

Join the
Labour
Party

Socialist Organiser

Against all bans and proscriptions!

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Polish
workers
defy
junta

IN A startling display of courage and militancy in the face of continued military repression, tens of thousands of Polish trade unionists have taken part in demonstrations and clashed with riot police over the May Day weekend.

On Monday May 3 — the anniversary of Poland's revolutionary democratic constitution of 1791 — riots were reported in no less than 14 towns, including the original Solidarnosc strongholds of Gdansk and Szczecin as well as Warsaw, Lublin, Torun, Krakow, Lodz, Bydgoszcz and Poznan.

First signs of this new defiance of Jaruzelski's savage Stalinist junta was the astonishing 50,000 Solidarnosc supporters who turned out in Warsaw to support a noisy rival march to the official May Day demonstration led by Jaruzelski. Thousands more marched in Gdansk.

By the Monday, marches were being met by violent action from riot police with tear gas, water cannon,

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"I do not believe the actions of the fleet can be justified in any way. The British labour movement ought to be mounting a campaign to stop the war"
REG RACE MP
speaks to Socialist
Organiser — p.15

SLAUGHTER IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

A BLOOD OFFERING TO THATCHER!

A FEW weeks ago a US government official, wearied by the negotiations over the Falklands, voiced his exasperation to the press. The negotiating effort was in vain, he said, because the Tories wanted a battle. Thatcher wanted blood.

It looks like he was right. Some 350 Argentine sailors — the great majority of them teenage conscripts, aged 17 to 20 — have been killed in the sinking of the cruiser General Belgrano.

Even the horrible logic of war hardly explains this bloodshed. The cruiser was a lumbering veteran of Pearl Harbour, sailing outside the 'exclusion zone', launching no attack on the British forces. Its sinking was more like cold-blooded murder —

a blood-offering to Thatcher and to the war zeal of the British military top brass.

The destruction of British destroyer and the loss of some 30 British sailors' lives soon followed.

By the time Socialist Organiser reaches its readers, the death toll in Thatcher's war

may be much higher again.

As Tony Benn pointed out last weekend, "The admirals and generals are now in charge". Benn quoted from a letter received from a marine's fiancée.

"She said that most of his unit did not want to fight over islands so far from home. Most of them are only 18 years old. They come from working class families and only joined up to escape the dole queue".

"They are being sent to their deaths for a lost cause".

Maybe the warmongers will decide soon that another spell of negotiations can follow the bloodshed. And maybe not. Maybe soon the number of conscripts and 'economic' conscripts slaughtered in this war to save Thatcher's face will exceed the total population of the Falkland Islands.

Who then will believe that Thatcher is motivated by concern for the Falklanders?

The Tory press has been full of outrage against Benn for "bringing class into it" in wartime. Yet the class issues are fundamental. The working class stands only to lose from Thatcher's war for the prestige of the British ruling class.

Thatcher's war will strengthen the Tories, by rallying flag-waving support behind them as the party of "Britain's" victories against a foreign enemy. It will strengthen militarism, enab-

ling the armed forces hierarchy to increase its prestige and its demands for more military spending.

And it will strengthen the world-exploiting power of the richest capitalist states — their ability to impose their will on oppressed peoples that fight back.

So victories for Thatcher will be defeats for the working class. From the point of view of the British working class, defeat for Thatcher is the best outcome from the clashes in the South Atlantic.

The labour movement should campaign for the withdrawal of the fleet. We should take class action against Thatcher's war.

At Felixstowe, the seamen's union port committee has advised members not to sail ferries requisitioned by the Navy. Though the committee cautiously stressed that it was only defending trade union interests, not directly challenging the war, this action points the way forward for the whole labour movement.

By blacking military supplies, the labour movement could and should halt this war.

The demand is mounting from the labour movement for negotiations in place of battles. Michael Foot has refused Thatcher's invitation to private talks on the war.

Any dissociation from the Tories, and any campaign for the recall of the fleet, should be supported.

And better that Thatcher and Galtieri deal with their disputes by negotiation than by war.

But the labour movement cannot afford to put itself in the role of adviser to Thatcher on how best to negotiate. The Bank of England, or US economic pressure, are not at the disposal of the labour movement as alternative weapons to wield against Galtieri instead of the fleet!

If we look towards such illusions, we can lose sight of what the labour movement — with the methods of working class action that actually are open to us — can do to win a peaceful solution.

We can wage class war against Thatcher's war. We can force the British ruling class to repudiate its claims to the resources of the South Atlantic and Antarctica. On that basis, we can establish links with Argentine labour — exiled Argentine trade unionists have already appealed to the TUC for discussions on joint working class action to achieve a peaceful settlement.

We can help the Argentine workers' movement fight for its rights and overthrow Galtieri. We should help the Argentine workers defend Argentina's own territory and people against any aggression by Thatcher.

In that context, we should seek common working class action to defend the right of the Falkland Island-

ers to decide their own future — pointing out that the islanders are a long-established distinct community with a distinct territory, posing no threat to Argentina's national rights, and that Galtieri's invasion was no anti-imperialist action but a mini-colonial gambit to try to strengthen the position of the military within Argentina. We should offer our support to the Argentine workers for a genuine anti-imperialist struggle against the banks and the multinationals — and against Galtieri!

The labour movement is beginning to awake to its responsibilities in this crisis, moving away from the initial silence or open support for Thatcher. Still Labour's leaders are too timid, too dependent on ruling-class options, too inclined to shelter behind the words of the UN rather than come out with an independent line which is Labour's and no-one else's.

As on jobs and wages in Britain, they prefer to operate as advocates of a supposed alternative of more humane, more moderate capitalist policies.

But independent working class politics, necessary at all times, are never more necessary than in time of war. And if Labour's leaders will not campaign for such politics, then the serious left wingers must organise themselves to do so.



DEMONSTRATE IN LONDON



MAY 8th BRITAIN OUT OF IRELAND MAY 8th
SELF DETERMINATION FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE

Assemble 1pm Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park, London



Murray presents his excuses to last Thursday's lobby

Fighting Tebbit

A SECOND reprint is currently being organised of the leaflet 'Act Now Against Tebbit' from the Mobilising Committee for the Defence of Trade Union Rights, and of the Committee's factsheet, 'How the Tebbit Bill affects You'.

Trade union branches are taking bulk orders — 500, for example, to Camden NUPE. And local Mobilising Committees are starting activity, following the example of the London Committee launched under the chairmanship of Jeremy Corbyn of Hornsey Labour Party and NUPE.

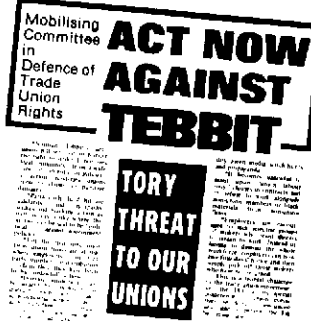
In Leicester for example the Trades Council has sponsored its own local campaign against Tebbit.

The Mobilising Committee's appeal calls for the labour movement to break all links with the Tories now and the TUC to call a one-day strike as the first

step to all-out action to stop the Tebbit Bill becoming law.

It becomes the more vital, the more the Tories step up the pressure. If the labour movement allows the Tebbit threat to be overshadowed by the Falklands crisis, or resigns itself to the idea that nothing can be done for now because the Tories are so determined to push the Bill through, then the conditions for fighting back in the future will be that much worse.

Contact: Mobilising Committee for the Defence of Trade Union Rights, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL. Or phone 01-609 3071.



Break links with Tories!



Hull

campaign

HULL Unemployed Workers Union has called for a fight against Tebbit's Bill. It has decided to propose:

1. Break all links with the Tories now, including withdrawal from the NEDC and other tripartite committees.

2. Agreeing to give total and public support to the one day national strike being called for by rank and file members within the TUC, and demanding that the TUC at a national level openly supports the rank and file.

3. Call on Hull TUC to organise a day of protest against Tebbit's Bill, with walk outs at factories, schools, docks, and all workplaces.

Hull UWU has also printed 2,000 copies of the Mobilising Committee leaflet, 'How the Tebbit Bill affects you', for distribution in the Hull labour movement, and to add as a page to their paper Dole Mirror.

STUC waits for next election

"ALL IN all a difficult year for the trade union movement. We are however looking ahead to the next General Election". These sentences from the General Council's Annual Report summed up the philosophy informing the Scottish TUC's debate on Tebbit's union-bashing Bill.

14 motions were submitted, more than on any other issue. But the only one with

any teeth at all was the one from the NUM Scottish Area which called not only for 'militant resistance... including the use of strike action', but also for an 'end to collaboration on tripartite bodies such as the National Economic Development Council'.

All fourteen motions were merged into a single composite, and the NUM call for an end to collabora-

tion with the Tories was quietly dropped.

The composite pledged to 'vigorously oppose any new legislation', urged 'financial, industrial and any other appropriate support to assist trade unions which become victims under the Tory anti-union legislation', and called on the General Council to organise 'rallies, demonstrations and coordinated

forms of industrial action on a local and national level'.

An emergency motion was also put. It 'welcomed and wholeheartedly supported the decisions of the Special Conference of Executives held by the British TUC on April 5', and 'the commitment of the movement to give the General Council of the TUC powers to coordinate ind-

ustrial action against employers using this Act'.

Both motions were passed unanimously.

'This may have appeared a subdued debate', said STUC President John Pollock in his summing up, 'without much rhetoric. But this is a reflection of the seriousness with which we confront this issue'.

But there was a fair

amount of rhetoric in the course of the speeches.

What was lacking was any real response to the rhetoric from the floor of the conference. Rhetoric ceases to be rhetoric when people can see through it.

The serious atmosphere most likely reflected the nagging awareness in delegates' minds that all the clichés and phrases could mean everything or nothing.

A successful campaign to defeat Tebbit — including the implementation of the promises of action in the motions passed at the STUC conference — lies in the hands of rank and file militants.

Tories pleased with Civil Service award

DESPITE appearances the Tories have good reason to be pleased with the result of arbitration on civil service pay. The arbitration award was 6.25% for those on the maximum of their scale in each grade; 4.5% to the bottom scale in each grade, and 5.5% to in-between scales; plus extra leave.

It seemed to be a big blow to the original Tory offer — 4.5% on the maximum, one to two per cent on in-between scales, and zero for the youngest and those on minimum scales.

But the award is a big cut in real wages. The Tories have seen that the leadership of the civil service unions is weak and ineffective, demoralised after their failures in 1981, and more than willing to enter into long-term arbitration-type schemes for future pay.

If the Tories should reject the award, then there would certainly be unofficial action. But there has been no rank and file action against the award itself.

By fighting alongside the health service workers, civil servants could have helped strike a big blow against Tory pay-cutting; but the chance looks like being missed.

The major responsibility lies with the right-wing NEC, who have made no effort to rouse the membership.

But the Broad Left too has been slow. A London conference of all civil service workers, called by the CPSA London area committees, organised a mass lobby of the arbitration hearing on April 19 — but the Broad Left, after giving token support, failed to mobilise.



Leadership key to CPSA decisions

THE motions carried or lost at this year's CPSA conference, beginning on May 13, will matter less than the make-up of the new National Executive.

Over the last year the right wing NEC has defied conference policy on issues like new technology and affiliation to CND, as well as selling out the 1981 pay struggle. Without a Broad Left majority this year, any conference decisions opposed by the right wing are likely to be suppressed, and CPSA democracy will be further smothered.

The National Executive and officers are elected by ballot at workplace meetings, thanks to a democratic reform pushed through by the Left some years back.

In the election for deputy general secretary, Broad Left candidate John Macreadie lost by only 1,177 votes, despite a vicious witch-hunting campaign against him by the Right and despite some Broad Left members voting against him because he is a Militant supporter. Macreadie is now pressing charges of corruption in the election process in ten branches led by right

wingers.

So the prospects for the Broad Left in the NEC elections — whose results will be declared during the conference — are good.

Some vital issues are before conference in any case.

*The left will be pushing to extend the principle of election to the middle ranks of CPSA officials, and to bring their pay more in line with the union members'.

*On pay, the left will be opposing moves for long-term arbitration schemes.

*On new technology, the left will be pushing to overturn the recently signed national agreement in respect of the clause accepting job loss and the two-year limit on the 'no compulsory redundancy' clause. Otherwise, 30,000 jobs stand to be lost between now and 1984.

On this issue, the left must stress the links with the fight against the cuts and for a shorter working week.

*The big political battle with the right wing will be over affiliation to the Labour Party. The lead motion for affiliation is from my branch, British Library.

*On Tebbit, there is a grave danger of a very weak motion going through, namely accepting the TUC's 8 points. Socialist Organiser supporters will be pushing for an emergency motion to commit CPSA to demanding that the TUC break links with the Tories and call a one-day general strike.

The conference will also begin to bring to a head the debate about how the left should organise in the CPSA.

Abandoned

The Socialist Workers' Party seem to have abandoned any idea of Redder Tape being more than SWP plus sympathisers. But they have developed no alternative route to build a rank and file movement.

Their self-exclusion from the open and democratic Broad Left organisation leaves an open field to Militant as the biggest force there.

But conference will also see a stronger intervention from the Socialist Caucus in the Broad Left, which fights to turn the Broad Left away from the cautious electoralism favoured by Militant.

Youth suffer from Tebbit's other Bill

THE Manpower Services Commission Task Force, including representatives from the TUC and CBI, has come to an agreement on proposals to Norman Tebbit on how to deal with the young unemployed.

Tebbit had produced a White Paper outlining a Youth Training Scheme which all unemployed 16 year olds would have to do. You'd be paid a pathetic £14.40 a week, and if you refused to go on the scheme, then you could not claim supplementary benefit.

The MSC task force — with TUC assent — has agreed that this youth training scheme should go ahead, with only a couple of minor amendments.

On the initiative of the CBI — the bosses' organisation — they are suggesting that £14.40 a week is a bit mean! It should be increased to £25 a week — the poverty wage you get on YOP schemes now.

The Task Force also proposes that all 16 year olds be given the chance to come onto these training schemes, not just the unemployed. The result of that proposal is clear. Proper jobs for 16 year olds will be even more impossible to find.

The MSC suggests that youth who refuse to go on a training scheme should still be allowed to claim supplementary benefit. There's no way Tebbit will agree to this, as the whole purpose of his training scheme is to get the unemployed off the official statistics.

It is nothing strange that the CBI supports such proposals. But it is appalling that the TUC does too. The TUC clearly have no intention of fighting youth unemployment, and are quite happy to go along with the Tories' and the bosses' plans to conceal the true numbers of unemployed youth.

Tebbit could well 'grant' the £25 a week 'allowance'. The TUC can then sit back and say 'Look, we've forced the Tories to change course on this. What more can we do?'.

They can withdraw from the MSC right now, and have nothing to do with Tebbit's cover-up schemes for the young unemployed. The trade unions are supposed to be fighting unemployment, not covering it up for the Tories.

FUND

Sorry — we're still doing our arithmetic on last month's standing orders. But the month's total was certainly well below the £1000 target.

And we're not doing well this month. Send contributions to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8



Civil servants: offered no leader

ACTION GETS UNDER WAY

Last week was the first full week in which one of the health unions — CoHSE — had sanctioned action in pursuit of their 12% pay claim. Socialist Organiser looks at the action on the ground.

ON WEDNESDAY April 28 five hospitals were affected by strike action in Greater Manchester.

ASTMS members at Crumpsall Hospital struck and picketed the hospital, while NUPE members at four hospitals in Salford Health Authority took half day strike action and mounted effective pickets.

Prestwich Hospital, which has nearly 700 NUPE members, was the scene of particularly militant strike action. ANNA LUNTS, a NUPE shop steward at Prestwich Hospital, reports:



At 9 o'clock we were joined by more student nurses, clerical staff, and part-timers. Half a dozen members of the FBU arrived to give support. The pickets cheered, and our morale was boosted.

The picketing resulted in long queues of traffic down Bury New Road, and tail-backs on the motorway.

But, despite the hassle, many motorists hooted and cheered at the sight of striking uniformed hospital workers. A leaflet outlining our case to the general public got a good response and opened many people's eyes to the appalling wages we receive.

We turned back non-essential supplies. The pickets decided what should be allowed in, and what was considered an emergency

delivery.

Some of the excuses were pathetic. For example: Driver: 'I've got an urgent delivery'.

Picket: 'What is it?'

'Electrical equipment'.

'What sort?'

'Electric fires'.

Relatives and patients were allowed through. Several patients came up to tell us that they supported our action. In fact, one patient, an EETPU member, sent £5 to the branch secretary to show support.

The money has been returned to the patient, but this shows that patients understand that our action is not aimed against them.

Morale was fantastic. We shouted slogans — 'Maggie, Maggie, Out, Out, Out'. We cheered when

lorries and contractors were turned back. We drank lots of coffee and waved placards.

The idea that we were all drinking rum is of course a vicious rumour.

One lady felt so inspired that she walked up and down the zebra crossing carrying her placard and holding traffic to ransom. By the way — to the three T&G members who were smuggled in a blue land rover: your days are numbered.

The mood of militancy on the picket line was amazing, every bit as angry as a picket line in industry. Decisions about who could go in were made where they belonged, by the workers involved, although clear guidelines will be necessary



Pickets at Prestwich

United action in Leicester

by Charlie Sarell (NUPE steward, Leicester)

INDUSTRIAL action started on Wednesday 28 April, at the Leicester Royal Infirmary.

On the previous Monday the NUPE Hospitals Branch Committee had unanimously agreed that united action was necessary, and that meant that if CoHSE were starting their action, then NUPE locally would start.

This, of course, runs against the national position of NUPE which is to wait until the TUC Health Committee calls for action.

Other hospitals covered by the Leicester Hospital Branch of NUPE have also started action, or are starting action on May 4.

At the moment the action is confined to working to rule and establishing what areas of work we will allow to be done and which we will cut out.

So far the response has been very good amongst all sections of the ancillary staff, but the influence of the RCN and the 'Florence Nightingale' mentality has meant that action amongst

nurses is very isolated and patchy.

The response of the management has so far been very low key, but they have issued to shop stewards at the Leicester Royal Infirmary copies of the 1979 DHSS Health Service Management document 'If Industrial Relations Break Down'.

This is nothing more than a warning shot and as has been explained by the Hospital Administrator, it contains the various responses that the workforce

can expect, including docking of pay and lock-outs.

The stewards told the membership about this document at a mass meeting of both NUPE and CoHSE on Friday April 30, explaining that management had not yet acted on it, and would warn us when they intended to.

The rank and file responded by saying that the fight must go on. We'll have to take anything that is thrown at us, but we have to win this time.

NHS PAY FIGHT

HELP

However, as one nurse pointed out before the vote was taken: 'The only way we can prove to our leadership that we are serious is by taking local action'.

There was general agreement that we had had inadequate leadership, and that we needed to lobby the TUC Health Services Committee and the NUPE Executive to get them to call national all-out strike action with emergency cover only.

Some of us who had voted for a one-day strike went away feeling a bit disappointed, but on the whole we felt it had been a great day. The faces of management when confronted by their own angry employees were unforgettable.

We saw reports of our action in two national newspapers and three local newspapers, and heard reports on three radio stations and two television channels. Not bad for a start.

And finally: to the RCN member who asked who the outside agitators on the picket line were — they were ancillaries from the annexe.

in the future.

At 12 o'clock a mass meeting was held, where a vote for one day strike action the following week was taken and passed by 60% of those present.

However, the stewards

are divided, and the outcome of the meeting was that our action was deferred in favour of pursuing joint action with CoHSE by collaborating with 2-hour lightning strikes until our own executive gave us national guidelines.

Oxford: COHSE by Jo Coxhead (CoHSE secretary, Oxford)

sets pace

WHEN CoHSE members gathered, 150 strong, at the psychiatric hospital in Oxford for the hour of protest over pay on April 14, everyone wondered what we should do next.

A resolution was put at the Littlemore Hospital meeting that we should lobby the TUC Health Service Committee on April 29, to demand that they put the maximum pressure on their constituent unions to call national strike action with essential patient care under union members' control, to win the pay claim.

This was passed with only one vote against.

But what action should we take while our union leaders dragged their feet? How could we push them into action?

The logical step was a one-day strike to carry out this lobby and make it as strong as possible, thus showing our union leaders what we were prepared to do.

This proposal was passed overwhelmingly.

When April 29 came, the turnout for the pickets was the best in the history of Oxford CoHSE. We decided not just to lobby the TUC, but to charter a bus and a van to go round all the local general hospitals, to meet the workers and to ask them to come out on strike with us when their unions gave the go-ahead.

This we did, with a fantastic response.

We walked into a NUPE stewards' meeting and they cheered us. Their section had voted 16 to 1 for industrial action on pay.

What they wanted was a week's national strike action, as a build-up. They, like us, felt that such national action would be welcomed as the only way to break the Tory government's vicious four per cent limit.

The CoHSE section at the Area Health Authority supplies department stopped work completely and picketed; canteen workers stopped at the Regional Health Authority; and another hospital which had decided to come out for half a day stayed out for the whole day.

Stopped

Back at Littlemore Hospital, the kitchen porters had stopped completely, and management, who had said they would not take the food trolleys to wards, ended up backing down and doing just that!

Nurses took turns in coming out for four hours at a time.

At 4pm, a delegation visited the Cowley car fac-

ory (which we had leafleted the day before), to collect for the strike fund. Car-workers, themselves badly paid, were queuing up to donate money. Their generosity was tremendous.

Meanwhile, back in London, I was lobbying the TUC Health Services Committee along with 18 other Oxford CoHSE members and some workers from Guys Hospital in London. Not only were we not allowed into the meeting room, we weren't even allowed in the foyer of the building: 'You are not on official business!'

We handed in our resolutions, adding the information that CoHSE members in Oxford were already on strike that day. For 2½ hours, no-one came out.

They had invited the press in straight after their meeting, instead of seeing us.

While the rest of us caught the bus back to Oxford, one member stayed behind. He later reported back that the TUC had decided to coordinate... nothing.

Unlike these bureaucrats, we cannot afford to wait. For CoHSE members in Oxford, taking strike action and persuading other workers to come out with us has made us start to realise our own strength like nothing else could do.

We must continue to show our union leaders that we are not prepared to sit around only making helpless gestures. We must force them to call strike action with union control of emergency services nationally.

Scots strike

IN EDINBURGH, Rosslynlee Hospital has gone on an all-out strike for six days over a domestic who was suspended for following CoHSE guidelines.

Gogarburn Hospital has banned all non-emergency admissions.

NUPE South Hospitals branch has voted for all-out strike action. A joint shop stewards meeting at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital has been called for Monday May 10, and will discuss this motion. The local leadership in CoHSE will support the strike call, and the debate will centre round who controls emergency cover.

Islington — test bed for SDP

Islington, in North London, has the only SDP Council in Britain. A solid Labour majority (50 Labour councillors, 2 Tories) was returned in the last election, but the majority of those Labour councillors have now gone over to the SDP — and joined up with the Tories to run the council.

All three of Islington's MPs, elected as Labour, have also gone over to the SDP.

These councillors and MPs were right wingers, who mostly gained their positions when the Islington Labour Party was weak, inactive and bureaucratically run. But recent years have seen a big expansion, and a sharp shift to the left, in those Labour Parties.

Islington is therefore a test case for the SDP — and for the ability of the new left wing in the Labour Party to fight the SDP.

Despite the Islington Labour Parties' shift to the left, their manifesto for May 6 is still — like many other local Labour manifestos — full of commitments to improve services but vague on exactly how far a Labour council will go in defying the Tory government.

A Labour victory on May 6 will therefore be only an essential first step. What happens after that will depend on the ability of the Labour Parties and unions to hold the Labour councillors to account, and on the activity of those left-wing councillors who are determined to take on Heseltine.

Pat Longman is a Socialist Organiser supporter, a member of the print union NGA, and a Labour candidate in St. George's ward, Islington. She told us how she sees the issues.

Why are you running for council?

For three reasons: First, it is important that people run for Council who want to help and extend those campaigns and organisations fighting to protect and defend the interests of the working class.

Second, we need Labour councillors prepared to stand up to Heseltine — to refuse to implement the cuts or to pass on the attacks in the form of increases in rents and rates. It's no good arguing for these policies in Labour Party meetings unless you are also prepared to put forward candidates who will fight for the policies, and to replace the councillors who collaborate with the Tories.

Third, it is important also that more women are prepared to stand for the council and to fight for women's rights.

How do you think a Labour council can help working people in Islington fight for their rights?

One of the main points

of the Islington Labour Manifesto is to decentralise: to build up neighbourhood groups and to provide on-the-spot help with maintenance and repairs. We want to put more control into the hands of those who are directly affected by council services.

In this way we hope a Labour council will be able to strengthen tenants associations and community groups, which traditionally have been very weak in Islington.

A Labour council must also refuse to police council workers in the usual management role. Instead, we want to strengthen union organisations and to act as a team with them in fighting the Tories.

A Labour council must also support and help trade unionists on strike, giving them verbal, financial and physical support.

Do you think your stand as a woman councillor fighting for women's rights can be important in that? How?

The section of the Islington Labour Manifesto on



Pat Longman: 'The job of Labour councillors is not to be managers, but to lead a fightback'

ton Labour Manifesto on women's issues is clearly left wing and influenced by the ideas of the women's movement.

On health, it proposes establishing a counselling service for abortion, sterilisation and post-natal depression.

It commits a Labour council to proper paternity leave for all male employees, the extension of day care facilities, the building of three new nurseries and the laying down of minimum standards for childminders.

It promises to change housing policies as it affects women — both in the design of homes and on tenancy rights for women.

Big difference

The Islington Labour Parties, like many others, have been much affected over recent years by women active in the women's movement or influenced by it who have come into the Party, established strong women's sections, and played a big role in the Left.

The fact that many of the Labour candidates standing this time round support women's rights and have been active in the women's movement will make a big difference; in terms of taking up women's issues and helping women to organise to fight for their own demands.

by Joe Baxter

Lothian faces fresh penalties

TORY Scottish Secretary George Younger has once again picked out Lothian Region for special attention.

Cut

With the elections to the Regional Council due on May 6, Younger has made it public that he will be demanding a £45 million cut in Lothian's budget for the coming year.

The ruling Labour group and Party have already proposed a budget £67 million over the government guidelines.

Of 63 Scottish local authorities, 56 had proposed budgets over the government guidelines. Only two, Stirling District and Lothian Region, have been penalised.

Both the Regional Labour Party and the Labour group have condemned Younger's statement as an election ploy, and stressed the Labour manifesto commitment to improved services.

However, Labour's election material, while saying what we would like to do, says nothing about how we can do it.

When asked what lessons had been learned from the failures of last year's strategy, Cllr Eric Milligan seemed to be saying that no strategy at all existed this year!

How

However, if a Labour majority keeps control of Lothian Region this Thursday, May 6, then the question of how to carry out the manifesto in the teeth of Tory government opposition will become the most important question of all.

MAY 6

Campaign for LABOUR PARTY Democracy

Model motion on local government

AFTER MAY 6, the campaign will not be over. The fight will be on to make sure that newly-elected Labour Councils stick to their Manifestos and are accountable to the local labour movement. Proposals to this end form one of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy's model resolutions for Labour Party conference 1982.

THE STANDING orders of many Labour Groups tend to accentuate the separation between group and party. CLPD has proposed several reforms to these standing orders to overcome these divisions. Some of these reforms were included in the constitutional amendment submitted by Hammersmith North to 1981 Annual Conference.

They proposed:

- Members of the Labour Group to be bound by all policy decisions in the local Manifesto,
- Where new issues arise these should be discussed by a joint meeting of the Labour Group and the local government committee, and a new policy formulated.

The constitutional amendment was not considered at Brighton, but was automatically remitted to the NEC for consideration at Conference 1982. It is therefore crucial that we build support throughout the country in order that this amendment shall be adopted by conference this year. At least some CLPs should submit a conference resolution along the suggested lines.

"This Conference regrets the damage done by divisions between Labour Groups on local authorities and their local parties. Conference notes that a

constitutional amendment from Hammersmith North CLP whereby Labour Groups would implement local manifesto policies, and any changes or new policies would be decided jointly with the local party, is coming before the 1982 Annual Conference as part of the NEC Report.

"Conference notes that in the past this procedure for considering constitutional amendments has meant that they were not properly debated. Conference therefore instructs the Chairman and the Conference Arrangements Committee/Standing Orders Committee to allow a proper debate on this constitutional amendment, with the same speaking time for mover and second as in the other debates at Conference".

(from the CLPD newsletter)
★ Dates for Labour Party conference resolutions:
FRIDAY JULY 2: Final date for receipt of resolutions.
FRIDAY AUGUST 13: Final date for receipt of amendments and nominations.

Kigass mass pickets

SINCE APRIL 1, 112 shop floor women workers have been on strike at Kigass Engineering Ltd, Leamington, for union recognition.

Some 30 other women workers at a small subsidiary, Abex in Warwick, have also joined the strike.

The women have all joined the AUEW in the last few months, hoping that this would make their boss — who has run the factory like a Victorian workhouse owner — listen to their grievances.

Last weekend a coach from Coventry organised by the AUEW and Coventry SE Labour Party went down to support the pickets.

Mass pickets are continuing every Saturday, and it now seems possible that the boss will agree to meet local AUEW officials (but not the strikers).

Blacking by trade unionists in factories which receive products from Kigass (Ford, Rolls Royce etc) is vital to win this dispute now.

Messages/Money to: Mrs B Stanford, 77 St Helens Rd, Leamington Spa.

BRYAN EDMANDS

Camden in the clear

31 Labour councillors from Camden, in North London, have successfully resisted a move from the District Auditor to have them surcharged to the tune of £950,000.

On Thursday April 29, High Court judges turned down an application by the District Auditor to have the councillors surcharged for conceding a £60 wage rate and a 35 hour week in the 1979 local authority manual workers' dispute. Camden's settlement was well above the national one.

The judgment was hardly flattering to the Labour council leadership: the judges found that there was

no evidence that it had "colluded with the strikers", or been "swayed by philanthropic enthusiasm".

Mobilise

But it does show that the Labour councils who rush to surrender at the least whisper of any legal threat — like West Midlands, over cheap fares, or Camden itself, in 1981, over manual workers' pay and cuts in direct labour — are conceding defeat too soon.

Threats of legal action are not the same as legal penalties. And even the strongest threats can be defeated, if there is the will to mobilise and to fight.



World News IN BRIEF

Ultra-right tightens grip on Salvador

by Harry Sloan

REAGAN'S team is faced with the need to accomplish a change of horses in the rapidly moving situation in El Salvador.

Their chosen puppet ruler, the former Christian Democratic President Duarte, who has been the civilian figurehead of the savage military regime since 1979, failed to secure a majority in the farcical "elections" at the end of March.

Since then the parties even further to the right of the Christian Democrats, having taken a combined total of 59% of the votes, have been haggling between themselves on how best to capitalise on their victory.

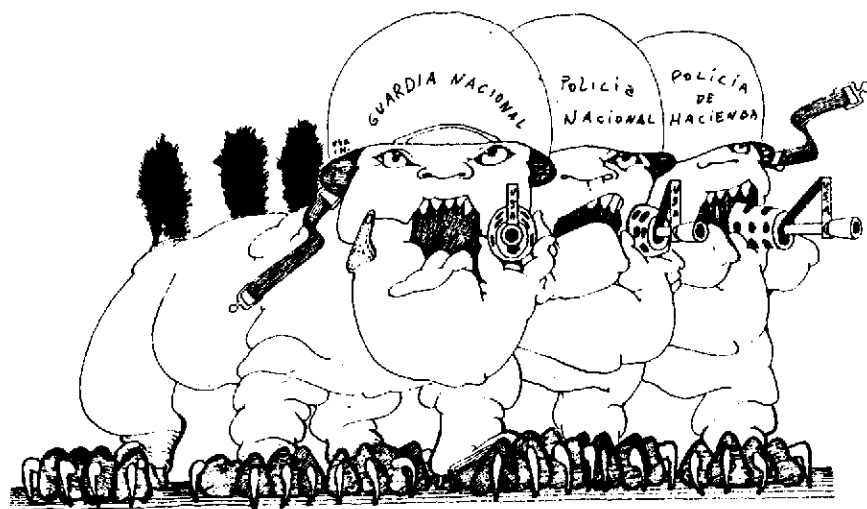
Their problem has been that Duarte was the chosen instrument for Reagan's strategy of repressing the left wing guerrilla forces of the FMLN and preserving a repressive regime as a bulwark against revolutionary struggles throughout Central America.

As such, Duarte has been able to secure an ever-increasing volume of American economic and military aid which might not necessarily pass on to a successor deemed unsuitable by the US State Department.

Reforms

Duarte's twin tactics of brutal military intimidation of the workers and peasants combined with a limited programme of 'reforms' including limits on the holdings of the biggest landowners and nationalisation of the banks, were designed in collaboration with the US hopefully to create a more stable political foothold for the long-term development of capitalism in El Salvador.

Duarte's more right wing



rivals however campaigned strongly against even this limited package of reforms.

Indeed the principal extreme right politician, Major Roberto D'Aubuisson of the Arena Party, branded Duarte as a 'traitor', likening him to a water-melon — apparently green on the outside but in reality red inside. At one point he called for Duarte to be jailed — or even executed!

D'Aubuisson himself is notorious as a leader of an ultra-right "death squad", accused by a former US ambassador of complicity in the murder of Catholic Archbishop Romero and described as a "psychopathic killer".

Not surprisingly, therefore, the Reagan administration has regarded D'Aubuisson as a liability in their efforts to maintain the necessary flow of US arms and aid to prop up the tottering state machine in El Salvador.

The war in El Salvador has been seen by increasing numbers of US politicians as a lost cause, and they have used the pretext of concern

over 'human rights' as their reason to mount a growing challenge to further allocation of aid to the Salvadoran military.

It is for this reason that D'Aubuisson, although now established as the most powerful politician in El Salvador, with a majority in the newly-elected Assembly for the right wing coalition which he heads, has not himself taken the Presidency.

Instead a less overt reactionary, banker Alvaro Magana, was elected President last weekend and has taken over Duarte's post.

But Magana will have no serious powers of his own. Before his election had come a sequence of manoeuvres which place the new regime firmly in the grip of the extreme right wing coalition. First came the election of D'Aubuisson as President of the Constituent Assembly.

Then the right wing majority in the Assembly went on to vote sweeping powers to the Assembly giving themselves a virtual veto over any actions by the President.

The Assembly now has the right to decide on the President's appointment of ministers and vice-presidents.

It has also taken full legislative powers, as well as the power to appoint members of the Electoral Commission and all judges.

At the same time D'Aubuisson's right wing cronies took all seven seats on the secretariat of the Assembly.

And while they avoided an immediate clash with the US government and made no attempt to undo Duarte's package of reforms, the right wing endorsed them in such a way as virtually to preclude any further land reform or nationalisation.

With the Christian Democrats now effectively walled off from any influence on government policy and the far right controlling all the levers of power, the Salvadoran military leaders have yet to spell out where they stand on the new situation.

During the protracted manoeuvres between the March 28 "election" and the appointment of Magana as

President, army chiefs have rumbled increasingly openly over their concern that the new governmental leader had to be one able to deliver a continued flow of US aid sufficient to maintain the war against the left.

This war shows every sign of intensifying in the next period as the FMLN guerrillas embark on what they apparently describe as a "final offensive" against the regime from their strongholds in the countryside.

While such a guerrilla military offensive will certainly test and expose the weaknesses in the armed forces, there are few grounds to believe that we are yet at the stage where a "final offensive" can topple the rickety and divided Salvadorean state machine.

In particular the level of mobilisation and political agitation among the working class in the towns falls short of that necessary to make possible a concerted uprising against the military.

The urban working class has borne the brunt of military repression and death squad intimidation in the aftermath of its mass strikes and struggles of 1978-9.

It is to the organisation and mobilisation of this working class that the revolutionary forces of El Salvador must look as the next step in the struggle for the military and political overthrow of D'Aubuisson and his gang.

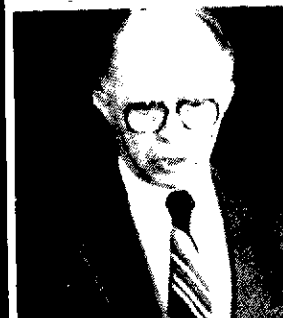
Meanwhile the Reagan administration ponders its chances of selling Magana as a figurehead President to the growing body of sceptics in the US Congress.

In this setting the British labour movement must step up the fight for solidarity with the FMLN liberation forces, mobilising the biggest possible forces for the demonstration against Reagan's visit to Britain on June 6.

Mid-East Norway

ZIONIST leader Menachem Begin has made it clear that he sees the next stage of the so-called 'peace process' as including the establishment of Israeli sovereignty over the occupied West Bank.

As he spoke, struggles continued on the streets of Nablus, where Palestinian youth have been leading militant resistance to the latest Zionist crackdown.



Begin

Norway

IN NORWAY, police have been in action against militant picket lines of striking transport workers who had halted supplies of petrol and food in their fight for increased wages. Their strike is illegal under Norwegian law.

Central America

WHILE British imperialism shows its teeth in the South Atlantic, the US warmongers have been conducting their third major show of strength in the Caribbean within three weeks.

The exercise, Ocean Venture 82, is designed both to intimidate revolutionary forces in Central America and to influence the outcome of the elections this month in the Dominican Republic.

Turkey junta swings right

A NEW lurch to the right by the Turkish military junta has brought the threat of 18 years in jail for a lawyer who committed the "crime" of petitioning for the release of a client — his brother!

Mr Buhan Apaydin had campaigned for the release of his brother Orhan Apaydin, who is President of the Istanbul Bar Association — and chief defence lawyer for the 52 trade unionists currently facing trial and possible death sentences for allegedly trying to overthrow the state.

Meanwhile the crackdown which began with known left wingers has widened to include arrests of over 40 liberal intellectuals including members of a banned peace association.

And former Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit who has already served a jail sentence for giving an interview to a foreign newspaper now faces

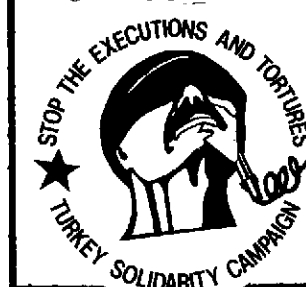
a further charge of speaking to *Der Spiegel* and to Dutch Television.

Yet the vendetta of military prosecutor Suleyman Takkeci has been directed exclusively against left wing and liberal critics of the regime, while numerous fascists initially held under arrest have been released to pursue their violent attacks on the now illegal labour movement.

Having initially posed as an 'impartial' force, standing above contending political forces in the struggle for 'order', the junta of General Evren appears now to be contemplating a show-trial of leaders of Ecevit's liberal-bourgeois Republican People's Party, while showing increasing tolerance of the fascist right.

It is plain that the Turkish labour movement faces a long and bitter struggle to win the most elementary democratic rights — a fight which can only be carried through with the overthrow of the junta and establishment of a workers' and peasants' government.

The British labour movement must assist this struggle. Contact the Turkey Solidarity Campaign, BM Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX.



Demand for solidarity on Rowntree



'Isolate apartheid'. Does that mean isolate black trade unionists, too?

CONTROVERSY over direct links with black unions in South Africa remains on the boil within Anti-Apartheid, as the AAM maintains its opposition to contact between unions here and unions in South Africa.

The largest non-racial trade union body in South Africa, FOSATU, has made its position unequivocally clear: namely that it favours contacts. A recently circulated statement by three of its affiliated unions declares:

"We strongly favour fraternal contact between workers in South Africa and workers in other countries, at all levels, provided that this is guided by the interests and requirements of the workers... Visits should involve not only top officials but also plant based worker representatives... Several visits to and from our unions have already taken place... this contact has been valuable and will be encouraged in the future."

The consequence of Anti-Apartheid's dogmatic hostility

to such contacts is clearly spelt out in their failure to offer any real support for SAAWU, the black union on strike at Rowntrees in South Africa.

The strike has been going on for over a year now, SAAWU has been refused recognition, its members fired, its leaders gaoled or placed under psychiatric 'care', scab labour has been introduced into the factory and a phony company union, the Sweetworkers' Union set up.

SAAWU's situation is clearly dire. Pressure here on Rowntrees is vital if anything is to be salvaged out of this bitter dispute.

Rowntrees workers and their unions here hold the key. But the unions have been slow to move and workers are confused by the company's claims that they recognise a democratic, non-racial union (the Sweetworkers).

SAAWU has appealed through the International Union of Foodworkers for a



fact-finding delegation to go over to South Africa, to see the situation for themselves, and to report back to their British comrades. The TGWU, to whom this invitation finally went, refused to go on the grounds that such a visit would violate the AAM's boycott policy on South Africa.

As if boycott refers to black workers as well as the apartheid state! A crucial opportunity was lost.

Now a resolution from an AUEW branch in Leicester has been endorsed by the AUEW Executive and passed

on to the TUC, calling for a conference in solidarity with SAAWU, to include all the unions at all levels involved with Rowntrees here (i.e. TGWU, GMWU, USDAW and AUEW), and for a SAAWU representative to be invited to this conference.

Brian Bolton of the TGWU said at an AAM Rowntrees support meeting on Saturday April 25 that he supported the resolution, but apparently the TGWU has done nothing.

Bolton, Chris Child of the AAM trade union committee and Solite Smith of the ANC all muttered on about the logistical difficulties of a SAAWU rep coming over. But what about the trade union movement here fighting for the right of a SAAWU rep to raise support in this country?

There were plans also mentioned for a Week of Action over Rowntrees in mid-June, culminating in a demonstration ending up outside Rowntrees in York.

Why are women workers low paid?

by Wendy Mustill

THE latest discussion booklet issued by the Low Pay Unit (*Women, Work and Wages*) provides a useful summary of the reasons why low pay particularly affects women and some proposals about what to do about it.

Women's low pay relative to men's has to be seen in the context of the dual role of women as workers: unpaid in the home, and badly-paid when employed outside.

It is not enough to try to improve the situation by legislating for minimum or equal rates and equal training or promotion opportunities, without acknowledging the reasons why women are forced to take part-time or unskilled work because of family responsibilities.

Low pay is particularly a women's problem: 6 out of every 10 low-paid workers are female. For part-timers the position is worse: 9 out of 10 are low-paid.

Yet women are increasingly the sole providers for their households, either as one-parent families, as single people or because their husbands are unemployed. The old idea that women work for pin-money and their low earnings are therefore less important than men's wages is now at least formally rejected by the trade unions, although so far few of them have acted on their new-found knowledge.

After the Equal Pay Act was introduced in 1975, women's average hourly earnings improved slowly relative to men's, but in the last two years they have started to drop back. At no time have women earned on

average more than three-quarters of the men's rate.

The narrowing of differentials, the pamphlet argues, would probably have happened anyway after 1975, regardless of the legislation, thanks to government pay policies which included flat-rate increases.

The Equal Pay Act has proved a disappointment to those who pinned their hopes on winning equality from it. It is well-known how employers have evaded the Act: by separating men and women's jobs into different grades and so on.

Many women suffered because they worked in areas where no men performed the same type of work as them, and hence there was no men's rate to win equality with.

Such ghettoisation of women into particular industries and types of employment continues to be one of the major reasons why women continue to be low-paid. These areas such as cleaning, catering and other 'natural' extensions of household labour also tend to be the ones least well organised by unions, and/or most badly affected by the recession, such as textiles, clothing and electrical assembly.

The fact that unions continue to be male-dominated and — with some exceptions — fail to actively encourage participation by their women members, also contributes to women's secondary economic position.

The pamphlet concludes by recommending:

*strengthening the existing laws to encourage positive action to bring women into traditionally male areas,

*that women's different work/career patterns be fully taken into account,

*extended facilities for child-care, time off etc. which recognises the responsibilities of both parents (and society) in the rearing of children,

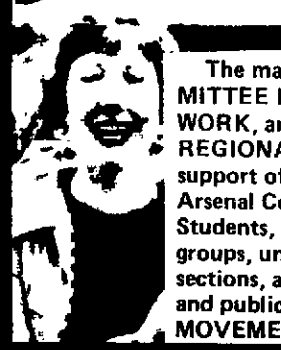
*more positive initiatives by unions.

MARCH WITH US TO THE LABOUR PARTY WOMEN'S FESTIVAL AND RALLY

JUNE 5th

Come and join us on June 5th. We'll be assembling at County Hall, Waterloo, from 10.30 and the march will start to move off at 11, and go to Battersea Park for the national Women's Festival and Rally organised by the Labour Party. There'll be women's bands, stalls, theatre, open-air discussion forums, a rally with national and international speakers, plus food, kids' entertainment & creche, and lots more.

WOMEN'S RIGHT TO WORK



The march is called by the ACTION COMMITTEE FOR A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO WORK, and co-sponsored by the SOUTH EAST REGIONAL COUNCIL of the TUC, with the support of the London Labour Party, the Royal Arsenal Co-op Society, the National Union of Students, the Bakers' Union, and dozens of local groups, union branches and Labour women's sections, as well as all the major campaigns, groups and publications of the WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT.

HOW YOU CAN HELP
*Come to the Action Committee meetings — there is a meeting every Monday evening at 7.15 at County Hall, Waterloo. Send us a donation. Publicise the march in your local press, at work, at college, at school, among your friends.
*Leaflets from: Action Ctee for a Woman's Right to Work, 181 Richmond Road, London E8.

Women in struggle



GREEN LIGHT TO STEP UP

by Winnie Murphy

HARASSMENT OF WOMEN

WOMEN are facing massive attacks on their rights by the Tories.

More than twice as many women as men are being made redundant. Nursery facilities are being closed.

The National Health Service is being decimated, and women face years of waiting for hospital treatment.

There is no right to claim supplementary benefit for any woman who is married

or living with a man. And there are cases now coming to light where women who can't work full time because of young children or handicapped children are having their role stopped.

They have to fill this in when they sign on saying the number of hours they can work and who takes care of the children while they are at work and during the holidays.

If the answers to these questions don't satisfy the Department of Employment, then their role is suspended.

It is unclear how many women are facing this attack on their rights. But it is clear that unless proper information

is got about this new questionnaire and a campaign launched, when it becomes legally enforced in November hundreds of thousands of women will find their right to unemployment benefit stopped. They will be disqualified because full-time work is put out of their reach by family commitments — and at one fell swoop the Tories will have reduced their unemployment figure.

It is believed that 20 unemployment offices round the country are testing the reaction of women who have been made redundant and who have previously worked part time to a questionnaire.

RAYNER'S ATTACK

"UB (unemployment benefit) and SA (supplementary benefit) for the unemployed is intended for people who could and would work if work were available. It is not supposed to be paid to someone who cannot work because of other commitments, or someone who does not intend to work, or someone who so restricts the work he (sic) is prepared to do in terms of hours, occupation, pay etc., that as a result he has little chance of finding a job."

Based on this principle, the official Rayner report proposes to exclude many women from benefit by way of an 'availability test'.

"It was put to the (Rayner) team frequently in local offices that many married women who were not available for work were nonetheless drawing benefit (UB)."

"It was claimed that many had small children and did not wish to work, but had realised that claiming

unemployment benefit was an easy source of money for a year. More married women have become entitled to UB as the married women's option to pay reduced National Insurance has been withdrawn...

"Between November 1973 and May 1980 the number of married women registering as unemployed (horror of horrors!) increased nearly eightfold. In addition 22% of married women in our survey were taking no steps to find work as opposed to 15% of all respondents..."

"Claimants were also asked whether a married woman who decided to stay at home with her children rather than work would be likely to get UB. One in four said yes as did one in five women with children. Respondents were also asked whether an unmarried mother unable to take a job as her child was ill would be likely to get UB."

"Nearly two out of five said yes, as did a similar

proportion of women with children.

"In fact both are examples of people who would be disqualified as not available for work."

Unaware

In fact many women believe that they are not entitled as they are unaware that they have been paying the full stamp while previously in work. It is also typical of the bias against women within the benefit system that they should be disqualified from UB because they are unable to find childcare facilities, which are abysmally lacking.

The Rayner report is in effect giving the green light to predominantly male Unemployment Review Officers to harass women, presumably in the hope that the mere appearance of an officer on the doorstep will cause sufficient fright and anxiety to intimidate women from continuing to claim.

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

WHAT'S ON

Paid ads 5p per word, £4 per column inch. Send to Socialist Organiser (What's On), 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

U.S. HANDS OFF El Salvador! Demonstrate against Reagan's visit. Sunday June 6, 12.30 at Hyde Park, Monday June 7, 5.30 at US Embassy, Grosvenor Square. Tuesday June 8, 1pm, lobby of Parliament. Contact: Reagan Reception Committee, PO Box 51, London SW10.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER Delegate Meeting: Sunday May 9, 11am to 5pm, at County Hall, London SE1.

LUTTE OUVRIERE fete: international festival of revolutionary socialism. Saturday to Monday, May 29-31, at Presles, Val d'Oise, France. A delegation of 50 supporters will be going over to the fete: all comrades interested, please write to SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

STOP THE DEPORTATION of Najat Chafee! Picket the appeal. Friday May 7, 9am, Thanet House, The Strand. Contact: Friends of Najat Chafee, 138 Minet Ave, London NW10.

MANCHESTER Labour Committee on Ireland meeting: Thursday May 13, 7.30 at the Britons Protection pub, Gt Bridgewater St, Manchester 1. Speaker: Pat Byrne, who was secretary of the Irish Republican Congress in the 1930s. LP members only.

STUDENT FIGHTBACK conference. Saturday and Sunday May 8-9. Manchester University Students' Union, Oxford Rd, Manchester.

POLAND Contact: Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group, 64 Philbeach Gardens, London SW5. 01-373 3492.

LONDON Workers' Socialist League classes on basic Marxism. Next one: Marxism and domestic labour. Friday May 14, 7.30pm. For details of venue, write to PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

EL SALVADOR: public rally in solidarity with FMLN and FDR. Saturday May 15, 7pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. Organised by El Salvador Solidarity Campaign.

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK: call-back meeting from the March 27 trade union conference. Saturday May 15, 2pm, County Hall, London SE1.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER MEETINGS & FORUMS

ISLINGTON: Every other Friday, 7.30 at Caxton House, St John's Way, London N19. Next meeting May 14.

SHEFFIELD: Every other Wednesday, at the Brown Cow, The Wicker. Business 7.30, discussion 8.30. Next meeting May 12.

OXFORD: Thursday May 13, 8pm at 44h Princes St (next to East Oxford Community Centre)

LEICESTER: Sundays, 7.30 at the Socialist Centre, High Street.

May 9: The fight against the Tebbit Bill. Speakers: Brian Pringle, secretary Leicester Trades Council; Alan Thorne, deputy TGWU senior steward, BL Cowley; Chris Goodwin, Women's Fightback.

KILL THE TEBBIT BILL. Mass rally organised by Yorks & Humberside Regional TUC. Sunday May 16, 10am to noon, Sheffield City Hall.

SHEFFIELD/ROTHERHAM Mobilising Committee for the Defence of Trade Union Rights: meeting Thursday May 13, 7.30, White Swan, Rotherham.

SOLIDARITY with Chile, Central America, and the Caribbean. National conference, Saturday-Sunday May 22-23, starts 11am, Sheffield University. Sponsors include Sheffield & Rotherham Trades Councils. More details: Cath, 0742 588052.

SUPPORT the Palestinian people: rally, Saturday May 15, 12.30, from Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park, London. Organised by Palestine Solidarity Liaison Ctee.

Where next for the Unemployed Workers' Movement?

WHEN the National Unemployed Workers Movement was formed last year by 40 or so unemployed groups, the people who attended the founding conference had a variety of concepts of the sort of organisation they wanted to see set up, and the direction in which it should go.

An instinctive suspicion and mistrust of the existing organisations of the labour movement was reflected in some calls for the setting up of an unofficial unemployed union.

Whilst some of these calls were motivated by people who thought such an organisational format was not incompatible with participation in existing unions, there were others who doubtless saw it as a means of evading such participation and the sharp struggle for policies reflecting the needs and aspirations of the unemployed, against the right wing trade union bureaucracy.

Keen

But to be fair, most of the individuals keen to set up such a union, thought that dual membership of an unemployed union and an existing union was a possibility which would allow autonomous organisation and a fight for the rights of the unemployed within the existing movement.

This was an option that was discussed at the NUWM conference, but the meeting decided to set up the NUWM not as a union, but as a loose federation of groups that locally decided whether to form unemployed unions, action groups, TUC unemployed centres, and/or work in existing trade union branches, according to the preferences of their supporters. Thus the maximum flexibility was facilitated.

The purpose of this article is to discuss where we go from here. The NUWM steering committee has initiated a number of campaigns. The implementation of the Rayner Report has led to increasing attacks and harassment of the unemployed.

The NUWM is planning a rally in opposition to the proposals contained in the report. They are also campaigning for a democratic national conference of TUC unemployed centres to discuss the question of setting

Movement?



up democratic and accountable management committees, in which the centres are not tied down and hamstrung by limitations imposed by funding which is conditional, and restrictive politically.

The third initiative has been a campaign for the right of unemployed people to join existing unions and for representation and positive action to ensure that the voice of the unemployed is heard at all levels within the labour movement.

The problem with this campaign is persuading people of the importance of getting into the existing unions. After all, if we have a national organisation like the NUWM why do we need to get into another union which is remote from the needs of the unemployed?

An opposite problem occurs with the unemployed in the few areas of the country where they are already members of a TUC affiliated union. (Why do we need to bother with some "Mickey Mouse" unemployed movement when we already have a proper, established union?)

It is important to realise that there are compatible

answers to both these opposing views.

The first is that we must fight to get into and influence the unions affiliated to the TUC because only these organisations have economic power arising from the employed membership.

Power

The unemployed have some power – the power to march and demonstrate, but not enough by themselves.

To this end we must see the NUWM as a base from which to organise unemployed caucuses in as many TUC affiliated unions as possible.

To those people who are already in TUC unions and do not see the need for a NUWM at all, it must be pointed out that there are many areas of the country where it is not yet possible to join a TUC-affiliated union; where there are people, who do not yet see the need to join such unions, but who are willing to participate in the NUWM, where we can influence them towards campaigning to get into the TUC unions.



An unemployed union could let TUC leaders off the hook...

In some areas the TUC unemployed centres might draw in such people, but the problem is that in many cases the centres are not able to do this because they are staffed by MSC-funded full timers who are restricted from giving the active campaigning lead necessary to seriously attract the unemployed; because they are controlled by stitched-up management committees imposed from above; and because they are financed on condition that the centres be non-political.

Accountable

We need democratic national conferences, an accountable national leadership elected from the rank and file activists.

The TUC unemployed department and full timers are not accountable in this sense. Until such an official accountable leadership is elected, we have every right to organise ourselves unofficially in the framework of the NUWM.

Again we must see the NUWM not as an alternative to the TUC centres network, but as a caucus within this network, and the trade unions generally, fighting to make them democratic and accountable to the rank and file unemployed.

We need the NUWM as the organisational base from which to plan and organise such caucuses, both locally in the individual centres, and nationally in the fight for an accountable, national leadership at TUC level.

We should surely see the NUWM as part of the fight for democracy in the Labour Party and unions. Indeed we must see to it that the unemployed are in the leadership of this fight, as an organised caucus, in the unions and Labour Party.

The unemployed are in fact an oppressed grouping containing very large proportions of women, blacks and youth. The unemployed movement can learn much

Chris Erswell looks at the problems and prospects for organising the unemployed

unemployed branches and an unemployed trade group within the TGWU, which would give both the autonomy and framework for the unemployed to decide and plan their requirements, but also provide for the full representation of the unemployed on district, regional and national committees (trade groups have these rights automatically). This would be an unemployed union within the biggest, most powerful TUC union!

The advantages of such a structure over a TUC unemployed union are clear, and such a perspective would mesh with an existing movement in the North West (Region 6) where the unemployed are already organised within the TGWU.

It is imperative that this demand is taken up by TGWU branches in every region:

1) for the implementation of rule 20, clause 18, which gives regional committees the power to decide who should be allowed to join the union.

2) that the regional committee adopt the policy of recruiting unemployed (as in Region 6).

3) that a special rules revision conference be immediately convened as in rule 5, clause 13 to a) clarify the rules on recruitment, b) set up an unemployed branch in every town, c) set up an unemployed trade group nationally.

It is vital that the unemployed groups affiliated to the NUWM approach sympathetic TGWU branches with a view to moving such resolutions and organising a joint lobby of the regional committees when they discuss the resolutions.

We must realise that an unemployed workers union would simply play into the hands of the bureaucracy and create the conditions for them to trick the unemployed into leaving the established and powerful trade unions, and lead them into a powerless ghetto.

We must be careful that we are not ourselves seeking a soft option which also happens to fit the bureaucracy's plans.

Does this mean that the NUWM is wrong to seek "recognition" by the TUC? In the first place if the NUWM is seriously challenging the undemocratic structure of the TUC centre management committees, then the question is rather academic anyway!

The TUC are not going to choose to "recognise" an organisation that is in strong opposition to its own bureaucratic grip on an already established and "recognised" TUC centre network! (It is rather like asking Denis Healey to "recognise" the Rank and File Mobilising Committee).

The NUWM will gain de facto recognition to the extent that it successfully reforms the TUC centre network, to the extent that it actively participates in the centres. Likewise with the trade unions. Similarly the NUWM will remain "unrecognised" to the extent that it remains self-isolated from the TUC centres and trade unions so that it can be ignored and ridiculed by the trade union bureaucracy.

even cause a problem of numbers of meetings to be attended, especially if you were on leading committees.

But most importantly, an official TUC unemployed union would let the existing union leaders off the hook on recruitment and representation of the unemployed within their unions.

Claim

They would be able to claim that the unemployed should join the unemployed union, thus relieving them of the obligation to fight for the needs and rights of the unemployed, and their recruitment and representation within the unions.

The real problem the union leaders are concerned about is the unemployed organising within their unions, not just themselves into caucuses, but also spearheading the fight, in common with the general employed membership in their unions (who have economic muscle), for militant action against the Tories and for accountability.

Thus in the TGWU in the North West it is the militant unemployed who lead the fight for coordinating committees, which bring together rank and file delegates from branches to hear report backs from the executive members after every GEC meeting; it is the unemployed who are the loudest shouting for political action against Tebbit and for the removal of the Tories from office.

Disaster

An official TUC unemployed union might have a superficial attraction for some of these unemployed workers, but it would be a disaster if they were conned into leaving the TGWU by the bureaucracy.

It would divorce the unemployed from the employed, and remove the fuse from a potentially explosive mixture.

An alternative would be for the NUWM to fight for

from the organised movements of these layers, such as organising as unemployed groups in caucuses, fighting for positive discrimination for the unemployed in the labour movement, etc., etc.

To return to the question of unemployed unions and dual membership, the TUC themselves have been toying with the idea of developing the centres network into an official unemployed union affiliated to the TUC. They are holding back from setting one up at the moment, but they have seriously considered it for some time.

Should we be in favour of this or not? The NUWM is itself seeking "recognition as the legitimate organisation of the unemployed by the TUC" (NUWM Constitution), but as an unemployed movement, not a union.

In certain parts of the country, the unemployed are well organised in the TGWU. They are a source of pressure on the bureaucracy and are leading the movement within the union for accountability; and they are a problem for the bureaucracy.

Full-time

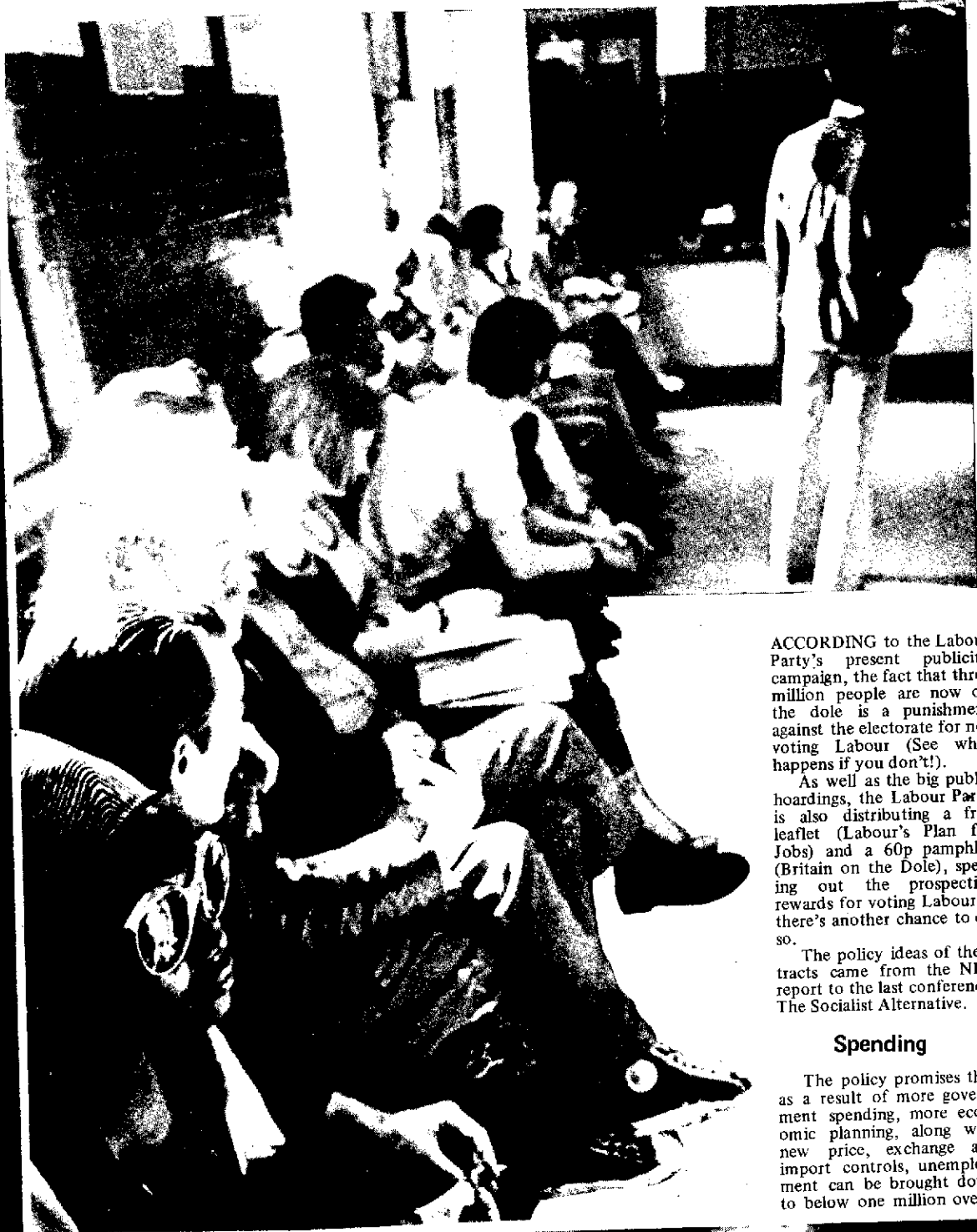
The unemployed are available full-time to organise against the bureaucracy. There is no doubt that the bureaucracy would be glad to get rid of them. An unemployed, official TUC union might be seen by the bureaucracy as a way out of this – of removing the thorn in their side into a powerless ghetto – a blind alley where the militancy of the unemployed could be divorced from the muscle of the employed membership, in the existing TUC unions.

Dual membership of two TUC unions would never be a viable demand because it would create all kinds of complications with regard to dues, membership figures and voting rights, both within unions and on the general council. It would



... But unemployed school-leavers can't just be told: join a TUC union or forget it

JOBS: WHAT LESSONS HAS LABOUR LEARNED



ACCORDING to the Labour Party's present publicity campaign, the fact that three million people are now on the dole is a punishment against the electorate for not voting Labour (See what happens if you don't!).

As well as the big public hoardings, the Labour Party is also distributing a free leaflet (Labour's Plan for Jobs) and a 60p pamphlet (Britain on the Dole), spelling out the prospective rewards for voting Labour if there's another chance to do so.

The policy ideas of these tracts came from the NEC report to the last conference, The Socialist Alternative.

Spending

The policy promises that as a result of more government spending, more economic planning, along with new price, exchange and import controls, unemployment can be brought down to below one million over a

period of five years.

These plans demand the closest scrutiny from the whole labour movement. If a Labour government were to be elected in the near future its ability to take a significant step towards socialism will depend on the economic feasibility of these plans — and on the political likelihood of their implementation.

Limited

At the outset the explicit and implicit objective of Labour's plan for jobs requires some criticism.

Its unemployment target is unacceptably limited. It envisages that at the end of a whole 5-year term, unemployment would still only have fallen to a million — hardly less than the already appalling level at which it stood when Labour was chased from office in 1979.

Labour's plan for jobs seemingly rests on the assumption that it is impossible to get back to what were regarded as normal levels of unemployment of 2-3% in the 1950s and 60s.

The objective of a gradual fall to 1,000,000 unemployed at the end of five years of Labour government is equivalent to saying that during the life of that government the average level of unemployment would be 2 million. Despite the radical words, this is far from a radical objective.

Not sufficient

In fact, a recent report by the left Keynesian Department of Applied Economics at Cambridge has calculated that Labour's stated programme is not sufficient to cut unemployment to less than 2 million let alone 1 million.

The specific limitations of this objective derive from a general feature of the whole plan. Though it envisages a substantial new round of nationalisations, it remains a plan for a predominantly capitalist ("mixed")

economy in which even publicly-owned enterprises are (implicitly) expected to operate on the principles of capitalist profitability.

Profit would remain the basic principle of Labour's "planned" economy and new jobs would be created according to that criterion, not primarily according to whether the jobs are socially useful.

Bearing that in mind we can look at the detailed components of the plan to reduce unemployment.

The "main emphasis", Labour statements say, is a major increase in public spending. No socialist could oppose this as long as it is spent on worthwhile activities. But even socialists must look at the question of the economic feasibility of more public spending.

The basic question we must address is "Can more productive resources (labour, materials, machines, etc) be employed on socially desirable objectives?" In a fully socialist planned economy then either resources could be directly diverted from other uses or unemployed resources could be put to work.

But in a capitalist economy problems of money and finance come between this objective and its fulfilment. In a capitalist economy we have to ask the additional question "Where will the money come from?"

The Labour Party pamphlet Britain on the Dole (well-written, by the way, by party economist Adam Sharples) gives a very interesting answer to this question. It says:

"... overall we must pay for the extra spending by borrowing money from people who choose not to spend it — from private savers. As the economy responds and employment rises revenues from taxes will rise and the enormous burden of unemployment on the public sector will fall. This means that the extra borrowing will quickly be reduced as spending generates new wealth and comes to pay for itself."

(p.13)

And the pamphlet then goes on to belittle the problem of more government borrowing and a higher national debt.

If this analysis is true it is good news indeed — more public spending pays for itself. But is it true?

Certainly there is some truth in it. The Tory government has found, like its Labour predecessor, that attempts to cut public spending are to a great extent thwarted by the semi-automatic new spending needs engendered by the resulting slump.

As a result a desired cut in net government spending requires a much bigger cut in gross spending.

Cut

But even if the opposite is bound to happen to some extent, that doesn't mean that expansion is costless.

In fact, if it were costless how do the authors of the Labour Party policy explain the fact that in the last decade governments (including Labour Party governments) in every single advanced capitalist country have come up against what has seemed to them an irresistible imperative to cut government spending?

There has been an almost ubiquitous "fiscal crisis of the state" (an apt phrase invented by the American economist James O'Connor) in tandem with an almost universal fall in the rate of profit. To the capitalist class the two things have seemed to be intimately connected.

So cutting state spending has emerged as a route towards restoring profitability. It is a very contradictory and painful route, as Thatcher and others have found — and it entails great political unpopularity.

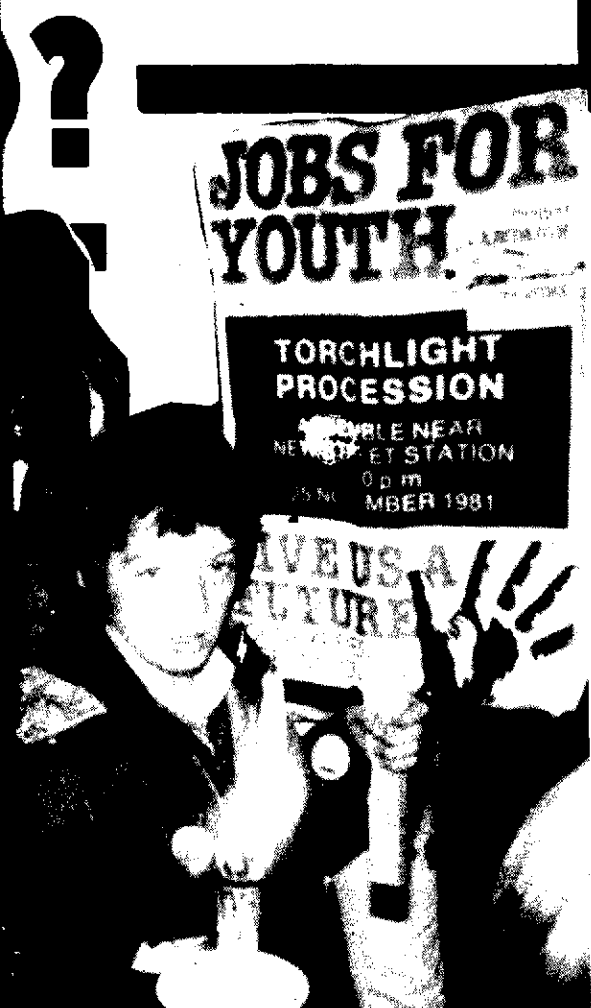
But unless the real rationale behind it is understood then the only possible understanding of Thatcherite policies is that they are either stupidly irrational or just plain vindictive.

Both of these explanations are implicit in Britain on the Dole and a more



Wilson and Foot ... draping Labour in the cloak of nationalism

Sutcliffe argues that Labour's jobs policy is short of what is needed, both in its proposals and in the means to carry them out



After the protests - will Labour carry out its promises?

serious attempt to understand the rationale of the policies as a response to capitalist crisis is absent. In fairness, however, Sharples does develop the way in which unemployment is being used by the Tories to weaken the bargaining strength of the workers.

If a Labour government really believed the vulgar Keynesian analysis implicit and explicit in this presentation of the Alternative Economic Strategy and were ever to try to implement the AES they would receive some nasty surprises about how the capitalist economy reacted.

The consequence of understanding the complex relation between state spending and the profits crisis would be a realisation that a new round of increases would not be a simple uncontradictory affair.

It would almost inevitably raise interest rates, leading therefore to further problems in parts of the private sector; it would increase inflationary pressure and create foreign exchange and payments problems for any country which carried through such a policy alone.

Crisis

It might, therefore, in some ways exacerbate the crisis of profitability prevalent throughout British trade and industry.

The radical reformists who have invented the AES do not like the consequences of these facts. They have a tendency to deny that the profitability crisis has taken place. Once they admitted it they would be obliged to respond to it (as previous Labour governments did) or to make very much more radical advances away from the mixed (capitalist) economy than those proposed by the AES.

In Labour's plan for jobs, therefore, as in all radical reformist rhetoric, there is a strong tendency to assume away the whole basis of the problem - the profit motive of capitalism and its consequences.

The same is true of the naive confidence with which Labour supposes it will be possible to implement a system of planning through a paraphernalia of enterprise boards and planning agreements.

Capitalists won't necessarily change their spots or their rules of behaviour because you put them in cages. They may put all their energies into trying to break out.

Predict

It is not possible to predict in detail the ways in which the capitalist economy might belie the more hopeful expectations behind the AES.

In fairness it should be said that many of the possible problems are now being foreseen and contingencies developed at least in general outline.

Unfortunately, however, the general answer to such problems from the proponents of the AES is not to search for a democratic anti-capitalist solution but to come up with a new control.

As it now stands the AES would entail a vast network of controls - on prices, probably wages (less often stated), foreign exchange movements, investment (domestic and overseas) and imports.

The extent would be similar to the British economy in World War II or many underdeveloped countries more recently.

Experience

Experience has not surprisingly shown that intense bureaucratic control of a basically capitalist economy combined with defensive economic nationalism is not very conducive to economic growth, efficiency or equity let alone to socialism.

All this doesn't mean that some of the first steps of an Alternative Economic Strategy envisaged by Labour's Plan for Jobs would not be extremely welcome to those who now suffer from the effects of

capitalism.

But it does mean that socialists in the Labour Party have to come up with some very different answers to the inevitable problems which would arise than those which currently appear in the AES.

But quite apart from the feasibility and coherence of the AES at a theoretical level, there remains the question of what are the possibilities of any future Labour government implementing what are now the Party's economic policies.

Labour's plan for jobs, despite its very modest objectives and its theoretical limitations does seem like a radical step forward for the party.

Lots more nationalisation, public spending on a large scale, economic planning and equal rights for

women - all this sounds like quite a departure for the party which ran British capitalism (badly) from 1964-1970 and 1974-1979.

But is there any reason to suppose that Labour's next government will carry out a radical economic policy?

To decide that we need to look back to the last Labour government and learn their lessons.

Labour fought the 1974 election on a set of policies which, while less specific and detailed than the AES, sounded every bit as radical.

Labour, you may remember, promised "a fundamental redistribution of wealth and power to working people and their families".

The circumstances of Labour's coming to power

(Heath's overthrow in the miners' strike) led, to begin with, to a round of large wage increases and an increase in both real wages and public spending in the first year of the government.

This, however, was not willed by the government. It was the price they paid to avoid worse social upheaval. Most of the rest of the life of the government was a relatively determined crusade to respond to the interests of capitalism and redistribute power and wealth away from working people.

Just as in 1965 Labour had thrown its National Economic Plan into the waste paper basket, the "planning agreements" promised in 1974 (as now) were dropped. Only one was ever signed (with Chrysler) and

that was a joke since Chrysler promptly sold out to Talbot.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Denis Healey taxed wages more heavily, and gave huge tax handouts to capitalists.

Real wages, after a brief rise, fell again under the impact of inflation and labour's taxes and real take-home pay was no higher at the end of Labour's rule than they had been at the start.

The main weapon to hold down wages was the infamous Social Contract. After 1976 the party which now advocates a vast boost to state expenditure made the most comprehensive attack on government spending since the war.

In particular general state capital expenditure (schools,

hospitals, roads, etc) was almost cut in half between 1975 and 1979.

Today's critics of monetarism on Labour's front bench fulminated against the over-rapid growth of the money supply and took many steps to control it.

Britain on the Dole rightly rejects the Tory argument that workers are pricing themselves out of jobs - but fails to mention how often Denis Healey as Chancellor of the Exchequer said the same thing.

When Labour came to office in 1974 unemployment (excluding the effects of the 3-day week) was 600,000. When they left, it was well over one million.

So virtually all the criticisms which Labour today directs towards the Tories could be directed with equal point against the last Labour government.

Virtually every item of the AES concedes a criticism of the last Labour government.

The indigestible fact is that if Labour had won the 1979 election and continued the economic policies of Callaghan and Healey then the situation today would not be much better than it is.

Hypocrisy

Yet, since neither Labour's Plan for Jobs nor Britain on the Dole make the slightest mention of any of these facts, it is impossible not to feel struck by a tremendous impression of hypocrisy.

Of all those in the Cabinet of 1974-79 who were primarily responsible for Labour's disastrous economic policies only Tony Benn has made even a semblance of self-criticism.

Many of the rest remain unrepentant and remorseless at the head of the Labour Party.

It is for that reason impossible to believe that we yet have a Labour Party which is any more capable than in 1974 of carrying out the spirit of even the first main steps of an AES let alone anything more radical.

OUR POLICIES

We fight for action on two fronts: on the one hand we struggle to mobilise workers in occupations and to mobilise the full strength of the trade union movement behind them, to defend existing jobs against closures and cuts; on the other hand we fight for a programme of useful public works to create new jobs at trade union rates of pay.

Our answer to management attempts to impose redundancies is to campaign for the retention of the whole workforce, and for a programme of work sharing on full pay, under the control of elected workers' committees.

And where employers claim that 'loss of orders' or bankruptcy compels them to close down or axe jobs, we fight for action to force the opening of the company's books, and those of its suppliers and bankers, to elected trade union committees. The figures revealed will point to the profits extracted from years of exploitation, and the necessity for each major industry to be nationalised, without compensation and under workers' management.

The new technology now available - micro-electronics, computerisation, and other forms of automation - offer the possibility of substantially reducing the working day, and improving the conditions of the working class.

But under capitalism new technology produces only the mounting misery of speed-up and unemployment.

Only under a socialist planned economy can workers achieve a genuine sliding scale of hours - the divi-

sion of the total work available among the total workforce, combined with guaranteed living standards. Such a system is the only real answer to unemployment.

There is of course no prospect of the Thatcher government embracing socialist solutions to the crisis. And a bosses' government that is prepared to bankrupt whole sections of its fellow capitalists in order to restore profitability for the survivors is not going to be swayed from its course by protests, petitions, or strong speeches in Parliament.

The fight against unemployment and for the right to work means therefore a fight for action by the working class to bring down the Tory government, and a fight for a new, socialist, leadership in the labour movement.

Previous Labour governments have administered capitalism in collusion with the bosses and bankers, basing themselves on the established state machine ignoring or defying Labour's rank and file.

The reconstruction of society to provide useful jobs for all requires a workers' government - a government based on the labour movement and accountable to it, taking decisive measures against the bosses' state machine and capitalist privilege.

The Left must therefore organise and fight to transform the labour movement: to democratise it; to win accountability; and to arm it with the will, the mass involvement, and the clear policies necessary to enable it to push through working-class solutions to the crisis of capitalism.

WORKERS' PARTY— NO ANSWER FOR IRISH WORKERS

John O'Mahony reports on the recent conference of Sinn Féin The Workers' Party

AT ITS conference (Ard Fheis) at the end of April, Sinn Féin The Workers' Party transformed itself into 'The Workers' Party'.

The party holds the balance in Dail Eireann (the Dublin parliament). Without its three Dail votes, Charles Haughey could not have set up the present Fianna Fail government.

The change of name represents no change in what the party is. But paradoxically it does symbolise and sum up the evolution of one strand of the Irish Republican movement towards more or less complete integration in regular Irish bourgeois politics.

When a Dublin solicitor, Pat Mc Cartan, argued in favour of the name change that it would allow 'professional people and tradesmen' to feel at home with the party, he wasn't making a music hall joke. He knew what he was talking about.

Secret

A report in Magill magazine recently suggested that the Official IRA, the armed wing of the party, said to have ceased to exist in the mid '70s, continues to exist in secret, unknown to most members of the party. Given the organisation's history, it would be most remarkable if this were not true.

Yet the dropping of the Republican name 'Sinn Féin' certainly follows a sweeping repudiation of traditional republican attitudes, while the 'Workers' Party' name has not stopped it voting for Haughey as prime minister.

The Ard Fheis decided to support the 'Prior initiative' for 'do it yourself' devolution in Northern Ireland, and to denounce Fianna Fail leader Charles Haughey for his opposition to it.

Criticise

The WP does criticise the Prior initiative, as:

- * sectarian in approach,
 - * not providing a proper legal framework for the new Northern Ireland government,
 - * not having democratic safeguards (the party favours a 'Bill of Rights'),
 - * not dismantling the repressive legislation,
 - * giving the Northern Ireland government powers too limited to allow it to deal with the economic problems.
- Still, the WP thinks Prior's proposals are a small step forward. An attempt should be made to get the proposed Northern Ireland devolved government working. Then it can be improved, via the workings of 'the democratic process'.

President Tomas Mac Giolla denounced Haughey for breaking his promise to SFWP during negotiations on the formation of the Fianna Fail government to give the Prior initiative 'a fair hearing'. They were now, he said, in total conflict with the government on the Northern question, and would vote accordingly in

the Dail if the occasion arose.

Speakers bitterly denounced the contention of 'the Fianna Fail/SDLP/Provo axis' that Northern Ireland had failed as a political entity. It could be made to work. The solution to the Northern conflict was 'peace, work, democracy and class politics'.

The party calls for a new southern constitution, denouncing the Catholic confessional character of the current (1937) constitution.

The WP calls for the building of a workers' party on an all-Ireland basis. It claims to be recruiting Protestant workers in the North. Of a substantial increase in membership during the last year, 40% in the North, it was claimed, had been from the Protestant community.

The long and emotional debate on the change of name showed the cross-currents in the party.

It was argued by Northern delegates that the name Sinn Féin was a major barrier when campaigning on Protestant doorsteps. Sean Garland, general secretary, appealed to delegates not to drag the dead or flags across the floor.

Yet Cathal Goulding, former Chief of Staff of the Official IRA, supporting the proposal, told delegates that they had to convince people that they were not deserting the radical republican tradition or the fight against imperialism. Means, not ends,



The three Workers' Party TDs whose votes gave Haughey power

were being revised.

But means such as support in the Dail for Fianna Fail, or support for Prior's plan, are incompatible with seriously radical or working-class ends — they are means to become embedded in the establishment structures.

Influence has frequently been gained by Labour and socialist parties in Northern Ireland on the shallow ground of trade union level economic issues, but it has never withstood the disrupt-

ive power of communal and sectarian, not to speak of republican, politics. The leaders of the WP should have learned this the hard way in the late '60s, when the supposedly unifying civil rights campaign aroused the Catholics but alienated the Protestants. And after leading Catholics to take a first step of calling for civil rights, the second step was to tackle the root reason why they had been deprived of civil rights — partition.

The WP's solution to the

communal divisions in the North is essentially to bury its head in the sand and pretend that *this time*, despite the experience since 1907 (when Jim Larkin briefly united Protestant and Catholic workers on economic issues, only to see the unity soon shattered by communalism), working class unity can be built on a basis of economic issues and socialist propaganda.

In the meantime its basic approach is to be a responsible and 'constructive' force



Haughey — the Workers' Party's choice as 'lesser evil'

in mainstream politics, putting forward reasonable and balanced proposals on all the issues of the day — within the parameters of the existing system.

Involvement in the Southern political establishment on this basis is already ravaging the WP's socialist credentials. Its commitment to the existing structures — both to partition and to the partitionist parliaments — will inevitably mire it completely in the bog of bourgeois, anti working class politics.

There is a precedent.

In the '40s, a regroupment of Republicans, seeking a way out of the blind alley politics of physical force on principle and abstention from the existing political structures north and south, formed a party called Clann Na Poblachta, led by Sean McBride, a one-time chief of staff of the IRA.

It was a mildly reformist organisation. It played a big role in bourgeois politics for a while, holding the balance in the Dail, and joined a Fine Gael/Labour coalition government in 1948. When the Catholic Bishops vetoed the establishment of free medical care for pregnant women, mothers, and infants, the party repudiated its own Minister of Health, Dr Noel Browne. The coalition collapsed and Clann Na Poblachta rapidly fell apart.

History never repeats itself exactly, but the WP has all the ingredients of a slightly more radical version of Clann Na Poblachta.

The additional feature of the WP is the Stalinist influence, strong among the people now leading it since the mid '60s. The WP supports General Jaruzelski's military rule and the suppression of the workers' movement in Poland.

A resolution condemning martial law and the internment of Solidarnosc leaders was on the agenda of the Ard Fheis. But Sean Garland said that: 'It was clear that the Polish armed forces had to take action to stop it sliding into anarchy and total chaos and ultimately ending in the hands of imperialism'. (Nobody should accuse these defenders of Prior's initiative of forgetting about imperialism!)

Garland added that it was important that they did not appear to have a simplistic approach to international affairs, as suggested in the resolution. The resolution was withdrawn.

But quite a few of the WP's rank and file activists probably think that it is a real working class alternative to traditional Irish nationalist politics. Whether some of them can go on to break with it and help build a real revolutionary socialist working class party is an important question. It will probably be determined by the speed with which the WP gets itself badly splashed with mud from the sort of politics it has engaged in with its recent deal to support Haughey for Taoiseach, and its current support for Prior.

Reagan's scapegoats



"AT THE price-Pfister Brass Manufacturing Corporation in Pacoima, on the outskirts of Los Angeles, dozens of unemployed men clawed their way up wire fences to watch 82 suspected illegal workers being loaded into buses."

"The next morning, over 1000 jobseekers, most of

them young blacks or — ironically — people of Latin American origin, besieged Price-Pfister and two other firms that had been raided the previous day" (Sunday Times, May 2).

With unemployment at 9 per cent overall, 35 per cent for black teenagers in Los Angeles, and even higher for Hispanics there, the US government is scapegoating immigrant

workers. Daily sweeps in ten major cities have pulled in thousands of illegal immigrants for deportation. Most of them are from Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America.

Hispanics, alongside blacks, are also bearing the brunt of Reagan's cuts. The 1980 census figures, just published, showed 12 1/4 per cent of Americans living

below the official poverty line. (The figure is now 15 per cent). But among Hispanics the figure was 24 per cent below the poverty line; among blacks, 30%.

60 per cent of Reagan's \$11.3 billion cuts last year in Federal programmes came from spending aimed to help people below the poverty line. Reagan's proposed 1983 budget would leave households on \$10,000 a year or less \$240 worse off, and rich households (\$80,000-plus a year), \$15,000 better off.

Talks between the White House and the Democratic Congress majority on these budget proposals have now broken down. The reason is not so much the penalties against the poor as the big budget deficit implied in the Reagan plans. But the breakdown reflects increasing disillusion with 'Reaganomics', both in the working class and in the ruling class.

Declining

Only months ago Reagan's team was predicting a 'roaring recovery' by spring 1982. Yet the last three months' figures show industrial production

declining at a rate of 14 1/2 per cent. Profits fell sharply in the last quarter of 1981, manufacturing corporations suffering a decline of \$17.1 billion. General Motors has just announced its figures for the first quarter of 1982 — it was saved from a loss only by gains on foreign exchange transactions.

Business failures are running at the highest rate since 1933.

So long as interest rates remain at their present sky-high levels — about 7 1/2 per cent in real terms, whereas until recent years interest rates in the big capitalist economies were almost always negative in real terms — any major revival is unlikely. Investment will remain depressed because the cost of borrowing money is so high.

Yet the Reagan administration dare not do anything to 'reflate' the economy, for fear of setting off new spirals of inflation and forfeiting all the bosses' confidence.

So they end up lashing out at scapegoats. But the day is coming closer when the US labour movement will link up with those 'scapegoats' to lash back at Reagan.



Hey, listen to this... The President says the prime rate shoulda dropped last summer

Rallying the workers' movement against racist menace

by Ali Mir

SINCE THE winding-up of the Anti Nazi League after the last general election, there has been no national anti-fascist organisation in Britain.

But despite the electoral failure of the National Front in that election and its subsequent splits into the Constitutional Movement, the British Democratic Party and the New National Front, the fascists have certainly not gone away.

On the contrary, the Tory government's policies aided by the ineffective 'opposition' of the labour movement leaders, have provided a fertile breeding ground for fascist and racist ideas.

Over the last year there has been a horrific growth of racist violence, with the deaths of well over 20 black people.

Even the Home Office's official statistics recognise that Asians are 50 times, and West Indians 36 times, more likely to suffer racial attacks than whites.

In an attempt to cover up the implications of this reality, the state has increased its policy of criminalising black people. The recent police/media campaign against 'black muggers' and 'black crime' - the alarming facts, has followed attempts to intimidate the self-defence actions of black youth in cases such as the Bradford 12 and the Thornton Heath incidents in South London.

All of this has been intended to make blacks, and all workers, pay for the capitalist crisis.

Unemployment of four million, the Tory spending

cuts, the fall in real wages, and most recently Thatcher's war drive and the bosses' rallying calls for patriotic unity, all provide favourable conditions for a rise in fascism.

Taking all this into consideration, the racist and fascist threat is even greater than in 1977 when the ANL was launched.

No response

Five years later in 1982, however, there has been no real response from the Left. The SWP's enthusiasm for the ANL seems to have been redirected into the opportunist sectarianism of its very own Right to Work Campaign. The anti-fascist magazine Searchlight has, since an editorial last October calling for a new national anti-fascist link-up, made efforts to provide a forum for debate. But the response has been seriously inadequate.

There are, however, signs that sections of the labour

movement are beginning to organise some sort of fight-back.

Following extensive racist and fascist activity in Coventry last year, Coventry Trades Council has organised a local labour movement conference against racism.

This will provide the Coventry area labour movement with a valuable opportunity to send delegates to discuss the programme and policies required 'to forge the unity in struggle necessary to smash racism and take on the economic and political structures responsible for it'.

The two central themes of the conference are racism in the workplace, and the unions' counter-strategy to racism in the rest of society.

Perhaps this can set an example for the labour movement elsewhere, and lead to a national delegated labour movement conference on racism later in the year, which would discuss the need for a labour movement anti-fascist organisation.



Coventry labour movement conference against racism. Saturday May 8, from 10.30am, at Lanchester Polytechnic, Coventry. Open to all labour movement organisations in the Coventry area.

Sinister regroupment of fascist right

Ted Eames analyses the merger of a section of the BM with John Tyndall's NNF.

'HANG the Tory traitors!' was the great rallying call from the press conference held to launch the most significant of the new fascist groups to emerge during the current realign-

ment of the far right in Britain.

The 'British Nationalist Party' is the new name to watch for - an amalgam of John Tyndall's New National Front with a

large section of the British Movement under Leicester Nazi Ray Hill.

This 'new dynamic nationalist force' (Tyndall's words) also comprises elements from the League of St. George, the whole of the tiny Nationalist Party, and the ageing Führer Colin Jordan.

The remainder of the British Movement under Michael McLaughlin has changed its name to the British National Socialist Movement.

Apart from the line-up and the names, very little else has changed. The BNP is committed to the same old Nazi politics and the same old methods of rabble-raising, propaganda and street-fighting.

It remains to be seen how long Tyndall and Hill can stick together. Hill's rise within the BM was because of his success in drawing in skinhead youth combined with an ability to build links with the more upper middle class fascists of the League of St. George, and with characters like Anthony Reed-Herbert (with whom he was involved in gun-running operations).

Contemptuous

Tyndall, for his part, has been openly contemptuous of skinhead youth, though he has been happy to recruit them recently from the NF of his former pals Andrew Brons and Martin Webster.

The call to introduce capital punishment for Tory traitors (such as Carrington for letting Argentina into the Falklands and Whitelaw for being 'soft' on blacks) is

clearly designed to appeal to layers so demoralised and brutalised that they can be brainwashed into believing that the Tories have not gone far enough in their attacks on the working class.

The launching of the BNP must also be seen against a background of rising racist attacks and further attacks on young people's rights via YOPS and the social security system.

In the more middle class and 'respectable' areas of fascist politics the launch is also mirrored by the rise of ultra-right groupings such as WISE (Welsh, Irish, Scottish, English) and David Irving's Focus Policy Group.

Irving's move into active politics has been imminent for some time and repres-

ents a significant development of which all socialists should take note. He is a dedicated Nazi with a network of carefully nurtured contacts around the international fascist movement.

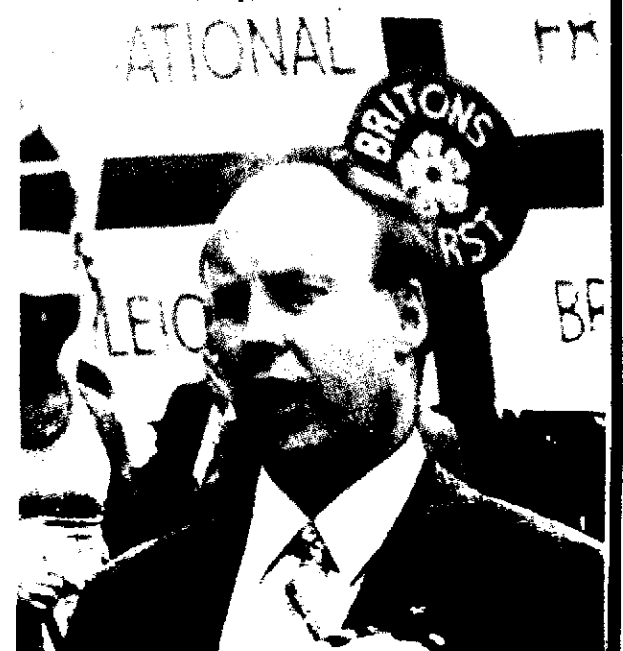
Whether fascists organise under the name of a Focus Policy Group or a British Nationalist Party, socialists must fight within the labour movement to build a class response.

The fascists must be opposed and exposed wherever and whenever they show themselves.

Anti-racist groups must draw in young workers, black and white, and draw in the unemployed to fuse the nucleus of the defence squads which will be needed to cope with attacks from the Nazis and from the state.

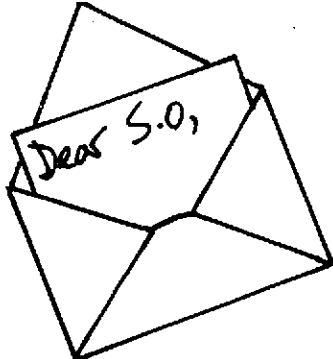


The trial continues in Leeds of the Bradford 12 - Asian youth activists arrested last summer and charged with conspiracy to make explosives. Contact: Bradford 12 Defence Campaign, c/o Box JK, L.A.P., 59 Cookridge St, Leeds



Tyndall

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.



'Left' face of NF propaganda

THE coverage of fascism in Socialist Organiser is usually confined to the reporting of violence against blacks and the labour movement, and it is rare to find articles that give an analysis of fascist politics.

ANL propaganda is also weak and inadequate, focusing as it does on Nazi war crimes and the murky past of Tyndall and Webster. What is usually missed out is that the fascists and the NF in particular do have

policies that attract working class support.

The NF is changing. Our views on fascism and how to combat it need to be kept in line with the developments taking place.

Since the last split in their ranks and the departure of John Tyndall they have emerged with a left face, a working class orientation with revitalised plans for work in the trade unions.

Although their ideology has something for everyone, they see themselves as the revolutionary party of the white working class out to smash capitalism and its "communist twin".

Incidentally, the Soviet Union and its satellites are categorised as "State Capitalist" manipulated by Western banks.

Left wing economic plans have always played a part in the programme of fascism, the reason being they could never hope to gain power without the support of sections of the working class.

Three million plus unemployed has produced a favourable climate for the emergence of a radical NF, particularly when there is no militant fightback against the government from the unions and the Labour Party which makes fascist infiltration of the labour movement less difficult.

The economic plans of the NF as outlined in a recent article in Nationalism Today, their theoretical journal, are strikingly similar to those peddled by supporters of the Alternative Economic Strategy. "Industrial ownership must be handed to the workers and managers themselves, with workers co-operatives and decentralised small businesses playing a vital role."

"The financial system must be totally reconstructed to end unemployment and give the working class the purchasing power to buy the products of their own labour."

Today's NF sees itself not so much in the tradition of Hitler, whom they describe as a reactionary, but of Gregor Strasser, with his distaste of Hitler's dealings with German big business.

Obviously fighting racism and fascism can never be separated but fascist ideology and its appeal to workers and youth needs to be looked at closely. A campaign also needs to be waged against the left advocates of 'Britain First' in the Labour Party and unions.

Robert Mansell, London

THE COST OF TRUTH

by Sean Matgamna

WHAT DO you do if you are given the choice of either telling a pack of barefaced lies, to order, as decided by the leaders of what you regard as an unpleasant and destructive quasi-political/quasi-religious sect, or of being hauled into court, bled of your financial resources, and threatened with bankruptcy?

It depends on who 'you' are — and on what you think is important.

For a socialist newspaper to tell lies is to turn itself into a malignant force in the labour movement, an active force poisoning the wells of information that the labour movement depends on.

Therefore, for a socialist newspaper, the choice is nothing less than this: to be or not to be.

That's why Socialist Organiser decided to go to court when the rich WRP presented us with such a choice.

In January 1981 we told a fraction of the truth about the WRP, in the course of an article dealing with the fight against rent and rate rises. (The WRP were supporting the rate rise policy of Ted Knight).

The response was a series of libel writs from a prominent and rich WRP member, Ms V Redgrave.

SO lacks resources and reserves. Nevertheless we will not gainsay what we said and know to be true.

So we need money — and we need it pretty desperately. There are other pressing causes, but the libel case fund is something without which SO cannot defend its right to be what it claims to be — an honest socialist newspaper, committed to telling the truth to the labour movement.

Please send donations to the Labour Movement Press Defence Fund, c/o 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

Weak assertions in IRSP polemic

THE IRSP's objections to John O'Mahony (SO 81) appear to depend on two extremely weak assertions.

The first is that Socialist Organiser can be identified with Sinn Féin the Workers Party (now the Workers Party). Half of their article concentrated on attacking the economism of SFWP and Militant and asserting that SO were guilty of the same errors.

The clear priority in SO's entire work on Ireland in the trade unions and the Labour Party has always been to support the anti-imperialist struggle, to call for troops out and self-determination for the Irish people and to fight imperialism within the British labour movement. As regards the Provisionals and the INLA our position is one of critical support.

Some people do feel that O'Mahony's recent articles have been more critical than supportive but I feel, especially after reading the IRSP article, that we cannot underestimate the value of constructive, anti-imperialist criticism.

The type of ideas put forward by Militant on Ireland are constantly under attack from Socialist Organiser and its sympathisers, chiefly through the Labour Committee on Ireland. The IRSP only waste an opportunity to take up real political differences when they attack us for



being pro-imperialist.

The justification for labelling SO pro-imperialist is that we don't support Irish nationalism. It is the IRSP and not SO who identify nationalism and anti-imperialism as entirely synonymous. Thus they can conclude that since Haughey is a nationalist of sorts, he is also an anti-imperialist.

"Imperialism is the main enemy in Ireland", say the IRSP, and extensive criticism of Irish capitalism is "a diversion from attacking imperialism". This is the justification for supporting Fianna Fail. But the comrades admit later in their article that Fianna Fail is based "primarily on Irish

capitalism and thereby ultimately on imperialism".

It seems clear to me, even from their own analysis, that the anti-imperialist movement must also attack Irish capitalism, the main defender of imperialism in the South.

For all his rhetoric Charles Haughey is a supporter first of Irish capitalism, the profit system, workers' disunity and imperialism.

His negotiations for a solution to the national question included an attempt to improve the capacity of western capitalism to defend itself in the North Atlantic by putting NATO bases on Irish soil.

To see that as an anti-imperialist victory is extremely dangerous, for that solution would make Ireland a much better prospect for international capitalism than it is even today.

The second assertion in the article is that Fianna Fail is the party in Ireland which must closely approximate to the Labour Party in Britain. John O'Mahony has dealt with the obvious fallacy in this claim, the difference in the class basis and origins of the respective parties. The party which most closely approximates to the Labour Party in Ireland is the Irish Labour Party.

The point has also been made that Fianna Fail are a

support for imperialism.

But in addition Fianna Fail have to be seen as the most socially reactionary party in Southern Irish politics. With no fascist party they really are on the far right of Irish politics.

Their defence of the privileged position of the Catholic Church in the constitution and the state is not matched by any other party.

When Fine Gael threaten to liberalise the laws on family planning, divorce, etc., Fianna Fail consistently pose as the defenders of the faith. They are clearly the party of Catholic supremacy and make no contribution to workers' unity.

Workers' unity

The problem is that the IRSP don't see workers' unity as an issue to be tackled at all during the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland. Because of the ham-fisted way in which it is taken up by Militant, the IRSP reject the whole concept.

We say yes to workers' unity, but only on the basis of anti-imperialism. Thus the IRSP conclude their article by claiming that there are only two choices for Irish workers, the 'workers' unity first' option adopted by SFWP and Militant or the 'nationalism first' option

SCIENCE



ALDRIN is a pesticide — but it doesn't just kill insects. It is a persistent organochlorine pesticide, so it lingers in the environment, accumulating in the flesh of animals and humans eating and drinking in regions where it is used.

Among its suspected effects on humans, according to the US Center for Disease Control, are "cancer, damage to the foetus [and] nervous disorders". In Britain, the government phased out its use in 1969.

So if British American Tobacco grew their tobacco in Britain, they couldn't use Aldrin to keep the pests down. But they don't — they grow it in Kenya. Or rather 8500 farmers

grow it and give it to BAT in return for credit, seeds, and supplies. And these supplies include... Aldrin!

Warning

True; there is a warning leaflet in English and Swahili — so if you speak either language (and there are 15 other languages spoken in Kenya) and can read them, you can follow the instructions — or can you? The recommended precautions include:

"Avoid contaminating rivers and streams. Always wash with soap and water after use. [In case of poisoning] — consult a doctor immediately".

Unfortunately, in the remote areas where tobacco

The perils of pesticide

by Les Hearn

is grown, soap is frequently not available, while many farmers have never even seen a doctor. Further, it is impossible to avoid polluting streams in the hilly tobacco-growing areas, as rainwater washes straight off the fields into the nearest watercourse. Already there have been mysterious deaths in remote villages with pesticides in the water supply being suspected.

Polluting

Another company involved in polluting Kenya is ICI, whose subsidiary in Kenya markets Aldrin, as well as another ICI product 'Ambush', which it advertises as 'safe for you and the

environment' — a direct lie, as no pesticide has been proven safe, and many have been proven dangerous.

British capitalism is not the only capitalism guilty of selling products to the Third World which are banned at home, but it is one of the largest exporters of pesticides to the Third World, supplying over 12% of the world market, risking the health of millions of farmworkers, and killing thousands every year, according to Oxfam.

Our labour movement should be demanding safeguards for the health of Third World workers and peasants, similar to those we demand for ourselves

(Info: New Scientist)

Socialist Organiser Alliance

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SOCIALIST Organiser fights to act as a real campaigning paper which can organise workers in the struggle for new leadership.

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If there is no group in your area why not help us to build one?

To 'Get Organised', write at once to us at 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Name

Address





Industrial News

Rulecan fight rattles union leaders

by Winnie Murphy

THE strike at Rulecan, Runcorn, is now in its eleventh week. 70 women workers came

out on strike against poverty wages and to defend trade union rights. When the factory was

taken over by a Mr Rattles the workers were given six weeks to adjust to the new work and an assurance that their right to remain in the union and be represented by the NUTGW would continue.

After only four weeks the truth was becoming apparent. The employer brought in time and study men and made prices so tight that wages above £30 would be unattainable. When the machinists called in the full time official, the management refused to discuss the ratings and escorted him from the premises, telling the workers that the union was no longer recognised.

This happened on a Friday afternoon. On the Monday morning none of the members clocked in and they said they would strike for union rights.

The management responded with a threat to sack anyone who didn't clock in by Wednesday. 90% agreed to stay out and only five or six went back to work.

Pickets were set up and appeals sent to the local factories. The General Secretary made the strike official immediately (he could do little else after being condemned for making the Lee Jeans workers wait six weeks).

In the following weeks support came from Widnes and Runcorn Trades Council, Liverpool Trades Council, Mid-Cheshire Trades Council, Vale Royal Constituency Labour Party, the Women's Fightback trade union conference, ICI, Fords and Bass Charrington.

But what really hit the company, who were by this time recruiting scab labour, was the blacking of the goods sent to Gratton and Kays Warehouses.

Refused

USDAW and TGWU members refused to handle the garments despatched from Rattles' non-union factory, Kingsland Models, Kidgrove.

It was as a result of this action that Rattles agreed to talk to the area official (he still refused to meet the local official).

The talks resulted in Rattles saying he would not sack any of the scab workers but he would take back half the strikers. As there were 25 scab workers in the factory at this time, the trade

union members would have been outnumbered when they returned.

This was turned down by the strikers and the dispute continued.

Rattles then informed the local official and the USDAW shop steward that a court injunction would be served on them for secondary blacking which is contrary to the Prior Bill of 1980. He said work being blacked was not Rulecan's but from Kingsland Models.

As Kingsland Models is owned by the same firm, and all Rulecan work is cut out there before being sent to Runcorn to be made up, then returned to Kidgrove for packing and dispatching, to say it's not the same work is ridiculous.

The local official was willing to fight the court injunction and take the case to the TUC Conference on April 5 as an example of the attacks being made on the trade unions, but unfortunately the General Secretary was not so eager to fight for his members' rights.

He immediately called the Rulecan employer and assured him the blacking would be lifted.

The Executive Board, who are lay members of the union, unanimously endorsed the General Secretary's decision — though the EB includes four Communist Party members, the same group who came under so much criticism for their role in the Lee Jeans dispute.

The action of these people is a gross betrayal of the working class.

The strikers have reacted very strongly and called for a full meeting of the Liverpool factory stewards and all the strikers with the two North West members of the EB to make them account for their actions and to overturn the decision to lift the blacking.

It is very important that NUTGW members realise what a blow this is to their union rights. If these women are to win, all the groups who have given verbal and financial support as well as some support on the picket line must redouble their efforts and make the picket line into a mass picket every day. The blacking must be supported by all the unions involved in the handling of any goods, whether Rulecan or Kingsland Models.

Support the picket line at 7 am every day, Pilcove Farm Lane.

Standing firm against privatisation

Colin Moore, chairperson of Wandsworth NALGO, spoke to Bob Sugden from Socialist Organiser

Why have Wandsworth Council workers been taking industrial action for 2 weeks?

The reason is that the Council have produced, and begun to implement major plans for the privatisation of a number of services — refuse collection, parks and cemeteries, and mechanical workshops.

So advanced were these projects that they would have been very difficult to stop, for a new administration elected on May 6 — so we took action now.

What action has been taken so far?

All the action has been joint action, organised by a Joint Action Committee consisting of NALGO, and officers and manual workers from GMWU, NUPE, and UCATT.

The first action, on April 19, was a one-day strike of all Wandsworth Council workers, followed by a one-week strike of all the manual workers.

These actions were most successful and were followed up by all-out strike of refuse collection staff (officers and manual workers).

Selective support action has been taken by telephonists, creditors (the staff who pay the council's bills), rates staff, Valuer's admin, part of Planning admin (with the effect of stopping property searches — so that now there can effectively be no buying or selling of property by the Borough), and very importantly, two groups who work on the Borough's computer.

One reaction from the Council was to bring in agency telephonists, and we countered this by instructing our members not to use the phone. They threatened to suspend anyone not working

normally, but we took this head on, and the Council were forced to back off.

Now they've sent out letters saying that people refusing to answer the phone won't be paid — but they can still continue to turn up for work if they want to! So we're 'working in', in a sense — but there's no way they can not pay us, especially as this action is holding solid.

Have the manual, craft, and white collar unions been united in the action?

Absolutely. The action began with a joint rally, and since then the Joint Action Committee has worked extremely well in coordinating events.

We will negotiate the end of the dispute together — no group will settle separately, without the support of the other sections.

What has been the Council's response to the action?

The Council tried to be very heavy-handed — but this has backfired on them.

Clearly senior management are very embarrassed about the situation and are trying to keep out of it. Only about 500 workers have had these letters so far.

How effective has the action been?

It has been absolutely effective. The Council has ground to a halt, its cash-flow has been stopped, the rate demands have not gone out — and if the rate demands don't go out by mid-May, and there's every chance that they won't — they will have serious legal problems recovering the money.

What are the future objectives of the campaign?

Our objective remains what it always was — there shall be no further privatisation in Wandsworth.

ation in Wandsworth.

They succeeded in privatising street cleaning, but now it appears that those pirates who took over are going to be faced with so many penalties because of the way they've done the job, that a Labour council would be able to remunicipalise the

service.

Are there any other points you'd like to make in conclusion?

Yes. The National Executive of NALGO should give us its full support. The action is official — and some strikers are getting strike pay of £20

a week — and we had to jump through hoops to get that!

NALGO should pay 55% of gross earnings as strike pay — the amount that used to be paid before it was changed in 1979.

New crunch on Rail jobs

BRITISH Rail's announcement of its workshop closures at Shildon and Horwich with a run-down of the Swindon depot, puts the fight for railway jobs on a new level.

Already Parker's Plan aims to slash 39,000 jobs in five years and the NUR's failure to fight up until now has opened the door to the latest plans.

If allowed to go ahead the proposed closures will be devastating. 5,500 jobs will go. Horwich and Shildon already have frightening unemployment rates — if the workshops close they will become Consett style ghost towns.

Undoubtedly the decision is political, and reflects the growing moves towards privatisation and asset stripping which the Tories are demanding from nationalised industries.

Announced the same week was BR's £37 million loss for 1981, with an expected loss of some £160 million for 1982.

Clearly Peter Parker faces a growing crisis (he is talking now of closing up to 3,000 miles of track — about 25% of the total).

The flexible rostering issue is still not resolved and the publication of the McCarthy report (expected this week) is unlikely to fully back management.

Determined

With the drivers still determined following the success of their strike, the stage looks set for a new confrontation. At many depots guards are refusing to work the new rosters despite the complete sell-out of the NUR leadership and the NUR conference in June will see a heated debate and possible rejection of the dirty deal Weighell made with Parker.

Meanwhile on the Bedford—St. Pancras line, a completely refurbished commuter service lies idle as workers refuse to work single-manned trains.

All this illustrates the



anger and impatience of most railworkers — especially as this year's pay settlement was due last month and negotiations haven't yet begun!

At the threatened workshops workers responded immediately with mass demonstrations in Shildon and Horwich. The NUR Executive unanimously agreed to oppose the cuts with all-out strike action "if necessary".

We now need strong, co-ordinated pressure from the rank and file to ensure that this decision is acted on. It is after all, already union policy. But Weighell is one of the most experienced blusterers in the business and his long and dishonourable record of sell-outs shows no trust can be placed in him.

His instincts are for self-preservation, sabotaging workers' struggles (particularly train drivers), and a pathological commitment to witch-hunts and expulsions. His opposition to privatisation plans is also pretty dubious.

Killing

The NUR made a killing recently — buying up shares in the sale of Amersham International, and Weighell defended the decision, pointing out that we must accept the realities of the mixed economy!

The fact that there is a growing campaign to kick him out (already on the

agenda for this year's conference) probably has something to do with his new-found 'militancy'.

The ASLEF strike proved that railworkers are not prepared to accept fewer jobs and worse conditions. The latest closures must be stopped and the only way to guarantee that is to stop the railway.

Railworkers should be getting their branches to demand immediate strike action to halt the closures as well as linking this fight to the continuing campaign against last year's sell-out, especially the NUR's agreement to flexible rostering.

We should also be developing links with steelworkers and miners in an effort to transform the Triple Alliance into a real workers' alliance rather than the present bureaucrats' tea party.

DAVE LUNTS (Pendleton NUR)

NUT 'no nukes' vote nipped in the Budd

by Elizabeth Creighton

ALF BUDD, President of the National Union of Teachers, seems to be all set to win this year's Richard Nixon Memorial Prize for bureaucratic double-talk.

Budd's first ruling at NUT conference was that the motion on disarmament at the recent Scarborough NUT conference was out of order. This was successfully challenged, and the motion was eventually carried.

But Budd has now informed NUT members that their conference did not have the right to pass this motion.

In a superb piece of reasoning which will no doubt feature in the next series of Whoops Apocalypse, Budd writes in 'The Teacher' that he and the

union solicitor believe the motion to be out of order — because outside the aims and objectives of the union — and the conference cannot break the rules of the union.

The fact that his ruling on the disarmament motion was overturned by conference; the fact that the motion passed through four separate card votes before it was finally adopted — all this is irrelevant, says Budd, the new benevolent despot of Hamilton House.

Even the union executive has not had the chance to discuss the issue. NUT rules state quite clearly that interpretation of the rules is a matter for the executive. There is no mention of superior powers for the president.

NUT members who wish to see a democratic union,

and one that has a conference that can adopt policies on all the real political issues facing teachers, should begin now to campaign through their local associations to break the president's ruling, through a fight to get support for the anti-Reagan demonstrations on June 6 and 7.

They should also argue for a clear commitment to support for other disarmament activities in their areas, and in particular to set up disarmament groups in schools.

The fight for democracy in the NUT is clearly just beginning. We must fight between now and next year's conference to create the conditions to challenge the president's bureaucratic ruling — and to change the union rules to delete the 'non-political' clause.

Tebbit tactics by Press boss

THE TWO-month struggle by NUJ members still under way at the South London Guardian carries grim warnings for trade unionists in the print industry.

Management approached the NUJ chapel a year ago and again in January, demanding the introduction of new technology. This was then coupled with the threat that if the chapel refused, printing would be transferred to a subsidiary of the notorious anti-union firm T.Bailey Forman in Nottingham.

The chapel held out for proper recognition and a negotiated house agreement, and Guardian proprietor Paul Morgan transferred printing to Nottingham on March 5.

On March 8, NUJ mem-

bers were instructed to black copy to this union-busting firm: two hours later all 11 who complied with this instruction were sacked.

The struggle amounts to a copy-book exercise in the application of Tebbit tactics by management. His new anti-union bill specifically encourages employers to pick off and sack union members who take industrial action; makes unlawful solidarity action such as the NUJ blacking copy to non-union printers; and would make the NUJ liable to claims for damages arising from its action.

Support of any kind is welcomed. Contact the Strike Committee, 162 London Rd, Kingston, Surrey (01 546 6002).

Debate

'We can not be against the war'

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is a copy of the International Workers League (Fourth International) statement on the conflict between Argentina and Great Britain.

The statement, written a few days after Argentina recovered the Malvinas Islands expresses the principle that constitutes the basis of our position. We join up with Argentina against British imperialism in spite of the character of the Argentine government. We do not in the least support that government politically but we do give our full military support against England.

Since that document was written, the situation has evolved and war is rapidly approaching. This requires an even more categorical position on our part. The IWL and the PST of Argentina has decided to launch

Recently in *Socialist Organiser* we have carried an article and an interview from Carlos — a comrade of the Argentine Socialist Workers' Party (PST) living in Britain. The IWL, an international grouping which unites the PST with other socialist organisations mainly in Latin America, has asked us to publish this letter.

an international campaign of support to Argentina's just struggle against British imperialism. The joint mobilisation of working class, democratic and anti-imperialist forces around the world is needed to halt the imperialist offensive and force Britain to withdraw her forces from the South Atlantic.

We were very much surprised by the statements of comrade Carlos Garcia published in *Socialist Organiser*

numbers 80 and 81. We do not doubt that the confusion is due to the illegal situation of our party, which gives rise to certain difficulties in communicating with our comrades in foreign countries.

We must state however that comrade Carlos' positions are not those of the PST(A) and the IWL.

We are not against the war. We cannot oppose it because it is the struggle of a semi-colonial country to regain a part of its territory from the hands of an imperialist power.

All the imperialist powers and their governments whether liberal, conservative or social democratic, have formed a united front to back up imperialist Britain.

We are not pacifists. Our attitude towards a given war depends on the character of

that war. In this case we must state categorically, no matter what the aims of the Argentine military junta are, Argentina's war against England is anti-imperialist.

We align ourselves with the oppressed nation against the oppressor. We are for the victory of Argentina against Britain.

In 1938, in a discussion with the Argentine militant Mateo Fossa Trotsky said:

"In Brazil there now reigns a semi-fascist regime that every revolutionary can only view with hatred. Let us assume however, that on the morrow, England enters into a military conflict with Brazil. I ask you on whose side of the conflict will the working class be?"

I will answer for myself personally. In this case I would be on the side of fascist Brazil against



Thatcher's War

democratic Great Britain. Why? Because in the conflict between them it will not be a case of democracy or fascism.

If England should be victorious she will put another fascist in Rio De Janeiro and will place double chains on Brazil. If Brazil on the contrary should be victorious, it will give a mighty impulse to national and democratic consciousness of the country and will lead to the overthrow of the Vargas dictatorship.

The defeat of England will at the same time deliver a blow to British imperialism and will give an impulse to the revolutionary movement of the British proletariat.

Surely one must have an empty head to reduce world antagonisms and military conflict to the struggle between fascism and democracy and under all masks one must know how to distinguish exploiters, slave-owners and robbers."

Writings 1938/9, p.34.

Savage

We know very well what the government of Argentina is. It is a savage military dictatorship that has killed thousands of workers and revolutionaries, that condemns thousands of workers to hunger and unemployment and miserable wages. It has outlawed the unions of the working class and left wing parties. It helps the Yankee imperialists crush

the masses in Central America.

Killed

More than 100 of our comrades have been killed in the struggle against it. But like Trotsky said we must learn to distinguish the robbers under their masks.

Comrade Carlos is wrong when he calls for a General Strike against the war because this is not a war between imperialist powers. That is why we aim our weapons against British imperialism, from the military camp of the Argentine government.

Comrade Carlos allows himself to be misled by the imperialists when he says that we respect the right of self-determination of the Malvinas islanders. The islanders are not natives of the Malvinas, but inhabitants of the colonial enclave, a group of people transplanted from England to the islands to help maintain colonial domination.

Therefore what is in question here is not the historic right of the people over their own territory, a right we fully defend. To defend the right of self-determination of the islanders is to defend the rights of Israeli settlers in Arab lands, or the rights of Englishmen in Ireland. The only rights of the Malvinas islanders is to choose whether they will return to Britain or remain on the islands under Argentine government.

Trotsky teaches that it is impossible to fight against fascism without fighting against imperialism. Colonial and semi-colonial countries must struggle in the first place against the imperialist power that oppresses them.

It is necessary to organise a militant solidarity of working class, democratic and anti-imperialist forces around the world. In imperialist countries they must raise the demand for the immediate withdrawal of the British Fleet from the South Atlantic and recognition of Argentine sovereignty over the islands, the lifting of the EEC's economic boycott of Argentina, calling on the trade unions to lead this struggle.

In Latin American countries our slogans are:

Full military and economic support to Argentina. Suspend payment of the foreign debts.

In reply to the EEC boycott expropriate all British and other imperialist concerns.

It is our duty as Trotskyists to lead this anti-imperialist struggle. We invite you to join forces with us in this campaign for the victory of Argentina in the struggle against British imperialism.

Finally we request that you publish the statement of the IWL in your paper, *Socialist Organiser*, so as to state our positions clearly for the British working class.

With fraternal Trotskyist greetings,

Zeze,
for the IWL Secretariat



'Solidarity with Argentine struggle'

Statement of the International Workers League (Fourth International) on the conflict around the Malvinas Islands.

A military conflict has exploded between the Argentine military dictatorship, justly hated by the working people of that country, and British imperialism, that old bulwark of world counter-revolution.

This conflict could spark off a bloody battle in the South Atlantic. In such a case the Leninist-Trotskyists have always supported the nationalism of oppressed

nations against that of the oppressor. The IWL, faithful to that tradition, hereby states that if need arises, it will fight in the camp of the Argentine government.

The Argentine army had a right to occupy the Malvinas. From a historical, political and military point of view, England must be held accountable for all past and future bloodshed.

The islands were invaded almost 150 years ago, by the English Fleet and since then their return has been a constant anti-imperialist claim. Great Britain was forced

by the revolutionary struggle of the colonial masses to retreat from her dominions on the seven seas and the five continents. After World War II most of these remained under the semi-colonial domination of Yankee imperialism. But wherever Britain was able to remain, she did so.

Cynical

Lord Carrington's cynical statement that he resigned because his policy had failed is proof that the only aim of British diplomacy is to retain British possessions. British colonialism has sent 40 ships of her war fleet — the third in the world in terms of destructive power — to punish the Argentine.

In this it is backed by the bureaucrats of the trade unions and the Labour Party as well as by the bourgeoisie as a whole. What is at stake for Britain is neither the strategic value nor the possible economic value of those few uninhabited islands. No, what is at stake is the principle of imperialist domination — the counter-revolutionary world order, that same order that the USA defends in Central America, Jaruzelski and the Kremlin in Poland, France in Zaire.

It is no accident that Yankee imperialism, whose armies and military advisors are spread around the globe

to impose the law of the multinational corporations has condemned the legitimate action undertaken by the Argentine government from the floor of the United Nations and that they have offered to mediate in this conflict. The aim of such mediation is evident. Whatever the outcome of the negotiations, the sacred principle that an imperialist power may not be driven out but must emerge unscathed.

It is no accident that Japan and the EEC agree on this. It is no accident that the Latin American bourgeoisies, satellites of American foreign policy support the mediation, following the lead of the Colombian government.

Finally it is least of all an accident that the social democratic governments of French imperialism together with the English Labour bureaucrats have adopted the same policy. Either punish the Argentine or negotiate a way out in such a way that imperialist principles will remain intact.

Bloody

But this clear anti-imperialist struggle has been besmirched by the character of the Argentine government. This bloody dictatorship, the worst so far this century, has exploited the workers and the people for the benefit of

Yankee imperialism. Singapore and Argentina are the two semi colonies where the imperialists have reaped the greatest benefits in the past few years.

Divert

Galtieri surprised Lord Carrington and the British imperialists but he aims to surprise the Argentine workers. He aims to divert them away from the struggle against their exploiters and the dictatorship. When the dictatorship decided to take over the islands they consulted neither the Argentine people nor took their real needs into account.

The war, if there is one, will mean more hunger for the workers and the people.

However, this will not deter the Argentine workers and ourselves who have consistently attacked the dictatorship since it came to power from carrying out united action against imperialist aggression — the most odious and terrible violation of human rights. Without giving the slightest political support to the government and to the steps it has taken we will form part of the military camp of the dictatorship in the fight against the British imperialists.

We defend their right to take over the islands, we struggle together with the Argentine soldiers and call

on all workers and democrats and anti-imperialist fighters around the world to support this struggle.

At the same time we sound the alert. The Argentine government which has handed the country over to the imperialists will not wage a consistent struggle in the battle that is approaching.

This battle can only be won if the workers are armed.

Under the leadership of the military dictatorship the battle against the third navy in the world will be lost, the people will suffer and very probably the dictatorship will bow to the demands of the American imperialists, thanks to whose support and that of the Argentine bourgeoisie it has been able to remain in power.

We will fight together with the Argentine soldiers without abandoning our political struggle against the government and the military command.

Defeat

We will call on the workers to mobilise around the demand that the government adopts those measures that will guarantee the defeat of Her Majesty's Navy and Army, backed by the rest of the imperialist powers.

If Argentina is to repel imperialist aggression, it is



PRESS GANG

Daily Mail
Daily Express
Financial Times
The Daily Telegraph
The Sun

by Patrick Spilling

TODAY learned of tragic loss of General Belgrano. Watched Admiral Sandy Woodward doing televised press conference on deck. Said sad at loss of life of Argentine sailors. Woodward spoke of brotherhood of seagoing folk and how deaths affected him deeply. Very moving.

Personally thought effect spoiled when TV red light went off by Woodward giving a wink and punching the air, shouting 'Got the bastards'.

Some readers mistaken this column for fiction. In fact Ministry of Defence called special press conference last week to denounce it as 'a pack of bloody lies'. Soldiers and sailors in task force caught reading Socialist Organiser have had papers confiscated.

But evidence for truth all around. Nothing I have written is more outrageous than other correspondents. Tony Snow, who 'writes' for the Sun and News of the World, signed a missile being loaded aboard a Harrier jet last week on behalf of his readers with the message 'Up yours, Galtieri'.

Despite Ministry protests they know I am writing copy for correspondents too seck or drunk to produce own stories. Sometimes leads to embarrassing duplication. Here are first few paragraphs of story in Tuesday's Guardian, by-lined Gareth Parry, on board Invincible.

"The British task force showed a strong compassion to the battered Argentine

navy yesterday. After torpedoing the General Belgrano the British submarine allowed the cruiser's escort ship to sail away unharmed.

"Later, after one Argentine patrol boat had been sunk and another reduced to a 'burning hulk', the task force flagship, the carrier Hermes, put out a distress signal for survivors and sent out helicopters to search.

"Each patrol boat would normally carry a crew of 50. But no survivors were found."

And here are the first few paragraphs from the same day's Telegraph, by-lined A J McIlroy.

"The British task force showed compassion to the battered Argentine navy yesterday.

"After crippling their second largest warship, General Belgrano, with torpedoes, the British submarine that did the damage allowed the Argentine cruiser's escort ship to sail away unharmed.

"Later, after sinking one Argentine patrol boat and leaving another 'a burning hulk', the task force flagship carrier Hermes put out a distress signal for survivors and sent helicopters to search the area.

"Each patrol boat would normally carry a crew of 49, but no survivors were found."

Some people say the only way two stories could come out the same is that they are all being written by Ministry of Defence PRs. Only I know better.

Argentine spokesmen appeared today to be softening

up population for the loss of another of its dwindling fleet. A communique issued on television this evening said a rowing boat had been attacked by British planes off the coast, but it had shot down eight Harriers and three Sea King helicopters. It added however that the rowing boat had suffered 'some minor damage'.

British Ministry spokesmen denied the craft could be termed a rowing boat, and designated it as 'a coastal auxiliary vessel'. They said it was armed with a 9 foot rod with sharp barbed hooks on the end which could threaten British submarines.

The pilot - acting in full accord with United Nations resolution 502 - gave two warnings over the aircraft's intercom, but the vessel failed to vacate Argentine coastal waters. The pilot therefore released a Sidewinder missile which hit the warship just behind the oars. The vessel has been sunk.

Later Foreign Secretary Pym defended use of missile within 200 yards of Argentine coast. "It depends where you measure the 200 mile exclusion zone from", he said.

Meanwhile, outrageous Argentine claims to have sunk the entire British fleet have been quashed, but bad feeling caused on Hermes after press corps had cabled stories saying they had not seen any attacks on their ship. Press Association cabled back asking captain if correspondents would have noticed.

'Campaign against the war'

Reg Race MP spoke to Socialist Organiser about the tasks of the Labour Left in the Falklands crisis

THE LABOUR Party NEC and the TUC General Council on April 28 passed resolutions opposing further military action. Yet when the British forces launched their attack last Saturday, Peter Shore appeared on television supporting the action. What do you think Labour's attitude should be?

Our attitude should be to call the fleet back to Ascension or South Georgia to enable a negotiated settlement to be concluded. There is no justification for military action, and the Labour Party should not support it.

What do you think is the view of the rank and file Labour Party membership?

I believe that most of the activists in the labour movement want to see a negotiated settlement with no loss of life on either side. I am confident that that is their opinion: it is also the case that three out of five voters want to see a negotiated settlement and believe that not a single British serviceman's life should be wasted in re-taking the Falklands.

It is also essential to understand that whilst our forces have been firing on the Argentinians, the Bank of England has been rolling over Argentinian central bank debt. In other words, whilst we have been killing and wounding people, the Bank of England has been refinancing the debts of the Argentinian government.

The quickest and easiest way of bringing the Argentinians to the negotiating table is to exercise economic pressure on them. They are clearly vulnerable to such pressure, and it should be implemented.

The objective of our efforts should be to ensure a negotiated settlement and an administration which is neither British nor Argentinian, but based on the United Nations.

What is your view on the rights of the Falklanders?

There clearly has been mili-

tary aggression by Argentina against the Falkland Islands. Therefore we have a responsibility to ensure that the Falklanders are not physically assaulted or have their democratic rights removed.

However, the Falklanders should not be able to exercise a veto over a long-term settlement of the Falkland Islands question. I believe that they should be offered either re-location or generous compensation for leaving the Falklands; if some of them wish to remain, they clearly have a right to do so under any interim administration which is established.

Do you think sending the fleet and starting a war can be justified as a defence of the rights of the Falkland Islanders?

A short answer to that question is no. I do not believe that the actions of the fleet can be justified in any way. I believe that although military aggression has taken place, one can get a negotiated settlement which removes the problem of sovereignty on either side by exercising economic pressure.

Exiled Argentine trade unionists have appealed to the TUC to meet them to discuss

STOP THE WAR!

Public meeting.
Speakers include
Tony Benn.

Wednesday May 12,
7.30pm, Committee
Room 14, House of
Commons.

common action for a peaceful settlement. What sort of appeal do you think the British labour movement should be making to the Argentine labour movement?

That's very difficult. I don't really know the answer to that question because I haven't seen what the Argentinian trade unionists have been saying.

It's quite clear that the Argentinian labour movement, most of which is Peronist, have been supporting the government's claims to the Malvinas, and I think that what we ought to say to the Argentinian trade unionists is that we fully support their attempts to rid themselves of a fascist dictatorship.

The British labour movement ought to be doing some other major things, like mounting a campaign against the war. That is going to be done next week, when we hope there is going to be a major rally in the House of Commons, as the start of a campaign to stop the war.

Joan Lester and some other Labour MPs have put down a Commons motion attacking Tony Benn's call for the fleet to be withdrawn. What weaknesses do you think this crisis has shown in the Labour Left?

The motion which you refer to is slightly different to the one which your question implied. It is silly, because it has been signed by a very large number of Tory MPs, and the people who put it down had one object only in mind, namely to embarrass, as they saw it, Tony Benn and his allies on the Left of the Labour Party.

If people want to waste their time conducting such trivial exercises, then they are welcome to waste it.

What the Labour Left should be doing now is uniting to mobilise a major campaign against the war which Britain is drifting into.



Polish riot police in Warsaw

Polish defiance

From front page

shields and clubs. workers — and in particular working class youth — hit back with stones, bricks and

petrol bombs. Nearly 1,400 people were arrested — far outnumbering the token 1,000 political prisoners released by the regime last week as a gesture of restored

'normality'.

The demands of the demonstrators have been for the release of jailed Solidarnosc leader Lech Walesa and the defeat of the Jaruzelski junta.

These same demands should now be ringing long and loud through the British workers' movement — which so far has largely failed the test of mobilising serious solidarity and support for Solidarnosc.

Strike

For the British labour bureaucrats and for Stalinist leaders around the world, this new resurgence of the revolutionary strength of the Polish proletariat must be seen as a body blow.

The task however is the development of a leadership within the Solidarnosc movement and throughout the working class in the Stalinist-ruled states capable of politically overthrowing the Jaruzelski regime, its fellow bureaucrats, and their reactionary Kremlin sponsors.



Thatcher's War

We reply: Our 'camp' is that of workers

ON THE need to fight for Thatcher to be defeated and forced to withdraw the fleet, we have no disagreement with the comrades of the PST.

The analysis that "the only aim of British diplomacy is to retain British possessions" seems to us false. In truth Britain has been trying to get rid of the Falklands since the early '70s. The war is to save the face and the prestige of Thatcher.

But the same conclusion follows: the British labour movement should campaign against Thatcher's war and attempt to stop it through blacking military supplies. And this is the policy SO has put forward since the start of the war.

Our disagreements with the PST and IWL come when they say they "will fight in the camp of the Argentine government".

Marxists, it seems to us, should fight in the camp of the working class against Thatcher's war and against Galtieri's adventure.

The war over the Falklands, as the IWL points out, will mean more hunger for the workers and people of Argentina. And for what?

Untouched

Galtieri's invasion did not liberate anyone from colonialism or imperialism. It did not lessen the burden of imperialist exploitation, or improve the conditions for the fight against it, for a single Argentine worker.

It deliberately leaves untouched the imperialist banks and multinationals which daily exploit the workers of Argentina.

It is of course possible to imagine circumstances

where an attack on these imperialist interests in Argentina — through expropriations and the repudiation of debts to Western bankers — might conceivably have triggered off a military response from Britain or the USA, in the course of which there might have been an attempt by the imperialists to use the Falklands as a base for their operations.

In such a situation, plainly an Argentine invasion of the Falklands would have been part and parcel of a genuine anti-imperialist struggle, and would have had to be defended.

But instead the whole invasion has been a red herring designed purely and simply to divert the Argentine workers away from their mounting mass struggles against the junta.

Far from advancing the

struggle against imperialism it has strengthened the standing of a fiercely reactionary, pro-imperialist dictatorship, and embroiled the Argentine people in a war in which they can hope to win nothing of significance.

The analogy with Israel or with Ireland does not hold. (Moreover, we would not be in favour of the Jews in Palestine, or the Protestant Irish in Northern Ireland — if it is they who are inaccurately referred to as 'Englishmen in Ireland') — suffering the same fate that the Falklanders are likely to face under Galtieri's boot).

Community

The Falklands have been a distinct community for 150 years, displacing no-one, oppressing no other community. They were not

an outpost for British domination of Argentina. Their seizure was not an issue of Argentine national unity.

Duty-bound

The workers of Argentina to be sure, are duty-bound to fight to defend their own territory and people, under whatever regime, against aggression by Britain. But they should do so through their own, independent methods of mobilisation, and in no way have they an interest in fighting and dying in the cause of Galtieri's mini-colonialism.

So far as we can judge at this distance, the tasks for socialists in Argentina should be:

1. To reveal, soberly and coldly, the realities behind Galtieri's nationalist bluster. To show that the invasion was in fact a

Socialist Organiser



PHOTO JOHN HARRIS

Health service pay

FORCE UNION



CoHSE leader Spanswick:
no instruction.

LEADERS

Lobby TUC
May 10

TO ACT!

MEMBERS willing to fight. Leaders determined not to lead. That is the impasse facing militants in the health unions in this decisive period in their pay battle.

The unions are demanding 12 per cent. The Tories have offered derisory sums ranging from nothing at all through 4% to a top offer of 6.4% for some nurses. But instead of seizing upon this offer to go out and rally the united strength of the health unions in strike action to win the full claim, union leaders have dithered and deliberately divided the workforce.

CoHSE branches were last week 'authorised' to begin partial action — but none were instructed to do anything.

NUPE general secretary Alan Fisher, on the other hand, has announced that he is opposed to strike action by nurses, opposed to action before it is decided by the whole of the TUC Health Services Committee, and in favour of arbitration — which he hopes might produce a face-saving extra percentage point or two.

Instead of action, NUPE has called a ballot of its branches on the offer, to be completed only this week.

ASTMS and other unions are also holding fire, arguing that they will only take action jointly with all the

other health unions. Yet it has become evident that the bureaucrats who sit on the TUC Health Services Committee have no intention of coordinating anything — let alone calling for any intensified action. Their meetings take place behind locked doors, with no minutes or reports available to the membership they supposedly represent.

Yet this Committee has an unparalleled opportunity this year to mobilise a

fight on pay. For the first time ever all sections of health workers have a common review date and a common claim. United strike action — with strike committees locally deciding on emergency cover — could rapidly force the Tories to concede.

There is every indication that, where a lead is given along these lines, health workers will respond. Yet in many areas the fact that there has

been no instruction to take action means that right wing branch officers, convenors or officials are sitting tight, while frustration and demoralisation grows among their members.

Two key meetings could change this situation. One, the NUPE NEC, begins this Thursday at the Charing Cross Hotel in London. It will assess the result of the ballot and decide the policy of the biggest health

union. It is vital that the call is for national strike action.

The second is the TUC Health Services Committee at Congress House at 10.30am next Monday May 10. A call to action from this Committee could open up a major struggle against Thatcher's pay limits. Anything less could raise the spectre of a new sell-out on pay.

Socialist Organiser supporters in the Health Service last week participated in the launching of an ad hoc rank and file group Health Workers for the Full Claim, which is taking up the struggle for a lobby of both the NUPE NEC and the TUC Health Services Committee, and publishing a mobilising bulletin.

TUC leaders won't fight Tebbit!

the workplace to put to their own employers about the Bill".

Top union leaders are still pursuing the fantasy of an alliance with the bosses against Tebbit's Bill — when in fact the Bill is designed and tailored to serve the bosses' interests.

Some bosses, to be sure, are worried about Tebbit's tactics. At a conference organised by the Financial Times last week, James McFarlane, director-general of the powerful Engineering Employers' Federation, called for Tebbit's provisions on the closed shop not to be implemented until after the next election.

Other managers also expressed worry about some Tebbit proposals backfiring.

But behind this lies the fact that these bosses, unlike the TUC, soberly assess the state of the working class movement, and know that the will to fight and the power to win still exist on the shop floor.

The way to push the bosses and the Tories from doubts to defeat is to fight for action, not to beg and beseech.

The Mobilising Committee for the Defence of Trade Union Rights is campaigning for such a fight. For latest campaign news, see page 2.

DESPITE THE efforts of Socialist Organiser sellers, calling for the TUC to break links with the Tories now and organise strike action to stop Tebbit, the lobby of Parliament on the Tories' new anti-union bill last Thursday, April 29, was a subdued affair.

The organisers, the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, had clearly made little effort to mobilise and publicise the event.

And this inaction by the official leadership looks like continuing.

The TUC has named Thursday June 10 as a day of protest — 'Union Day'. But it is making no call for strike action.

It announces only that "On this day millions of copies of a special leaflet aimed at explaining to the public the positive role of trade unions and the threat posed by Mr Tebbit's Bill will be distributed throughout the country. The leaflet is to be given to members of the public by union members at railway and bus stations... etc".

The TUC is also launching 'a booklet 'Put Your Employer on the Spot', which spells out key points for trade unionists at

Dock strike on

by John O'Mahony

18,000 dockworkers are set to go on indefinite official strike from May 10 — unless the Tory government changes course on its policies in the ports.

Dockers are insisting that the Tory government carry out the commitment made to them by the Labour government in 1976 as part of the Social Contract

deal then made with union leader Jack Jones.

The 1976 agreement was embodied in the Dock Work Regulation Act. Under this the government must act to protect dockers' jobs either by extending the areas around the ports within which registered dockers do all jobs packing and unpacking containers, or by bringing ports like Felixstowe and Dover, which have been rapidly expanded to allow National Dock Labour Board ports to be bypassed, into the National Dock Labour Scheme. One quarter of all traffic now passes through non-NDLB ports.

An emergency delegate conference of the TGWU docks group on April 21 voted for strike action from the 10th unless the government agrees to bring additional ports under the NDLB.

Basically the dockers are driven by the growth of unemployment in the ports. The bosses are offering £22,000 a head to cut the workforce by 2000. They are determined to resist any extension of the National Dock Labour Scheme.

The dockers' demand that the 1976 agreement be activated now was triggered as part of the response to the employers' recent attempt to replace the

existing local Dock Labour Boards with a much smaller number of regional boards, and transfer some of their present responsibilities to the employers.

They were forced to retreat on this by a one day protest strike and the threat of all-out national strike action. Reportedly the employers are demanding that the government stand firm, refusing to strengthen the NDLS.

Meetings between the union and Tebbit's ministry are taking place as we go to press.

BL VICTORY

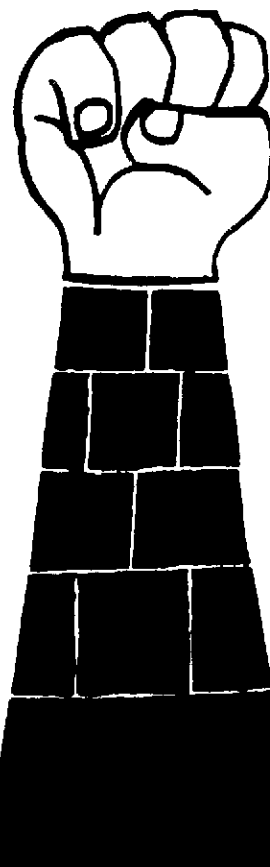
WORKERS ON the Rover Ambassador assembly track at the BL Cowley Assembly plant scored an important victory against BL's hard-line management style this week.

After a two-day strike by both shifts, a letter threatening workers with disciplinary action for lateness and absenteeism was completely withdrawn.

Absenteeism in the plant has risen because of the hard conditions on the track and constant pressure by management. The letter, which was in breach of the established disciplinary procedures in the plant, was designed to solve the problem by intimidation.

BILL PETERS

£6000 fund



£30 from a Warwick supporter, £25 from Dai and Sarah Stephens, £28 from Godfrey Webster, £20 from Cheung Siu Ming, and £5 more from Birmingham readers, makes £108 this week for our £6000 special fund.

The total now stands at £1550.80 (represented by the red patch below).

What we need to push the total up decisively is not just individual donations but organised local fund-raising activities.

Let us know what your group has planned.

And send money to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL. Cheques payable to Socialist Organiser

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Call for labour movement solidarity—p.3

Take a bundle
of 50 to sell!