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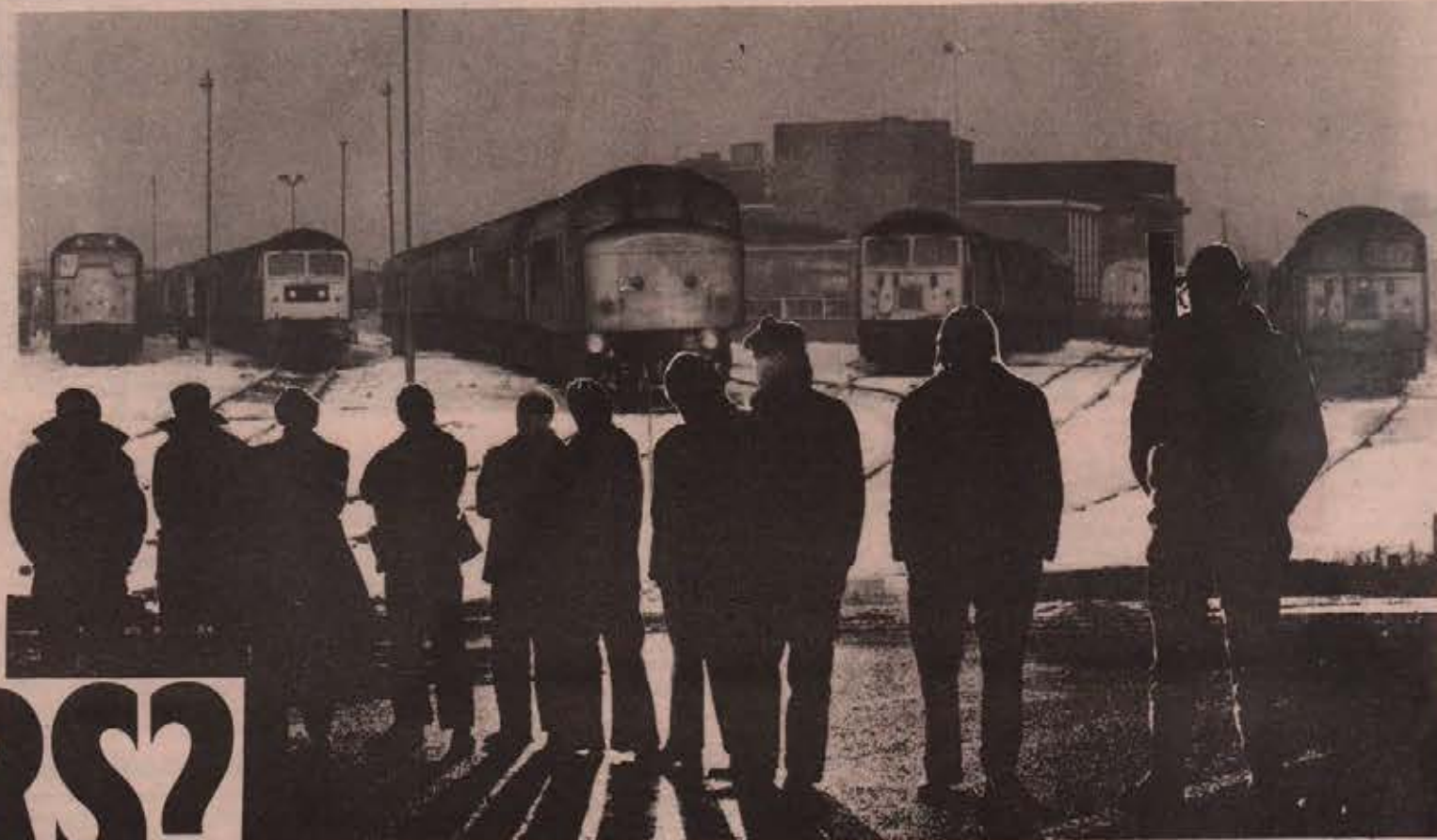
STAND AGAINST FOOT!

AN OPEN LETTER TO TONY BENN

Whose side are you on?

SEE INSIDE, PAGE 15

ASLEF? or the UNION BUSTERS?



WEIGHING up the chances of British Rail management inflicting a major defeat on the train drivers' union ASLEF in the current strike, the Financial Times last week pointed out a key element in the Board's favour.

"Partly through distorted reporting, ASLEF are held up as trade union ogres".

Certainly the whole ASLEF case has been turned on its head by the Tory press and mass media.

The wholesale attack on jobs and working conditions embodied in British Rail's "flexible rostering" scheme is played down.

Instead ASLEF has been pilloried for its defence of hard-won agreements and working conditions!

The new rosters sought by management are the thin end of a productivity wedge designed to slash the rail workforce by 6,000 over five years.

In standing firm against these proposals, which also destroy the 8-hour working day won by ASLEF 70 years ago, the train drivers are leading one of the few determined struggles against the Tory offensive in the public sector.

Jobs have been axed by the thousand and conditions worsened in the NHS, local government, school meals,

education and the civil service: factories, steel plants and shipyards have all dumped thousands more redundant workers onto the Tories' 3 million unemployed scrapheap. Now at last ASLEF has decided that the time has come to fight back. They must be supported.

And while ASLEF is held up as an example of what the Tory press describes as "unions with too much power", the fact is that the present confrontation has been deliberately provoked by the British Rail Board.

Having been knocked back from flexible rostering by ASLEF action earlier this year, BR have come back again determined to crush the strength of the rail unions.

First they offered an insulting 5% pay award, then BR management went so far as to withdraw the offer when the NUR went out on strike last week. And it has said that it will not be bound by the recommendation of arbitration on the unions' claim.

Then, utilising the reactionary refusal of the ASLEF leadership to support the NUR strike as a lever to split the rail work-

force, the Board put the boot into ASLEF by announcing the imposition of flexible rosters.

And in a direct challenge to the union closed shop on the railways, the Board went Edwardes-style over the heads of the union to NUR and ASLEF members urging them to scab on the strike calls, and promising that if they were expelled from their unions they would not be sacked from their jobs.

Instead there are well-publicised threats that if the strike goes on BR will sack the ASLEF strikers, and only reinstate individuals who agree to accept the flexible rostering proposals.

It is a scandal that under such conditions NUR leader Sid Weighell has lent his vocal support to the witch-hunting of ASLEF by management and the media, while TUC leader Len Murray has spent his time not rallying support for ASLEF but trying to press-gang them into an "arbitrated" sell-out.

Despite the efforts of Murray and Weighell, however, the NUR conference correctly put aside their anger over the ASLEF role in their dispute to call on NUR train drivers to respect

picket lines.

And the NUM conference has unanimously declared its total solidarity with the ASLEF struggle, invoking the "triple alliance" of steel, coal and rail unions to back the struggle.

Indeed the ASLEF fight has implications for all rail workers and for the whole trade union movement. Any supporting action by miners or steelworkers will be in defiance of the Tebbit and Prior anti-union laws, and as such a direct challenge to the Tory government.

And at the same time it is plain that a defeat for

ASLEF on the rosters issue will redouble the determination of the BR Board to ram home the remainder of its productivity package, in which a further 5,000 NUR and ASLEF jobs are at stake.

The strike can be won. With 26,000 members ASLEF is not a large union - but it has considerable industrial strength. Despite bravado claims by the Tory press and the weaknesses of the ASLEF leadership the strike is obviously over 90% solid.

In fact BR on Wednesday claimed only 1,000

drivers at work: yet there are 1,700 drivers in the NUR alone!

Larger numbers of largely empty passenger trains on the move indicate not more scabbing but longer hours being worked by the handful of blacklegs who have gone in.

With determined organisation of flying pickets at strategic targets and patient explanation of the issues to shop stewards' committees, union branches, trades councils and Labour Parties, ASLEF members can tighten their grip on this dispute and force back BR and their

Tory backers.

In doing so they will strike a blow for every worker fighting in defence of jobs, wages and hard-won trade union rights.

And it is through such struggles, linking up wherever possible with other sections of workers through joint strike committees and local councils of action that the workers' movement can regain the level of mass mobilisation, self confidence and militant rank and file leadership that can confront and defeat this savage Tory government.

Tory axe over rail network

THATCHER'S Think Tank, the Centre for Policy Studies is advocating that railways should be converted into roads. According to them this would save the tax payer £1 billion a year. It would also mean that there would be no railways.

British Rail itself says that if the current level of investment is continued for the next ten years, the rail system will collapse with 3,000 miles of track (out of a total of 11,000) becoming

unsafe.

Some of BR's rolling stock (carriages and freight wagons) are 40 years old. There are 4,000 passenger coaches which are over 18 years old.

7,000 electric and diesel powered trains are over 18 years old. And out of a fleet of 3,500 locomotives only 16 were built last year.

Track renewal is far behind target, indeed 179 miles of speed restrictions exist because of poor track.

That's an indication of the shape the railway network is in.

Yet the Tories plan to slash 6,000 jobs in BR Engineering workshops. They continue to argue that productivity has to go up before any more money is put into the system. But the whole of BR has less money spent on it than on the Paris Metro.

BR gets only 29% subsidy from the government which is well below sub-

sidies other European railways get from their governments. Fares in Britain are almost double those in France.

So at a time when the clear need is for expansion of the railways as a more efficient and safer method of transport, the Tories are cutting back - with the possibility of eventually doing away with the entire system!

Rally round the rail strikers!

INSIDE: centre pages - the bosses' plans; pages 2-3 - reports from the picket lines

⊖ Ceasefire on LT

Andrew Rossing reports that the London Transport cuts have been delayed — but not yet defeated

AUEW STRIKE

SIX AUEW members are on strike for union recognition at Glendale Engineering, Hythe Road, London NW2.

The AUEW approached Glendale for recognition after recruiting seven of the ten workers (excluding the boss's family). But the management refused even to answer letters from the union.

The union members walked out on Monday June 28, and have been picketing and turning back some suppliers. Some non-union suppliers are however still making deliveries.

The AUEW North London district committee endorsed the strike last Monday, and blacking of Glendale products is being sought.

Messages/money: Mick Woods, 76 Austen House, Cambridge Rd, London NW6 5LY.

EDP pickets curbed

Around 50 people responded to the call for a mass picket to prevent scabs, deliveries and customers from crossing into EDP in Sheffield on Tuesday 6 July. The police were there from the start and played a highly political role, strengthened no doubt by the government's curbs on picketing.

The six picket rule was enforced as soon as they arrived, and others were pushed aside "right away from the gate".

They divided us up into two portions. The first was a group of EDP strikers. They were the six, so graciously allowed by the government at the gate. The second was what the ASTMS official called a demonstration of support.

But it wasn't a demonstration in the mould of the CND demonstrations we have seen so far. We were all active pickets. We were all showing disapproval of management's behaviour in victimising Jenny Wright and sacking the 21 who struck against her sacking.

Donations and messages of support should be sent to the EDP Strike Committee, c/o 61 Wostenhome Road, Sheffield S7 1LF.

PTA victim

18-year old Neil Grimes has become the latest victim of the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

He was arrested this week and taken to Paddington Green police station. Meanwhile, anti-terrorist squad police, with dogs, "tore his house apart" at the home of Neil's brother Peter Grimes.

Neil has never been politically active, and it seems he has been arrested only because Peter is a former organiser in Britain for the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

Information from, and messages of support to, Socialist the Prevention of Terrorism Act Campaign, 01 274 3961.

THE June rail strike on London's underground succeeded in preventing the immediate introduction of rail timetables which would cut the peak service on most lines by up to 25%.

Union leaders and LT management are now engaged in talks to find alternative ways of saving the money.

These seem bound to fail and LT railworkers could find themselves on strike again by the second week of August.

The peace deal signed by two of the three union executives, ASLEF and the white collar TSSA, included the condition that should the talks fail, the unions would allow LT to bring in the new timetables.

The NUR Executive rejected the deal because of this catch. Whether the peace cobbled together at the NUR conference included this commitment is unclear.

What is clear is that implementation will depend on the LT workers' willingness to resist.

The action — the first for more than a day for many years — gave rail workers considerable experience in how trade unions need to operate during a strike.

The basic strength of the strike was a deeply felt opposition to the cuts among rail union members.

The rail union leaders had consistently opposed the new timetables from the first.

Explain

But when it came to the day they had done little to explain the issues to their members or prepare them for strong and sustained action.

That this strength did not turn to a serious weakness is a measure both of the workers' attitude to the cuts and also the extent local ASLEF and NUR branches were able to organise and run proper strike committees.

This experience should prove invaluable in future struggles.

The London Transport Trade Union Defence Committee, which is the bureaucrats, called an all-out strike on the buses for this Monday on the correct assumption, as it turned out, that the rail dispute would be settled by then.

Garages, mainly in East London, came out on a one-day strike on Monday 28 June.

Although some rail strike committees visited local bus garages, calling for their support, the bus garages action was principally over impending bus cuts rather than in direct solidarity with fellow tube workers.

Effect

The effect of this action and the very fact that there was a rail strike, has forced London Transport to postpone its bus cuts from July 31 to the first week in September, for fear of provoking simultaneous bus and tube strikes.

There is a strong basis for joint action around both the cuts and the pay offer (7% plus important strings for both bus and rail workers). LT workers need to repeat their oft-voiced demand for a recall of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee which met in February to endorse the March 10 strike.

The decision to call this JSSC rests with the Defence Committee and since widespread demands for it have consistently been ignored by that committee it is impossible to say whether it will take place again, let alone be recalled on a regular basis which would make it much more the property of the members than the trade union leaders.

Unity in Action — a group of LT workers set up in March, which played a small but worthwhile role in the recent strike — is now working to bring together the local rail strike leaders and the best of the bus shop stewards to try to get them to meet together on a regular basis.

MEGAW MEANS WAR ON CIVIL SERVICE PAY

by Stephen Corbishley

IN 1981 the "Pay Research Unit" system of settling civil service wages by comparison with wages elsewhere was unilaterally scrapped by the government — and a major pay battle followed.

The official Megaw inquiry, set up to formulate a new pay bargaining system, has just finished its report.

And this inquiry — headed by a judge and including leading representatives of industry and finance, with a token right wing trade unionist — has reached predictable conclusions.

It tells the civil service trade unions: stand up again as you did in 1981, or accept a pay bargaining system that will:

*be based on pay comparison only with private enterprise (especially small, low-paid firms),

omitting major employers of clerical labour like the nationalised industries.

*link pay to individual merit — i.e. give local managers more power to discriminate,

*step up job evaluation,

*start moves to cut take-home pay by increasing the amount to be paid to pension funds,

*make access to arbitration conditional on government agreement.

Some of the unions organising the higher professional and administrative levels in the civil service will welcome the report, but it would destroy living standards for the vast bulk of civil service workers. Well over half of the civil service workers get less than £80 a week before tax; under Megaw things will get worse.

Militants in the CPSA, CSU and IRSF must start

a campaign for a wage claim that will unite the lowest paid workers in these three unions. We must demand no less than restoration of real earnings to the pre-1981 level which means something like a £20 per week increase. The claim must be for a flat rate increase. As in the CPSA, unions must call special delegate conferences to commit their unions against Megaw; and for strike action in 1983.

The CPSA special conference on pay is fixed for December so the left in CPSA is well placed to give a lead.

Particular responsibility thus lies with the current Broad Left majority on the CPSA Executive.

They must be urged to reject not only the Megaw committee majority report,

but also the minority report signed by Boilermakers' general secretary John Chalmers and evidently inspired by top civil service full-timers.

The minority report looks back nostalgically at the old Pay Research Unit system, pleading plaintively that the unions never broke with it in the 25 years of its existence. It calls for more regular comparability studies, it hints at productivity payments for new technology, and suggests that an unspecified minimum wage could be introduced gradually.

It does not challenge the basic axiom of the majority report — that civil service workers are the first and easiest target when governments want to control wages.

Only the rank and file can prove Megaw wrong on that.

COUNCILLORS BACK FIGHT AGAINST TEBBIT

"We therefore commit ourselves to fight the Employment Bill before and after it becomes law by:

*publicising what the law will mean and organising together with our employees and constituents to fight the Bill, calling for strike action on June 10 and on every future day of action against the Bill;

*refusing as employers to implement the Act, especially clauses relating to the use of non-union sub-contract labour,

*supporting totally any action our employees take against the new law,

*fighting for the return of a socialist labour government committed to repealing

I WOULD like to add my name to the list of sponsors of the Mobilising Committee in Defence of Trade Union Rights.

Best wishes for this vital campaign.

Yours sincerely,
Dennis Skinner MP

the 1980 and 1982 Acts and any future legislation the Tories may introduce to further impoverish the working class and smash its organisations."

This statement, circulated by the Mobilising Committee for the Defence of Trade Union Rights has been signed by the following Islington Labour coun-

cillors.

Ian Wilson, Alan Clinton, Derek Hines, Victor McGeer, J.R. Franklin, C. Calnan, K. Banham, Bob Crossman, M.K. Babulali, Rosie Dale, Anne Green, Joe Simpson, Maurice Barnes, Talal Karim, C. Chapman, P.N. Mullin, Sandy Marks, Chris Smith, Smarajit Roy, Rosemary Nicholson, Maureen Leigh, Barbara Rogers, David Rees, David Yorath, Peter Powell, Bill Sillett, Pat Longman, Sally Gilbert, Terry Herbert, Derek Sawyer, Keith Veness, Eric Brown, C. Bromley, Jan Whelan, Kathy Bundred, Alex Farrell, Valerie Veness, Carol O'Brien.

Other councillors to

sign include:

Manchester: Tom Egan, Eddy Newman, Phil Openshaw, Nilofar Siddiqi, Veronica Myers, Frances Dove, Pete Keenlyside, Joe Holly, Nick Harris, Kath Robinson, G. Byrne, A.J. Spenser, Pete Hildrew, Peter Morrison, Ken Strath, Sheila Robertson, Patrick Karney, J. Tucker, J. Stringer. Southwark: R.J. Doyle, Rob Smyth, J.E. Cannon, Sandy Macpherson, Tony Goss, Danny McCarthy, Trevor Ely, Elizabeth Bendall.

Contact: c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.

Circulars on everything — except the claim!

"AS far as the official leadership are concerned", Edinburgh COHSE shop steward Reg Bartlett told us, "they're playing it down. We're getting circulars about everything except the pay claim."

"The workers are really looking for leadership. But they won't get it from the officials."

"So we have to fill the gap. Through Health Workers for the Full Claim we're flooding the hospitals locally with as much information as possible."

The June 23 one-day strike got the biggest response yet from the health workers, and working class solidarity action on a scale not seen for many years. But instead of pressing home the advantage, the TUC Health Services Committee on June 24 decided to leave any further coordinated action for nearly a month.

And the action has not just been delayed but also weakened. Most workers thought that three days' action on July 19-21 obviously meant three days' strike. But the TUC Health Services Committee was careful to say "intensive nationwide industrial action", not strike.

NUPE's National Executive is calling for a "three day strike with the maintenance of accident and emergency services and the immediate care of all in-patients". But the COHSE leadership is stressing that it is not calling or supporting a strike. The GMWU leaders also are not calling for strike action.

With such delay, and such leadership, there is an inevitable tendency for

morale to sag. NUPE shop steward Anna Lunts put it like this: "There is such a long gap between now and the 19th that unless something is organised people will forget that we're even in dispute".

In Leicester, for example, the industrial holiday fortnight falls between now and the 19th, severely limiting what can be done in the way of building industrial support. In Coventry the three days July 19-21 themselves fall in the industrial holidays, and many hospital workers will be on holiday too.

But in many areas sectional action is continuing right through to the 19th, keeping up the momentum.

In Oxford, the transport drivers have been out since the 23rd, moving supplies only with trade union agreement. At Littlemore Hospital COHSE has decided to come out for three days despite the national leadership line.

In Coventry, the Central Sterile Supplies Department will be on strike from the 7th. The CSSD is also out indefinitely at Hope Hospital in Salford. In the Manchester area, switchboard operators at the Regional Health Authority and medical records staff at Oldham General are also out.

And work is also going ahead to get demonstrations and sympathy strikes on the 19th-21st. In Leicester, for example, a Trades Council demonstration is planned for the 21st; in Coventry, a Regional TUC demonstration for the 19th, in Islington, London, a trade union/Labour Party march and rally for the 21st.



On July 19-21 the demos can be bigger still

Sorry!

CORRECTION:

A sentence was garbled in last week's article on the struggle to defend the sliding scale of wages in Italy.

The last-but-one sentence should have read: "We have to combat the view put by the right wing in the unions — especially the Socialist unions — that we should first settle the three-yearly wage agreements (due to be signed last January), and afterwards we can see about the sliding scale."

CORRECTION:

There was a mistake in last week's article on SAAWU. It said that the

campaign to defend SAAWU was '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'. These guidelines were issued not recently but a year ago and indeed were the beginning of the campaign against SAAWU and were the cause of the sackings of SAAWU members at Rowntrees.

CORRECTION:

The author of last week's article about BL's disciplinary threats to Roy Fraser was not Tony Richardson, as indicated by mistake in the by-line.

SPANSWICK MOVE TO KNIFE NHS STRUGGLE

by Anna Lunts

THE PAY struggle in the NHS has now reached a crucial stage. The response to the three day strike on July 19-21, both from health workers themselves and from the wider trade union movement, will probably determine whether or not the dispute is escalated into the kind of struggle needed to win.

Already there are signs that the trade union leaders are trying to wind down the action. They can see only too clearly that serious escalation of the dispute would threaten their control over it.

CohSE's notorious sell-out merchant Albert Spanswick has already put the knife in by sending a telex to CohSE officials telling them there has been a misunderstanding. The three day strike is not a strike at all, but three days of 'intensive industrial action'.

Many CohSE branches up and down the country will ignore this cold-blooded attempt to sabotage their action, and will be out for the full three days if not longer.

The solidarity from other workers has been tremendous.



'Escalation of the dispute would threaten the officials' control'

ous - the highest level since the fight against the Industrial Relations Act, which united millions of workers in a common struggle.

The three-day strike should be the best display of solidarity yet, with thousands of workers following the lead taken by the miners and others. However, this solidarity will not continue unless hospital workers

themselves are out!

Not only must hospital workers support the three day strike, but action must be escalated now, or much of the support will be cut from under our feet.

Many hospitals are trying to keep action going by working to rule, pulling out sections, and lightning strikes. But these are difficult to sustain and will not win the 12% claim.

All-out indefinite action must be argued for and prepared for. It is the key to continuing the solidarity from other workers, and the key to cracking this ruthless government.

We should also try to make links with the ASLEF strikers at local level, with joint shop stewards' committees and strike committees visiting the drivers on the picket lines to show support.



LAST SUNDAY 20 activists from all over the country attended the fourth national meeting of Health Workers for the Full Claim in Birmingham.

We broadly agreed that we should argue that hospitals should stay out after the three day strike on July 19-21. Despite the problems of betrayal and isolation which have forced back hospitals which have previously taken indefinite strike action, most of us felt that we would have very little to lose by staying out. If the strike is not seriously escalated this time, there is a strong chance that the dispute will lose its momentum.

After hearing about the success of the local Health Workers for the Full Claim bulletin in Leicester, we agreed that other local bulletins would be important in arguing for workers to stay out.

There was a debate on the future structure of the campaign, and we agreed that a secretary, treasurer, and editor were needed, to share the workload, but that open national meetings should continue to take the decisions, rather than a formal steering committee.

The fact that we have been able to increase the print run of the bulletin every time (6,000 of the fourth bulletin have been produced) shows the need for a rank and file campaign in the present dispute. The formation of functioning local groups will put much-needed flesh on the bones of the campaign.

Next national meeting, Saturday July 24, in the Socialist Centre, Leicester.

Witch hunt in civil service unions

by Stephen Corbishley

TONY Christopher, General Secretary of the Inland Revenue Staff Federation, has started a purge of his union's left wingers. Less than two months after the IRSF Broad Left was founded, its steering committee have been suspended from union membership.

Probably on July 17 the Executive Committee will expel the six steering committee members. Included in that six is the IRSF vice-president, a long-time SWP member who had served on the IRSF EC for over five years.

Christopher and the right wing are mortally afraid that the IRSF, the only union to reject the pay sell-out in 1981, will follow the development of CPSA.

If expelled, the six also face the serious possibility of losing their jobs. In a workforce which has achieved a 90-95% level of unionisation, to be militants expelled from the union places them in a very vulnerable position.

Two rules give power to the bureaucrats. Rule 68 forbids 'circulation of any material whatsoever... by or from individuals, or by and from groups who are not a constitutionally elected branch committee... unless prior sanction is given by the General Secretary or Executive Committee'.

tee." Taken to its logical conclusion, it forbids even the circulation around a local office of a postcard from a member away on holiday without the permission of the General Secretary!

And Rule 7 gives the EC - if it is 'of the opinion' that a breach of the Rules has happened - powers to suspend and expel.

The IRSF Broad Left does not intend to back down. Its regional conferences planned for July (to precede the national Broad Left conference on September 4) are going ahead. Many of the left Branch Executive Committees, particularly in the Tax section, are planning office meetings.

Out of these meetings will develop a fightback against this petty-tyranny. The previous (successful) EC action against an SWP rank and file group 4-5 years ago stimulated Branch Committees to start local Branch magazines, and this present action can backfire for the EC.

This struggle shows that a witch-hunt in the Labour Party can easily be turned into the unions, and that therefore democracy in the unions and democracy in the Labour Party are indivisible.

Teaching jobs threatened

14,000 school teachers could be sacked next academic year, according to a report in the Guardian on July 6.

Another 15,000 teachers' jobs will be cut through natural wastage if the Tories' plans for spending cuts are met. And in Polytechnics and sixth form colleges, one lecturer in 12 will be sacked.

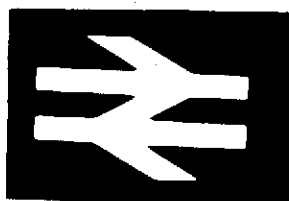
Non-teaching staff in schools, already decimated, will be cut by a further

3 1/2%, and then 7% in the two following years.

The figures come from a confidential official report on the implications of Tory budgeting.

Trade unionists in the NUT, NAS/UWT, NATFHE and NUPE should start pressing their leaders now to demand full publication of the government's plans, and to prepare for industrial resistance.

"The most serious situation since 1926"



ALAN STEPHENS reports from the ASLEF picket at Kings Cross, London.



ASLEF leader Ray Buckton

WHAT do you think is the way to win, we asked. "Effective picketing", one ASLEF activist replied. "But we should have been out all last week, and then we'd have won it straight off".

ASLEF branch secretary Steve Forey said: "The priority is our own depot, but we've got to stop trains running, and we're not going to do that just by standing outside Kings Cross station".

Assistant secretary Steve Good took up the point. "The EC is hiding. We've got to put pressure on them to get out and organise pickets".

Kings Cross ASLEF are not waiting for the EC, but have organised for their own flying pickets - to other rail depots, to Fleet Street, and to other crucial areas.

There can be no doubt that well-organised picketing could stop all rail traffic and make sure that cargoes normally carried by rail do not move. For all their bravado, British Rail themselves put the number of scabs no higher than a few hundred out of ASLEF's 24,000 members. ASLEF estimates the figures much lower - 25 members scabbing on Monday 5th, when BR claimed 250.

Solid

In many areas the strike has been absolutely solid. In Glasgow, for example, a big mass meeting of ASLEF members on Sunday 4th voted in support of the strike call with only two against.

The problem is that if enough people can be convinced that the strike is going badly, then the strike will go badly.

The British Rail Board is keeping up the pressure with threats. The Financial Times reported on Monday that "letters to state that drivers

were deemed to have dismissed themselves by going on strike could be distributed by the middle of the week". Urging the BRB on, leading Thatcherite MP George Gardiner ranted:

"Commuters demand that this strike be broken. They don't want another fudge". It would be a fight to the death. "Is it by any chance going to be the death of ASLEF? What a welcome event that would be".

At King's Cross, ASLEF branch chairperson Tony Dent had this to say about drivers who reckon that the safest thing is to scab.

Losing

"Men who don't belong to a union are out on their own. In two months' time these blokes who are good boys now and patted on the back by Parker will find themselves losing their jobs first".

And Steve Forey commented on the possible BRB strike-breaking moves.

"The first thing we want is support from the NUR. If

drivers are eventually sacked, then the TUC has no alternative but to recognise this as an attack on the union and to respond.

"We're in the most serious situation since 1926, and in a weaker position - but if the threats are carried out, I see the possibility of a general strike".

Branch committee member Steve Melton added:

"The TUC should give ASLEF whole-hearted backing, rather than the pathetic letter sent out so far. We need clear instructions from the TUC for union members to black goods normally moved by rail.

"If the sacking threats are carried out, then the TUC should call an all-out general strike because of the importance of the struggle to the whole trade union movement.

"There's no way it's just flexible rostering. There are also 4,000 jobs involved. If we cave in on this, then the whole trade union movement on the railway is threatened with destruction".

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Schmidt's government at the cross-roads



HELMUT Schmidt and the German SPD — the models so often held up to us by Denis Healey and the Labour Right — face a major political crisis which could mean the end of their 16 year period in government.

It now looks as if the SPD-FDP (Liberal) coalition is certain to be voted out of office at the next General Election in 1984, if it doesn't collapse before then.

There are two immediate threats: one wing of the FDP is already talking about a coalition with the Conservative CDU/CSU. Alternatively, the successive victories of the CDU/CSU in the elections for regional assemblies may by September give them a majority in the Upper House of the Federal Parliament. This would enable them to block any legislation from the directly elected Lower House where the SPD and FDP have a majority.

Crisis

This crisis has hit Schmidt very suddenly. In 1980 the coalition was re-elected with an increased majority over the CDU/CSU. Schmidt as leader of the SPD triumphed over the CDU/CSU's candidate for Chancellor, the extreme right-wing Bavarian leader Franz-Josef Strauss.

Since then, the SPD has suffered a string of major election defeats. This is not just a mid-term swing against the government. The SPD has lost control of a number of major city governments (Berlin, Munich, Frankfurt) which have traditionally been SPD strongholds. In state elections in both Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein the SPD lost around 6%.

Their coalition partners, the FDP, also did badly. The main beneficiaries were the CDU/CSU, who actually won over SPD voters and the "Greens", the ecological party, who in a number of areas broke the 5% barrier needed to get representatives elected. The Greens look likely to replace the FDP as the third major party.

In Hamburg, where elections took place in June, they hold the balance of power and there is a minority SPD administration, in a very strong SPD area which is Schmidt's home town.

Survey

A recent survey pin-points where the shift comes from. In 1980, 51% of people under 24 voted SPD; in recent elections only 33%. Of those shifting from the SPD to the CDU/CSU 63% are 'professional' but as many as 25% are workers. Of those shifting from the SPD to the Greens the figures are 56% and 20% respectively.

These figures — and the results from Hamburg — show that now even the traditional working class support of the SPD is shifting to some extent.

Why has this happened? In many ways, the reasons are similar to those for Labour losing in 1979. The SPD's stability was based on being able to offer the working class some minimal reforms on the basis of West Germany's relative economic strength.

The first cause of the political crisis is that even in West Germany that prosperity no longer exists.

Unemployment in March was at 7.6% (relatively high), not counting the immigrants who have been forced to leave the country. The West German Mark is no longer the supreme currency it was. More and more SPD-FDP government has been forced to attack workers' living standards.

Pressure

Schmidt faces pressure from differing directions. Most of his FDP partners are closer to the CDU/CSU on economic policy, favouring large cuts in public expenditure.

On the left of the SPD, a policy has been put forward of "Employment policy without cuts in social expenditure", "planned investment" and "participation", not dissimilar to the Alternative Economic Strategy.

The other major area where Schmidt is under pressure from the left and right is defence policy.

Schmidt favours the stationing of American missiles in Europe and will only consider disarmament if the USSR begins first and it is directly linked to further Russian reductions. This so-called "double decision" has met with massive opposition from the peace movement (which has held demonstrations of several hundred thousand in Bonn) and from the left of the SPD itself.

Generally, like Callaghan, Schmidt has traded on his position as the 'experienced statesman' and a figure of stability. This has enabled the CDU/CSU to put forward positive conservative policies, rather than just the slogan of 'Safety first'.

At the same time, the politics of Schmidt and state governments (such as in Hesse, where the SPD has used massive forces of heavily armed police to attack protestors occupying the site of a new runway for Frankfurt airport) have alienated young people in particular, who have few of the traditional SPD loyalties felt by older organised workers. They see the Greens as the only movement offering anything radical.

Expel

These pressures have found expression within the SPD itself. For a long time, the party leadership was able to expel any left wing dissidents with little opposition. In the last two years, increasingly, a left of sorts has begun to emerge in the SPD, particularly on the defence question. At the SPD Congress in April they were defeated in trying to get a decision against missiles. Schmidt successfully argued for postponing

a final decision pending forthcoming arms limitation talks.

The SPD leadership has two responses to these pressures. On the one hand, Schmidt blames the party's losses on its appearing to be split, threatens to ignore decisions of the Party Conference if they didn't go his way, and demands that the party shift further to the Right. On the other hand, Party Chairman Willi Brandt, sees the need to accommodate a bit to the peace movement and the Greens, recognising that their appeal is not just to the 'lunatic fringe'. He has even talked of possibilities of SPD-Green coalitions.

The crisis in the SPD has yet to result in the creation of a coherent alternative to its left. The Greens and the 'Alternative lists' (election blocs between ecologists and some elements of the far left) take in a vast spectrum of political attitudes united only in opposition to nuclear power and nuclear weapons, to projects such as the Frankfurt airport extension, and a vague opposition to the big parties and economic growth.

The Greens were founded by a disillusioned CDU MP and its supporters range from 'blood and earth' fanatics and ramblers through to ex-members of revolutionary groups.

The Greens have so far not had to be anything other than a protest movement. In Bremen, where 4 Greens were elected to the State Parliament in 1979, they said that they would work with any other party, and at times this has included the CDU. The Greens have been able to grow because of the absence of any real revolutionary alternative to the SPD and also because they have been able to capitalise on issues that have led to protest movements which the other bourgeois parties have opposed.

Once their success goes beyond a certain point, the



The organised working class is still the key to progress: steel strike 1979

Greens will be forced to put forward a positive programme and, lacking any roots in the working class or labour movement, they will increasingly become a conservative force, open to pressure from the right.

The crisis in the SPD has brought about a split to its left. Earlier this year the 'Democratic Socialists' were founded by a number of left SPD members. It has however failed to carry more than a few of the SPD left with it: it numbers around 1500 nationally, of whom the majority are probably ex-members of the SPD. It has however managed to group a number of different far-left currents (mostly local groups).

Many of these currents are pulling in different directions. There are groups which orient towards ecological issues and the Greens and others, such as groups of rank and file trade unionists in Berlin and elsewhere, who are more clearly oriented towards the working class movement. There are Euro-Communists, ex-Trotskyists and ex-Greens.

The DS does not have a coherent orientation and looks unlikely to find one without losing at least some of its constituent parts.

In many respects, it is

competing for the same political audience and activists as the Greens and the Alternative lists and lacks a clear enough identity to distinguish itself from them.

It remains, however, a field in which West German revolutionaries must intervene to win the forces attracted to the DS through their disillusionment with the SPD and the Greens. Without such an intervention the DS will simply lead to another of the dead-ends that have dominated the German far left over the last ten years.

The Greens and DS attract the support of people who are disgusted by the pro-capitalist policies of the SPD, yet see no response from the working class. The ecological and peace movements represent at least something that is happening outside the framework of 'conventional politics' and their success at the moment seems to point towards a possibility of going round the organised working class, which appears unable to respond to the SPD-FDP coalition's attacks.

In reality this reflects a major disorientation on the German left. The peace and ecological movements will not even make lasting gains



West Germany's 'consensus politics' are fraying at the edges. Bruce Robinson reports, and looks at the openings for the West German Left.

Will Schmidt's crisis just let in Strauss?

on their own limited demands without involving the working class movement — even more so if they are soon to face a CDU/CSU government.

The German left has to begin the patient and apparently unrewarding task of taking to the labour movement a programme that deals in an all-round

way with the attempts of the coalition (and the CDU/CSU) to solve the crisis at the expense of the working class.

Only if this task is begun now, will the political crisis of the SPD be a real step forward for the left, rather than simply resulting in a reactionary CDU-CSU government.

Washington gauges cost of Thatcher's war

FROM Britain it is difficult to form a picture of the impact of the Falklands war on Latin America, and especially on relations between the Latin American countries and the USA.

Before the war the likelihood was that Argentine possession of the Falklands would have led to US bases on the islands as part of the knitting together of a South Atlantic Treaty Organisation (involving the USA, Argentina, Brazil, South

Africa, and possibly Chile and Britain).

In the aftermath of the war things are likely to be different. But how different? US-Latin America relations are US-Latin America ruling class relations. They need each other.

Here we reprint, for the information of Socialist Organiser readers, a shortened version of a report from Mexico City by Alan Riding of the New York Times Service.

DESPITE Latin America's dismay at US support for Britain in the Falklands conflict, Washington's relations with much of the continent may not have been permanently damaged by the crisis, according to diplomats, govern-

ment officials and other experts in the region.

A senior official in Mexico said he thought the impact of the crisis on United States-Latin American relations had been exaggerated. "Yes, they have been affected, but not

in a very serious way," he said. "In each country, it's the bilateral relationship with Washington that really counts."

The United States' relations with Argentina, diplomatic sources said, would remain badly scarred by the conflict, although much would depend on internal developments in Argentina and on Washington's ability to persuade London to adopt a conciliatory attitude about the Falklands.

But they argued that since most Latin governments gave more importance to their relations with Washington than those with Buenos Aires, the Falklands issue would soon fade as a major point of friction with the United States.

Despite the perception in some Washington

circles that Latin America had lined up as a bloc with Argentina and against Britain and its US ally, reactions in Latin America were more varied and complex.

Because Argentines have never disguised their feeling of superiority over the rest of Latin America, often boasting of pure European stock, they have generally been disliked in the region.

Many Latin officials, who in public expressed solidarity with Buenos Aires, privately hoped to see Argentine "arrogance" deflated by a humiliating defeat in the Falklands.

Even in public there was less than unanimous support for Argentina. Chile, which faces an Argentine claim to islands in the Beagle Channel near Tierra del Fuego, took a neutral stance in the war, and

Colombia refused to endorse the precedent of Argentina's use of force because of Nicaraguan claims to San Andres and other Colombian islands in the Caribbean.

Brazil and Mexico, the region's largest and most influential powers, also maintained a low profile throughout the crisis and their relations with Washington have not been affected by the conflict.

The chorus of criticism of the USA from Latin America was in fact little more than a quartet comprising Venezuela, Peru, Guatemala and Panama. And, in each case, special circumstances may have been as important as direct sympathy for Argentina: Venezuela claims two-thirds of neighbouring Guyana, Peru has a longstanding territorial dispute with Chile, Guatemala claims Belize as its own, and Panama remains sensitive to the US presence in the former canal zone.

Unions must act to support Rowntree strikers

ABOUT 150 people, including a strong Socialist Organiser presence, marched to the headquarters of Rowntrees in York.

We were protesting against Rowntrees' refusal to recognise in South Africa the most elementary rights of black workers who have been on strike for over 16 months.

We demanded that Rowntree management recognise SAAWU as the representative union of black workers, that they re-instate all the 500 striking workers whom they sacked and that the SAAWU militants detained by the apartheid state be released.

Banners on the march included Hull Trades Council, Oxford Trades Council, Region 1 of the TGWU, USDAW North East Division, and BL Cowley Assembly Plant 5/293.

As ever, the Anti-Apartheid Movement's speakers appeared oblivious to the real problems of generating effective solidarity for black workers in South Africa.

This lack of concern was typified by their ritualistic praise of a large turnout, when what had to be confronted was how few people had been mobilised (perhaps in part due to holding the demonstration at such short notice, and after the universities and schools had ended their year).

The real problems (which some of the trade union

Bob Fine reports on the July 3 march in solidarity with SAAWU

speakers referred to) were these.

First, this demonstration was being held some 16 months after the dispute at Rowntrees started; and in the course of this time SAAWU and the striking black workers have been hit very hard. Yet no supporting strike or blacking action has been called for by any of the British unions. As a result, it is very hard now for this particular dispute to be won. If solidarity is to be genuine, and effective, a much speedier response is called for.

Second, calls for direct links between the independent unions in South Africa and unions in this country had been made by SAAWU as well as by local militants from the GMWU in the Rowntree plant.

Under the influence of the Anti-Apartheid 'boy-cott' policy, trade unionists have been boycotted while goods (and profits) have flowed freely between Britain and South Africa! Unions at Rowntrees (GMWU, TGWU, and USDAW) refused to send a fact-finding delegation over to visit SAAWU in South Africa, and have done little or nothing to bring a SAAWU representative here.

If such contacts had been made, there is no doubt but



that the solidarity campaign would have received an enormous boost.

Third, Anti-Apartheid initiated for its 'week of action' a half-hearted and poorly publicised campaign to 'think before you eat Rowntrees'.

At the meeting the AAM speaker, Mike Terry, simply ignored opposition to this toothless slogan from GMWU chief shop steward Trevor Haigh, who

said that the local unions at Rowntrees were keen to help their fellow workers in South Africa in other ways, but not through a campaign which, if successful, would hit their own members and offer them nothing.

The only response AAM is 'capable of making to this kind of position is' to say that there is no chance of their campaign affecting Rowntree's sales!

We cannot necessarily

offer Rowntree workers a way of seriously supporting South African strikers without making any sacrifice themselves: but we should listen to what sympathetic workers are saying and find in common with them forms of concrete solidarity into which they can channel their support.

Once the best means of fighting management is established, the fight must be taken up to convince convenors, stewards and the rank and file to carry it out.

Fourth, a call for a TUC conference on Rowntrees to organise solidarity, with a SAAWU speaker present if possible, has been made by the AUEW at the initiative of one of its shop stewards in Leicester.

This call needs to be actively pursued, not shrouded, as it was, in silence.

Fifth, the SAAWU strike at Rowntrees is only one of many industrial actions now being taken by independent unions in South Africa.

For example, at present FOSATU unions are on strike in the docks, the construction industry and

the aluminium plant at Richards Bay.

The AAM tends to take a passive or even antagonistic stance toward FOSATU unions because FOSATU has come out with a working class politics that is explicitly critical of the nationalist politics of the ANC, the South Africa Communist Party and its trade union wing, SACTU.

We need to support all the independent unions in South Africa and especially FOSATU which is the largest and arguably the most organised on a national level.

It is not sufficient to offer support only to SAAWU, simply because it is the most nationalist-inclined of the independent trade unions in South Africa.

Where do we go from here? We should continue to seek support for SAAWU's claims for industrial and other action to put pressure on Rowntree management, and call for the release of detained trade unionists.

In particular we should push for the establishment of direct links between SAAWU and the unions at Rowntrees here at all levels.

Montt digs in

ARMY officers who staged a coup three months ago to overthrow the Guatemalan regime of General Romeo Lucas have realised that they picked a wrong 'un for his successor.

General Efraim Rios Montt last week proclaimed himself President, unceremoniously elbowing aside his two triumvirate colleagues, and declared there would be no elections for at least 30 months.

This might seem routine in Guatemala: but Rios Montt is also increasingly revealed as a religious nut who believes himself installed in office by God.

The officers who brought Montt to power in order to provide a more flexible response to the rising popular opposition to the Lucas regime may now be having second thoughts.

But to topple him, they will plainly need a second coup. And Montt is well-placed in the affections of the Reagan administration — apart from being an expert in counter-insurgency: a talent which will be invaluable to the military machine in the months and years ahead as they face a 6,000-strong peasant based guerrilla army.

POLISH DEMO

DESPITE six months of heavy martial law, more than 3,000 Polish workers turned out in Poznan on June 28 to commemorate the dead from major riots in the city in 1956.

Engineering workers from the Cegielski plant marched to the monument at the end of the afternoon shift to be confronted by riot police and water cannons.

In 1981, the commemoration drew a crowd of 150,000, addressed by Lech Walesa.

Turkish torture

THE leader of the Turkish left wing trade union confederation DISK last week told a military court how he had been tortured by police interrogators.

General Evren's military junta rode to power in September 1980 determined above all to crush power of the Turkish left wing and labour movement. DISK leader Abdullah Basturk is one of 52 leading members of the 500,000-strong union facing charges which could carry the death penalty.

He told the court that he was given between 80-100 beatings during the first stage of his imprisonment.

And he claimed that he was subjected to 'six days and six nights of physical and psychological abuses' on being handed over to police interrogators.

He was forced to listen to the screams of other prisoners while held blindfold.



Seal of approval

want more private investment, an essential first step is to create a climate that would make such investment attractive."

These were the words of David Rockefeller, ex-chief of the giant Chase-Manhattan Bank. He completed a ten-nation tour of Africa earlier this year, as chairman of the Bank's International Advisory Committee.

It is because of Rockefeller and his class that millions of people are starving, when there is food enough for all.

So long as the economy of a country remains capit-

alist, that country is caught in the vice-like grip of monopoly capital, with no way out of poverty and oppression for the masses of people.

The only force that can break that grip and open the road to planned economic development is the mobilisation of the masses behind working class leadership.

It is exactly this force which the radical middle class governments in Africa fear and oppose. This is why the governments in Zimbabwe, Angola, and the other countries remain hostages of monopoly capital.

Despite all their radical

speeches, despite the wishes of the best of them, these governments act to protect the profits and the control of capitalism. As Rockefeller put it: "As far as African socialism is concerned, I am convinced the socialism of most of the African leaders I talked with meant a very specialised thing. Indeed, I think socialism in Africa is more labels and trappings than reality. The clear impression I got in speaking with leaders in places like Zimbabwe, Angola and Guinea was that these nations seek closer economic and commercial ties with the US."



Mugabe

"I believe the key element in riding out the current depression and expanding African economies over the longer term, is the commitment to give as free rein as possible to the private sector. I stressed to the leaders I met that if they

Honduran troops in Salvador

AN estimated 2,000 Honduran soldiers have crossed the border to El Salvador and lent their murderous talents to the Salvadorean armed forces.

And the world's press, which would have shrieked hysterically if Nicaraguan or Cuban troops had gone to the aid of the FMLN guerrillas, has relegated the news to inside pages — or blacked it out altogether.

The Honduran soldiers have joined in a large-scale offensive against the guerrilla forces of the FMLN which had begun extremely badly for the Salvadorean High Command.

The guerrillas had evaded the main concentrations of military force,

but hit other selected targets — roads, electricity supplies and a radar and communications station in Chamaltenango, which was destroyed.

But the guerrillas also claim that last month they engaged in a pitched battle with the butchers of the elite Atlacatl Brigade, killing or wounding 550 of the state forces and capturing 44.

The Honduran reinforcements — totalling 30% of the entire Salvadorean army — come from another regime staunchly backed by US imperialism, and their arrival follows extensive training programmes in which Argentine military experts have been involved.

The US administration

faces popular opposition to any military involvement in El Salvador and finds it embarrassing to intervene directly on behalf of the vicious Salvadorean regime, which is nominally headed by President Magana but in reality dominated by the extreme right wing D'Aubuisson and his Arena party.

In place of open military involvement, therefore, the State Department is pursuing its objective of quelling the Salvadorean struggle by facilitating actions by the Honduran dictatorship — who themselves have a material interest in bottling up the Salvadorean masses.

Indeed the Honduran military command itself has recently come into the limelight, not because of its

daily brutality against Honduran workers and peasants but because soldiers committed the indiscretion of raping and killing two volunteer relief workers — one of them an American citizen!

Opponents of Reagan's support to the Salvadorean junta have for many months used bumper stickers proclaiming 'In El Salvador US guns kill US nuns'.

Now is the time for the US and international workers' movement to take action to halt the flow of arms and aid to the reactionary regimes of Central America, and rally in solidarity behind the struggles of the FMLN and other anti-imperialist forces.



Re-born Women's Campaign for Jobs

Women
in
struggle



by Gerry Byrne

A Women's Campaign for Jobs — that's the proposal that was enthusiastically adopted to follow on from the Action Committee which organised the June 5 Women's Right to Work demonstration.

Nearly 20 women from all over the country came together to decide how or whether the Action Committee should continue to function. There was overwhelming support for its continuation, to build and develop further the contacts and strengths established in the run up to June 5.

But it was felt it should be put on a more formal footing — hence the change

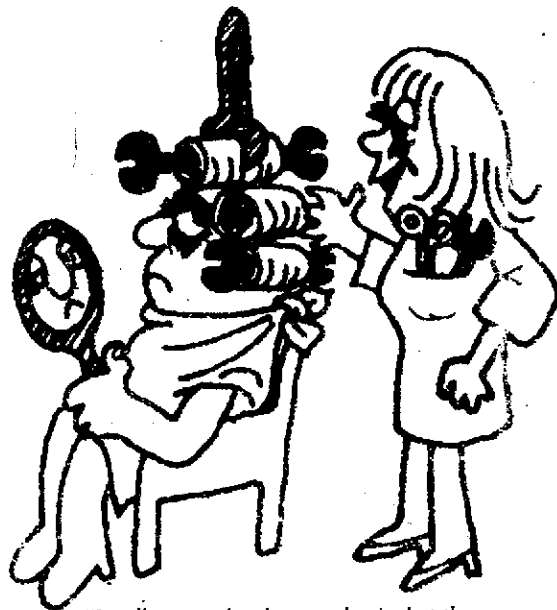
of name — with at least a minimal structure so that local groups and organisations could affiliate and be kept in touch.

The afternoon was devoted to what kind of activities and initiatives the re-born campaign should engage in. There was some polarisation between those who felt local work should take priority, arguing that to an extent the campaign for the march had diverted energies from supporting local struggles, and those who felt national focuses were also needed, to break down the isolation of local groups and create some sense of being part of a cohesive and dynamic movement.

Much of this debate centred round the proposal previously raised in Women's Fightback for a Women's March for Jobs. Fightback secretary Rachel Lever pointed out that "most of the feedback so far has been very positive, and the placards and badges were highly popular on June 5."

Some sisters felt the analogy with the People's March was either "over-ambitious" (Jude Arkwright, Socialist Challenge) or rather alarming. One sister who had been on the Right to Work march felt that these kind of events were diversionary, exhausting the marchers and taking them away from more productive local work.

Some of these objections were conceded as valid. Perhaps we should not be aiming for a "long march", but rather building on the "rolling demonstration" idea — with a coordinated series of local marches linking up with local workplaces and struggles, and only a token number of



marchers doing the whole stint.

NUPE shop steward Anna Lunts pointed to her experience over the health service pay campaign, where requests to address workplace mass

meetings have gained an enthusiastic response.

The general feeling was that while the campaign would stand or fall by its ability to build a solid local base, including building unemployed-unwaged

women's groups, such local groups needed the sense of support and solidarity generated by a national event.

Whatever final shape it takes it was stressed we need a nationwide event that combines the advantages of national (press publicity, sense of unity and solidarity) and local work (building a base, linking up with living struggles).

The meeting adopted the call for a nationwide event, such as a Women's March for Jobs, but felt the detailed planning of it should be left to a wider body to decide. So a women only conference will be called in September to launch the Women's Campaign for Jobs.

It will discuss 1) building local campaigns, organising unwaged women and linking up with struggles; 2) Planning a nationwide event within a year to focus the local work.

Other initiatives were suggested to build up to the march-tour. These included:

*A national day of women registering as unemployed and a stand-up-and-be-counted campaign (which came out of the February Organising Conference called by the Action Committee).

*A demonstration on the Sunday at the start of the Labour Party conference in Blackpool;

*Liaising with the Civil Service unions and the unemployed movement on action against the Rayner proposals which are due to be implemented in October (a day off occupations and strike action was suggested but this will have to be investigated further);

*Picketing in support of the Runcorn strikers, who are now back on strike, after management went back on their agreement to take them back.

So who is 'normal'?

THE stereotype 'normal' household — father out working, mother at home, two children — is a tiny minority of actual households. Although social conventions, advertising, housing provision etc. all take it as typical, it is about 5% of the total.

The recently published preliminary results of the latest General Household Survey give more background on this.

53% of households are only one or two people. And 32% of all households (included in that 53%) are old people's households — people over 60 living either alone or with one other person.

Only 35% of households include children. Of those, 12% are single-parent households (this percentage has increased from 8% in the early '70s). Seven out of eight single parents are women.

For women — including married women — to go out to work is not an exception, or a matter of 'pin money', but the rule. 58% of married women have jobs, and another 4% are looking for jobs. In the age 35-54, the proportion of married women who either have jobs or are looking goes up to 69%.

Interestingly, the survey reports that "The proportion of unemployed married women who are not registered has fallen steadily over recent years, from 70% in 1975 to 41% in 1981". (The proportion of unemployed

non-married women who do not register is much lower — 16% — but it seems that this may be decreasing too).

This may reflect an increased willingness among women to demand and expect their right to a job.

So the stereotype is not typical. That does not mean, however, that it is a pure fiction.

The vast majority of people still get married at some time. Most have children and live in 'nuclear' families. The 90-odd per cent of households which differ from the stereotype mostly do not represent a different pattern of life. Rather, they have not yet reached the stereotype, or (like the 32% of households which are old people's households) they have lost it and find themselves in the position of leftovers.

The stereotype is important for capitalism because it is an integral part of its economic mechanism. The leftovers, the missed-out ones, do not matter.

On the nature of the stereotype, the footnote in the report giving the definition of a "household" is most revealing: "A household is a group of people who all live regularly at the address... and who are all catered for, for at least one meal a day, by the same person". "All catered for by the same person"! Guess who...

The definition has just recently been changed to cut this revealing clause, but whether for feminist reasons is not clear.

THE DOME'S THE LIMIT!

IF you've walked along Drayton Park in Islington and wondered what that building was with the green dome, here is the answer: it is going to be Women's City.

Empty

The building has been empty for nine years, but with a lot of dedicated work by women architects, surveyors, engineers, plumbers, electricians and decorators, it's practically a purpose-built women's centre.

In the 14,000 square feet under its dome, there's a

ready-made auditorium that could seat 1500, a

ready-made cafeteria with an adjoining creche area, space for workshops, dances, meetings, film shows, rehearsal rooms and studios, galleries and library, bookshop and offices. There are plans for a top quality computer.

As well as being a cultural, political and resource centre, Women's City will also provide the first 24-hour Attackline giving practical help and support to some of the women who suffer violent attacks every day in London (On average,

the rate is 144 violent attacks in each 24 hours).

Any woman who has been assaulted will be able to ring a freephone number through to Women's City, which will send out a car with a woman driver to go to her and take her wherever she wants to go, with no charge.

A general women's minicab service will also be based at Women's City.

Attract

Women's City will obviously attract visitors from all over the country and around the world. But it will also be for the

women of Islington: somewhere to leave the kids while they do the shopping, somewhere to come for help and advice and relaxation, not just for the dungaree set.

Cinema

A launderette, a Saturday morning kids cinema, perhaps a kids' library, and other features that will make it useful to women in the immediate area, are among the priorities.

How is it all going to come about? The Women's City Co-op are approaching every source of money in sight — including Islington Council, but also

the GLC, Arts Council, women's banks in the USA, and are looking at fund-raising ideas like "buy a brick for Women's City".

We're determined to get the money and none of us has any doubt that we will. Women are standing by ready to start the work of renovation. Others are raising support.

Islington Council Women's Committee will be discussing the project at its next meeting, and looking at the plans that have been drawn up.

RACHEL LEVER
(From the Islington Labour Party paper Islington Voice)

WHAT'S ON

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

SUPPORT the health workers! Islington march and rally, Wednesday July 21. March 12 noon from the Town Hall, rally 2pm at Whittington Park.

TRIBUNE rally. Stop the Pange! Speakers: Tony Benn, J. Richardson, Arthur Scargill. Fri 10.30. Camden Town Hall, London N1.

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

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 help. C/o Edinburgh Trades Council, 12 Picardy Place, Oxford Labour Committee on Pland, 468 Banbury Rd., Oxford. 0865 58238.

Coventry PSC. John Fisher, c/o ASTMS, 26 Queens Rd., Coventry. Labour Poland Solidarity Fund, c/o Cooperative Bank, 110 Leam 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.

STOP SIZEWELL B — national rally/conference against the Pressurised Water Reactor, Saturday November 6, Central Hall, Westminster. Called by Anti-Nuclear Campaign.

IRISH PRISONERS in English jails: national weekend 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.

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

TROOPS OUT delegation to the North of Ireland. August 7 to 9. Details from John Underhay 01-735 1064, or PO Box 353, London NW5.

ZIONISTS hands off Lebanon! Labour Committee on Palestine picket of El Al office in Regent St. 12 noon, Saturday July 17.

LABOUR Committee on Palestine public meeting: Friday July 23, 7pm, County Hall, London SE1.

NO BANS, no expulsions, no register! Glasgow Socialist Organiser meeting. Tuesday July 13, 7.30, AUEW Halls, West Regent St, near Blythswood Square.

HOLOCAUST 82: genocide in the Lebanon. Meeting organised by Labour Middle East Council in conjunction with Trade Union Friends of Palestine. Wednesday July 21, 7.30, Dulwich Baths Small Hall, Crystal Palace Rd, London SE22.

CHILE/El Salvador festival: Thursday-Saturday September 24-26. Three days of music, poetry, theatre, exhibitions, films, seminars and workshops, at Manning Hall, University of London Union, Malet St, London WC1. Details: El Salvador Solidarity Campaign, 01-359 2270.

Copies available (20p plus postage from 41 Ellington St, London N7)

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK 20p

WE WANT Jobs

Women's march for jobs

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EUROPE 82

Growth of anti-nuke campaign

by Dave Spencer

THERE have been massive ban the bomb demonstrations held over the past year in all the capital cities of Western Europe together with a march of a million in New York.

This reflects a deep

concern throughout the world about the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the very real threat to the future of the human race.

At the Europe '82 conference held in Brussels

over the weekend July 2-4, reports were given of the activities of the peace movement throughout the world and intense discussion on the political problems facing us.

Some of the most moving accounts came from the Third World, doubly and triply oppressed by imperialism.

A missionary from Belau island in the Pacific spoke of a mass movement amongst islanders for nuclear free zones against American imperialism.

An Eritrean spoke against non-violent action. He said "We have guns in our hands, but peace in our hearts".

There were many interesting themes and reports at the conference but the main theme that came out was impatience with the dead hand of bureaucracy and official party machines.

For example the organisers refused to invite officials from Eastern European organisations apart from Romania.

A key debate, therefore, was on Friday night between Tony Benn and Rudolf

Bahro of the Green Party of West Germany. Bahro stressed the need for grass roots rank and file action bypassing official organisations. Tony Benn stressed the need for the rank and file to take over labour movement organisations and make their leaders accountable.

The organisation of the conference was mainly on the basis of workshops, sharing similar experiences and creating networks for future activities. This worked very well and what became clear was the tremendous upsurge of support everywhere that was being gained.

The great confusion over political aims and solutions was also clear. But the feeling of comradeship and of being part of a mass movement seemed to overcome the widest differences at this stage.

A tremendous ovation was given to Fenner Brockway, over 90 years old, who proposed that next year, the conference should be held in Berlin and that we should organise a mass demonstration to coincide with it.



The horror of the Lebanon war has shaken even ardent Zionists

LABOUR COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE

"EVENTS in the Lebanon have shaken sections of the Zionist establishment by their brutality. In Britain, some of those who until now have been ardent supporters of the state of Israel and of Zionism in general have recoiled in horror and begun to see the true nature of the Zionist state and the validity of the Palestinian cause."

"This makes the present a particularly propitious time to establish a long-needed campaign, a Labour Committee on Palestine."

Words

With these words, Andrew Hornung, a Socialist Organiser supporter, introduced an inaugural meeting of the Committee which will fight in the labour movement and the Labour Party in particular against Zionism and for Palestinian self-

determination.

The inaugural meeting, held on June 30, was well attended, both by representatives of different tendencies on the left and by interested individuals, including Israeli anti-Zionists. The Committee hopes to function like the Labour Committee on Ireland, organising support groups throughout the country.

Left

The meeting agreed that there was a long road ahead, as a number of prominent left-wingers have been energetic pro-Zionists — Ian Mikardo, Les Huckfield, Tony Benn to name a few. Indeed, in the Labour Party, it is frequently right-wing MPs, like Andrew Faulds, that have taken much more creditable positions.

After a brief discussion a statement was adopted as a

basis for the campaign, centred on solidarity with the Palestinians, opposition to the Zionist state, and immediate withdrawal by Israel from the 'occupied territories'.

*Labour Committee on Palestine picket of El Al office, Regent Street, 12.00 noon Saturday 17 July. "Zionists, hands off Lebanon! Out of the occupied territories now! Solidarity with the Palestinian people and their chosen representative, the PLO!"

*Labour Committee on Palestine Public Meeting: Friday 23 July at 7.00pm, County Hall. Labour movement, Palestinian and Israeli anti-Zionist speakers.

*Contact Labour Committee on Palestine, c/o 28 Carlton Mansions, Holmleigh Road, London N16.

Close down NF market stall!

FOR THE last few weeks Nazi racist propaganda has been sold openly in Brick Lane market as a result of the council unknowingly issuing a licence to an individual who was acting on behalf of a fascist organisation.

Anti-racist groups in the area have been alarmed by this, and have made efforts to get the licence cancelled. But the council has hidden behind legal arguments.

stall!

The left councillors are attempting to question this policy in full council, and have issued a call to get rid of the stall.

Other incidents like racial attacks and harassment by white tenants on

an estate where a Bengali was moving into his new home and had it barricaded against him, have been temporarily thwarted by other tenants and anti-racist group support, but the general increase in racism shows the nastier effects of a patriotic war like the Falklands.

Weak

The Labour Party is weak on the question of self-

defence against racist attack and Bengalis' memories of the events in 1978 leave a suspicion of labour movement involvement.

The left Labour councillors stand will be backed by a council lobby, but socialists should be aware that just revoking the licence will not end the fascist violence.

SUSAN CARLYLE



Echoes of Warsaw

"BEIRUT 1982 — Warsaw 1944; it is difficult; it is difficult to avoid a direct comparison, such an acute irony of history, with in both cases a ghetto people demanding a homeland, both beleaguered within an alien capital under siege by a powerful ideological enemy and with another army either unable or unwilling to come to their aid, standing off nearby."

That's the way one letter-writer to the Guardian sees it. A Jew is not the only one. R is a paratrooper living in northern Israel whose testimony on the Lebanese atrocities was reported in the Israeli daily Davar. "When I look at what I have done in terms of my own values, I cannot help remembering what was done to my people during the Second World War."

"I am not making accusations, I know the

difference between those 'processed' and selected at that time and those whom we are 'processing' and selecting now. Nevertheless, it turns out that the job of an army of occupation... invariably involves the very measures we were exposed to in the 1940s."

IN THE midst of campaigning for the health workers, don't forget others who are also having to tighten their belts.

After being elected as SDP leader, Roy Jenkins is going to have to manage on £30,000 a year — paid to him until the end of 1983 as a 'farewell payment' from the EEC Commission.

He is giving up his job as director of merchant bankers Morgan Grenfell, which brought him £10,000 a year (for attending a few board meetings) and a chauffeur-driven car.

Starring David!

THE recently released film of Chaim Potok's famous novel, The Chosen, cannot be judged simply by what it says about Zionism and the Palestinians.

Still, its total emotional endorsement for the state of Israel coupled with numerous unchallenged statements about Arab "aggression" and the fear of "Arabs killing Jews" makes it yet another

Hollywood vehicle for Zionism.

We all know that the American Indians were blood-thirsty savages and the settlers wonders of Christian morality; and that the Japs were a bunch of torturing slit-eyed maniacs while the US marines were tough but fair. Now we know that the Arabs are murdering anti-semites and that...

LAND OF THE FREE

THE US immigration service is appealing against a court order instructing it to release some 1,900 refugees from the Duvalier dictatorship in Haiti from internment camps where they have been held since fleeing to the US.

Unfortunately the court order was based not on human rights, but on a technical flaw in the legality of the US government's policy. The government is still saying loudly that it will lock up any future refugees from Haiti.

Tearful kelpers

FROM most reports, you would think that the Falkland islanders were enthusiastic champions of the British war in the South Atlantic.

An article in last Saturday's Financial Times by BBC correspondent Robert Fox gives a different picture.

"Towards evening", he writes, "the marines and paras moved towards Stanley. A few islanders stood in the silence of deep shock, some weeping openly. The winter campaign had distorted or destroyed their old way of life, perhaps forever."

100,000 on anti-war march

ABOUT 100,000 demonstrators rallied in Tel Aviv last Saturday to protest against Israel's invasion of Lebanon. The "Peace Now" movement, which called the demonstration, is calling for an end to the war, peace negotiations now, and the resignation of Defence Minister Sharon.

Opposition to the war has come from the most unlikely sources, including Nahum Goldman, ex-president of the World Zionist Federation, and Rabbi Amitai, head of the Hesder religious seminaries which are close to the ultra-conservative Gush Emunim movement.

Twenty three graduates from the seminaries have been killed so far in the Lebanese fighting, a figure which casts some doubt on the Israeli casualty figures.

While the "Peace Now" movement is predominantly middle class and certainly does not question the fundamentals of Zionism, the huge turn out makes the protest immensely significant.

Among the protestors were many soldiers and reservists as well as the relatives of fighters at the front. Increasingly meetings opposing the war are being addressed by pilots and paratroopers.

Their protests are unlikely to go unpunished, however. A group of army officers who took part in the huge "Peace Now" demonstration may face court-martial. The Agriculture Minister has called their action "mutiny".

Other soldiers have signed anti-war petitions and 22 air force pilots and paratroopers from the unit that carried out the Entebbe raid in 1976 have written to Sharon demanding his resignation.



Now the bayonets are beginning to think

TURNING PARKER IN A MICHAEL EDWARDS

'Work on our terms, or get sacked'. BL pioneered the formula. Now BR seems to be following suit. Harry Sloan reports

SIR Peter Parker neither looks nor sounds like Michael Edwards. His chubby cheeks and public school breeding contrast visually with Edwards' lean South African arrogance. And as a union-buster he has always appeared distinctly a keen amateur rather than one of the "professionals".

But Edwards can't be everywhere at once. And there are lots of unions to be confronted. So the Tory government and the employers must 'make do and mend', using the management personnel that comes to hand.

Instead of replacing Parker — as they had replaced Sir Richard Dobson with Edwards at BL, or Sir Charles Villiers with Ian MacGregor at BSC — the Tories have piled pressure upon him, and persuaded him to enlist the services of a squad of mercenary anti-union 'hit men'.

The abrupt shift in the British Rail Board's demeanour since the one-day stoppages by ASLEF earlier this year is apparently linked to the consultations by the Board with a firm called Opinion Research and Communications, headed by one Tommy Thompson.

Daily Mail

Thompson is a former Daily Mail political correspondent — and advisor to the Tory Party's Central Office. His company offers what the Daily Telegraph describes as:

"a consultancy service for right wing businessmen. It also carries out secret staff surveys for management."

Among these surveys, according to the Telegraph, was one carried out for BL during a pay dispute.

And another was done for British Rail last week. Having conducted a "sample" of 613 railworkers at 87 stations and depots, ORC reported that 53% of ASLEF members and 66% of NUR members would vote against a strike if a ballot were held.

This management-commissioned poll was headlined by the Sun — without attributing the figure to ORC. In other words ORC not only offers a gauge of individual feelings of some workers for the benefit of management — but its figures — where judged appropriate — can be then passed on for propaganda purposes to the gutter press.

But ORC does more than passively assess opinion: it offers guidance to management on how to shape opinion. In this capacity, the firm drafted the "personal" letters sent by Parker to all 125,000 rail workers in the

The letter threatened that a strike would mean no pay increase, the loss of thousands of jobs and the closure of some lines and services.

And it contained an outright challenge to the trade union closed shop, promising to would-be scabs that their jobs would be protected in the event of any union disciplinary action.

"If you decide not to strike, the Board will not accept loss of trade union membership as a cause for dismissal."

In many respects therefore it is a direct attempt to go over the heads of union representatives and bludgeon individual members back to work, the British Rail stance is an echo of the arrogant posture struck by Edwards in BL.

Postal ballot

An important role in such confrontations is played by the postal ballot, or (where this cannot be achieved or might show a majority for action) the "personal" threatening letter. Exploiting the unease of individual workers at the (invariable) equivocation of their union officials and right wing stewards, and using the isolation of workers in their homes, such letters always set out to atomise the mass strength of a collective decision.

Thus in the famous April 8 1980 BL showdown, Edwards successfully forced an abject retreat by union leaders by threatening to sack any worker who failed to clock in that day. Those who came in to work, his letter explained, would be deemed to have accepted the company's 5% pay offer — and its 92 pages of productivity strings — while those who did not would be regarded as having sacked themselves.

19,000 BL workers defied this ultimatum and stayed out. But it had its desired impact — on the union leadership!

TGWU leader Moss Evans was drawn into a personal meeting with Edwards — and came out having completely surrendered.

This is the pattern of repeated battles in BL. Last year's pay review too saw Edwards issue a threatening letter to all 58,000 car-workers on the eve of mass meetings to decide on action over the company's 3.8% pay offer.

If the strike, called by the Joint Negotiating Committee two weeks earlier went ahead, Edwards warned, he would shut down the whole of BL. And he would liquidate any individual plant which took action for an increased offer.

His threat to sack the BL workforce — and thus put at risk the jobs of up to one million workers in engineering and ancillary industries all over the country — was plainly backed at top level by the Tory government.

It did not intimidate the workforce. They voted 8-1 to proceed with the strike, sacking 100 managers up at Edwards' and his threats. But the threat to sack

labour movement: it scared the trade union bureaucracy witless.

Workers on the shop floor were both desperate enough for money and confident enough to defy Edwards' talk of closure: but, detached from their members, and accepting every word and every statistic trotted out by Edwards on the state of the company, the knees of the top union officials could be heard rattling together like castanets.

Headed by AUEW negotiator Ken Cure they scratched around frantically for a "compromise" that would let them off the hook. The TUC was dragged in to help — as were the Labour leaders, and ACAS.

The final miserable climbdown came on the weekend before the strike. As militants began preparing in earnest for the mass picketing on the Monday, Edwards met with 11 union general secretaries and Len Murray, and struck a "deal"

which went over the heads of the Joint Negotiating Committee and was actually worse than the original 3.8% offer.

The prospect of entering a major confrontation with both the government and Edwards while their own officials were openly against them sapped the strength of the recalled mass meetings — and an 8-1 majority for strike action was transformed into a 25,000 to 19,000 vote to accept the "deal".

The lesson has not gone unnoticed by other managements. And there is reason to believe from ORC's involvement with BR, that in fact the BL experience is being consciously generalised, at least within the public sector.

In the case of the NUR strike, management had an added advantage compared to Edwards in the last BL pay round.

The resistance to Edwards had been fuelled tremendously by the mass meetings held in each plant,

which allowed every worker to draw strength from the 88% support for the strike. Every worker had participated in a meeting at which the offer and the union response were explained.

Sid Weighell

But the NUR, bureaucratic from top to bottom, had offered no such collective strength to its members and for a very material reason.

The vote for strike action had been taken by the NUR Executive against the strong opposition of General Secretary Sid Weighell. Weighell had never made any secret of his desire to avoid any serious struggle over pay — or anything else.

From the day of that vote to the start of the strike there was no attempt whatever to use the machinery of the NUR to mobilise for the strike, or to explain the issues in detail to the members.

Instead it is plain that

behind the scenes right wing officials throughout the union were working to undermine the strike vote from the lay Executive, looking towards the union's right-leaning AGM as the forum to overturn it altogether.

On top of this the ASLEF leadership, which had — under pressure — put forward an apparently militant, 'left' face on the issue of flexible rosters earlier in the year, remained rooted in narrow sectoralism, and refused to support the NUR in the struggle on wages for 1982.

Instead, Ray Buckton and other ASLEF leaders viciously attacked the NUR and witch-hunted militants who pressed for solidarity, common action and respect for NUR picket lines.

It was under these more fruitful conditions that Parker was able to issue the BR Board's threatening letter to rail workers. It was written by ORC — at a cost of £90,000. And for some

railway workers it must have reinforced uncertainties and confusion over the issues.

But it did not break the strike. The vast majority of NUR members heeded the strike call. It was their bureaucratic leaders — Weighell's right wing cronies and faint-hearted conference delegates with no stomach for a fight — who called off the action at the end of a day in which militants were just beginning to feel their strength.

Weighell of course acted as the aggrieved party. He complained that cordial relationships between NUR negotiators and BR might never be the same again.

He complained that BR management — once eager enough to use the closed shop to their own advantage (by using NUR leaders to force through unpopular deals on management's behalf) — were now threatening to break it up.

But the responsibility for the betrayal of the pay struggle on the rail is



1980: BL workers and steelworkers press for common action. 1982: Police smash into Laurence Scott picket lines; health workers fight for 12%. Every time the union

TUC leaders: running scared

"WE shall have fights with governments of all varieties, but we must never give the impression that we or any other union will go on strike in order to change the government."

These words from Joe Gormley in the aftermath of the Tory election victory in 1979 have spelled out the attitude of TUC leaders to every struggle that has taken place against the Thatcher offensive.

From time to time when they have found it impossible to stem a tide of rank and file militancy, some union officials have reluctantly sanctioned action by particular sections of workers: but on each occasion the action that has occurred has been bog-

ged by a refusal of the TUC leadership to generalise and spread struggles into an all-out mobilisation against the government.

The pace for this was set by the TUC's actions during the steel strike of 1980. After 13 weeks of tenacious and solid strike action by over 100,000 workers a sell-out formula was hurriedly cobbled together at the beginning of April.

Why was the deal stamped through? Because the right wing steel union bureaucrats knew that BL workers, having repeatedly voted for action, were due to strike all-out from April 8.

And dockers, who had dragged their feet on solid-

arity blacking of steel, had finally begun it in earnest; a call for strike action on the docks was issued as the final touches were put to the sell-out.

The steel strike was indeed from day one recognised as a political strike against the Thatcher government: and as such it was a strike which terrified the union leaders, whose reformist politics reflect their contented position of power and privilege within the existing system.

To mobilise the independent strength of their mass membership would disrupt the cosy relationships established over decades between union bureaucrats and the employers:

it would lift the lid with which the bureaucrats hold down the militancy and demands for democracy and accountability among new layers of rank and file workers.

Mass struggle and class confrontation are therefore anathema to the bureaucracy. Many of them would actually prefer to preside over sell-outs, betrayals and defeats than wage a mass strike.

Thus the whole of the TUC leadership joined ranks in the early days of the steel strike to stamp on a call by the Welsh TUC for an all-Wales General Strike from the end of January — which had enlisted NUM support and could rapidly have spread.

And the leaders of the BL unions held back action against their 5% pay offer for eight weeks to avoid any link-up between their members and the steel workers!

The same pattern has prevailed in every major struggle. Huge closures have been either meekly accepted by terrified bureaucrats, or struggles that have arisen from the rank and file have been deliberately isolated and destroyed — as at Lawrence Scotts, Plesseys, St. Benedict's Hospital and numerous plants and public sector facilities.

Indeed the huge job loss in the public sector — with more jobs axed in school meals than the whole of the

TO DES

Weighell's in the first instance, and Buckton's in the second.

By his treachery on the pay issue Buckton has now created the worst possible conditions for ASLEF to fight in defence of the eight hour day.

Management, cock-a-hoop, are going further down the BL road. Learning their lesson from the last ASLEF strikes, they have gone out of their way to try to keep some form of service running, to urge individual train drivers to defy the strike, accept the new rosters and come in to work, and thus to exploit very weakness in the drivers' ranks.

At first sight this is a ludicrously expensive policy giving guaranteed week payments to 200,000 workers in order to bring pressure to bear on 24,000. But the BL experience has shown management that this tactic can help crack the will of union leaders. We can expect no repetition of their

JOHN HARRIS



BL last November: a strong strike and a speedy sell-out

tactical blunder in the steel strike of 1980, where management, once the strike had been called, shut down the plants, locking strikers out, thus sacrificing an important means of weakening the will to fight.

What is in effect, then a partial lock-out of those ASLEF members who reject the new rosters, could however be escalated into an all-out Edwardes-style "over the top" confrontation if it fails quickly to crack the strike.

BR cannot for long afford to pay the guaranteed week money without

running a full service. The Board is now publicly talking of sacking the striking ASLEF members — and reinstating only those who accept flexible rosters.

While it seems reasonable to discount talk of BR press-ganging ASLEF drivers into the NUR as something it would be difficult for other TUC unions to stand by passively and watch, we should not underestimate the tenacity of the BR Board in its current stage of development.

They say that even a worm will turn. And Peter Parker, having been firmly

trodden on by ASLEF earlier this year seems, under the tuition and guidance of ORC, set on emulating his more flamboyant colleague in British Leyland.

A defeat for ASLEF would be a major setback for trade union organisation not only on the rail, but throughout British industry. ORC and its ilk would offer its profitable strike breaking talents to more and more managements, developing in reality a handbook for union busters, training management nobodies to become Michael Edwardes.

Like many of the martial

arts, Edwardes and ORC point out that to beat a larger and more powerful opponent is a question of singling out the most vulnerable point to hit.

That vulnerable point on each occasion is the trade union and Labour bureaucracy. And we can only protect against such tactics by eliminating that weak point — fighting for the fullest accountability of our leadership, and developing a principled revolutionary leadership ready and willing to mobilise mass action to defeat the employers and the Tory government.

Full speed in retreat: saga of NHS pay fight

THE pay battle in the NHS is one which the union leaders at first thought they had escaped.

The routine protest lobby of Parliament was called in mid-March, and it was expected that the reactionary leadership of the Royal College of Nursing would once again use its deadweight of membership on the staff side negotiating body to force the unions kicking, screaming, and smiling into a 4% deal.

What went wrong for the leadership was that the offer was too low even for the "professional" strike-breakers of the RCN to stomach — indeed their membership rejected both the original offer and the Tories' divisive 6.4% increased offer.

As for the health unions, the rank and file was incensed. And as actions began to be called on a local basis the extent of the militancy was revealed.

An unofficial half-day strike in the Manchester and Salford area called to pressurise the March 23 meeting of the TUC Health Services Committee fired a shot across their bows, and confirmed that it was impossible to accept either the 4% or the 6.4%.

But the officials called only the most minimal action: one-hour token stoppages on April 14. Undeterred by the temerity of their leaders, thousands of health workers all over the country took action. And the COHSE leadership announced a programme of "warm-up" action — to begin two weeks later on April 26!

The action — banning non-emergency admissions, admissions of private patients to NHS hospitals, selective two-hour strikes and a work-to-rule — remained at the level of a pin-prick to management particularly since branches were not instructed but simply "authorised" to carry it out.

Many — led by right wing convenors and secretaries — didn't. But in some areas there were one-day and even longer selective stoppages. And despite everything done to throw cold water on the dispute, the movement was gaining momentum.

NUPE attempted to apply the brakes — and decided on April 16 to begin a time-wasting ballot of members before taking any action — thus leaving the COHSE action isolated on April 26. The struggle was becoming a contest for the most invisible union leadership — leaving a divided, isolated membership to "do it yourself".

But pressure was still building up. In Oxford, COHSE members called a one-day strike to lobby the TUC Health Services Committee on April 29 demanding an all-out stoppage.

A rank and file group, 'Health Workers for the Full Claim' took up the fight for national strike action and began a regular bulletin, and lobbied the NUPE executive on May 7.

A TGWU health workers' delegate conference voted on May 11 for all-out strike action — but was vetoed by the union leaders. Instead the TUC Health Services Committee — pressurised by a 99% NUPE ballot vote for action called for a one-day strike on May 19, followed by two-hour strikes every week.

Meanwhile — no thanks to the NHS union officials — South Wales miners voted for one-day solidarity strike action to back the NHS struggle.

The fight was growing — despite the leadership. And the NUPE conference at the end of May voted unanimously for a policy of all-out strike action — only to be immediately denounced by GMWU official Donnet.

The NUPE bureaucrats seized upon a poorly drafted clause which gave them an excuse to ignore the motion.

Instead NUPE went meekly along with the next rounds of token action called by the TUC Health Services Committee.

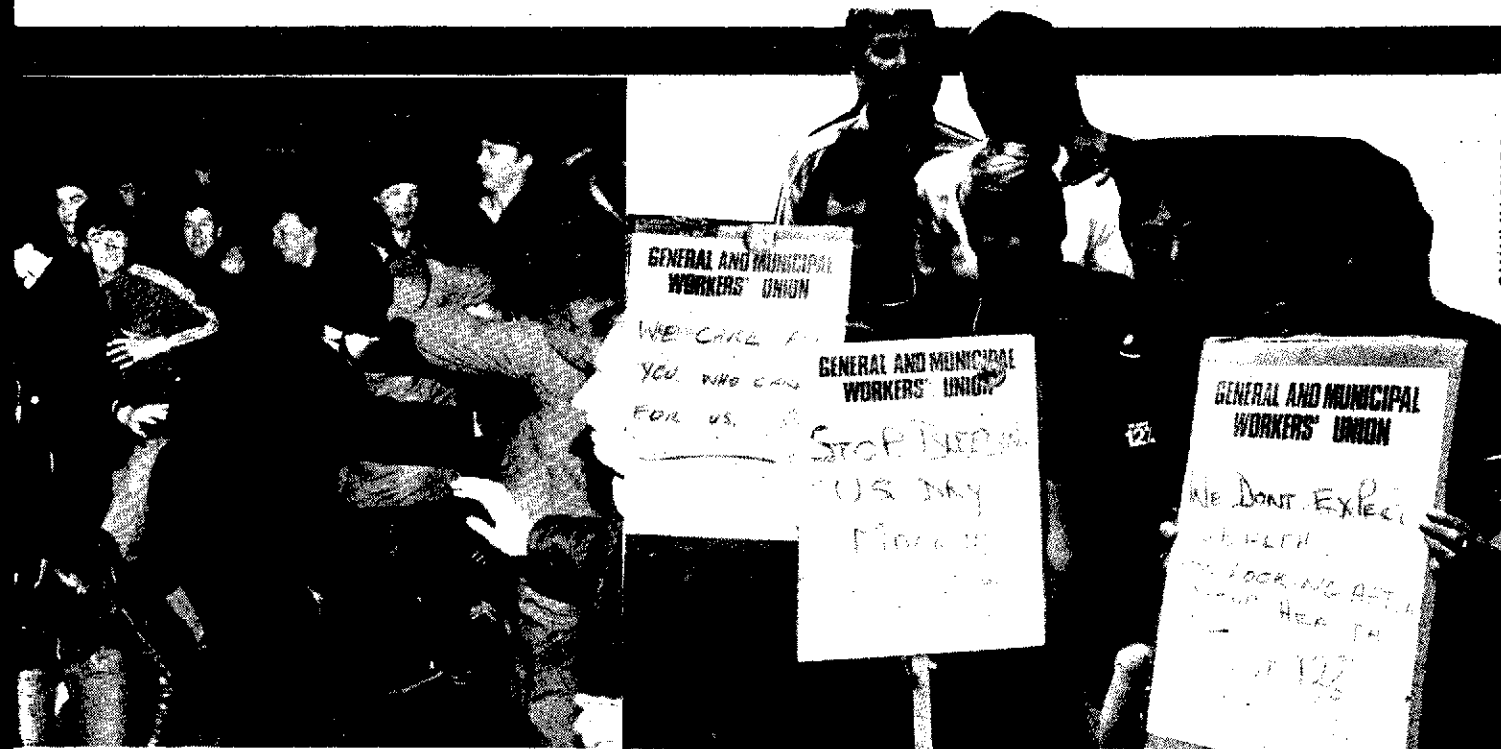
As miners and other sections of trade unionists demonstrated in practice their willingness to strike alongside NHS workers against the government health union leaders were looking for a way out of a growing confrontation.

COHSE leaders stridently attacked, and secured the defeat at conference, of calls for a policy of all-out strike action.

And the next meeting of the TUC Health Services Committee put off any further action for nearly a month — to July 19-21. And since then COHSE, following TUC policy, has issued a circular making it clear that what is called for is not three days of all-out strike action.

In the meantime, the Tories, plainly worried at the scale of the movement, have already increased their offer well beyond the original 4%. An all-out push could force them to concede the whole 12% of the common claim.

Only our official leaders have consistently stood in the way of a major victory!



Leaders shy away from an all-out, generalised fight

from Tories

While the bosses devise new tactics, what are the union leaders doing?

steel industry — has gone almost without a finger lifted by the bureaucrats. Unemployment at 3 million is a monument to TUC betrayal as much as monetarism.

The civil service too has taken a heavy burden of losses: but when mass militancy emerged on the 1981 pay review, TUC leaders were quick to spot the danger that this might rally resistance — and moved in to limit the industrial action to a demoralising, endless succession of partial stoppages and protest.

The retreat by the official leadership has been total and unshamed. It has proceeded despite the obvious emergence of working

class militancy in the last 12 months.

When BL workers voted 8-1 for strike action last autumn they found themselves against not only the Tories and Edwardes but also Len Murray, the eleven general secretaries of BL unions — and even Joe Gormley, who consciously delayed NUM pay negotiations to avoid a confrontation alongside the BL workers.

Indeed Michael Foot too hastened to play his part in securing an 11th hour sell-out. Eager to prove his strikebreaking credentials to the Tory press, and reassert the values of "parliamentary democracy", he sought out behind-the-scenes talks with Edwardes

and worked might and main for a sell-out.

With the added incentive of avoiding a quick general election, Foot has carried out a comparable back-stage role in the latest sell-out of the NUR.

The whole of the current pay round and the latest battles over productivity have seen union leaders intent upon one thing above all: the struggles must not extend out of their control or challenge the existence of the Tory government.

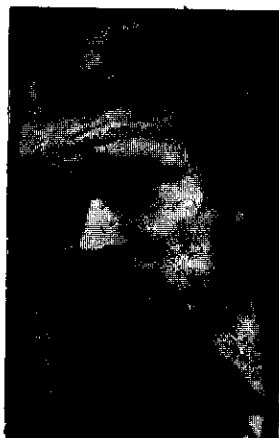
But the Tory government unashamedly challenges the existence of trade unionism. The Prior Bill and the Tebbit Bill combine to offer a swingeing package of attacks on the most fundamental rights

to organise, strike and picket.

In the face of such a withering onslaught, TUC leaders have shrunk still further into their bolt-holes. The mass demonstration of March 9, 1980 and the 'Day of Action' of May 14, 1980 against the Prior Bill were replaced this year by a 'Union Day' of limp leafletting as the TUC has run up the white flag to Tebbit.

The TUC and Labour leadership has shown since 1979 that it has three levels of response to Thatcher's attack: dead slow, stop and reverse.

For the working class still stuck behind these reactionaries, cynics and incompetents, the task is to



develop an organisation and a programme that can enable us to force the bureaucrats off the road and clear the way for the necessary struggle against the Tory government and the employers they represent.

Woman's Right to Work: do marches help campaign?

AT the Leicester Action Committee for a Woman's Right to Work we discussed Women's Fightback's call for a "Women's March for Jobs organised along the lines of the People's March".

We are all exhausted after organising for just the one day demonstration on June 5, which, although gaining much support, has actually done nothing to alleviate women's unemployment and all that goes with it.

We have got a lot of support and want to do something with it. We want a local campaign to concretely tackle women's unemployment. The way to do this is by setting up local

Unemployed Women's Groups: these already exist in some towns. Nobody pretends this is an easy task. It will mean: being on the estates instead of in the town centre; being in the Community Centres; structuring meetings differently; remembering that women have to collect the kids from school; cook evening meals, etc. etc. This way we can involve working class women in the fight.

Kigass and Rulecan were unable to speak at the

Labour Party Women's Festival. Kigass have had false reports about them in the media. These women, the NHS staff, and women fighting redundancies need our support.

Unemployed Women's Groups could lend that support, as well as having their own campaigns such as actively opposing the social security co-habitation snoopers; or campaigning for childcare facilities at DHSS offices or the National Day of Registration — all around the country women who are unable to claim benefits will be asked to go and sign-on, all on the same day, to show that 3 million is way below the real unemployment figure.

Experience

From my experience of the ten-day Right to Work March, 1981, little political gain is to be had from a Women's March for Jobs.

There was much said about how the march could link the struggles in different towns, thus strengthening the fight, but the practice was different. We visited factories and workers in struggle and had rallies with workers from all



The demo should not be the end of the campaign

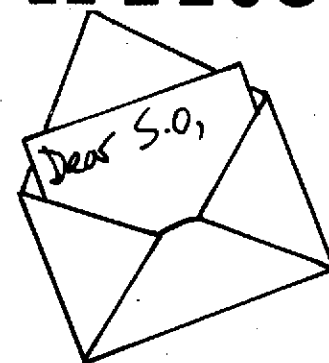
around the country speaking; but solidarity must be involved with those in struggle and I was always too exhausted to notice what was going on.

Energy

In short, there was a lot of energy used up in organising and carrying out that march; and little came of it. There is a Right to Work March every year and little else in between.

JUDY GOSS
Leicester

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.

NUR questions

THE ANNUAL wage rise issue for British Rail workers has been clouded by a massive propaganda fight within the NUR.

The National Executive Council, by a 17-6 vote, called a strike of all NUR members in British Rail,

BREL, Travellers Fare, and Sealink, for 00.01 hours, Monday June 28.

A lot of questions will have to be asked. Why June 28 when the NEC is disbanded for two weeks of the Annual General Meeting, starting June 28?

The first time in 56 years that the NUR has called an all-out strike, and the people who have done the negotiations are not there to listen and discuss any new proposals from the BRB. Why?

All that members heard and read in the lead-up to the strike was the General Secretary attacking the NEC, Militant, and the left wing in general. Is this the way to prepare for a strike? When a strike is called, the NEC should go all over the country explaining why. Did this happen?

Picketing decides whether strikes are won or lost. Did the NUR include secondary picketing in its instructions?

The AGM has the right to overturn any NEC decision. The trouble is that 30 delegates to this AGM went uncontested [not elected].

The membership where I work [Southern Region central division] feel humiliated. We threw away two days' money for a vote of no confidence in the NEC, which is about the only thing that has come from the whole affair.

The NUR has been destroyed due to internal fighting, and is now the laughing stock of the trade union movement.

BRIAN WHITEHEAD
[NUR]

Import controls - a dangerous diversion

THE disorientating effect of the call for import controls upon the British labour movement was testified to by recent events at the Ravenscraig steel plant in Motherwell. A decision

taken by unions and management to ban foreign made cars from entering the steel complex.

On the pretext of insufficient parking space, Bill Irvine, executive member

of the ISTC, moved the motion for the ban and he was seconded by managing director Len Raby.

As if this was not bad enough, Tommy Brennan, convenor at the plant, suggested that the ban be extended throughout the steel industry and added that the position of foreign-manufactured delivery vehicles was being looked at.

The same man moved the anti-Tebbit law motion at the ISTC annual conference and had been prominent in the campaign against the witch-hunt in the Labour Party. Obviously militancy does not inoculate against the virus of protectionism and nationalism.

Those economists who peddle the formula of import controls as a "socialist" panacea for the problems of the British economy should ponder over its warping effects on the consciousness of even the most militant sections of the working class.

IAN McCALMAN

Cricket and imperialism

YOUR paper has documented fully the forms of economic domination, control of capital cash flows, the development of underdevelopment, whereby Western capitalism exploits and oppresses so called 'Third World' countries.

However there is a large imbalance in the way you cover the manner in which the West distorts and destroys the indigenous culture and economy of underdeveloped states.

Your coverage is almost solely economic. You

should attempt to highlight the complex fashion by which British imperialism established its socio-cultural hegemony over its Empire.

The game of cricket, presently flourishing across most towns of the country, is a classic camouflaged matrix of processes by which Britain dominated India, Pakistan, etc.

We attended the recent England/India Test Match and were greeted to exhibitions of violent racism and chauvinism against ourselves and also the Indian

players.

Obviously the Falklands crisis has led to a mini-renaissance of Victorian patronage towards former "members of the Empire".

Buffoons

Tory MP Ian McDonald Sproat, who is also editor of the Cricketers Who's Who said in the latest TCCB programme:

"The halcyon summers of Victorian cricket: those were the days! W.G.

Grace — idol of the British Empire at the peak of its glory — once ran three runs with the ball lodged in his shirt, and refused to remove it in case he was given out for handling the ball. Then there was Victor Trumper of whom it was said 'no-one came near him as a man or a cricketer'. And lastly the great Raymond R. Attwell of whom it was said 'he can score liberally with both bat and tankard'. The spirit of these trojans of an Empire gone-by, lives on in the work of the Falk-

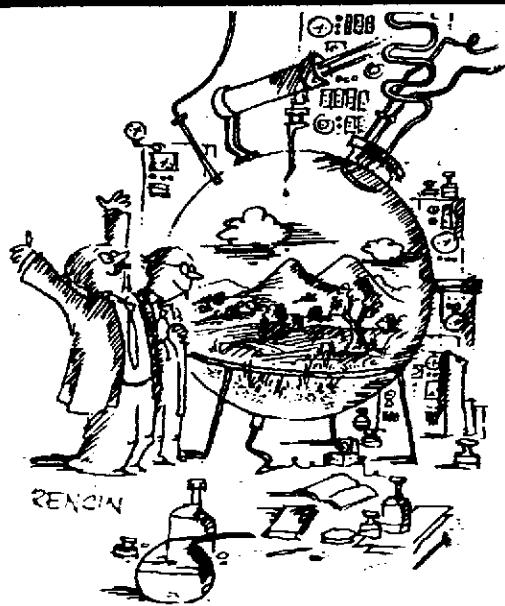
lands Task Force."

A few years ago such nonsense as this would not have been written without being greeted with jeers of derision for eccentric buffoons. Yet today it is taken seriously. We ask you to give much more space in your paper to examining the causes and effects of cultural imperialism. It would certainly broaden the appeal of your newspaper.

WASIM ASLAM
MOHAMMED
MANSOOR HARTAZ
AHMED

SCIENCE Trials and Tribulin

by Les Hearn



I think socialists should be concerned with the welfare of their fellow animals as well as of their fellow humans (and not solely for humane reasons), so I was pleased to read in a recent New Scientist that in testing drugs for certain activities the use of animals may give way to the use of the unfeeling moong bean.

The particular test is to see if various new drugs are anti-convulsants (potentially useful in treating epilepsy). This involves inducing convulsions in animals, and seeing if the drug will stop them. Now, as well as being rather cruel, such tests are not very reliable, so pharmacologists have been trying to develop a reliable test.

One new test involved separating a special enzyme* from the ends of nerve cells in rat brains and seeing if the drugs being tested slowed down the work of the enzyme (this being the effect

of all known anti-convulsants). This test was also rather unreliable, as well as calling for the killing of large numbers of rats.

Then someone had a brainwave. Enzymes very similar to the rat-brain enzyme are found in various plant roots — why not see if anti-convulsants affected these? Well, they didn't but another enzyme found in the roots of moong beans was affected, reliably, by anti-convulsants.

Doing the test with this enzyme, 11 of 14 known anti-epilepsy drugs were correctly identified, and a new anti-convulsant drug was discovered. It was also found that a group of anti-depression drugs (the tricyclics) had the opposite effect on the moong bean enzyme.

So, this test can be used to identify new drugs of two types, as well as sparing laboratory animals from

suffering or death.

*Enzymes are large protein molecules found in all living things. Each enzyme has a special function — either making or breaking up a particular chemical substance. The enzyme in question breaks up an energy-rich chemical, releasing this energy to drive nerve impulses.

Benzodiazepine (Valium) has been used to treat anxiety for two decades, but only now are researchers finding out how it works.

Like other physiological systems in our bodies, emotional states seem to be maintained by a balance of opposing factors.

In the case of the calm/anxiety system, it is thought that one factor is a "calming substance" with an effect similar to Valium, balanced by an "anxiety substance".

So, if you are under stress, your body makes

more of the anxiety substance and less calming substance. Your brain feels anxiety or panic and initiates action to reduce the stress, whereupon the levels of the two substances return to normal.

However, in this society, many people are unable to change stressful situations (because they need the money, or there's no job to be found or no help in the home, etc).

Rather than urge changes in society, the response of capitalist medicine is to supply an external source of calming substances (i.e. Valium). But it doesn't work very well.

The effect is that the body "thinks" there is too much calming substance and not enough anxiety substance, given the stress being experienced, so it produces more of the latter and less of the former.

If you now stop taking

Valium, you will feel worse than before — you are now addicted!

Professor Merton Sandler of Queen Charlotte's Hospital, Chiswick, now reports that the anxiety substance has been found. It is called tribulin (from tribulation, I imagine). It has a known chemical effect in the body and is present in all people. Higher than usual amounts are found in people subject to stress.

The opposing effects of tribulin and Valium are shown in that volunteers, who had taken tribulin and suffered uncontrollable panic, calmed down when given Valium.

And to confirm the theory of Valium addiction, patients who suffered withdrawal symptoms after taking Valium for a long time were found to have increased tribulin levels!

'It's like the situation of Irish freedom fighters'

When Andrew Hornung recently visited Israel, he talked to Palestinians there about the oppression they live under and their fight against it

THE road from Afulah to Hadera is called the Wadi Ara. From the arid valley bottom where the main road runs, smaller dusty roads rise winding to the many big villages hung on the hillsides. As you climb the road to Umm el Fahm you notice a hammer and sickle painted boldly on the side of a house.

I didn't need this sign. In Beersheva, a hundred miles to the South, I had said I was going to a village called Umm el Fahm. "They're all Communists and PLO members there," came the swift response.

A boy took me through the narrow streets to a tiny shop near the offices of the village council. The shop-keeper was a young man in his middle twenties.

"I was arrested twice," he said impassively. "In 1967 with two others, colleagues from school. A colleague had left school and gone to Jordan and joined the Resistance. He came back and bombed the factory where Dodge produce military vehicles. I was charged with helping him. I was given a year in jail for that. I was sixteen and a half."

"The second time was in December '72. I was one of thirty three then. About seventy of us were detained altogether. Udi Adiv was the main person. He was charged with leading an independent underground organisation which considered itself part of the Palestinian Resistance."

"He and the group were influenced by the ideas and analysis of the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine because it was the only group that immediately on its establishment declared that the exploited Jews are partners, or can be partners, of the Palestinian struggle."

"Udi Adiv was sentenced to 17 years in jail. They threw the book at him because he was Jewish. He was probably the first Jew to be actively a militant in the Palestinian struggle. Hassan who runs the bookshop here got four years. I

got six as it was my second time.

"I was released in December '78. We have both been under a restriction order — we can't go out before eight in the morning, we can't stay out after eight in the evening, we can't leave the village and we have to report to the police every day — for the last nine months. There's another three months to go, but they can renew the order."

"What was the charge that led to the detention?" I wanted to know. "Nothing — no charge. There's no court hearing. The order is handed down by the military commander of the region and that's that."

"Is there no appeal?" "Sure there's an appeal, but it takes a year to be heard by the High Court."

"Palestinian prisoners with Israeli citizenship are detained with criminals and the same goes for prisoners from annexed East Jerusalem. Palestinians from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and from the camps are kept separate, but also with criminals."

"We have demanded political status. There have been hunger strikes and appeals to the International Red Cross and the UN, because the UN Assembly passed a resolution that Israel should treat the prisoners as freedom fighters and political prisoners. It's like the situation in your country with the Irish freedom fighters."

Prisons

We talked more about the prisons, the beatings, the humiliations, the petty vindictiveness and, again, the Resistance: the strikes, the hunger strikers. "The prisons are a school. This is why they try to put activists in solitary confinement and prevent young ones from coming into contact with more experienced militants."

"It's impossible for an ex-prisoner to go work in a bank, in teaching, in a hotel or any state-run organisation. Can't get factory work. For that you need a special recommendation from the police. In every factory there's a special department, personnel, headed by a person who is usually an ex-officer with a direct link to the police."

"On the West Bank there is a lot of activity on this question."

Here there is a group of ex-prisoners who have set up a committee, the Committee for the Defence of Political Prisoners, which has been active on the question and has just

published a pamphlet about prisoners and their rights."

Then the shop-keeper switched to talking about the village itself. "I'll tell you something about our situation here."

"As you know, the economic base of our society, agriculture, has been destroyed. Whole villages have been destroyed and the people driven out. So we became a minority without homes. Leaders have been arrested or have left, clubs and newspapers have been closed down."

"Over the last 34 years we have gone through a new process of development. The main economic activity was farming, but we have gradually lost out land through confiscation by the Zionists and so gradually we became workers."

"Not workers on the land but in factories, in the big towns and villages, particularly in the service sector, in hotels and suchlike. We are paid less than the Jewish workers. The West Bankers who work here get paid even less than us."

"Only a few remained farmers."

"The authorities build no industrial base in the villages. The villages are

These refugees come from the surrounding villages that were destroyed by the Zionists."

"Of course we are starved of funds. There is no investment in the village. The council has a budget which is about a tenth of what it would be if it were a Jewish settlement."

Villages

"And of course our villages, being old, don't already have the infrastructure — electricity, sewage systems, drainage and so on — that the Jewish settlements have from the beginning. In any case, the ministry doesn't usually approve of the budget drawn up by the council."

"Naturally the council's role is restricted. It has responsibility for a large part of the schooling, yet the police involve themselves in the appointment of teachers."

"Every student has to learn about Zionism, not a word about Palestinians. The word isn't mentioned. And our school is far too small."

"The restrictions placed on the local council led certain leftist Arab village councils to come together

middle sixties. It developed out of Nasserism and concentrated on the question of Arab nationalism and Arab unity. It didn't develop ideologically as a Palestinian movement."

"The leading members were professionals and it wasn't organised as a political party with cells and branches. The masses sympathised but they weren't organised. So when the High Court banned it, it didn't survive."

"After the defeat of 1967, Nasserism was very much weakened throughout the Arab world. The independent Palestinian struggle really began in this period. The Sons of the Village grew up against this background, focussing on the daily struggles of the Palestinian people."

"We believe that the basic solution is to build a democratic, socialist society in Palestine. In this society both Jews and Arabs can realise their rights. We understand that this solution cannot exist without the support of the Jews in Palestine or at least their majority."

"There can be no real national liberation in Palestine separate from socialism. So when we demand a secular, democratic society,



no more than dormitories, big, bad dormitories. Umm el Fahm, for example, used to have 120,000 dunams, a very big area of land, and so the authorities confiscated the majority and now there are only 15,000 dunams. In 1948 the population was 4,000, today it is 20,000."

Refugees

"There are also refugees in Umm el Fahm — the refugees are not just outside the borders of Israel."

in a single organisation, but this was banned from the outset. The authorities could see that once Palestinians begin to organise, they will organise as Palestinians."

The Umm el Fahm council has on it four members of the front connected with the Israeli Communist Party, Rakah, of whom two are Rakah members. There are nine representatives of families, one from the Jewish religious party and two from Abna' el Balad, the Sons of the Village. The shop-keeper supports Abna' el Balad.

Account

He began to give an account of Palestinian organisation within the Israeli borders.

"First there was the El Ard movement in the

we immediately face the question of what the Jews want. They already have a bourgeois society in which they have democratic rights. Why should they destroy this to live in a common society with Arabs?"

Socialist

"We have to talk about a socialist society. There is a good objective basis for it. After all, state property is already on a vast scale, rich farmers are few, individual capitalists are not strong and there is a big trade union movement, if you can call the Histadrut that."

"Abna' el Balad has a programme and it has a varied activity. We believe you need to build clubs, funds, workers' committees, women's organisa-

tions and so on."

"In Umm el Fahm we are fighting for a democratic workers' committee. You know there are workers' committees representing the biggest sectors like ports and Lod airport — there are thirteen of these and they can call strikes without the approval of the Histadrut."

"We are trying to build such a committee here."

Branch

"Our first branch here was in 1969. We have a club house and run cultural, political and social activities. We produce leaflets against the government's oppressive measures. We try to lead struggles for democratic rights."

"We lead demonstra-

tions, hold public meetings on important national questions and in support of the struggle on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip and we organise commemorative events, like on June 5, the anniversary of the '67 War."

"We educate our youth and our members about Palestinian history and the situation of the revolutionary forces all over the world and about imperialism."

Subject

"The fact that we are a subject people on an occupied land is, after all, a daily reality. And in case we forget it for a moment, here on the hill where no Jews live, the police are around to remind us."



A classic work on the Jewish question

Abram Leon's book 'The Jewish Question' — an introduction by Constance Lever

IN 1944 Abram Leon was murdered in the gas chambers of Auschwitz. But unlike most of the millions who died there too, he understood the force that destroyed him, and he had devoted himself, up to his arrest a few months before, to the fight against it.

A leading Belgian Trotskyist, Leon had directed his party's socialist propaganda work amongst the working class conscript soldiers of the occupying German army, helped organise meetings of underground factory committees in the metal plants of Liege and travelled secretly to occupied France to reestablish the international links of the revolutionary workers' movement.

These actions were not only those of a socialist internationalist, but of a Jew who understood that decaying capitalism had no place in it for the Jews whom it had evicted from their traditional class position as feudal middlemen; who understood that it could only use them as a scapegoat for its own crimes. Capitalism was a world system from which there could be no escape — and the only salvation for the Jews as for the working class, lay in destroying it.

Abram Leon came to these conclusions on the basis of a historical analysis, which he had worked out while a leader of the Belgian Zionist Socialist youth movement (Hashomer Hatzair). He had argued for his explanation within the Zionist movement, and had then left on the basis of it to join the Trotskyists in 1939.

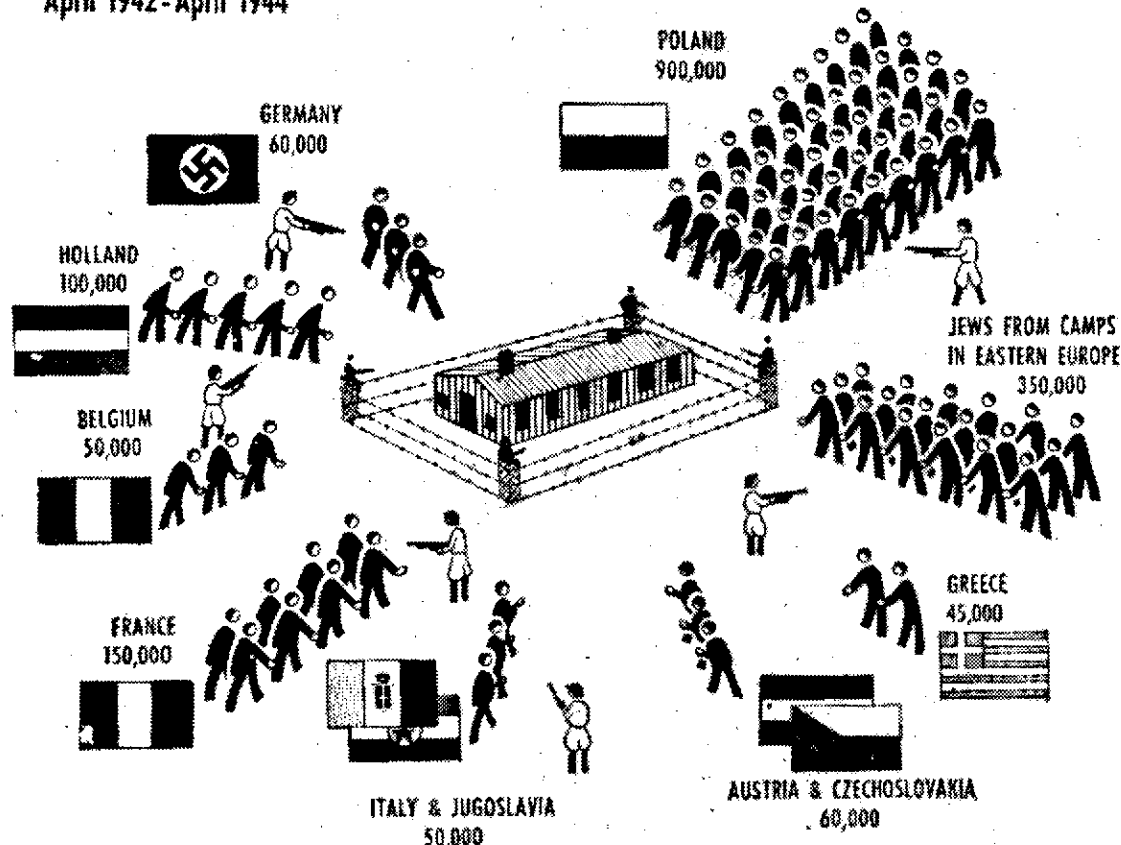
Zionist ideas centred round the Jewish myth — that the root of the tragic history of the 'Jewish people' lay in the action of the Roman soldiers, 2,000 years ago, who drove the Jews from their land dispersing them over the earth; that their spiritual greatness lay in their holding together despite dispersal and persecution, united by a belief in one god and in their national destiny; and the myth that their problem could be solved and their destiny realised by a return to 'their' land, of 2,000 years ago.

Leon argued that the Jews were a 'people-class': a historically and culturally distinct people, bound together by a common class position. They were mainly involved in trade, beginning in the ancient world in which their land straddled the crossroads of the trade routes between the centres of the ancient civilisations. It was not the Roman soldiers, but their own jobs as traders which scattered them through the ancient world: the mass dispersal

of Jews outside Palestine had already become a fact before the final fall of Jerusalem. It was not despite the dispersal but because of it and of the common class position that accompanied it, that they survived as a distinct people.

The Victims of Birkenau Came From...

April 1942-April 1944



And now, in the modern world, it was not essentially as a national minority, but as an unpopular, increasingly irrelevant and therefore powerless class that they faced anti-semitism. It was, argued Leon, by the destruction of capitalism, not by the establishment of a client state of imperialism — Israel — that the survival and freedom of 18 million Jews around the world could be assured.

Independent Jewish merchant capital was in no sense a germ of modern capitalism. The Jewish merchant did not invest money in production, he was merely the link between points of production far apart, over which he had no influence.

The development of early bourgeois merchant capital, growing up organically out of society and gradually achieving power over raw materials and local processes of production, had first to overcome the obstacle of the commercial monopoly of the Jews — who belonged to feudal society and depended on it, though they were a foreign body within it.

Unlike feudalism, capitalism has no special place for the people-class. Early capitalism finds them an obstacle. Established

advancing capitalism diversifies their economic tasks and assimilates them. In the countries of the West, before the mass migrations from Eastern Europe, those who remained or had returned earlier were well on the road to assimilation, intermarriage was high, conversion common.

A new wave of migration to the West was soon followed by the post-World War I crisis of capitalism, bringing mass unemployment, ruined small middle classes and a decaying society. Having set the Jews in motion, capitalism could not now find room for them. Seeking to enter the petty bourgeois and craftsmen jobs to which they were accustomed, they found themselves facing the competition and hatred of similar elements, themselves being ruined.

Fascism directed popular hatred of capitalism and terror in face of social collapse onto the traditional 'money men', vulnerable precisely because they were, as a people, no longer major money-men or leading capitalists.

The septic stream of anti-semitism which had always oozed along the sewers of society — the preoccupation of cranks, misfits and those who see visions of the 'who-killed-Christ' variety — now became a central element in a fascist myth erected to defend the rulers of society by deflecting the wrath of their victims against a scapegoat. The Jew had long personified money in folklore. He now became the cause of all the catastrophes which capitalism was inflicting on the mass of people.

Thus it was not capitalism as such which ruined and starved the people — but an undefinable section of it, 'Jewish Capital', which also, mysteriously, in its other guise of 'Jewish Bolshevism', was the all-

Socialist Bookshelf

Books and pamphlets that you should read

national working class — and this was prevented or betrayed by the socialist and Stalinist political organisations (and, incidentally, to a minor degree, by the Zionist diversion from the class struggle).

Living in Nazi Europe and fighting for the socialist revolution, Abram Leon dismissed Zionism as a utopian and reactionary diversion from the real struggle which would liberate humanity, including the Jews.

He did not live to see modern Israel become a major client state of American imperialism and its partner in repressing the attempts of the Arabs to escape from backwardness and from the imperialist exploitation which keeps them backward.

Leon also could not have foreseen the post-war temporary revival and stability which gave a new lease of life both to Zionism and particularly to the process of Jewish assimilation. Russia is a peculiar and, in many ways, a special case, but in the two other major Jewish centres, the USA and Israel, the Jews are well on their way to losing their old identity.

In Israel most of the traditional culture and way of life of the people-class (including their traditional radicalism and their internationalism) have disappeared. The 'Jewish Question' here has been transformed into the problem of the Zionist state of Israel, imperialism's ally against the Arab people.

Twisted

The twisted logic of a capitalist world has resulted in some of the remnants of one of imperialism's most tragic victims is becoming its best defender in this area, where imperialism has helped create a Zionist state complete with all the normal features of capitalism, including even racial discrimination against dark-skinned Jews, as well as against the conquered Arabs.

It proves the truth which Abram Leon so clearly understood and which led him to a sharp break with Zionism — that there is no escape from the problems of the capitalist world except its total transformation by the revolutionary socialist struggle, and the victory of the working class.

LPYS must Organise black youth!

IF the LPYS black youth conference on July 3-4 only showed that the YS leadership now acknowledge that black youth are doubly oppressed because of their colour and that we have to have a special orientation towards them, then it would have been worthwhile.

In the event the conference went a lot further than that. We discussed in some detail how we can attract black youth through the YS into the labour movement.

And it was a rare sight to see YS leaders calling on campaigns like the Bradford 12 and Scrap Sus to give their opinions on the YS.

The new found enthusiasm for these campaigns must be taken into the pages of the YS paper, Socialist Youth.

In the main workshop there was a lively discussion about riots. Supporters of Class Fighter and Revolution Youth argued for us to get involved with the youth who were rioting. We could help them learn the political lessons when we had won their respect. But Militant supporters argued that the riots were a step back, and we should be trying to stop them. According to this logic, the youth of Brixton should have sat back while 'Swamp '81' was in motion.

Andy Bevan, the Labour Party youth officer (who is a Militant supporter) spoke at length on the importance of understanding imperialism. It is a pity that he did not do this a few weeks ago when imperialism was high on the agenda in the war over the Malvinas and Militant failed the test.

And Militant's weaknesses also showed up on positive discrimination. GLC leader Ken Livingstone gave us an example: the London fire-service used to employ only three blacks. 'Through positive discrimination, we are now creating a multi-racial fire service in London' Livingstone said.

Unfortunately supporters

of Militant waited until Ken Livingstone had gone before they attacked the policy. It would only create a black middle class, like in America, they said.

In the Sunday discussion on the conference statement, supporters of Class Fighter proposed an amendment on the call for a mass labour movement campaign against racism. We wanted to commit the YS leaders to work with others such as Coventry Trades Council, whose recent conference on racism also came out for such a campaign.

No amendments were taken, however, and the statement stood, with Class Fighter supporters and Revos supporters abstaining.

The final discussion saw quite a lot of sectarianism from Militant supporters. But summing up, YS chairperson Lawrence Coates pointed to the need for the YS to become more active in anti-racist work and to build for the October 16 demonstration.

Class Fighter supporters will continue to argue that the YS should use its power to initiate a labour movement campaign, and that the only way to win black youth to the labour movement is to be part of their struggles.

MICK LIGGINS
Oxford YS

CLASS FIGHTER



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



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"All groups must refuse to register"

The badge all witches are wearing.....



Jeremy Corbyn is chairperson of Hornsey CLP — the CLP which has clashed with the NEC over its decision to admit Tariq Ali as a Labour Party member. He is also prospective Labour candidate for Islington North. And he is a leading figure in the Unregistered Alliance set up this week (see back page). He talked to Socialist Organiser about the campaign



Kinnock — 'inept and two-faced leadership'

Why do you think the witch-hunt has come now?

I think it's the weakness of the leadership of the party. They are not prepared to fight for the socialist policies on which the party is by and large committed and they conveniently use the pressure that is put on by the media to say that left wing policies are unpopular because the media say they are unpopular.

They are therefore saying that the only way the party can get any support and win back any popularity is by attacking the left organisations and left groupings within the party.

The results of their activities so far seem to be the lowest ever support for an individual Labour Party leader and a very low level of support for the Party throughout the country.

What's been set up so far?

The Briefing editorial group decided that it was important that all the threatened groups in the Labour Party got together and did two things — firstly refuse to register under the proposals of the NEC and secondly form a collective campaign to gain support from CLPs and perhaps more importantly trade union branches.

This was endorsed unanimously by the Briefing conference at County Hall a couple of weeks ago. The Target 82 meeting on July 5 will be the springboard for setting the campaign in motion.

So far we've had a lot of indication of support from CLPs, and I understand hundreds of resolutions have been sent in to the NEC condemning their decisions.

So what sort of activities are you planning?

The details will be decided on the 5th but basically it is to expose the inept and two-faced leadership that is being given both by

play on it.

Really we should be opposing the operation of Trade Unions for a Labour Victory because, in a sense, it has set itself up as the arbiter of trade union funding for the party and is used as a negotiating lever. We should be opposed to it and affiliations should be paid directly into the Labour Party. I think we should be calling for the disbandment of Trade Unions for a Labour Victory and for the unions to carry on with their affiliations to the Labour Party and their relationship to the Party in the normal way as in the past.

The activities that were exposed last year when they fixed the NEC election slate have carried on and got worse. This witch-hunt is the result of it and Michael Foot is the most willing prisoner there ever was of this group.

Target

Do you think Militant is the real target or is it aimed much further?

I think Militant is one target, but it is aimed much further than that. It is aimed at a very large number of, in many cases, non-aligned socialists that are active throughout the Labour Party.

The NEC know perfectly well that the vast majority of the Constituency Labour Parties have substantial left wing majorities on their GCs and throughout their membership and they feel that this is one way of hitting back at that. It could be the start of a very long war of attrition.

The other side of it is that if a witch-hunt is established in the Labour Party it could spread over into the unions.

Yes, this has happened before in the last period of witch-hunt when there were attempts to proscribe groups and organisations within trade unions. Quite clearly the very close tie-up between Trade Unions for Labour Victory and Labour Solidarity on every political question but particularly on this one, will be brought into

Quite a few trade unions have this year passed resolutions against witch-hunts, including some not normally regarded as being on the left. Is this enough to guarantee that they'll come out against the NEC proposals?

We've had this problem before with trade union conference decisions. Last year a large number of unions, including quite right wing unions, passed resolutions calling for unilateral nuclear disarmament, and yet their votes were not cast in that way at Labour Party conference. I suspect we'll have exactly the same problem over this witch-hunt because the national leadership will always be looking for some clever way out of it, whereas we have to mobilise support within unions, to oppose any witch-hunts, any bans and proscriptions.

Support Seema Waseem

ON 23 February 1980 Mohammed Waseem drugged his wife, Seema, and two teenage daughters, Sameena and Rubena.

Then, during the night he abducted the two youngest children in the family, Khalid then aged 12 and Shahina aged only 1, and took them to Pakistan.

He had planned the abduction, unbeknown to the rest of the family, for some time. In the preceding months he had talked them into moving from their comfortable home in Enfield to a run-down house in Wood Green; his reason for this, he told them, was to release the capital tied up in the house so that he could set up in business on his own and leave his job with the Civil Service.

However, his real intention was to steal the money amounting to £26,000, leaving his wife and daughters with a massive mortgage of £20,000 and no means of support. Incidentally, he removed the £26,000 from a joint bank account on only his signature without the bank querying such a withdrawal! He also took with him the family's passports and his wife's jewellery.

Since this incident, Seema Waseem's life has been tragic. She has had to fight for Supplementary Benefit to live, she has had to fight to keep her home,

and worst of all, she has had to fight, and is still fighting, for the return of her two children.

Khalid and Shahina are both British citizens and have been made wards of court. However, Seema Waseem has had to go to Pakistan to fight for their return. She left Britain in the summer of 1981, almost a year ago, and is still not back. Court proceedings have been long and drawn out, not least because at one stage her husband bribed the Clerk of the Court to hold things up.

Being on Supplementary Benefit, Seema Waseem obviously had not means of paying to get to Pakistan, so the money for air tickets had to be borrowed. Neither is there any support to pay for legal costs in Pakistan. No legal aid is available for court cases conducted abroad to recover abducted children.

Before leaving for Pakistan, Seema approached a number of Pakistani and Muslim organisations in Britain for financial assistance. She was told that if her husband had left her and taken her two young children, he must have had a good reason and she can't have been a very good mother. It was also suggested that as she had two of her children left with her then surely that was enough, and she had no means of supporting

them it was unreasonable for her to try and get the other two back.

Seema Waseem, therefore, left for Pakistan with no financial support and knowing that in fighting for the return of her children she would incur huge debts. Not only that, she had to leave behind her two teenage daughters, both at college, to fend for themselves and to cope with the bills and problems of their dilapidated house.

After nearly a year, it looks as if Seema Waseem will win custody of her

children in Pakistan. She hasn't seen them since their disappearance; she doesn't know where they are — or who is looking after them. But she will fight on for as long as it takes to get them back.

She cannot do this, however, without support. The money for her air fares has to be found and for her legal costs. Consequently, her member of Parliament, Reg Race MP for Wood Green, who has been fighting her case for two years, and the Mayor of Haringey, have set up an

appeal fund to raise this money. Seema Waseem has had to face a plethora of problems because she is a woman, and not least because she is a Pakistani woman. Financial help cannot solve these problems, but it can go a long way to help her to fight back. All donations, however large or small, will aid this fight.

Please make cheques payable to the Waseem Family Appeal Fund, and send them to Reg Race MP, House of Commons, London SW1.



Campaigning won Anwar Ditta's case. And so it can win Seema Waseem's.

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
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- *Left bookstall

For more information write to LCGR, 21 Devonshire Promenade, Lenton, Nottingham, NG7 2DS or phone Chris Richardson, 0602 780124.



THE recently published new issue of the Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin throws cold water on any talk of economic recovery in Britain.

Over the last nine months, it reports, industrial output has been more or less unchanged. There was a slight increase in production during 1981, but it petered out after the autumn.

For next year the Bank of England slightly more optimistic than other bourgeois experts predicts growth of 2 or 3 per cent. However, it adds: "Growth of this sort would probably be insufficient to stop the continued growth of unemployment."

In 1981, the Bank reports, profit rates were the lowest ever recorded. The pre-tax real rate of return on trading assets and commercial companies (excluding North Sea Oil) was 2.75%. In the 1960s this profit rate used to be 10% or more, and it has been drifting downwards ever since, with only a brief upwards flip in 1977-78.

About the only encouraging sign the Bank can see — from its point of view — is a rapid increase in productivity. Between late 1980 and late 1981 productivity in manufacturing increased about 8%, according to the Bank's figures.

But this increase clearly does not reflect a lot of new technology, lighter work, and corresponding higher wages. On the contrary: the reality behind it is speed-up, job cuts, and cuts in real wages.

As Marx explained in Capital: "The overwork of the employed part of the working class swells the ranks of the reserve; while, conversely, the increased pressure which, through competition, the members of the reserve exert upon those who are in work... subjects them more completely to the dictatorship of capital. (Thus we have) the condemnation of one part of the working class to enforced idleness by overwork of the other portion, and the converse..."

Reg Race on the Tribune Group crisis

RIGHTWARD DRIFT OF MARSHMALLOWS!

THE Tribune Group's decision on Monday to back the Foot leadership's line over witch-hunts is a watershed decision for the left in the Labour Party.

It marks a new stage in the rapid movement to the right of certain establishment figures in the Tribune Group. And it poses new questions as to how the Left should best organise itself to win the ideological battle now under way in the Party.

The resolution, moved by Stan Orme and carried by the microscopic majority of 2, backed the leadership's line on witch-hunting to the hilt. One of the resolution's major features was that it pretended that the attack on the Militant tendency was a friendly act by a benign NEC, unworthy of the wicked description of witch-hunt.

Register

The proposed register of organisations and the implied threat of expulsion for Militant is no such friendly act. It is based on the proposition that the left in the party is dangerous and needs rigorous control.

The Militant Tendency is not a threat to the continued existence of the Labour Party. Many of Militant's supporters are deeply involved in active work for the party. Considering the massive input of resources which Militant have put into organising in constituency parties, it is remarkable that they have made so little headway in winning control of CLPs.

To argue that expulsion of the Militant is essential to the electoral survival of Labour is just plain crazy: indeed, their credibility is greatly enhanced by the Labour leadership, who



claim that they are an evil incubus.

The witch-hunters' attack on Militant credits the organisation with an importance it does not have and does not deserve. But the real reason for creating the device of a register is to intimidate threaten and possibly expel the other organisations on the left such as the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, which are a real threat to the future domination of the right.

The right have lost control in the Party. The only way in which they can reconstruct a policy-making majority is to expel sections of the left. The register is, in this context, a peculiarly effective mechanism for intimidation.

Each year

Each year, every organisation would have to submit itself for re-registration, with the possibility that a malevolently-inclined NEC

could impose de-registration because it disliked the organisation's politics.

The register also favours the infiltration of organisations by their implacable opponents. As every organisation's meetings would have to be open to all members of the Labour Party we could see Denis Healey turning up at the monthly executive meetings of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (or Ian Mikardo paying a comradely visit to the committee of Trade Unions for a Labour Victory!).

The presence of registration will reintroduce the old proscribed list. Groups that do not register, or who are struck off by the NEC, will be effectively proscribed. Back will come the surveillance techniques and the secret files in the National Agent's Department.

This clearly will divide the party, and present legitimate groupings organising for specific objectives within the party with an agonising dilemma. Should they risk expulsion by refusing to register or risk infiltration and disbandment if they do?

Threat

A major difficulty for the right wing proposals for a witch-hunt of left-wingers is that it will be immensely difficult for them to deliver the goods. How will the members of a banned organisation be prevented from meeting together in the local pub to discuss issues of common concern? The truth is that the right will not be able to stop organisation completely. They will only be able to limit its effectiveness.

Given this clear threat to the stability of the Party, it is quite astonishing that a majority of the Tribune Group refused to oppose the witch-hunting tactics of the leadership on Monday.

But this is nothing new. The only purpose in some of the soft left's membership of the Tribune Group

in recent months has been to prevent initiatives from getting off the ground. They have exercised their veto over condemnation in the witch-hunt. They exercised their veto over the deputy leadership contest. They exercised their veto over linking the Tribune Group with organisations in the trade unions and CLPs put forward in order to build a Broad Left in the Party.

Soft left

The tactics of the soft left are in opposition to ours. There seems to be no concession to the opinions of the right or the editorial

opinions of the Daily Mail which they would be unwilling to make in order to maintain their position in the party.

Historic

What we are now seeing is a historic change in the structure of the left in the Labour Party. Under right wing ideological pressure, and as British politics has shifted to the right under the impact of Thatcher monetarism and the Falklands war, the marshmallows have been forced to drift at an increasing speed to the right in order to maintain what they see as their credibility in the party.

The key question for socialists to ask themselves is this: is the Tribune Group now the vehicle for the left in the PLP?

A broad alliance strategy sometimes works. But it is useless if you have to make too many concessions of political principle to those who oppose you.

What is needed now is a campaign to refuse to register, to refuse to implement expulsions, to say no to the witch-hunters, to win back the NEC for sanity and socialism. The future of the Labour Party is in your hands.

Rochdale against witch hunt

AT the June meeting of Rochdale District Labour Party, the following resolution was passed:

"This DLP rejects the NEC's call for the setting up of a register (proscribed list) Further this DLP organises a day conference inviting all CLPs, Labour Groups, LPYS branches, women's sections and affiliated organisations in Manchester to fight this witch-hunt."

At the EC meeting where the resolution was proposed by Socialist Organiser supporters and discussed, the chairperson of the DLP, himself a Militant supporter, proposed that this resolution should not be taken, owing to it being out of DLP's standing orders.

After delegates insisted that the resolution be put, a vote was taken and only one person — the leader of the Labour Group — voted against.

Single

At the DLP meeting itself the motion was passed without a single vote against. Comrades who spoke pointed out that Militant were not the target for the purge

which was intended to rid the party of all those to the left of Denis Healey.

The day conference will take place on the second Saturday in August with a suggestion that a march takes place at the Labour Party conference to show the NEC the anger felt by Labour Party activists in the Greater Manchester area.

All Labour Party activists in Greater Manchester should work to ensure that

the conference is a success so that the campaign against the witch-hunt can be mounted.

Further details can be obtained from Peter Corby, Rochdale District Labour Party Secretary, telephone Rochdale 74303 or Barry Haslam, telephone Rochdale 357242.

LARC No

THE Labour Abortion Rights Campaign Annual General Meeting on Saturday June 26 decided unanimously against registering under the NEC proposals.

"We believe that LARC cannot register except by rendering itself ineffective as a campaign, because registration will require us to open our meetings to anybody, whether they agree with us or not and to alter our Constitution to admit people who do not agree with our aims. It would provide any given NEC with unacceptable arbitrary powers to decide on the eligibility of LARC to register."

LARC is now going to ballot the whole of its individual and affiliated membership on this.

Socialist Organiser Alliance

Get Organised!

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

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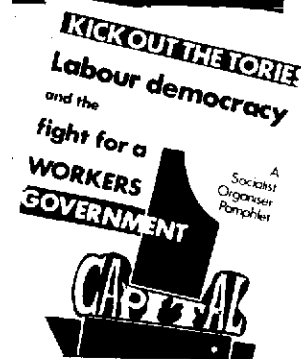
Why not join with us? Supporters are asked to undertake to sell a minimum of 6 papers per week and contribute at least £1.50 per month (20p for unwaged).

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

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

Name

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

Open letter to Tony Benn

STAND

AGAINST FOOT!

DEAR COMRADE BENN,

THE SHAPE of the next Labour government is being determined in the Labour Party now. The shape of the labour movement in the period ahead is being decided now too.

The report endorsed by the NEC on Militant is nothing less than the manifesto of Labour's counter-revolution. If consistently implemented, it will impose a tight regime on the Labour Party, tighter than it has ever known.

The Labour Party would take a giant step towards the cauterising, sterilising, and centralised bureaucratic regimes that stifle and limit most of the European counterparts of the Labour Party.

This is the answer of the Parliamentarians and the trade union bureaucrats to the revolt of the rank and file in the last three years. This is their response to the labour movement's drive, in which we have participated, over the last few years to renew, remake and regenerate itself.

After all the enthusiasm, the aspirations, and the hopes, which welled up in the labour movement, and like a flood-tide shifted and lifted the Labour Party from its long-time moorings in the centre of British politics — is this to be the outcome? A tighter bureaucratic regime in the Labour Party which allows the old establishment to live and operate within the new rules adopted in the last three years?

That will be the outcome if we do not stir ourselves and stop the right wing offensive now. It can still be stopped.

What are the lessons of the last three years? The rank and file revolt was a belated revolt against the governments of Wilson and Callaghan which paved the way for Thatcher and pioneered Thatcher's monetarist policies. The cry of the rank and file was: never again!

Greater democracy was to be the means to the end of getting a Labour government next time which would really serve the labour movement. With the rank and file of the Party overwhelmingly left-inclined (as witness the 83% vote for you in the deputy leadership campaign), success seemed assured.

What has gone wrong?

The unions were the first problem. Decisive voting power in the Labour Party was and is in the hands of union bureaucrats who are elected once or twice in a lifetime, or not at all. Some of them favoured the changes at the beginning. But to expect them to trans-



form the political labour movement is to look to the Bourbons to make the revolution. Much of the revolution will have to be made against them.

Press

The other main problem was the vast reserves that the Right and the establishment could draw on in bourgeois society, with the aid of the press.

The SDP was the first result. The second result was that the softer Left and the naked careerists lost their nerve and looked for 'compromises' — compromises that left the political establishment entrenched within the new rules.

At the last Labour Party conference the soft Left and the Right got control of the NEC.

But these were 'problems' that the serious Left knew about and should have taken account of.

It's no use blaming our opponents and the unreliable 'Left' for being true to their own natures. We must blame the serious Left for not doing better, despite these known difficulties.

For we had — and have — a great deal going for us: a vast rank and file desire for change; the obvious need for the labour movement to be able to put forward a government which is a real alternative, to

Thatcherism; the fact that the Right and soft Left have no political answers; and the fact that the trade union barons are vulnerable to the activity of the rank and file in the unions.

The great mistake of the serious Left was that we failed to organise properly. It was only with the deputy leadership campaign that the Labour Left began to take the issue of Labour Party democracy seriously into the unions. The issue of union democracy has not been taken up, except on an unavoidably small scale by Socialist Organiser and London Labour Briefing.

Central

Socialist Organiser believes that a central weakness of the broad Left which you personify is that it does not have fully developed working class politics for the replacement of capitalism by a democratic socialist system; and on some vital issues it has positively wrong politics. Your own arguments for a British national liberation struggle have been discussed at length in Socialist Organiser. And we have stressed that the work of Michael Meacher to prepare the way for a new incomes policy under a Labour government is not compatible

with serious left wing politics. We believe that the socialist struggle will not be won in Parliament — however important Parliamentary politics may be — but by working-class direct action.

Despite this, the Left could have done much better against the establishment if we had been organised. To preserve the possibility of a free discussion in the labour movement on these and other political questions is an essential common task. And that possibility is now threatened by the Right and soft Left counter-offensive.

If they set up the new system at the next Conference, the decisive question will be whether we let them work it, i.e. whether the broad Left fights back and organises resistance. That in turn will depend on whether the Left now settles into accepting that the Right/soft Left has come out on top 'for the moment'.

That would mean accepting defeat, at least for the period leading up to the election and perhaps beyond it.

It would be to accept that all the hopes of the last three years are to be trampled on; to accept in advance, that the next Labour government will be as bankrupt as the last one; to accept that the labour

movement has no immediate comprehensive alternative to Thatcherism. We cannot, must not, and will not accept such a defeat. Voluntary acceptance of such a defeat, without a struggle, is indistinguishable from the sort of betrayal in which the soft Left specialises.

We should not fail to understand that the new proposals amount — potentially — to a more authoritarian regime than any-

thing known in the past in the Labour Party. Before, a newspaper or group was left alone unless banned; now it will be assumed to be outside the Party unless the Parliamentarians and the other leaders accept it. Under this regime, the Michael Foots and Stafford Crippses and Aneurin Bevens of the past would have found no place in the Labour Party!

We must organise to fight back. The demise of Labour Liaison 82 is the opposite of what is needed: yet it does express the decision of whole sections of the broad Left to acquiesce in the victory of the Right and soft Left.

You, comrade Benn — we say it despite our political disagreements with you — have played a tremendous role in organising, rousing, and leading the Left in the last few years.

Right now you could stop the retreat, and rally the forces of the Left for a new advance. You could stand against Foot for leader of the Party. You could create a campaigning organisation to fight for the leadership of the Party.

You said after the NEC decision: "I will die an unregistered socialist". We need to organise as unregistered socialists! You pledged to fight like a tiger: we need to prepare the sinews and muscles for such a fight.

Foot is now the close ally of the Right. We were correct to support him against Healey. But he is now serving Healey's politics. Stand against him!

The deputy leadership was a position of little power. It was a symbolic

contest. Challenge Foot for the position of real authority.

You would be unlikely to win. But you would rally the Left in the constituencies, and we could pick up the work begun with the deputy leadership campaign of organising in the trade unions.

It would be a clear declaration that the Left is not beaten and is in no mood to surrender.

It would be a warning to those who will control the next Labour government that this time they had better not ignore the movement. It would be a beginning on organising the rank and file to resist the right and soft left in the next Labour government.

It would be a major lift-off for the work of organising for trade union democracy.

Crossroads

The labour movement is now at the political crossroads, comrade Benn. If we let the Right and soft Left consolidate their victories, the chance may not come again for years or decades to do what we hoped to do in the campaigns of the last three years — remake the labour movement into a force to transform British society.

More perhaps than any other single individual in the labour movement, you, comrade Benn, have the possibility of influencing the direction the British labour movement takes now.

We urge you to stop the retreat of the Left. Stand against Foot for leader!

JOHN BLOXAM
JOHN O'MAHONY



"We cannot, must not and will not accept defeat"

Socialist Organiser

S. African miners revolt

— PLO leaders face Beirut dilemma —

BOMBARDED AND

DESERTED!

by Harry Sloan

DESPITE renewed aerial and artillery bombardment, with water, electricity and most food supplies cut off, and abandoned by their so-called allies in the other Arab nations, the Palestinian guerrillas in Beirut continue to hold out for a negotiated withdrawal that will preserve their organisation.

There is no doubt that as a result of the ruthless, genocidal onslaught of the Zionist military machine the PLO has suffered an extremely serious setback.

The invasion of Lebanon has destroyed their last military strongholds within striking distance of the borders of Israel, and captured vast stocks of PLO arms and ammunition.

It has also created conditions for heavy repression of the left wing Lebanese allies who had rallied to the Palestinian cause.

They, together with the whole population of South Lebanon will now find themselves increasingly under the heel of the Zionist invaders and their fascist allies in the Christian Phalangist militias.

All of this is welcome news not only to the Zionist war chiefs in Tel Aviv but also to their imperialist sponsors in Washington.

But for the Reagan administration it is important also to preserve harmonious relations with the Arab bourgeois regimes of the Middle East — in particular Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States whose compliance is vital to US military and diplomatic strategy in the region.

This is why Reagan's envoy Philip Habib has been drifting disconsolately around seeking to patch up some kind of deal which can allow the PLO leaders to evacuate Beirut with the minimum of humiliation.

But with Zionist leader Begin having gone to such lengths to crush the strength of the PLO, and confronted by a rising mood of popular opposition to the war at home, Habib is involved in a race against time.

There now seems to be no chance that US pressure could — even if Reagan chose to do so — force the immediate withdrawal of Zionist forces from Beirut before the final evacuation of the PLO from its former headquarters.

Begin knows full well that though Reagan may huff and puff the US administration could not withdraw the vast military and economic aid which sustain the Zionist war machine.

Indeed just as the Falklands war underlined that the US relates primarily to its fellow European imperialists and only secondly to its sponsored Latin American dictatorships, so the Lebanese invasion has confirmed that the alliance with Israel is for the US paramount over its attempts to cobble together deals with reactionary Arab regimes.

But it has also shown that none of the Arab bourgeoisies is prepared to take the lead in openly opposing imperialist and Zionist oppression.

While marches of 20,000 and 100,000 against the war have surged through Tel Aviv, the opposition in the Arab countries has been remarkably low key; instead, reactionary regimes have confined their attention to back stage negotiations on the evacuation of the beaten PLO.

The utter bankruptcy of the "rejectionist" Arab leadership is summed up in the message to PLO leader Yasser Arafat from Libyan despot Colonel Gaddafi. He advised the guerrillas to fight to the death, and Arafat personally to commit suicide rather than negotiate with the Zionists.

"Your suicide would immortalise the Palestinian cause for future generations... Your blood will fuel the inevitable revolution from the Atlantic Ocean to the



Gulf."

With advice like this from their "friends", the Palestinians scarcely need enemies.

Pounded by Zionist bombs and shells, forsaken in their hour of desperate need, the PLO fighters have little choice but to regroup elsewhere to continue their struggle for the right of return to their homeland and the overthrow of the racially exclusive Zionist state.

That struggle has never been winnable simply by guerrilla means or by alliances with existing bourgeois Arab regimes: now more than ever it requires a revolutionary strategy for the mobilisation of workers and peasants against their repressive governments throughout the Middle East.

The British workers movement must lend its solidarity to that struggle.

Scargill: a new era?

A meeting called by London Labour Briefing on Monday night 5th July, agreed to form the Unregistered Alliance to fight the present witch-hunt. Together with London Labour Briefing, Tribune, Militant, Women's Fight-back, Socialist Organiser, National Left Wing Youth Movement, Labour Herald, Socialist Challenge and members from many CLPs were represented at the meeting.

The call is for all groups in the Labour Party to join the Unregistered Alliance, and for all sections of the Party to:

*Oppose any expulsions within the Party due to the witch-hunt.

*Refuse to cooperate with any inquiries into groups and organisations in the Party.

*Oppose the register, refuse to register with the NEC. Constituency parties not to cooperate with NEC requests for information.

Central to the fight will be the unions, and the need to campaign to commit union delegations to Party Conference, to link up with the industrial struggles against the Tories and work closely with union Broad Lefts.

*Further information: Jeremy Corbyn, 28 Lausanne Rd., London N8 (01-340 9069).

WHEN Arthur Scargill got elected president of the National Union of Mineworkers, many left activists in the union were worried that his militancy might start disappearing among the cushions of the office armchair.

They'll still be watching warily. But in the meantime they'll be cheering loudly.

For, as Arthur Scargill told the NUM conference in Inverness this week, his election as president was "a demand for a break with the past, a demand for a different kind of leadership". And so far Scargill has delivered on that demand.

Under his leadership, the NUM conference has voted to consider re-election of all

full-time officials every five years (overturning an Executive decision). It has decided to shift the union headquarters from London into the coalfields.

It has voted for a restructuring of the union to give the big coalfields their proper weight within it. It has laid down a £27.20 flat-rate pay claim — and detailed plans to fight for it, committing the union to call a special conference if the Coal Board rejects the claim.

Scargill has given the Coal Board a six-week deadline to withdraw the closure of Snowdown colliery, or face industrial action. He has boldly denounced the witch-hunt in the Labour Party against Militant, and called

for a socialist policy. He has made clear and repeated calls for miners to defy Tory anti-union law and strike in support of the health workers.

The union conference gave recognition to the "break from the past" by passing a censure motion on ex-president Joe Gormley for accepting a peerage and for using the columns of the Daily Express to urge acceptance of a Coal Board pay offer.

The NUM right wing is reeling, and the whole union is now firmly on path for confrontation with the Tory government, after the November 1 pay settlement date or maybe even earlier. It shows what a little militant leadership can do.



IN a massive show of militancy, tens of thousands of black mineworkers have gone on strike in South Africa. The strikeway started on Friday (2 July) when 13,500 workers mobilised at a mine near Johannesburg.

By Monday, at least five gold mines had been hit by strike action. At least eight workers have been killed by the bosses' police. Hundreds, probably thousands, of workers have been sacked and forced under the pass laws into rural areas, where there is nothing but starvation and disease.

Workers are showing their anger at the new wages announced by the mine bosses' organisation — an 11-12% increase which brings the minimum up to £66 a month for underground workers.

But inflation is effectively over 20%. This is in fact a cut in real wages. For these starvation wages, workers work a six day week, and 12 hour days under the most terrible safety, health and living conditions.

The mines are like giant prisons in which workers are cut off from the outside world by barbed wire and constantly under the armed guard of the bosses' private police.

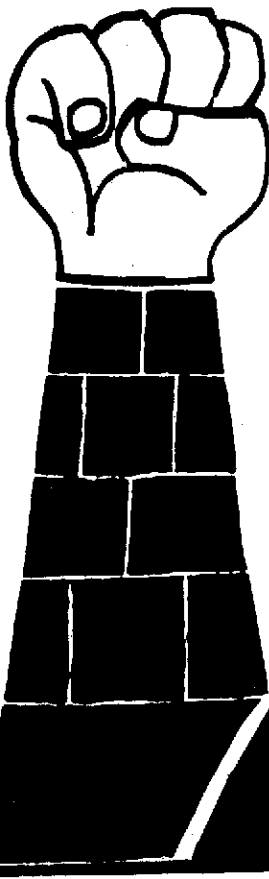
The standard response to a strike is an attack by these police, using tear gas, dogs, bullets and helicopters.

In the recent strikes the bosses have been forced to call on the state police for help to put down the workers.

The courageous action of the mineworkers in the face of massive oppression is a fighting example to workers everywhere.

The vicious response of the bosses and their government shows yet again the real meaning behind all the recent talk and plans of reforming apartheid, and the powerful action of the miners shows yet again the answer of the black workers to these plans.

£6000 fund



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