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Falklands
war

NO VICTORY FOR WORKERS!

BRITISH AND ARGENTINE WORKERS UNITE!



BRITAIN has retaken the Falklands. The cost in Argentine and British lives – between 800 and 1,000 – is a ratio of more than one killed for every two inhabitants of the islands.

Mrs Thatcher's finest hour? Undoubtedly it is. The Tories are riding high in the polls, buoyed up by patriotism and success. Now the only place they can go is down, and they will, fast.

The brief taste of national pride and glory will soon turn sour and nasty in the unchanged atmosphere of decay and decline which will still saturate Britain when the flags have been put back in mothballs.

The victory will change nothing for British capitalism. Backward Tory MPs, drunk with the almost forgotten savour of victory, may dream of a "national renewal" through the effects of this petty foreign war.

It will all prove as short-lived and delusory as the Argentine victory over the Falkland Islanders on April 2 did for Galtieri.

Both the British and Argentine ruling classes set their soldiers, sailors and airmen to slaughtering each other in a competition for prestige and authority and for the advantages possession of the Falklands could give them.

Thatcher hypocritically talked of her concern for the violated rights of the Falklanders, brutally seized by the armies of a foreign military dictatorship.

Nationalism

The ruling junta wrapped itself in Argentine nationalism and Foreign Minister Costa Mendes, who had recently been negotiating with the USA, Britain, South Africa and Brazil for the setting up of a South Atlantic Treaty Organisation (with military bases in the Falklands), and had been talking of sending Argentine troops to help put down the guerrillas in El Salvador, now emerged as a passionate anti-imperialist!

Cant and hypocrisy on both sides. The rights of the Falklanders are important and so is the struggle against imperialism. But Thatcher is the bloody oppressor of Northern Ireland's Catholics. Galtieri's Junta is the organiser since the 1976 coup of a large-scale increase in imperialist investment in the exploitation of Argentine workers.

Thatcher and Galtieri are the disease, not the cure.

Galtieri's Junta started the Falklands adventure to divert mounting opposition into patriotism (a general

strike had been called for the beginning of April). It was a bold attempt to harness the political tiger of Peronist chauvinism to haul the floundering Junta out of the mud of Argentine economic chaos and social disintegration. Only victory would have made that possible. Now there are riots in Buenos Aires and the hunt is on for the "National traitors".

The defeat is a crippling blow to the military caste which it cannot survive for long. A writer in the Financial Times puts it like this: "... the military as a caste have failed the country in a contest that they themselves chose ... those military values which generals said for generations gave them the right to interfere in any and all aspects of Argentine life, are in 1982 lying in ruins".

A restoration of civilian rule is now unavoidable, peacefully or otherwise. The military caste, shaken if not shattered in its prestige, in its political, moral and national authority, and perhaps even in its grip on the Army's conscripts, will be less capable of "intervening" in politics for some

time to come, and perhaps for a long time.

Mrs Thatcher's come-uppance won't be long delayed either. Dockers on strike against Tebbit's anti-union laws and miners on sympathetic strike for the health workers' claim – these are the signs of a real revival of working class militancy. The brief patriotic splurge has changed nothing basic for the Tories.

In no sense is this a victory for the British working class. In no sense is it a defeat for the Argentine working class. This unnecessary, irrelevant and fruitless war was a ruling class stunt and diversion on both sides.

Now the cornered Junta talk of continuing the war. And Thatcher raves about making the Falklands into a British fortress in the area.

We urgently need the unity of Argentine and British workers to fight against any attempt to continue the diversion by either side.

The TUC and the Argentine unions should immediately meet to try to work out a joint common working class policy on the Falklands and to bring about reconciliation between the Argentine and British peoples.

Against Thatcher and Galtieri!

Zionist butchers in Lebanon

In a few days of merciless
slaughter in Lebanon, Zion-
ist invasion forces have killed
an estimated 9,500 people –
the majority of them

civilians – and injured at
least twice that number.
60,000 have been made
homeless – and the toll is
still mounting. The scenes

are being compared to the
devastation of Dresden in
World War 2.

In a cynical bid to
minimise their own casual-

ties, the Zionists are appar-
ently attempting to install a
puppet right wing Phalangist
regime in Beirut which will
carry out the house-to-house
extermination of beleaguered
Palestinian fighters in the
city.

While they make limp
calls for a ceasefire the
imperialist leaders are the
crucial accomplices who
enable the Zionists to perpe-
trate this barbarism.

Middle East details – pp.7-9



COHSE: Spanswick holds pass for Thatcher

By Jane Goss

COHSE started its pay campaign on April 26 by asking branches to take one-hour stoppages and by starting a work-to-rule aimed at stopping all non-emergency admissions.

Since then a series of 2-hour and 1-day stoppages have been the recommendation from the TUC and the STUC. But in some areas health workers took the initiative and came out on indefinite strike as in Edinburgh where around 1,000 health workers were on strike for seven days (NUPE, NALGO and COHSE).

This lead from the workers shows that the strategy of selective action is not supported by the rank and file.

NUPE conference unanimously supported the call for all out action with emergency cover but the leadership used a clause which referred to other TUC health



unions in a way which disarmed the all-out strike call.

COHSE conference had three emergency resolutions on the COHSE pay campaign. The National Executive Committee, Dundee and Hackney all put resolutions to conference. The usual manipulation of speaking time occurred with Albert

Spanswick, general secretary, abusing his platform position by speaking for 20 minutes on the NEC resolution.

Bulletins and lobbying by Health Workers for the Full Claim was instrumental in getting the support of some of the delegates for the Hackney resolution.

Spanswick, in an attempt to give a rousing speech, blasted delegates with such 'militant' phrases as 'We want jam today' and 'We will not trade off jobs! He made much of COHSE's 'lead' in the present campaign and the effect this is having on hospitals.

Obviously, as chair of the TUC's Health Services Committee, Spanswick was supporting the weak stand taken by the TUC. He maintained that health workers should continue the selective action ('We started together, we should finish together') until

the government took notice!

Spanswick spoke several times of the importance of reducing hospitals to accident and emergency cover only. This showed how totally out of touch he is.

Several delegates opposing the NEC resolution pointed out that they were already reduced to accident and emergency cover and it hadn't pushed the Tories any further towards giving us 12%. However, Spanswick's lack of any real commitment to fight became apparent in his opposition speech to the Hackney resolution calling for indefinite strike action with emergency cover only.

he said it would be totally against COHSE policy and that the Hackney resolution would be illegal because it would mean nurses walking off wards and leaving patients without any care.

This complete distortion of the resolution was calculated to twist its meaning and confuse the emotive subject of accident and emergency cover.

Despite some excellent calls to support the Hackney resolution, Spanswick and the NEC got their weak and divisive resolution through.

If Spanswick gets his way the 'ultimate weapon' of indefinite strike action is to remain buried for all this year, at least, in the COHSE arsenal at head office.

Activists in COHSE should continue to argue and fight for indefinite strike action. We need to offer support to NUPE branches who are prepared to come out indefinitely and to pursue the only kind of action that will win the 12% claim - indefinite strike and emergency cover only.

80 delegates discuss democracy

GROUP 81 - the Broad Left grouping within COHSE started at last year's conference - made a meaningful intervention in this year's conference.

Its first fringe meeting was held on Sunday night before conference where 80 delegates discussed the importance of democratic reform in COHSE and organising an intervention within the pay debate.

A majority of the delegates there felt that the only way to win the 12% claim

was to embark on a course of all-out strike action, with the provision of emergency cover under trade union control.

The rest of the discussion centred around abortion rights and democracy resolutions.

An immediate and concrete effect of Group 81's organising was seen in the passing of the Hackney resolution demanding that Regional Councils should be held at quarterly intervals, instead of the present twice-

yearly intervals.

In addition, many delegates sought the advice of leading Group 81 activists throughout the week.

A series of Group 81 fringe meetings were held. Over 200 attended a meeting on Monday evening to hear Tony Benn. Welcoming the formation of Group 81, he suggested that the reason trade unions did not act in the best interests of their members is that their leaders had grown away from their members.

Benn maintained that the reaction against the Left and democratic reform was based on the fear that groups like Group 81 presented a positive way forward and therefore change. This obviously undermined the opportunist leadership within the trade union and labour movement.

Ellen Taylor, from Middlewood Hospital, Sheffield, spoke for Health Workers for the Full Claim on the need for COHSE to support all-out strike action.

Other meetings were held on Labour Party democracy, with CLPD speakers, on the Falklands war, with Tam Dalyell, and Michael Meacher on the Tebbitt Bill.

After only one year Group 81 has already proved itself a real step forward in the long-overdue fight to organise the left in the union.

Roll on 1983!

By Pauline Bartlett

Gormley: prop for state

YORKSHIRE miners use his photo as a target in darts matches to give an edge to their aim. But Mrs Thatcher knows her own. Lord Gormley dons the ermine as the reward for a lifetime's service to the ruling class.

Offensive

He fought them, of course, reluctantly, when he couldn't avoid it, as in 1972 and 1974 when the miners went on the offensive against Heath's government.

But always he remained on their own ground, a militant right winger and defender of the capitalist system. Always he acted as a brake on the miners and on the labour movement, always he eagerly sought compromises and deals with the status quo.

His recent 'intervention' to sway the vote on the miners' pay claim against the left and for peace with this murderous Tory government was an appropriate last act in the career of a time server.

'Honours'

Even so, that the leader - however inept and reluctant - of the miners' battles against Heath should accept 'honours' from this most vicious, most anti-working class and most indefensible of governments - that is the measure the crisis of working class leadership in Britain today.

Back in the 1920s Leon

Trotsky truly said that the British trade union bureaucracy had become a central pillar of the state, without which the state could not survive. Last Sunday in an editorial which was as perceptive as it was candid the Sunday Telegraph said the same thing when it hailed the 'enoblement' of Gormley as a strengthening of the state. From the labour movement's point of view, the editorial, which we reprint below, can serve as an appropriate obituary for the wretched toady, Joe Gormley.

John Cunningham



Lord Gormley with another future Lord - the AUEW's Duffy

'WIGAN'S PEER'

"BY accepting a peerage Joe Gormley has done honour to the House of Lords. It is the reputation of that ancient institution which will be strengthened rather than the reputation of that venerable trade unionist."

As leader of the National Union of Mineworkers, Mr Gormley was much more powerful than any member of the House of Lords, and his presence on their benches will raise their prestige far more than his. Such is the strange turnabout of modern times that it is the peerage which increases its status by gaining a trade union leader rather than the trade union leader by gaining a peerage.

As it happens, trade union leaders, even without formal ennoblement, are usually referred to as 'barons', since their behaviour is often much more imperious and swash-buckling, overbearing and lordly, than the grandest and most ancient of hereditary noblemen, most of whom eschew such characteristics, prudently preferring to present a much more modest mien. Far from being tempted into arrogance by his elevation, Mr Gormley may well find himself required to relearn habits of humility wholly alien to the oligarchic world of the TUC.

Even his standard of living may drop, since there is certainly no comparison

between the spartan fare served in the Lords and those Lucullan dishes served in the fine London restaurants where Mr Gormley used to hold court.

All in all, Mr Gormley may have made quite a sacrifice, lost much face among some of his old colleagues who will never deign to speak to him again.

Certainly there can be no possible question of his having had to beg, or buy, his title. Quite the contrary, it is likely to have been Mrs Thatcher who had to beg him to accept. For trade union leaders in the Lords are still precious rarities, much to be treasured, their arrival as welcome to that beleaguered body as any

relieving force.

In the old days some commoners used to turn down a peerage on the grounds that they did not own enough acres to do justice to that high rank.

No such inhibition is likely to have deterred Mr Gormley for a moment. Card votes today mean much more than acres, and in the past Mr Gormley has been the proud owner of one of the finest collections of the former in the land - not to mention a fiefdom stretching over much of England, Scotland and Wales. Shoulders which have borne so many heavier burdens will be more than broad enough to do more than justice to an ermine cape.



S. WALES BACKS NHS STRIKERS

THERE was widespread support for the one day strike in Wales last Wednesday 16 June. The response was the best yet, with even the small hospitals responding and coming out on strike.

At the miners' gala on the previous Saturday, a number of NUM Lodges promised to send delegations down to the picket lines in Cardiff before attending a demonstration through the town on the Wednesday.

A delegation of NUPE members attended the gala where we collected £45 for the Health Workers for the Full Claim Campaign.

A number of different groups of workers pledged their support for strike action - apart from the miners. These included the Cardiff branch of the

National Union of Seamen, who had originally sent the resolution calling for support for the NHS workers to their own national executive. Local council workers in Merthyr and Rhymney Valley had also promised to take action as did NUPE members at South Glamorgan County Hall.

The breadth of support in the labour movement had encouraged more participation by health workers in picketing and marching.

More and more people are seeing the need to go beyond limited one-day strike action and feel confident enough to take on the government over pay and defeat them.

MARTIN BARCLAY
NUPE
Cardiff Royal Infirmary

Glasgow action

AS on May 19 the health workers' one day strikes on June 4 and 8 were widely supported in Glasgow, although at the same time there was a widespread feeling that the time for one-day strikes was past and it was time to step up the action.

Various forms of selective action are already under way in a number of the hospitals. At Stobhill General Hospital the enquiries office staff were out all last week and the flow of mail continues to suffer under the impact of their action. This week the transport staff and the TSSU members (who sterilise the surgical instruments) are out on strike.

At Ruchill Geriatric Hospital, the sewing room and laundry staff are on selective action, and in all hospitals in Glasgow Western District the transport staff struck for three days, resulting in a large amount of bed linen having to be destroyed.

The impact of the picket lines varied from hospital to hospital. At Stobhill, Gartnavel General and Gartnavel Royal the pickets were effective in stopping all but the most determined scabs from going in. But at Ruchill, the picket was of little more than token effect, and some hospitals had no pickets out at all.

At Gartnavel General and Stobhill pickets came close to injury as some of the scabs drove straight through

their lines without paying any attention to the pickets.

Emergency cover was being provided at all hospitals, although this was sometimes being abused by management, as well as being mis-reported by the press, the "Scottish Sunday Standard" in particular tried to give the impression that corpses were being left lying around the wards in Gartnavel General.

Organisation of the one-day strikes, and the other actions being taken during the dispute, varied from hospital to hospital. But where the dispute was under the control of a specially established Action Committee, as opposed to just the normal Joint Shop Stewards Committee, the degree of organisation and militancy was generally higher.

In some hospitals however no action at all was taken at all during any of the one-day strikes. At Forest-hall Geriatric Hospital, for example, no action was taken because spending cuts have reduced the day-to-day cover at the hospital effectively to emergency cover anyway, so any strike action at all would lead to a less than emergency cover situation.

The mood on the picket lines (who were, admittedly the more militant sections of the strikers) was definitely one of wanting to stop soft-pedalling on the strike action.

Rays of the rising sun

AFTER a long, dark night of seemingly uninterrupted setbacks and sell-outs, it seems that the sun of militant resistance has begun once again to rise in the sky.

There have been those who had drawn pessimistic conclusions about the will or ability of the working class to challenge Thatcher's remorseless offensive.

Demoralised by the abject refusal of union leaders to mobilise resistance to a tide of cuts that have slashed jobs by the thousand in local government, the NHS, and right across manufacturing industry; bitter at the barrage of brazen betrayals that have made workers at BL into a punch bag for the Tories and the CBI; perplexed at the TUC's failure to mount any struggle against anti-union laws; many people have wrongly

begun to regard all these positions of the union leaders as being the result of a retreat in the membership.

So overwhelming has been the flow of uncontested closures and redundancies, the onslaught on shop floor working conditions and manning levels, and on hard-won and much needed social services, that it has been easy to lose sight of the fact that some small, albeit partial and temporary victories have been won.

Successful

A threatened national dock strike last year forced back an attack on jobs. The NUM was similarly successful in forcing a reprieve for threatened South Wales collieries. This year we have seen the ASLEF dispute

drive management into an ungainly retreat, from which they are still regrouping their forces.

And most recently the threat of NUR action against rail workshop closures has forced management to hold back until at least next year.

The lesson in each case was the same. The Tory steamroller can be halted – but only by a full-scale mobilisation of the working class.

And in addition the ASLEF dispute underlined another important point: where a firm and coherent call for action is given from the leadership, the rank and file is ready and willing to respond. It has not been the members, but their leaders who have thrown in the towel to the Tories.

Now in the struggles currently under way we have

more and more evidence of this – clear symptoms of a welling-up of frustrated militancy across wide sections of the working class.

The anger of hundreds of thousands of health service workers at their poverty line wages has overflowed even the bounds of the trade union movement and affected that sedate "professional" body the RCN. Given for the first time the prospect of united action embracing every section on a common claim, health workers have piled pressure on grudging and conservative union bureaucrats, demanding they lead the fight.

Infectious

Their fighting spirit has been infectious – and produced a new upsurge of sympathy strike action on a scale

rarely seen in the last decade. Dockers too have played their part in this revival, with the first national stoppage against Tebbit.

On the rail, the left majority on the NUR Executive has made new moves to push umpire Sid Weighell to one side and get to grips with the Tory enemy, calling an all-out strike from June 28. And from the coalfields comes a new wave of militancy against new plans for pit closures.

The mass movement is moving again for all to see: but this does not mean there will not be further setbacks brought about by the union leaders.

The union bureaucracy though bolstered by the mass media is not simply an artificial entity foisted upon the working class. It is rather

a parasitic outgrowth of the workers' movement itself. The labour bureaucracy feeds off real political weaknesses in the working class. It also reinforces those weaknesses and its actions and institutions help generate those weaknesses. They do their best to ensure that workers fail to see beyond the limitations of shop-floor trade union issues, they oppose any fight to overthrow capitalism – but substitute vain hopes of improving conditions under it.

Bulwark

The trade union bureaucracy and the institutions it rests upon are a major bulwark of the nationalism, racialism and sexism which divide and disorientate the workers' movement.

Such obstacles will not

be surmounted overnight – particularly when the whole labour and trade union bureaucracy is committed to policies which preserve them and oppose the growth of genuine independent action by the working class.

Opposition

It is this independent action which prompts the frenzied opposition of health union leaders to an all-out strike; and also provokes the simultaneous moves towards witch-hunts and expulsions of the Labour left.

As the sun rises, it becomes easier to see the way forward. A vital component in this must be the struggle for a new, revolutionary leadership in the labour movement, to spearhead the struggle for united mass action against the Tory enemy.

Bradford trial exposes police prejudice

In the closing stages of the Bradford 12 trial, Terry Smith takes stock. Information from Leeds Other Paper.

WITH all the evidence having been taken from both defence and prosecution, the trial of the Bradford 12 Asian youths is now in its closing stages.

The eight week trial centres on conspiracy charges arising from riots in Bradford last summer.

So far Jayesh Amin has been found not guilty of both charges of making and conspiracy to make petrol bombs with intent to endanger life or damage property.

And Judge Beaumont has agreed to direct the jury to return not guilty verdicts on Sabir Hussain and Saeed Hussain on charges of manufacturing explosive substances – though they still face conspiracy charges.

Attack

In his defence statement Tarlochan Gata Aura has admitted sole responsibility for making 38 petrol bombs for self defence. He has strongly argued that the bombs were to protect against an anticipated attack by fascist thugs.

"Given what had

Giovanni Singh (18), Ishaq Kazi (22), Pravin Patel (20), Ahmed Mansoor (17), Tarlochan Gata Aura (25), Masood Malik (18), Vasant Patel (20), Tariq Ali (24) and Bahram Khan (19) face charges of making an explosive substance with intent to endanger life or property; and conspiracy to make an explosive substance for an unlawful purpose.

Sabir Hussain (19) and Saeed Hussain (18) are charged with conspiracy to make an explosive substance with intent to endanger life or damage property.

All are pleading not guilty.

Jayesh Amin (24) has been found not guilty on both charges.

happened in Southall, in Deptford, in Coventry where Satnam Singh Gill had been stabbed to death by skinheads; given what had happened in Walthamstow, I feared that death could have been a consequence of a skinhead attack on Bradford," he said.

"My personal experience is that the police have never defended our community. There is an absence of a will to help."

Fascist violence

Earlier in the trial the court had heard the police repeatedly argue that they knew nothing of the continuing fascist violence in the town against left bookshops and the Asian community, nor of the NF, the British Movement or Column 88.

But detectives also admitted having extensive background knowledge of the politics of accused youths, subjecting them to prolonged questioning on their political views, and the involvement of Special Branch political police in the case.

Defence barristers argue that in the context of rumours of skinhead invasions, reverberations from Southall and shock at the murder of the Khan family in Walthamstow, the reaction of the accused Bradford youths can be understood.

"I ask you to put yourself in my shoes and ask what you would have done," 19 year old Masood Malik told the jury.

As the defence barristers began their closing speeches, Judge Beaumont ordered an end to "political speeches" in the court.

But Asian defence barrister Sighbat Kadri underlined his view that the trial is "a political trial".

And defence barrister Paddy O'Connor, too, underlined the political basis to the events and the court case.

"There was no second class citizenship for British businessmen and soldiers who went to India. But when Asians wanted to come here, they were degraded, pushed into the ghettos and forced into second class citizenship."

And when they see racist groups on the rise and racist violence increasing, 'ignore it' say the same people who went over to India, and who pushed them into second class citizenship when they arrived here.

Who are you supposed to turn to? To the very people, the very state that took each of those steps?"

O'Connor pointed out that no force was used, and no injuries caused by the defendants. They were preparing for self-defence. The government of this country, he added, is making preparations – in self-defence – for the "destruction of mankind".

The case continues.

Tory plan to purge juries

By Jo Thwaites

YOUR chances of getting a fair trial – judged by your peers – are likely to become less.

The Tories are seriously considering excluding from juries all people who have been found guilty of an imprisonable offence – whether they were sent to jail or not.

Police and judges have long been lobbying for this since – they say – there is a problem of 'criminal types' on juries succumbing to bribes.

But in reality the fact is that under present rules if you've been sent to jail for between 3 months and five years you'll be disqualified from jury service for ten years.

Each year, over 2 million people aged 17 or over are found guilty of crimes that could have a prison sentence given. Technically, stealing a milk bottle can carry a jail sentence.

But it is clear that the police, judges and Tories

ASSAILED by falling ratings in the opinion polls and poor election results, the Scottish National Party at its recent annual conference in Ayr set about tearing itself apart in a frenzy of internecine warfare.

In a sharp swing to the right, conference resolved to proscribe all political groups in the party and to suspend anyone who refused to comply with the injunction within three months.

Although the resolution is ostensibly aimed at all political groups, the main target is the "79 Group", the left oriented tendency that has tried to win the party to socialist positions.

On the eve of the conference, right wingers, led by Gordon Murray, Provost of Cumbernauld, and Winnie Ewing, the Euro-MP, created an artificial device,

the Campaign for Scottish Nationalism, to panic delegates into proscription of the left. Gordon Wilson, party chairperson, then made an emotional and personal appeal for unity, thus creating the conditions for a 308 to 188 vote for the ban.

This debacle marks a definite stage in the degeneration of the SNP, having briefly achieved electoral success in the late sixties and early seventies, on a wave of disillusionment with Labour's refusal to pose a meaningful alternative to the Tories, a revulsion against the increasing bureaucratisation and centralisation of the modern capitalist state and a quaint attachment to long dead historical traditions, the party swept forward on a wave of ersatz nationalism.

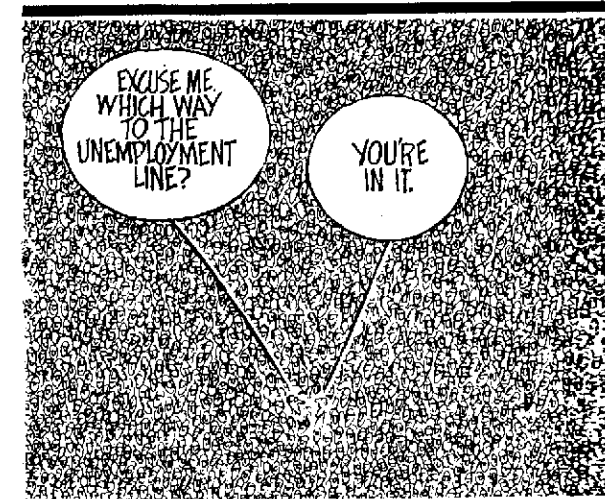
That head of steam has

long run out however, and in a desperate effort to make nationalism relevant, the "79 Group" strove to give it a leftist coloration. They have obviously failed and must now seek to make an appraisal of their ideology and their political future.

Although radical demagogues, such as Jim Sillars, tend to grab the headlines, there are amongst the Group people of more significant political weight, such as Stephen Maxwell.

It is up to socialists now to engage in a dialogue with such people and to win them over to a principled socialist programme and the cause of organised labour.

That can only be successful, however, if it is carried out in a spirit of unremitting hostility to the dead-end ideology of nationalism.



Labour silence on cops

POLICE investigating themselves is still OK. So says the all-party Commons Home Affairs Committee Report. They do say that there should be a new system, rather like the Scottish one where there is a Procurator Fiscal, who is nominally independent from the police.

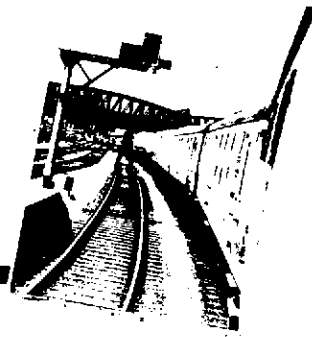
Under the new proposal there would be a Crown Prosecutor who would be responsible for judging complaints against the police – but (and here's the catch) the Director of Public Prosecutions could over-ride the Crown Prosecutor! So back to square one.

This proposal and others in the report fall well short of recommendations made in the Scarman Report that there should be a fully independent complaints system.

Yet, out of seven Labour MPs on the committee, only two have disassociated themselves, Robert Kilroy-Silk and Alf Dubs. What about the other five?



Collision course on British Rail



STEVE GOOD (Kings Cross ASLEF) looks at the looming confrontation scaring union leaders and BR Board alike.

TROUBLE continues to mount for the British Railways Board. The NUR executive have now set June 28 as the deadline for strike action over the joint union claim for a 15% pay increase.

The NUR EC are refusing to negotiate on pay unless there is a substantially improved offer from the BRB. This follows the BRB climbdown on the immediate closure of the BR works after the NUR threatened to take strike action on June 7.

Meanwhile ASLEF remains firm on flexible rostering. ASLEF conference voted unanimously to reject Railway Staff National Tribunal decision number 77 in which Lord McCarthy backed the BRB over flexible rostering.

The conference also reaffirmed its commitment to defend the 8 hour day and to accept no further worsening of conditions.

The strength of the positions taken by both ASLEF and NUR reflects the actual balance of forces between the Board and the unions in the year-long battle over pay and productivity.

The McCarthy award and the renewed support of the Tory government for a hard line approach by the BRB may give management some little comfort but in reality the victories belong entirely to the unions.

In spite of ASLEF's partial strike action early this year, it was the footplate union which won the first round of the battle. In spite of Sid Weighell's treacherous agreement on variable rostering, the actual implementation of the new rosters is largely stalemated within the NUR by the refusal of many local representatives to accept them.

The BRB are keenly aware of this strength and are desperate to keep control of the situation. For this reason, the climbdown over the works closures was carried out with embarrassing haste.

The Board know that the only way they can achieve victory over the unions is if they can isolate one union from the other and defeat that union on the issue they choose, be it one-man-operation or flexible rostering.

Only then can the Board proceed with further attacks on conditions. To have precipitated a dispute with the NUR over the works closures would have completely wrenched the initiative from the Board's hands.

The position of the BRB is indeed a delicate one. On pay, the ASLEF executive meet this week to determine their response to the June 28 strike call by the NUR.

Licence

In all this, it is Sid Weighell who continues to extend a lifeline to the BRB. In spite of the NUR executive's instruction that no further negotiations should take place on pay until BR come up with a better offer, Weighell in interpreting this mandate as in fact giving him license to bargain and plead for an improved offer in order to lift the strike threat levelled at management.

Weighell seems to be increasingly isolated on the executive, but any attempt to do a separate deal on pay for the NUR must be resolutely opposed within the NUR executive and the union as a whole.

Were he to isolate the NUR from ASLEF over pay, Weighell would provide the BRB with their only hope. The possibility of a united and militant approach on the pay claim can only create the best possible conditions for advancing demands for the



rejection of so-called productivity items and to extend strike action beyond pay to a defence of existing conditions and jobs.

The ASLEF executive, for their part, must back the NUR strike call. The notion that ASLEF can go it alone may reflect an understandable mistrust of Weighell, but it is a position which can only lead to defeat in the present

situation. It is precisely the tactics of the BRB to divide and isolate one union from another. For the ASLEF EC to decide to go it alone would represent a kind of chest-beating which is just as treacherous as Weighell's frantic behind-the-scenes deals.

Key to the development of a united campaign for strike action on pay and productivity in the creation

of joint NUR/ASLEF action committees at local level. These bodies must be built to prepare for joint strike action and to become a powerful movement within both unions to ensure that neither EC has room to squeeze out yet another "ambiguous" agreement on pay productivity.

A defeat for either union on any one of the productivity items facing them

would signal the beginning of a massive onslaught by the BRB on conditions.

On flexible rostering alone the prospect of a defeat for ASLEF would mean the elimination of a whole range of agreements central to the conditions and jobs of footplate staff.

The BRB would not need to wait for next year's pay round to press their offen-

sive on conditions — the attack would be automatic and immediate if concessions are made on long-standing agreements. The need for a united campaign on pay linked to the rejection of productivity, could not be more urgent.



'Sacred principles are at stake'

Following the NUR Executive's strike call Socialist Organiser spoke to NUR Executive member IAN WILLIAMS.

Having successfully repulsed a witch-hunting attack from Sid Weighell on the Executive earlier this year, Williams faces renewed attacks by Weighell at the forthcoming NUR conference.

Do you think Weighell will use the NUR conference to head off the strike on pay? Well, the strike starts on the first day of the conference so he can't stop it happening. But you can't tell exactly the balance of views at the conference — it's a mystery and an enigma.

There are a lot of new delegates, so it is possible that there may be some promising surprises. A lot of our members — even quite non-political, non-militant members — have been quite embarrassed by the amount of humble pie the NUR leadership has been eating in the last year or so.

How do you account for the size of the 17-6 vote for strike action on the Executive? Would you think management's retreat over the workshop closures was a factor? No. The initial vote for industrial action was taken several weeks ago. What was put off was the form. And despite what Sid Weighell has been saying, the fact is that a clear consensus on the Executive has been that the kind of guerrilla warfare he has been promoting has been nothing more than fighting with tulips!

There was nothing particularly new about the vote. In fact there were two people absent and one in the chair who would probably have voted for industrial action as well. On the Executive there is a hard-core of half a dozen

who will support Weighell no matter what he does. They were the six against the strike.

How do you assess the mood of the membership on the strike? Initial reports suggest no opposition to it. Several sacred principles are involved. There is the fact that the anniversary date is moved from April to September — people see that as a permanent precedent: it's half-way towards not making an offer at all!

There is the size of the offer itself — 3% over the year. And finally there is what the BR Board wants. Nobody is under any illusion that the suspension of the workshop closures is anything but temporary. All of the workshop representatives supported the strike, by the way, including three people from Swindon, Horwich and Shildon.

They all know that at the very best all the Board will come back with is "alternative" proposals which spread the harm rather than concentrating it.

And the other point of course is that the Board has hung its banner on one-man trains.

Can I ask you about the question of Weighell's witch-hunt against you and the Militant? Do you get any gauge of how the conference will go? There is no way of knowing which way it will go. It could go for anything from endorsing the Executive position — which is against

his attempts to witch-hunt me — to voting the expulsion of everyone involved!

What Weighell has done is shot his bolt: he has defined Militant as "Tony Benn and all his supporters". Well, if you remember, last year 25 delegates at the NUR conference voted to support Benn in the Deputy Leadership election.

So is he saying that a third of the NUR conference delegates should be expelled? And presumably he also means a majority of the national executive should be expelled! This is if he is going to pursue it to its illogical conclusions!

I have heard that some of the branches which have appealed against the Executive's decision have done so on the basis of false information. They were under the impression that those accused had actually put their names to the Militant letter which went round to NUR branches. That would actually have been a breach of rule.

It is interesting that apparently Sid Weighell in his most recent speech was implying that he would like to see the rules changed to get Militant put out of the union.

I don't think he's ever met a Militant supporter in his life to be honest. No I mean that! He accused me of being a Militant supporter until I pointed out that he sponsored me as a PPC against Tony Mulhearn from the Militant Editorial Board!

He accused Brighton

branch of being Militant, while there's not a Militant supporter in the branch.

If he does go for a rule change then it would do us a favour because it makes it clear what he means: that in conditions of a closed shop you cannot work on the railways if you do not agree with Sid Weighell!

What was this meeting of Branch Secretaries that Weighell claimed gave him an ovation?

It is an unofficial body, outside the rules of the union, called the Council of Branch Secretaries. It is attended by only around 100 out of 580 branch secretaries.

It's interesting that by making his conference pitch there Sid is going to an unofficial body to campaign against the democratic decisions of the national executive!

What is the future for the growing rail Broad Left?

If we can survive the next few years there are big possibilities. The Beeching years have meant that there is a big gap between the older leaders and the rank and file. All most all the top officials are due to retire in the next five years. The "officer corps" of the NUR — including many branch secretaries — must be renewed, while many of the NCOs — the rank and file activists, are younger and far more militant.

Time is on our side.



Could he know a Militant supporter from a bar of soap?

STEPS FORWARD FOR LABOUR WOMEN

By Ann Evans

THE good news started before we arrived at Newcastle for the National Labour Women's Conference: the hall had to be changed because the number of delegates and observers who had registered far exceeded expectations.

Altogether, 600 delegates attended: twice that of last year. The women's organisation of the Labour Party is obviously the fastest growing and the most dynamic part of the Party.

On the main policy issues the Conference was fairly united. However, important resolutions on the conference theme of "Disarmament and Development" were passed, and included a call for withdrawal from NATO (passed overwhelmingly against opposition from the platform) and unilateral disarmament.

On other issues also, the Women's Conference showed itself ready to go further with socialist policies than the main Annual Conference.

We passed a call to commit the next Labour Conference to introduce a statutory minimum wage, linked to the cost of living (again with 'reservations' from the platform), and for the nationalisation of the pharmaceutical industry under workers' control, with special provision for women's committees to deal with research into women's health needs.

The discussion on the Tebbit so-called Employment Bill also showed that the women's sections of the Party were in no doubt as to how this Bill should be treated: the resolution that was passed unanimously included a pledge that:

"should these vicious proposals become law, we will give our total support to all trade unionists who break the law".

On youth unemployment, conference voted by a 2-1 majority to totally oppose the Youth Opportunities Programme and support the YOPs Trainees Union Rights Campaign. The platform opposed this resolution with the dubious argument that YOPs was 'better than nothing' for school-leavers.

Important resolutions on Women and Employment were passed overwhelmingly. The most compre-



JOHN HARRIS

hensive of these called for changes in the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination legislation to allow positive action in employment and the repeal of all exempted categories (which notoriously include all state benefits, allowing the government to discriminate against women in supplementary and other benefits).

It also called for the legal definition of equal pay to be changed to allow inclusion of the concept of 'equal pay for work of equal value'. At present, equal pay legislation only applies where men and women do the same work — so that the vast majority of women's jobs, which are done by women only, are excluded.

Conference voted to condemn the Labour leadership's support for Thatcher's war in the South Atlantic, by 185 votes to 179, even though this was opposed by the Women's Committee. Gerry Byrne, an SO and Women's Fightback supporter, delegate from Putney Women's Section pointed to Michael Foot's craven support for Thatcher's war and demanded that the British Fleet

be withdrawn.

Despite the slaughter raging in the Middle East while the conference was going on — there was no time for an emergency resolution on the Middle East. This may have had something to do with the fact that Gwyneth Dunwoody, an NEC member on the National Women's Committee is a supporter of the Friends of Israel.

So some good resolutions were passed. But for many of us, the really important debate was not on these policies: because we know that the Labour Party as a whole, the NEC, or the PLP are under no obligation to pay any attention to what the women's conference does, says or decides.

For us, the most important debate was on the women's organisation, and the 40 or so resolutions aimed at giving it a place in the decision-making structures of the party, and giving it an effective voice. It was at this point that the unity of the conference broke down: with a clear division that was, unfortunately between the older women party members and the younger women with recent experience of the Women's Liberation Movement.

There were four main things that the feminists including Women's Fightback supporters, wanted to do. Firstly, we wanted to make sure that the Women's Conference has, in future, a direct input into the Labour Party Annual Conference. We proposed that it should have the right to submit five resolutions to Annual Conference and that these resolutions be tabled under the relevant heading.

Accountable

We were anxious not to be fobbed off with a separate 'women's debate' which still did not affect the main fabric of the conference (and which the

delegates could spend in the bar!).

Secondly, we wanted the women's section of the NEC to be elected by the women's conference, and accountable to it. At present, the women's seats on the NEC are the property of the annual conference — and only 11% of the delegates last year were women.

These seats do not go to the women most committed to feminism and the policies of the women's organisation, but to the women the male trade union bosses want to appoint.

Elected

Thirdly, we wanted the national women's committee to be elected by and accountable to the women's conference. At present the committee is elected by a complicated and mysterious ballot that most of women's sections never seem to see. There are also five places for NEC members: last year two of these were men. A national women's committee committed to the policies of the women's organisation has to be elected at the women's conference.

Fourthly, we wanted to do a simple thing to try and rectify the present sexual imbalance of the PLP, where only 11 out of 268 MPs are women. The proposal was to have a mandatory obligation that at least one woman be included on all parliamentary shortlists where a woman has applied. At least we thought it was simple...

This was the debate that the old women's committee did not want to hear: of course they did not attain their positions by the democratic processes that we were proposing. The start of the conference saw a battle with the Conference Arrangements Committee to change the debate from the Monday after-

noon (when many delegates would have left) to Sunday. We won that battle but were still left with little over an hour for discussion on which nearly a quarter of the resolutions were tabled!

We did get an extension of half an hour — but regretted it when the chairperson, Anne Davis tried to prevent anyone from speaking in the 'open debate' in favour of any of these positions. Speaker after speaker, (many of them Militant tendency supporters) got up to oppose positive discrimination, saying that the alternative was for women to work harder in our constituency parties.

Clearly, it's our fault that we're underrepresented in the party! Some of the trade union delegates opposed the women's conference election of NEC members, on the grounds, apparently, that they wanted their votes to be exercised by their male leaders.

The conference was obviously polarised: and a great deal of heat was generated by the hostile and bureaucratic attitude

Women
in
struggle



A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE

LABOUR
ABORTION RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN AGM
Sat, 26 June at
Lambeth Town
Hall, SW2.
11am - 4pm.
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phone 670 6459
or 582 2955

of the chairperson, who not only rigged the debate in favour of speeches against the proposals, but ended by misquoting a resolution in the middle of calling a vote.

The votes were close — but we won three out of four. Women's seats on the NEC elected by Women's Conference; positive discrimination in favour of women on parliamentary shortlists; and resolutions from women's conference to annual conference. We lost the vote on electing our National Women's Committee from conference, on a show of hands.

This is a victory — but unless we push these positions through so the NEC has to take notice of and act on them they'll mean nothing. Constitutional amendments need to be drafted and fought for at Labour Party annual conference — fought for by the

entire women's organisation. An indication of the preparations for a fight were given in the elections of the Conference Arrangements Committee for next year's conference — five out of a slate of six women put forward by Women's Fightback and the CLPD's Women's Action Committee were elected.

And we'll make sure that next year the child care arrangements are improved. They were completely unsatisfactory this year and delegates were forced to bring their children into the hall to demand an improvement.

The CAC and chairperson replied by blaming the mothers for not registering in advance — but even if it was true which was vehemently denied by the mothers — it doesn't explain why there were hardly any toys and no outings were arranged.

DHSS snooping — it's official

MOST women claiming benefits were never in any doubt that the DHSS still employs sex snoopers. But last week the DHSS kindly confirmed it. They had little choice since confidential guidelines issued to social security officers investigating 'fraud' fell into the hands of the Child Poverty Action Group.

These guidelines consist of nine questions which are supposed to be an 'aide memoire' for officers.

They have to find out whether the woman has

sexual intercourse — but they should not ask the woman that question.

Indicators of co-habitation are listed. These include whether the woman has cooked a meal for the man or washed his clothes — the assumption is presumably being that if she does these things she must be sleeping with him!

Another indicator is if the man has decorated the house or done the washing up; the assumption here is that men only do this sort of things if they sleep with the

woman in that house!

Now that this has come to light — after the DHSS publicly denied that questions about sexual relations would be asked, the DHSS will investigate whether these forms should be withdrawn.

Not that this will make the slightest bit of difference for as long as the benefits system operates on the assumption that single women cannot live without a man somewhere around.

WOMEN'S
FIGHTBACK 20p

WE WANT Jobs

Women's
march
for
jobs

ORGANISING THE LEFT

In preparation for the Annual General Meeting of the Socialist Organiser Alliance, JOHN BLOXAM and JOHN O'MAHONY put forward a draft resolution for discussion.

THE Tory government continues its vicious attack on the working class and on the labour movement. The second round of anti-union legislation is within weeks of becoming law. The Parliamentary Labour Party has disgraced itself by its feebleness and unwillingness to fight the government. The TUC has confined itself to feeble protests which lead nowhere. Yet the strike of dockers on June 10th, the solidarity strikes for the nurses by miners — action of a tremendously high level of class consciousness — may indicate the beginning of a turn in the tide, the beginning of a strong direct action working class fightback.

In this situation the response of the Labour Left is central to the future of the labour movement.

Since the Deputy Leadership campaign the left has marked time and even retreated; the right and the Foot 'centre' have gained and they are now conducting a limited offensive. Some of them are arguing for a full-scale offensive and a purge of the hard left and the Marxists. Foot was for a while a breakwater for the hard left, but now he is increasingly becoming a partner of the right in its offensive.

Intimidation

There are two linked causes of the setback the left has experienced.

The first was the SDP split and its consequences. The SDP MPs gained far more influence on the Labour Party when they left it than they had had in the previous 8 years. Appealing with apparent success directly to the 'public', they exercised tremendous power of intimidation over the Labour Party. The stay-in-and-fight right-wing used it skillfully. The soft and less resolute left was frightened by the prospect of massive electoral setback and retreated. Big sections of the harder left were inhibited. The serious Marxist left was too weak to shape events.

The 1981 Labour Party Conference saw the opponents of organisational and political renewal for the LP and Labour Movement gain firmer control of the commanding heights of the LP apparatus. Thus for a time seemingly irresistible pressure has



ironically, been mobilised against the left by split of its polar opposites to form the SDP.

What happened to the broader left was not, however, a mere reflection of events outside its control like the ballooning of SDP support. It was conditioned by the politics and leadership of this left.

The broad Labour Left is a vast assemblage of individuals and attitudes which cohere only very loosely, and on issues like the EEC, the Deputy Leadership and reselection. Organisation has been and is ad-hoc and minimal. That the Rank and File Mobilising Committee, initiated by SO, was the high water mark of Broad Left organisation for many years says much about the organisational state of that left. Organisation and a sense of coherent political purpose has been episodic, ephemeral and confused. The Broad Left is not united by any coherent and worked-out programme of socialist measures towards which it works and for the attainment of which it organises itself. It is not united by the binding, homogenising and integrating power of a common perspective for the labour movement.

Tony Benn is the charismatic leader and so far the major political force expressing what coherence, unity, sense of perspective and purpose the Broad Left as a whole has managed to attain.

And thus the impact of the SDP on the left was to disorganise it. Some retreated (the LCC, for example), abandoning the key struggle to make the organisation accountable (that is to make it possible that the next Labour government might be a different sort of Labour Government, one under the organised pressure, if not control, of the rank and file). Others like Militant, which like Onan is suffi-

cient unto itself and which was only nominally involved in the Rank and File Mobilising Committee, retreated into a habitual vegetating sectarianism. Labour Liaison 82 was extremely feeble and has now been wound up.

Unions

At the same time the most promising side of Benn's Deputy Leadership campaign was not developed — the turn to the unions. The lesson of the Labour Democracy campaign so far is that the labour movement is indivisible; you can't get Labour Party democracy, or at any rate stable Labour Party democracy, unless and until the unions too are democratised. The labour movement is indivisible. The paradox of leaders of undemocratic unions championing LP democracy was the measure of the weakness of the campaign for democracy, and is a major part of the explanation for the recent setback and retreats.

In this period SO has:

- Opposed the general retreat. We have argued that the working class can be rallied to socialist policies. Even if the first impact on the electorate of the convulsion in the Party is to repel them, the working class will rally actively and enthusiastically to socialist policies if we fight for them.

In any case no other politics serve the interests of the working class or offer them even a minimal answer to Thatcher and Thatcherism.

(b) We have argued that

it is not enough to get a new Labour Government — though the achievement of such a government, even under a Denis Healey is of course a centre objective of the labour movement. We need more — we need a Labour government with answers to Thatcherism. We need a Labour government which is under some degree of rank and file labour movement control as a guarantee against any more betrayals.

Therefore we have argued for the adoption of socialist working class policies and for a vigorous left wing prosecution of the fight for democracy.

We have continued to champion the sort of Broad Left unity to fight to implement the decisions on democracy which we helped create in the Rank and File Mobilising Committee.

We have argued for a left wing turn to the unions: our Conference on Trade Union democracy in April in Birmingham (organised jointly with London Labour Briefing) brought together Labour Party and trade union militants to discuss the struggle for union democracy and turning the fight around Labour Party democracy into the unions.

Isolate

Our support has grown but we have had diminishing success in affecting the Broad Left. The right and centre's strategy lies in trying to isolate the Marxists as the first stage in splitting and disorganising the left coalition they have faced in recent years: to an extent they have succeeded. Organisations like



Delegates at the SO trade union conference

the LCC, the ILP, and, of course, individual careerists who are inevitably to be found in any broad mass movement, have distanced themselves from the Marxists and some have come close to indulging in witch-hunting.

There is now a sizeable spread of SO comrades who were elected councillors in May. Local government has been one of the success stories of the Broad Left in the sense of electoral successes. It has also been one of our major failures: nowhere has the local government left managed to organise and lead a serious fightback. Defeats such as the GLC and Lothian suffered were defeats with nothing that could be called a serious struggle. Other aspects of the local government experience has been the emergence of sections of the left as cynical traditional fakers while maintaining a left rhetoric and even image — Ted Knight is the most notable example.

The failures of the Labour left in local government can discredit the left. In a sense that should be a warning to the entire labour movement: the quick collapse of the left of the GLC and Lothian could be a dummy-run for the next Labour government. The pressure on councillors to be administrators rather than militants is inexorable. SO councillors will organise themselves to resist these pressures and together with, for example, the serious left on the GLC and around London Labour Briefing, prepare a local government fightback.

One of the major involvements in the last year has been in women's struggles. The Labour Party Women's Sections have begun to take on a new life and have tremendous potential. Women's Fightback, initiated by SO and which many SO comrades are centrally active, has grown and developed in the last year, organising large scale demonstrations and conferences. This must remain a major commitment of SO — women and men — in the next year.

Chances

What do we do next? In fact the objective situation has begun to move in favour of the left and we should act to seize our chances. The objective pressures from the SDP which pushed the left into retreat has weakened dramatically with the defeats of the SDP in the local elections. The SDP is still a major problem. But it is no longer of the dimension to scare fainthearts, provide an excuse for careerists on the make and thus inhibit what others

SOCIALIST ORGANISER ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

DATE: Saturday June 26 and Sunday June 27.
PLACE: Lanchester Polytechnic, Priory St, Coventry.
TIME: 10am to 5pm Saturday, 10 to 4.30 Sunday.

TO DECIDE: perspectives and structure for the Socialist Organiser Alliance over the next year, and to elect the Socialist Organiser Secretariat.
OPEN TO: all paid-up Socialist Organiser supporters (with the right to vote), and observers from trade union branches, Labour Party branches, and other labour movement bodies.

AGENDA: will include workshops on aspects of Socialist Organiser activity, and workshops with invited speakers from the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, the Labour Committee on Ireland, the Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group, the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights, etc.

AMENDMENTS to resolutions can be submitted up to June 22.

CRECHE: available. Please give as much notice as possible.

FACILITIES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE: available. Please give us notice of requirements.

CONFERENCE FEE: £4 waged, £1 unwaged. There will be a fund to assist comrades travelling large distances.

WRITE TO: John Bloxam, Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.

Name
Address

*I wish to attend the Socialist Organiser AGM on June 26/27 as a paid-up SO supporter. My local SO group is and my SO supporters card number is I enclose £..... to cover arrears in SO contributions (£1.50 per month minimum waged, 20p unwaged), and £..... conference fee *Our branch (committee, CLP, etc) wishes to send the following comrades as observers to the Socialist Organiser AGM.

..... (names)
We enclose £..... conference fees.
(*delete as appropriate. All cheques payable to Socialist Organiser).
Please send conference literature to the address above. I enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

can do.

The Left should resume the offensive. The left must fight tooth and nail against the imminent attempt to expel Militant and Militant supporters. The left should recreate a structured broad left unity.

We should campaign to draft Benn to stand against Foot for leader in October. Prospects for immediate victory is not the decisive question — it is necessary to rally and organise the serious left, to mark out the ground on which Foot and the right must be opposed.

Reselection has not been made to work at all as it should have been to purge the careerists and create a normal practice that will put Labour MPs, and thus to an extent a Labour Government, under the direct pressure of the rank and file. It must be made to work in that way.

The fight for Labour democracy in the trade unions and for trade union democracy, is tremendously important: we must continue to pursue the fight and to build on the — unfortunately limited — achievement of the SO/LLB Birmingham Conference.

In the election, whenever it comes, there must be an organised socialist voice

with the Labour campaign. If, as is possible, the PLP leaders or the NEC ignore or bowdlerise Party policy in the election the answer of the left must be what the SCIV did in the last election — to run an autonomous left wing campaign within the Labour campaign to express the working class socialist interest in that campaign and prepare to defend those interests whoever wins.

For the SOA itself the next period must also be one of organising the broad spectrum of Labour Party and union support we have built up in the last three years into a more structured and more practical support for the paper and its interventions.

The experience of the last year has shown how irreplaceable it is to have a much bigger and better organised revolutionary Marxist segment of the broad Labour left. If a much bigger and better organised SOA had been in existence — or if Militant had been less sectarian and self-absorbed — then the broad Left would be in far better shape today than it actually is. That is one of the central lessons of the entire period since the return of the Tory government in 1979.

Socialist Organiser AGM June 26 - 27



MIDDLE EAST

ZIONIST POLICY: GENOCIDE

Captured Palestinian guerrillas are herded by the hundreds and thousands, blindfolded and bound at the wrists, into barbed-wire encampments in the battle areas and special custody centres inside Israel. They are not, according to the Zionists, prisoners of war!

Under the terms of the

1949 Geneva Convention, members of 'organised resistance movements' are to be treated as POWs too. That doesn't cover the Palestinians, says Israel.

This is the logic of Israel's steady refusal to recognise the existence of a Palestinian people at all. What for the vast majority of the world's population is

'the Palestinian problem' for Israel is 'the Arabs' self-made refugee problem' and the 'the problem of terrorism'.

This view makes it inconceivable that Israel will accede to the setting up of any kind of Palestinian state — even one ruled by a mood of demoralisation and national humilia-

tion. Defence Minister Sharon, however, talks of giving Jordan to the Palestinians. What does this mean?

Despotism

Sharon isn't offering the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to the Palestinians. He is simply off-

ering them integration in an existing Jordan whose despotic monarch would be further guaranteed by Israeli arms.

In the meantime, he is seeing to it that enough Palestinians are slaughtered to make their integration feasible. In a word, his policy is a policy of genocide.

'MOPPING UP' A WHOLE NATION!

ANDREW HORNUNG looks at aspects of the massive slaughter in the Middle East.



Seven years of horror

THE bloody dismemberment of Lebanon by the Israeli forces completes a seven year tale of terror and civil strife that broke out into open warfare with the Roumaneh massacre in April 1975. On that day, a gang of Phalangists stopped a bus in eastern Beirut and massacred its 55 passengers, Palestinians and Lebanese workers.

Open warfare continued — punctuated by scores of brief ceasefires — with the rightist, often fascist, Maronite militias directing their attack at the Lebanese left and, then, the Palestinians.

By January 1976 the Right had laid siege to the refugee camp of Tal-al-Zaatar with the help of Syrian regulars. Later the same month the Palestinian Christian camp of Dheir was crushed by the Right.

Syrian controlled PLO units, the al-Saiqa current,

turned their guns on other PLO units as they linked up with the Rightist militias.

Gradually the tide of battle turned against the right, however. As the Lebanese left and the Palestinians began to get the upper hand by the summer, the Syrians invaded to save the Right.

The Syrian bid to control the Palestinians and use this control as a way of bargaining for the return of the Golan Heights from Israel came to nothing. In time it was necessary for the Syrians to turn their guns on the very militias they had saved from the advancing left.

The causes of the civil war were complex: there were internal and external causes. French imperialism had established the state of Lebanon in such a way as to frustrate the development of Arab nationalism.

The French did all they

could to cultivate a pro-Western bourgeoisie within the Maronite community and to establish Lebanese politics on a feudal-confessional basis.

The result was that Lebanon, one of the most advanced and modern states in the Middle East, had one of the most backward political structures.

Pact

The 'National Pact' of 1943 guaranteed that top positions in the state would be divided according to which religious community people belonged to. The dominant community was to be the Maronite one; specifically, the dominant section of the bourgeoisie was to be the Maronite bourgeoisie.

In time the demographic balance that the Pact was based on changed: by the fifties the Muslim

communities were in the majority.

With the development of the Lebanese National Movement there arose a political movement concerned not to redistribute positions in the state apparatus or commercial fiefdoms but to get rid of the confessional system altogether.

That movement was radicalised by the presence of the Palestinians in Lebanon, but also by the deteriorating economic circumstances.

In the Beirut slum suburbs the squalid shanty towns often merged with the refugee camps, binding the poor and the Palestinians together.

The civil war was the Right's bid to suppress the rising discontent, to hold on to their privileges and to act as a servant of imperialism at the same time.

The extermination squads are still active. Picking their way through the rubble, Israeli soldiers are 'mopping up' Palestinian and Lebanese Leftist resistance. Shelling from the coast or inland batteries, the Zionist troops methodically pound the slums, the refugee camps, the villages — anywhere that opposition might be found.

The estimates of casualties are staggering: perhaps 10,000 killed, over half a million — perhaps even a million! — made homeless. The slaughter by the Israelis continues, ceasefire or no ceasefire, under a bizarre banner: 'Opposition to terrorism'.

Israel's terms for a ceasefire suggest that the aim of the present slaughter is to establish a 25-mile wide cordon along Lebanon's common border with Israel that would be closed to Palestinians.

But this is deceptive. The Zionists are aware that a buffer zone in South Lebanon could not be closed to the Palestinians unless the Palestinian presence in Lebanon is annihilated.

Further, the zone could not be established as a stable entity unless the Lebanese Left is crushed along with the Palestinians.

Thus, whatever the ceasefire terms, Israel will not be content until the Palestinian presence is exterminated; until the Left

has been smashed and the Lebanese Rightist dynasties put in charge of North Lebanon and Major Haddad put in charge of the South; and until the Syrians have withdrawn.

Whether Lebanon is formally divided between Haddad and the Phalangist leader in the North, Bashir Gemayel, or whether the present Sarkis government continues with the division existing simply as a fait accompli is a matter of speculation. Certainly the division of Lebanon as an accomplished fact can no longer be avoided.

Alliance

According to David Hirst, writing in the 'Guardian', the Israeli advance has brought about the extraordinary alliance of the right-wing Shi'a militias like AMAL and the Sunni-dominated left, but this is unlikely to lead to any stable realignment.

Certainly no other opposition can be expected in the short term. Israel has 'pacified' and isolated the Egyptian regime; Iraq is in chaos following its defeat by Iran in the Gulf War; and Jordan has not got the military power to make any difference even if it wanted to.

It is impossible to judge at this stage the degree to which either the Palestinians or the Lebanese left have preserved their strength. What is clear is

that Israel has launched several ferocious attacks on the Lebanese Left and on the communities that provide it with its main social base, the Druze villages and the villages of the Chouf.

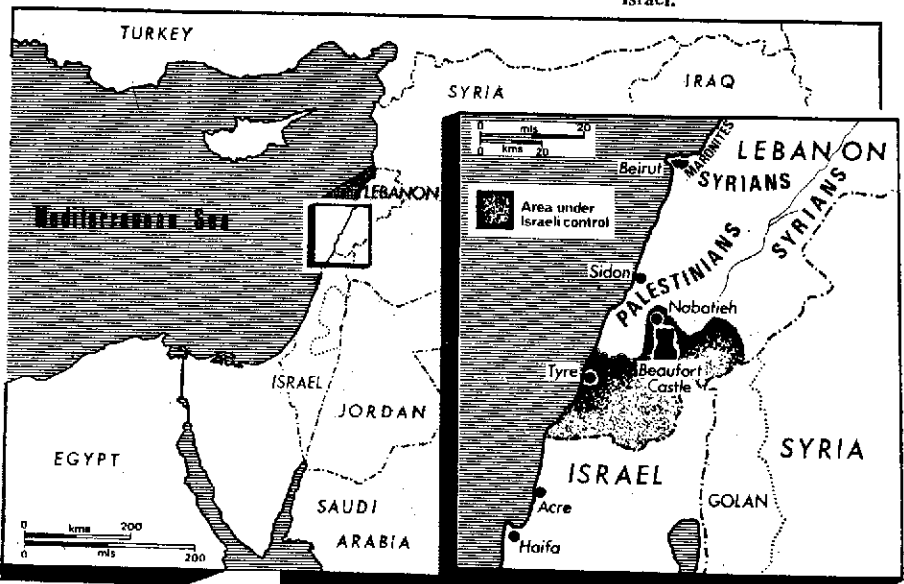
Despite the carnage, all past experience suggests that neither the Palestinian nor the Leftist opposition will be liquidated.

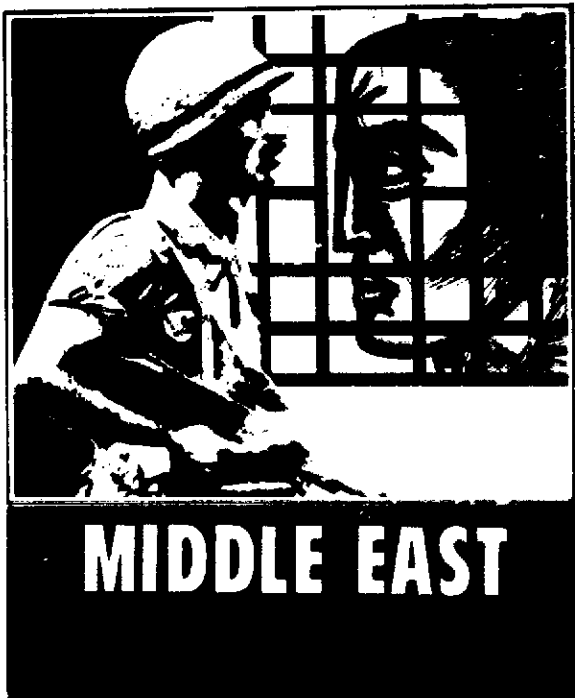
What is more likely is that — like in 1970 and 1971, after the Black September massacre of the Palestinians in Jordan at the hands of King Hussein — the Israeli victory will be followed by a spate of blind-alley terrorist attacks before the Palestinian forces develop a new strategy.

But it is essential that a break is made by the PLO from reliance upon the bourgeois nationalist leaders of the Arab countries to resolve matters in the interests of the Palestinians.

The fact is that these leaders lack sufficient political independence from imperialism, and fear the revolutionary mobilisation of the workers and peasants in their own countries more than they fear even military setbacks at the hands of the Zionists.

It is only through establishing an alliance in struggle with the toiling masses of the Middle East, fighting for the overthrow of the bourgeois Arab regimes, that the Palestinian people can lay the basis for the struggle to destroy the racist state of Israel.





MIDDLE EAST



Daily brutality against Palestinians trapped in racist state of Israel



Child victim of Zionist bombing: how many thousand more after?

A STEP IN BEGIN'S STR

By JOHN NELSON,
Executive member of
Bradford Labour
Movement Campaign
for Palestinian Solid-
arity.

THE recent Israeli invasion of the Lebanon has to be seen not as a reaction to a particular event but as part of an ongoing concerted campaign by the Zionists.

It is a campaign which aims at eliminating or at least neutralising the Palestinian leadership, both the national leadership provided by the PLO and the local leadership in the post-'67 occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

This would enormously aid the Zionists in realising their aims of bringing about the 'autonomy' plans embodied within the Camp David Accords.

These plans themselves would circumvent the legitimate rights of the Palestinians to national and political self-determination and facilitate the further colonisation of the territory under the control of the Israeli Army, leading to its eventual annexation to the State of Israel.

These aims are not new, not only the designs of the right wing Likud govern-

ment under the leadership of Menachem Begin, but they have been the policy of the Zionists, both Labour and Revisionist, since the colonisation of Palestine began.

The Zionists have openly started major wars in 1948, 1956 and 1967, with two aims:

*territorial expansion — but of territory 'cleansed' of its Palestinian Arab population so as not to incorporate too many Arabs into the Jewish state thereby endangering Jewish homogeneity;

*and secondly, to prevent any articulation of Palestinian national and

political rights, least of all claims to a state of their own in competition for the same land as that of the Jewish state.

The Israeli invasion of Southern Lebanon of 5 June 1982 has its roots in the June 1981 Israeli elections that returned to office for a second term the right wing Likud coalition led by Menachem Begin.

Begin sees himself as fulfilling a historical mission, and he reportedly wants to go down in history as the man who restored Judea and Samaria, (the biblical name used by Zionists for the West Bank) to Eretz Israel

(literally the Land of Israel of the biblical promise).

On 18 December 1981 the Jewish Chronicle in London commented:

"Associates of the Israeli prime minister are increasingly convinced that he now regards the restoration of Eretz Israel as his prime purpose on earth and that nothing, not even the wrath of his best friends will deter him from his mission".

To this end in July 1981 Begin appointed Ariel Sharon as defence minister; previous to his new post he was minister for agriculture and the spearhead of Israeli expansionist settlement in the occupied territories.

One of Sharon's first announcements as new defence minister — who is the de facto authority in the occupied territories — was the launching of a campaign against 'pro-PLO elements' in an attempt to encourage 'moderates' to take control of local affairs.

He accused the PLO of terrorising local people into unwilling opposition to Israeli rule. 'Expressions of sympathy' for the PLO were made illegal.

On 1 November 1981 (sixty-fourth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, a day marked by strikes in the West Bank) the former

Arab Affairs advisor to the government Menachem Milson was appointed civilian administrator and the new civilian authority in Judea and Samaria was brought in by the Israeli Government.

The civil administrators, now in civilian clothes, were in most cases the same people who the day before walked into their offices in army uniform, being part of the military administration of the occupied territories!

The means used by the new civil authorities in attempting to eliminate and neutralise local leaders is the power of arrest and imprisonment without trial.

Every member of the National Guidance Council, a pro-PLO body set up in 1980 by the municipal councils and national institutions to direct local affairs, has been placed under house arrest or had their movements restricted, so that they cannot leave their home town or village in daylight hours and must be in their homes from dusk to dawn.

To replace this leadership the Israelis set up an alternative structure run by collaborators, the 'village leagues', first in the Hebron area in the south of the West Bank,

and later attempted to introduce them in other areas.

The leagues have become the channel for all Israeli-sponsored development projects, offering financial and technical aid.

Two million dollars have been allocated to the village leagues and all permits for travel and residence are now issued by them.

Money from the joint PLO Jordanian committee which used to come into the West Bank for development has now been stopped by the Israelis; hence the village league is the only place left to turn for money — but still they have been unable to persuade any Palestinian official to work with them.

Informed estimates put the league's active membership at a few hundred. Nevertheless the Israelis try to bolster the credibility of the village leagues by giving great publicity to cases where refugees that have been denied entry since 1967 have been allowed to return and reunite with their families due to the intervention of the village league.

Teachers have been sacked and instructed to go to the heads of their village league who could

get their job back, and so on.

The introduction of the civilian administration its village leagues and its policy of eliminating the elected local leadership has led to strikes and demonstrations in the occupied territories throughout the early part of 1982, with unarmed demonstrators being killed and injured by the Army.

These strikes and demonstrations have been the pretext for the sacking of elected mayors of the major towns in the occupied territories, not because, as the Israelis say, they are inciting demonstrations and are a threat to peace and security, but because those mayors support the PLO and have a great following amongst their people.

In parallel with Zionist policy in the West Bank a fatal blow to the Palestinians in Lebanon would serve the interests of the Israelis with regard to eliminating the Palestinian leadership.

It would also serve the interests of Israel's allies in the Lebanon, the Lebanese Front, which groups all the main Christian elements under the leadership of the Phalangists, who are determined, as



Reagan tour exposes divisions



HARRY SLOAN
charts Reagan's progress around Europe in the first week of June.

DESPITE the official fanfares and flag waving, President Ronald Reagan's European foray last week was by no means an unqualified success.

His embarrassments were not simply the hundreds of thousands of demonstrators who turned out to protest against US warmongering.

Indeed, the period of his visits to France, Britain and West Germany revealed a wide range of divisions and confusion between the leaders of the main imperialist nations.

There was, of course, the semi-comic fiasco of the USA's miscast vote at the UN over the latest proposal to resolve the Falklands conflict.

American UN ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick vociferously denounced her State Department team as "a bunch of amateurs" following belated instructions from Secretary of State Haig for her to abstain rather than join Britain in vetoing the cease-fire plan.

And Reagan was subjected to the embarrassment of being completely ignorant of the foul-up when questioned by journalists as he sat next to Thatcher.

These crossed wires are however only a symptom of a much bigger divergence on policy over the Falklands issue.

While the imperialist nations of Europe, the USA and Japan have rallied behind Thatcher's war effort, welcoming it as a reassertion of imperialist military authority, they are by no means overjoyed at the prospect of Thatcher installing a permanent large-scale garrison to keep the islands firmly under British

rule. Such a move would be a thorn in the flesh of the diplomats and dictators attempting to cement long-term relations between the imperialist nations and the various regimes of Latin America, whose reserves of raw materials and cheap labour are an important component in the superprofits of the multinational banks and corporations.

Provocative

Nobody other than a handful of Tory backbenchers seems too keen on the Thatcher proposal for a so-called "self governing" system — in which the survivors of the 1,800 "independent" inhabitants nestle under the guns of a British military garrison sporting anti-aircraft guns and missiles and a contingent of troops twice as big as the population.

Reagan has been more or less openly demanding that

Thatcher pull back from such a provocative "solution" and concede some form of joint settlement with the Argentines to enable the rebuilding of links and alliances.

But ironically in the Middle East the voice of prudent "moderation" over the Zionist invasion of Lebanon came not from Reagan but from Thatcher.

Just as Reagan's administration has had its finger most closely on the pulse of political developments in Latin America, so the Thatcher government, with its long-standing close relationship with the reactionary and feudal Arab regimes of the Gulf region has been best placed to warn of the problems of offending them by giving the Zionist warmongers a blank cheque in the Lebanon.

So even while Haig in Washington defended the Zionist invasion — arguing that Begin's government was defending Israeli sovereignty

in the same way as Britain was defending its sovereignty in the Falklands — Thatcher attacked the same invasion in strident terms. Her argument? That the Israeli incursion into Lebanon is the equivalent of the Argentine invasion of the Falklands!

Thatcher's message in this instance was the same as that of the other EEC countries — and it was more effective than Reagan's lobbying of Thatcher. US pressure was soon stepped up in the effort to force the Zionists to a cease-fire.

But of course on the need to strengthen the armed forces at the disposal of the imperialist rulers to threaten the international workers' movement, Reagan and Thatcher speak as one.

The NATO summit in Bonn saw Thatcher make a call for their anti-communist alliance to extend operations on a world scale and for heavy new spending on conventional as well as nuclear weapons.



er last week?

STRATEGY

they see it, to liberate Lebanon from both the Syrians and the Palestinians and to set up a Maronite Christian state.

At regular and increasingly frequent intervals the Israelis have attacked PLO positions in the Lebanon and bombed civilian targets with the aim of isolating the PLO from the Lebanese people, thus making the Zionists' aims easier to implement.

In 1978 Israel invaded Southern Lebanon and more recently for 15 days in July 1981 attacked PLO

positions and bombed civilian centres of Beirut, killing hundreds of civilians, mostly Lebanese.

Israel used the Polish crisis last December to divert attention from its annexation of the territory of the Golan Heights occupied in 1967.

Now it appears Israel is taking advantage of the opportunity afforded by the Falklands crisis and the European summit in diverting media coverage and the attention of the US executive while it carries out its aims in the Lebanon.



Begin, heading notorious Irgun terrorists, 1948.



Lebanon refugees after air attack



Zionist troops celebrate invasion of South Lebanon, 1978

s among imperialists



Peace demonstrations blossomed in Reagan's path across Europe

The speech was made as 200,000 peace demonstrators joined a huge rally on the other side of the Rhine - underlining the pressure of West German Chancellor Schmidt to moderate the pace of the war drive.

But while imperialist leaders have grown accustomed to putting up with Schmidt's timidity - and

plainly look forward to an impending electoral defeat for his right wing Social Democratic Party - the NATO camp as a whole is far from a harmonious one.

Most rowdy of the inmates is the newest entrant, Spain. The Spanish generals have set the cat amongst the pigeons by demanding the establishment

of a new southern command under Spanish control - to include not only the Canary Islands and Spanish enclaves in North Africa but also Gibraltar!

The Spanish military also want NATO's Iberian sub-command transferred from Portugal to Spain.

Needless to say neither the Portuguese generals, nor

the British government, nor many other NATO chiefs (reluctant to spread their net to include Africa) are enthusiastic about this plan.

And on top of this Spain has for its own diplomatic reasons refused to back Thatcher's war in the Falklands, and has withheld cooperation from US moves to aid Egypt and Israel in the Middle East.

But while the soldiers and strategists squabble over the best way to divide up the task of repressing the world's working class, it might be thought that at least the top industrial ruling classes could agree on how best to confront the economic crisis.

Inconclusive

But no: the conflicting and competing economic interests of the 'top ten' economic powers brought an inconclusive meeting in Versailles. No concessions were made by the Reagan govern-

ment to the demands that the USA assist efforts to stabilise international currencies and reduce world-wide interest rates.

In exchange, Reagan's attempts to tighten restrictions on trade with the USSR and deformed workers states met a cool response from EEC leaders desperately anxious to find markets to sustain their own floundering home industries. And Japanese leaders stonewalled calls on all sides for them to ease off their export drive.

The disarray among the leaders of the capitalist world is an indication of the scale of the political and economic crisis they face on an international and national level.

But our task in this situation is to prepare the necessary revolutionary leadership and mass mobilisation to overthrow their reactionary governments together with the capitalist system of exploitation on which they all depend.



MIDDLE EAST

The politics of Israel's "Labour Party"

THE Zionist Labour Party of Israel, headed by Shimon Peres, is affiliated to the social democratic "Second International", and is thus a sister party of the British Labour Party.

Like all reformist parties, the main line of policy of the Israeli Labour Party is a reflection of the policies of the domestic ruling class.

In Israel Labour policy is based on four 'no's':

*No to the PLO;
*No to Palestinian self-determination, national rights and Palestinian statehood;

*No withdrawal from Jerusalem;

*No return to the borders of pre-June 1967.

From this standpoint Labour leaders have disagreed with the Autonomy plans in the Camp David accords.

Instead they advocate what is called the "Jordanian option", whereby Jordan would control the West Bank while the Zionists would retain their settlements there.

Though these settlements amount to only 40% of the land, they are in fact 60-70% of the fertile land available.

Settlement

Settlements are key to Labour's position. During the elections last year Peres argued that Begin had no real idea of how to establish settlements: and that by electing a Labour government, Zionists would get a real settlement programme!

This is part and parcel of a general line of "practical Zionism" through which the Labour leaders believe



Major pro-Zionist - Wilson

political sovereignty over the dispossessed Palestinian people must emerge from the facts accomplished of colonial settlement.

That a party with such overtly oppressive, warlike and reactionary politics should be admitted to the ranks of the Second International should come as no surprise: after all the British Labour leaders, their hands bloodied by practical complicity in eighty years of imperialist and colonial wars, are among the leading lights of the "International".

Indeed within the British Labour Party and its NEC there is a vocal pro-Zionist lobby which has so far crippled the necessary struggle for solidarity with the dispossessed Palestinian people and with the Arab and Jewish working class in their struggle against a vicious, marauding, racially-exclusive regime.

It is vital that this struggle is taken up. Socialists should demand:

1) Opposition to all forms of racism including anti-semitism. Unconditional support for all genuine anti-imperialist struggles.

2) Recognition of the right of national self-determination for the Palestinian people.

3) Recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to choose their own representatives, at the present time their representatives being the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO).

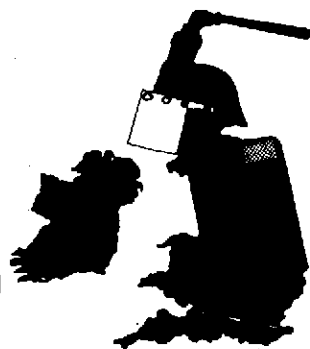
4) Recognition of Zionism as a racist colonialist movement.

5) For a secular democratic state of Palestine. For the right of refugees to return. For the right of all resident in occupied Palestine, including the Jewish settlers, to remain in Palestine, to retain their own language and culture and participating as equals in the politics of the area.

6) For the blacking by the labour movement of all military equipment and supplies to Israel.

7) For the breaking of all links between the trade union and labour movement and Zionism, in particular for the disaffiliation of Poale Zion from the Labour Party.

The 'Officials' break cover



FOLLOWING a series of bizarre incidents in Dublin the "Official IRA", which officially went out of existence in the mid-70s, has come out of the shadows and into the light of day.

And the three deputies of the Workers Party which evolved from the old political wing of the Official IRA have been given special guards to protect them against possible assassination attempts by the INLA, the military wing associated with the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

The three Workers Party deputies hold the balance in the Dublin parliament and the Haughey government is dependent on their support.

The sequence of events which led to these developments was as follows.

The May issue of the monthly magazine 'Magill' published an article which proved that the Official IRA had never really ceased to exist but had gone underground. Nor had its links with the Workers Party leaders been severed. The "military wing" was still a weighty and perhaps decisive voice in a leadership of the Workers Party which presents itself as having broken completely from the typical republican type of organisation in which the more or less conspiratorial "military wing" is the real power and the political groups and parties linked to it so many glove puppets.

Two weeks ago at 2 pm on a Friday afternoon a certain James Flynn was shot three times as he left a public house in Dublin by a man who then escaped on

JOHN O'MAHONY reports on some strange developments in the Irish republican movement.

the pillion seat of a motor cycle.

A native of Crossmaglen, Co. Armagh, Flynn had served two years on arms charges in Britain in the early '70s, and then been deported under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

The INLA issued a statement claiming responsibility for the shooting. They had shot him, they said, because he was the man who murdered Seamus Costello, founder of the IRSP/INLA. Costello had led it to a break with the Official Republican movement at the end of 1974. He was shot dead in his car in October 1977 near the spot where Flynn was shot.

The INLA have threatened that if there is retaliation for the shooting of Flynn they will shoot leaders of the Workers Party, thus the extra security for the three important, government-sustaining Workers Party deputies.

At this point the Official IRA came back into public life. It issued a statement to the state broadcasting system, RTE, on the shooting of James Flynn. Flynn, the statement said, had been 'Director of Operations' of the Official IRA and had been "on active



Irish youth on the streets of the Six Counties

service" when killed.

Vincent Brown, editor of Magill says he has received threatening phone calls in the name of the Official IRA. So has one of his informants in preparing the article, the former editor of the old Official Republican paper, the "United Irishman", and now editor of the Communist Party of Ireland's paper 'Irish Socialist'.

In fact, though what the Magill article said could hardly have been 'information' to the INLA, the article may have led indirectly to the shooting of

Flynn. The INLA claim that they shot Flynn at this time because they thought that after the expose of the Official IRA in Magill, it would now be "acceptable to the public".

INLA is sensitive to such things. It shot the Orange bigot and para-military John McKeague some months ago just as he was about to be implicated in the Kincora child abuse and prostitution scandal.

The political consequences were such that the automatic assumption was that his killers were concerned to keep the polit-

ical aspects of the scandal from boiling over. Then the INLA admitted responsibility for it.

The Workers Party leaders deny that they continue to have links with the now again 'public' Official IRA. But still some of them marched in the traditional Republican funeral for Flynn (who was not a party member).

The oration at his funeral was given by Seamus Collins, chairperson of Clann Na H'eireann, the Workers Party support group in Britain. Gerry Doherty, himself deported

from Britain under the PTA in 1975, described him as a friend of the party and a great help to it financially.

The Workers Party leaders may not be sufficiently in control of the militarists to prevent retaliation against INLA.

What impact the reemergence of the Official IRA will have on the development of the Workers Party remains to be seen. It could stymie it — and no doubt the expose was intended to stymie it.

NUJ backs Polish union

ON the authorisation of the union's national executive, the President of the National Union of Journalists, Jonathan Hammond, has offered to share his office at the NUJ's headquarters — Acorn House — with members of the Polish Solidarity Trade Union Working Group.

That offer has been accepted and members of the group have now moved in. They are using their own equipment, stationary and facilities, not those of Acorn House.

Mr Hammond commented: "Anyone can pass fine resolutions at annual conferences provided it doesn't mean you have to take action of any kind. But what Polish Solidarity needs is practical help and I am glad that my union is able to provide it."

The group can be reached on its own telephone line: 01-837 9464 which has been installed for its exclusive use in the President's office rather than through the Acorn House number.

July 3 demo

The demonstration in solidarity with Wilson-Rowntree strikers in South Africa jointly called by AAM and York Trades Council is on Saturday July 3 in York.

Assemble 1.30pm, Heworth Green, Monk-gate Roundabout, York.

PRESS GANG



THE last chapter in the war for the Falklands drew to a close none too soon for the battle-scarred media.

Gung-ho militarism is a phenomenally difficult weapon to sustain at long distance for long periods. Keeping up the war effort in Fleet Street has not been easy under appalling conditions.

For the last few weeks this has been under a virtual blackout of military disinformation, even to its most loyal and trusted servants. Moreover, the media has been forced to open a second war front in Spain under far less predictable conditions than those in the South Atlantic. There the British forces may find that wrapping themselves in the Union Jack may not be enough.

Some idea of the difficulties in the Falklands for the press can be gained from the 50p phone call disaster.

The papers attacked with a barrage about the British Brigadier who made an

advance through a phone call. Armed only with a 50p piece he approached one of the island's telephone boxes and phoned a farmer in the area that the British were trying to capture.

"Any Argies around?" he asked. "Not at the moment" came the laconic reply. "Right then, we're on our way", replied our hero, dashing his men onto a helicopter.

But the self-confident press assault turned out to have been made without enough cover. It was revealed that there are no 50p pieces on the island. The Falkland Islanders are so British they have stuck with the ten bob note.

This might have been laughed off but the next revelation was a bombshell. There are no phone boxes either.

Finally it was revealed that all calls on the island have to be put through the telephone exchange in Port Stanley, then under Argentine control.

These damaging revelations could have left our reporters exposed to enemy snipers, for ever carping about such outdated virtues as truth, honesty and objectivity.

The Ministry of Defence came under attack no doubt, as it has done from our press consistently, throughout the campaign, for revealing not too little, but too much information!

But defence secretary John Nott swept aside all criticism of our lads in the press corps. Praising their reports, he said "They have been vivid and have given the country a great deal of information that has been of value to us."

There is no nonsense about objectivity or truth here. Steady, sustained assaults on enemy positions. That was what won us the war. It does not matter what the "information" is so long as it is of value to our side.

But now our lads in Spain are free to open their

assault untroubled by attacks from their flanks. General Kevin Keegan — who has picked up a groin injury practicing bowling to his majesty — and the rest of his team have bequeathed profits from their World Cup song "This time we'll get it right" to the South Atlantic Fund.

Rebound

The decision not to show the opening Argentine match live on television — surely the only football game anywhere in the world over the next three weeks not to be shown in its entirety rebounded badly when the Argentines lost.

The sale of World Cup bulldog tee-shirts has already proved a disaster. One firm which won the contract to make them has laid off all its extra staff, complaining that the bulldog emblem looks so much like the National Front image that no-one was buying it.

By Patrick Spilling

GLC challenged on investment

ON Monday June 14 the London Region Executive passed a resolution declaring that:

"The Executive Committee of the Greater London Labour Party calls upon the GLC Labour Group to implement immediately its resolution of a year ago calling for the disinvestment of its monies from Rio Tinto Zinc — the company which is engaged in giving succour to the policies of the racist government of South Africa."

The motion was strongly supported by Lambeth's Ted Knight, who argued that they had found no difficulty in simply instructing their council's brokers to cease

investment in RTZ.

An amendment was moved unsuccessfully by GLC leader Ken Livingstone and by the resolution's main opponent Mike Ward, stating that the "GLC had no power to disinvest from RTZ".

Livingstone, though he did not support, did not vote against the resolution after the amendment had failed.

Though the policy of disinvestment has little to offer in practical terms for the struggles of the South African workers, the attitude of the Labour GLC to this stated policy is an important test of accountability and the willingness of Labour representatives to break with legalistic restrictions.

VIDYA ANAND, of the London Region Executive, points out the scale of GLC involvement.

One year ago, the GLC Labour Group at County Hall voted nem con to sell off all investments in Rio Tinto Zinc because of their financial involvement in South Africa.

One year later, what has been achieved? Nothing. The GLC's multi-million pound Pension Fund is still playing its part in propping up an apartheid regime which has been universally condemned by the labour move-

ment and civilised people throughout the world.

The GLC's cover-up of this dark stain on its record came to light as a result of the recent Rio Tinto AGM of 2 June, which ended in chaos and the police being called in to eject demonstrators. Questions from the floor demanded to know the attitude of the GLC Pension Fund to investment in the company. Its current investment in RTZ is of the order of two and a half million pounds.

Over the last year, the Labour GLC has been vigorously lobbied by RTZ's victims — ranging from uranium miners in Namibia who allege gross violations of international law and trade union rights, to Australian aborigines who have had their lands stolen and their legitimate interests ignored.

Nor is RTZ the only beneficiary of GLC largesse. Pension Fund cash is currently assisting the good works of others in South Africa:

*British American Tobacco, £6.2 million; Barclays Bank, £3.8 million; NatWest Bank, £2.6 million.

Why, one might ask, is the Fund's account not with the Co-Op Bank, as has been suggested on many occasions?



Livingstone

UNDER REVIEW

A police novel with a difference!

Reviewed by
Terry Smith

GORKY Park, now out in paperback, is a cop novel with a difference. Its action is set in Moscow and the Soviet Union. The cop is Arkady Renko, chief investigator for the People's Militia.

The case opens with the discovery of three bodies — two men and a woman shot dead and left in the snow of Gorky Park with the flesh stripped from their faces.

But its investigation leads through a sequence of events which strip away much of the mystery of life in the middle reaches of the Soviet Bureaucracy.

In his depiction of a living Moscow, with a feeling for its street life and its toilers as well as a willingness to probe beneath the facade of its most obvious institutions, author Martin Cruz Smith establishes a real parallel to the established crime fiction centred in the western countries — of Raymond Chandler, Georges Simenon, Ed McBain and many others.

Indeed too many people in Britain fall victim to the clash between the hysterical Cold War propaganda of the capitalist class on the one hand, and the laughably idealised, stage-managed and retouched picture of life in the Soviet Union offered by Stalinist apologists on the other.

Ordinary

It is all too easy under such pressure to forget that within the vast geographical spread of the USSR tens of millions of ordinary people — workers, peasant farmers, national minority groupings — lead real, ordinary lives like we do, in which the great issues of world politics are as remote from their thoughts as they are on any council estate in Britain.

Even some of the issues they face are the same — though the state machine in



the Soviet Union rests not as in Britain upon the defence of private ownership of the banks and means of production, but upon an economy nationalised as a result of the great October Revolution of 1917.

The isolation of that revolution and the economic weaknesses of Tsarist Russia combined to create the basis for the bureaucratisation of the world's first workers' state — a bureaucratisation which has remained to this day an obstacle to the development of the economy, and which means that the Soviet state apparatus exhibits numerous parallels with its capitalist counterparts.

Just as in Britain, for instance:

"A directive goes out to raze workers' houses to construct cooperative apartments that workers can't afford, a seeming breach of workers' rights."

But while in Britain the argument for such action is unashamedly in defence of 'free enterprise' and profit, in the Soviet Union the state ideologists offer a different rationalisation. There is no contradiction between workers' interests and the state, because:

"This is the workers'

MARTIN
CRUZ SMITH

GORKY
PARK

state. What benefits the state benefits them. By tearing down their houses we protect their rights." (Chapter 1)

Gorky Park does not focus on such exposes: they are simply a part of a rich pattern of convincing detail which forms the background to a complex and gripping plot in which Renko finds himself in progressively deeper and deeper water.

The whole plot gains in credibility in the present period in which the corruption of the top layers of Brezhnev's entourage has come to the surface. Scandals involving diamond smugglers, black marketeers and circus impresarios have filtered through to the outside world — quite probably as part of an attempt by various contenders for the succession to discredit Brezhnev's camp followers.

The murder hunt involves the links between the militia and the KGB, the KGB and the Party, the Party and the army, politicians and western businessmen, and the tangled web of corruption, careerism, censorship and silence which holds the whole apparatus together in

defiance of the interests of the Russian working masses.

It gives a hint as to the huge geographical and ethnic diversity embraced in the general abstract category 'Soviet Union' — which stretches from the metropolitan sophistication of Moscow to the vast barren fastness, geological wealth and rugged struggle for human survival in Siberia.

Procreate

It underlines the 'Great Russian' chauvinism which remains such a marked characteristic of Stalin's heirs in the Kremlin bureaucracy:

"Russians procreate! the article demanded. Fertilise a glorious roe of young Greater Russians lest all the inferior nationalities, the swarthy Turks and Armenians, sly Georgians and Jews, traitorous Estonians and Latvians, swarming hordes of ignorant yellow Kazaks, Tartars and Mongols, backward and ungrateful Uzbeks, Ossetians, Corcassians, Kalmuks and Chukchis tip with their upraised organs the necessary population ratio between white, educated Russians and dark..." (Chapter 2)

Corruption

But if Cruz Smith appears excessively hard on the Soviet Union in his dissection of its corruption, the USA is not portrayed as any contrasting paradise.

The book is well worth reading. It shows in more graphic than political terms some of the reasons why we as revolutionary socialists, and Soviet workers from their own standpoint, must struggle for political revolution to overthrow the Kremlin bureaucracy and open up the road to the full development of the gains made in the 1917 Revolution.



State education fails to capture the enthusiasm of youth

Our chance to educate the unemployed

By
BOB TOWERS

THE growth of unemployed centres provides an excellent opportunity for working class people to organise their own education courses. A major part of any unemployed centre must be the education of unemployed workers and it is this which I wish to discuss in this article.

Firstly, the effects of unemployment are well known and need not be listed here but we must recognise that unemployment destroys people and it would be arrogant to assume that the unemployed will have the motivation let alone the money to seek state education courses.

Autonomy

Secondly, before considering the style and content of education we must consider who it is we are offering education to. We must not think of the unemployed as disabled in some way to whom we are generously giving assistance to or see them as clients.

The unemployed are workers without paid employment. Whilst they are dejected, disillusioned and looking for answers, they are also sick of being patronised. The working class has a proud history of organising effective education, especially in times of economic depression, the Chartist classes of the 1830s, the Educational Settlements of South Wales in the 1930s and the Socialist Sunday Schools of the 1880s were all marked by their independence and autonomy.

We must also show the relationship between education and the state.

Just as the school system "trains" young workers to fit into the machine of bourgeois society, so state unemployed education is styled to make the unemployed more attractive to employers, it offers qualifications which sharpens the competition for jobs or it provides a harmless pass-time to prevent frustration and unrest.

We must point out the futility and oppressiveness of the "old" education of which Lenin said "nineteenth was useless and one-tenth distorted."

But working class education must differ from bourgeois education more than its teaching of the state and the class structure.

To replace the capitalist

The principle is to reject all limitations and prejudices that cage us and interpret and relate science and history to class and practicality.

We then see education as a challenge to the old ideas, attitudes and morals. An extension, or vital part previously overlooked, of democracy. An education which studies, probes and analyses, prompting the pupil to act.

How can we practically achieve this now? I see this arising from local education units and groups, working from unemployed centres (the unemployed being a test case for working class education generally) linked to, and financed by, the labour movement, perhaps sharing with the WEA but the resources must be controlled by the unemployed.

I see this as part of the broader struggle for premises for the unemployed, creches and the defeat of the 21 hour rule.

Knowledge

To sum up, Lenin said at the Third All Russian Congress of the Young Communist League:

"If you were to ask why the teachings of Marx have been able to win the hearts and minds of millions and tens of millions of the most revolutionary class, you would receive only one answer: it was because Marx based his work on the firm foundation of the human knowledge acquired under capitalism. After making a study of the laws governing the development of human society, Marx realised the inevitability of capitalism developing towards communism."

"What is most important is that he proved this on the sole basis of a most precise, detailed and profound study of this capitalist society, by fully assimilating all that earlier science had produced. He critically reshaped everything that had been created by human society, without ignoring a single detail. He reconsidered, subjected to criticism, and verified on the working class movement everything that human thinking had created, and therefrom formulated conclusions which people hemmed in by bourgeois limitations or bound by bourgeois prejudices could not draw."



Lenin

BRAZIL'S BEES CLEAN UP

By
LES HEARN

HERE is a bizarre example of the interaction between humans and nature. It involves a species of Brazilian bee which has probably existed for hundreds of thousands of years, and a chemical invented only a few decades ago.

Males of the species *Enfriesia purpurata* spend their lives flying from flower to flower, collecting the attractive-smelling substances they produce (and incidentally pollinating the flowers).

Soon after the launch of a malaria-control programme in one area of Brazil in which the walls of houses were sprayed with the insecticide DDT (sounds pretty unhealthy to me), the residents noticed that these bees were visiting their houses and spending a lot of time on the DDT-sprayed walls. They noticed

because of the incessant buzzing of the bees, loud enough to be a serious disturbance.

Researchers, intrigued by reports of unusual "bee-haviour" caught some of the bees and analysed them. They found that the bees were collecting the DDT in pouches on their back legs, obviously finding the smell rather nice!

The amounts collected were quite incredible — some 5-10% of the weight of each bee — and even more incredible, the DDT was causing no ill-effects in the bees.

While 6 micrograms (millionths of a gram) will kill your average honeybee, *E. purpurata* males were happily flying around with an average 2000 micrograms of DDT.

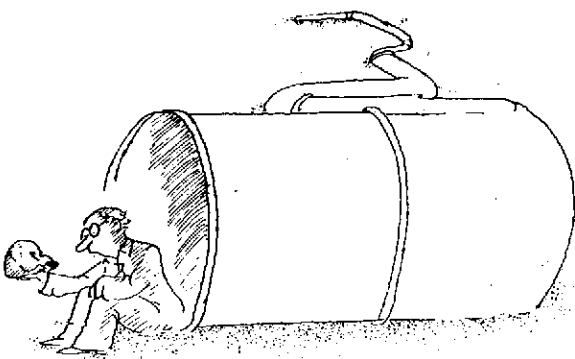
What do they do with it?

No one knows yet, though the bees seem to break down the DDT and may use the products as territorial markers or sex attractants.

Is this phenomenon anything more than a curiosity? Well, how about unleashing a swarm of DDT-collecting bees into environments polluted

by DDT (which is after all a persistent insecticide, causing lots of damage to harmless animal life)? And perhaps we can find mutations of this species that are attracted to other polluting chemicals (like dioxin).

The possibilities are endless!



DIMITROV - A CLASS FIGHTER DESTROYED BY STALINISM

On the centenary of Georgi Dimitrov, often best remembered as a servile lackey of Stalin's Comintern, JOHN RILEY points also to some of his strengths.

JUNE 18 marks the centenary of the birth of the Bulgarian Communist Georgi Dimitrov, the hero of the Reichstag Fire trial of 1933.

In Bulgaria, where Dimitrov is very much a national hero, (eulogized as such by the Zhikov bureaucracy), massive celebrations are planned to commemorate this event but in many other countries his name is, or should be, remembered.

This is because Dimitrov, although very much part of the Stalinist monolith of the '30s and '40s, has distinctly separate claims to fame which do deserve a measure of respect and attention from socialist revolutionaries everywhere.

He was born on June 18 1882 in the village of Kovachevtsi which is some forty miles to the South West of Sofia. His working class family moved quite soon after his birth into the slum district of Youchbounar in Sofia, and at the age of 12 Georgi became a printer's apprentice in the Bulgarian capital.

Almost from the start of his working life, Dimitrov was involved in intensive class struggles when he organised an apprentices committee to support the 1894 Sofia printers' strike.

In the late 19th century the Bulgarian working class were forging their own trade unions and, in 1900, Dimitrov became an early member of the Company of Printing Workers. In 1904, at the age of 22 he became



Soviet troops move in against Hitler, 1944. (Above) Dimitrov

one of the founder members of Bulgaria's TUC - the General Workers Trade Union.

Playing a leading role in the two big miners' strikes in Pernik in 1906 and 1908 helped him to be considered for the position of secretary of the GWTU.

He was appointed on the recommendation of Georgi Kirkov, the brilliant revolutionary journalist who was one of the Bulgarian Workers Social Democratic Party (Left Socialists) leadership at the time.

Dimitrov joined the Bulgarian Social Democratic Party in 1902, at about the same time the party was splitting into two factions - one proletarian, the other petty bourgeois and revisionist. (As Trotsky noted in his Balkan War correspondence, this apparent propensity for splitting was just one of several interesting political/cultural similarities with the Russian Social Democrats).

Having avidly studied and indeed applied the works of Marx, Engels and Plekhanov the young Dimitrov sided with the proletarian Tesnyak (orthodox) faction in opposition to the class collaborationists of the Obshtodetsi (Common Cause).

Pioneered

The Tesnyaks were led by Dimitar Blagoev who had pioneered Marxism and Social Democracy not only in Bulgaria but also in Russia (in 1884 he established the St. Petersburg Social Democratic Circle, for which he was deported by the Tsarist authorities). Like the Bolsheviks - the Tesnyaks opposed imperialist war from the standpoint of proletarian internationalism, but in Bulgaria's case the Great War was preceded by the two Balkan Wars of 1912-13.

These wars stemmed from the Balkan Peninsula's artificial division into six independent, but not viable, states by the imperialist intrigues of the British, Russian, Austrian and German ruling classes. With the decline of Turkey in Europe the tiny Monarchies fought to unify the Balkan Peninsula, not by cooperation but by forcibly trying in two wars to establish Greater Bulgaria or Greater Serbia.

Crusade

During and before these wars the Bulgarian Tesnyaks had organised Balkan socialist opposition. The ruling classes spoke of a Pan Slavic crusade against the Turks and organised a Sofia Congress of reactionaries to support their aims.

The Tesnyaks replied by converting their annual Sofia

based congresses into Slav socialist rallies, addressed by foreign delegates such as Leon Trotsky. To the mystical Pan Slavic war cries of the Balkan kings, the party of Dimitrov and Blagoev replied with resounding calls for peace and a Balkan Federation of States.

These calls for proletarian unity against imperialist war were continued by the Tesnyaks during the First World War when most other socialist parties, except the Bolsheviks, caught war fever. During World War One Dimitrov was elected an MP for the districts of Vratsa and Troyan and remained an MP till 1923.

As part of a Parliamentary socialist grouping, he attached his name to a document appealing to the Bulgarian working class, urging it to struggle against Bulgaria's involvement in the imperialist war.

Mutiny

In August 1918 Dimitrov was arrested and jailed for inciting servicemen to disobedience around the time of the Vlada soldiers' mutiny for an end to the war involvement and for a republic.

The period immediately after the First World War saw the Bulgarian revolutionary socialists miss several important opportunities.

The Tesnyaks greeted the Russian Revolution, changed their name to the Bulgarian Communist Party and entered the Communist International. However, though they adopted Leninist forms they had not yet adopted a Leninist content.

The party failed to cash in on its big influence

amongst the mutinous soldiers at Vlada and were sectarian in their attitude towards the Peasant Agrarian Party.

This sectarianism towards the peasants did much to isolate and bring about the defeat of the massive railway and postal strike in 1919/20 (which Dimitrov had led).

In 1919 the Agrarian Party were elected into governmental office. Dimitrov went to some trouble to persuade the BCP to be more flexible in its approach to Stamboliyski's Peasant government but was unsuccessful.

In this period Georgi Dimitrov attended the early, still revolutionary, congresses of the Third International (the Comintern). His hazardous journeys to these congresses in tiny fishing boats, braving Black Sea storms and Romanian gunboats are straight out of the adventure comics.

In the Soviet Union he met Lenin who spoke of the need for the BCP to force closer links with the peasants in Bulgaria. This advice was not heeded by the party who missed a golden opportunity for revolutionary action and instead stood by and watched a right wing coup d'etat overthrow the Peasant government and establish a proto-fascist dictatorship in June 1923.

Rising

Forced to correct its errors the BCP formed a united front - with the peasant Agrarian Party and began to fight back.

3 months later, Dimitrov led the brave, but ill-considered, poorly prepared and abortive anti-dictatorship rising in north west Bulgaria

in the September of 1923.

After the defeat of this uprising, Dimitrov and the insurgents escaped into Yugoslavia.

For the following ten years Dimitrov moved under false names all around Western and Central Europe. He spent much time engaging in activities for the Comintern and its trade union organisation which were increasingly falling under the thumb of Stalin's bureaucracy.

Coordinating

A Bulgarian Party in exile was formed and Dimitrov worked at coordinating a Balkan Party grouping within the International. His most important position in this Stalinist International was that of head of the Western European Bureau.

As the bureaucracy began to take more and more control in the USSR, Dimitrov took the line - making a speech as early as 1926 denouncing "Trotskyism" and "Zinovievism" in Germany (which was the centre of the Comintern's Western European Bureau).

At the same time he appears to have shown some degree of independence from the Stalin line when in 1932, on the basis of his Bulgarian experiences, he urged the formation of united workers' fronts against fascism.

At this time the Comintern was carrying out an extremely sectarian political line which characterised the non-communist workers' parties as "social fascist".

Dimitrov's political work took him to Germany when the German Communists were carrying out this policy with great enthusiasm. (Even to the point of working in some cases against the 'social fascist' SPD in alliance with

the Nazis who were seen as the lesser enemy!)

Ultimately this line did much to pave the way for the Nazis coming to power in January 1933. This parliamentary success finding a suitable route to the establishment of fascist dictatorship his business backers needed to crush the working class.

The powerful German labour movement was decimated at this stage but not out of the picture. The burning down by arson of the Reichstag building (German parliament) on February 1933 provided Hitler with his much needed excuse to rush through draconian 'enabling' laws banning all left wing opposition parties.

The Communists were immediately blamed for the attack on the symbol of German democracy. Hitler claimed the fire was a signal for a Communist uprising in Berlin and other German cities.

Of course this was true, the fire was actually started by the Nazis mentally retarded young Van der Lubbe was cornered into starting the fire by Nazi conspirators who followed this up by obstructing the fire brigade's access to it.

Frame-up

By the time the appliances reached the Reichstag building the fire was beyond control. Max Van der Lubbe was arrested for the crime but so was Dr. Rudolf Hediger.

This was only a passing name. The police soon covered that they had caught Georgi Dimitrov - 'notorious international Communist'. This arrest led to the Reichstag Fire

Workers' Socialist League

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Nazi frame-up trial was thwarted by Dimitrov's defence

one of the trials of the 20th century and Georgi Dimitrov's finest hour.

At first Dimitrov didn't think he was going to be charged with complicity in the Reichstag Fire, but it soon became clear to him that the Nazis were trying to frame him. He decided to embark upon a course of defending not only himself but also the working classes of the world who were also going to be menaced by the Nazi menace.

He planned to utilise the inevitable show trial as a platform for launching a Communist counter-attack on the Hitlerite lies and fascism.

Brilliant

In the long months before coming to Trial, Dimitrov, permanently handcuffed, met with much obstruction, as might be

organised labour and its parties, he began to put the Hitlerites on trial. Dimitrov in order to show his awareness of the situation he was in, quoted Goethe to the court, "He who does not want to become an anvil must be a hammer!"

It was because he succeeded in turning himself from an anvil for the Nazis into a hammer to attack them, that the Nazi (!) court was forced to acquit him. After a couple more months in prison, while Hitler tried to think up ways of liquidating him, Stalin granted Dimitrov Soviet citizenship and he was deported to the USSR, to a hero's welcome.

On the strength of his fame and prestige Dimitrov was made Secretary General of the Comintern and his talk of a united front against fascism appeared to be taken up by Stalin.

"The leader of the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919, a much-loved hero, Bela Kun was a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International and in charge of the Balkan countries.

One day in the spring of 1937 Bela Kun arrived at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. Around the table were Dimitrov, Manuiski, Varga, Piki, Togliatti and a leader of the French CP. Manuiski took the floor and said he had an important announcement to make. According to documents furnished by the NKVD, Bela Kun had been a Rumanian spy since 1921. Everyone knew Bela Kun, everyone was aware of his devotion to the cause of socialism, only an hour before, they had been warmly shaking his hand. Yet not one of them protested or even asked for further information. The meeting was adjourned. Outside the building, a car from the NKVD was waiting for Bela Kun, who was never seen again...

I want to cite the example of the Bulgarian representatives. They had asked to see Dimitrov, the Comintern president, and they used strong language: "If you don't do something to make the repression stop," they told him, "we'll murder that counterrevolutionary, Ejov". Ejov was head of the NKVD.

The president of the Comintern left them no illusions. "I have no power to do anything, everything is in the hands of the NKVD".

The Bulgarians did not succeed in killing Ejov, but he killed them like rabbits.

Yugoslavs, Poles, Lithuanians Czechs - all disappeared... The Korean section was decimated, the delegates from India had disappeared, the representatives of the Chinese CP had been arrested... the revolution had degenerated into a system of terror and horror, the ideals of socialism were ridiculed in the name of a fossilised dogma which the executioners still had the effrontery to call Marxism."

Leopold Trepper, 'The Great Game'

expected from his Nazi captors as he worked on his defence.

The trial began in Leipzig on 21 September 1933 with the eyes of much of the world watching. The Nazis hoped to use the trial to brand the communists as terrorist enemies of democracy: but Dimitrov's brilliant defence strategy soon made this aim blow up in their faces.

They tried so hard to convict Dimitrov of conspiracy but his courageous stand against them succeeded in convicting them.

One by one the top Nazi bosses like Goering and Goebbels strutted in to the court room to speak their rehearsed testimonies against Dimitrov and one by one they were exposed as liars by the logic of Dimitrov's answers.

As he began to bring out the real purpose of the Reichstag fire, that of providing a pretext for the destruction of German

The view of Stalin towards a united front was not really a united front of workers' parties but the class collaboration with 'progressive' sections of capitalists in the form of the Popular Front.

Dimitrov's speech to the 7th and last Comintern congress in Moscow in 1935 referred to the need for 'a broad popular anti-fascist front on the basis of the proletarian united front.' Although sounding similar to each other united fronts and popular fronts are quite different things with quite different practical consequences.

The united front means unity in action of the working class organisations in order to achieve common aims. It can be positive insofar as it provides a living arena for revolutionary activity in the struggle against, say, fascism.

Thus Trotsky advocated a united front between the Communist Party and the

Social Democrats in Germany, before 1933, in order to combat the rise of Hitler. The Popular Front which Stalin pushed, through the medium of the Reichstag hero Dimitrov, was a bloc of the workers' parties with 'liberal' sections of the bourgeoisie against the fascist threat to 'democracy'.

To achieve this the Stalinists watered down their programme in order to woo bourgeois democrats. This class collaboration led to more defeats for the working class in Spain and in France where such Popular Front governments were supported by the Stalinists to the exclusion of revolutionary action - and similar policies brought catastrophe in Chile in 1973.

As Secretary General of the Comintern and puppet of Stalin, Dimitrov became more and more identified with the disastrous Popular Front policies and the use of the International as a mere instrument of the Soviet bureaucracy's foreign policies.

Dimitrov was an anti-fascist up to the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact (with a battalion of the International Brigade named after him) then he opposed the "Imperialist War" of 1939 to June 1941 until following Hitler's invasion of the USSR it was renamed the "Great Patriotic Democratic Anti-fascist War" of June 1941 to May 1945.

In other words Dimitrov zigzagged exactly according to the requirements of the Soviet leadership. In 1943 Stalin dissolved the Comintern as a sop to Churchill and Roosevelt whom he needed as allies during World War Two. Dimitrov was out of a job.

The last years of Dimitrov's life saw him as Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bulgaria (when it suited Stalin to socialize that country's economy in response to the cold war-mongering of the US Marshall Plan). In this position Dimitrov was beginning to display some revolutionary independence again when he spoke of the need for a Balkan Federation and was possibly discussing this with Tito.

Stalin attacked him for this and his talk of including a Communist Greece in a Balkan Socialist Federation. (This was particularly irritating to Stalin as Greece was an area he had agreed to hand over to British 'influence' and he'd specifically observed this by allowing the British army to crush the Greek Kapitano Communist partisans in 1945/7).

However, Dimitrov was too deeply a part of the Stalinist monolith to seriously challenge his master and did not have the independent power base in terms of a solid party apparatus which Tito had in revolutionary Yugoslavia.

After falling ill in early 1949 he was sent to a Soviet Sanatorium where he died on July 2.

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.

Garcia line wrong on war

CARLOS Garcia was wrong before and he is wrong now that he has changed his position.

Certainly Britain as the imperial power was blameworthy in a special sense; this he neglected last time, and this marred his then approach. But his current rediscovery of this essential fact leads him to far-fetched statements. Galtieri's appeal to the bourgeois opposition parties, and to the Peron-

ist stooge leadership of the CGT may allow workers' groups for the moment some slight measure of civil liberties but it certainly won't have all the effects he suggests.

If the Junta, through spurious anti-imperialism and a demagogic nationalism, can gain itself a mass plebians - if not proletarian - support, it will gain what it has so far lacked as a fascist movement. (Peronism had the mass appeal but its fascistic character was derived from the 'left fascism' of the Strasser, rather than the Mussolini-Hitler - Franco variety).

Carlos Garcia's original position, when published in England, was bad mainly in so far as it provided a left excuse for Liberal supporters of limited war (both the Guardian and Radio our referred to Carlos Garcia - "a leader of a small Argentinean Socialist Party" - and his statement, though not saying where they saw it).

But though published here, it was a dangerous adaptation to liberal-bourgeois "anti-fascist" imperialism; the same statement published in the Argentine (if perhaps, there, "ultra-left" by Trotskyist standards - I speak as an "ultra-leftist") would have been a courageous blow against the Junta.

The present letter justifies the liquidation of opposition to Galtieri, while - though right in insisting on a more vigorous opposition to British imperialism - argues for this so crudely as to alienate support.

Fraternally,
LAURENS OTTER

THATCHER - A TORY FIRST

AT the national LPYS conference 1980 there first appeared a caricature of Margaret Thatcher on a poster.

The poster called Plunder Woman portrayed Thatcher dressed in an overtly feminine sexy bikini suit.

My reaction as a socialist and feminist was to deface the poster with anti-sexist slogans as did others, after repeated but unsuccessful attempts to convince members of Militant that it was sexist and why it was sexist.

With the production of that sexist, backward caricature on plastic bags more progressive members of the YS, sympathisers and supporters of Socialist Organiser carried an active campaign against its use.

At YS conference this year only one was visible on show (though unfortunately we were inundated with personalised Ted Grant

"he's my hero" posters).

Why did we object to this caricature? Plainly Militant saw Thatcher as a woman.

Whilst this may be biologically indisputable, her politics are far from sympathetic with the rights and emancipation of women - so first point.

Thatcher is a Tory first and in the capacity that she is a woman, it is in the role as the defender of capitalist ideology which oppresses women.

Secondly, that it regards women as sex objects by using women as mere bodies caricatured by the bikini.

It reinforces a stereotype of women - one which has a double standard under capitalism - women as sex objects as in magazines and adverts, and women as passive beings, wives, mothers, housewives.

Why, oh why, then does Socialist Organiser of which I am a supporter degrade

itself by the use of sexist cartoonery as on the front of SO 87?

Thatcher may see herself as a Britannia ruling the waves, she may also be a woman, but why exaggerate the size of her bust?

Sexism

This may be something palatable to the Sun comic strip readers, no doubt, but to readers of Socialist Organiser? If the cartoonist is so concerned with a clear expression of gender in his/her drawing (my thoughts implicate a him) are we to expect bulges on male caricatures where the balls and prick are?

Some of us will not tolerate any degree of sexism - language, comic or cartoon.

I would hope all SO sympathisers dissociate themselves with such sexism.

JUDITH BONNER
Coventry

Yes! Defend Argentina!

Stan Crooke's letter (SO88) spills the beans. Now Argentina has been put into the same category as Tsarist Russia, after the previous parallels (SO82 letter by J. Connell) with Czechoslovakia.

Therefore, he concludes, we do not have to support Argentina - even if it were invaded by imperialist forces!

Trotsky and Lenin did not hesitate to call Tsarist Russia and Czechoslovakia imperialist. But now confusionists, trying to cover themselves, come up with a fig leaf term "sub-imperialism".

Where and how does Argentina export capital? And what does "sub-imperialism" mean scientifically?

Is it a new phenomenon superseding Lenin's thesis on imperialism? We have no answer so far.

More thoughtful arguments are presented by Martin Thomas in SO87: "Argentina is now on a level with countries like Portugal, Greece or Turkey."

Strategy

He informed us that "in 1969 foreign capital owned 60% of the 160 biggest industrial companies which controlled 32% of industrial production."

After the Second World War, imperialism developed a new strategy towards the

countries like Turkey or Argentina. Direct exploitation of these countries was replaced (as a concession to bourgeois nationalism like Kemalism, Peronism, etc) with new economic relations which we might call "import substitution".

Imperialist capital began to involve the indigenous bourgeoisie in their investments, sharing out the fruits of the exploitation of the toiling masses.

The majority of these investments consist of producing goods for the internal market - where previously these goods were imported by these countries.

Stan Crooke might be fool enough to believe (and doing so disbelieves the theory of permanent revolution) that these underdeveloped countries have secured their economic independence from imperialism (and themselves become imperialist).

But imperialism has been clever enough to ensure over the last decades that these countries are in fact further subordinated to the interests of imperialist capital.

Subordination

Military dictatorships in Latin America and the 1980 military coup in Turkey followed by subsequent implementation of the economic measures of the IMF offer living examples of the way in which the toiling masses in these countries (unlike Stan Crooke's) have paid the price of this subordination with their blood and flesh.

The actions of the military regime in Argentina may be difficult to under-

stand; but it is equally hard to understand, for example, the 1960 military regime in Turkey. This regime drafted a constitution which allowed trade unions to organise, the right to strike, freedom of expression, etc.

The working class went beyond these formal concessions, to establish its major class organisations such as DISK, the Turkish Labour Party, etc., in the mid-60s.

Trotsky explained these dialectical relations as follows:

"In the industrially backward countries foreign capital plays a decisive role. Hence the relative weakness of the national bourgeoisie in relation to the national proletariat. This creates special conditions of state power (...). Actually it can govern either by making itself the instrument of foreign capitalism and holding the proletariat in the chains of a police dictatorship or by manoeuvring with the proletariat and even going so far as to make concessions to it, thus gaining the possibility of a certain freedom toward the foreign capitalists."

A victory of Britain over Argentina would certainly guarantee the first one of these options, but a defeat of British imperialism by Argentina would create the possibilities, for the Argentinian working class to repeat what the Turkish working class did in the 1960s.

In my view, to abstain in between these options would be the biggest error for the revolutionary Marxist in the present period.

JACK JOHNSON
London



Turkish nationalist figurehead Kemal Ataturk



Industrial News

S&K fight for union rights

30 black workers at Sandhar and Kang Wholesale Warehouse in Digbeth, Birmingham are now entering their second month on strike. The dispute is essentially about union recognition but it also involves the victimisation of former head cashier Baljinder Singh (suspected by management of being the main force behind organising the workforce into the TGWU).

Underlying the whole struggle are the poverty line wages (as little as 80p per hour for some workers) and appalling conditions at S&K.

One of the women strikers, Robina Talat, told Socialist Organiser: "We've come a long way in four weeks. S&K started out by refusing to recognise the union or reinstate Baljinder Singh under any circumstances. They even refused to meet John Partridge, the TGWU official.

"Now they've agreed to recognise the TGWU and to have Baljinder back. But we are not accepting this because they will not give Baljinder his old job back. They want him to work in the packing department on a job that would be completely unsuitable for him.

"But still it shows that the management are backing down. If we stand firm and don't allow ourselves to be split I'm sure we can win all our demands."

Baljinder Singh added: "Management have tried to buy me off with cash. But this is a matter of principle with me. As long as the others are willing to fight on, I'll continue to insist on full reinstatement in my old job."

The strikers are now picketing S&K's other warehouses in Coventry and Wolverhampton. And they are prepared to extend the picketing to S&K's other

businesses like the appropriately named Paylo Supermarket.

Although the strike is official, the TGWU isn't paying out strike pay because the workers haven't been in the union for 39 weeks.

This is an issue that all SO supporters within the TGWU should be taking up for under rule the TGWU can, and in the past often has, made ex-gratia payments to workers in similar situations.

Meanwhile donations are urgently needed c/o TGWU 211 Broad Street, Birmingham 15.

Jim Denham

Part-timers in the firing line

HOW DO you get rid of part-time workers you don't particularly want? Simple. You lengthen the hours of the remaining full-time workers to do the work of the part-timers. And how do you do that when the full-timers have got nationally negotiated contracts? No problem!

You tear up the existing contracts, effectively sack all the workforce and tell them the only way they can get their jobs back is by signing new ones.

This didn't happen in some cut-throat capitalist factory — it happened in a local authority. And not even in a Tory controlled one. It happened in Manchester which is solid Labour.

Last March a one line item on the budget went unnoticed through the council which stated that £400,000 would be saved by altering the conditions of service of further education teachers. NATFHE members soon found out what this meant when the education department came to them with proposals for lengthening class contact hours (these are the hours that teachers actually spend in the classroom).

This would have had the effect of doing away with about 500 part-time teachers, many of whom are single parents.

NATFHE flatly refused to negotiate on this point, either at national or local level, so in April the council gave the Chief Education Officer the go-ahead to unilaterally change the further education teachers'

contracts. Now Bill Egerton, leader of the Labour Group, has sent a letter to all councillors saying that it was "NATFHE's intransigent attitude and their failure to accept the reality of the financial difficulties which we face" that is to blame for the present situation.

In fact it is Egerton and his supporters who are failing to face the reality of the Tories' attacks on workers' jobs and conditions.

An attempt was made by left councillors at the last Labour Group meeting to get the whole issue referred back to the education committee. Unfortunately the vote was tied 29 each so the resolution fell.

So now it looks like NATFHE will call a national dispute over the issue and industrial action will start at the beginning of the new term in September. Meanwhile, NATFHE members have been instructed not to sign any of the new contracts.

It is important that the right wing aren't allowed to get away with this one. If they can do this to NATFHE they can do it to any other group of Town Hall workers. Already the Town Hall unions forum has voted to back the teachers. This support will have to be turned into strike action if this measure is to be defeated.

And Labour Party members in wards where there are councillors who voted for the measure must organise to bring them to account.

WOMEN workers at Kigass Engineering Ltd, Leamington Spa, and Abex Ltd, Warwick, voted to go back to work as from Tuesday 15 June at mass meetings held last Friday 11th.

It is not altogether clear what the conditions are on the boss's side. Clearly he has had to concede a great deal. He has agreed on paper to recognise the workers' demands for better conditions and facilities, negotiations on measured day work, and he says 'no reasonable demand will be refused'.

As for pay, the women will have to wait until November, when hopefully negotiations on a domestic level will bring them in line

with federated companies. They will get an immediate rise which was introduced for the scab workforce who stayed in and those who went back during the strike.

Union recognition has been granted on condition that there's no harassment from either side.

Presumably this means that more open methods of getting workers to join the union like a leaflet will have to be replaced by one-to-one talks.

It would also appear that the workers will still have no choice about whether or not they do overtime.

If they refuse they face the risk of dismissal.

4.2% cutback means 160 jobs face the axe on top of a prolonged series of manning cuts already imposed. The Body Plant cutback means 400 jobs 200 of them among time workers. Skilled workers too are under attack — with demands for amalgamations between trades. The AUEW has already held a mass meeting and begun an overtime ban in defence of

their members' jobs. Where did the "plant audit" come from? Have management got the right to impose the results of it?

The audit came out of last November's wage review. It was one of the things negotiated by national officers and General Secretaries during those negotiations late on the Saturday night which led to the sell-

out of the strike. Management were given the right to "audit" each plant and produce findings. Once those findings were implemented that plant would no longer be restricted to a bonus ceiling of £22.50, but could go up to £30 (which is great for Cowley workers since they have never gone even near to £22.50!)

What was not said in that deal was that the findings could be imposed without negotiations and in defiance of all existing agreements. but that is what management are now claiming.

A plant audit industrial engineer now goes into a department and makes a brief "assessment" of the effort, probably only looking at one operator. On the basis of that he may overturn all the agreed manning and IE sheets which may exist.

Secret

His "study" is not subject to the industrial engineering agreement, which provides for shop steward involvement, trade union access to the observation sheets and calculations, and negotiations over disputed factors.

Now all the timings and calculations remain secret; all the stewards and the operator see is the findings — how many jobs have to go (on top of this the company in most cases is refusing to carry out the Movement of Labour Agreement).

Such a procedure has never been agreed by the unions; but only firm action to fight back will halt this management steamroller.

Stewards' meetings must be called in both Assembly and Body plants, to agree a policy to defend existing agreements on manning levels and the movement of labour.

And BL workers, who have suffered heavily as a result of top-level betrayals by their union officials and negotiators, must turn seriously to the struggle for a new, accountable and principled leadership to defend their interests against management attack.

The Leyland Action Committee, which leafleted both Cowley plants this week explaining the scope and meaning of the 'plant audit' offers a rallying point for such a struggle.

Contact: LAC, c/o 194, Dawlish Road, Birmingham 29.

Edwardes uses the 'audit'

By Terry Smith

RESULTS of "plant audits" in BL's two main factories at Cowley have now been announced. Management are calling for a cut of 4.2% in manning levels in the Assembly Plant and 10.7% in the Body Plant across the road.

In the Assembly Plant a

Boost for EDP

By Brian Wood

The feeling of the strikers has intensified and morale is high, thanks in part to their unity nobody has returned to work since the beginning of the strike when four people did go back. Two of these have signed renegotiated contracts, part of which involved tearing up their union cards in front of pickets.

Union backing and messages of support have also boosted morale. Some support and donations have been received from local AUEW, TGWU and the Job Centres CPSSA.

A member of ASTMS Executive Committee met with the managing director of EDP in London for the first time since the dispute began and was due to report

to pickets on Tuesday with the outcome. A further mass picket has also been planned.

There are reports of some of EDP's customers suffering delays in completed jobs.

Blacking is obviously going to have an impact and I urge all readers to track down any company using EDP products.

Fight pit closures!

By John Cunningham (Dinnington NUM)

THE struggle against closure in the mining industry is still going on despite the victory of February 1981.

In Yorkshire, the NUM has given notice to the Coal Board that they expect some news of the Orgreave Drift development very shortly. Orgreave Drift is a planned replacement for the old Orgreave mine which closed in 1981. But the Board have so far come forward with no concrete proposals.

Industrial action is being contemplated unless the Board delivers the goods very shortly.

In Kent the threat of the NCB to partially close Snowdon colliery has met with a firm response from the Kent area, who have called all-out strikes from June 19.

What is necessary now is for the NEC to throw the full weight of the NUM nationally behind the Kent men.

By Judith Bonner

All in all, compared to what the workers' lot was before they came out, the strike has brought considerable gains. But not enough. Harsh exploitation and no negotiation has been replaced by exploitation which can be negotiated.

Stronger

The Kigass and Abex women have learnt and become much stronger from their struggles. They have shown that women will fight against the capitalist system that exploits and oppresses them and they have shown male trade unionists that without them, their struggle is futile.

KIGASS WOMEN GO BACK

June

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WHAT'S

ON

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

Islington Socialist Organiser meeting "Islington — Women's City?". Speakers: Rachel Lever (Women's Fightback) and speaker from Islington Council's women's committee. 3pm, Sunday 4 July, Thornhill Neighbourhood Project, Orkney House, Caledonian Road. Tea, coffee, sandwiches provided. For baby-sitting ring 607 5268.

Basingstoke SO Group Political Forum: The Falklands War: Who are the real winners and losers? Saturday 19 June at 2.15pm at Chute House. Further info, phone 0256 57038.

Contact: Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group, 64 Philbeach Gardens, London SW5. 01-373 3492. Glasgow Polish Solidarity Campaign. Ian McCalman, 18 Mossiel Rd., Glasgow G43. 041-632 1839. Edinburgh PSC. C/o Edinburgh Trades Council, 12 Picardy Place. Oxford Labour Committee on Pland, 468 Banbury Rd., Oxford. 0865 58238. Coventry PSC. John Fisher, c/o ASTMS, 26 Queens Rd., Coventry. Labour Poland Solidarity Fund, c/o Cooperative Bank, 110 Leman St., London E1.

WOMEN, Politics and Trade Unions: beyond June 5. Dayschool for women organised by Manchester Industrial branch of WEA. Saturday June 19, 9.30 to 4.30 at 8411 Community Education Centre, Moss Side Precinct, Manchester 16. £1 (50p unwaged).

"Labour and the Falklands War" Public meeting sponsored by Islington South and Finsbury CLP. Speakers: Reg Race MP, Chris Mullin (Editor of Tribune). Tuesday 22 June at 7.30pm, North Islington Library, Manor Gardens, (off Holloway Rd by the Royal Northern).

LABOUR COMMITTEE ON IRELAND

LOBBY of Labour Party NEC to demand Labour Party oppose the renewal of the PTA. Wednesday 23 June at 9.00am at Labour Party Headquarters, Walworth Road, London SE17 (nearly tube — Elephant and Castle).

CAMPAIGN FOR LABOUR PARTY & TRADE UNION DEMOCRACY 'A Question of Leadership'. The film HTV refused to screen. Discussion after showing of the film led by Ken Loach, the film's producer, Alan Thornett, film participant and British Leyland shop steward, Ray Davies, ISTC and film participant, Wednesday June 23 at 7.30pm, Ringland Club, Newport. Sponsored by Llanwrn Steel Action Gp.

London Workers Socialist League classes on basic Marxism. Next class: The Transitional Programme. Friday June 11, 7.30pm. For venue write to PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

WORKERS' march against Racism: FROM Brick Lane through Brixton to TUC conference in Brighton. September 4 to 8. Sponsors include: Jayaben Desai, Anwar Ditta, Nasira Begum, Tony Benn, Ted Knight, Ken Livingstone, Paul Boateng. Details 01-274 3951.

POLISH SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN bulletin: new issue out now. Individual copies, or sale-or-return bundles, can be obtained from Marion Pitman, 29 Hampton Road, Twickenham, Middlesex. (01-898 7165) at 30p per copy. Subscription (six issues) £2.50.

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WOMEN'S RIGHT TO WORK

SOUTH ATLANTIC: THATCHER'S SLAUGHTER HOUSE

Class Fighter, paper of the National Left Wing Youth Movement of the LPYS. 10p plus postage from BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX

WOMEN'S RIGHT TO WORK

South Atlantic: Thatcher's Slaughter House

Solidarity strikes defy Tory union-bashers

By Terry Smith

THE dramatic emergence of mass picketing and sympathy strikes around the NHS pay claim, together with an overt political strike by the dockers last week showed the basis to crush Tebbit's anti-union legislation.

Under Tebbit's Bill, it is unlawful to fight for sympathy strikes, and unlawful to stage them. The health workers picketing mines could be sued for damages arising from lost production — and so, if the sympathy strike were official, could the NUM.

Under Prior's Employment Act, picketing is restricted to six people at their own place of work — the contingents of miners and other trade unionists who have joined mass pickets of health workers are strictly outside Tory law.

Action

But police have in almost all cases pulled back from confrontation with pickets, and it is plain that in the face of mass action, gaining momentum throughout wider layers of the labour movement, the Tebbit legislation, like the government which spawned it, can be defeated.

These developments run in stark contrast to the defeatist words and gestures of the official trade union "campaign" against Tebbit.

And indeed they point once again to the kind of conditions in which — even after the TUC has permitted the Thatcher government to put draconian new laws on the statute book — mass action can turn the law into a dead letter.

Support

We must continue to warn and explain the dangers of Tebbit, and fight for action on this issue. But at the same time we must fight

throughout the labour movement for full-scale practical support — sympathy strikes, blacking action, mass pickets and other solidarity — to every struggle against this government and the capitalists it represents.

In this practical way workers can gain in confidence and develop the "custom and practice" of defying anti-union legislation — in preparation for the struggle to come.



Miners march with health workers in Yorkshire

OFFICIALS' DAY OF INACTION

Harry Sloan looks at June 10



Todd: Class-war prisoner!

ing" the government to drop Tebbit's anti-union Bill which is soon to become law.

TUC spokespeople claimed that millions of leaflets were distribu-

ted outside stations, factories and on High Streets on June 10.

It is not even worth debating the truth of this claim or whether in fact the two-colour leaflets remain-

ed unopened in their boxes in union district offices. The fact is that the leaflet itself — plainly angled at non-trade unionists — said next to nothing and asked nobody to do anything.

And while it may have offered a day in the sun for a handful of over-paid union bureaucrats, 'Union Day' was in no sense an attempt to mobilise the trade union rank and file.

Two years ago on May 14 1980 the TUC held a so-called 'Day of Action' against Prior's Employment Bill — in the run-up to which union leaders argued time and again against any strike action.

In the event and in the teeth of a press witch-hunt, hundreds of thousands of workers took action despite the lack of any official call. But ever since TUC leaders have referred to May 14 as their stock example of workers being

"unwilling" to fight Tory anti-union legislation.

For June 10, there has been a studious attempt to avoid even the term 'Day of Action'. But this does not mean that union leaders will not use the almost complete lack of any activity on that day as an excuse for their inevitable complete capitulation before the Tebbit Bill.

This grim pattern of organised inaction was broken in only a few bastions of trade union strength. Dockers, following a lead from their unofficial shop stewards — and at the same time underlining a separate grievance of their own on jobs and conditions — struck for the day in Liverpool, Cardiff, Newport, Swansea, Ayr and Kings Lynn, with partial strikes at Hull and Felixstowe.

Shipyard workers at Cammel Lairds too downed

tools against Tebbit. Elsewhere there were workplace meetings in Rolls Royce plants in Bristol and London.

Some trades councils organised local activity — notably in Liverpool. In Oxford where an evening demonstration was called by the Trades Council, union officials conspicuously boycotted the campaign and the march — and have attempted to exclude Trades Council officers from a bureaucratic local "educational campaign" against Tebbit run by the TGWU.

Strike

So where next after the June 10 fiasco? The Tebbit legislation is nearly on the statute books. If enforced it threatens the most basic trade union functions. It must be combatted by the full strength of the labour movement.

Plainly this means combatting also those union leaders who would sooner throw in the towel to the Tories than mount a fight.

The dockers have shown that given a lead workers will strike on this issue. The fight should be taken up — particularly in those unions already vaguely pledged to one-day stoppages against the Bill — for a one day general strike on the day it becomes law, as a dress rehearsal for the class action needed to defeat it once and for all.

To do that would demand union leaders really take a stand in defiance of the law; at least it would be better than getting nicked for leafletting at Kings Cross!

STEVEN CORBISHLEY looks at the issues before the conference 'Running London Our Way' called by London Labour Briefing.

The conference is on June 19 at County Hall.

June 19: councillors must prepare to fight

HESELTINE's legislative war against local government has taken a back seat as Thatcher slugged it out with Galtieri in the South Atlantic. But the war against Labour in the local boroughs has not been forgotten by the Tories.

The Tories still want to see tighter legal controls on local spending; an end to or substantial reduction in direct labour services; and increasing rent charges to be laid on tenants, not rate-payers or the government.

The results of the London local elections on May 6, as well as in the metropolitan areas must have given Heseltine some problems to ponder.

Despite Labour losing 'red' Lambeth, Brent and Waltham Forest in London, and some of the big metropolitan areas like Birming-

ham, the control over many of the Inner London boroughs such as Islington, Camden, Haringey and Southwark was given over to the left of the Labour Party.

These left wingers have said in the past that they are prepared to fight the Tories rather than dance around them as did Knight in Lambeth with fiery speeches and silent cuts.

Meanwhile Heseltine's failure to develop adequate legal powers that will allow discrimination against Labour-held councils means that the Tories have to find new ways of hitting Labour directly.

On June 19 London Labour Briefing is organising a conference for labour movement delegates and councillors to plan the new

fight against the Tories.

Recognising the failure of the London Labour Party EC to lead a fight in the last round of Heseltine it is very encouraging that a number of London Region EC members (including known supporters of Militant) are also sponsoring this conference.

The central task faced by this conference is the need to organise a fight to tackle the Tories that goes well beyond the Council chamber and well beyond the boundaries of each particular borough.

The lesson of Lambeth is that while resistance must begin at local level, a single borough cannot try to or pretend to stand alone. The other lesson is that it is necessary to organise the resistance to

Heseltine which is rooted in the workplaces, estates, and labour movement organisations.

Socialist Organiser welcomes the June 19 conference and the proposal to initiate the Association of Socialist Councillors as a way of linking all those Councillors — whether in Labour majorities or not — who are prepared to implement the Briefing policy statement.

Only by campaigning on policies along the lines of that statement can the drift towards "councillor socialism" be halted; and the drive outwards into mobilising the community and labour movement be achieved.

The necessary direct challenge to the District Auditor (possibly Heseltine's only real weapon

now) can only be mounted by those determined to stick to the policy of defending "jobs, services and living standards of the people of London".

Showdown

The ground must be prepared for a showdown with this government. This means:

- *opposing privatisation of council services;
- *refusing to put up the rents;
- *campaigning for a nuclear free London and scrapping of all Civil Defence;
- *breaking up Tory control of national wage bargaining bodies, to settle on wage increases that break the Tory norms;
- *refusing to carry out any

of the provisions of Tebbit's anti-union Bill;

*using local council resources to campaign for occupations against redundancies;

*supporting NHS workers fighting to defend living standards.

And as long as the fight to stop the Tory attacks also focusses on building effective alliances at rank and file level between Labour Party members, trade union activists, and community organisations, especially those of blacks and women, then the Tories will face a real threat.

Such a threat frightens the pants off Labour's PLP leadership. The ASC should also take up a fight within the right wing's bastion — the national Local Government Conference.

Union leaders must

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and the
Labour democracy
fight for a
WORKERS GOVERNMENT

40p plus postage from Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8

NHS, Rail

ALL OUT FOR THE FULL CLAIM!

THE strident opposition of COHSE leader Albert Spanswick to calls for all-out strike action on the NHS pay claim this week shows the real stumbling block faced by health workers.

Three successful one-day strikes have shown workers increasingly ready to fight: sympathy strikes have shown others ready to fight alongside them. Yet the TUC Health Service leaders continue to hold back from the all-out action needed to win the claim.

At the TUC Health Services Committee last week the NUPE conference policy of indefinite strike action was not even put to the vote despite a vocal lobby of nearly 150 health workers outside.

Instead a further one-day stoppage was called on June 23 and more partial action authorised, together with talk of a "rolling programme" of regional 24-hour strikes after June 23.

Arbitration

But in addition to this half-hearted policy, there was agreement of union leaders to seek ACAS arbitration – and NUPE leader Rodney Bickerstaffe welcomed the involvement of the ACAS chief – former BL union-buster Pat Lowry!

The officials' strategy is described as "hit and run":



but there is far more running going on than hitting the Tories!

With rail workers having called for all-out strike action from June 28 and massive popular support for their case throughout the workers' movement, health workers must continue to press for an escalation of their struggle into indefinite strike action – with emergency cover under the control of strike committees.

NHS union branches should pass resolutions for their executive committees declaring outright opposition

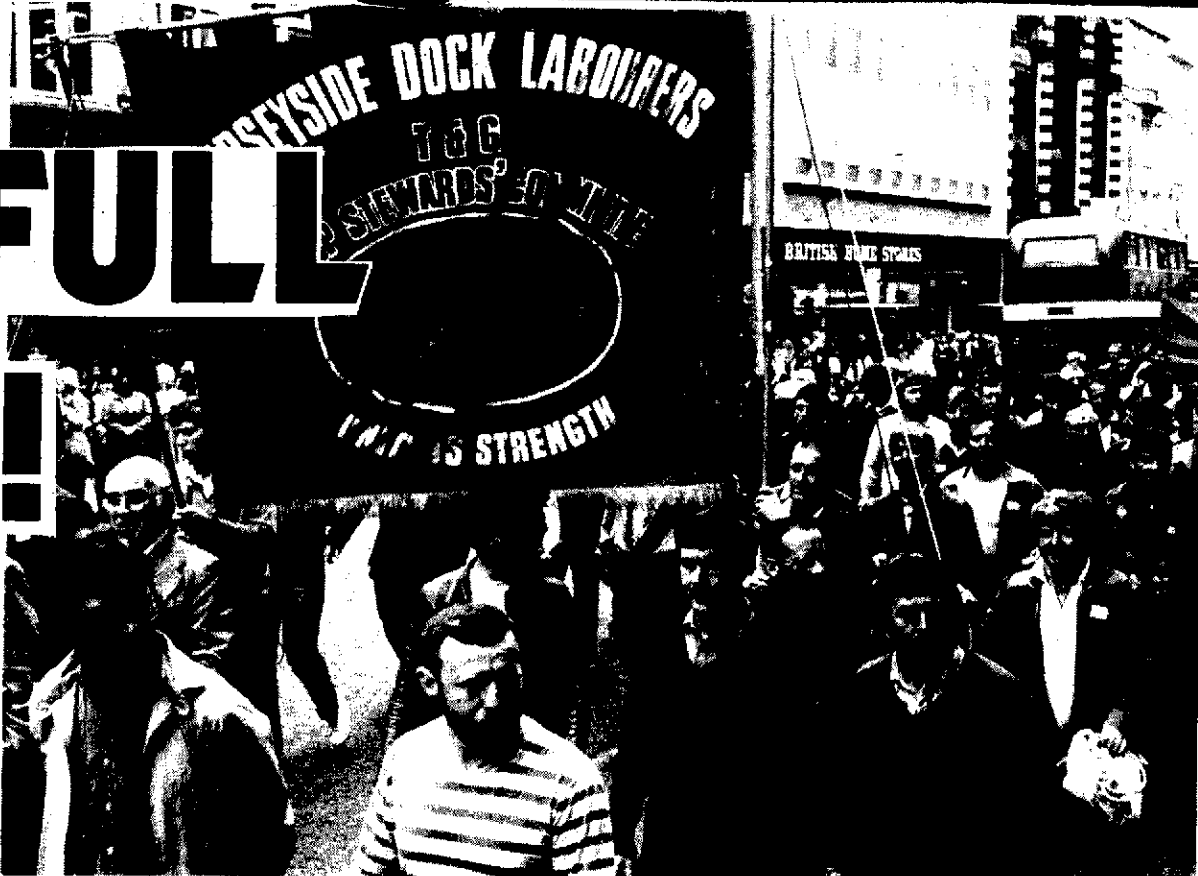
to arbitration, and insisting that whatever the antics of the scab leadership of the RCN the unions refuse to settle until the full claim is met for all sections of NHS workers.

Meanwhile let us build for a massive display of solidarity and determination on June 23 – with flying pickets to extend still further the sympathy strikes that have already begun.

A new issue of the bulletin of the rank and file group Health Workers for the Full Claim is now available, price 5p. Donations are urgently needed to support this publication which has consistently fought for the perspective of all-out action in the NHS. Contact Anna, c/o 78 High Street, Atherton, Lancs – phone Atherton 877296.

A national meeting of Health Workers for the Full Claim is to be held this Sunday June 20 from 1.30 to 5pm at Manchester Area Resources Centre, 61 Bloom Street, Manchester (near Chorlton St Bus Station).

Socialist Organiser



Striking dockers march on 'Union Day', June 10 against Tebbit. Union Day report – page 15

Hands off Militant!

IT SEEMS pretty likely that next week's NEC will have proposals before it recommending that Militant supporters are kicked out of the Labour Party. Already several weeks before the June NEC the press had been whipping up as much dirt as they could on the Militant Tendency.

'Calculated conspiracy', 'covert meetings', 'clearly subversive' and so on are all supposed to prove that Militant don't belong in the Labour Party. Yet all that has very little to do with it.

Clearly what's brought all this to a head has been the advance of the Left in general – not specifically Militant – over the last two years. The democratic reforms won at the last two annual conferences – elec-

tion of the Leader, mandatory reselection – proved too much for some to stomach, resulting in the defections of some right wingers to the SDP.

However there still remains a strong and fighting right wing in the Party which is using the hesitancy of the Left in the Party to stick the boot in the convenient scapegoat of the Militant.

There has been a wavering in the Left about what to do next. Labour Liaison 82, which could have organised the Left in the Party into a stable campaigning force has been wound up by its own Steering Committee. Tony Benn is not going to stand against Foot for the leadership this year, though it is clear that Foot needs replac-

ing.

There is a desire on the Left to be legitimate to show that they are as 'respectable' as any of the right wing Labour Party members and this has resulted in a pulling back. The enthusiasm generated in the rank and file through the campaign for Tony Benn last year and the winning of the reforms the year before is in danger of being dissipated in the drift towards respectability.

Dangerous

This kind of thinking is dangerous. The entire left in the Party must stand united and firm against the right wing attacks. Militant must be defended. We need a joint campaign to do it.

In February, Socialist Organiser wrote to the Militant Editorial Board suggest-

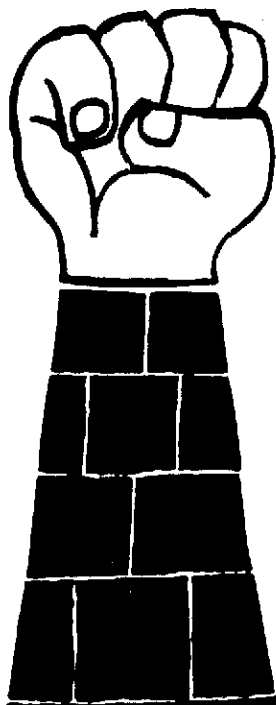
ing just such a united campaign. We received no reply and Militant continue to go it alone with dribs and drabs of support throughout the Party.

Resolutions

The experience of the Wales Labour Party Conference where a witch-hunting motion was passed narrowly surely shows that there is nothing to be complacent about. The Left must fight against bans and proscriptions now.

All SO supporters should make sure that resolutions from their Labour Parties and trade unions condemning the witch-hunt. And the LPYS, which is also a possible target for the witch-hunters must not be left to fight off any attack alone.

£6000 fund



A single donation of £100 is the total amount we have received this week for the Special Fund. This brings our total so far to £1851.80 – still a long way short of our £6,000 target.

This fund is not a luxury that we could manage without. We are committing substantial resources to the campaigns we are supporting against the Tebbit anti-union legislation and in support of health service workers fighting for all-out industrial action to win their 12% pay claim in the face of determined opposition by their union leaders who want to limit action to ineffectual one-day strikes.

In the next week or so we will almost certainly be posed with the need to campaign against witch-hunting in the Labour Party when the report on the Militant Tendency is published.

All this requires a lot of money. And we depend on you, our readers and supporters, for that money.

So please send us a donation today so that we can continue this work. Our address is: Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.

Reg Race: 'We need a united fight'

"Yes I think it's quite possible that there will be a limited purge of Militant. Perhaps their full timers will be asked to "choose" between the tendency and the "Party".

If that does happen it will be full scale war in the Party.

Gwyneth Dunwoody at the Solidarity fringe meeting at the weekend (at the Labour Party Women's Conference) was calling in effect for a wholesale purge of everyone to the left of Solidarity. She suggested that anyone making any qualification at all in their political allegiance to Labour ought to be expelled.

I think the "centred left" on the NEC is also moving very fast to the right with

the prospects of office as the election looms closer.

What is remarkable is that the right wing obviously think everyone on the left is a Militant supporter.

Anyone under 35, or women who wear denim jeans, or any man wearing an open-necked shirt and pullover is branded as Militant. That's how ill-informed they are – and I'm not just talking about the loonies either!

What is needed now is a concerted, united campaign against the witch-hunt. I think we will have to wait before we act until after the report on June 23.

I know Militant have not waged much of a fight so far: but they must do now."



"The heavy parent: 'My dear, if the violence of those Militants succeeds in establishing the excellent principle of the deportation of the politically undesirable, well, I for one will feel that they have not lived in vain.'"