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Against all bans and proscriptions!

New anti-union laws planned

"During the past three weeks", declared miners' leader Arthur Scargill last week, "members of my own union have been acting illegally, contrary to the law [in their solidarity action with NHS workers]."

"If they accept my advice, they will continue to defy the law."

But most union leaders do not take the same firm stand. Quite the contrary.

So an emboldened Thatcher – egged on by SDPer David Owen – has now promised new anti-union laws to follow the Tebbit Bill. They would make secret (presumably postal) ballot compulsory for electing union officials, and perhaps also for strike action.

Once again the folly is clear of trying to duck under the Tebbit Bill and hope it will not be so bad after all. If Tebbit succeeds, there will be worse to come.

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SABOTAGE!

Union leaders split struggles

LAST week the scene was set for a tremendous mobilisation of working class strength against the Tory government.

Hundreds of thousands struck in solidarity with the health workers on June 23. The demands from health workers for an all-out strike with emergency cover under workers' control became louder than ever.

The NUR had called an all-out indefinite strike against British Rail's miserable pay offer of 5% five months late and with strings. ASLEF leader Ray Buckton had said he was sure ASLEF would be backing the NUR strike.

The developing mobilisation could have beaten back the Tories' policy of cutting wages and services. It could have threatened the survival of the government. Workers were beginning to talk about a general strike.

Then came sabotage – from the terrified union leaders.

BLOW No. 1: NHS union leaders put off further action to July 19-21. It could only be a deliberate attempt to avoid simultaneous action by NHS and rail workers.

BLOW No. 2: ASLEF leaders told their members to report for duty and make 'personal decisions' about working with any NUR scabs.

BLOW No. 3: Browbeating by the press, and manoeuvres by general secretary Sid Weighell, pushed the NUR conference into calling off the rail strike.

BLOW No. 4: A circular from the TUC health services committee talked of "intensive nationwide industrial action" on July 19-21 – but made no official strike call, nor any mention of strike pay.

BUT the struggle con-

tinues.

NHS workers are confident. In many areas work-to-rules or sectional indefinite strikes are set to continue until July 19. Workers are organising for even wider solidarity action then.

Joint stewards' and strike committees are flourishing in more and more hospitals. It is clear that the bureaucrats will have trouble getting a return to work on the 22nd!

A major strength of the NHS workers is that they have stayed united, resisting Tory attempts to split off the nurses.

In contrast, railworkers have been weakened by mindless inter-union chauvinism. While union leaders in steel, coal, and the power industry – even right-wingers – issued firm instructions for blacking in support of the NUR, ASLEF and NUR leaders continue with petty tit-for-tat tactics

refusing solidarity.

NUR members are bitter. But they are not despondent.

With ASLEF's strike call from Sunday 4th, the way is open again for a fightback against BR. It will be more difficult after last week's events, but not impossible. BR's attempts to cut wages and get more work from fewer workers are a common issue for all railworkers.

NUR and ASLEF rank-and-file members need to fight the divisions inflamed by their leaders, forming joint local committees, arguing for NUR support for ASLEF picket lines. As in the NHS, such joint union committees, accountable to the rank and file, can be the basis for an alternative leadership, combatting the sell-outs of the privileged bureaucrats.



FIGHTBACK

—we can still
unite and win!

Inside:

Rail carve-up, page 2; health service solidarity, page 3



Solidarity action can defeat Tory pay limits and anti-union laws

RAIL CARVE-UP

"We would have been 100% by the second day"

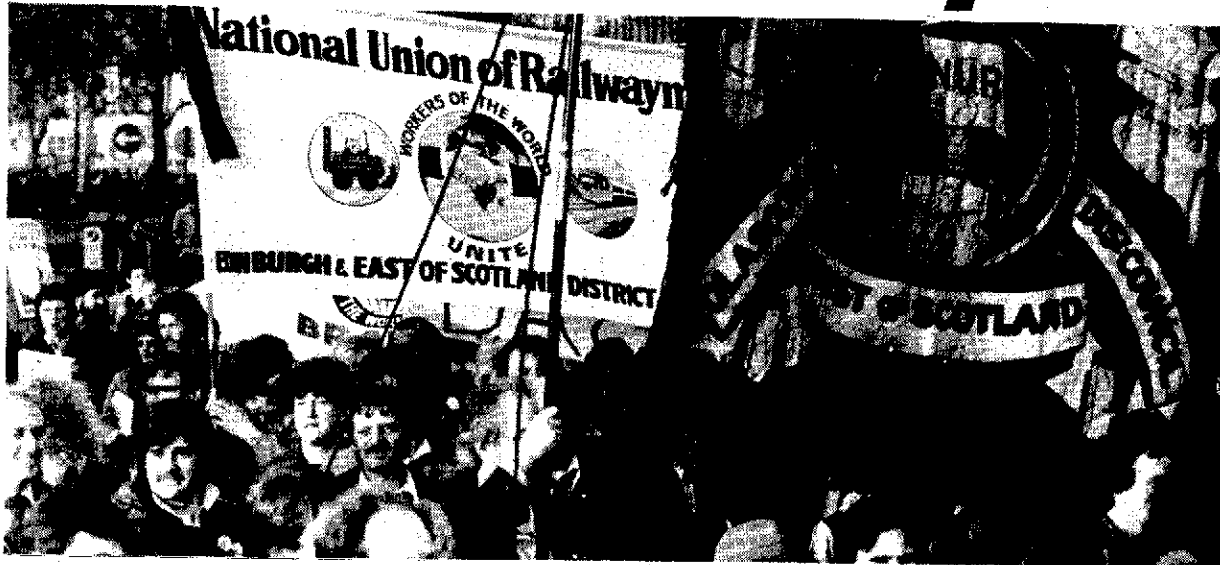
Colin Foster reports

"HAD they been on the picket line with the members on Monday, there is no way the AGM delegates could have taken that decision to call off the strike. It didn't reflect the rank and file", said Rob Dawber (Sheffield City NUR).

The AGM, dominated by older delegates, browbeaten by the press, flooded by a campaign of anti-strike resolutions from branches, and nudged by right wing general secretary Sid Weighell, voted on Monday 28th to call off the NUR strike.

One NUR picket at Euston told us:

"The way I see it, it's like parliamentary democracy. You elect these people to go to the NUR AGM and once they get there, just like Parliament, they do what they like."



Front line Tebbit

WITH Thatcher's armies seizing the headlines for their exploits in the South Atlantic, union-basher Norman Tebbit - the cabinet's Colonel H - led the onslaught on the enemy at home.

But he ran into stiff opposition as he ventured out on a Tory raiding party into the enemy territory of Greater Manchester. 300 trade unionists

turned out to support a North West TUC picket of a Tory public meeting on June 19.

Police rescued Tebbit as he came under fire from "stand-off" missiles - guided placards and a (Soviet-made?) rolled up newspaper.

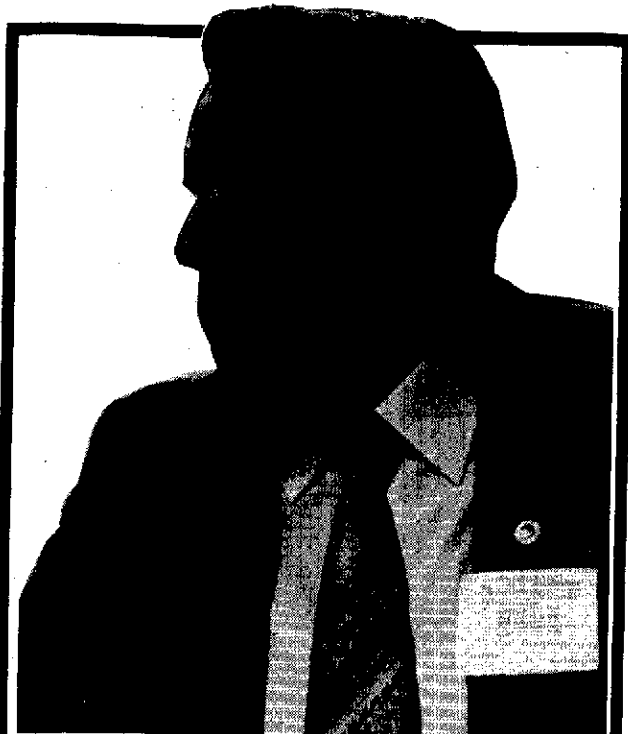
Tebbit however returned safely to base. His comment was a classic of true British grit - and in the best tradition of Defence Ministry statements.

"I was a serving officer in the armed forces, and I am used to coming face to face with the Queen's enemies."

In case anyone is sceptical about this picture of our Norm slugging it out hand to hand on the battlefield with the Nazi hordes, it is worth noting that he was in the forces: he was an RAF pilot!



Tebbit - "returned safely to base"



Buckton

Buckton bashes NUR and ditches pay claim

by Steve Good (Kings Cross ASLEF)

UNREMITTING NUR bashing is the only way to describe the speeches made by ASLEF executive committee members at a mass meeting at the union's headquarters in London last Sunday 27th.

The most virulent attacks on the NUR came from ASLEF President Derreck Fullick and Ray Buckton, the General Secretary.

The impression created, particularly by Ray Buckton was that the present NUR dispute had been engineered by Weighell and the BRB with the sole intention of dragging ASLEF into a strike which would break the union.

The reality is, of course, that the decision of the NUR Conference to call off their strike must strengthen the confidence of management to take on ASLEF and impose flexible rostering.

Apart from the view that the NUR dispute was some sort of fantastic conspiracy to "drop ASLEF in it", the EC's excuses are not supporting the NUR were shameful and pathetic. For example, the NUR NEC had failed to turn up for a joint trade union meeting!

With this level of argument it wasn't long before the dreaded "machinery of negotiation" was wheeled out. The NUR had not gone through the machinery on the pay claim, so (once again) ASLEF could not support the strike

call! In the last year the "machinery" has handed down one decision after another against ASLEF - the decision on flexible rostering being the most severe. The machinery has been totally discredited in the eyes of ASLEF members and ignored by the BRB except when it has suited them.

Furthermore, it is now ASLEF policy, following a resolution passed at the annual conference, to go for a complete review of the machinery, precisely because of the decision it has handed down and the way in which it has been disregarded by management.

Yet here we have the ASLEF EC once again defending it.

The EC expressed its "regret" that ASLEF members would have to cross NUR picket lines, and said that it was up to the "conscience" of the individual whether or not he or she crossed the picket. It was also a personal decision for an individual to work with a blackleg guard if s/he crossed that picket line!

A resolution put forward by Kings Cross members calling for joint strike action with the NUR was resoundingly defeated - by exploiting the old sectional prejudices against the NUR which run through the ASLEF membership.

The irony of all this is that the ASLEF EC played precisely the same role that the NUR general secretary played in the ASLEF dispute earlier this year. The position taken by ASLEF and the capitulation of the NUR conference only opened the door for a renewed management offensive on railway jobs and conditions.

whole of the North West - despite incredible pressure from management, and despite a complete lack of leadership from the union. Most people on the railway did not even really know what the strike was about."

The greatest victory BR could claim in Monday's strike was that local trains in Birmingham were kept running. That's a pretty clear indication that the turnout across the country

was overwhelming.

In Glasgow, pickets at Queen Street station on Monday told Socialist Organisation: "Weighell wants a deal. But that's not on. And it's not on to bring in ACAS either."

"The only thing for us is strike action."

On Tuesday, even after the AGM decision, pickets turned up again at Muirhouse, Hamilton, Polmadie, and Glasgow

Central station, before being sent home by the strike committees.

At the NUR Glasgow no. 5 strike committee, in Queens Park Labour Party rooms, activists were bitter:

"The gut reaction of the staff to the AGM decision has been that it was diabolical, bloody rubbish."

But they were determined to make the best of it.

"At the end of the day

it's a decision taken by the AGM and it wasn't a close vote either. But the strike hasn't been finished, only suspended."

Now the task is to fight petty inter-union rivalries, to floor NUR headquarters with branch resolutions against a sell-out, to ensure NUR members respect the ASLEF picket lines from Sunday, and to build ASLEF-NUR joint committees.

UCW leaders join sell-out

AN agreement was made between the leaderships of the NUR and the UCW that any mail not shifted by train during the rail strike would be moved by UCW members only and that no non-UCW labour will be used.

It did not seem to occur to the UCW executive that we should not handle mail affected by the strike at all!

Post Office drivers were asked by the management to handle this mail by working open-ended shifts and by single manning of

lorries (during the ASLEF dispute earlier this year all lorries were double manned).

Drivers in Coventry refused to shift the mail unless double manning was agreed to. They understood they would have the

full backing of UCW HQ.

Since then, UCW executive member Maurice Styles, has unilaterally agreed to single manning on all runs. As a result of this drivers in Coventry have reluctantly accepted single manning.

This will not be the first time that an agreement has been made without consulting the membership.

And in this particular case it shows the unwillingness of the union leadership to take up the issue of Solidarity action with other unions (both the Tebbit Bill and the Health workers strike were effectively kept off the agenda of the National Conference).

It also shows just how far the leadership of the UCW is out of touch with the needs of its own rank and file.

COLIN BARNES
Coventry UCW

Republican seized

DAVY Marzella, a member of the Troops Out Movement (TOM), and a sympathiser of Welsh Republicanism, was arrested on the morning of June 22 under the Explosive Substances Act. Police entered and searched his flat and took away political literature as well as files and correspondence belonging to another occupant.

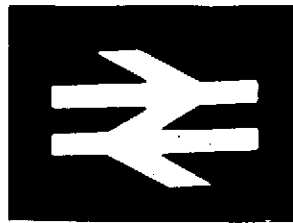
After being held at Bishopsgate Police Station

for 36 hours he was released without charge, but he is on Police Bail, and will have to report to them again on July 28.

Brian Rhys was also arrested, held for 50 hours, then released, immediately rearrested and taken to Cardiff, where he is now being held. He has been charged under the Explosive Substances Act and appeared in court on June 25.

Friends of Marzella and Rhys believe that these arrests are connected with the arrests of five militant nationalists in Wales last month, on explosives offences which they categorically deny. Police harassment of Welsh nationalists has also included widespread raids in 'Operation Fire' March 1980.

For further information contact: Jon Farley on (061) 671 6685.



NHS PAY FIGHT

Solidarity? All we had to do was ask!

Socialist Organiser rounds up reports from the NHS pay strike on June 23

"It is worth saying how we achieved such widespread solidarity action", reports JULIA REDMAN from Coventry, describing the strikes and demonstrations in support of the health workers on June 23.

"All we had to do was send out letters from the Hospital Joint Action Committee asking for support. The response was immediate."

"5,000 Warwickshire miners came out. We were joined on the picket lines by delegations of miners, Massey Ferguson workers, water workers, Post Office workers, the city engineers, and NALGO members."

"The bus mechanics and canteen workers came out on sympathy strike and sent two buses down to a lunchtime mass meeting at Whitley hospital."

"The water workers said they would follow the lead of the miners in sympathy strike action next time, and many others said that this was just the start."

So solidarity is snowballing. It took a lot of hard work to set that snowball rolling.

In South Wales health workers repeatedly



Persistent lobbying by NHS workers paved the way for solidarity in the South Wales coalfield

approached miners and seamen, and lobbied the NUM area conference. But now the work is bearing fruit.

MARTIN BARCLAY reports: "Miners and seamen were again present on picket lines on the 23rd. And it was clear that health workers have learnt a lot from the miners. The attitude of health workers to picketing was much more confident than before."

"We sent a flying picket to the opening ceremony of the BUPA hospital in Cardiff. BUPA management responded by offering us a glass of champagne each. They looked most upset when the contents were poured on the ground!"

"In the evening a Health Workers for the Full Claim delegation attended a meeting of steelworkers in Llanwern and got a promise from ISTC full-

timer Brian Connolly of a one-day strike in solidarity with us."

In Leicester there were not only strong pickets and solidarity, but a week's strike rather than a day's."

CHARLIE SARELL reports: "The City General hospital voted on June 18 for a week's strike. Health Workers for the Full Claim took this as a signal to spread the action, producing five bulletins in the

week.

"Leicester Royal Infirmary and the ambulance crews stayed out after Wednesday, producing a strong united strike on the Thursday and Friday."

In the North West, too, ANNA LUNTS reports, "solidarity action was stronger than ever. And virtually every hospital was out — including some who weren't on the previous one-day strikes."

Health Workers for the Full Claim meeting: Sunday July 4, 1.30pm to 5pm, Labour Club, opp. 'Night Out', Bristol St Birmingham. Health Workers for

the Full Claim bulletin — no.4 out soon. Order from Anna Lunts, 78 High St, Atherton, Lancs (0942 877296). Financial contributions urgently needed.

"Flying pickets went out to the pits, and 14,000 miners struck in the North West. 750 gas workers struck in Manchester, and bus drivers, civil servants, and local government workers joined us on a demonstration through central Manchester."

"Most hospitals are keeping up work-to-rules, and at Hope Hospital, Salford, the Central Sterile Supplies Dept is on indefinite strike."

The central stores department at Guy's Hospital in London is also on indefinite strike from Monday 28th, reports JANE GOSS.

"In central London, hard work by stewards paid off with a 2,000 strong march from University College Hospital. There were large delegations from NALGO and the UCW."

In East London NALGO, CPSA, and NUT members took action and joined the picket lines at Hackney Hospital."

"Patients willingly refused to cross picket lines and signed petitions, while the police were becoming so made at passing motorists tooting their horns in support that they ripped down placards and threatened to arrest the next motorist who beeped!"

In Hull, reports IAN DOLPHIN, "the demonstration on the 23rd was the largest I've ever seen locally."

"Solidarity was tremendous, coming from NUT, NALGO, gas workers, boilermakers, and two major local factories."

In Oxford, ALAN STEPHENS reports, "a local Health Workers for the Full Claim group will be set up out of a public meeting this week."

"June 23 was the strongest strike yet. At Littlemore hospital a meeting on the picket line voted to recommend to a union meeting later that week that they strike on July 5 and 6, with the option of all-out indefinite action from the 6th."

"NALGO local authority workers struck in solidarity, and the BL Cowley Assembly Plant TGWU, ACTSS, CPSA, and FBU



supported an afternoon demonstration.

"A new escalation of the dispute followed on Thursday and Friday, when the District Transport Department came out."

At the Western Infirmary in Glasgow, STAN CROOKE reports, "there was a better response than in previous strikes. But people have vowed that this will be the last one-day strike", said a NUPE shop steward."

"The demonstration through the city numbered about 8,000 and included delegations from Govan and Scott Lithgow shipyards, Shieldhall dockers and sewage workers, Cowglen Savings Bank, Rolls Royce, Barr and Stroud, the GPO, teachers, bus maintenance workers, Scottish Farm Dairies, NALGO local authority workers, and miners."

"Every pit in Scotland stopped."

"At the Southern General hospital pickets were dissatisfied with the strategy of one-day strikes."

Pickets felt that the next step should be city-wide all-out strikes to build a rolling all-out national strike."

"And on all the picket lines the scale of solidarity had a decisive impact. Everywhere health workers felt that now, with that kind of support backing them up, they were starting to get somewhere."

"The question now must be whether the health unions' leadership will press home the advance."

Figures they kept quiet

TWO-THIRDS of the British warships in Falklands waters were sunk or damaged by Argentine missiles and bombs.

The extent to which the navy was damaged was concealed while the war was on.

Defence secretary Nott revealed last week that out of 23 destroyers and frigates operating in the South Atlantic, four were sunk and 12 were damaged. Six of those damaged escaped being sunk only because bombs which passed through the decks failed to explode.

The statistics which have been given minimal publicity help explain why the Tory leadership still wants to swap some surface ships for more nuclear weapons.

In some ways it was business as usual in Fleet Street; pens dipped in poison; headlines polished; sights set on a trade union leader who just called a national strike.

There was a strong supporting cast. Red baiting over the Militant inquiry. Law and order outrage at secondary picketing. A 'we want to work' campaign nourished and supported in local papers up and down the country as well as by the national press.

Despite appearances this

is not a rerun of the last three years.

Orgy

Nothing can be quite the same in the wake of the military victory in the Falklands war and the orgy of nationalism which has engulfed the media — and a large segment of the population.

There has been swift evidence that the Thatcher government intends to cash its chips from the Falklands war by launching a major campaign against the trade union movement.

The Daily Express didn't shilly shally forging links between the two. Its front page headline was superimposed on a silhouette of intermeshed rail lines and said: "After our finest hour in the Falklands, the nation faces chaos at home... Now the Battle for Britain."

Press

It isn't the press who contrived this link — it is the Thatcher cabinet itself. Cecil Parkinson, Tory Public Relations Officer, acquired a taste for television interviews as the task force was being assem-

bled and has no intention of fading into obscurity.

He has been drawing the distinction between a unity of purpose he claimed to divine while the war was in progress and trade union leaders who in Tory eyes are seeking to ruin the country.

The cabinet has given a nod to the press to draw a direct link between the government's stand in the South Atlantic and its determination to beat the unions.

The result is the press trembles on the verge of direct comparison between Galtieri — whom it defined as fascist — and the trade union leadership.

Foot

One cartoonist was prepared to extend this to Michael Foot (whom it can safely be said has done nothing to endanger the Thatcher government). It showed Foot in a bar being confronted by Galtieri over his low showing in the opinion polls.

The hospital dispute has made the press realise that the trade union movement has not gone to sleep. It is one thing to make light of unemployment going back

over the three million mark. It is another to hope that nobody will notice.

The nervousness with which our fearless journalists approach this battle can be seen by the strange case of the Royal baby; the greatest week to be alive, the dawning of the new age and a shot in the arm for the Royal Family, etc., etc.

But less than 24 hours after the birth the baby was taken 'home'.

This was explained as being an example of modern motherhood, revised medical opinion and the general physical well-being of Princess Diana. In fact if the Madonna and child had not cleared off the premises when they did their royal visitors to St. Mary's would have been faced with a picket line.

This is exactly the kind of story to set the saliva flowing in Fleet Street and shortage of facts has never so far been considered justification for silence. The only conclusion that can be drawn from the failure of Fleet Street to link the two is that the press is not yet ready to launch a full broadside against the hospital workers.



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How the US oils the wheels of Zionist military machine

ISRAEL is perhaps the most highly militarised country in the world. Where else is such a huge proportion of the budget spent on military material and personnel? Where else is almost the entire active male population either in the army or part of the regularly trained reserve?

Where else can one find so many settlements that have a largely or purely military purpose and little or no economic value? Where else can one find such a big proportion of top state and institutional functionaries who are ex-military brass and part of the reserve army leadership?

You cannot be in Israel — the Israel of the pre-1967 borders, that is — without seeing soldiers everywhere. The bus stations team with soldiers on short-leave carrying

THE last few years have seen Israel invade Lebanon, challenge Syrian troops and bomb a nuclear plant in Iraq. Most of the arms used in these bloody ventures come from the US. Despite occasional mild statements of disapproval, the US continues to support these ventures and shows its support in the clearest ways: it keeps up the arms flow.

When delivery of four F-16s was briefly halted after the Iraq bombing, the restriction did not affect deliveries of howitzer

cannons, surface-to-air missiles, and other equipment. As one Israeli official put it: "We know that the US is not selling us airplanes only for use on parades on Independence Day. They sell them because of the common strategic interest between our two countries".

Here ANDREW HORNUNG details the US military support for Zionist expansionism and Zionist terror. The article draws heavily on the May issue of MERIP magazine.

their sub-machine guns with them: religious soldiers with skull-caps, women soldiers in sand-coloured uniforms, professional soldiers, conscript

soldiers... In the occupied territories things are infinitely worse. "Civilian" rule is a grim joke consisting of little more than referring

to General Milsom by his academic title, Professor Milsom.

The Zionist state's obsession with "security" is not totally unfounded. Having established itself by the gun, it must now secure itself — internally and externally — also by the gun.

Israel is both an importer of arms and a manufacturer and exporter of weaponry. Until the early 1960s Israel's most important military supplier was France. Under Kennedy and then Johnson, US military supplies were increased to include Hawk anti-aircraft missiles and Skyhawkjet fighters.

The lightning defeat of Egypt, Syria and Jordan by Israel in 1967 clearly impressed US strategists. Moreover US policy-makers felt that they would have to arm Israel to counter-balance what they saw as the pro-Soviet build-up in the region in the hey-day of Arab nationalism.

Israel was in 1968 the first country outside the NATO alliance to get F-4 bombers. According to William Quandt, who served on the National Security Council under both Kissinger and Brzezinski, "the US-Israeli relationship came to be seen as the key to combating Soviet influence in the Arab world nearly tenfold in the 1971-3 period, rising from \$140 million in 1968-70 to \$1.2 billion.

With the Nixon presidency the floodtide of arms increased yet further. But now Washington made available substantial credits without which Israel would not have been able to afford the new level of arms supplies. A "cash flow" procedure was also evolved which, among

other things, evaded annual review procedures.

Perhaps the most important development, however, was the 1971 agreement by which the US allowed Israel to produce advanced weapons components itself. This was not only another way of avoiding public review procedures. It also permitted Israel substantially to expand its own industrial base in high technology areas.

Under Carter there was a discernable shift in US policy: the use of the oil weapon by the conservative Arab states after 1973, the growing collaboration between these states and the US and the sudden importance of these states as financial powers and consumers all combined to make Carter rethink.

Tide

But although vast quantities of weaponry was sold to selected Arab states and certain restrictions were placed both on US sales to Israel and on co-production agreements, there was no stemming the tide. Sales tripled from the 1971-3 period to top \$4.5 billion in 1974-6.

But "peace" exacted its price in weapons of war too! artly as a reward for making peace with Egypt, the US increased its shipments still further in the following period. The sales of the 1977-9 period hit \$5.2 billion. The fall of the Shah of Iran also brought new transfusions of arms to Israel.

The Reagan administration had barely taken office when Secretary Haig announced that "international terrorism will take the place of human rights"

as the focus for US policy.

If this example of Haig-speak was obscure to some, it was brilliantly clear to the Israeli administration: the next day they launched the year's first terror bombing of several Lebanese cities.

In early 1981 a new concept, "pre-positioning", was being floated. An Israeli correspondent clarified its meaning:

"The considerations behind this concept are military and financial and involve the US plans for deployment in various parts of the region. According to the plan, IDF [Israel's army] will keep the [US] equipment and maintain it in workable condition in case the United States needs it for a military operation in the Persian Gulf. As for Israel, the equipment would be put at its disposal in times of special emergency, as was the case during the airlift in 1973. Since the equipment will not be owned by Israel, it will not be included in the list of US equipment sold to Israel and Israel will even be paid for maintenance expenses."

This concept was connected to the latest US tactic, the Rapid Deployment Force. The RDF forces would have to be based in the region and given back-up facilities, above all equipment servicing and medical facilities. A RAND Corporation study concluded that Israel's geographic position is worth \$10 billion to the US in any military race to the Gulf, and would save over two months in the transport of a mechanised division.

Of course, if it came to any serious confrontation in the Middle East — anything beyond small commando operations — it

is certain that Israeli military personnel would also be used, either in addition to US personnel or instead.

One cannot exclude an action like the 1956 Suez venture in which Israel was the partner of the then regionally dominant imperialist powers, Britain and France, but this time with the US as Israel's senior partner.

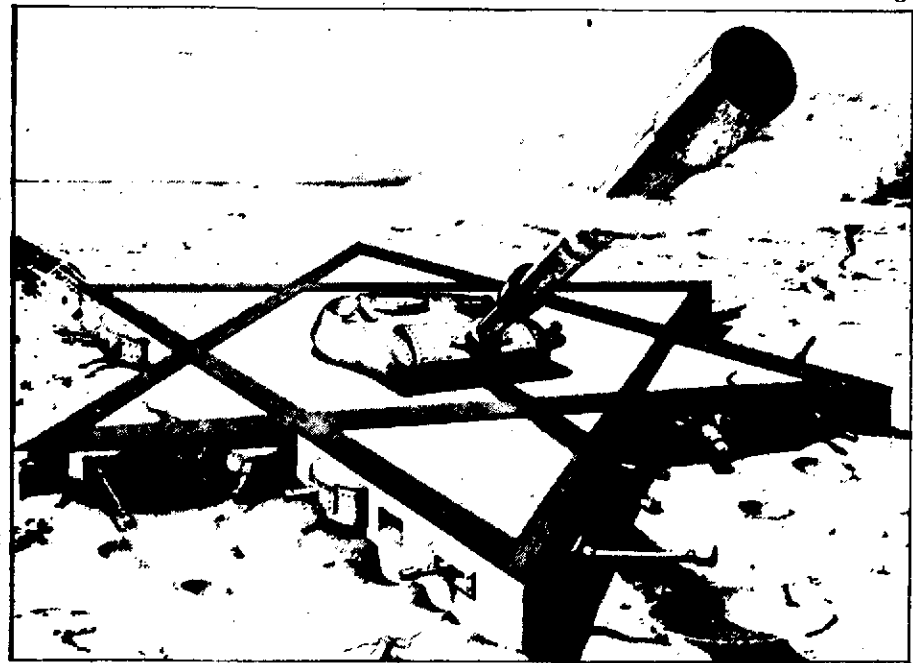
The Israeli leaders, of course, hope that they can make use of arms "pre-positioned" in Israel for which they do not have to pay. But this could not become the normal practice without compromising the US in the eyes of the other states of the region.

With or without "pre-positioning" and despite huge credits and waivers, the Zionist state suffers from severe financial strains. A nation that spends 40% of its budget on "defence" while having the highest per capita national debt in the world and suffering from runaway inflation cannot simply continue the arms race.

Hardware

Given the tidal wave of military hardware flooding the conservative Arab regimes and Egypt, Israel is forced into employing one of two strategies — or both at once: seeking to curb US sales to other states in the region by its friends in the US (the attempt to stop America selling AWACS reconnaissance aircraft to Saudi Arabia was a case in point), or waging war now.

Thus Israel is pushed inexorably towards a strategy of pre-emption and, ultimately, even nuclear pre-emption.



Polish generals' 'three options'

"THE results of martial law are unsatisfactory, especially in southern Poland... The commissions cannot cope with the factory workforces..."

The latest issue of the Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group newsletter carries a report of an interview with a senior Polish army officer. As well as describing the results of martial law — and Jaruzelski's contingency plans — the interview gave details of the preparations for martial law.

The first preparation for martial law was started in February-March 1981. These included training for the professionals in the army. The decision to introduce martial law was taken during the Solidarity Congress and, immediately, military training was begun on a tactical level.

An important element in the training and preparations was the use of the so-called operational groups who were to spy out the ground. Officers in charge of units were assigned a number of public premises in order to train their troops to seize them.

One month before the declaration of martial law, officers received sealed envelopes which they were

to open on receipts of a given code word. On the night 12-13 December, this particular officer got the code word and opened the envelope. It contained instructions as to what objects were to be taken by his unit. The training and information about martial law were a shock for the cadets in the army colleges. They did not want to go out on patrol, there were cases of psychological depression and suicide.

Criminals who had previously received long jail sentences, were incorporated into the ZOMO formations. This particular officer trained them. They distinguished themselves by their exceptional lack of intelligence. They were given IQ tests and their average was about 70.

Apart from these facts, which the officer knew at first hand, he gave several other facts which he had been told but which were difficult to check.

*The actual date of martial law was known only to Jaruzelski and not more than five absolutely trusted generals. The Politbureau of the PUWP didn't know. This was the crucial precondition for the successful introduction of martial law.

*Officers prepare reports about the effectiveness of their activities. The results of martial law are unsatisfactory, especially in southern Poland.

In fact, one can speak of a partisan movement there. The commissars cannot cope with the economy, factory workforces, etc.

*There were revolts in the army after the introduction of martial law. As a consequence of refusing to obey orders, more than ten generals were shot. Many units were isolated.

*The army has problems with the ZOMO which must be watched so that they don't rob or rape. There have been cases of theft during searches.

Officer

The remaining information illustrates the state of awareness of the army's officer corps and is a testimony to their indoctrination.

*The need to introduce martial law in Poland was a conclusion during a talk between Jaruzelski and Kulikov. The discussion took place in January 1981. It was decided that martial law would be intro-

duced since the military position of the Warsaw Pact was threatened. The precise date of martial law was not fixed.

*Martial law can be implemented on one of three possible ways:

1) As it is at present.
2) The militarisation of the whole population; a drastic curtailment in personal movement (empty streets), starvation food allocations, everything rationed. This alternative is so constructed that it must lead to rioting and acts of desperation by the civilian population since under it life becomes impossible.

Tactics to deal with partisans and street fighting had been planned, possible civilian and military casualty levels have been estimated.

3) If that failed to restore order, military intervention and occupation.

Thus the official propaganda stresses the insoluble nature of the situation since it flows from a total dependence on the Soviet Union; it also stresses the "humanitarian" characteristics currently pursued by Jaruzelski.

(First published in "wokopach" number 10, Warsaw, 1 March 1982).



May Day in Warsaw. Solidarnosc demonstrates defiance

JULY 3: March to back S. African strikers

by Colleen Molloy

"THE struggle against apartheid is the same struggle for fundamental trade union rights and for a free non-racial society", said national USDAW official Garfield Davies at a joint Trades Council/Anti-Apartheid meeting in Leicester last week in support of the Rowntree strikers in South Africa.

Garfield Davies went on to describe the effort of the joint negotiating council (involving the three main process workers' unions in Rowntrees, TGWU, GMWU, and USDAW) to pressurise management over the dispute. This was essentially



two meetings with the company chairman - which failed to shift him!

Although Garfield spoke with great feeling, in essence

his union (and the two others) has done nothing for the South African Allied Workers Union members facing torture, intimidation and arrests under the racist regime.

When asked why his members and other Rowntree workers have not yet been informed of the dispute by the union, let alone mobilised in solidarity, Garfield evaded the issue with typical bureaucratic rhetoric. He blamed the members' 'apathy'.

A NUPE member who had come to the meeting from the picket line at Leicester Royal Infirmary,

commented: "If our leadership had the same attitude as you, there would never be a national health dispute today".

However, the meeting welcomed the resolution passed at the USDAW Annual Delegate Meeting which calls for links with SAAWU, for a campaign against handling South African products, for information through the union journal, and for the union 'to solidarise with South African workers in ways their unions suggest'.

(This last clause is the most significant, since it commits USDAW to organise



British unions have dithered while Rowntree strikers in South Africa were beaten down. Now they must organise to defend jailed members of the strikers' union, SAAWU

blackening when South African unions call for it, as SAAWU has done for Dunlop).

The motion is an important one, won through successful work by the Anti-Apartheid movement. Socialist Organiser and AAM members of USDAW need to ensure it is carried out.

Meanwhile the Rowntree strike is over. There are no picket lines. Half of the SAAWU strikers are in jail. The rest have been banished to the Ciskei homeland, where there are no jobs.

SAAWU's entire leadership are in jail, including president Thozamile Gqweta, vice-president Fisa Nijikelana, and general secretary Sam Kikine, who face trial for their lives, charged in May 1982 under South Africa's notorious catch-all

Terrorism Act.

The Rowntree campaign needs to be developed into the defence of SAAWU, with demands for the release of its members and especially the leaders now on trial.

The campaign is made more urgent by guidelines recently issued by South Africa's Department of Manpower Utilisation to employers on how 'to break the power of SAAWU'.

A programme of solidarity should include:

- * messages of support,
- * shop stewards committee's protests to management,
- * sympathy strike action and blacking where appropriate,
- * opening company books to show their links with South Africa, and the

nationalisation under workers' control of all companies with subsidiaries in South Africa,

* full blacking action against all military and related supplies to the South African regime,

* a fight against secret diplomacy, to uncover the imperialist links and deals with South Africa.

National Anti-Apartheid demonstration

Saturday July 3, 1.30pm, Heworth Green (by Monkgate roundabout), YORK

AAM factsheet on the Wilson-Rowntree dispute - 5p per copy plus postage from AAM, 89 Charlotte St, London W1

De Gaulle's secret army

by Martin Thomas

"IF the country has a left government, the role of the SAC is to destabilise the regime by actions of infiltration and intimidation going as far as violence", an official French Parliamentary report concluded last week.

The SAC, now in discredit after internal feuds and killings last year, was set up in 1959 by de Gaulle. It provides stewards for Gaullist politicians, policemen, strong-arm men, criminals, and ultra right-wing militants in a mafia providing the French bourgeoisie with an alternative armed fist to the

official state forces.

The commission reports, "About 10 or 15% of the members are police... It is certain that the presence within the police of numerous SAC militants has allowed that movement to nip in the bud any proceedings likely to affect the association or any of its members..."

And it quotes a retired police officer explaining why for a long while the RG (French equivalent of the Special Branch) seemed to know nothing about the SAC.

"M. Frey (interior minister 1962-66, and a member of the SAC) said that there was no point giving him reports on the movement to which he belonged, since he knew much more about it than the RG did."



the bloody record of the Argentine junta was such as to cause profound embarrassment even in the motley gathering of bourgeois reactionaries, petty bourgeois populists and Stalinist bureaucrats which makes up the "Non Aligned Movement".

Like a loud fart in a public library, the intrusion of the undisguised politics of one of the participants in the Non Aligned charade would have been a natural but inexcusable breach of etiquette.

Luckily there were friends on hand - heads of delegations from some African and Asian states - to tip Costa Mendez the wink. He came prepared with a speech ringing with apparently fervent and well-rehearsed anti-imperialism.

Pride

He began by a curtsy in the direction of the Cuban regime - "pride of the Caribbean".

He went on to sound off against "colonialism" and "imperialism". He claimed affinity with the struggle against apartheid, the struggles of the Palestinians, and warning of the danger of "a new neo-colonial system" if Britain should win the war.

Yet Costa Mendez is no guerrilla fighter against imperialism: he is Foreign Minister representing one of the most bloodstained and reactionary military regimes in Latin America.

The Argentina junta is no opponent of imperialism: from its rise to power it has been an instrument of imperialist control over the working masses of Latin America.

The massive slaughter, torture and imprisonment of the junta's political opponents - over 15,000 of whom have "disappeared" since the military crackdown of 1976 - has been precisely the repression of those revolutionaries and trade unionists who were genuine oppon-

ents of imperialism, seeking a workers' government and socialist policies which would free Argentine workers from imperialist exploitation at the hands of the banks, multinationals and partly-owned companies.

In recognition of this work done by the Junta, British imperialism had continued to develop trade and extend credit: and the Reagan regime (ending Carter's "human rights" charade) had re-established military links.

The Argentine junta is a keen supporter of savage pro-imperialist military regimes in Bolivia, Uruguay, and Paraguay.

And Argentine troops have only recently been in the field fighting the anti-imperialist FMLN guerrillas in El Salvador, and training the state forces of the savagely pro-imperialist regime in Honduras.

That Costa Mendez' "anti-imperialism" was purely cosmetic is therefore self-evident. But in the context of the "Non Aligned Movement", cosmetic anti-imperialism is easily enough.

After all, its ranks include representatives of the Spanish imperialist monarchy, the Indonesian dictatorship, the savagely repressive regimes of Pakistan, Singapore, South Korea, the despotisms of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and (until he was toppled by an unmanly mass movement) the "Movement" even boasted the Shah of Iran!

None of these representatives are likely to probe too deeply for evidence that the new anti-imperialist rhetoric would be transformed into practice: some of them would certainly prefer that it wasn't!

So, of course, the resolution moved by Costa Mendez sailed through the conference - and into the special oblivion reserved for the various scraps of paper emerging from the "Non Aligned Movement". All this is unremarkable. But what is surprising is

that some comrades who would regard themselves as Trotskyists have wound up not simply accepting Costa Mendez' speech at face value, but actually promoting it as evidence of a change of heart by the Argentine junta.

Mary-Alice Waters of the American Socialist Workers Party was in Havana at the time of the Non-Aligned meeting. Her report of the proceedings has since been featured by the SWP and in Socialist Challenge, which reflects the views of the British International Marxist Group.

She describes Costa Mendez' speech as "the high point" of the conference. With a mind-boggling naivete (or irremediable cynicism) she proclaims that:

"Ten months ago [Argentina's] military government was playing a central role in US imperialism's war against the peoples of Central America and the Caribbean. Today that same military junta is being forced to turn to the oppressed and exploited world over including Cuba and Nicaragua to appeal for support and solidarity against a powerful Anglo-US economic and military oppression."

This is doubly ridiculous: not only has the Argentine junta maintained its savage repression of the Argentine "oppressed and exploited", but it has not turned to the masses "the world over", simply to their repressive, reactionary and bureaucratic rulers in the Non-Aligned Movement.

Waters admits that only by emphasising "Argentina's common bond with the other semi-colonial countries" could Costa Mendez get away with it at all.

"Costa Mendez' unpromising speech made it nearly impossible for those delegations which were resisting adoption of a critical, anti-imperialist stance, to hide behind the excuse of the Argentine

junta's reactionary, pro-imperialist policies."

She offers an extended quotation from the speech (which is reprinted in full, without criticism in Intercontinental Press, the international journal of the 'United Secretariat'), and concludes that:

"Costa Mendez' words had the impact intended."

It is unlikely Costa Mendez fooled any of the delegates. But he certainly fooled the SWP and the IMG - who now apparently believe that Argentina has moved firmly into the ranks of "anti-imperialist" regimes.

Such a standpoint is both deluded and misleading. It fails to grasp the partial nature of the Argentine conflict with imperialism. It refuses to point out the cynical motivation of the Argentine junta's initial invasion of the Malvinas.

It fails to expose the meaningless play-acting of the so-called Non-Aligned Movement in which dictators and exploiters posture as "anti-imperialists", while Stalinists manoeuvre for diplomatic advantage.

And, in giving quite spurious progressive "anti-imperialist" credentials to the junta, such a position can only politically disarm the Argentine workers whose prime task remains now as before to organise their own power for the overthrow of the military regime and establishment of a workers' government.

The IMG had until now insisted that their position of defence of Argentina in the war did not mean support for the Galtieri junta. But the SWP attitude to the Costa Mendez speech, which the IMG echo, certainly throws this into question.

This would not be the first occasion on which the supposed "anti-imperialism" of a bourgeois regime was seized upon by the USFI as a basis for extending its political support: but it would perhaps be the least excusable.

Playing the non-aligned tune

Harry Sloan reviews the political quick change operation of the Argentine military chiefs over recent weeks, and asks how deep it really went.

"WHEN in Rome" the saying goes, "do as the Romans do". And when in Havana, it makes good sense to pander to the sensibilities of Fidel Castro's Stalinist regime.

So it was little surprise

to find that Argentine Foreign Minister Nicanor Costa Mendez put on a hastily-borrowed "anti-imperialist" outfit hired from a local political costumiers for his June 3 speech to a ministerial

meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Costa Mendez was looking for a motion of support for Argentina in its war with British imperialism. But he realised that

FLOOD NEC WITH RESOLUTIONS

Why do you think the witch-hunt is happening now?

OVER a long period the right wing has lost the battle for hearts and minds. They are incapable of presenting coherent policies and arguments which in any way inspire the rank and file members of the party.

So they are resorting to organisational and bureaucratic methods to foist a right wing majority on the Party. This is the latest of those attempts to re-win right wing control.

What do you think we should do in the next 3 months?

To begin with, as many constituencies, ward parties, women's sections and YS branches as possible should flood the NEC with resolutions condemning the witch-hunt, the proposal to set up a register of groups, and in particular the attacks on the Militant. And for the annual conference, parties which haven't submitted resolutions on the subject already should send in amendments opposing the witch-hunt.

And I think constituency parties and groups in the Party should make it clear now that they will not comply with the register, and that they will not be involved in any disciplinary action against those

AGAINST THE WITCH-HUNT

PETER TATCHELL spoke to Jo Thwaites about the plans for a register of groups in the Labour Party

whom the NEC may wish to expel.

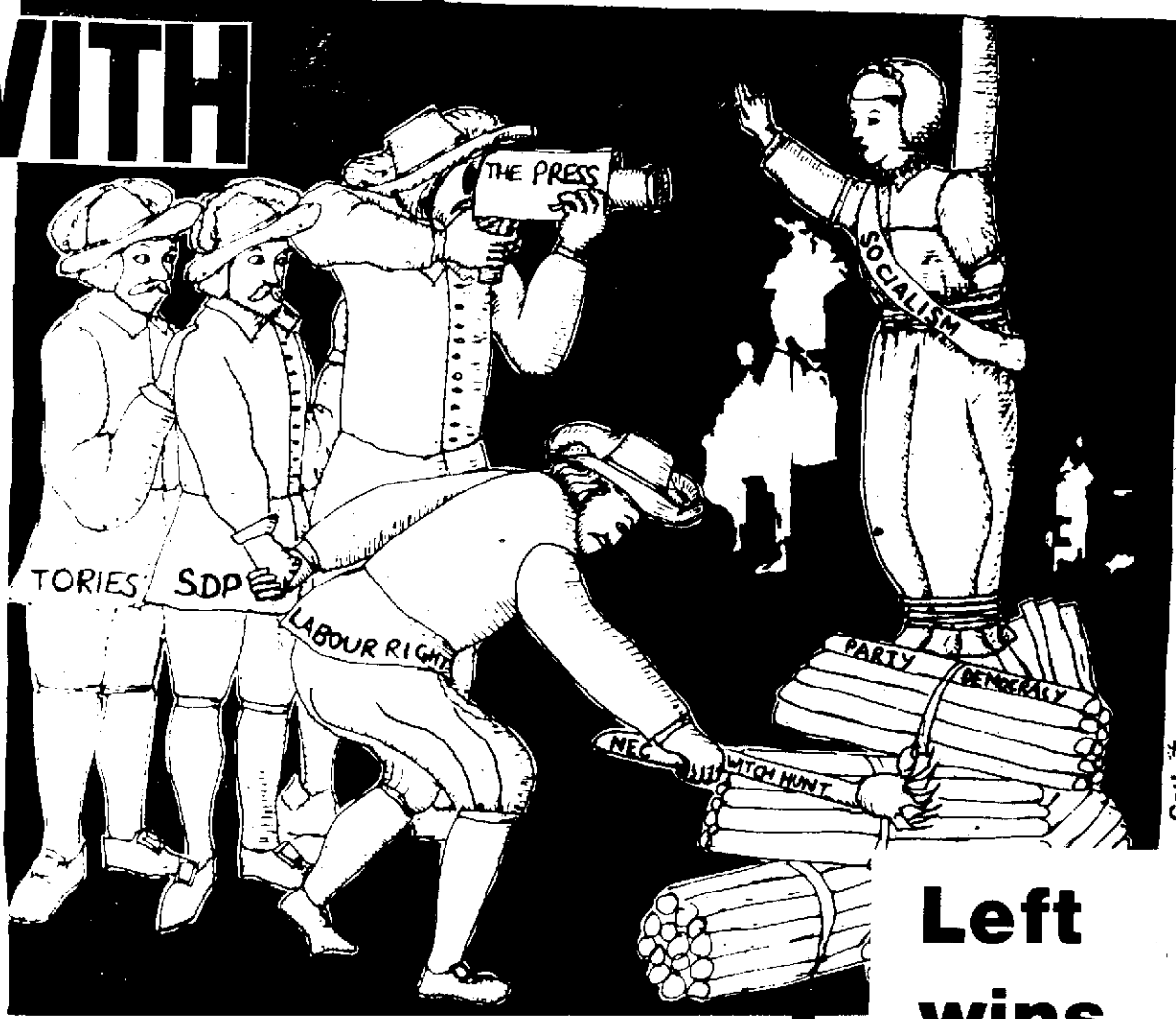
Do you think there should be a new type of Rank and File Mobilising Committee basing itself on the support you received from all over the country when the NEC refused to endorse you?

At the time of my non-endorsement and the announcement of the inquiry into Militant

around 300 resolutions were sent to the NEC from constituencies, plus a further 300 resolutions from local ward branches, women's sections and Young Socialists.

That total would provide a good base from which a campaign could be established. We need some kind of umbrella organisation to mount a fightback against the NEC's decision.

There's no doubt that



Left wins again

SUNDERLAND North GC have selected left winger Rob Clay as their prospective parliamentary candidate for the second time in nine months.

In the first vote, held back in October 1981, Clay was selected with a clear majority — only to be knocked back by the NEC. The reason given was that he didn't have two years' membership.

This two year guideline — and it is just that, a guideline, has been over ruled in a number of previous cases, most notably in the case of Jimmy Reid.

The conclusion is inescapable that Clay was blocked because of his left wing views, and no doubt the right both on the NEC and in Sunderland North hoped that their second bite at the cherry would be more profitable.

It is quite likely that attempts will be made to either block Clay again or at least attack him in the press. Four days after the October selection, right-wing councillor Joe McGrath was in the Sunderland Echo voicing his doubts about Clay.

However, the left majority in Sunderland North, which is heavily composed of delegates from the NUM and Boilermakers Union, have left no-one in doubt as to who is their choice.

LCC caves in

ONE PART OF THE Left has already buckled before the witch-hunt. The Labour Co-ordinating Committee, calling for an 'internal truce', has effectively accepted the proposal for a register.

Jon Lansman, a member of the LCC executive, told us:

"I think it's disgraceful. If the LCC aligns itself with such people as Stan Orme and Neil Kinnock, then as far as I'm concerned that's the end of the LCC."

"What I wrote a couple of weeks ago in Tribune applies with all the more force now:

"In my view the LCC has made decisions which will bring it into disrepute

on the Left, and which are totally unrepresentative of the membership

"The reason, it seems, is that the LCC executive is excessively influenced by a small group of people,

Open letter to Scots LCC

I AM writing to you on behalf of the local supporters of the newspaper Socialist Organiser, most of whom are also members of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, in relation to the urgent need for a united campaign by the Labour

mostly associated with Clause Four, who have on several occasions out-voted the well-established founders of LCC — Audrey Wise, Stuart Holland, and Michael Meacher."

Left against the current witch-hunt of the Militant.

Quite apart from an obligation on all left-wingers in the Labour Party and labour movement in general to defend Militant (whether one agrees with their policies or not) from the attacks of the Right, it is also clear that in the longer term this right-wing offensive is directed at the Left as a whole in the Labour Party, including the LCC itself.

It is therefore imperative for a united response by the Left to the current situation, and, in Glasgow/Scotland, in particular, we feel that the LCC should give a lead in organising that united response, especially in the light of the unequivocal opposition to witch-hunting expressed in the motion passed by the LCC (Scotland) at its AGM in Stirling at the close of last year.

Yours in Solidarity,
STAN CROOKE
(on behalf of Socialist
Organiser supporters,
Glasgow)

there is a significant majority on the NEC, in the PLP and in the Shadow Cabinet who are determined to see this witch-hunt through to its logical conclusion. The possible expulsion of Militant and the establishment of this register is only the thin edge of the wedge.

It will very quickly be extended to other groups. People will start saying that X may not be a supporter of Militant but look, they've got these ideas which are similar to Militant, they should be expelled as well.

The trade unions have a considerable influence at annual conference. What do you think trade union activists should be doing about the witch-hunt?

I hope that a lot of trade union branches will be sending in resolutions to the NEC. It is in the interest of trade unionists to make sure that the witch-hunt is stopped.

The witch-hunt is being initiated by the very people who were responsible for all the anti-trade union policies pursued by previous Labour governments.

If the witch-hunt succeed in the Labour Party there can be no doubt that there will be attempts to extend it to the trade union movement. The right wing axis in the trade unions will be trying to initiate similar expulsions and registers among their union membership as well.

I think the register is a back door for introducing a

proscribed list. It would establish a permanent list for Head Office of people whom they deem to be on the left and possibly undesirable.

We also need to defend the LPYS, although that isn't under direct attack yet. A campaign to defend the YS is an immediate and urgent priority because if the present witch-hunt was to extend to a banning or the closure of the YS it would be a major disaster for the Party.

I'd like to add something on the NEC. I've decided in consultation with local party members that I won't stand for the NEC this year. I believe that we need to maximise support for the left candidates to ensure they get home, in the face of a very determined right wing onslaught.

I appreciate that there are going to be some people who'll be disappointed — I had a lot of messages of support from constituencies round the country urging that I should stand.

I hope they will understand that in the current situation we need to unite around seven agreed candidates.

The main thing is that we get a full left wing representation on the constituency section of the NEC. Who the actual people are is of secondary importance, and I'm confident that the seven on the slate are good socialists who will uphold the right of constituencies

to choose their own parliamentary candidates.

A last word on the witch-hunt. Last year, when I was not endorsed by the NEC and when the Militant enquiry was first set up, it was interesting that one of the targets for special investigation with regard to the Militant was Bermondsey. And we've all noted with interest that Bermondsey has not been mentioned in the report of the current investigation into Militant!

There is a clear distinction between the struggle for accountability and socialist policies on the one hand, and on the other hand, the need to campaign and win the public to the alternative socialist programme of the Labour Party.

I think the two go hand in hand — one without the other is a pointless, meaningless exercise.

But to some extent I do agree with the view held by the LCC. I think that too many of us do spend too much time on internal party activities as opposed to public campaigning.

I would like to see every constituency party, every ward and every party member commit themselves to set aside at least one night a week for campaigning.

Frankly I think Michael Foot and the other members of the NEC and the PLP should give a lead in this direction. Instead of witch-hunting against the left, it wouldn't hurt them to go out on the doorsteps for two hours a week and set a good example to the rest of the party!

Bigotry at Labour club

HULME Labour Party (Manchester) members walked out of their meeting in Hulme Labour Club on Monday night June 21 and voted to boycott the Club, cancel all councillors' advice bureaux in the building and call on Manchester City Labour Party to immediately move their office out of the Club.

This protest action is the result of the refusal of the Club Committee to condemn an attack on two gay men which took place in the Club at an Election Night Social in May. The attack, which was entirely unprovoked, resulted in both men requiring hospital

treatment. The club, despite knowing who the assailant is, have refused to revoke his membership and bar him from the club.

Hulme Labour Club has a history of discrimination against gay people. In 1978 it attracted national publicity when it banned gay discos from taking place on its premises.

The Club Committee last week refused to issue a statement, requested by the Labour Party, condemning violent attacks on gay people, welcoming lesbians and gay men as members and guests and agreeing to accept book-

ings from gay organisations for meetings and social events, including discos.

Break

Ms. Karen Reissman, chairperson of the Party, commented after the Labour Party meeting:

"The Labour Party in Moss Side is totally opposed to all forms of discrimination and has a strong policy in support of gay rights. For four years we have attempted to change the policy of the club from within, and have got nowhere. We now have no choice

but to break all connections between the Party and the club until they stop discriminating against lesbians and gay men."

Having walked out of the club, the Labour Party reconvened its meeting at the Transport Club down the road. It will now organise a weekly picket of the club every Friday evening between 7.30pm and 9.00pm, and is calling for a Special Meeting of Labour Club members to overturn the decision of the Club Committee.

It is calling on all organisations who use the club also to boycott it until the policy is changed.

LABOUR CAMPAIGN FOR GAY RIGHTS
National Conference
Saturday 24 July, 1982
11 - 5.30 in Nottingham, at
Queen's Walk Community Centre, Meadows
Workshops on LCGR, Labour Party Discussion
document "The Rights of Gay Men and Women" —
"Is it enough?", plenary session and LCGR AGM.
Registration £2 waged, £1 unwaged. Conference open
to members and supporters of the Labour Party.
*Creche
*Facilities for disabled
*Crash pads (if booked in advance).
*Left bookstall
For more information write to LCGR, 21 Devonshire
Promenade, Lenton, Nottingham, NG7 2DS or phone
Chris Richardson, 0602 780124.

Women
in
struggle



'It's important we don't just sit in County Hall'

GLC Labour councillor VALERIE WISE talked to Jo Thwaites about the GLC Women's Committee

IT'S an enormous job we've set ourselves. We're going to cover all aspects of the GLC's activity.

One of the most important issues is employment. The GLC has set itself the target of creating jobs at the rate of 10,000 a year by the end of its four year term of office, and we have to make sure that women's jobs are a substantial proportion of that.

We'll have to make sure that there are adequate training opportunities, that child care facilities are available, that the hours and conditions of work are keyed into women's needs. We'll directly intervene where we can. In County Hall itself there is a staff committee with an Equal Opportunities adviser whom we'll work with very closely.

The GLC is of course an Equal Opportunities Employer but we have to make sure that they put it into practice.

The GLC's Women's Committee consists of seven Labour members and one Alliance — the Tories are boycotting it.

We have provision for co-options, and we want up to eight people co-opted. But I think that the co-



JOHN HARRIS

options themselves aren't that important. Usually it's the work you do before or for the committee that is most important.

Also I don't think that simply co-opting women from the Women's Liberation Movement is really liaising with the movement. Much more important is working with the campaigns and groups on the ground.

That's why the open meetings are so important.

We held the first one last month — 100 women turned up, there was a good response, and our next one is on July 9 at 7.30 at County Hall.

Maybe people will get fed up with big meetings, but I think they're really important at the beginning so there is a good flow of ideas into the committee.

There are problems with it becoming elitist as it can

be a bit self-selecting. But we're advertising the next meeting as widely as possible with leaflets and adverts in the free magazines they hand out at the Tubes for office workers as well as Tribune, Labour Weekly, City Limits and so on.

We want the work of the committee to reach women who aren't necessarily activists in the women's movement, though reaching those women is important too.

What was discussed at the Open Meeting?

The first open meeting decided to set up working groups on areas of policy we want the GLC to adopt — the idea is to produce a women's manifesto for London.

The GLC Manifesto was sadly lacking in policy on women and we want to do

that by September. Some people are saying that that's a colossal job to be achieved by September, but I don't think so.

There are many groups and campaigns which have been working for a long time and have a general idea of what needs to be done. If we can't do that quickly, then I wonder what we've been doing all these years in the women's movement!

On housing for instance, a group has already been working for sometime and the women in it are much better qualified to produce a policy statement than any new working group would be.

Of course it will be the Labour Group that decides on the policy in the end, but I don't expect any major differences.

The working groups include employment policy

for women in the GLC: child care; transport for women; education; planning; housing and health. There are 16 working groups altogether.

It's important also that an eye is kept on us from the women in the movement in London. I've not come up with a structure yet, but hopefully someone will at the second open meeting.

There has been a lot of talk about the huge amounts of money that the GLC Women's Committee has for giving out in grants to women's groups. Is this true?

Yes. We have been allocated £200,000 for grants to women's projects. That wasn't as much as we had asked for, but they've promised to review the situ-

ation after the summer recess.

I'm hopeful that we'll get more money. I would encourage groups and organisations to submit applications.

The closing date is the end of July — and it won't be done on a first come, first served basis. Applications will all be studied and we can give advice on how to make your case most effectively.

Also I'd like to make the point that women's groups shouldn't just apply to the Women's Committee. Part of the Women's Committee's work is to make sure that the other committees face up to their responsibilities.

For instance, last week the Industry and Employment committee made a grant of £24,000 to a Lewisham Women's unemployment group. All the other committees have a lot more money than we do and we shouldn't find ourselves in the situation where because there is a women's commit-

tee that all the applications for grants then just come to us.

We have to make sure that the GLC as a whole spends money on women's rights.

Is there a campaigning aspect to the Women's Committee?

Yes. We want to support existing campaigns like the Action Committee for a Woman's Right to Work, and we can also be the launch pad for new campaigns.

Last week we agreed on a statement in support of the health workers' pay claim and some of us went down to the picket lines at hospitals to back the day of action.

We sent that proposal on to the full Council from the women's committee and hopefully it'll go through.

I think it's important that we don't just sit in County Hall, but give active support to the health workers in their fight against low pay.

SACKED FOR BEING A LESBIAN

JUDITH Williams has been sacked from the home for adolescents where she worked as a houseparent for being a lesbian.

Judith had worked for the agency Care Concern in the home in Ruthin, Clwyd, for five months. She was well-liked by both staff and residents. She had just been recommended for promotion by her group leader. Even her boss admitted that her work was "excellent".

But her boss also added that Judith was " temperamentally unsuitable" — and asked her to resign. When Judith refused, she was sacked. Judith's lesbianism was the only cause.

Issues

It is important that cases such as Judith's and that of Susan Shell, sacked a year ago by Barking (Labour) Council for being a lesbian, are taken up in the labour movement, both for themselves and for the issues they raise inside trade union and Labour Party branches. An example of what I mean by this comes from a recent meeting of our Branch at which a motion of support for Judith Williams was on the agenda.

Both CPSA nationally and our branch have formal policies of opposition to any discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, and if the motion had merely been one of

principle there would have been no debate at all.

But because it was a concrete case of a gay person who worked with adolescents, there was strongly-voiced opposition from one member who raised sufficient doubt in the meeting to ensure that, though the motion was passed with a big majority, the number of abstentions was very high.

Children

This member's opposition rested on the fact that Judith was working with "children" — "vulnerable children", as he put it. From this, he argued that, first, the agency's concern when it sacked Judith must have been with the children. They would have been acting with the children's interests at heart, so who were we to interfere, not knowing the "real" facts of the case?

But second, he argued, the dangers had to be recognised. Gays, he said, must of course be "tolerated" — he had nothing against that. But "children", particularly children in care, are vulnerable and to have someone around possibly "steering" them in the direction of being gay is likely to cause them harm.

So, terrible though it may be for Judith to lose her job, she should not have been working there in the first place.

These arguments came

from a quite intelligent, quite "liberal" man, who probably would genuinely support someone sacked for being gay from any other kind of job. Nor was he so unsophisticated as to use the classic gay-bashing argument of implying that all gays are child-molesters.

What he could not cope with was the idea that "children" should be exposed even to the idea of being gay. He would not recognise that adolescence, precisely the time when, on an individual level, kids are discovering or creating their social and sexual identity, is precisely the time when they may well need to know about and to understand what being gay is.

Judith's case is being taken up widely in the labour movement. NALGO's National Conference passed an emergency motion instructing its members not to place any kids with Care Concern — a move that could threaten its existence.

Further information about Judith Williams and donations (URGENTLY NEEDED!!) Defend Judith Williams Campaign, 123 Greencroft Gardens, London NW6 3PE. Tel: 01-328 5007. The Campaign is jointly run by Gay Rights at Work Committee and Gay Welfare Workers Group.

BEN PLOUVIEZ
Secretary, CPSA British
Library (London)
Branch.

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Contact: Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group, 64 Philbeach Gardens, London SW5 (01-373 3492), or c/o National Union of Journalists, Acorn House, Grays Inn Road, London WC1 (01-837 9464).

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, OX6 5BZ.

Coventry PSC, John Fisher, c/o ASTMS, 26 Queens Rd., Coventry.

Labour Poland Solidarity Fund, c/o Cooperative Bank, 110 Leman St., London E1.

LONDON Workers' Socialist League educational on basic Marxism. New series starting soon. Write for details and registration to WSL, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

HULL Socialist Organiser meetings:

July 7: Hull Unemployed Workers' Union: organising the unemployed in Hull.

July 14: The Transitional Programme.

Details of venue etc from SO sellers.

OXFORD YOP Trainees' Union Rights Campaign conference on organising YOPs and the trade unions. Saturday July 10, 2pm to 4pm, Co-op Hall, Cowley Road, Oxford.

ISLINGTON Socialist Organiser: next meeting Sunday July 4, 3pm, Thornhill Neighbourhood Project, Orkney House, Caledonian Rd. Tea, coffee and sandwiches provided. For baby-sitting ring 607 5268.

IRISH PRISONERS in English gaols: national week-end of prison pickets organised by the Troops Out Movement.

Saturday July 10, 1pm:

Wakefield, Leicester, Long Lartin, Durham, Sunday July 11: Wormwood Scrubs 3pm, Gartree 1pm.

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.

ACTION Committee for a Woman's Right to Work: national meeting Saturday July 3, from 11am, at UMIST students' union, Manchester.

BLACK YOUTH conference organised by the Labour Party Young Socialists. Saturday/Sunday July 3/4, starting 11.30am, County Hall, London SE1.

CONFERENCE of Socialist Economists annual conference: Bradford University, July 16 to 18. Details: J. Macdonald, 20 Stanley Rd, Ormskirk, Lancs L39 2DH.

SMTWTFSS

WHAT'S
ON

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

INTERNATIONAL CO-OP Day festival: Sunday July 4, 2pm to 6pm, Jubilee Gardens, South Bank, London SE1.

TARGET 82/London Labour Briefing meeting on Witch-hunt/NHS dispute/Rail dispute. Monday July 5, 7.30, County Hall, London SE1.

ZIONISM: RED IN TOOTH AND CLAW

Harry Sloan sketches the history of Zionism — racist against the Arabs and a death-trap for the Jews

REFUGEES by the million; homeless by the hundreds of thousands, dead by the thousand: the toll of Palestinian and Arab victims of the violent Zionist regime in Israel continues to rise daily.

Yet a consistent and influential propaganda campaign conducted both by the Zionists and by their imperialist sponsors in Britain, USA, and internationally has ensured that in the eyes of many workers the state of Israel is still seen as a sort of "under-dog" surrounded by hostile and potentially genocidal Arab regimes.

What are the facts?

Since the fall of the Jewish state of Palestine in 70AD there had, until 1948, been only two periods in which the Jewish people had their own state. In the fifth century there was a state in the Yemen; and between the eighth and tenth centuries there was a Jewish state on the Lower Volga.

But the Jewish people had not as a result ceased to exist: far from it. Even before the Roman conquest some three-quarters of Jews lived outside Palestine.

Their widespread position as merchants, traders and moneylenders led them at first to an increasing economic role under feudal societies, but then increasingly into rivalry and conflict with the emerging bourgeoisies. Progressively the Jewish communities were subjected to ferocious attacks, their property and wealth confiscated, and expelled from all the western countries.



Theodor Herzl

It is no accident therefore that by the end of the nineteenth century the vast majority of Jews were living in the most economically backward, still heavily feudal countries of Europe — Eastern Europe, and especially Poland.

But the late 1800s brought profound social upheavals in Eastern Europe. Feudalism began to crack and decay — with no development of any dynamic native capitalism to take its place. The Jews, concentrated in the urban centres, found themselves caught in a vice.

Used as scapegoats by the landowners and non-Jewish capitalists, they suffered both the anger of poverty-stricken peasants seeking work and the aggression of the non-Jewish petty-bourgeoisie seeking to lever them out of a contracting market.

As a result there was a rising tide of anti-Semitism, producing riots and pogroms. In 1879 the German leader Bismarck launched an anti-Semitic campaign, followed by similar agitation in Austria, Russia and in France.

There were varied responses to this rising tide of attacks. Many Jewish people actively embraced revolutionary and socialist

politics seeking a fundamental change in society. Many others simply kept their heads down, hoping they would escape the violence.

But a third response was to seek escape from non-Jewish society altogether, to form a Jewish state. This notion was put forward in developed form by an Austrian Jew, Theodor Herzl, who had been appalled by the anti-Semitism in France at the time of the Dreyfus case.

Herzl's book, *A Jewish State* (1896) became the centrepiece of the modern Zionist movement. It focused the problem as locating a homeland for the Jews, in a situation where the imperialist powers had already carved up the world's habitable land space. After discarding a number of alternatives (including the vast territories of Argentina!) the preferred choice for this new "nation" was the ancient land of Palestine.

Zionism and imperialism

The fact that Palestine was already populated by a vast majority of non-Jewish people (500,000 Arabs to 24,000 Jews in 1881) did not trouble Herzl: but it did mean from its very inception the Zionist dream of a Jewish state required the active collaboration and participation of the imperialist powers.

To the imperialists in exchange Herzl and his co-thinkers offered the prospect of a pliant force in a potentially hostile Arab world.

"We should there form a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilisation as opposed to barbarism."

(Herzl, *A Jewish State*) This myth — of "civilising" Jews — enlightening "barbarous" Arab states — is still energetically fostered today: yet the attraction of the scheme then — as now — was that Herzl's offer to the imperialists coincided with a rise of Arab nationalism which meant that the imperialist leaders themselves were forced to contemplate new measures to control the Middle East.

The first congress of the Zionist Movement took place in Basle in 1897; by 1914 the movement of Jews into Palestine had raised the population to 85,000 — compared with 654,000 Arabs. This influx had taken place with the approval of the Ottoman Empire, of which Palestine was a province.

But in the conflicts of World War I the Ottoman Empire lined up against Britain and France. And

the British imperialists, heavily lobbied by Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann, and seeking to utilise the Jewish people as military and diplomatic support, issued in November 1917 the notorious 'Balfour Declaration'.

"His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people..."

Naturally the Palestinian people were not consulted over this issue: indeed at the time of its release Britain had no authority to hand over Palestine to anyone. But in 1922 the country was placed under British administration. The first High Commissioner was pro-Zionist Sir Herbert Samuel, and Jewish immigration continued to build up.

117,000 Jews entered Palestine between 1919 and 1931, when they made up 17.7% of the population. The Zionists set up their own Jewish National Fund, with the objective of purchasing land from Arab feudal landlords.

They then began evicting Arab tenant farmers. An organised campaign barred sales of Jewish lands to Arabs. Similarly policies of "Jewish labour" and "buy Jewish" set out to exclude the Arab majority from the Jewish sector of the economy.

Doors closed to Jews

By the 1930s Hitler's onslaught on the Jews in Europe brought a massive surge of immigration — as Jews found themselves barred from refuge in Britain and other imperialist countries.

Between 1932 and 1938 217,000 Jews entered Palestine, bringing the population in 1939 to 429,605 out of 1,500,000 — 28%.

This build-up of an imported, pro-imperialist, colonising population in Palestine did not take place without resistance.

There was harassment of Jewish settlements by dispossessed Palestinians in 1920-21. In 1929 there were more substantial confrontations, and a wave of strikes and street demonstrations in the 1930s culminated in the 1936-39 events — a 6-month general strike followed by a mass revolt in the countryside, which was savagely crushed by British troops backed by the Zionists.

Indeed the Zionist "state within a state" had developed from 1920 onwards its own army, the Haganah, used to defend Jewish property and in alliance with the British to repress and intimidate the Arab majority.

By 1937, the British in the throes of this struggle floated a scheme for the partition of Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state: this was rejected by the Zionists, who would accept nothing short of a Jewish Palestine.

Matters were then frozen by the start of World War 2, in which the British attempted to secure Arab support by restricting further Jewish immigration to 75,000 and imposing other curbs on the Zionists.

In was indeed during the war period that the hostility of the imperialist leaders to the Jews reached its peak. As Hitler's gangsters herded Jews into the concentration camps and extermination centres, the non-fascist countries of Europe and America closed their doors to Jewish immigration.

Decrees limiting entry of Jewish refugees from Nazism were passed in France, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Belgium. A 32-nation conference at Evian in July 1938 agreed that none

of the participants except the Dominican Republic could take in the victims of Nazism.

The USA, too, joined the restrictions. In 1943, when the exterminations reached their peak, the US restricted Jewish immigration to a total of only 4,705.

Only Palestine declared itself an open refuge for Jews — and there the quotas were imposed by British imperialism.

Britain and Zionism 1944-47

So while they joined the Allied war effort against the Axis powers, the Zionist leaders did so with great political reservation. They continued to protest at the quotas and the signs of an accommodation towards the Arabs.

By 1944 extreme right wing Zionists began terrorist actions against the British, whom they with sublime irony, now began to brand as "colonial oppressors".

The first organisation into the field of armed struggle against the British was the Irgun Zvai Leumi (National Military Organisation) — involving one Menachem Begin. The Irgun's at first "unofficial" struggle gathered strength at the end of the war when the Haganah also joined in the terrorist raids and assassinations.

In February 1947 the British announced they would withdraw from Palestine, and hand over responsibility to the UN. The UN in turn called for the partition of Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state, with international status for Jerusalem.

The Arabs however fought back against this carve-up of their lands imposed upon the majority (the 600,000 Jews were still only one-third of the Pales-

tinian population and owned only 10% of the land). In the UN's "Jewish" state, half the population would be Arab!

In the run-up to the British withdrawal of May 1948 a ferocious guerrilla war was waged by the Zionists with the aim of seizing additional territories not ceded to them by the UN, and driving out the native Palestinian population from the "Jewish" areas.

The Zionist forces were better armed (by the British) and better organised than the Palestinian resistance: and their brutality was horrific. Brutal raids led by the Irgun and other right extremists included the massacre of all 254 inhabitants of the Arab village of Deir Yassin. Before the British left, some 300,000 Arabs had been forced from their homes and become refugees.

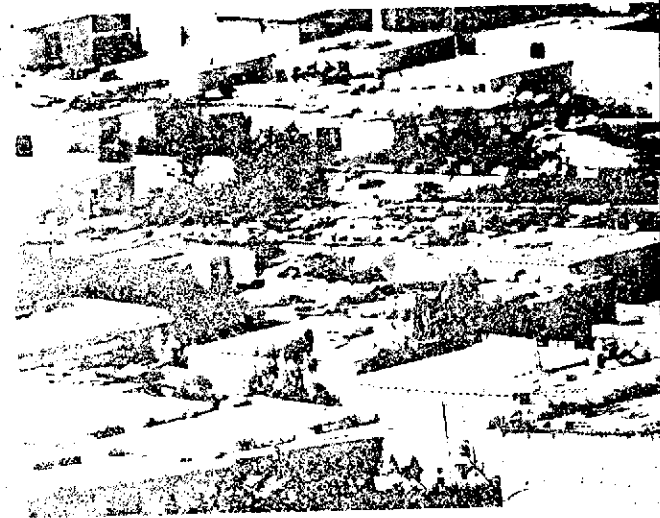
When regular armies of the surrounding Arab states moved in, attempting to safeguard the Arab areas, they were confronted and heavily defeated. The additional territory seized by the Zionists included the Arab cities of Jaffa, Acre, Ramleh, Lydda and Beersheba.

The number of Palestinian refugees rose to 750,000 — and despite undertakings made in 1949 to the UN, the Zionists refused to allow them to return to their homeland. On the other hand the racist 'Law of Return' of the Israeli state offers free immigration to any Jew from anywhere in the world.

COLONISATION

I believe that it is true Jerusalem do not want it there because they want it.

Moshe Dayan



Anti-Zionism is fuelled by imperialist exploitation of the Arab masses.



Palestinian refugee camp (above) and prisoners (right)



West Bank Arabs revolt against Zionist repression

In 1956 the Zionist military machine moved into action again — this time against Egypt (in agreement with Britain and France). Only under US pressure were Israeli forces subsequently withdrawn to the 1948 borders.

By the late 1960s there was a growth of Palestinian pressure on the Arab bourgeois governments — rising from the dispossessed and the oppressed in the refugee camps and within the Zionist state.

In 1967 a huge Israeli build-up triggered an Egyptian reaction: UN "peace-keeping" forces were withdrawn from the Gaza Strip and Sinai and a major blitzkrieg opened a new expansionist war which brought the seizure of all that was left of Palestine as well as the Sinai Peninsula and the South West corner of Syria.

The 'triumph' of Zionism

By this time the number of Palestinian refugees in exile had topped one million, with a further 540,000 refugees under Zionist occupation.

Yet the unbroken strength of the Palestinian militancy was demonstrated in the battle of Al-Karamah in the Jordan River Valley, where armed contingents forced back a substantial thrust by the Zionist army.

The further Arab/Zionist war of 1973 however once again confirmed the military superiority of the

that the Arabs of East annexed, but we are not

Israeli Minister of Defence, quoted in Davar, 10.8.1967

'But they are not human beings, they are not people, they are Arabs.'

David Hacohen, Israeli Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Knesset.

Zionist forces over the Arab states; the Zionists annexed Jerusalem and began planting military settlements in Palestinian territory on the West Bank.

Zionism has therefore largely achieved its mission: it has established a racially-exclusive Jewish state, red in tooth and claw from its decades of unremitting struggle to drive the native people of Palestine from their homes and land.

But the Zionists have never in a real sense been "under-dogs" in their self-allotted battle against the Arab people. They began as the chosen proteges of British imperialism; and since the war they have been able to count upon huge military and economic assistance from the imperialist nations — above all the USA.

The imperialists see the Zionist state as an assistant — albeit an unruly and volatile one — in the task of controlling the Arab regimes of the Middle East.

It is for this reason that despite what are seen as periodic embarrassing excesses by the Zionist leaders and occasional attempts by the US and other imperialists to pull them into line, Begin today knows full well that there is no way the flow of arms and aid will halt.

Nor will the occasional crocodile tears in the Tory press for the death toll in the Lebanon lead to any real exposure of the nature of the Zionist state and its myths.

The Zionists of course

claim that to oppose them is to be anti-Semitic; thus they try to equate the PLO with Hitlerism. Yet the fact is that most Jews are neither Zionists nor residents of Israel: and Zionism is a political expression of a particularly virulent form of colonialism whose own logic is genocide — against the Palestinians.

Zionist theory itself is in fact heavily racist in tone and content. Not only is this the case in relation to the Arabs, but also in terms of non-Jewish whites.

Leo Pinsker, a precursor of political Zionism, proclaimed that anti-semitism is a disease.

"Judophobia is then a mental disease; and as a mental disease it is hereditary; and having been inherited for 2,000 years, it is incurable."

Theodor Herzl himself made no secret of the fact that Zionism is in effect an acceptance of anti-semitism which he sees as "futile" and "empty" to combat.

Zionism and anti-semitism

Indeed anti-semitism — and the fear of it — has even been exploited quite cynically by the Zionists themselves in the hopes of stampeding Jews into Israel.

Thus in 1950 and 1951 a series of outrages were directed against the Iraqi Jewish community. These ranged from assaults on rabbis to the bombing of Jewish shops, businesses and cafes as well as a synagogue.



RACISM

'We must ask ourselves: What sort of Israel do we want? I say: A Jewish Israel, with no question marks and no doubts. A Jewish Israel, without the daily fear whether the minority now constitutes 50 per cent or not.'

Golda Meir, Israeli Prime Minister, quoted in Davar 6.6.1969

But it has been proved that they were carried out by Israeli agents, in league with some Zionist supporters, and with cover provided by Britain.

The Zionists, in line with view of anti-Semitism, claim that the Palestinians wish to smash their state and drive the Jews into the sea.

Yet the Palestinians are committed only to the destruction of the discriminatory state which denies rights to Palestinians (and which also discriminates against Jewish workers of non-Jewish origin).

The Jews have certainly suffered genocidal attacks — but rarely at the hands of Arabs. Until 1967 for instance, Jewish communities lived at peace in many Arab states including Egypt. Arab opposition to Israel is an opposition both to Zionist atrocities and to imperialist exploitation which keeps the Arab masses in crippling poverty while the US oil monopolies suck out the national wealth of their countries — and feed back subsidies to the Zionist military machine.

This same top-heavy state structure also places a huge extra burden upon the backs of the Jewish working class. Indeed the Zionist state has not fulfilled any of its promises to workers.

While its capitalist class grows fat and prosperous, plunging its armed forces again and again into war, Jewish workers contend with poverty, inflation, unemployment and (for non-Europeans) racism.

They also bear the brunt of the incessant military action which is the only way this voracious colonialist state can protect itself against the antagonised Arab masses.

The Zionists claim that it is they who "made the desert bloom", and who

have raised living standards for all in the region. Yet they fed at first off British imperialism and wealthy Jews in Europe, and have profited ever since from huge allocations of foreign aid.

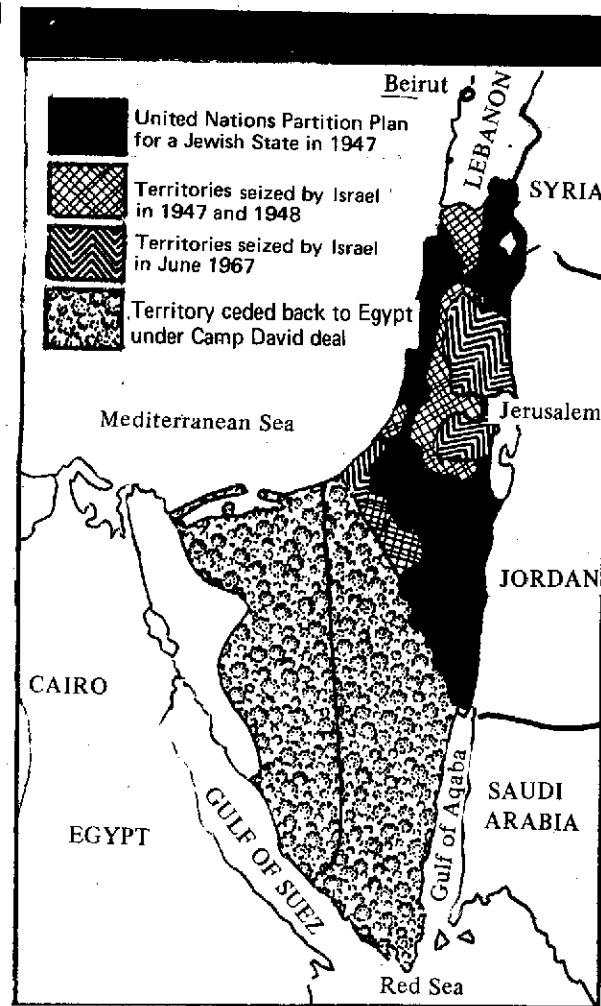
In 1968 Israel received 10% of the aid to all underdeveloped countries — the equivalent, in proportion to its population of 20 times the aid to any state in the 'Third World'. Its military machine and entire economy are totally dependent on US subsidies, and its technology is the spin off of the advanced Western economies.

In any event the wealth thus accrued is of little benefit to the super-exploited Palestinian people held as a captive workforce in Israel — still less the 2,285,000 refugees in exile.

The claim that Israel is a "democracy" is rendered farcical when we recall that



Daily violence is the means to preserve minority rule



3,000,000 Jews now control the whole of Palestine (as well as parts of Syria and Egypt) while 4,000,000 Arabs are deprived of the most basic rights.

And adverts suggesting that the Israeli yellow "union" confederation the Histadrut and Labour Party are evidence of a freely functioning labour movement will ring hollow when we recall that the Zionist Histadrut dates back to 1920 and the first struggles to dispossess the Palestinians and is also the country's largest employer. The Israeli Labour Party has played a shameless and active role in promoting Zionist expansionism.

It was Labour leader Golda Meir who declared with arrogant racism that: "It was not as though there was a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them. They did not exist."

(1969) What then is the solution to the Palestinian problem? If the racist state of Israel must be overthrown does this not mean that the Jews must be driven out?

On the contrary, the overwhelming military predominance of the Zionists, the weak position of the Palestinian refugees, and the isolation of the Palestinian working class

in Israel means that the defeat of Zionism cannot seriously be contemplated without a struggle to mobilise the Jewish working class in the struggle against their own capitalist rulers.

And with their fellow "Zionists" exploiting them to the hilt, the capitalist land of Zion is no dream solution for Jews, while it is hell for the Palestinians.

It is from this standpoint that it is necessary not simply to map out demands for the right of return for Palestinian people, and the formation of a secular, democratic state for both Arabs and Jews, but to couple these to the socialist demands of working class revolution.

And at the same time Palestinian militants in exile should be energetically fighting alongside left wing forces for socialist revolution in the other Arab regimes of the Middle East.

To the barbarism brought by the Zionists to the Middle East, and the servile support for capitalism exhibited by bourgeois Arab regimes, it is necessary to counterpose revolutionary policies which through the development of a Socialist United States of the Middle East can offer a material basis for the co-operation and development of Arab and Jewish workers.

Socialist Organiser AGM

Link the struggles against Tories

Martin Thomas reports on the Socialist Organiser Alliance AGM

"FAR from seeing everything as separate campaigns, we can build an organisation that links up the struggles".

Anna Lunts, a NUPE shop steward at Prestwich Hospital, Manchester, concluded the Socialist Organiser AGM last weekend by calling on SO supporters to turn out to the rail and health workers' struggles.

We should help on the picket lines, distribute the 'Health Workers for the Full Claim' bulletins, sell badges, and produce strike leaflets, she said.

"But I hope nobody is going to put up a tent on the picket lines and forget about the Labour Party. We have to link together the Labour Party and the industrial struggle — turn the Labour Parties outwards."

Referring to an earlier debate on SOA priorities, Anna told the AGM: "The priority of priorities is the class struggle".

The AGM had been opened by contributions from Steve Good (Kings Cross ASLEF), Andrea Campbell (COHSE), and a London Transport worker, on the current struggles. On the Saturday and Sunday afternoons, there were several workshops, some of which we report on these pages. The major plenary discussions were on a general perspectives document — 'Organising the Left', published in SO 89 — a priorities resolution and the Labour Party witch-hunt.

Andrew

Hornung

successfully proposed an emergency resolution of solidarity with the Palestinians fighting back against Zionist slaughter in Lebanon. A resolution moved by Colleen Molloy committed the SOA to a programme of solidarity with the new non-racial unions in South Africa.

Bob Sutcliffe, reporting back from the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights workshop, put the question: why do so few non-gay comrades introduce resolutions in the labour movement on gay rights? Why do they feel inclined to start anything they say on the question, "I am not gay, but..."

Rachel Lever introduced the discussion on the witch-hunt. The sharp point of the struggle, she said, would be in the local Labour Parties; in the end the CLPs will decide whether to defy the witch-hunt or to purge 'unregistered' socialists.

CLPs must be committed to defiance. And it is also 'really important to mount a campaign in the trade unions to say that this is not just a tidying-up, it is a witch-hunt'.

Although the SOA is small, it can do irreplaceable work. In the struggles over the last few years, said Rachel, "we have played a significant role in keeping the left on course. We must continue to do that."

The same theme was taken up in John O'Mahony's introduction on 'Organising the Left'. "Socialist Organiser must take the lead in the fight-

back against the witch-hunt. If recent events have shown one thing, it is the uselessness of the soft left.

"There will be pressure to keep our heads down. There will be leftists saying, 'We're all right, we control our local Labour party, why do we need to organise a national campaign'..."

Pete Keenlyside from Manchester moved reference back of the section in 'Organising the Left' on the fight to make the next Labour government a workers' government, on the grounds that it did not distinguish clearly between a workers' government and an old-style left Labour government.

John O'Mahony conceded that the section was indeed unclear, and the reference back was carried.

Debate

The other major debate on 'Organising the Left' was on the document's statement that some Labour leftists in local government — notably former Lambeth council leader Ted Knight — had turned out as 'cynical traditional fakers'.

Jeff Slee from Lambeth proposed unsuccessfully that this description be removed: it was exaggerated and could isolate SO from many activists who support Ted Knight. On many issues other than rates and cuts, Ted Knight is with us.

John O'Mahony replied, "If people use Marxist phrases six days a week,

then how the knee on the seventh day when it comes to a clash, then they are fakers. That they use Marxist rhetoric makes it worse, not better.

"There will be pressure to think: why do we need the SOA when we have leftists like Ted Knight leading the London Labour Party. And we must resist it."

The conference was attended by SO supporters from all over the country, as well as representatives of several campaigns invited to contribute workshops and bookstalls: the CLPD, Health Workers for the Full Claim, Labour Campaign for Gay Rights, Labour Committee on Ireland, Leyland Action Committee, London Labour Briefing, National Left Wing Youth Movement, National Unemployed Workers' Movement, Polish Solidarity Campaign, Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group, and Turkish Solidarity Campaign.

A new Secretariat was elected: Jonathan Hammond (chair), John Bloxam (secretary), Jenny Fisher (treasurer), Martin Thomas (editor), Alan, Clinton, Alasdair Jamison, Mick Jarman, Maura Jones, Rachel Lever, Steve McArthur, John O'Mahony.

Final note to witch-hunters: the AGM was completely open to observers from trade union branches and Labour Parties. Copies of AGM documents can be obtained from SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.



JOHN HARRIS

Fighting Tebbit

Wendy Mustill reports from the workshop on union rights

THE workshop agreed that the main priority for the Mobilising Committee in the immediate future was to work round the health and rail disputes. Instead of just propagandising around what is still perceived by the majority of workers as an abstract issue, the Mobilising Committee must:

*Emphasise the importance of practical solidarity action in support of the rail and health workers.

Solidarity action is essential for the success of the health service and rail pay campaigns. Such 'secondary' action is of course already unlawful under Prior's 1980 Employment Act.

*Relate the significance of Tebbit's Bill to the practical experience of workers

supporting the health and workers.

*Argue for the widest possible strike action on July 19, the start of the next TUC-co-ordinated NHS strike. Provide the political arguments which link Tebbit's attack to struggles taking place now.

*Start to build for a one-day strike in September when the bill becomes law, as a step to all-out action when the first injunction is taken out.

*Expose the arguments of the TUC's publicity documentation which is based on a consensus view of industrial relations and not on a class analysis.

*Raise the demand for solidarity strikes on July 19 to be also strikes against Tebbit's Bill.

Leaflets will shortly be available from the Mobilising Committee relating Tebbit's Bill to the NHS and rail disputes, for use on picket lines, factory and Labour Party meetings, etc.

The situation is currently very fluid. An upsurge in militant action in the immediate future could soon result in Prior's Act being put to the test.

Although Thatcher has until now been turning a blind eye to mass secondary action and picketing, the government will come under strong pressure to implement the existing legislation.

Already the media is bleating about the uselessness of laws which dare not be used. Even if the British Rail Board or Area Health Authorities are reluctant to act against secondary action/pickets, outside suppliers may not be so hesitant.

SO supporters should be prepared for a rapid escalation of activity against Tebbit should such an injunction be issued during the rail strike in particular.

The relative demoralisation of the past three years could easily evaporate and turn into its opposite — a national movement for strike action against both Prior and Tebbit's laws as part of growing solidarity with the health service and rail workers.

The willingness exists. The Mobilising Committee must now respond by linking theory to practice.

OUR WEEKLY PAPER

Maura Jones and Pete Allen report on the workshop discussing the paper



JOHN HARRIS

MARTIN Thomas outlined the problems of producing a socialist newspaper on a low budget and with limited staff at a workshop at the Socialist Organiser AGM in Lancaster Polytechnic.

The useful discussion that followed raised a number of salient points.

One major point of criticism which had much support at the workshop, concerned the style of

writing in much of the paper. It was widely felt that articles are often too lengthy and are written in the language of theoretical journals, rather than that of an agitational weekly newspaper aimed at the working class. (One SO comrade had calculated that the reading age of the newspaper was for those of post-graduate achievement).

Many of the longer articles presuppose a large amount of preliminary knowledge — the bulk of Socialist Organiser's potential readership has neither a social science degree nor a detailed schooling in the works of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky and the rest.

It was also suggested that political debate and disagreements should not

be confined to the letters page; readers should be encouraged to express their opinions in articles as well.

Few women contribute regularly to the paper. A more vigorous policy of positive discrimination should be practiced by local SO groups in allocating branch reports, etc. Also more labour movement campaigns (national and international) should be encouraged to write regular columns.

Some positive discussions arising from the meeting for local groups to discuss for a future delegate meeting included:

1) SO to hold a weekend school for those interested in writing for the paper to discuss questions of lay-out (is the typeface too small? Are the articles too crammed?); focussing the readers attention (Is it an effort to read some articles after the first paragraph, not because of the content but because the reader hasn't been immediately stimulated); use of photographs, etc.

2) More contentiously, it was suggested that many of the longer theoretical articles would be better suited to a (bi)-monthly journal and that Socialist Organiser, perhaps reduced in size and price, should concentrate on its agitational role, expressed in clear, concise, easily understood language.

Contact: Mobilising Committee for the Defence of Trade Union Rights, c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL

Socialist Organiser Alliance

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Socialist Organiser

LABOUR must act to STOP THATCHER'S WAR

BLAME MILITARY World The World Unite

JOHN HARRIS

Socialist Organiser Alliance secretary John Bloxam introduced a report on the SOA's work

Bulletins for workplaces

Lol Duffy, a Boilermakers' shop steward at Cammell Laird, reports on the factory bulletins workshop

AT this workshop, people involved in Leyland Action, Longbridge and Lairds bulletins were represented, as well as comrades from Vauxhalls and other workplaces.

The discussion was about the need for industrial bulletins to support the work of SO supporters in various industries.

Comrades from the car industry wanted to build up to a trade bulletin across the various firms and throughout the country.

But first we need to establish local bulletins where we have supporters.

The SO bulletins often represent the only real information that rank and file workers receive about what was going on in their committees and workplaces. This does not mean that SO bulletins replace shop stewards bulletins and these should still be fought for.

SO bulletins also put across the politics of SO, backing up our comrades'

work within the industries rather than being counterposed to doing this work.

There were copies of Leyland Action, Longbridge, Lairds, Sheffield Rail and Sheffield Miners' bulletins for comrades to see at the workshop.

Coordination

But we felt that there should be more co-ordination between all the bulletins so that information

contained in one could be of use to the others.

It was agreed that each area producing a bulletin should send 30 copies to SO so that it can be circulated to the areas and be used in the paper.

We felt that despite the big effort involved, comrades should push for more bulletins, as they can greatly increase the influence of Socialist Organiser in industry.

Islanders in the way of imperialism

Tony Richardson reviews the World In Action programme on Monday 21st - "Britain's Other Islanders"

THIS programme was about the removal of the population of Diego Garcia by the British government to make way for an American Naval and Bomber base.

The events took place in 1971 but the details were only discovered in 1975 by an American Senator.

The islands were dependencies of Mauritius and the native population of Diego Garcia were the Ilois.

The US government was looking for a base in the Indian Ocean and the British government gave them Diego Garcia in exchange for \$14 million off their Polaris Bill.

They could have used another of the islands but that was populated by Giant Tortoises and they didn't want to remove them.

The retired US Navy chief said that the base is the most important outside of the five continents and Pearl Harbour.

This is shown by the fact

that the Americans have just spent \$2 billion expanding it.

The 1,200 islanders were removed because, as the ex-Navy chief explained, it was better to have no indigenous population because "Russia would not take advantage of them."

The British government told the Americans that they were all migrant workers, but the programme clearly showed they had been there for at least four or five generations. The Ilois were given 15 days to get out and they could only take their clothes and a few possessions.

They ended up dumped in the slums of Port Louis in Mauritius.

Ever since then they have been fighting for compensation. After some years they got an offer of £650,000, then in 1979 this was increased to £1¼ million. This was followed by riots not shown on TV at the time, at which Thatcher's effigy was burned.

Gradually the offer was increased to a final one, made in 1981, of £4 million. In exchange for this the Ilois signed away their rights.

The new government recently elected in Mauritius this week announced the formal opening of a campaign to reclaim Diego Garcia.

Asked why the British government took such an obviously different stance to that of the Falkland Islands, Robin Cook MP replied it could only be because the Ilois were 'racially different' i.e. they are black.

This is obviously correct. But there is more. The Falklanders were not burning effigies of Thatcher. The Ilois did not want to be British, they just wanted to live on their own island.

One old man, asked whether money could compensate, replied "No, we can never forget".

The Mauritius government is not strong enough to drive the Americans out and the world's courts are controlled by the capitalists.

It will be up to the world working class to rectify the injustices to the Ilois and the countless other populations that have been displaced by imperialism because they were in the way.

Supporting Polish fight

Jo Quigley reports on the 'Poland' workshop

STEVE Murray, editor of the Polish Solidarity Campaign News, stressed the vitality of Solidarity despite the continuing military repression.

More than a thousand illegal publications flourish in Poland. Warsaw, with a 50,000 strong demonstration probably had the distinction of holding Europe's largest May Day march. And the 15 minute strike supported by 75-80% of Warsaw's factories showed that Jaruzelski has failed in Poland where Pinochet succeeded in crushing the working class in Chile.

From many factories the Solidarnosc underground resistance is under pressure to organise a general strike. For Socialist Organiser groups to win support and understanding in the trade unions in Britain before the Polish workers clash again with their brutal, bureaucratic rulers is a most pressing task.

Steve Murray also urged the importance of selling 'PSC News' in the trade unions. It is one of very few publications (and the only one specifically aimed at the trade unions) with reliable, up to date, and extensive information on Poland.



The Polish Solidarity Campaign was launched in August 1980 literally a few days before the Gdansk agreement was signed. Its first success was its involvement in securing from a reluctant TUC recognition of Solidarity.

Insisting that solidarity with Solidarity was its overriding objective, the campaign refused to allow organisations of either right or left to impose conditions before support was forthcoming.

WOMEN ORGANISING

WOMEN'S liberation issues and activities did not figure in the AGM as largely as perhaps they should. But the priorities resolution passed by the AGM stressed: "By their very nature women's liberation issues interact and overlap with practically all activity. Specific attention to these issues, to Women's Fightback activity, etc., is therefore a bedrock essential for SO groups."

A policy document on 'Women and the SOA', first passed in May 1981 and amended since, commits the SO groups:

- *to operate positive discrimination,
- *to affiliate to Women's Fightback, to help sell the WF paper, and to seek joint work with WF,
- *to organise regular baby-sitting rotas to enable comrades who have babies or young children to look after to attend meetings,

Gay Caucus

At a workshop introduced by the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights, a Socialist Organiser gay caucus was launched.

Comrades interested can contact it c/o Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL,

*to organise educationals on women's liberation; and to organise educationals on general socialist theory run by women SO supporters for women SO supporters.

The priorities document stressed the importance of putting this into practice.

Organise against fascists

THE call by Coventry Trades Council for a national labour movement anti-racist / anti-fascist organisation was at the centre of discussion in the anti-racist / anti-fascist workshop.

Such an organisation could mobilise militants from all areas to counter fascist or racist threats.

And it could educate the labour movement about what fascism is and initiate debate as to how best to confront fascist violence.

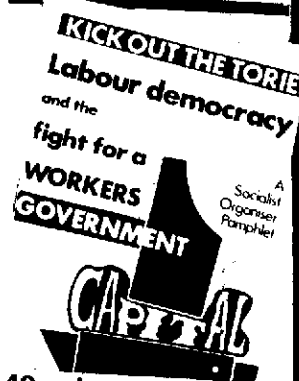
The black youth conference organised by the Labour Party Young Socialists on July 3-4 will be another chance to argue for this national anti-fascist organisation, and for the

role black youth could play in it.

'Asian Labour Alliances' were discussed: they were seen as an important step forward, and the need for coordination was stressed.

The workshop also called for local SO groups to be more active in anti-racist anti-fascist work.

Piyushi Kotecha



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

by Davy Jones

DON'T SCIENCE DRINK THE WATER!

A few weeks ago the Science column reported on the hazards of lead in petrol. Recent information from Italy and the USA suggested that at least a third of lead in the blood comes from lead additives to petrol, which leaves the question of where the other two-thirds comes from?

One source is lead from water pipes. In soft water areas, which include the whole of Scotland, Wales, Ireland, the West Country, the North-West and parts of the North-East of England (and cities which get their water from these areas) the slightly acidic water dissolves lead from pipes.

Although lead is no longer used for water pipes, sufficient of the old pipes remain to make drinking water an important source of lead pollution. According to a report a few weeks ago in the Western Mail, of Cardiff, the entire water supply of Wales would fail to meet proposed EEC standards limiting the lead content of domestic water supplies. No doubt other soft water areas have the same problem.

Now, scientists working at the Water Research Centre have reported that even new houses, with copper piping, can have dangerously high lead levels in their drinking

water. Joints in the copper pipes are usually made using lead solder.

Although the amount of lead in contact with the water is tiny compared with lead pipes, the fact that the two metals are in contact with a weakly acidic water results in a primitive electrolytic battery being formed. The nett result is that despite the small amount of lead in contact with the water, it dissolves much more readily than the lead in an ordinary lead pipe.

Dose

In an attempt to replicate the conditions under which lead solder is used in domestic water pipes, the Water Research Council scientists produced lead levels of up to 6,000 micrograms per litre, 120 times the limit recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO). And in samples taken from an ordinary house, levels of four times the safe dose were found.

Devon County Council have banned the use of lead solder in drinking water supplies after finding levels five times the WHO limit in a school in Bideford and seven times the limit in a block of flats for the elderly and disabled in Brixham. Despite the growing

evidence that even small doses of lead affect intellectual ability, and the implication of lead in still births and congenital malformations, the Department of the Environment, for whom the research was carried out, have sat on the report for a year.

They do not plan to implement its recommendations for a ban on lead solders, and their replacement with tin/silver solders and compression fittings, yet 70,000 houses are built annually in soft water areas. The great bulk of them have lead soldered, copper pipes.



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

PUMPING OUT THE PROFITS

Noel Hibbert asks: where is all the money from North Sea Oil going to?

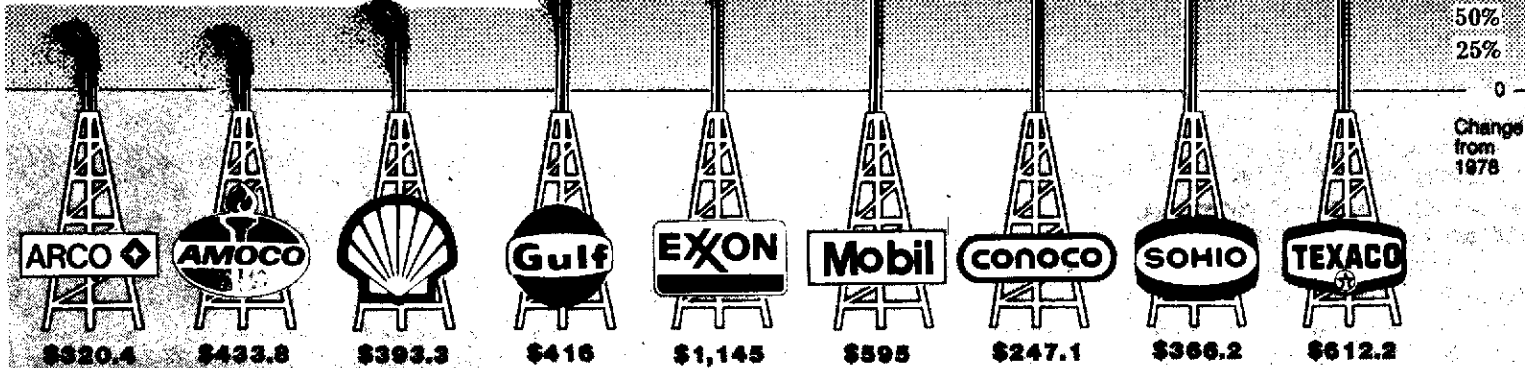


IN ten years time workers may well look back on the Thatcher government and say — "Whatever happened to all that money from North Sea Oil?"

At first heralded as the saviour to halt Britain's economic decline, North Sea Oil has simply become a monumental slush fund into which the snouts of the international financiers have been plunged at will in order to pay for the relocation of factories and refineries from "high-wage" Britain to the underdeveloped parts of the globe.

For whilst North Sea Oil has been undergoing a phenomenal boom, making the UK self sufficient in oil and exporting 60% of production to the USA, Britain's petro-chemical refining industry has been starving to death from chronic shortages of naphtha and ethane, which are the basic feedstocks for producing chemicals and plastics and that are derived from crude oil.

1979: US petroleum profits were a major scandal in the wake of Carter's "fuel crisis"



demand for oil-based products. Demand for petro-chemical commodities fell by 10% between 1973 and 1980 whilst petrol consumption increased. Last year, consumption was £13.4 million barrels a day, and though no great expansion of demand is expected in Europe, the industrialisation drives predicted for the Third World during the latter eighties certainly offer the prospect of recovery.

These developments have also been compounded by changes in the pattern of demand for oil products away from the heavier end of the barrel (fuel and gas) towards the lighter crude oil (e.g. North Sea oil) that is, ironically, the staple diet of most UK refineries. Such events though, have not stopped Britain moving into fourth position in the world oil producers' league.

In the last six months alone refinery closures have taken place at Ellesmere Port (Burmah — 100 jobs gone), the Isle of Grain (BP — 1700 down the road); and just recently ICI, after already closing five chemical plants, issued a death warrant for the giant Wilton refinery on Teesside (1000 jobs lost).

Similarly, after reducing the Shellhaven site to a veritable graveyard, Shell

(UK) are saying that 2000 jobs may well have to go at the massive Carrington complex in Manchester.

Why is this happening when Britain has more oil than it knows what to do with?

Ray Attwell, a former leading TGWU member at the AKSO Chem site in Rochdale summed it up well:

"It's like having a massive blood bank packed to the ceiling with reserves, and then having scores of people down the road dying from lack of blood transfusions. But there's a sicker side to the story than this."

"Imagine the ambulance drivers who deliver the blood nipping off to the States and flogging the merchandise on the cheap. This is what is going on in the oil and chemical industry."

"Thatcher is so much of a patriot that the profits from North Sea oil are not even ending up in British gaffers' pockets. No, Thatcher is well in with Reagan and the Yanks are crafty."

War

"They are buying 60% of our oil and are storing it as a 'strategic reserve' in dried up wells in the USA in the eventuality of a new war."

"While British workers extract the oil from the North Sea, the American workers are putting it back into the ground again. If that doesn't sum up the absurdity of the system we've got then I don't know what does."

Thatcher's monetarist strategy does not provide an economic framework for the regeneration of British capital. Of course the Tories' project entails the breaking up of the strength of organised labour, but it is not the case that the practical measures the government have taken have girded UK capital for effective competition against its overseas competitors.

On the contrary, the

government have placed their own social class in an increasingly subordinate position in relation to international capital.

We say this not to lay the groundwork for arguing for the refutation of British capitalism through the autarchic policy of import controls initiated by a Left Labour Government. Just the opposite, in fact, we are making two major strategic points.

Firstly that Thatcher's orientation — even if it did succeed in breaking the back of working class resistance — would stand no chance of reclaiming the old glories for UK capital precisely because its policy strengthens the Bonn-New York-Tokyo axis over which UK capital has marginal influence.

And secondly, we are maintaining that only a workers' government committed to a policy of a fundamental transformation of class forces in society and linked to an internationalist perspective could stand any chance of reversing Britain's historic, economic and social decline; propelled as such a government would be, by a mass mobilisation of human resources.

Moreover, the Tories' handling of the North Sea oil and petro-chemical industries is a classic example of them giving primacy to foreign capital. Indeed the cancer of "privatisation" has now spread well beyond the arena of Tory councils selling council houses — right into Britain's economic heartlands.

Consider the following: *By deliberately forcing down the value of the pound against the dollar, and recognising that all oil is traded in US greenback dollars, Thatcher's Surrey based businessmen have been forced to pay higher sterling prices for oil. This is a major factor that has made it more profitable for the bosses to export North Sea crude rather than seek to refine it in the UK.

*By liberalising the

market (BNOC) the Tories have opened up the UK's colossal oil and gas reserves not "to the laws of the market" but to the massed formations of banking consortiums emanating from the leading capitalist metropolises, who will doubtless gobble up the ownership and control of the oil reserves to further stabilise the existing division of capital in the West.

*By refusing to build the gas gathering pipeline, and hence make the UK self-sufficient in gas, the monetarists have made the economy even more dependent on overseas purchases. It is estimated that the UK economy lost \$500 million last year because of the refusal to pipe North Sea gas ashore.

And even more absurdly, there is substantial evidence that multinationalals may well pipe the gas off elsewhere.

Significantly, the reasons for ICI, the UK's largest manufacturer, closing the Wilton plant on Teesside, is a direct product of the government's connivance with overseas multinationalals (in this case Shell and Esso) in refusing to build the gas pipeline.

The latter would have been ICI's only mass source of cheap Ethane, a necessary feedstock for

chemical production, but the fact that Shell and Esso spent money "persuading" the government not to build the pipeline — eventually had the desired result.

Now ICI will be squeezed out of its last remaining domestic markets, with a consequent escalation in redundancies. Needless to say, Shell and Esso have their own private gas pipeline from the Brent Field that will pump cut-price Ethane into Esso's giant new Mossmoran plant in Scotland.

ICI's only serious chance of competition would have come from the Gas Gathering Pipeline. But the government, "patriotic to the core", supported Esso and Shell's policy, thus accelerating the outflow of capital from the UK.

In 1980 nearly 50% of North Sea oil was exported, and the proportion of North Sea oil being put through UK refineries has fallen from 57% in 1977 to 49% last year and to a paltry 45% in the first six months of 1982. Thus instead of creating jobs in UK refineries, the bosses have redirected North Sea crude to 'low cost' non-unionised plants abroad.

Admittedly the recession has combined with the oil price increases of 1973 and 1978 to depress the

Cheaper

Moreover, UK based international companies like Shell Chemicals are selling the same commodities cheaper abroad than in the UK. Take automotive diesel products, they sell as follows:

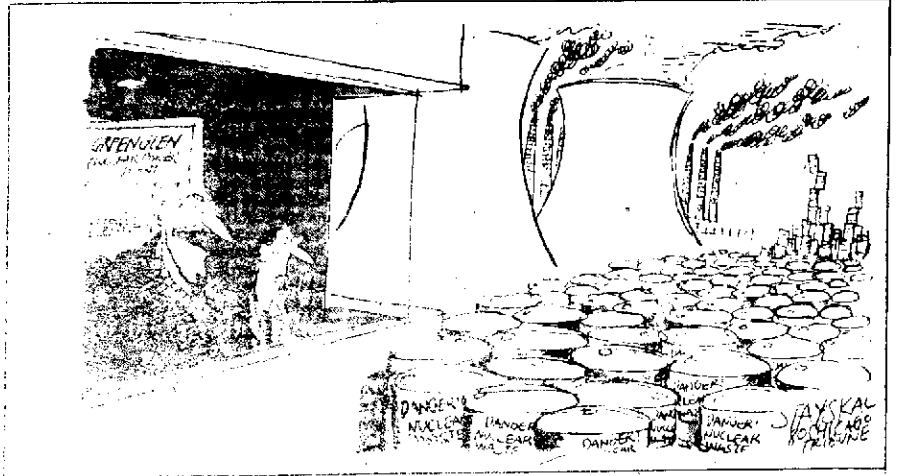
West Germany — £144 per metric tonne.
Netherlands — £149 per metric tonne.
United Kingdom — £173 per metric tonne.

Instead of being sold considerably cheaper here, this oil is extracted from UK fields then moved to Europe for refining then re-imported to Britain at pre-fixed prices. With the full support of the government of course!

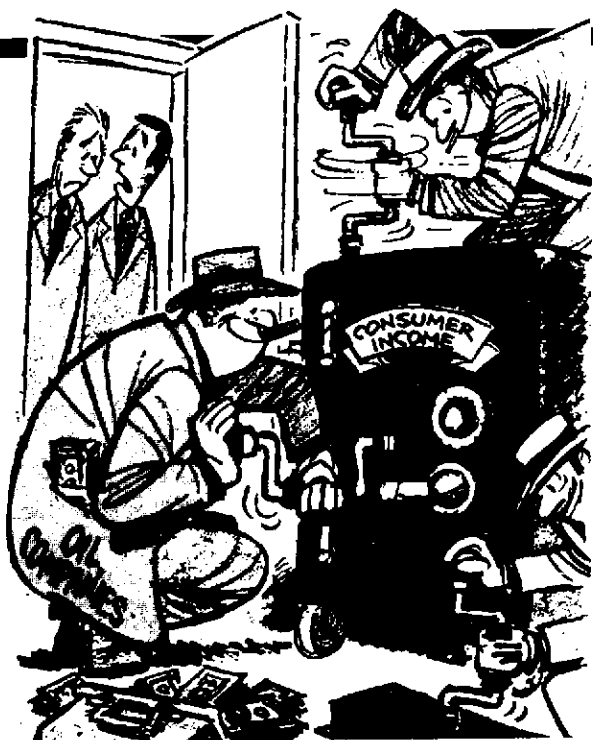
Similarly, gas and oil is also being sold cheaper overseas too.

West Germany — £149 per metric tonne.
Netherlands — £152 per metric tonne.
UK — £171 per metric tonne.

The Tories would main-



'Some day this will all be yours... And your children's and your grandchildren's and your great-grandchildren's and your great-great-grandchildren's...'



'Well, they told us they'd do more drilling after prices went up'

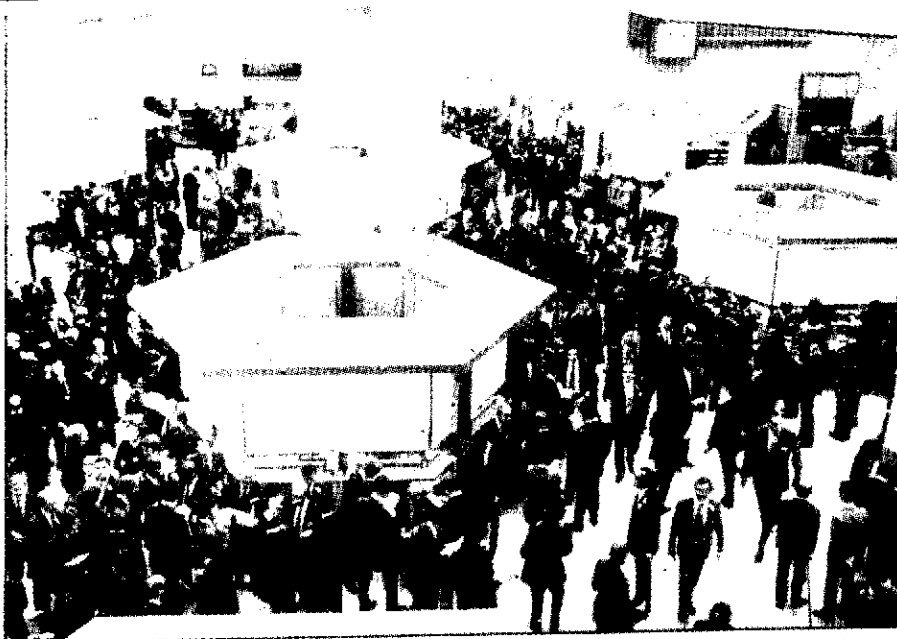
tain that 'unit costs of production' are cheaper abroad than in the UK therefore "capital will assemble at the cheapest point of production" i.e. the place with the lowest wages. But this argument is not strictly true. Indeed, if the Tories were right, then why does the US goliath AMOCO (a cost conscious company), supply the rest of Europe from its one UK refining complex?

A similar argument was used by Shell when stating a £44.4 million loss for their Manchester refinery, with a possible 2,000 jobs in jeopardy. Interestingly, this company forgot to mention that they have just begun construction at a cost of £760 million on a new North Sea oilfield, and that they estimate it

will take only 1.8 years for the company to recoup its original outlay.

Royal Dutch Shell, the second largest oil conglomerate in the world, have a reputation for double-dealing and trickery. In 1975 they approached the EEC and Labour Chancellor Denis Healey, with a proposition: "Why not give some of the UK oilfields to the EEC in exchange for cuts in Britain's contribution to the Community budget and changes in the Common Agricultural Policy?"

They also proposed closing eight refineries, two of them in the UK, and it was only after a massive campaign of opposition by petro-chemical workers, particularly TGWU and ASTMS members with the late intervention of then



The Stock Exchange gets the profits (above), while we get the other by-products (below)

Energy Minister Benn that the 'project' was scuppered. Their scheme of course was simple — rip the guts out of the UK petro-chemicals sector and relocate it in a union free zone.

Close

The oil giants also have a close relationship with the CIA: "Chemical Weekly" (2/2/81) stated "Chemical companies... are also hiring specialists some of whom are former officials of the US State Department or Central Intelligence Agency and sending them abroad on 'fact finding' missions". Dow Chemicals, a US multinational, had its fingers in the moves initiated in Chile in 1973 by the CIA to assassinate President Allende.

Labour Party member and TGWU senior steward Tommy Hart of AKSO Chemie, punctured the company's strategy:

"If you starve any organism of its basic nutrients then obviously it is going to put in an under par performance. In reality, there are a lot of con-men and fat profiteers in New York and Bonn benefiting from our misfortune."

Furthermore, the government and the multinationals cannot use the arguments they utilised for slashing jobs in British Steel or British Leyland, for justifying mass redundancies in the petro-chemical industry."

Indeed the industry is extremely profitable. Government figures for 1980 show that profits, interest and dividends on North Sea oil which were due to go abroad amounted to £2.3 billion. This was equivalent to the same amount as the government's entire tax return from North Sea oil.

Moreover, government revenues from North Sea oil in current prices in 1981-82 are now expected to be £6,430 million, more than £500 million more than expected. Even more, the contribution of oil and gas reserves to the country's Gross National Product is expected to increase by leaps and bounds over the next few years from £13¼ billion this year, to £14¼ billion next year, £17½ billion in 1984 and £20 billion in 1985.

Only a child would therefore believe the statements of the big oil producers that "falling profit margins" necessitate massive redundancies. In 1980 the "seven sisters" — Exxon, Royal Dutch Shell, Mobil, BP, Texaco, Chevron and Gulf — were able

to mass a combined net profit of \$23.3 billion on a total turnover of almost \$450 billion. This compares with combined earnings of \$21.9 billion in 1979, which was regarded by economists as a bumper year.

These figures reduce to nonsense any notion that the major oil companies are undergoing "severe financial difficulties". Though the rate of increase in profitability may have declined during the early 1980s nobody can deny that these multi-organisations wield astronomical capital resources.

The success they have achieved so far in closing oil terminals and refineries across Europe and the UK has flowed from complacency among the workforce and lapse shop floor organisation among the workforce induced by the "years of plenty" in the 1950s and 1960s when oil was sold for peanuts and petro-chemicals workers were part of the wage earning elite.



'And then you get up on this stand'

However the signs are now there that radical changes are in the air. Petro-chemical workers are beginning to recognise the immense strategic power they can wield in the primary energy industry of the future. Moves are afoot to set up a national rank and file movement among oil workers that can reverse the massive haemorrhaging of profits into bankers' coffers now taking place.

A national conference of delegates from Shell plants met in Manchester on 26 May and committed themselves to a campaign of industrial action and struggle against the bosses' closure plans.

Significantly, workers at the Manchester site of Shell

voted by an overwhelming majority at a number of mass meetings on 10 June to mandate the stewards to initiate industrial action if the company were to proceed with redundancies.

The stewards at Shell have also taken the bull by the horns by calling a national conference of delegates from all UK petrol chemical establishments to take place in the next six weeks, that will set about building a national movement to throw back the employers' offensive.

The struggle to build a viable shop floor organisation and political leadership in the plants to roll back the plans of the mega-profiters is now beginning in earnest.



Socialist Bookshelf

Books and pamphlets that you should read

John Riley introduces 'Man's Worldly Goods' by Leo Huberman (Monthly Review Press)

omic theory from a Marxist point of view.

History books are usually about the history of ruling classes. Working classes are for the most part hidden from history. Thus it was the Pharaohs who "built the Pyramids", not the thousands of slaves whose identities have been lost forever...

At school we learn about the backgrounds and lineages of royalty, but can remain unaware of great events such as the Peasants Revolt or the Chartist

Man's Worldly Goods

Movement.

Economics, too, is very much the economic theory of the capitalist class. Their oppressive system is presented as an inevitable fact of life, with timeless laws which nobody can hope to avoid.

Man's Worldly Goods attempts to "explain history by economic theory, and economic theory by history". In the Preface Huberman explains his approach.

"The 'dismal science' (economics) will remain dismal so long as it is taught and studied in a historical vacuum. Ricardo's law of rent, by itself, is difficult and dull. But place it in its historical context, see it as one battle in the struggle between landlord and industrialist in the England of the early nineteenth century, and it becomes exciting and meaningful."

Huberman begins his

economic history in the Middle Ages, with the opening chapters examining the agricultural basis of feudalism.

"The directors of the earliest movies often did queer things. One of the most curious was their habit of showing you people riding about in a taxi, then piling out and walking away without paying the driver... No payment necessary."

It was very much like most of the books on the Middle Ages that go on for pages and pages about knights and ladies all decked out in shining armour and gay dresses, at tournaments and games. They always live in splendid castles and have plenty to eat and drink.

"You get very little hint that some one had to provide all these things, that armour doesn't grow on trees and that food has to be planted and looked after and worked over. But

it does.

"Just as you have to pay for a ride in a taxi, so some one, in the tenth and twelfth centuries, had to pay for the fun and good things the knights and ladies enjoyed..."

"This was quite plain to at least one person who lived at that time, and who commented on it in this way: For the knight and eke the clerk Live by him who does the work."

Man's Worldly Goods shows that the working people and their struggles for freedom and dignity are a crucial part of history. Moreover, this is not a history of ideas but of the economic forces behind ideas and struggles.

The book is full of interesting pieces of information which demystify and lay bare the economic basis behind social relationships. The Church in medieval

times was a repository of scholarly learning and spiritual advice, but it was also the biggest owner of land. Huberman tells us that it was because of this wealth, and the need for a tight bureaucratic hold over it, that the priests were forbidden to marry.

If they had been able to, their children could have had a claim on the church land and so the property of the church would have been lost and dispersed.

After cataloguing the decline of feudalism and the rise of capitalism, the book then looks at the transformation of once-revolutionary capitalism into the ossified obstacle to socialism and progress that it represents today.

Huberman explains how monopoly capitalism grew out of the earlier competitive phase with the analogy big boxers beating, and growing bigger at the expense of smaller,

weaker ones.

Nineteenth century capitalist economic theory is examined and compared with Marx's economic ideas.

In the last part of the book, the writer's Stalinist illusions lead to somewhat misleading and weak conclusions. The chapter "Russia has a plan" is an uncritical contrast of Stalinist 'Socialism' with the depressed capitalism of the 1930s (when the book was written).

But the book remains an exciting and approachable introduction to the marxist view of economics and history.

CORRECTION:

A mistake in last week's Socialist Organiser inadvertently omitted the Israeli Socialist Left from the list of organisations supporting the Bir Zeit Committee, which has been campaigning against Israel's invasion of Lebanon.

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.

Sub-imperialism and Argentina

FOR reasons of space I limit myself to making the following points in reply to Jack Johnson's criticisms (SO89) of my previous letter (SO88):

*Argentina exports capital to its natural hinterland, particularly Bolivia; it is exported either through direct private investment by the Argentine bourgeoisie or through banks. This does not make Argentina a net exporter of capital, and it wasn't my intention to suggest it was, but nonetheless

capital is exported from Argentina.

*Sub-imperialism is not "a new phenomenon superceding Lenin's thesis on imperialism". Some may be loathe to admit it, but changes have taken place in the world since 1945 which cannot be fully explained by giving a page reference to Imperialism — the Highest Stage of Capitalism.

I would have thought that "sub-imperialism" supplements Lenin's thesis on imperialism in the same

way (but to a lesser extent) as "deformed workers states" supplements Trotsky's theses on Stalinism.

"Import substitution" was not "a new strategy developed by imperialism". It was a strategy pursued by Third World countries, particularly Latin American ones, in an (unsuccessful) attempt to achieve national industrialisation. It was the recognition of its failure which led to the emergence of the theories of dependency.

*The 1960 military regime in Turkey bears no similarity to more recent military regimes in either Latin America or Turkey. It was a short-lived affair, based predominantly on the petty bourgeoisie suffering from the policies of monopolistic industrialisation pursued by the Mendes government. The present regime in Argentina is about as similar to it as the junta of Evren.

*Johnson's argument that "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" shows up the fundamental defect in his position.

For the present Argentine junta has done the exact opposite of what happened under the Turkish junta of 1960: it has clamped down on trade union organisation, destroyed the right to strike, replaced a (limited) freedom of expression with censorship etc., etc. The fundamental differences between the Turkish regime of 1960 and the junta of Galtieri show up the absurdity of the idea that the Argentine workers could repeat what the Turkish workers did. Aren't 15,000 "disappearances" proof enough of this?

STAN CROOKE
Glasgow

Lenin, imperialism and muddleheads

IN their eagerness to carry through the SO neutral position on the Falklands, some comrades are now fabricating the role and nature of the Argentinian state to the point of making the basic Marxist distinction between imperialist and dependent states completely meaningless.

This is the position put by comrade Stan Crooke (SO88). He carries forward what is the logic behind the neutralist position and asks, "If we do not support Argentina against this imperialist attack, why should we support it against any other?"

Comrade Stan also argues that the appropriate analogy to use is the one of Lenin's position of defeatism towards Russia in World War I.

But if he wants to stand in the camp of Lenin, comrade Crooke and those in SO who think like him, will have to look at Lenin's position a little harder.

The reason that Lenin argued for defeatism in relation to Russia was because Russia was imperialist. It dominated a colonial empire and was the carrier of capitalist relations and the dominance of finance capital into the parts of the world which it dominated.

Now it is clear, on this basis, that we should always automatically be defeatist for Britain. But if the analogy is to have any usefulness, comrade Crooke has to show us that Argentina, like Russia, is an imperialist power.

He does not do this, because he cannot. The

Argentinian state neither dominates a colonial empire, nor has it been the carrier of capitalist relations and the dominance of finance capital into any part of the world.

The European imperialist powers have played that role in relation both to Argentina and the rest of Latin America. All that the Argentinian regime does is to act like a lieutenant for the imperialists, to protect the dominance of the system which they have already established.

This situation is riddled with contradiction and conflict — at the core, that between the workers and the imperialists and their stooges. But there is also a secondary conflict between the national and the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Because they own the vast mass of finance capital, because they control the international banking system, because they can rely on massive military superiority, the imperialist bourgeoisies always have a guaranteed advantage.

Moreover, the national bourgeoisies depend on the imperialists and their governments to help prop them up and protect their local ownership. The only weapon which the national bourgeoisies can wield is the strength of the anti-imperialist masses, but this is a weapon which will put them in the firing line themselves.

So the dominance of finance capital means the dominance of the established imperialist powers.

Only the proletarian revolution can break that dominance — only war can decisively shift relations within it.

This does not mean that there are not a few finance capitalists of Argentinian origin. There are a few. But that does not change the history of the state within which they live, or the system of international relations of dominance within which they have to operate.

When Indian capitalists buy a Swiss concern, they are not asserting national dominance over Switzerland or turning India into an imperialist power.

Very likely, they are buying the concern with money raised from, located within and accruing interest for a Swiss bank.

Lenin pointed out in 1916 that:

"The world has been divided into a handful of usurer states and a vast majority of debtor states" and:

"Not only are the two main groups of countries, those owning colonies and the colonies themselves, typical of this epoch but the same is also true for the diverse forms of dependent countries which, politically, are formally independent but in fact are enmeshed in the net of financial and diplomatic dependence."

In the same work on imperialism, only a few paragraphs earlier, Lenin has identified Russia as one of the major imperialist powers.

From these views Lenin

is plainly another one of those who thinks like the "muddle heads" that comrade Crooke criticises.

The positions he put help us arrive at an assessment of the current conflict as one between an imperialist power and a dependent — although formally independent — capitalist state.

Unlike comrade Crooke Lenin knew perfectly well the difference between imperialist and dependent countries. If he wishes to stand in the camp of Lenin, comrade Crooke and all those who think like him must work a little harder at discovering where the real muddle headed thinking is going on.

GEOFF ROBERTSON
Oxford

Van der Lubbe — lies

YOUR article on Dimitrov failed to mention that his famous defence included a typically Stalinist lie about others on the Left. The world was told that Van der Lubbe was a demented half-wit with no links to the left, manipulated by the Nazis.

He had been in fact a Council Communist, with a significant record of activity and subsequent historians have reconstructed from his personal papers a very different story.

He despaired at the failure of effective action to stop Hitler from all the workers' groupings, and set out with no illusions to make a gesture to show that Hitler did not have the unanimous support he claimed.

LAURENS OTTER,
Wellington



Van der Lubbe — a communist

Beware of 'stages' theory

I would like to make a few points arising from Jack Johnson's letter (SO89). Firstly, Johnson objects to Stan Crooke's analogy with Russia in 1914 because Lenin called Russia imperialist. Johnson asks where and how does Argentina export capital.

Tsarist

One could well ask where, and to what extent, did Tsarist Russia export capital. The Tsarist empire was not based on economic power like modern imperialism, but on military

strength.

It is also worth remembering that Lenin and Trotsky considered that without the Revolution Russia would have been turned into an impoverished outpost of imperialism like China.

It is also a mistake to say that because Argentina is not a major capital exporter, whilst Britain is, that we should therefore side with Argentina. Imperialist war is precisely about seizing the markets, etc., of other capitalist states. Marxists have no more interest in siding with the Argentine ruling classes' imperialist intentions as against Britain's than we do in supporting the Iraqi bourgeoisie against the Iranian bourgeoisie.

Ultra-left

Argentina's imperialist intentions have been illustrated in its claims over neighbouring countries, e.g. Chile, and its invasion of the Falklands and the Georgias (to which it has never had a claim) was as much to do with bargaining over control of minerals in Antarctica as being a diversion from the class struggle at home.

Johnson's arguments about sub-imperialism are ultra-left. They are of the same school as those which deny any possibility of development within monopoly capitalism.

Just as new technology has made the claims that monopoly capitalism prev-

ents rapid development look silly, so empirical analysis of newly industrialised countries makes the assertion that imperialism keeps impoverished all underdeveloped economies look silly too.

Former colonies like Australia and Canada are clear examples, whilst others like Singapore have developed and become exporters of capital within their area. Domestic capital has also developed in Taiwan and South Korea, including in important areas like steel and heavy engineering.

Johnson refers to the theory of Permanent Revolution. My understanding of the theory is that we point out the limited ability of the bourgeoisie to fight imperialism, that we refuse to take part in Popular Fronts, that we insist upon the organisational independence of the working class, and that we prosecute the class struggle alongside the struggle against imperialism.

Workers

This is not what is being advocated by Johnson and those who would defend Argentina. There is no organisational independence for the workers inside the Argentine army, and far from the class struggle being fought against the imperialists and national bourgeoisie it has been suspended in order to invade a group of

harmless islanders.

A real anti-imperialist struggle in Argentina would have focussed on the workers to seize the assets of the international finance houses and the factories of the multinationals.

Johnson's argument is support the junta in its war against Britain in the Falklands, then maybe we

can persuade it to act against imperialism at home, then we can get round to the class struggle against it.

In other words it is the stages theory, the direct opposite of the Theory of Permanent Revolution Johnson seeks to defend.

Faternally,
ARTHUR BOUGH
Stoke

SHARED ERROR

STAN Crooke's arguments about the South Atlantic war (SO 88) seem to me to share a common error with the comrades he most sharply criticises.

Stan argues that because Argentina is a sub-imperialist power we should not have supported it even if the war had shifted to a war by Britain against Argentina's national rights.

The other comrades argue that because Argentina is economically dependent we should have supported it despite the reactionary nature of its invasion of the Falklands.

A long — and not useless — argument is possible about Argentina's precise ranking in the world hierarchy of capitalist powers. But surely it is very abstract and mechanical to read off an attitude to the war directly from that ranking.

What interests us is not just whether the capitalist forces waging a war are

strong or weak, but the political issues.

We would support a war for genuine national rights, despite bourgeois leadership, because it is our war — a war on issues we support. The reason for not supporting Galtieri's war was that it was a war for reactionary aims — a war for the self-promotion of the Argentine military regime.

That Galtieri miscalculated, and that the Argentine state was not strong enough to achieve its imperialist-type aims, cannot change that assessment. (Nor can Galtieri's war be made progressive simply by the fact that it was against a reactionary opponent, the British state).

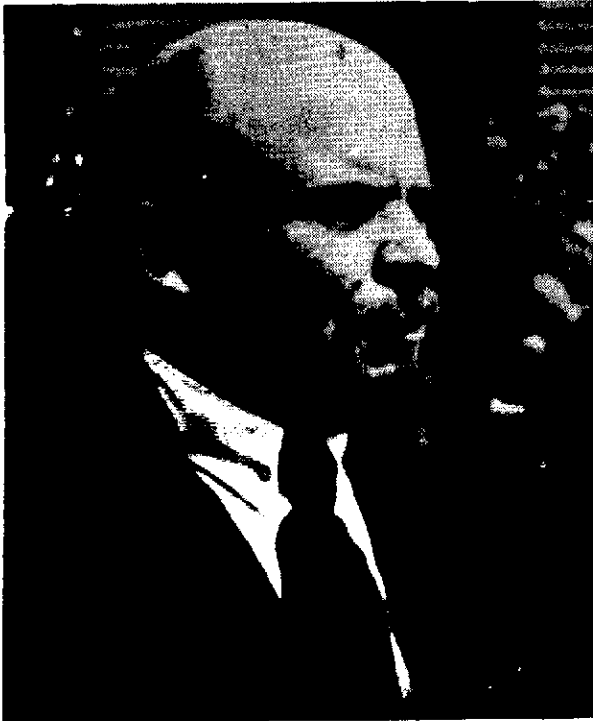
So the analogy between Galtieri in 1982 and Chiang Kai Shek fighting for Chinese national liberation in 1937 falls down. But so does Stan's analogy with the Tsar in 1914-17.

When chauvinist 'socialists' during World War 1 argued for supporting one capitalist state or another to defend the national rights of Belgium, Russia, or wherever, the Marxists did not reply that those national rights were unimportant.

They said that the war was not about national rights. It was basically a war between big capitalist powers each trying to grab a bigger share of colonies. Socialists must take their stand on that fundamental assessment, and not on secondary features.

But if the recent war had shifted to a war of subjugation by Britain against Argentina — which it did not, and in my view was not likely to — then it would have been about national rights. And socialists should have taken a stand in defence of Argentina's national rights.

MARTIN THOMAS
London



Lenin. Russia was an imperialist power.

Industrial News

STOP THE PIT CLOSURES!

by John Cunningham (Dinnington NUM)

IN his book about the Kent miners, called *The World on Our Backs*, Malcolm Pitt, a miner himself, opens chapter one with the following words:
"There are now only three pits in Kent, Bettes-

hanger, Snowdown and Tilmanstone. There were four, but the demolished ruins of Chislet Colliery are a landmark to the vandalism of the Robens era and the period of closures."
If the NCB has its way,

Snowdown Colliery will follow the path of Chislet. The Board's recent announcements about running down the manning levels of Snowdown from 850 to 200 men appear to be little more than a pre-

liminary to its closure. The NCB say that Snowdown is uneconomic, due to the physical conditions of the existing workings, but even they admit that below these workings is a seam which, if exploited, would yield good results.

A sum of £3.2 million is being coughed up by the Board to explore this seam. So in the meantime they intend to cut manpower down to 200 and stop producing coal.

This is an old NCB trick which has been tried on before (in certain South Yorkshire pits, for example). It usually means that the Board aren't interested and are merely playing for time before putting the lid on. Snowdown was also on the 1981 hit list of 23 pits.

On June 24 the National Executive Committee of the National Union of Mineworkers met the NCB and its new chairman Norman Siddall. As most people know that meeting lasted only 3½ minutes – the NEC walking out when the Board failed to give any assurance or information over closures.

3½ minutes! That was Arthur Scargill's first negotiating session as NUM President! And he came out pledging to end secret negotiations with the NCB. First step on this road was cancellation of the NCB traditional dinner at NUM conference. Miners should ensure Scargill keeps up this pace!

The NCB are still denying that there is a new hit list of 30 pits.

It is now up to the annual conference of the NUM, meeting shortly, to decide what action to take.

Without a doubt the conference will give full support to the Kent miners and will oppose closures (except on grounds of seam exhaustion) with industrial action.

The Yorkshire and South Wales areas already have firm policy on this issue, decided by ballot last year and the response in February 1981 to the NCB's old hit list shows the depth of feeling. This feeling has not receded. If anything, it has increased. As Arthur Scargill said recently at the Yorkshire Miners' Gala, "Miners must recognise that the defence of Snowdown represents the defence of all pits and the union must stand firm and united to keep it open. The butchery of the sixties cannot and will not be tolerated in the eighties. And miners should be prepared for strike action to defend their industry, individual pits and jobs."

JOE Gormley is already learning how to live like a lord. He has just been appointed a Governor of the BBC. Although this adds a mere £2,000 a year or so to his income it should help ensure that Gormley's face is kept before the public as an elder statesman for some years to come.

Confusion rules in LT strike

THE terms on which the London Underground has returned to work are not clear as we go to press.

ASLEF last week called off their strike after London Transport postponed new schedules which mark the beginning of cuts in service imposed after the Law Lords' ruling against cheap fares.

Alternative

ASLEF agreed to discuss alternative savings. But the kick in the tail was that the return-to-work terms committed ASLEF to accepting LT's new schedules unless acceptable alternatives were found within four weeks.

The NUR then called a strike, which was ended by a unanimous decision of the NUR AGM on Tuesday. It seems that the NUR's return to work was based on postponement of the LT schedules but without the four-week deadline for implementation: but it is not clear.

Early Wednesday morning (30th), LT however said they would post the new schedules immediately!

They backed off – but only for a week.

We do not know if the NUR or ASLEF will reimpose their strike.

Divisive

Two political points are however clear.

1. The petty divisive tactics of the NUR and ASLEF leaders have given great comfort to London Transport.

2. The struggle nevertheless shows that the fare rises imposed by the Law Lords in March could have been beaten, if the GLC Labour Group had given a lead by defying the law and campaigning for industrial action.

And why isn't the GLC Labour Group making itself heard now in support of the tube workers?



Silent: Ken Livingstone

Scabbing at EDP

by Brian Wood

THE strike by 21 workers, sacked for supporting a victimised colleague at EDP is at a critical stage. Management have employed 11 scabs on a full time basis and another seven temporarily, in an attempt to continue business normally.

There is a danger that the bosses will now consider the dispute over, and continue operating as if there were no jobs and rights at stake.

A two-pronged attack is needed. The first is effective picketing to stop scabs from moving in and out. For this we need more support at both gates in the mornings and an exceptionally large mass picket next Tuesday morning at 7.30.

The second is to spread the fact that there is a dispute here – an attempt at blacking all goods is needed.

The West Yorkshire and Lynsey Regional Exam Board is a valued customer of EDP, estimated at £3 million over several years, on whom they rely for examination paper work and marking and they have already indicated unwillingness to continue the contract with EDP unless the dispute is settled favourably.

All union members

ROY Fraser must not be allowed to go the way of Derek Robinson!

Fraser, AUEW convenor at the BL Cowley Body Plant, has been called up before management on Wednesday June 30 for disciplinary action because he called a stewards' meeting in work time.

Throughout BL the trade union organisation is under attack, not least in Cowley.

The technique of BL management is familiar: do deals through the trade union leadership and then attack the shop stewards movement.

The company has just

forced through a new procedure document, with the aid of the trade union bureaucracy. The document takes away the powers of the shop stewards. The Company is also trying to make the shop stewards movement inoperable at plant level.

In the Cowley Assembly Plant shop stewards are tied to their jobs and cannot operate properly. The company refuses permission for stewards meetings, except on rare occasions they want something. Stewards now have to meet off plant in their own time.

In Cowley Body Plant the right wing TGWU leader-

ship hardly ever call stewards meetings anyway. But the AUEW Convenor Roy Fraser recently asked for permission to have a meeting about the company's moves to end demarcation on a number of jobs.

Refused

The company refused permission so the stewards went off the plant for a meeting. From this meeting the stewards called a mass meeting.

Now Fraser is being called up for discipline. Considering he has already had a warning, for publicis-

ing irregularities in relation to contractors, this is obviously a very serious situation.

The company is on the offensive throughout Leyland. Using their 'plant audits' they are cutting jobs by the thousand and maintaining production through speed-ups.

In Cowley Body Plant, as in other plants, workers are showing their willingness to resist and are slowing up the company's plans.

This high degree of militancy of Leyland workers provides the possibility to defend Fraser as long as leadership is given.

Foyles lose case

IN a test case, three out of 17 workers sacked by Foyles Bookshop in London have won their industrial tribunal hearing.

The 17 were sacked for recruiting to USDAW. After picketing the shop day after day, they were forced by lack of support from their union leadership

to pin their hopes on the tribunal.

The tribunal has recommended reinstatement for two and compensation for another worker who did not want to go back to Foyles.

Foyles, a rabidly anti-union employer, declared they would rather close

than reinstate the trade unionists!

Unfortunately the alternatives are not so drastic. An industrial tribunal cannot force an employer to reinstate workers, and the worst Foyles will face is having to pay damages.

7 weeks out at Caplans

by Steve Hall

It is now seven weeks since the seven sacked TGWU members at Caplans Cash and Carry, Manchester, started their fight for reinstatement and union recognition.

Their determination to win this fight is stronger now than ever. One of the main reasons for this is the tremendous support they have received from other trade unions not only in and around Manchester but even from dockers at Felixstowe.

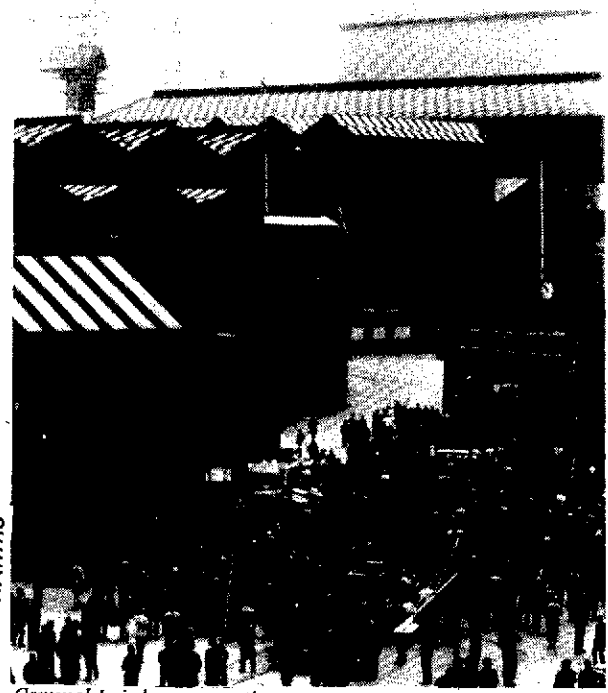
The strikers reckon that their action has reduced the firm's supplies by 80-90%.

The response of management so far has been to make a ridiculous threat of complete closure though they are likely to offer the strikers their jobs back as vacancies arise provided they call off their action.

Needless to say this last suggestion was immediately kicked into touch by the strikers who are sticking to their original demands.

The prospects now are for a long, hard and bitter dispute. If the Caplan strikers are to win, it is vital that the tremendous support they have received so far is maintained.

Please send donations and messages of support to Dave Jones, c/o 37 Plymouth Street, Salford.



Cammell Laird mass meeting

Shipyard struggle

by Lol Duffy

returned to work when management agreed to withdraw disciplinary procedures under the new time limits and to revert to the status quo for 48 hours while negotiations continued.

The June 22 mass meeting decision was not a clear one for the return to work, and there is a lot of bad feeling towards the stewards' committee for failing to make a recommendation.

But a further mass meet-

ing on Thursday 24th voted to reject slightly changed proposals from management and to carry on with normal finishing times.

There is no doubt that British Shipbuilders are attacking the brew and finishing times as part of a general attack on working conditions in Lairds and possibly throughout British Shipbuilders. Lairds is earmarked for redundancies and closure, and management are using Michael Edwards tactics against the workers.

ISTC conference fights for control

THE conference last week of the steelworkers' union ISTC confirmed that the new blood pumped out by the 1980 strike is still working its way through the union's veins.

It voted 91 to 79 for future conferences to become the union's supreme policy-making body. At present ISTC conferences have no decision-making rights at all – all powers remain in the hands of the union executive. Indeed, until a few years ago the ISTC had no conferences at all.

Even the executive clearly sometimes has problems exerting any control over the ISTC's right wing general

secretary, Bill Sims. At the conference, Sims opposed the motion on conference powers, and said he was speaking on behalf of the executive.

Intervene

Executive members had to intervene from the floor to point out that the EC had decided to take no position.

Catch 22 is that only the executive can decide whether the conference should have decision-making powers, but clearly the conference vote will exert heavy pressure.

The conference rejected motions calling for the election of national officials.



Bill Sims

ZIONIST HANDS OFF

US oils wheels of Zionist military machine — page 4
Zionism — Red in Tooth and Claw — centre pages

by Harry Sloan

WILL the Reagan administration sanction the carnage of a full-scale Israeli invasion of West Beirut and the slaughter of the Palestinian forces bottled up in there?

Even if the US government vigorously opposed such an invasion, could it act firmly and swiftly enough to restrain the Zionist regime before the PLO were exterminated?

These are among the difficult questions facing PLO leaders as they calculate their few remaining options under the ever-present guns of Zionist air, sea and land forces.

There is no way they can militarily escape from their last stronghold, which is surrounded by vastly superior forces. The half-hearted support they received at first from the Syrian armed forces has been beaten down or withdrawn. No other Arab regime is prepared to offer them military help.

And the Zionists have been able to mount a military offensive of undisguised and indiscriminate brutality in Lebanon with hardly any of the anticipated outcry around the world.

Truly the Palestinians have been deserted at their time of need — and now face the prospect of a military defeat which could decisively weaken them politically.

They have only one hope of staying on in their Beirut base — and that is at best a flimsy straw to clutch at.

The resignation of US Secretary of State Alexander Haig is evidently seen as the outcome of differences within the Reagan camp over his unashamedly hardline pro-Zionist policy.

PLO! 20,000 march against war in Tel Aviv

Last Friday, while Zionist forces blitzed Beirut, Haig sent an ultimatum *not* to the aggressors — but to the PLO, demanding they surrender! It was Haig who instructed UN representative Kirkpatrick to veto the French resolution calling for a Zionist withdrawal from Beirut.

It was a move that further antagonised and embarrassed the influential Saudi Arabian leaders who have been pressing (possibly with the backing of veiled economic threats) for the US to restrain the Israeli government.

And it proved to be Haig's last decision as Secretary of State. His surprise resignation was followed by the appointment of George Schultz, a former Nixon cabinet member and an executive of Bechtel — a monopoly with extensive contracts in Arab countries.

This abrupt turn in the situation has been seized upon as a step forward — even a "victory" — by the PLO, heralding a sharp shift in US policy.

But even were this the case, it is far from certain that Schultz has the immediate leverage to stem the progress of Begin's armed forces; indeed the Zionist leaders may even be prompted to preempt US pressure and rising anti-war sentiment at home by mounting a rapid final onslaught on Beirut.

The scale and ferocity of opposition to the war within Israel itself has plainly shocked the Begin government.

The weekend demonstra-

tion in Tel Aviv, some 20,000 strong, was the largest left wing protest ever held in the country.

It has run alongside the unprecedented holding of news conferences by reservists released from duties in Lebanon, who have strongly denounced the war; and even a former Chief of Staff, General Mordechai Gur has described the two weeks of fighting as "pointless".

It is possible that such a combination of pressures may restrain Begin from the final bloodletting in Beirut.

But it will also reinforce the political dependence of the PLO leaders upon the reactionary Arab states and even upon the USA as a means of support.

This can only be reversed by a tenacious fight in the labour movement of the imperialist countries and within the working classes of the Arab countries and Israel for active solidarity with the Palestinian struggle, and a perspective for socialist revolution in the Middle East.

Socialist Organiser



Shattered remnants of the Lebanese town of Sidon

Italian war on wages

ITALY'S industry was stopped last Friday 25th by an eight hour strike against the unilateral decision by bosses in big and medium private industry to cut back the 'scala mobile' (sliding scale) — the agreement guaranteeing regular cost-of-living wage increases.

Nearly half a million workers marched on a trade union demonstration in Rome.

Franco Grisolia of the LOR, an Italian socialist organisation, told us:

Further attack

"The strike was followed on Tuesday 29th by a further cancellation of the sliding scale — by bosses in the public sector [i.e. the companies part-owned by the state].

"Some 40% of the Italian working class were affected by the first attack on the sliding scale, and now another 15% are affected.

"Also, the bosses in the commercial sector are likely to follow suit.

Strike

"The metalworkers' unions responded today with a two-hour strike.

"This move by the bosses confirms that the June 25 strike was not sufficient to have any immediate political result.

"But it could have a positive effect — not so much in immediate political results, but in galvanising working class militancy.

"In the months of struggle to come, the trade union activists will have a feeling of strength from the demonstration. Or possibly they will, at least: it's too soon to be definite.

No policy

"There was a wide spread of mobilisation, from different areas and different sectors of industry.

"The problem is that the trade unions have proposed absolutely no further action.

"As for the LOR, the central element of our policy is the need for linking up the struggles and blacking. Right now the key problem is to beat back the bosses' offensive — it's not the working class that is on the offensive, but the bosses.

"We have to combat the view put by the right wing in the unions — especially the Socialist unions [Italy's unions are divided into three federations, 'Communist', Socialist and Catholic], and afterwards we can see about the sliding scale.

"We argue that the fight to defend the sliding scale must go ahead now, alongside the fight on the wage agreements."

Bradford stands by Pat Wall

by Barry Turner (Labour councillor, Bradford Moor)

THE crashing defeat last Friday for Bradford North right winger Ben Ford was described by his opponent Pat Wall as an historic vote and indeed it may prove to be so.

Eight months ago, Wall defeated Ford after a selection process which left no doubt in the minds of constituency members as to who would win.

Ford had received only four nominations, compared with around 20 for Wall and the vote was quite decisive.

What followed is now well-known to Labour members throughout the country. Wall was to be vilified throughout the national and local media. What may not be appreciated is the level of slander and hostility experienced by Pat and his family.

Accused

National newspapers phoned his workplace to ask why he had not been sacked and even accused his boss of being a Trotskyist for not joining the witch-hunt. Poisonous phone calls and letters all joined the local newspapers and Tory controlled media in a massive campaign to attempt to decide who leads and represents the Labour Party.

This campaign was designed, Pat Wall stated, to return the Party to the 50s and 60s, when the right wing proscribed journals and papers and disbanded branches.

In many areas of Bradford, he continued, we were experiencing the end of civilised life with no employment prospects, no social life, broken down estates and people afraid to walk out at night.

**Tribune Rally
STOP THE PURGE
Camden Town Hall
July 20 at 7.30pm
Speakers: Tony Benn,
Arthur Scargill**

How could we waste time on internal struggles when the fight must be against the Tories. We were told that Keynesian public spending would solve the problems but now we see clearly that the capitalist system doesn't work.

Whilst there was nothing to fault in Pat's contribution for me the problem lay rather in what was not discussed, such as a perspective for drawing together the massive pay struggles of the railmen, health workers, etc around a drive towards a mass strike movement to remove the Tories and lay the basis for a workers' government.

If such a perspective was not included in Pat's speech it was a million miles from the thoughts of his opponent in the blue corner, representing the Labour Party NEC, Battling Ben Ford.

Arrogance

60 delegates were treated to 20 minutes of apologetic arrogance, the first ten of which were spent reading out word for word a carefully compiled and documented attack on the Militant Tendency.

Stating his intention with the help of the NEC to be the next Labour candidate in Bradford North, Ford was shaken by a question from one shop steward who simply asked him if he considered himself a socialist.

As complete confusion descended on the meeting, with many of Ford's supporters despairing of their lot, he surfaced finally to read a touching personal letter sent to the constituency from Michael Foot which described in suitably vague terms Ford's great contributions as a running boy in the House of Commons.

The result speaks for itself — with a greatly increased majority for Wall who won by 49 votes to 12.

The problem now rests with the NEC. Twice we have now selected Pat Wall and we have absolutely no intention of selecting anyone else.

30 years

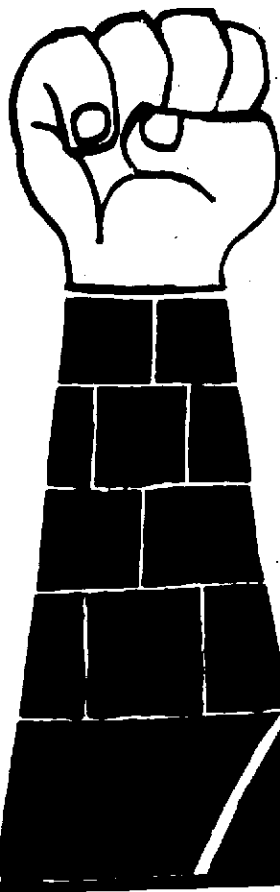
We wait to see how the NEC will attempt to invalidate our decision. The whole Labour Party in Bradford will support Wall throughout all three constituencies and the District Party.

He has been in the Party over 30 years and done just about every job possible for the Party and has the respect of the trade union movement as the President of the Trades Council for many years.

He is our candidate and we are pledged to fight tooth and nail to defend him and our right to decide our own representative. We will expect massive national support if that right is challenged again.

**Interview with
Peter Tatchell
— page 6**

£6000 fund



Several hundred pounds have already been pledged in sponsorship for three Merseyside Socialist Organiser supporters who are running in the Mersey Marathon on Sunday September 26. And they're hoping to raise the sponsorships to over £1,000 before they set off on their 26 miles.

You can sponsor them by cutting out this 'fund' box, filling in your name and address, and sending it to Wirral SO, 1 Wellington Road, New Brighton, Wirral, Merseyside.

Meanwhile the collection at the Socialist Organiser AGM last weekend raised £360. With contributions in the mail the overall total has been raised to £2549.50. New contributions to: Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.

Regional scores are: Scotland and North £56.40 (17%); Yorkshire and North East £280.50 (56%); North West £278 (36%); West Midlands £918.80 (100%); East Midlands £174 (32%); South Wales £45 (25%); West £402 (63%); London £256 (12%); Miscellaneous £138.80. Full breakdown next week.

Name.....
Address.....

I will sponsor 1/2/3 SO supporter(s) in the Mersey Marathon for £.....per mile, plus £.....extra to finish.