaved unreasonably.



GRIM WARNING IN FARES JUDGEMENT

William Booth reports on the 'real and present threat' to the labour movement from the judges

IN A recent issue of Socialist Organiser, John O'Mahony wrote an excellent expose of the hypocrisy of those right wingers who attack so-called 'opponents of democracy' while themselves supporting the manifestly undemocratic practices of members of the legal profession whose judgements clearly defy decisions made as a result of the votes of thousands and millions.

The judgements of the Court of Appeal and the House of Lords in the 'Fares Fair' case, wrote Comrade O'Mahony in SO 67, provide 'a precious warning to the labour movement, which can learn from it what can happen if it ever tries to take drastic measures against the ruling class'.

The activities of Lords Denning, Scarman and the others are not simply a warning of what might happen at some future time when there was a fundamental attack on capitalism.

Many judicial rules exist, along with a panoply of other extra-parliamentary institutions, from the armed forces and the civil service right down to the monarchy and the House of Lords, to preserve class rule against any long term threat, whether it begins in Parliament or anywhere else.

The judges are being used not just as a back-up for capitalism, but as a real and present threat to the mildest of reforms, involving public spending or administrative action of which the Tories and their friends do not approve.

More and more in the 1980s we are likely to see

measures agreed by the labour movement, voted on according to the norms of the system of parliamentary democracy, only to be frustrated by the 'direct action' of judges and other non-democratic forces.

This has already had an effect in many spheres of action for the labour movement. It has applied in obvious ways to the action of trade unionists, but it has also more and more affected what Labour local authorities have been able to do.



Fare-fixer Denning

The use of the law by a group of Tory councillors in the 'Fares Fair' case was by no means the first such event.

As is well known, a similar court case was taken out against a group of Camden councillors who in 1979 committed the heinous crime of voting to pay a minimum wage of £60 for the Council's employees.

That particular case is still going through the courts, but there are many others that have not even got there at all because councillors have been scared, on legal advice, from acting at all.

Hallowed

The 'Enterprise Board' proposed by the Greater London Council has encountered difficulties of this sort.

Beyond this there is the increasingly active intervention of 'district auditors' in the affairs of local councils, with continual threats to most of the sorts of policy now likely to be proposed by Labour groups in local government.

Many forms of direct labour may be kept in check by district auditors, and it seems likely that efforts to enforce trade union conditions on contractors will also fall foul of the law.

Such interventions would bring into question almost the first thing that public sector unions were able to do, when they began to get 'fair wages clauses' in local authority contracts in the 1890s.

The ever widening range of legal intervention thus applies not simply to radical, new policies: it also threatens the most hallowed and long-term gains of the working class movement.

Working class representatives in the 1980s, be they trade union officials or local councillors, who make a principle of never being in conflict with the law are not just cowardly or right wing.

They are also expressing a reluctance to fight in ways that may from now become necessary.

Enforce

To refuse to take this into account is to express a profoundly reactionary compliance with rules whose application now threatens the very purpose of the movement.

It is worth also considering some other aspects of the application of the law to the labour movement, and a number of significant changes which are a product of recent history.

Traditionally, trade unionists and socialists have campaigned for changes in the law, for example to enforce shorter hours of



Under attack: Livingstone

work or to expand the educational system.

However, on matters of industrial relations, the settlement of strikes and so forth, the traditional view in the labour movement has always been against the intervention of the legal system in any form.

Thus trade unionists have always opposed even the positive legal definition of their rights for fear of what might happen to the interpretation of this definition in the courts. (Such has not always been the case in other countries—in France, for example, or more recently in Poland).

In the mid 1970s in Britain there was something of a change in this.

The 'social contract' agreed over the heads of the members between the trade union bureaucracy and the post-1974 Labour government held back living conditions and wage claims in return for the promise of a series of measures including legislation, which made it possible, for example, to sue for 'unfair dismissal' and to claim discrimination on racial or sexual grounds.

Whether these measures were good or bad, they were certainly important, and there is no serious trade union negotiator today who does not take full account of

such developments as legislation on health and safety, codes of practice on time off for trade union representatives.

The legal measures introduced by the Labour government from 1974 to 1977 brought the law into industrial relations in a much more serious way than ever before.

During the latter period of that Labour government up to 1979, the limits and effects of these measures were probed and questioned.

Such probing was particularly the job of a Conservative Party front organisation laughingly known as the National Association For Freedom (now the "Freedom" Association).

During its latter period, the Labour government, because of its pact with the Liberals was prevented from carrying out any measures which could be even alleged to be of benefit to the trade unions.

The NAFF took up a number of carefully prepared legal cases against the trade union movement. Thus in January 1977 it took out an injunction against the Union of Post Office Workers for threatening a week long boycott against South Africa.

Enshrined

This legal judgement, though it became enmeshed in numerous legal technicalities about the position of the Attorney General, brought into question the rights of Post Office workers to go on strike.

It clearly provided the basis for the present Tory government, when it altered the status of the Post Office in 1981 and set up British Telecom, to leave in doubt the legal right to strike of this major and powerful section of public sector workers.

Other legal decisions and

pressures brought by NAFF and the star recruit George Ward of Grunwick, prepared the way for many other measures threatened or already introduced by the Tories.

The Grunwick case saw court injunctions used to halt blacking action by Post Office workers, implicitly threatening prosecution for those engaged in industrial action. This principle is now enshrined in Prior's Act and enlarged upon in Tebbit's proposals.

Defiance

So also is curtailment of the right to picket or to take secondary industrial action of any kind.

All this has brought the legal system much more into industrial struggle than was the case in the past, and the effects can be seen every new day of this government.

We must of course campaign against the Tebbit Bill and for the repeal of the Employment Act as well as other changes in the law. However, we need also to carefully consider how the law has been recently changed, and the implications of this.

The problem can be resolved not just by invoking the ghost of Lord Carson, who was quite prepared to organise defiance of the democratically agreed Home Rule Bill before the First World War.

Exploitation

Nor do we simply have to recall the mutterings about a possible military coup that were heard in mess rooms and elsewhere during the great class battles of 1974.

We must also deal with the reality of Lord Denning and Scarman, and others who are determined to uphold norms of capitalist exploitation whatever we decide, or however we play the rules.

tribunals!

In the face of 4 million unemployed, Jack agreed with a judgement which stated:

"A man (sic) has the right to be able to work and to freely compete in a particular field. NATSOPA in fighting redundancy was interfering with that freedom."

Jack cinked in his fat fee (the case involved a five day hearing) and returned fortified to fight job loss in the TGWU. NATSOPA, meanwhile, could face a bill of £16,000 for compensation.

Jack is not unique.

Conniving

When four women black-legs were held to have been unfairly dismissed by Walsall Council under the 1980 Act for refusing to join NUPE, there sitting on the tribunal was another union official.

Members of NATSOPA



T&G national organiser Ron Todd

and the TGWU may well be asking why their officials are implementing the very legislation that their unions are pledged by conference decision to totally oppose.

Why for example is Mr Kitson conniving in his district officials drawing tribunals expenses to fine fellow trade unionists under laws that his members have mandated them to spend their time fighting?

Judges clear who they defend

LAST WEEK saw two new brazen statements of class justice from the bench of British courts.

In Edinburgh, Lord Mayfield of the Court of Session granted an interim court order to BL management for the conviction of the workers occupying the Bathgate factory in their struggle against redundancies.

Sacrosanct

Lord Mayfield proclaimed that the occupation constituted an "infringement on the rights of property", and was preventing the company carrying on its business.

A significant part of BL's "business" at present is of course the mass manufacture of redundancies. Indeed while the "rights of prop-

erty" for BL and the ruling class as a whole are defended as sacrosanct by Lord Mayfield and his fellow judges, the right to work is being systematically attacked and destroyed with the active backing of the courts.

The previous Monday had seen a Judge representing the British direct rulers in the North of Ireland impose a crushing £7,500 fine and £20,000 costs upon a union official for the "crime" of leading a fight against redundancies!

Mr Martin King, Newry branch secretary of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union was hauled before the courts after he had organised a strike in defence of seven workers declared redundant.

The judge, Mr Justice

Murray, declared he was satisfied that Mr King had gained access to the factory, taken charge of the situation and directed a walk-out.

Resort

By directing the workers to strike "he clearly induced them to break their contract of employment."

Never mind of course that by abruptly declaring seven workers redundant in the middle of the week the employer had himself broken the workers' contract of employment: the courts act to defend the rights of the owners of industry, not the working class.

Tebbit's new proposals aim to load the scales still further in favour of the employers in order to force home still further sackings

and speed-up.

The labour movement was built only by mass action flying in the face of such legislation. It can now be defended only by the resort once again to mass action.

Majority

So long as the state apparatus built by the capitalists for the defence of their system of exploitation remains intact it will continue to act against the organisations and basic rights of the working class.

This has been seen to be the case no matter which government holds a formal majority in Parliament.

A new kind of legal system—to defend the interests of the working class—can only come from a new

kind of state—a workers' state.

History has repeatedly proved that there is no way the existing state machine and judicial apparatus can be transformed piece by piece into a socialist state.

Mass action is needed to force through the nationalisation of capitalist property, the disbanding of the armed forces and police, the dismantling of the bourgeois courts and state bureaucracy and the establishment of a workers' government based on the power of workers' councils and workers' militia.

And a new leadership is needed that recognises and is prepared to carry out these tasks.

**Socialist
Organiser
EDITORIAL**



SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY

JOHN O'MAHONY's discussion series continues this week, arguing that the real working class alternative to Stalinism is not—as Foot would have it—a cringing legalism which abandons any active concept of socialism as a new society, but the democracy of workers' councils.



AS WE saw last week, Michael Foot holds to the view that the totalitarian system in the USSR was the direct and inevitable result of a primary sin committed by the Russian workers in 1917: they used violence to defend themselves and then to establish and defend their own workers' government.

But Foot's method of argument is incompatible with serious historical analysis. It reduces the whole question to one of broken taboos: it leads straight to a superstitious approach to politics, and away from a rational account of what went wrong — and what must now be done to put it right.

And consequently it leads to one or other variant of the idea that the working class cannot take power, and should not try.

In Britain — the conclusion must be — the last class with the historic right to fight for and take power was the bourgeoisie — back in the 17th century. Why the curse against perpetrators of revolutionary violence has not jinxed the British system this last 300 years, Foot forgets to explain to us.

Or does the curse apply only to the working class? Yes. Because socialism as a distinct system to replace capitalism is, according to this view, an 'apocalyptic' dream: and you will probably end up in the nightmare of the Stalinist gulag if you dare to strike out from the rules and constraints of the existing British parliamentary system.

Even when that system allows the sustained and savage tyranny against millions of people which the Thatcher government is legally inflicting, the working class must still submit, lest worse things follow from a resistance that overflows the hallowed constitutional channels of the sacred system.



For no earthly power has the right to suborn an anointed prime minister until her full 5 years are up!

For those who struggled, by revolutionary means and mass agitation, to win the first version of the system out of which existing British parliamentarism has evolved, democracy was a living movement for real self-rule, for government of, for and by the people.

Unthinking

For Foot it becomes a decadent set of constitutional rules, forms and regulations which must be treated with reverent superstition.

For if one thinks, even subconsciously, in terms of broken taboos and of original sin by the revolutionary working class to explain Stalinist totalitarianism, then you must tread care-

fully! You don't know where the hidden taboos, curses and voodoo may be lying in wait for you!

Foot says that Stalinist 'apologists have never been able to explain how the enormities of Stalinism happened — or what guarantee there can be that they should never develop again'.

That's for sure. Yet part of Foot's conclusion arises from his own unthinking acceptance of much of the self-definition of the bureaucracy: he accepts that the bureaucrats have some connection — other than that of murderer to victim — with socialism and with the revolutionary struggles of the working class.

In contrast to both Foot and Stalinists, Trotskyists have a rational, materialist, class explanation of what went wrong in Russia.

Russia in isolation was known by the Russian lab-

our movement to be unripe for socialism. Through defeat of the workers in the West by the strength of the ruling class, of which the treachery of the right wing socialists was a major part, the workers' revolution was isolated in the USSR.

A distinct privileged caste emerged and eventually took direct power. The totalitarian system is the system of their unbridled rule over society and over the working class.

As well as a rational explanation, we have a rational political programme of working class action: revolution against the bureaucracy (which for reasons of technical definition we call political revolution, but which will in fact also be a tremendous social revolution which will liberate from bureaucratic tyranny the workers, peasants and oppressed nationalities of the Stalinist states).

Even if it could plausibly be argued that certain institutions set up by the revolution in the terrible struggle for survival in the civil war and against the 14 intervening states contributed to the degeneration and the emergence of Stalinism, it would only follow that certain mistakes were made which had great consequences.

It would not follow that democratic mass working class action to take power and disarm the ruling class leads to totalitarianism.

On the contrary. If the Russian workers had an armed militia system, totalitarianism would not survive a week in the USSR.

If the Polish strike pickets who guarded the gates in Gdansk in August 1980 carrying pick-axe handles had gone on to organise an armed workers' militia, then the martial law would have been impossible.

If the British trade union movement had an armed

militia now, then Britain would be a much safer place for democracy than in fact it is now.

Or would armed resistance by the Polish or USSR workers, even against Stalinism, also be a breach of the taboos of Foot's pacifist god?

The conclusion from Stalinism, says Foot, is 'the necessity of establishing some truly independent parliamentary institutions'. This, he says, is the course Solidarnosc would have wished to follow in Poland.

Yes! In August 1980, the most democratic Parliament ever to meet in Poland lived and functioned for a month at Gdansk.

It was not a Parliament like the one bound by the five year rule which sustains Mrs Thatcher. It was a workers' council, a 'soviet', composed of factory delegates from the entire region, who reported back to their electors and could easily be replaced.

Revered

It was counterposed to the bureaucratic state apparatus, and incompatible with it and with the bureaucrats served by it.

Such a system of intense democratic self-rule is always and everywhere incompatible with the rule of a stable bureaucratic state machine behind the scenes. That is why, though it was a Parliament, it belonged to the type of the 1917 workers' councils, and not to the type of Michael Foot's revered institution.

Just as he invokes the dead, safe, radical causes of the past, and falsely appropriates them for use against those who stand in their living continuity, Foot misuses the Polish experience. For that tremendously democratic 'parliament' in Gdansk could only

have been developed and consolidated as a revolutionary movement. It could only live if it could find the force to disarm the Polish state and successfully raise the cry of national revolt against Russian overlordship in Poland (and the rest of Eastern Europe: only a movement spreading across Eastern Europe could hope to defy and defeat the Russian state).

Instead, the workers' movement, the unchallengeable power in Poland in August 1980, decided to bow to the fact of Russian overlordship in Poland, and the consequent rule of the Polish bureaucracy. It transformed itself into a 'trade union' — though in fact Solidarnosc was always much more.

And the forces of Stalinist reaction gathered strength for the blow they struck last December.

What would Foot have advocated in Poland? Reliance on the Sejm (the official Parliament — which showed some life, in fact)? A long, moderately conducted, war of attrition — perhaps for decades — to make the Sejm 'a real Parliament'?

The only guarantee against counter-revolution in Poland would have been an armed working class which overthrew the bureaucracy and secured Polish independence. And only a mass armed revolutionary movement of the Polish workers could have achieved that.

The road to democracy in Eastern Europe and the USSR — surely even Michael Foot will have to agree — is the road of armed revolt.

Suppose they won — what then? They should choose a parliamentary system based on the existing British model? They should set up a separate state bureaucracy and armed forces with a professional officer corps,

to which the workers would then surrender their guns.

Perhaps, to put the case on it and bring it to our British level of democratic perfection, they should invite some foreign prince to come and be the constitutional king?

Shield

To suggest it is to show how senseless and postmodern that would be — and how irresponsible the attitude of the Foots who pride themselves on their adherence to democracy in Britain now.

The only sure guarantee against capitalist or Stalinist counter-revolution is active, self-controlling mass democracy in real control — without a reserve military force which is the iron hand in the parliamentary glove, and which the ruling class (or ruling bureaucracy) can use to strike down the masses and their democracy.

Foot's view of Stalinism is all of a piece with his views and perspectives on Britain, and his self-avowed Fabian politics.

Foot does not understand that Stalinist totalitarianism is the rule of distinct social formations. And he does not understand that the British parliamentary system is a shield and an instrument for the rule of a social class.

He says of Poland that 'it is by no reckoning irrelevant to our own argument about political institutions and refers to the inability of the Stalinist states to develop or protect genuine independent institutions'.

There is no more blatant example of Foot's class blindness for British politics than his inability to understand who rules in the USSR — the fact that totalitarianism arises because minority rules over the oppressed majority (and



Facing page: Paris Commune; Lenin and Trotsky. Above: partisans in the civil war after the Russian Revolution

therefore totalitarianism is simply inconceivable as an instrument of the working class majority).

Even though the totalitarian bureaucracies are not fully-formed ruling classes, they are materially privileged elites with all the worst features of historic ruling classes, including their need for a vicious state machine to oppress and repress the masses. (It is the historic virtues of fully-developed ruling classes that the bureaucracies lack: a necessary and therefore, for their time, progressive role in a given type of social/economic formation).

Foot himself has an elitist conception of 'socialism' — a civilised Fabian elitism which he contrasts with Stalinism and... Thatcherism!

Elitist

Condemning Stalinism's sacrifice of generations, he insists on the need 'to let them' (emphasis added) establish for themselves what may be the nature and scale of the sacrifice'. But this shows he has missed the point.

In a socialist democracy no elite would 'let' the people decide matters: no-one else but the majority could decide.

And when Foot contrasts his view of socialism to trade union direct action, the elitism is again clear.

'Increasingly as the years passed, he [Aneurin Bevan] placed his confidence in collectivist, social power, to be wielded by the central state, acting through Parliament, with all the devices, chances and protections of open debate which he knew so well how to exploit on behalf of... his people and his party'.

Foot's difference with unfalsified Marxism over democracy is that he is himself a mere bourgeois democrat and an elitist, who counterposes the limited accomplishments of bourgeois democracy to the necessary development of democracy which the working class must achieve if it is itself ever to rule directly in society.

He has abandoned the notion of developing and deepening democracy, and maybe never understood the revolutionary Marxist goal of developing democracy beyond the present system into social and economic self-rule and self-administration.

Bureaucratic

In the view of Marxists, such a qualitative expansion of democracy in the running of society lies at the other side of a socialist revolution which overthrows capitalism (and, in the Stalinist states, the bureaucracy).

But that revolution is in turn inconceivable except as the culmination of a great explosion of working

class democracy and of struggle to defend, expand and deepen democracy.

Workers' socialist revolution would undoubtedly present itself to the ruling class and its hangers-on as highly authoritarian, but to the mass of the people as a great expansion of democratic self-rule. This paradox merely expresses the fact that our society is divided into two antagonistic classes, one of which must go down so that the other can rise.

When Foot accuses us of being anti-democratic, he takes his own bureaucratic conception of socialism and accuses the Marxists of wanting to realise it too rapidly and brutally. It is easy enough for him to do this, with the aid of the press and the monstrous example of the Stalinist states to point to. It is nevertheless completely dishonest.

It is linked to the basic lie that defines democracy by one of its forms — Parliament. All the so-called ultra lefts, from those who oppose Parliament on principle to those who want to work within the existing political institutions, advocate another form of democracy — the democracy of workers' councils.

Foot advocates limited measures of nationalisation (of moribund industries) by the existing military/bureaucratic state. The Stalinist state apparatuses are the sole masters of their societies. When the Fabian looks at Stalinism, he is looking at

himself in a distorting mirror — or rather in a different historical dimension.

The statist 'socialisms' of Fabians and Stalinists are cousins if not twins. Both rest on the rule of an elite over the masses (in Britain, with a five-yearly release mechanism).

The Fabians of course are not the sole masters, or even the masters: at most, the role history has given them is to be the statist-oriented agents for solving some of the problems of capitalism. They operate within the system set up by the bourgeoisie in its revolutionary epoch, and refined by mass struggle.

The Stalinist bureaucrats emerged as the sole masters of the Russian state (and later other states) — backward, and with no tradition of democracy except that of the Soviets of workers' representatives, which the bureaucrats, as a precondition for their own rule, had to smash and destroy.

Foot's polemic is shot through with mixed feelings and ambivalence towards democracy. The Fabians recognise in Stalinism a development in a barren climate of their own 'socialism'. Some recoil in horror, though others, like the Webbs in the 1930s, have embraced it.

The Marxist programme — of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky — proposes socialisation of the means of production to be achieved by the working class and to be administered by and

for that class. As a precondition for the healthy development of the socialist society, there is to be no state in the old sense.

The workers' state is not Stalinist collectivism, a tyrannical all-controlling state which is the instrument of the bureaucracy against the people and especially against the working class. Nor is it any version of the existing state collectivism of the Fabians, writ large or modified.

Socialist transformation by the working class will only be possible if it is linked to expansion of liberty: 'every cook shall govern', as Lenin put it. When the supposedly anti-democratic Marxists advocate something other than parliamentary democracy, this expansion of liberty is what they advocate.

The present type of Parliament is organically tied to the old historical form of state power — rule of society by minorities, typically through bureaucracies. Socialism needs the destruction of that form of state power.

If the bureaucratic form of state power were fused with control of the wealth-producing activities of society, then it could, even in a relatively rich society like Britain, lead to corruption, inefficiency, and abuse of power, perhaps even to a bureaucratic dictatorship.

Graft on

So perhaps Foot, Kinnock etc are right to beware of themselves and their socialism! But they should not attribute it to us.

There are two distinct but interwoven strands in the attitudes the labour movement has taken to parliamentary democracy.

The first was and is ardent championing of parliamentary democracy and democratic liberties. In varying alliances with sections of the middle class, workers and early labour movements fought to extend the suffrage and enlarge the power of Parliament — often by revolutionary means.

The first mass political labour movement, Chartism, took shape around demands for the reshaping of the existing parliamentary system so as to admit the working class to the suffrage and make it possible for workers to be MPs.

In Britain, as late as 1917 the Workers' Socialist Federation led by Sylvia Pankhurst (emerging out of the Workers' Suffrage Federation, which in turn came out of the left wing of the suffragette movement in the East End) based themselves on an extremely radical programme of democratic reform attempting to graft on to the British parliament features of the workers' council system that had just emerged in Russia.

In 1934 Trotsky suggested a united front with reformist workers in France for a similar programme.

The second strand has been the drive to create new, different, specifically working class organs of democracy — either by converting old forms for the purpose, or by establishing completely new ones.

The Paris Commune in 1871 was an example of the taking over of old forms. The creation of new forms began in Petrograd, Russia, in 1905, when striking workers who did not have political rights elected their own local parliament or council of workers' deputies — the 'soviet'.

After the overthrow of Tsarism in February 1917, a vast network of soviets developed, with pyramids of city, district, and all-Russian gatherings.

In their own way, from the ground up, the soviets realised such old working class demands as direct control of the legislature — delegates could be recalled and replaced.

The soviet network showed itself to be a uniquely flexible and responsive system of democratic self-organisation and, increasingly, of self-rule by the Russian masses. Whereas even the most democratic parliamentary system was tied to the bourgeois military/bureaucratic structure, the soviets were counterposed in toto to the surviving Tsarist military/bureaucratic state.

In 1917 the Congress of soviets (with the Bolshevik Party majority as its driving force) seized state power.

Thereafter the drive to reform and develop the existing parliaments gave place, for millions of revolutionary workers throughout the world, to a commitment to soviets as the highest form of democracy, as the working class form of democracy.

This commitment became a central part of the programme of revolutionary socialism.

In the hands of the right wing of the international labour movement, the commitment to perfecting the democratic institutions of capitalist society became a commitment to the bourgeoisie against the revolutionary workers. In Germany the 1918 revolution created a bourgeois democratic regime, with the right-wing Socialists in alliance with the Junkers against the revolutionary workers.

In the mid-'30s the Stalinists dropped soviets from their programme and, pursuing alliances with the right of the labour movement and with Liberals to serve Russian foreign policy interests, became hypocritical worshippers of the existing parliaments. At the same time they pushed the debilitating lie that Stalinist totalitarianism

was a form of 'workers' democracy'.

The result was to banish concern with democracy and to falsify the very language and concepts.

The basic idea that socialists must continue the struggle for human liberty and freedom was expunged from the programme of 'communism'. 'Democracy' and 'socialism' became cynical catch-cries, shot through with double-think about the democracy of the society where the Stalinist bureaucrats ruled.

Trotsky noted the corrupting effect of this on the labour movement itself when he commented on the Norwegian Labour Party: 'I soon had occasion to become convinced, by experience, that the old bourgeois functionaries sometimes have a broader viewpoint and a more profound sense of dignity than Messrs 'Socialist' Ministers...'

Since 1917, soviets — workers' councils elected from factories and districts — have been thrown up in a large number of countries in conditions of large-scale working class struggle.

From Austria, Germany and Hungary in 1918, and Hungary again in 1956, through to Gdansk in 1980, soviets have emerged as flexible forms of working class democratic self-organisation — factory committees generalised to the whole of society.

Soviets

The historical experience of soviets as a form of social rule is of course limited. As early as the end of 1918 the soviets in the USSR were being undermined as freely functioning democratic organs by the exigencies of civil war, and they were shortly to be gutted of all real life. This process culminated in the ban on every party but the Bolsheviks in March 1921. Intended as a temporary civil war measure, it became fixed as the norm of the Stalinist political counter-revolution.

Nevertheless, it is clear: That these soviets, which have emerged in vastly different conditions and countries, are not accidental forms. At the very least, they are valuable organs of working class self-organisation in struggle.

In Russia before they were blasted by civil war, they were a form of democracy more flexible, adjustable and responsive than any other 'parliamentary' system.

Being independent of the existing bureaucratic/military system to which capitalist rule is tied, they are — to go by experience so far — the best form of organisation for a workers' movement that is seriously setting about transforming society against the will of the ruling class.

That they are more appropriate than any other known form of democracy for the socialist rule of the working class, in so far as it involves a qualitative expansion of the direct exercise of democracy.

That they can and will re-emerge at intense levels of mass working class action, when the struggle overflows the channels of the existing system. We probably came close to it in Britain in 1972.

This is why workers' councils are a central part of the programme of revolutionary Marxism.

The word 'soviet' has been utterly debased by association with the totalitarian bureaucracy of the USSR — which as the Soviet Union is a capitalist state is not a soviet. There are no soviets, it is not socialist,

and it is not a republic.

But Marxists remain committed to soviet democracy. We continue the old socialist commitment to expanding democracy in a qualitative way. We explain the limits of existing democracy and the possibilities of a different democracy.

Is this Marxist commitment counterposed to the basic labour movement commitment to parliamentary democracy? Not at all.

Socialism is not possible until the mass of workers want it and are prepared to realise it — neither is an extension of democracy beyond the level already attained.

It is in the direct interests of the working class to defend the existing system against anti-democratic attacks. It is in our interest to extend it and better it (for example by making the next Labour prime minister subject to election by the labour movement, outside of Parliament; by freeing the existing system from the dead grip of the parliamentary oligarchy of the PLP; and by ensuring that there is some relationship between what aspirant MPs and aspirant majority parties say they will do, and what they actually do). All this is the difference between good and bad circulation in the existing body politic.

Thus Marxists have much in common with people in the labour movement whose best notion of democracy is parliamentary democracy. We can agree to fight to rejuvenate the existing system; we could agree to defend it with guns against, for example, a military coup.

Marxists can and do form such alliances with honest 'non-soviet' democrats. The reason why we cannot and do not form such relations with the right wing and the soft left is not because we are not democrats, but because they are very bad democrats.

They worship the miserably inadequate system that exists.

They have done more than any Marxists to educate sections of the labour movement about the limits of parliamentary democracy: they have even exaggerated those limits and made them far more narrow than they would be for a fighting labour movement intent on defending the working class interest. They have, in successive Labour governments and especially since 1964, done more than anyone else to discredit parliamentary democracy and render cynical large sections of the labour movement.

Advance

The cynicism has corroded not only democracy but the political consciousness of the labour movement. Marxists, while we tell the workers who listen to us that they should rely only on their own strength, see no advantage or gain for our politics in cynicism.

While small groups can advance to a higher understanding by way of such disillusionment, the great mass of the labour movement is thrown back by it.

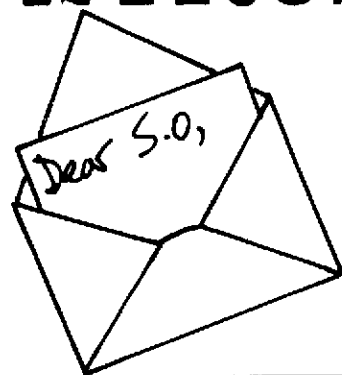
The mass of the labour movement will advance to a better understanding of the limits of parliamentary democracy, not by pure disgust with the Labour Right — politically, that is a passive response, and politically limited even when it helps generate industrial direct action — but most likely by struggle, and by attempting to use the maximum of the existing channels of the labour movement and of British bourgeois democracy.



CORRECTION: The reference in last week's article on Socialism and Democracy to 'the Chartists' was imprecise. What was meant was the comrades producing the bi-monthly

magazine 'Chartist', the majority of the old Chartist group. The statement in the article would not be true of the former 'Chartist' minority.

Writeback



We invite readers to send us their letters, up to a usual maximum length of 400 words. Send to 'Writeback', Socialist Organiser, c/o 28, Middle Lane, London N8.

Scabs who side with Jaruzelski

READING the Fifteen Points of Polish Solidarity, I noted these facts. Those who support the military action by the Polish junta are seen by Poland's workers as "your enemy" (point 4); "bastards" (point 6); "scabs and collaborators" (point 10). Solidarity urges Polish workers to avoid such scabs and collaborators in their private relationships. Should we not be thinking of doing the same here in Britain, and showing solidarity with Solidarity?

Whilst Solidarity urges Polish workers to "remain with the workers" (point 1), these scabs and collaborators who infest the ranks of the labour and trade union movement in Britain, side with the so-called Communist bosses who now shoot down, beat, and imprison workers in Eastern Europe and in Russia. They have thus allied themselves with the armed State which oppresses workers, while acting as the caretakers for Big Capital's East European and Russian investments.

It cannot be emphasised too strongly that this is what the bureaucracy in the so-called "presently existing Socialism" is doing. Big Capital has invested scores of millions (billions, even) in the lands that lie on the other side of Checkpoint Charlie. Poland alone received some twenty-five billion dollars from Big Capital. Why? Well they knew the workers in Poland would have lots of surplus value screwed out of them by the Polish boss class.

This boss class use the vast wealth created by the workers' labour power to enrich themselves in Poland, and to create

special conditions of privilege for their families. They also export part of the wealth to the West in the shape of interest rates on loans, or commodity products (usually food) which are then sold in Western markets at vast profit.

Comrades?

Is this not exactly the same sort of situation that obtains in Latin America, or South East Asia? Do not corrupt and greedy bureaucrats there enrich themselves as a class, and act as the caretakers for Big Capital's investments, even to the extent of shooting workers, and beating them, and casting them into prison, denying them their democratic rights?

Yet the scabs and collaborators of the self-styled Revolutionary Communist Group, the New Communist Party, and the Straight Left group inside the Labour Party side with the Polish military junta in such matters against the workers of Poland.

Can we call such "bastards" (I quote Poland's workers) comrades? Can we in any way collaborate with them as they try to gain positions of power in the Labour and trade union movement in Britain to erect a similar repressive state apparatus?

I say no collaboration with the scabs and collaborators of the RCG, NCP and Straight Left Group. Down with them! "Moscow was our Rome", said Santiago Carrillo. "That was the period of our infancy. Today we are grown up."

HARRY MULLIN
Glasgow

ALAN Walker is correct to say that the elections for secretary and assistant secretary of Liverpool NALGO took place by ballot and not, as stated in my article (SO 66) "Typists go Back to Work", at the AGM.

We obviously support the ousted officers in their campaign for re-election against anti-strike candidates.

This does not mean that the old officers were not seriously in error on many issues during the typists' strike.

We also believe that these errors were a not unimportant factor in the election defeat. While we would not claim omniscience about all aspects of the dispute, we would claim the right to offer our view about where the officers misled the strike.

For example, in what sense does advocating arbitration (the abandonment of "class struggle") constitute the actions of a "class struggle" leadership?

The question is not only whether the strikers themselves wanted arbitration, as Peter Cresswell stated in his letter to SO 63. Nor is it just whether the national union leaders wanted arbitration. It is not even merely whether support was forthcoming from the national leaders or from local trade unionists.



To any experienced trade unionist (like Alan Walker, Peter Cresswell and branch chairperson Graham Burgess) it should be quite unsurprising a) that the national leaders should

sell-out, b) that the inexperience of the women strikers should lead to confusion about the dangers of arbitration, and c) that local trade unionists should be slow to respond to a women's strike.

The question we are asking of the branch officers is: Did they, at any point in the dispute seek to expose the dangers of going to arbitration, to the confused strikers? Or did they act as the national leadership's yes men?

Did they at any time actively oppose arbitration and challenge the strikers' misconceptions? Or did they advocate arbitration under pressure from the national leaders?

Do the officers deny that the offer of arbitration got Jones off the hook at a time when the strike was biting, when the council were losing £400,000 a week in rents?

Was it really "factually incorrect" to speculate that the branch officers had allowed Jones to regain the initiative? And was it "factually incorrect" to suggest that the officers' tail-ending of the strikers on this question, had done little to inspire the more class conscious elements in the branch to vote for them in the branch elections?

Connected

Was it "factually incorrect" to assert that the mass of the membership had been left "bewildered" about the dangers of arbitration, by the failure of the officers to expose these dangers?

On the question of disciplining of scabs, Alan Walker protests against my suggestion that the branch officers "gave in". I do not accept his version of events.

Of course there was a mass meeting in which the branch officers advocated opposition to Jones' attempts to re-write the union rule book. But even before this meeting the negotiators had apparently conceded on the crucial question.

Jones and Stephenson had promised all along that if any strikers came back to work, the Liberals would safeguard their jobs, and this encouraged more scabs to do so. So it was crucial to keep this promise and extract an undertaking that the union would not endanger scabs jobs on the return to work by "victimisation".

Witch-hunts

The Liberals and scabs did not care a toss about expulsion from the union: that would just be a formality, a rap across the knuckles.

But Peter Cresswell was reported in the Echo on 3 December, four days before the mass meeting (if he has been mis-reported he will doubtless inform us) as follows:

"Mr Cresswell said NALGO had promised there would be no blood bath or witch-hunts on a

return to work—but agreed that no action be taken against members, who had broken union rules, 'would itself be a breach of union rules. The message that could happen to anyone would be expulsion from the union—but they would not lose their jobs.'" (emphasis added).

How reassuring this message has been for the scabs to read this in the Echo, particularly as they must have been not a little concerned about the attitude the union would adopt. It basically meant that "discipline" would merely be a tool of less formality, a rap across the knuckles.

When the final agreement came a week later, the Echo reported (or perhaps mis-reported?) it as follows (December 1981):

"Under the new wording it has been agreed that NALGO will do nothing which will prejudice the job security job prospects of council staff" (emphasis added).

And as if the message was not clear enough that the scabs had little to fear, branch chairperson Graham Burgess further reassured them in the Echo on 12 December.

Extracted

"No one [the scabs] will be weeded out as a matter of policy... we want harmonious relationships... there will be no witch-hunt by the branch committee, but if we receive complaints against some of our members, they will have to be investigated..."

"We want a united branch but I can only say in all honesty that there is likely to be a small number of cases."

Even if in practice there is little the union could do to the scabs kicked out of a miserable job, there was need to concede defeat in advance; to needlessly give Liberals the appearance of having forced the union to abandon its attempts to "victimise" the scabs.

To anyone reading the statements to the press, it looked like Jones and Stephenson had got away with their promise to safeguard the scabs' jobs; had extracted the essence from the negotiations, and the NALGO officers with their empty formality, a meaningless "union discipline" which promised in advance not to affect the scabs' jobs.

Since Alan Walker raised the question in his letter, I given my view in more detail than normally, and I hope clarifies why I made the statement that the officers "gave in" in my article.

Yours fraternally
CHRIS ERSWORTHY
Liverpool

How fall out can kill

by Les Hearn

TWO WEEKS ago I summarised the first article in a series 'Medicine and the Bomb' [British Medical Journal] describing the immediate effects of a one megaton airburst over BMA House in Central London. The second article dealt with the effects of fall-out radiation in the first fortnight on the human race.

With a stiff breeze in a north



west direction, a cigar-shaped cloud of fall-out would kill unprotected people as far as Manchester and beyond. How would they die?

Really massive doses of radiation [over 5000 rads] would cause immediate nausea and vomiting [N&V], followed by convulsions, tremors, and listlessness, with all victims dead in two days from breathing failure or swelling of the brain. Most people suffering such doses would probably die first from blast or heat.

1000 to 5000 rads [the dose in North West London, for example] would cause N&V for a day, followed by apparent recovery for about five days, then diarrhoea and fever until death of all victims in two weeks. This would be the fate of many soldiers and civilians if neutron bombs ['theatre nuclear weapons'] were used in Central Europe.

SCIENCE



600 to 1000 rads [London to Coventry] would cause N&V for two days, recovery for five to ten days, then loss of hair and white blood cells [leading to uncontrolled infections], and haemorrhage for up to four weeks with 90 to 100% of victims dying.

200 to 600 rads [Coventry to beyond Manchester] would cause similar symptoms, with a recovery phase of one to four weeks and a final phase of up to 8 weeks. Up to 90% of victims would die by three

months, according to dose.

100 to 200 rads [as far as Carlisle] would cause N&V, recovery for two weeks, and more N&V and loss of white blood cells for four weeks, but few deaths.

Under 100 rads would cause no symptoms except for sterility of males as far as Glasgow.

This list does not include long-term effects of radiation. These, as well as protective measures and medical treatment, will be dealt with in future articles.

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'Red Orchestra' which failed to play Stalin's tune

ON Wednesday January 24, Radio 4's nine o'clock news announced "Leopold Trepper, the leader of the wartime spy ring the Red Orchestra was buried in Israel today."

This brief statement recorded the final act in one of the most intriguing, interesting and full lives this century has yet known.

Trepper was a Jew and a Communist. It was these two factors that shaped Trepper's long and eventful life.

He was born on February 23, 1904, in Novy-Targ, Poland.

After World War I a rise in nationalistic sentiment fostered a dramatic rise in anti-semitism. This had two effects on the young Trepper. It forced his family to move in search of employment, and it resulted in him joining the left-wing Jewish youth movement "Hashomer Hatzair".

He quickly established himself within the movement. He took part in activities including the general strike of 1923 in Cracow and as a result was forced to move from Poland to Palestine.

Already disillusioned with Judaism, he quickly became disenchanted with the Kibbutzim. In 1924 he joined the growing Palestine Communist Party, where he worked for the unity of the working class, both Arabs and Jews.

To the disbelief of the Zionist leader Ben Gurion, the CP scored some success.

For Trepper the price for this moderate success was to be hounded, twice imprisoned, and eventually forced to leave the country by the English authorities.

In 1929 he arrived in Paris where he married another Jewish Communist. He worked for the Party in France for three years before he again had to leave the country.

The home of the socialist revolution was his next stop. But on arriving in Moscow he was surprised and shocked to see thousands of peasants crowded into railway stations, being transported to other parts of the country, warnings about thieves and a thriving black market.

He was assigned to Marchlevski, the university for national minorities. Among his lecturers were four broken old men whose names belied their appearances: Radek, Zinoviev, Bukharin and Kamenev.

In the following years Trepper witnessed the total

Socialist Bookshelf

Books and pamphlets that you should read

Leopold Trepper was a leading spy for the USSR who ended up convinced that 'socialism will triumph, and it will not have the colour of the Russian tanks that crushed Prague'. He described his life in his memoirs, 'The Great Game' (Sphere, £1.50). Brian Lucas reports.

destruction of any internal opposition to the Stalin regime, the annihilation of the leaderships of the Communist Parties throughout the world, the decapitation of the Red Army and the rule of fear with which the NKVD controlled the Soviet Union.

In his memoirs, "The Great Game" he gives a harrowing account of the fear under which the CP leaders of foreign countries who were studying in Moscow lived.

"And yet", he writes, "we went along, sick at heart but passive, caught up in machinery we had set in motion with our own hands, mere cogs in the apparatus, terrorised to the point of madness, we became the instrument of our own subjugation... But who did protest at the time? Who rose up to show his outrage? The Trotskyites can lay claim to this honour."

"Following the example of their leader... they fought Stalinism to the death, and they were the only ones who did. By the time of the great purges, they could only shout their rebellion in the freezing waste lands where they had been dragged in order to be exterminated. In the camps, their conduct was admirable. But their voices were lost in the

tundra.

"Today the Trotskyists have a right to accuse those who once howled along with the wolves. Let them not forget, however, that they had the enormous advantage over us of having a coherent political system capable of replacing Stalinism. They had something to cling to in the midst of their profound distress at seeing the revolution betrayed. They did not 'confess' for they knew that their confession would serve neither the party nor socialism."

Refused

Trepper himself was never a Trotskyist. Disillusioned by seeing many friends, comrades and leaders swallowed up by the Stalinist machine it would have been understandable for him to leave politics and go to live out of the reach of the NKVD. But one major driving force kept him going, his belief in the inevitability of war against Nazi Germany.

He met General Berzin, head of the espionage service, who also thought that war was inevitable, contrary to Stalin's pronouncements on the subject. They decided to set up a network in Belgium, France and Germany of agents who would not start to work until the outbreak of war.

After Trepper was assigned to Belgium, Berzin was shot for the support he gave to the former Red Army chief Tukhachevski.

In 1938 Trepper (political name Domb), renamed Adam Mikler, and an old Palestinian Jewish comrade named Leo Grossvogel set up their cover operation: The Foreign Excellent Trenchcoat Company.

Mikler remained a hard working "industrialist" until the outbreak of hostilities in 1939, but on the second day of the war his cover was blown. He took a new identity: Jean Gilbert, consultant to two new cover companies, Simex in Paris and Simexco in Brussels.

The Red Orchestra, as the spy network became known, began to play. Besides the operations in occupied Belgium and France, the Orchestra also had a branch within Germany under the leadership of another brave anti-Nazi, Schulze-Boysen.

This German operation was specifically against the orders of Stalin, who refused to believe that his good friend Hitler would threaten the Soviet Union, even when he was presented with the evidence of



"I was never a Trotskyist, but the Trotskyists who were accused in the trials were of an exceptional courage... Why was this? It is possible to understand: because of all the factions within the party, only the Trotskyist faction (one may or may not agree) understood much more deeply what had happened to the October revolution, its degeneration, what the Stalinist regime was."

(...)
"At the time when Trotsky analysed what was happening in the USSR, many militants did not believe in it. But later, it is not necessary to be a Trotskyist to understand that it is so, that it has developed as he foresaw. It is enough to live for a couple of years in a socialist country, not as a delegate from a fraternal party (in that case, one can know nothing) but to live one, two or three years in any one of these countries. And... there is such a (bureaucratic) caste. One can call it caste, class as you wish... It is not a class, that is my opinion."

(Information Ouvrieres, 9 July, 1974)

the date for the invasion by Trepper and Schulze-Boysen.

During the years 1940-43 the Orchestra sent 1,500 dispatches. There were some astounding successes. They managed to get the plans for Germany's super tank, the Tiger M6 to the USSR in time for the Soviet Union to produce their KV version which was superior in every aspect, and they did the same with the Messerschmitt fast plane. They also had a representative at every meeting of the German Chief of Staff—the stenographer!

The Germans set up a force (Sonderkommando) whose sole purpose was to stop the Orchestra. This they managed to do, thanks to the carelessness and mistakes made by the director of the spy centre in Moscow.

Eventually the whole of the Orchestra was arrested. The vast majority refused to say anything even under the most horrendous torture.

Many died under torture, some managed to commit suicide and others were executed.

Trepper was one of the very few who survived. The German High Command wanted to keep the network going to pursue the policy of a separate peace.

Trepper played along with their game long enough to secretly tell Moscow what was going on, then he escaped and remained at large until the end of hostilities.

He was flown back to Moscow early in 1945, expecting to be welcomed as a hero. Also on his flight was Shliapnikov, one time leader of the Workers'

Opposition, who was also promised a hero's welcome by Molotov.

Instead of medals they both received a prison cell at Lubianka. And Trepper spent the next ten years at Lubianka and Lefortovo.

His crime? Being assigned by the "traitor" General Berzin in 1938! He was not an isolated case. In prison he met thousands who similarly had committed no crime.

After the death of Stalin Trepper was released, free to go and join his wife and two sons. He had not seen them for 16 years, and they had been told he was dead.

Eventually he was allowed to go to Poland, where he became the head of Jewish and cultural affairs. He stayed there until 1967, when the Polish Party under Gomulka began its purge on Jews.

He applied to leave Poland to go to Israel, but it took four years, an international campaign and a threatened hunger strike for the Polish authorities to let him go.

When Trepper died at the age of 77 he was beaten but unbowed. He remained a Jewish communist: "I know that youth will succeed," he wrote, "where we have failed, that socialism will triumph and that it will not have the colour of the Russian tanks that crushed Prague."

"At night in our university," he records, "where militants from all countries were living, we used to stay awake until 3 am. At exactly that hour, headlights would pierce the darkness and sweep over the facades of the buildings."

"They're here! They're here!" When we heard that cry, a wave of anxiety would run through the dormitories. Standing at the windows, stomachs knotted with insane terror, we would watch for the cars of the NKVD to stop.

"It's not for us, they're going to the other end of the building". Relieved for the night in this cowardly way, we could sink into our restless sleep."

"Fear which had become our second skin, induced caution, guided us towards submission. I knew that my friends had been arrested and I said nothing. Why them? Why not me? I waited for my turn and prepared myself for this end."

"One day in the spring of 1937 Bela Kun [the Hungarian CP leader] arrived at a meeting of the Executive of the Comintern... Manuilski announced that according to documents furnished by the NKVD, Bela Kun had been a Rumanian spy since 1929."

"No one protested or even asked for further information... outside the building a car was waiting for Bela Kun, who was never seen again."

Shehu's lead lunch

A CONSIDERABLE amount of mystery still surrounds recent events in and around Albania, where the Prime Minister Mehmet Shehu was officially reported to have committed suicide on December 18. Little was said by Radio Tirana about Shehu's death, except that it was self-inflicted following 'nervous problems', and nothing has been said of Shehu since.

However, unofficial reports reaching Yugoslavia suggest that he died after attempting to shoot Enver Hoxha (the veteran Stalinist who has been in power in Albania since leading the National Liberation War to victory over the Nazis in December 1944) during a meeting of the politburo of the Albanian Party of Labour (Albanian CP).

An argument seems to have broken out over whether or not to continue with Hoxha's extreme isolationist policies, through which the Albanians

have broken successively with Yugoslavia (1947), the USSR (1955) and China (1977).

Albania's autarkic economy must need outside help now, (the idea of building Socialism in One Country has reached ludicrous proportions in this tiny Balkan country), and it is probable that Mehmet Shehu represented a faction within the party to develop better links with, at least, the Eastern Bloc. Hoxha cannot have agreed, guns were pulled, and in the ensuing battle Shehu died.

Simultaneously, Albanians over the border in Yugoslavia are fighting for an autonomous republic within the Yugoslav Federation. When Albania's borders were arbitrarily drawn up by the so-called Great Powers in 1913, large numbers of Albanian nationals found themselves outsiders.

They now live in the region of Kosovo and have never been

incorporated into Albania proper or accorded republican status of their own—despite wartime promises by Tito to the Albanian partisans. Demonstrations and rioting have met with increased repression by the Yugoslavs, who are also attempting to move Serbians into the area to reduce the Albanian majority.

Albania, whilst formerly repudiating any territorial claims against Yugoslavia, supports the Albanian nationals' demands, and relations between the two countries have deteriorated. A note from the Yugoslavian government to the Albanian Ambassador in Belgrade charging his country with internal interference in Yugoslavian affairs was refused at the door; in May 1981 two explosions (bombs?) were heard in the Yugoslavian Embassy in Tirana.

John Riley



Industrial News



COHSE fight low staff levels

DESPERATE conditions still existing in the Royal Edinburgh Hospital have resulted in union members unanimously deciding to continue industrial action within the hospital.

The unions have repeatedly approached management over the past few weeks in an attempt to resolve the low staffing problems. The COHSE branch even suspended their action to give management the opportunity to open negotiations, but met with no response.

A mass meeting of workers was called by the Joint Shop Stewards Committee to inform the whole workforce of the dispute.

Management refused to allow the meeting to take place on hospital premises or during working hours, due to the "political" nature of the meeting.

They then said that if the meeting went ahead it would be dispersed with the use of police force. Stewards then organised an outside venue and transport.

However, the day before the mass meeting was due to go ahead, a union full timer who had no previous connection with the dispute came in and with the branch secretary negotiated facilities

for two mass meetings, but only for their own particular union, leaving the other union out on a limb.

Stewards from the other union negotiated a similar arrangement and a joint union mass meeting was convened.

Despite the confusion the mass meetings were attended by about 350 workers. A union branch meeting held immediately afterwards voted to continue the industrial action.

A six-page document produced by management and read out to the meetings set out to defuse and blur the central aim of the action in the minds of the members.

ship but the members would have none of it.

Any attempt by the union bureaucrats to sell out the workers would have been met with firm opposition from the members.

The lesson to be learned from this stage in the dispute is that rank and file members must keep firm control of the actions of their representatives and ensure that they do the job they were mandated to do—to force management to recruit more staff and improve the conditions for staff and patients.

Jean McIntyre
and John Chalmers

Let's see cash!

STRIKES erupted in the BL Cowley Assembly Plant last week when bonus payments fell as production went up.

Each stoppage produced revised figures from the management. When the South Works, which produces the Ital, stopped on Friday afternoon, management again raised the figures and offered

payment for the period of the strike in an attempt to cool the situation.

Further stoppages are likely this week by workers who want to see Edwardes' 'praise' for their productivity achievements, carried in the Daily Mirror, translated into hard cash.

BILL PETERS

Support these sit-ins

AT INVERGORDON, at Brynmawr, and at Newhaven, sit-ins for jobs remain solid.

At Invergordon, over 100,000 signatures have been collected from local people in support of the workers occupying the BACO smelter. The workers are also planning another lobby of Parliament.

But a tour of workplaces by workers from the occupation, asking for support, donations, and backing of BACO, could rouse the

power needed to save the jobs. Write to Action Committee, Invergordon Smelter, Ross-shire, Scotland.

At the Dunlop Semtex plant in Brynmawr, management is refusing to discuss redundancy money until the occupation is called off. But the 300 workers are sitting tight, fighting for their jobs.

Sealink management have been discussing options with the French railways, SNCF, for maintaining the Newhaven/Dieppe ferry service. "This is obviously due to the

pressure mounting up on them by the continued occupation of the Senlac", John Newman of the Merchant Navy and Air Line Officers' Association told us.

"We will not be ending the occupation until a solution satisfactory to us, saving the ferry and the jobs, is found".

But mostly the national unions involved are giving little real support.

These workers are showing how to fight for jobs, and to win they need the

backing of the whole labour movement.

A Gallup poll recently showed most workers would be prepared to cut working hours to save jobs, though the poll did not make clear whether this would mean loss of pay.

The demand for work-sharing with no loss of pay must be raised now, in a united mobilisation of the labour movement.

JO THWAITES

DEFEATED BUT STRONG

LAST Friday, striking ASTMS members voted by 13-9 to return to work at Rank-Wharfedale in Bradford. Management have therefore beaten their 'no flexibility' ban which was the response to the management's imposition of a 3½ percent plus £1 wage increase.

During their three weeks on the picket line the strikers received no support from EETPU and FTAT workers. The full timers of both these unions did not even call a meeting to discuss the strike.

AUEW members were advised to continue working. The ASTMS strikers received minimal support from their full-timer.

Convenor Harry Waring obviously disappointed by the decision told Socialist Organiser that the 24 strikers had felt a strong sense of solidarity during the strike and were going to discuss contributing to the strike fund for the future.

The strike has caused considerable bitterness which will affect trade union unity at the plant but some lessons have been learned. Harry Waring thanked Socialist Organiser supporters both for their assistance and for the contribution they raised at the Labour Party.



37 AUEW and TGWU members are on strike at Jewel Razor, Sheffield against the victimisation of their convenor. They want blacking and financial support. Contact: D. Bremeld, 10 Parson Cross Rd, Sheffield 6.

PHOTO: JOHN HARRIS

Organising the left in the TGWU

Bruce Robinson reports on the meeting of SO supporters in the TGWU last weekend.

"THREE-QUARTERS of the Solidarnosc activists have been interned, right down to shop steward level... But the resistance is continuing... In the Ursus plant only two tractors have been produced in two weeks. Everyone supports us... We're the only force to fight for real democracy and socialism in Poland."

These words came from Piotr Kozlowski, the Solidarnosc convenor at the Ursus tractor plant outside Warsaw, speaking last Saturday at a meeting in Birmingham of over 30 Socialist Organiser supporters active in the TGWU. He continued: "Poland was a capitalist country before. We're not going back to that. But we're not going for Stalinism as we know what it's like, we want a society where the workers are really responsible for running the country. We would never allow leaders to separate themselves from the working class."

Comrade Kozlowski also spoke out on his call for blacking of Polish imports and exports.

"It is nothing to do with Reagan and Thatcher. We are

talking to trade unionists."

He argued that, although blacking might have a bad effect on supplies to the Polish population, it was the only way that the international working class could show solidarity with Solidarnosc and bring pressure to bear on the Jaruzelski junta.

Speakers from the Jewel Razors strike in Sheffield also addressed the meeting.

They are fighting the victimisation of their convenor, and called on TGWU members to organise blacking, financial support, messages of support and to ensure that TGWU members didn't cross their picket lines.

Opportunities

They demonstrated that international solidarity with Polish trade unionists is not just a slogan when they agreed to give their half of the collection to support the work of the Solidarity Trade Union Working Group, which is organising speaking tours for Piotr Kozlowski and other exiled Solidarity activists.

The meeting was an attempt to draw together TGWU militants supporting Socialist Organiser and provide a national framework for their work in the

union.

The structure and rules of the TGWU with members in different Regions and trade groups kept isolated from one another leave vast power in the hands of the full-time officials and makes union-wide rank and file organisation difficult.

The meeting agreed that the present situation in the TGWU provided both opportunities and dangers for revolutionaries.

The Left Labour/Communist Party leadership is in some disarray at a time when both the 'lefts' Kitson and Todd are clearly seen to have sold out major struggles against the government.

The 'left' leaders are also facing a massive loss of membership and are caught between the need to preserve the basis of their own power and their unwillingness to lead a fight against unemployment.

Invisible

There was considerable discussion of how rank and file organisation could best be built in the unions.

On Merseyside, coordinating committees have been set up made up 100% of rank and file delegates from branches.

This sort of organisation is usually blocked by the officials, who possess all

kinds of powers only vaguely defined by the rules.

To push for changes in the union, some kind of Broad Left organisation is needed. It was clear that the Broad Left differs radically from one Region to another. In Region 5, it was set up on the initiative of militants in the Midlands and, although it is not a mass body, it contains representative rank and file militants from a number of important sectors of industry.

In Region 1 the Broad Left is simply an electoral machine which consists entirely of officials, is invisible to ordinary members and does not meet publicly.

The meeting agreed that the creation or opening up of really representative Broad Left bodies should be a major priority for SO supporters in the TGWU. We also discussed how to make the TGWU habitable and attractive for the unemployed and which changes to the rules were necessary to make the TGWU democratic.

SO supporters are in a position to play a major role in the fight for rank and file organisation and a democratic union. We are organising another meeting in March. For further details, write to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Spread the cuts fight!

ON Monday the Manchester University students' fightback against the cuts entered a new phase. The Senate, successfully disrupted last week, tried to reconvene to approve the 16% cuts. The Senate—the main governing body of the University—is totally undemocratic with few students and manual campus workers represented on it.

This time the University authorities, faced by an angry mass picket of students, called in the police to defend this undemocratic meeting. The students attempted to picket the meeting and prevent the

body from approving the cuts but were faced with unprovoked police brutality. The violent police tactics resulted in many injuries but fortunately only one arrest.

A Manchester University Students Union Executive member told Socialist Organiser: "Today's events have clearly shown that the police see breaking picket lines as one of their major roles. It should be clear to students that the role of the police is not a neutral one. They will always side with the ruling class whether it is Arthur Snipe (boss of Laurence Scotts) or the University hierarchy."

The University's meeting went ahead and as expected they approved 16% cuts. The students' reaction was to immediately go into occupation of the main administration building.

Early Tuesday morning the students occupied the telephone exchange at the University which will considerably increase disruption.

However, action against the cuts must be national action. Other students must follow the lead set by Manchester. Occupations and disruption must occur on every campus across the country.

Stop this Inquisition

LAST Tuesday, 26 January, the CPSA DE London Regional Committee called a day of action in protest against the new 'availability test' being piloted in ten dole offices throughout the country.

This consists of a new question asking claimants if they are prepared to accept any job they can do.

During the current test period no-one is under any legal obligation to answer this question. Of course the form doesn't tell them this—it is just pushed in front of them at the dole office.

If claimants answer no to the question they may have their benefit suspended. If they answer yes, then they may be forced to take any low-paid job they are offered.

About 100 people turned up outside Waltham Cross dole office for the day of action. A delegation came from the Right to Work Campaign, giving their support to the ongoing CPSA campaign.

Leaflets are being handed out to fresh claimants every day, pointing out the implications of the availability question, and claimants' rights not to answer it.

At a time when increasing attacks are being made on the unemployed these new proposals are seen as yet another means to criminalise and police the unemployed.

This year has been the first in which benefits have not kept pace with inflation and earnings related benefit has been phased out.

Benefit workers are having their jobs cut at a time of increasing unemployment—thus being forced to increase productivity in cramped and unpleasant conditions which cause antagonism between them and the claimants.

Cuts in staffing levels have been announced. Natural wastage and compulsory transfers are being already implemented.

Benefit workers are angry at having their jobs eroded, being forced under increasing pressure and at the prospect of becoming the police force of the unemployed. They do not wish to be a part of the government's degrading tactics to make claimants pay for the crisis of capitalism.

LINDA GREEN

ASLEF LEADERS

HOLD BACK

by STEVE GOOD
(Asst Branch Secretary, Kings X ASLEF,
in personal capacity)

Socialist Organiser

FROM ALL-OUT

STRIKE

WITH THE ASLEF executive appearing to stand firm on the question of yet another arbitration on pay and flexible rosters and with BR launching a new propaganda initiative in the press on the joys of variable rostering, the railways still look set for a prolonged confrontation. Prolonged is indeed the word, as the ASLEF NEC have announced yet another week of two-day stoppages.

The ASLEF leadership are now keenly aware that there is a growing movement in the ranks for an all-out strike and despite efforts to control local militancy, Buckton and Co are having a job holding in the reins.

This week they have moved to increase disruption of BR by scheduling strikes on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday, rather than Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday. BR will have to shut down and restart its network three times in a week.

The Labour Party NEC has clearly supported the train drivers, and Tony Ben has spoken out for them.

Neutral

But the Shadow Cabinet has made it clear that the Bishops Stortford deal certainly does not include the PLP leadership backing Party policy on this issue! It has remained 'neutral'.

Terry Duffy of the AUEW and Frank Chapple of the EETPU have done worse, publicly backing BR's call for arbitration. And Sid Weighell of the NUR has also helped the bosses, accusing ASLEF of 'renegeing' on last year's deal with BR!

ASLEF EC members have been touring branches



McCarthy's inquiry promises railworkers nothing

pleading with the membership to fall into line with the official policy. Where pleading has failed and the local branch concerned is weak, massive personal pressure has been placed on individual branch officers to abandon localised actions and place their faith in the Executive.

At King's Cross, where the branch is traditionally well-organised and militancy is running high, even the appearance of Don Pullen, the Assistant General Secretary, at a recent branch meeting was not enough to sway rank and file members from whole-hearted support both for the policy of non-cooperation and the blacking of the Sun.

But EC members have been vicious in their effort to keep control. Over the

Sun blacking, which was undoubtedly an escalation of the national dispute, Bill Ronsley, outgoing President and a member of the Communist Party, singled out King's Cross for attack. Ronsley put a motion before the executive calling for the expulsion of Kings Cross branch from the union!

The motion was defeated but it is only a very extreme example of how far the EC is prepared to go in order to put a dampener on local action.

The executive realise, of course, that they cannot control the branches merely by coercion or threats. The exasperation of many militants at official policy has to be appeased in one way or another.

Now, the EC is proposing to have lightning strikes, instead of the two-day events which have become incorporated into the commuters' routine and have virtually no impact whatsoever on the movement of freight.

Total

But the attitude of BR and the government calls for all-out action. It is not the disruption of passenger and freight traffic which will win the dispute but a total stoppage of this traffic.

The executive have also displayed their determina-



tion to contain the struggle in another key area—that of blacking action. As a result of initiatives taken by Kings Cross branch, the EC has now obtained from Bill Keys, General Secretary of SOGAT, something in the way of a directive which has been sent to SOGAT branches.

SOGAT members are, of course, scabbing on the ASLEF strike by transporting newspapers nationally during the course of the dispute.

Keys has now instructed his members not to cross ASLEF picket lines! That is either a way for Keys to neatly sidestep the issue or an open invitation to organise secondary pickets.

At a meeting with Nick Sharman from the SE Region TUC last week, an ASLEF delegation was informed that in spite of local branch pressure the drivers' union executive had not been calling for a clear directive on blacking from the leaderships of other unions. This, in spite of a call from Kings Cross branch of

ASLEF that the EC demand effective blacking action from the TGWU.

The ASLEF EC is clearly and consciously going into this fight with their hands tied behind their backs.

A meeting has been set up for this week at the London Liaison Committee. The committee must, as a matter of urgency, take up the question of blacking action which can only be enforced by secondary pickets.

One branch on its own cannot sustain the kind of picketing required to prevent scabbing of the sort that has been going on with SOGAT members on Fleet Street.

The Liaison Committee can, however, sustain such an action and indeed extend it to TGWU branches in the coach operator firms.

Drivers have seen a reluctance to take on extra coaches for rail traffic, but there have been no actual ASLEF pickets to mount pressure for sympathetic action.

Last year, the executive committee did away with

the union's district councils as a 'cost-cutting' measure. It is now clearer than ever that this was done to eliminate direct contact between branches for precisely such an eventuality as a national dispute.

The Liaison Committee must fill this gap and direct the militancy in the ranks towards the EC so there can be no alternative for them but to call for all-out action. Formerly the Liaison Committee was restricted to ASLEF members. No such restrictions can be placed upon it now.

Guards in the NUR are still in rebellion over 'flexi-rosters' as was demonstrated by the walk-out at Fenchurch Street and Shrewsbury last week. This magnificent action is however localised and isolated.

The Liaison Committee must provide a focus and a lever for the guards in their fight to reject the new productivity measures and against the rotten leadership of Weighell and the right wing.

Keys call to break law

"We are inviting people to break the law," wrote Bill Keys, secretary of the print union SOGAT, in last week's Tribune.

And this policy of defiance of the Tebbit law was applauded by a union special conference last Friday, 29th.

Keys outlines proposals for:

*TUC-coordinated industrial action to defend unions against the Tebbit law.

*Trade union withdrawal from the NEDC, Government bodies and tribunals.

*Non-compliance with ballots on closed shops. No union must accept funds for ballots.

SOGAT's proposals point the way for trade unionists to start preparing for the decisive industrial action which alone can defeat Tebbit.

But if most of the TUC leaders have their way, then there will be no action, no preparation, just defeat accepted in advance.

Risky

TUC officials have drafted a document on Tebbit which says:

*Withdrawal from tribunals is 'dangerous';

*Withdrawal from the NEDC would be futile;

*Defiance of compulsory ballots is 'risky';

*Coordinated action is impractical;

*Even a token one-day protest would be too much.

Accepting this policy would mean meekly putting out our hands for the Tories to put their chains on them. Socialists must organise now for a fighting policy.

*See centre page feature on the fight against Tebbit's law.

Spread the news!

We're offering bundles of five each week for £1 post free, and bundles of 10 for £1.75 post free. That's £12 for three months for bundles of 5, and £21 for bundles of 10.

Regular subscription rates are £5 for three months, £8.75 for six months, and £16 for a year.

From: Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8. Please make cheques payable to Socialist Organiser.

Socialist Organiser FUND

Solidarity FIGHTING FOR ITS LIFE!

Call for labour movement solidarity—p.3

Take a bundle of 50 to sell!

Why we're going up

THE Socialist Organiser Delegate Meeting last Saturday decided to raise the price of Socialist Organiser from 20p to 25p. This increase will go into operation from February 18. The price to claimants and strikers will remain at 10p.

The price is no higher than general inflation, since Socialist Organiser has been at 20p since August 1980. Moreover we now have 16 pages as against 12 then—and (we think) a better and broader coverage.

Tribune is 35p, Labour Weekly 30p and Socialist Challenge 25p. Militant and Socialist Worker, each with their own printworks, are still 20p, though Socialist Worker is now having to run

a special £10,000 fund appeal to avoid a rise to 25p.

Despite all this, we took the decision with regret. Some delegates opposed the increase.

But the majority were convinced by the financial report. Our costs are going up, the same as all prices. For a while, rising circulation offset that, but our sales now seem to have reached a plateau, with only very slow increases.

For months, we have been operating on a tight-rope. Each time we produce a campaign or solidarity leaflet, send a circular to local groups or a reporter to a big dispute like the present one at Leyland Vehicles, it requires careful juggling to

get cash for paper, stamps and fares.

And while we are scrabbling for these relatively small amounts, we are building up bigger and bigger debts to suppliers and for essential services.

We have kept afloat by repeated appeals for funds. Many of our more committed supporters have responded tremendously, again and again. But that spring can only be tapped so often. And the backlog of debts can only build up so far.

Fund-raising from a wider circle of readers, and increased sales are what we must look to. But here and now good intentions, or even firm plans for sales and fund-raising, will not pay bills.

That's why we have to raise the price. The means of making sure it's the last price increase for a long time lie in our readers' hands—it all depends on the political work of extending sales and support.

Meanwhile we still need contributions and donations urgently. In the last week, we've had a much better response than for a while. The total is £308.

Stoke £10; Oxford £57; Bristol £25; Coventry £40; Durham £22; Islington £55; Edinburgh £50; F. London £30; Lambeth £19.

Keep it up! Contributions to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.