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Party

Socialist Organiser

Against all bans and proscriptions!

THIS ISSUE

This issue of Socialist Organiser departs from our usual pattern on three counts.

It is produced two days early, to be ready for sale on Wednesday, the third day of the health workers' action this week. It has extra space given over to the rail and health disputes, which means that some of our regular features have had to be omitted this week. And it is followed by a summer holiday break.

INSIDE: rail dispute pages 2, 4, 8, 9; NHS dispute, pages 3, 11; Labour Party witch-hunt pages 5, 6, 7; the Palestinians and Zionism, pages 12 and 13; Tory clampdown on jobless, page 10; South Africa, Iran/Iraq, Poland, page 14; Rulecan dispute page 15.

Next issue — August 12

Paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance No. 94 JULY 22, 1982 (Claimants and strikers 10p) 25p

ASLEF cut down by

THE ASLEF strikers were not defeated by their own weakness: nor were they abandoned by the rank and file of the trade unions. They were not intimidated by the Tory government or deterred by the sacking threats of Sir Peter Parker and the British Rail Board.

They were coldly and cynically cut down by a dozen leading trade union bureaucrats — the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the TUC.

Not one of these leaders had lifted a finger to support the ASLEF struggle. Indeed, each of them has sat back and watched their own members' living standards, and jobs by the thousand, fall victim to the Tory government's attacks. The last thing they want to see is another section successfully fighting back.

Not one of them has members working on the railways, or the slightest direct involvement in the dispute. Yet they had no hesitation in utilising the full weight of the TUC apparatus to blackmail and bludgeon ASLEF into defeat — threatening them with suspension from the TUC.

Ray Buckton is quite right to point out that: "Throughout, BR's actions have received the full support of the Government. Now they have received the support of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the TUC."

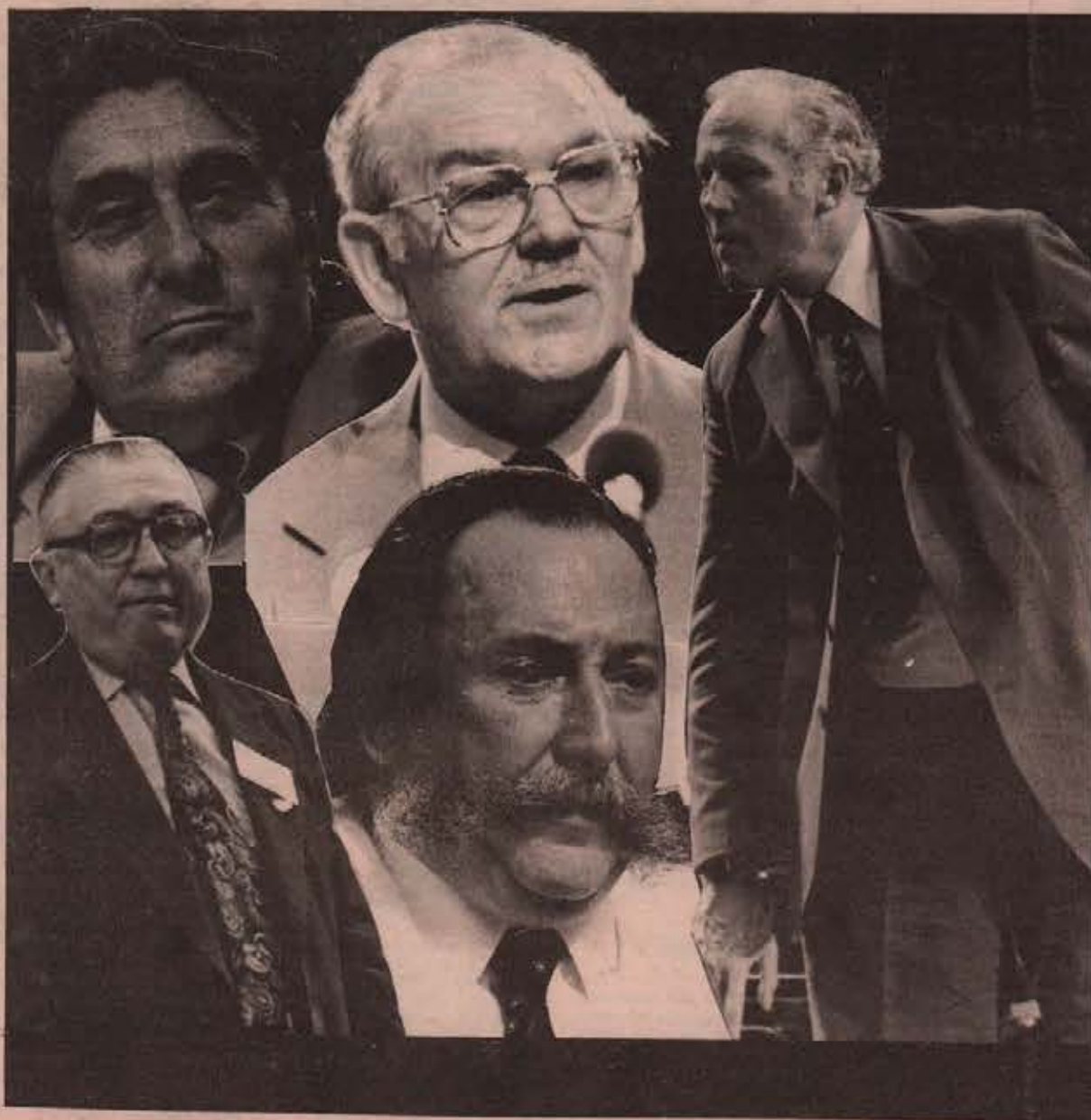
"The public utterances of the general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen have been contrary to every principle of trade unionism. He has, by his actions, assisted the British Railways Board at every stage."

With 'leaders' like these working against its interests, the working class scarcely needs employers or the Tory government. With the TUC working to isolate and smash independent action by the working class, small wonder that the Tories have not yet needed to use Prior's anti-union laws and feel confident that they can impose the Tebbit law.

Every militant will feel betrayed and weakened by the blow struck at ASLEF. But the health workers and others are still involved in struggle against the Tories: more will come forward to fight.

The lesson of this struggle is not to withdraw from the fray, but to arm the workers' movement with a new, revolutionary leadership.

TORIES' HIT-MEN!



We
didn't
expect
much

By Steve Good
Kings Cross ASLEF

WE didn't expect anything to come out of the TUC meeting. It was quite clear to me that they were not even going to go so far as to back ASLEF morally.

They were intent on putting pressure on the ASLEF Executive to back down and capitulate on the issue of flexible rosters.

That was the whole basis of the TUC operation yesterday (Friday). And that is why we came back here, to the strike committee headquarters and got a joint statement from both Euston and Kings Cross branches in the form of an appeal to the trade union movement for support, saying that time had come for action to be taken, specifically to back ASLEF on the date of the sackings.

This statement was endorsed unanimously at a meeting here of 150 men. They were clear that the TUC would not provide anything in the way of solidarity, and that we needed to make this appeal to sections of the trade union movement, like the dockers and the miners, to try and invoke the Triple Alliance at a rank and file level, in order to put more effective pressure on the TUC to come up with the goods in the future.

We are in effect, as a result of pressure from the TUC, going back on a position that is far weaker than the very weak position that we went into the dispute on in the first place. We will not even be working our own scheme in one area in tandem with flexible rostering but working flexible rostering under protest. That doesn't mean working to rule under flexible rostering, it means, I suppose that we mean and groan! That's what the TUC have done for us.

NHS: we can still win

Articles see
pages 2 and 11

LIONS LED BY RATS!

"LIONS — led by donkeys" was a famous description of the workers and their leaders during the 1926 General Strike, which was sold out by the TUC after nine days. "Lions — led by a vacillating ASLEF leadership, and sold out by the conscienceless rats who lead the TUC", that's the only proper description of what has just happened on the railways.

The Tories picked ASLEF and 'flexible rosters' to be a test case. They wanted to teach the labour movement a lesson. ASLEF was a strong union, not a pushover. The Tories wanted a full-scale confrontation which they could win, to create an 'ASLEF effect' throughout the labour movement.

The confrontation did not grow naturally and inevitably out of a conflict on rostering. Despite the ASLEF conference decision against 'flexible rosters', Ray Buckton was talking throughout the build-up to the strike like a man who wanted a deal and was willing to accept the basic demands of the British Rail Board. It is proof of the will to fight of the drivers that Buckton's vacillation undermined so few of them. The ASLEF leaders had agreed to almost everything put to them by BR on June 17, 22 and 25. British Rail decided on confrontation.

Symbol

Behind British Rail stood the Tory government — prodding, guiding, instructing it to go for confrontation.

For the Tories ASLEF is a symbol of what they hate about the labour movement — its ability and willingness to protect itself and in doing so to thwart and frustrate the drive of the capitalists further to exploit workers and beat them down. The eight hour day is 63 years old for drivers. To destroy it in a full-scale confrontation is to declare that none of the protective practices built over the

decades is safe from attack.

It is to incite employers throughout industry to follow the lead of BR.

No accident

The style of management was no accident. They want to be seen to be industrial dictators, roaring at the top of their voices and carrying a big stick. Michael Edwards in BL is to be cloned across industry. The 'smack of firm leadership' is to express itself in the sound of gates clanging shut behind victimised militants.

And so BR would accept nothing but abject surrender from the ASLEF leadership.

The challenge was to the entire labour movement. BR's brutal ultimatum against a comparatively strong union had implications for all the government-controlled sections of the economy and for private industry too. The government, with BR as its stooge, was making a direct political challenge to the TUC. Tebbit's proposals for a new law imposing postal ballots on unions shows the path the Tories want to pursue.

Resistance — organised, concentrated labour movement resistance, to the point of a general strike — was necessary. Mobilisation of the maximum strength of a united labour movement was called for, to strike at the government.

Instead the TUC turned round and struck at ASLEF.

Instead of organising the labour movement to fight back, the TUC made themselves into hatchet-men for the Tories against ASLEF. They threatened to suspend ASLEF from the TUC if it did not comply with the ultimatum from British Rail — and the Tories.

An already wobbly ASLEF leadership did not call the TUC leaders' bluff. Without even fulfilling their obligation to call an ASLEF special confer-

to decide what to do, they gave in.

This is one of the worst examples of scabbing by the trade union leadership in post-war working class history. Its consequences may well be grave for other struggles.

In the last months there has been the beginning of a tremendously promising revival of working class activity. Strikes to support the health workers' claim have shown a high level of class consciousness — and defiance of the Tory anti-union laws. And health workers' banners appeared on ASLEF picket lines.

Instead of building on this revival, and giving it a target and a focus on the Tory government with its anti-union policies and anti-union laws, the TUC leaders have joined with Thatcher to discourage it and snuff it out.

The leaders who sold out the drivers will take their place in the black museum of labour history alongside Ramsey MacDonald and J.H. Thomas. Most odious of all was Sidney Weighell — NUR general secretary and leading witch-hunter in the Labour Party — who acted throughout as a strike-breaker and a scab.

Socialist renewal

The strike was also a test of the scale of the working class and socialist renewal that has taken place in the Labour Party. The Scottish Labour Party called on its 71 CLPs actively to support ASLEF. There was massive support in CLPs throughout the country. The serious left-wing Labour MPs — led by Benn — turned out to picket with ASLEF. 60 MPs signed a motion supporting ASLEF.

An utter scandal that it was only 60. Nevertheless, compared with the past, that number prepared to come out for a strike being flayed by the press (and by the NUR general secretary) is a

sign of something moving. Activists should call the Shores and Hattersleys and others who did not support ASLEF to account in their local parties.

Michael Foot during the strike personified a past era. His mild statement on July 11 was remarkable among statements by Labour leaders in such circumstances for not condemning the strikers. In fact he preached peace and conciliation in conditions where the Tories were urging naked class war. Foot spoke with the voice of a wheeler-dealer out to placate — the voice of a Labour leader of the Wilson era of the '60s and '70s. Thatcher spoke with the union-bashing voice of Baldwin and Churchill in the 1920s and '30s.

Foot was irrelevant. But the 71 CLPs in Scotland, and some 500 others which could have been mobilised, would have been anything but an irrelevance in an all-out strike.

Now the entire labour movement has suffered a grievous blow — a deep wound, primarily self-inflicted.

After a massive act of treachery by the general secretaries last November stopped effective industrial action throughout BL, it was followed by a rash of uncoordinated strikes. ASLEF militants will mount guerilla resistance, and will probably have to resist victimisations.

The lesson now for railworkers is that they must maintain and develop the links built up between depots during the strike. They must develop joint NUR-ASLEF committees.

The lesson for all workers is that the official leaders of the trade unions will wobble at best and sell us out as a matter of course. We must create a rank and file network throughout out the railways — and throughout industry — capable of pushing aside the leaders who turned themselves into Thatcher's hitmen against ASLEF.

PRESS GANG

Daily Mail
Daily EXPRESS
FINANCIAL TIMES
The Daily Telegraph
THE Sun

By Patrick Spilling

THE ASLEF driver found in the Queen's bedroom had been hiding under the floorboards since 1974, it was revealed last night.

In the latest shock disclosure to the Commons, Home Secretary William Whitelaw said that teams of highly trained anti-terrorist police had seen the man on a number of occasions when searching the royal apartment for drugs, but had assumed he was an electrician and brought him cups of tea.

The scandal has rocked the British Constitution to its foundations.

The revelations continue to appear. A shocked Cabinet has learned that almost every time the Queen has shown her face out of doors she has been openly stared at by a variety of common working people, with dirty occupations.

In future, the Home Secretary said last night, there would be security vetting of everyone wanting to watch royal processions.

An American tourist who photographed Buckingham Palace yesterday was shot dead by Guardsmen who said they had been ordered to fire at anyone showing an 'unusual' interest in the Palace.

A special legal commission headed by Lord Denning is drafting new legislation

under which royal intruders can be charged. They are devising a retrospective Royal Familiarity (Defence of the Realm) Act which will carry a 12-year sentence.

The first person to be charged under it is the Queen's chambermaid, who was arrested after the Queen told luncheon guests that she had burst out: "Ec up mum, what's young bugger doing in t'fucking floorboards".

It was revealed exclusively in this paper last week that the man was an ASLEF member. "I was asking her advice about whether I should accept flexible rosters", he told Socialist Organiser. "I wanted to know what she felt about me having my sleep fucked up".

It has now emerged that the man has been under the floorboards for eight years since police were first alerted. He waited until night to come out, but otherwise his only contact with the outside world was through the Queen's private detective, who took betting slips to the bookies for him.

Eight years

Sir Peter Parker, head of British Rail, said that it showed that ASLEF drivers were not doing enough time on the trains if they were able to spend eight years

under the Queen's floorboards. It has been the connection with the rail strike that has caused most concern. Cabinet members are convinced that there was an ASLEF plot to kidnap the Queen to force her to drive engines on split shifts across the land. It was only her coolness in refusing to operate flexible rosters that stopped her from being abducted.

Until Socialist Organiser revealed last week that the intruder was indeed a train driver, he had been assumed to be merely a terrorist or a rapist. Now the Cabinet knows the full depth of the crisis.

Jostled

Meanwhile Scotland Yard has defended plans to allow ASLEF to hold next year's conference in the Queen's bedroom. Mr Sid Weighell, who was jostled and spat at as he entered Buckingham Palace for negotiations, said it was only fair that his union should have access to the Queen's bedroom since he had done more than anyone else in the land to ensure that she could sleep easy in her bed.

The Labour Party is racked by a new row over statement made by Michael Foot apparently in support

of the ASLEF intruder. Mr Foot told a Durham Miners' Gala that "The ASLEF driver is after all, as Nye Bevan once said, a human being".

At a later shadow Cabinet meeting, Mr Peter Shore and Mr Roy Hattersley launched virulent attacks on this speech. Mr Shore is said to have told the Shadow Cabinet that any Labour Party that believed that workers were human beings was one that he could do without.

'Blunder'

Mr Hattersley said that Mr Foot had made "the blunder of the decade" in mentioning workers if he wanted to win an election.

"Workers are extremely unpopular with the people I have dinner with", he said.

Mr Foot later backed down and said that he thought workers would have to make concessions if they wanted to be accepted as human beings by members of the Royal Family.

Mr Len Murray later described the mass imprisonment of the ASLEF executive as "a victory for common sense and for trade unionism".

* Next week: the underground spy scandal and the Scargill connection.



ANDREW WARD, REPORT

GCHQ — the top secret government communications and surveillance headquarters in Cheltenham — has not had such a secret existence since the disastrous Aubrey, Berry and Campbell (ABC) "secrets" trial of 1978. The then Labour government attempted to gag journalists who had pieced together publicly available information to expose the scale of the "Signals Intelligence" operations which help the secret service compile dossiers on us all.

The prosecution failed completely — and in the process a large amount of previously unknown information was uncovered. Now the latest "security" headache to tax the Thatcher government in the aftermath of the Falklands war shows that the whole exercise was a waste of time — the Russians apparently knew everything GCHQ did anyway!

Meanwhile in a further embarrassment to Thatcher, it appears that the efficient cop-killer Barry Pradom previously employed his skills guarding another top secret spy station — the US National Security Agency base at Menwith Hill, near Harrogate.

'It started at my Labour Party ward'

Jeff Evans describes the Health Workers' Solidarity Campaign in Huddersfield

IT STARTED with a resolution we put through our Labour Party ward - Honley Brookholes ward, Colne Valley CLP - at the beginning of June, to back the NHS workers and organise a support committee.

We went down to the picket line at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary, with a minivan plastered with placards. Talking to the shop stewards, we found that the four main hospitals in Huddersfield were not coordinating action at all.

Delegates

So we suggested a public meeting on the evening of the next day of strike action, June 8. 50-odd people came, mainly hospital shop stewards, and decided to back the Health Workers' Solidarity Campaign.

We set up a steering committee - two delegates from each hospital, two from the Labour Party, and seats open for all other unions that affiliated.

On June 19 we organised a march through Huddersfield - 350 strong. We've produced a bulletin for the hospitals - 'Staying Alive' - which we distribute together with 'Health Workers for the Full Claim', and a leaflet for general distribution. Through the Labour Party, we'll get the leaflet distributed to every letter-box in Huddersfield.

This coming week we're helping to bring out a smaller hospital that has never taken action before. We're leafletting the big factories, and hope to get delegations out at dinner time to join the health workers' picket lines. We've got a mass meeting on Tuesday dinner time at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary, which I'll be speaking at. On Wednesday, we'll be taking large numbers down to London to demonstrate.

We've widened out the committee recently to include more hospital

ISTMS
UEW
OHSE
ETPU
IA
NALGO
NUPE
SOCAT
TCWU
UCATT
UNITY IS STRENGTH



shop stewards, and we have Health Workers Solidarity Campaign posters up in all the hospitals.

We've done fund-raising too. We're getting sizeable cheques - £200 or so - from trade union branches, we've run a disco, and I'm doing a sponsored walk on the Pennine Way.

We've drawn in a lot of support. When the NUR came out on strike, we were down on their picket lines with nurses and ancillary staff at 6am on the Monday. The NUR sends a delegate to the committee: so do the shop stewards committee at ICI (the biggest factory in Huddersfield), AUEW (David Browns), NALGO (local government), UCATT, and the POEU.

Pressure

We've pulled in the two local Labour prospective parliamentary candidates and the Trades Council, too, as well as the rest of the left. And we're putting pressure on Labour councillors to support the campaign and come on the picket lines.

The Government says that district health authorities must pay £67 million towards the cost of the present offer. That could mean the loss of 12,000 jobs or cuts and closures of wards and hospitals.

The Government says an improved offer would mean even more cuts and closures. That's blackmail.

The cost of the Falklands war will be paid for out of the treasury contingency fund. We can be paid out of that fund too.

We can't live on sympathy and promises.

The offer:

Job	Current basic	Offer before deductions	Net offer
Domestic assistant	59.05	3.54	£1.48
First year student nurse	63.10	4.73	£2.14
Qualified ambulance staff	82.54	4.95	£2.13
Staff nurse	85.34	6.40	£2.89
Clerk	60.77	3.64	£1.52

from a NUPE leaflet

THE FULL CLAIM • HEALTH WORKERS
ALL OUT FOR THE 12%

Health workers can still win

By Martin Thomas

THERE is no point trying to deny that the NHS pay campaign has been struck a heavy blow by the TUC's sabotage of the train drivers.

Battered and beleaguered the health workers' struggle is not however dead.

After the defeat on the railways, our job is not to mourn but to organise - to regain momentum, to band

together rank and file militants in a network which can combat and displace the trade union leaders who cut down ASLEF.

The health workers' struggle is crucial now for that. The best protest against the TUC's axe-job on ASLEF, and the best way to show our anger against the Tory government, is a maxi-

mum turnout on the health workers' pickets and demonstrations.

After destroying the train drivers' eight-hour day, the Tories want to impose a 6-7½% pay offer on the health workers. Compare that with the 13% paid to the police, the 14% to top civil servants, and the 19% to judges!

There are plenty of obstacles to this week's mobilisation. The health service unions have been spinning out their pay campaign for months, and after the big day of action on June 23 they actually slowed the tempo still further, postponing all further action for nearly a month.

All-out strike

Although NUPE has called for an all-out strike (with emergency cover) this week, COHSE officials have been campaigning against all-out action, insisting instead on selective tactics.

The Tory government has issued warnings of disciplinary action against any civil service workers who strike in solidarity with the health workers.

Defiance

But the successful, persistent defiance of the Prior anti-union laws by workers taking solidarity action shows that such obstacles can be overcome. Despite everything there will be a big turnout by both health workers and others this week.

It needs to be followed by continued action where possible, and demands for the unions to call an all-out indefinite strike with emergency cover under workers' control. Backed with solidarity from other unions - which has been shown to be available if worked for - such action can still win the health workers' 12% claim.

We back NHS struggle

By Steve Good

ASLEF members have been demonstrating their support for the NHS workers. We have sent delegations down from our branch.

It is obvious why we should support them. There has been a clear attempt to smash our union and if our union goes to the wall, the lessons are there for the NHS workers. No union can stand alone against the

government in the final analysis.

Our members will be doubly sympathetic to the health workers given the extent of the betrayals we've faced over the last 48 hours. The comments this morning when I came into the strike headquarters were, for example, 'Well, if they can do this to us, what chance have the nurses got?'

We back ASLEF

by Anna Lunts, secretary Salford Health Authority Joint Shop Stewards' Committee.

TRAIN DRIVERS were struggling for the continued existence of their union, ASLEF.

There is no doubt that health workers should be right behind the ASLEF members' fight. The Tories' success against ASLEF will make our own fight that much harder to win.

In Manchester, hospital workers had already been down to drivers' picket lines and mass meetings. On Friday 9th, the Salford Health Authority joint shop stewards' committee organised a public meeting for solidarity with the health workers, and several ASLEF members attended.

An ASLEF member explained about flexible rosters and the wider issues at stake, and many of the platform speakers stressed the importance of linking the struggles of health workers and drivers, and nearly £40 was collected for the ASLEF strike fund.

Many health workers have learned a lot about the need to go out to the wider labour movement and to call for solidarity for their own struggle - and also to give that same support ourselves to other workers.

Our committee invited drivers' representatives to our next meeting so that the links could be strengthened.

Miners backed ASLEF



Scargill

THERE is no doubt that the ASLEF dispute could have been won.

In Yorkshire the NUM Area Executive and Area Agents had already met local ASLEF leaders and agreed that no coal normally moved by rail would go by lorry.

Nationally the NUM donated £10,000 to the ASLEF strike fund.

At pit level, NUM branch officers were being vigilant about cowboy haulage firms getting into the yards to take coal away.

There is much sympathy for ASLEF in the pits. Many of the miners involved in the 1972 strike remember the valuable assistance given to the NUM by ASLEF.

Drivers would stop trains if they saw a picket's banner draped over a railway bridge. Hardly any coal moved at all by rail which of course made it easier to get pickets to places like Salford and stop the lorries.

The support given by ASLEF was vital to the success of 1972. It looks

increasingly likely that we may be out later in the year, over closures, wages or both, and we'll need all the support we can get. The best way to build that support is to give our support to those in struggle now like the health workers and ASLEF.

Arthur Scargill said he would argue for continued support for ASLEF if they decided to ignore the TUC sell-out proposals and he was quite right.

School meals support

By Sue Carlyle

SCHOOL GATES were closed in Tower Hamlets, East London, last Thursday 8th, when school dinner workers called a one-day strike and picketed.

They were acting in solidarity with the women in Kent who have been striking for five weeks to defend their contracts.

The women in Tower Hamlets, NUPE members, were warning the Inner London Education Authority that the national agreement must not be breached. Authorities like Kent

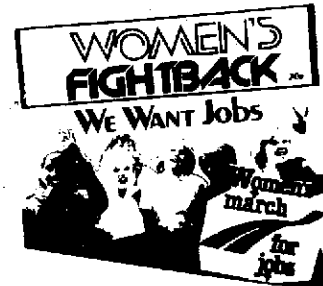
are scrapping contracts, casualising labour, cutting the retaining fee and bar holiday money, and even saying that leaves earned this year will be 'kept back until retirement'!

At a mass meeting, 200 women agreed to continue action next term, and to refuse to provide cover for any scabs. As one shop steward said, 'We have to show everyone that we're all in this together. I voted against the strike, but I still came out'. It was she who have moved the resolu-

tion to continue action.

Promises from ILEA not to follow Kent's example ring hollow. Despite ILEA being Labour-controlled and pledged to preserve services, all schools received a letter from it threatening disciplinary action for the strike.

A Socialist Organiser leaflet arguing for unity with the health workers' strike was well-received by workers who had not known of the full extent of the Kent authority's cuts and the implications for them.



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

'WEIGHELL SPEAKS ONLY FOR HIMSELF'

by Ian Williams (NUR Executive, in personal capacity)

SID WEIGHELL is really speaking only for himself. He claims that the National Executive of the NUR have no jurisdiction over the matter, because he sees it as part of the annual conference which referred it all back to him. We dispute that. Personally I have no doubt that the NUR Executive would make a substantial donation to ASLEF funds if the matter were allowed

onto our agenda. 18 of us made a private donation of £100 between us last week.

The real test of trade unionism will be if the BRB implement the plans they're floating to train other drivers in place of those dismissed.

It will be very important for the NUR to act as a trade union then. If the NUR did cooperate in such a thing, it would stand the risk of being expelled from the TUC — and with every reason. But there is no suggestion at the moment that we would tolerate any such thing.

Several NUR branches in my area have passed resolutions asking members to

donate the strike pay which they got for our two-day strike to the ASLEF strike fund. Liverpool no.5 branch raised a good few hundred pounds that way.

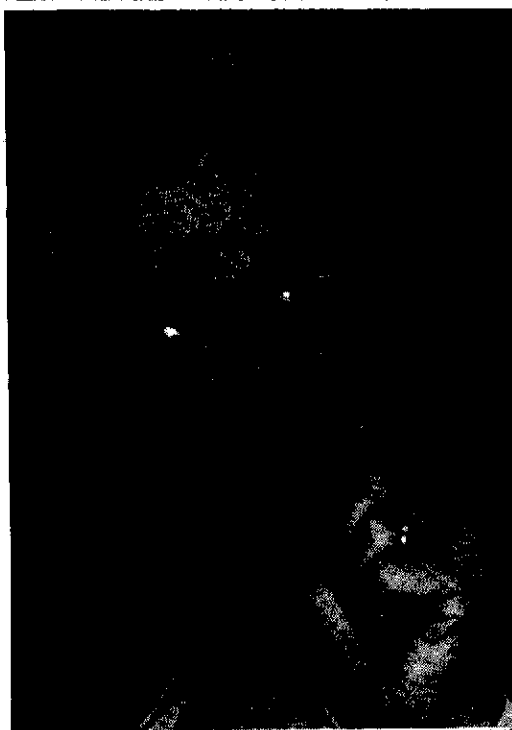
Feeling in this area, certainly among the activists, is that ASLEF are taking on the battle which we should have taken on.

Unilateral

The dispute isn't really about flexible rostering. The dispute is about whether the management can unilaterally impose a substantial change in working practices on a group of workers.

The BRB are hitting ASLEF on flexible rostering, over which they have an annual conference decision. The issue they're hitting us on is one-man operation — over which we have a conference decision.

It would appear to me that what they're looking for is the gross humiliation of the unions. They've picked on our strong points — points on which the unions can't give without a collapse of morale



Does Weighell reflect the NUR membership? He certainly doesn't reflect the elected Executive

"An attack on all unions"

Joint Appeal of King's Cross and Euston Joint Strike Committee of ASLEF to the trade union movement.

"That the joint Euston/King's Cross ASLEF strike committee firmly believes that the decision of the British Railways Board to sack our members is no longer over the issue of flexible rostering and is now clearly an attempt to smash ASLEF and as such represents an attack on the whole trade union movement, spear-headed by the BRB and actively backed by the Tories.

The leadership of the trade union movement must respond to this attack with a clear and unwavering instruction for strike action in support of ASLEF. Nonetheless, it is necessary to build strike action now, unofficially, at local level, in preparation for more generalised action to follow.

This joint strike committee therefore appeals to all trade unionists to defend trade unionism and call for strike action on the Wednesday the sackings are implemented. In particular the Triple Alliance of the steel, rail and mineworkers must be swung into action with the full backing of the dockers.

This joint strike committee calls for ASLEF branches in the mining areas to approach the local NUM branches to obtain definite pledges of strike action in support of ASLEF on Wednesday 21st. Further that we call on the National Port Shop Stewards Committee to convene an emergency meeting to take strike action on that day.

That this appeal be circulated to all local coordinating committees in the Society with a view to obtaining endorsement of the above.

Defend ASLEF — Make Sack Day Strike Day.
Eddie Flattery,
Branch Sec. Euston
A. Johnson,
Branch Sec. King's Cross

'Sell-out will strengthen Weighell'

by Steve Good

My assessment of Weighell before the TUC meeting was that he was becoming increasingly isolated, in spite of his efforts, to get a settlement, and the instruction to his members to work normally.

If there had been the possibility of action by the TUC, if they had stood firm and offered moral support, or financial support to ASLEF then Weighell's position would have been increasingly isolated.

I think now, this can only strengthen Weighell's position. The TUC seems to have gone entirely for his option. Duffy has backed him absolutely 100%, so has Chapple.

There is tremendous resentment amongst ASLEF members, not just against Weighell, but against whole sections of the right, against Chapple, Duffy. There's a very clear understanding of the role of these right wing trade union leaders.

The possibilities were unquestionably there in this dispute for a major confrontation with the government. The Executive had been prepared to stand firm, in spite of the inadequacies of their stand.

But the weakness was all at leadership level. They went into this dispute waving the white flag. As soon as the dispute started they closeted themselves in the Executive Committee rooms. Buckton actually issued instructions in the last few days that they were not to leave the Executive Committee rooms.

Executive Committee members like our own, Lou Adams from the Eastern Region, who has shown a willingness to struggle, who has gone to meetings and who has strengthened the position of the rank and file, who has provided a leadership and an inspiration, was constantly isolated by Buckton from the rank and file

and kept closeted up in Arkwright Road when he should have been out on the pickets, out on the delegations, out with us fighting to win the dispute.

The strength of the dispute has been the way the membership responded. The picketing has intensified. People have looked to Kings Cross for a lead. We have provided leadership at a totally unofficial level in this dispute.

Organising secretaries, whose job it is to coordinate picketing during disputes were either totally at a loss on how to go about it, and in a state of virtual panic 24 hours a day, or they disappeared!

At Kings Cross we provided this unofficial leadership and the men responded. We had men coming here from different depots all over London, reporting for picket duty, asking us for help and advice on every aspect of the strike from DHSS problems to flying pickets.

So the way to avoid such betrayals in the future lies with the role of leadership. Executive members who are willing to fight are drawn into continual meetings with the bureaucracy and do not realise the strength inside the rank and file.

Circus

Everything in this dispute pointed to victory. It's not as if it has been carried out like a circus from day one. In spite of the vacillations inside the executive, the strike had all the signs of being won right up until this last moment.

If the ASLEF executive had been able to stand up to the pressure of the TUC then there would have been



the possibility that today, despite our isolation within the TUC, and they would certainly have washed their hands of us after this, we could then have made an appeal, in the way that we have been making this appeal from Kings Cross

and Euston, to the trade union movement for support to make Wednesday a day on which other trade unionists would be taking strike action in defence of ASLEF. That would have been a tremendous boost to the development of the

dispute. As it is, Kings Cross has had to direct the way in which picketing was carried out, and provide assistance and we have gained tremendous respect within ASLEF.

8-hour day centre of our agreements

Steve Good (Kings X ASLEF) explains the issue

Probably nobody would be convinced that in itself flexibility around the eight hour day, one hour either side, seven to nine hours, is something of fantastic importance.

But on the eight hour day hinge a whole number of agreements which are central to the conditions of footplate workers.

Once the eight hour day is lost it means the automatic revision of a whole set of agreements, particularly the 1965 manning agreement.

Once the manning agreement is renegotiated, then it means an enormous number of redundancies will take place — 6,500 is the BR Board's own estimate. The jobs of drivers' assistants, who are the younger men in the line of promotion, are

certain to disappear.

This is in spite of the fact that over the next five years, 30% of the footplate-men will be retiring.

Flexible rostering will also mean a further disruption of the social life of the drivers. The rosters we are being presented with now are the seven to nine hour ones. No doubt in the pipeline are the six to ten hour ones and following them the four to twelve hour ones.

In conjunction with that will come the introduction of split shifts. The social life of footplate-men is already completely disrupted by the flexibility that we have already. An increase in that flexibility will make it virtually impossible to have any kind of social life or home life.

Some drivers do not actually see their families in a social sense for up to six weeks at a time with the pattern of shift work as it is.

The effects on health could be quite staggering to judge by reports from Bradford University outlining the effect of flexible rostering on the continent where the life expectancy of some drivers has been reduced to 50 years.

Working nights on these new shifts you would lose the equivalent of one night's sleep a week and this of

course builds up.

The new rosters will not save money — a mere £9 million up to 1986. The aim is to break the power of ASLEF and thus make it possible to introduce any number of productivity changes in the future in line with Tory policy to drive down the conditions of workers in so many industries, to break their ability to organise.

AN extra twist of the knife in BR's ultimatum is the threat to drivers' pension rights.

The sacking decree means that drivers also lose all pension rights beyond the statutory minimum. For the many drivers who are getting near retirement age, this is no small matter. One driver near retirement told us that he stood to lose £10,000.

These older drivers have slaved for BR for 30 to 40 years, working all sorts of hours of the clock.

Gratitude? A sense of decency or responsibility? None of that for the BR bosses! For them, 'industrial relations' mean ruthless struggle. And the only way railworkers will be able to defend their interests is to adopt the same philosophy on their side.

No union can stand alone!

The response we have had at rank and file level has been tremendous. Money is flowing in all the time. One bus garage rang up to say they had voted at a mass meeting for strike action in support of ASLEF.

There would almost certainly have been strike action on London's tubes if the sackings had gone ahead, and there is no question that NUR tube drivers would have respected our picket lines.

I've been on to represen-

RIGHT WING CLEAR THE DECKS FOR A

PURGE

IN a letter sent to a number of organisations last week, the Labour Party's new General Secretary has made the NEC's intentions quite clear. "... the register of non-affiliated groups of members to be recognised and allowed to operate within the Party is being established forthwith. All such groups must apply for registration. "The decision of the NEC on eligibility for registration shall be final. A report on these decisions will be presented to the forthcoming annual conference."

Message

And in case there was any confusion about the outcome, a Labour Weekly reporter was given the message. "While the register is seen as a way of bringing some party groups into line, it has become increasingly clear since the NEC agreed on it that Militant... is not reckoned to stand a chance of being accepted. "No possible changes in Militant would bring it within the constitution, it is

said." Foot and the Right's strategy is clear: to get the register approved at this year's Party Conference; to shift the NEC further to the right; and to embark on their programme of expulsions and intimidation of the left. The decision of more clear-sighted right wingers in the Organisation Sub-committee to allow a re-run of the Bermondsey selection and to accept the selection of Rob Clay and Pat Wall, should be seen as no more than an operation to clear the decks for the intended purge. The opposition of the left and the Party rank and file is equally clear. Of the nine resolutions for the Party Conference on the register, seven completely oppose; of the 22 resolu-

tions on Party unity, the great majority are against witch-hunts and purges, and ten are based on the CLPD model resolution.

Witch-hunt

A large number of Party organisations have declared opposition to the developing witch-hunt; a number of CLPs have already stated that they will support those groups that are refusing to register, and will themselves refuse to cooperate with any register or to undertake no expulsions or disciplinary measures arising out of it. CLPs and trade union organisations must inundate the NEC with such statements. The Militant inspired conference on September 11 - 'Fight the Tories, not the

Registration forms are dropping onto the doormats of various campaigns and socialist groupings within the Labour Party as the NEC moves to implement its proposed register. JOHN BLOXAM reports on the latest developments as opposition to the register grows within the Labour Party.



Socialists - must be used as one of the main rallying points of this defence before

Labour witch- hunt



What to do:

Move the following CLPD suggested amendment to conference resolutions in the party unity section:

"Conference believes that only a united Labour Party can achieve a Labour victory in the next election.

Unity can only be achieved if democracy within the Party is respected and its basis must be the policies passed by its annual conference.

All socialists prepared to

work for a Labour victory on this basis should have the right to do so within the Party and there should be no witch-hunts.

Conference believes in free and fair debate within the Labour Party at all levels, that differences should be resolved only through discussion and democratic decision rather than witch-hunt methods and expulsion.

Conference therefore firmly rejects the proposal to maintain a 'register' from which some groups of Party members would be disbarred. As democratic socialists, we believe that elementary freedoms of speech and association are far too fundamental to be surrendered to the veto of whatever 'alliance' temporarily holds a majority on the NEC.

The 'register' proposal would be exhaustingly impractical to administer and appallingly divisive in its effects. Most serious of all, it would represent a disastrous diversion at a time when we should all be uniting around Labour's policies in the struggle against the Tories and their allies.

This Labour Party conference refuses to be diverted from this task."

*Next meeting of the 'Unregistered Alliance', Friday July 30, County Hall, 7.30pm.

*Coordinating Meeting of CLPs against the Witch-hunt. Called by Hackney North and Stoke Newington CLP. September 4, County Hall, London. Details from 28 Beatty Road, London N16.

*Conference: 'Fight the Tories, not the Socialists'. September 11 at Wembley Conference Centre. Delegates' credentials, £1. c/o 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8.

Elections to Party Office. The right-wing's partial recapture of the NEC has played a major role in the launching of a witch-hunt. It is essential that that control is wrested back from them at this year's Party Conference.

Nominations have to be in by August 13. To maximise the chances, Labour Liaison 82 reached some agreement on a left slate for this year's elections.

Socialist Organiser supports this slate on the basis of it being the one most likely to do the immediate job of shifting the right's control.

SLATE

Constituency section. Frank Allaun, Norman Atkinson, Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, Jo Richardson, Dennis Skinner, Audrey Wise.

Women's section: Margaret Beckett, Joan Frances Barbara Switzer, Maynard Morrell.

Treasurer: Michael Meacher. Conference Arrangements Committee (constituencies representative): Pete Willsman.



When this lousy war is over...

THE RETURN from the South Atlantic of the P&O liner Canberra was greeted last Monday with front-page photographs and enthusiastic headlines like 'Canberra commandos sail home to carnival welcome'.

By the next day the carnival had turned sour for 129 of the Canberra's crew, who were promptly sacked by P&O. "It is an unhappy situation", confessed the fearful P&O director, "but the fact is that we are in a highly competitive position."

Gradually the squalid facts came out.

P&O pays its non-British crews a pittance of only £77 to £80 a month. For years they have refused the seamen's union demand of parity for all seafarers, which would bring these mainly

Indian and Chinese crewmen up to £74 a week, the rate for British sailors.

Apparently, when the Falklands war started, P&O sacked their non-British crew members and sent them back to where they came from. They hired an all-British crew to replace them, although the non-British sailors volunteered to go to the South Atlantic. "Crushing the Argies" was to be an all-British affair.

Now that the war is over, it's back to naked exploitation. Again, P&O will look for a crew that they can hire at a quarter of the rate for the job.

It is not certain whether the crew who have now been sacked will be able to wear the newly-minted South Atlantic service medal on their trips to the dole office.

THE announcement that a film based on the Royal Family is to star Christopher Reeve as Prince Philip should surprise no-one. Lee made his reputation playing Dracula. One blood-sucker plays another. Meanwhile Socialist

Organiser is informed that Christopher "Superman" Reeve has been cast to play Prince Charles, and Julie Andrews is to play all of the royal women with the exception of Margaret... but that's another movie altogether!

Deranged

A YOUNG unemployed worker enters the Queen's bedroom, draws back the curtains, and engages her in conversation about their respective families.

The poor man is deranged it appears - deranged for taking as the truth the message of the Daily Trash, the Sunday Quarrel and the Evening Escapist that 'the Royals' are just like us. He has fallen for the Royal Wedding hysteria, the easy informality of the 'Charles and Di' photos, and the matronly monotony of the Queen's Christmas broadcast. How deranged can you get!

The Queen, the symbol of privilege, wealth, and snobbery, has had the dreadful experience of being addressed directly by an ordinary worker, so crazy that he did not touch his forehead, bow, stammer, blush or faint.

The response of the ruling class royalists is predictably outraged. The Director of Public Prosecutions has been asked by the

Tory government "to frame a charge which can encompass the enormity of the alleged offence."

"Possibilities which have been discussed", continues the Guardian (July 16) "are treason and trespass."

Lick this

ONE FACT that was revealed in the 'exclusive story' of the intruder is that the first room he got into houses the Royal stamp collection. This collection, according to the Daily Express, is worth £14 million.

This week's competition is: what greater waste can you think of than a £14 million stamp collection kept, not where the national collection is kept, in the British Library, but for the eyes of the Royal Family alone.

First prize, a first class postage stamp.

the Party conference. It will take place a week after a co-ordinating meeting of Labour Parties against the Witch-hunt called by Hackney North and Stoke Newington CLP on September 4 and Hackney North is also making plans for a Conference of CLPs on October 30 to organise further defiance of the register if it is accepted at this year's Conference.

Ballot

The list is growing of organisations refusing to register. It now includes Militant, Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, Labour Committee on Ireland, Labour Coordinating Committee (Scotland), the Socialist Organiser Alliance, London Labour Briefing, Women's Fight-back, National Left Wing Youth Movement, Labour Parliamentary Association and Socialist Challenge. The Labour Abortion Rights Campaign AGM passed a motion not to register, and this has gone out as a recommendation in a ballot of all their supporters and affiliates. The Labour Campaign for Gay Rights will have a "don't register" resolution on the agenda of its AGM this Saturday.

The LCC (Wales) is delaying a decision on registration until it has consulted its membership, and so is Labour Action for Peace.

The only two organisations who have indicated they intend to register are the LCC (England) and the Tribune Group of MPs.

Basis

This large-scale refusal to register provides the basis for

The right-wing plan to enforce the register in time for party conference. CLPs must organise to stop them.

a united campaign, which will prevent the right isolating groups like Militant. But it is being weakened by wobbling in certain quarters.

While accepting a boycott of the register, sections of the CLPD Executive Committee are also arguing that it will be possible to 'democratised' the register and to wreck the NEC's proposals by putting forward an 'alternative' register.

As though you can make more 'democratic' a prescribed list!

Far from wrecking the NEC's proposals - the principles of which are accepted in the argument - the only thing such proposals threaten to wreck is the resistance to the register.

If people who have played a leading role in the fight for democracy end up, like the LCC (England), selling the left down the river in the fight against the register, it will be a major blow for the right wing.

Recreate

But even then the rank and file must stand firm.

Such was the view overwhelmingly expressed at the CLPD-inspired recall meeting of Labour Liaison 82 today (Sunday 18th).

And we also felt an urgent need to recreate a united, campaigning body like the Rank and File Mobilising Committee, which will clearly relate very closely to the work already done by the 'Unregistered Alliance'. It was agreed that that organisations who wish to take part should contact John Bloxam (c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8).

LPYS under attack

THIS TIME

LET'S SEIZE

THE MACHINE!



Labour witch-hunt



One of the first official organisations that will come under attack from the witch-hunt is likely to be the Labour Party Young Socialists. This is not the first time that the Young Socialists have

come under attack from the right wing of the party. Mick Liggins, secretary of the National Left Wing Youth Movement and a member of Oxford LPYS, reports.

But we must make it clear that the responsibility for the break up of Keep Left in the YS was that of the right wing and the bureaucracy, who hounded them out of the party.

Today we must learn from that experience in our fight to defend the YS.

At that time all the tendencies in the YS were not united against the witch-hunt. Ted Grant, now leader of Militant, abstained on the expulsion of members of the Socialist Labour League. S. Mani, business manager of Militant, voted to expel Keep Left supporters from Wandsworth Central YS. We must learn now that all the tendencies in the YS have to be unequivocally in defence of all socialists in the YS.

The YS now must wage a militant fight against the witch-hunt, injecting an offensive as well as a defensive element. It's no good saying that we might register if we are defeated. Talk like that will only please the right wing bureaucrats in Wandsworth Road and the right wing MPs in Parliament.

The register, if introduced, will neutralise the left. Once Militant is neutralised, then it will be the turn of the rest of the left. This will pave the way for the disbanding of the LPYS.

The YS must mobilise its forces against the witch-hunt. That means also redoubling the building of the YS. In the winter of 1962 unemployment was high because of the particularly bad winter. Keep Left organised a very big unemployment mass campaign.

Mass unemployment today presents the YS with the same opportunity. The October 16 demonstration must be a 'boot up the rear' for the bureaucracy. We can achieve this by ensuring a big turnout of YOPs youth and a turnout from the whole labour movement who are all affected by Tebbit's anti-union laws.

Consolidate

One thing that struck me time and time again in researching for this article was the total failure of the left to ever consolidate their victories. When the left won at the YS conference in 1962 the Editorial in New Advance discredited them — an editorial supervised by Transport House. Today, when we have won victories in the fight for democracy in the Party as a whole, the right wing has turned to expulsions. Why?

Not because they have won the political arguments. They haven't and they can't. But they do control the machinery of the Labour Party. That means that they can purge the left between conferences and they can do what they like in government.

The left has to learn that victories are not victories until they are consolidated.

If we come out of this still breathing, we have to seize that machine and put it under the control of the mass of Labour Party members. We have to put Labour governments under the control of the workers' movement that has propped them up passively for too long.

The history of Labour's youth is very much linked to the history of various Trotskyist currents in the Labour Party, and some now out of it.

The reason for this is not as the right wing of the Party say, because the Trotskyists are a bunch of good man-oeuvres backed with finance from Moscow. The reason in my view, that the right wing of the Party have nothing to offer youth faced with the oppression of capitalism. The Trotskyists, on the other hand, have always received a hearing from active sections of youth.

If you look at the Trotskyist tendencies in the Party, you will find proof of this in the average age of our supporters.

At present the LPYS is controlled by supporters of the 'Militant' newspaper. They took control of the YS democratically, by winning support for their ideas and there is nothing wrong with that. The National Left Wing Youth Movement is a tendency in the YS, we do not agree with the method and many of the policies of Militant, but we contribute at the same time to building the YS.

Prior

But this article is primarily concerned with the history of the YS prior to the Militant taking control. The right wing of the Labour Party sees the need for a youth movement. However, the arguments that they use are very different from ours. They have always had a different conception of a youth movement to ours.

Labour Party Conference

Socialist Organiser

BRIEFING

For just £2 you can get this amount of space to urge delegates to back a resolution that you support, to remember an issue you feel strongly about or come to a meeting you are organising ... and its amazing how much you can cram into a space this size!

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We have maintained that a youth movement is necessary to mobilise youth to fight against their special oppression, through the labour movement, as part of the overall fight for Socialism.

The right wing, on the other hand, have the conception that the youth movement should be nothing more than a glorified youth club, simply organising recreational activities, not discussing politics, with its main political role as an electoral machine to be dug up every four years.

Relaunch

In 1959 the Labour NEC under control of the right wing, decided to relaunch the YS. The way they approached the 'relaunch' was to treat the YS as a nuisance, a necessary evil. They put the YS firmly under the control of the Labour Party, effectively stifling any independence. They said that the YS should not discuss politics at its conference; those YS members who happened to be 'keenly interested in politics' they kindly explained, could be 'actively encouraged to be active in the Party also.'

But it was very difficult for the bureaucracy to keep the youth movement tame and apolitical. Many youth were asking questions and coming to radical conclusions. At that time, as now, there was a massive disarmament movement. This movement attracted thousands of youth to the YS. The left wing of the YS did not just have a token orientation to the movement. They went out and built it, and they fought tooth and nail for the Labour Party to adopt a position of unilateral nuclear disarmament which it did, to the horror of Hugh Gaitskell and other right wing leaders of the Party, at the LP conference in 1960.

In New Advance (the journal of the YS) in April 1961 there was a feature on CND on the front page. Misha Goldman, chairperson of the YCND at the time, explained why she was marching on the Aldermaston march.

Nuclear

'Basically I believe that Britain should cease production and storage of nuclear weapons and she should leave NATO and any other alliance based on the possible use of these weapons.' The right wing did not succeed in getting the kind



Young Socialist leaders evicted from Transport House byzops in 1964

PHOTO: WORKERS PRESS

of YS that they wished. When the YS conference took place in Easter 1961, it voted by a majority of better than two to one for nuclear disarmament and for withdrawal from NATO. It also voted, by a smaller margin, for no confidence in Hugh Gaitskell.

A key factor in the YS at the time was a tendency called Keep Left. Set up as a paper in 1950 by the Wembley League of Youth, Keep Left came under the influence of the tendency in the Labour Party led by Gerry Healy.

(This tendency, after being expelled from the Labour Party and suffering a drastic sectarian degeneration, has today become the 'Workers' Revolutionary Party').

Healy's comrades had set up the Socialist Labour League in 1959 but it was proscribed along with its paper as soon as it was set up. They therefore had to operate as semi-outlaws in the Labour Party.

In 1958 Keep Left became a four page printed monthly, with a lot of support among Labour's youth. The NEC of the Labour Party soon cottoned on to it. In November 1960 it said 'It is not the function of a branch or branches of the YS to issue a journal for national circulation'.

Thus began the witch-hunt against Keep Left.

A determined response from the supporters of Keep Left throughout the labour movement beat off that particular attack by the right wing. They immediately put on the masthead of their paper a list of 16 YS branches that supported Keep Left. This was a big step forward from the two that they had had before.

After a while they had a list of 45. They also organised a campaign throughout the labour movement which received a lot of support, including the unanimous support of the 250 delegates on Liverpool Trades Council.

At the same time they countered the witch-hunt in the most effective way possible — they set out to build mass, working class YS branches.

The way they set out to build these branches brought them criticism from the other left groups of the time, such as Young Guard (led by Tony Cliff, now of the SWP) and Ted Grant's tendency, which is now Militant. They organised social events and sports events that would attract lots of youth and bring some of them into the YS. The theory was to be in with working class youth, rather than speaking 'on behalf of them in smoke-filled rooms'.

The model was taken from Wigan YS, who organised 300 youth regularly at socials in the local Labour Club. About 50 of them got active in the YS politically, the rest of them were card carrying members and got involved in demonstrations that the YS organised. This method became known as 'Wiganisation'.

Liz Thompson, organiser of Wigan YS and later to be expelled from the YS National Committee put it like this: 'They', (the people who objected to the turn and resigned) 'declared they wanted 'classical' evenings and more 'high level' discussion. They believed that young people who could appreciate classical music would be more serious and altogether nicer types than those attracted to rock and roll'.

Rock and roll

But the youth attracted to rock and roll boosted the membership of the YS and did a lot to fight off the attack by the right wing.

In May 1962 Keep Left was proscribed by Transport House and its editor, Roger Protz, (now a keen campaigner for real ale) was expelled from St. Pancras North Labour Party. He was followed closely by three Keep Left supporters on the YS National Committee

including Liz Thompson (who had apparently done so much to destroy the Labour Party — by building it one must presume!).

Throughout 1962 Keep Left supporters battled on, selling the paper though this was now an expellable offence.

In 1963 they took the leadership of the YS again with seven out of 11 NC members supporting Keep Left. Supporters of Keep Left succeeded in defying the witch-hunt by the right wing and building the YS.

But it wasn't to last for long. Of the NC elected in 1963, only two members were left by the end of the year. Keep Left supporters were witch-hunted off, and a rally, with 1,200 youth outside the old Labour Party headquarters in Smith Square, succeeded in pressuring two Young Guard supporters to resign in sympathy.

In fighting this witch-hunt now we can learn from the tactics used then. Keep Left supporters often organised 'lobbies' of the party committees. Sometimes they were successful, and certainly they went a long way to involve the membership in the fight against the witch-hunt. Both the LPYS and the Party as a whole should be involved in this type of initiative now.

One mistake the Keep Left supporters did make was to take the right wing to court over the expulsion of Roger Protz. The WRP now are taking Socialist Organiser to court, and today are flagrant and shameless in breaching the principle of keeping the police and the bourgeois courts out of the affairs of the labour movement.

In 1964, the right wing started to close down the YS branches. Keep Left were defiant. They said in an editorial of September 1964, 'We will fight on irrespective of the actions of the bureaucracy and the right wing. As far as we are concerned, they can go to hell, with a well-placed boot from us in the rear to help them on their way'.

The witch-hunt was now so vicious that the right wing even called the police to exclude Keep Left supporters from meetings and used violence.

From 1964 onwards the Keep Left tendency seemed on course for breaking from the Labour Party. They floated the idea of an independent youth movement in their paper. We may say, of course, that it was wrong to break completely from the Party on the eve of the election of the first Labour government for 13 years.

Witch-hunters' latest offering

SOCIAL CONTRACT II

NEW! From the same old team that brought us 'Four Years of Wage Controls', 'Mass unemployment', 'Winter of Discontent', 'Thatcher!' and 'Carry on Scabbing', comes a new, sensational sequel — 'Social Contract II'!

Starring Michael Foot, Len Murray and a cast of dozens, it tells the story of how a handful of top labour bureaucrats fly in the face of the needs and aspirations of their mass membership to offer a new deal to their enemies.

Appropriately enough the premiere of this new epic came in the midst of the efforts by TUC and Labour leaders to knife the ASLEF strike.

Foot and Murray brandished copies of the script — the new TUC/Labour document on 'Economic Planning and Industrial Democracy'. It went down well with some of the more discerning critics from the Tory press.

Malcolm Rutherford of the Financial Times for instance declared, with some surprise that a Labour government acting to such a script 'could be lived with'.

Indeed, he declares with some surprise, the Labour Party has "advanced". Why? Because its idea of national economic assessments "is not so very different from what the Tory Party put forward in 'The Right Approach to the Economy' before the last General Election".

The main difference between the Labour/TUC plot and that outlined by the Tories and the SDP is the importance attached to the notion of central planning.

The new document is in essence a firm declaration that in place of any socialist policy of nationalising the banks and major industries to lay a basis for a genuine planned economy, the labour bureaucrats are committed to a utopian and reactionary attempt to "plan" the existing capitalist economy.

As workers know to their cost, the reality of the so-called "mixed" economy is

If the witch-hunters get their way, what will Labour's policies look like? Harry Sloan reports.

that even the nationalised sectors operate according to the requirements of capitalist private industry.

The central driving force in determining the shape of developments is the struggle of the capitalist firms to extract a rate of profit which they and their bankers and shareholders consider adequate.

The interests of the working class are in this way made subordinate to the interests of a tiny minority of capitalists.

Decisions which determine the lives of millions of people are made not in Parliament but in the boardrooms of vast banks and corporations.

Tacitly recognising this, the new LP/TUC document points out that "the largest 100 companies in Britain today control more than 40% of manufacturing production and over half our exports". But to resolve the problem they turn once again — as Labour governments did so disastrously in the 1960s and 1970s — to a mixture of Parliamentary legislation and bureaucratic structures for "consultation" between management and unions.

A new Department of Economic and Industrial Planning is envisaged, where pipe dream 'models' for the development of the British economy will be drafted into neatly printed documents. This in turn will relate to a tripartite "National Planning Council", involving government, bosses and union bureaucrats.

The set-piece event of this council would be an annual "national economic assessment". Then armed with sheafs of dubious statistics, the Planning Department would offer its "agreed development

plans", as a souped-up version of the "planning agreements" which proved so useless and expensive under the Wilson government.

This time it is said the Department would have powers to "issue, directives", to invest in or purchase companies, to give or withhold assistance, to control prices or not, and to provide or withhold protection through import controls.

But we should remember that such powers would be exercised only in the framework of a capitalist economy, in which attempts to "plan" any one particular

sector must rebound upon others, and in which the level of cooperation of employers with government "economic planning" will be calculated by them purely on their ability to increase their profits.

Additional levels of bureaucracy flourish as the system works its way down. There is a call for a "national planning college" at which management and union bureaucrats could rub shoulders and loaf about at enormous expense, debating how best jointly to implement rationalisation and speed-up. And there are plans for regional and local boards,

to enable lower level management and district officials to get in on the gravy train.

All this is plainly designed to suck in whole layers of union officials and careerist "planners" and administrators within the Labour Party. And indeed the proposal on "industrial democracy" is carefully drafted to evade the pitfall which poleaxed the Bullock Report.

Instead of the crude step of putting stooge "union reps" onto company boards — a move resented by employers and widely rejected by trade unionists — legislation is proposed

to establish an elaborate hoax of "consultation" between unions and management.

The proposal is that workers should be given statutory access to "major" corporate decisions, and the right to respond to such decisions with plans of their own within 60 days.

Management would then be obliged to go through a ritual of discussions "with a view to reaching agreement".

This whole approach is designed to combine blather about union "control" over company decisions with steps to keep unions at all points on the

defensive, forcing them to argue always within the framework of capitalist "viability" and an overall capitalist economy.

And indeed it is this angle which is key to grasping the central strand of the whole document — the notion of trade union "responsibility" for the planning and preservation of capitalism.

In exchange for notional increased rights to consultation and vague promises of "new rights in the area of public expenditure," unions are supposed to "acknowledge new responsibilities to support priorities once they have been agreed."

In particular this means using the TUC once again as the policemen to contain working class resistance to Labour government economic policies, which will, as on previous occasions, be dictated in the first instance by the bankers and biggest employers.

And (though this document is careful to avoid the issue) it must also mean imposing new rounds of wage control. What else can it mean when the document points out that:

"To be comprehensive the national economic assessment will have to cover the share of the national income going to profits, to earnings from employment, to rent, to social benefit, and to other incomes."

This is just the same old policy of pay norms and "cash limits", dressed up for the occasion in the false nose and spectacles of reformist "planning".

We can expect this new Labour Party/TUC plan to be eagerly promoted not only by the reactionary right wing who supported the last social contract, but also by wider sections of the "left", whose vague notions of an "Alternative Economic Strategy" within capitalism have been effectively incorporated into this revamped social contract.

The new document embodies all of the reactionary elements of the last Labour government which helped animate the struggles within the Party for democracy, accountability and alternative socialist policies.

'Social Contract II' is just as horrific as its predecessor. It is up to the rank and file in the unions and Labour Party to ensure it becomes an immediate box office disaster.



JOHN BULL — "CREDENTIALS EXCELLENT! JUST THE MAN I WANT."

Bankers lose no sleep!

WHEN David Steel fixed up the Lib-Lab pact in 1978, he jubilantly told the press that now "the banks could sleep at night".

In fact, Dennis Healey at the Exchequer was doing quite well at reassuring the banks without any Liberal help.

But will it be different next time? Next time, will a Labour government represent a real threat to the millions of finance capital? On Monday 12th the Labour home policy committee adopted proposals for the nationalisation of the four main clearing banks — Barclays, the Midland, National Westminster, and Lloyds.

However, the bankers' daily, the Financial Times, was unalarmed. It carried the

news as a small inside-page article, obviously believing that the policy had no chance of being put into practice.

And of course the FT will be right if the witch-hunters get their way. If the lid is put on the movement to transform and democratise the Labour Party, then the policy's chances of making its way through all the hurdles of NEC, conference, programme, manifesto, and implementation, are nil.

But without the nationalisation and unification of the banks — not just the top four — and the other financial institutions, talk of socialist economic measures is mere chatter. Let's beat back the witch-hunters and prove the FT wrong!



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A RE-RUN OF EDWARDES' BL MOVIE

Harry Sloan examines the experience that the Tories drew on to defeat ASLEF.

"It's an old trick, but it just might work," was one of the running jokes in the old "Goon Show".

But as the frantic scurrings to and fro by TUC leaders and the ASLEF executive now show, some old tricks can work again and again when employed by a ruthless and determined management against a cynical, gullible and spineless union leadership.

The British Rail Board for instance shamelessly pinched its tactics, timing and even some of its rhetoric from those adopted by Michael Edwardes in British Leyland.

Obvious

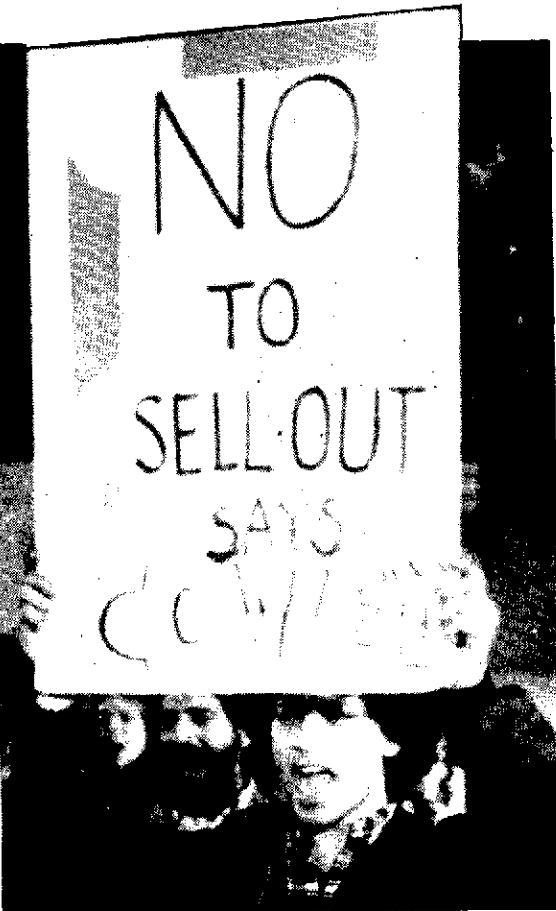
So obvious is the repetition, that thousands of workers watching the news coverage of the events in the rail dispute must feel rather as if they have switched on BBC-1 to watch yet another dusty old repeat programme or well-remembered old film.

But the tricks once again worked like a charm on union leaders who have learned nothing and forgotten nothing in the last ten years.

Like Edwardes, Peter Parker and the BR management set out to confront the unions, issuing a string of ultimatums and threats, and keeping the railways open in the hopes of cracking the strike in the first few days of the dispute.

Like Edwardes, they followed this by threats to sack the whole striking ASLEF workforce, shut down the entire rail network and possibly reopen only on a restricted scale.

Like Edwardes they are publicly debating even in the midst of the current confrontation exactly how they can force through further rounds of closures,



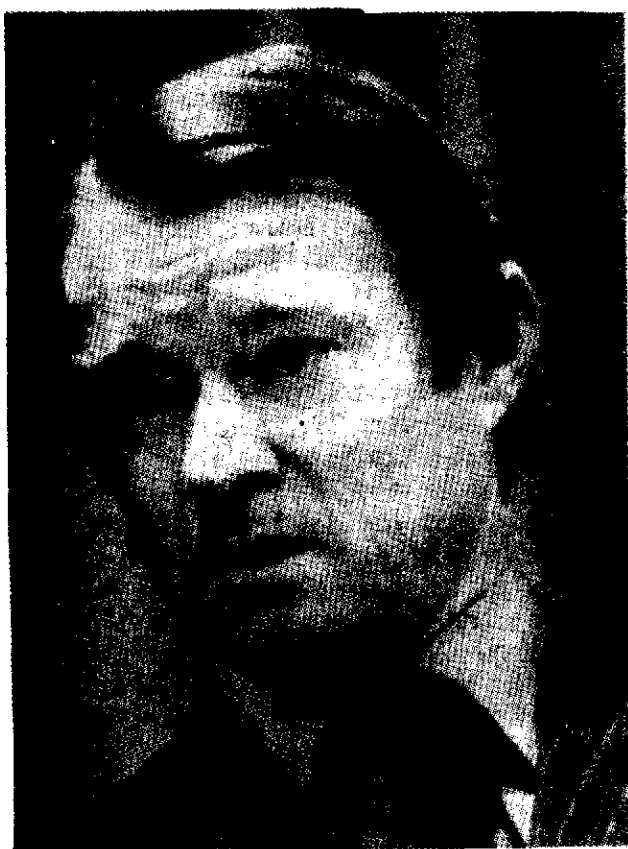
Who defeated the BL workers? Not Edwardes unaided, but Edwardes plus the cowardice of the TUC.

speed-up and redundancies by conducting an individual ballot of rail workers over the heads of the union leaders on the basis of a "survival plan".

And just as TUC bureaucrats of all sorts muscled in on the BL struggle, using every ounce of their energy to bludgeon the BL workforce into defeat, so too the same TUC leaders — and more! — have rallied to the cause of BR management.

The success of these now well-established and transparent tactics depends not so much on their impact on the strikers themselves and the rank and file union membership, but upon the ease with which the union leaders are persuaded to collaborate with the requirements of management.

Indeed while it is difficult to teach an old dog new tricks, it is predictable that the dogs who lead the TUC



will continue to get up to their old tricks whenever they hear the authoritative whistle of the employers or the Tory government.

The essence of Edwardes' method has been to maintain a momentum of attack, playing off various elements of the union leadership against each other and against the membership and never allowing sufficient leeway for shop floor organisation to regroup and

mount a coordinated challenge.

Thus within six months of his arrival — hailed by virtually every one of the BL plant convenors and union officials as the "saviour" of the corporation — Edwardes had begun his offensive in earnest, shutting down the Speke Assembly Plant and scrapping the "participation" scheme which had fulfilled its function of destroying the inde-



Cynical, gullible, and spineless...

pendence of the BL shop stewards' movement.

By the autumn of 1979 Edwardes, now working hand in glove with the new Tory government, had drawn up his so-called "survival" plan, involving the closure or part-closure of 13 plants and the loss of 25,000 jobs.

Strings

He combined the announcement of this plan with the unveiling of a pay offer of a mere 5% linked to a 92-page package of "strings".

To ensure trade union officials were enlisted as his allies in the fight to impose these savage new proposals, Edwardes arranged to meet leaders of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (Confed). At this meeting he spelled out a stark picture of the choices he was prepared to offer. Either they as union leaders threw in their lot with his plan, on the basis of which he would request more

financial assistance from the government; or the corporation would go bankrupt and close down.

Confed General Secretary Alex Ferry described the meeting as "a look over the precipice". He and his fellow bureaucrats came away with no doubt where they stood. Without questioning Edwardes' figures or his right to "solve" the problems of BL at the expense of shop floor workers, the Confed unions — with the exception of the TGWU — decided to cooperate with the plan.

When Edwardes announced he was to ballot the workforce on the question over the heads of the shop stewards' movement, the Confed printed its own letter for distribution in BL mailings, alongside Edwardes' own letter and ballot form, urging a 'yes' vote. Confed funds were used to place adverts in all the daily papers endorsing the Edwardes plan.

The question on the ballot was carefully phrased:

Age of the closure?

"BRITAIN should prepare to live without a railway. Or at least without one run on ASLEF lines."

Probably the Tories are not quite ready yet to follow this chilling advice from the Economist magazine. But they are prepared to accelerate the rundown of the railway system begun under previous governments, Tory and Labour.

In 1962 Britain had 17,500 miles of railway. Today it has about 11,000. According to BR figures, another 3,000 miles will become unusable in the next ten years if present levels of investment continue.

The current level of government subsidy to BR — 29% — is much less than for other rail systems in Europe.

BR's stock of carriages, wagons, and trains is increasingly aged.

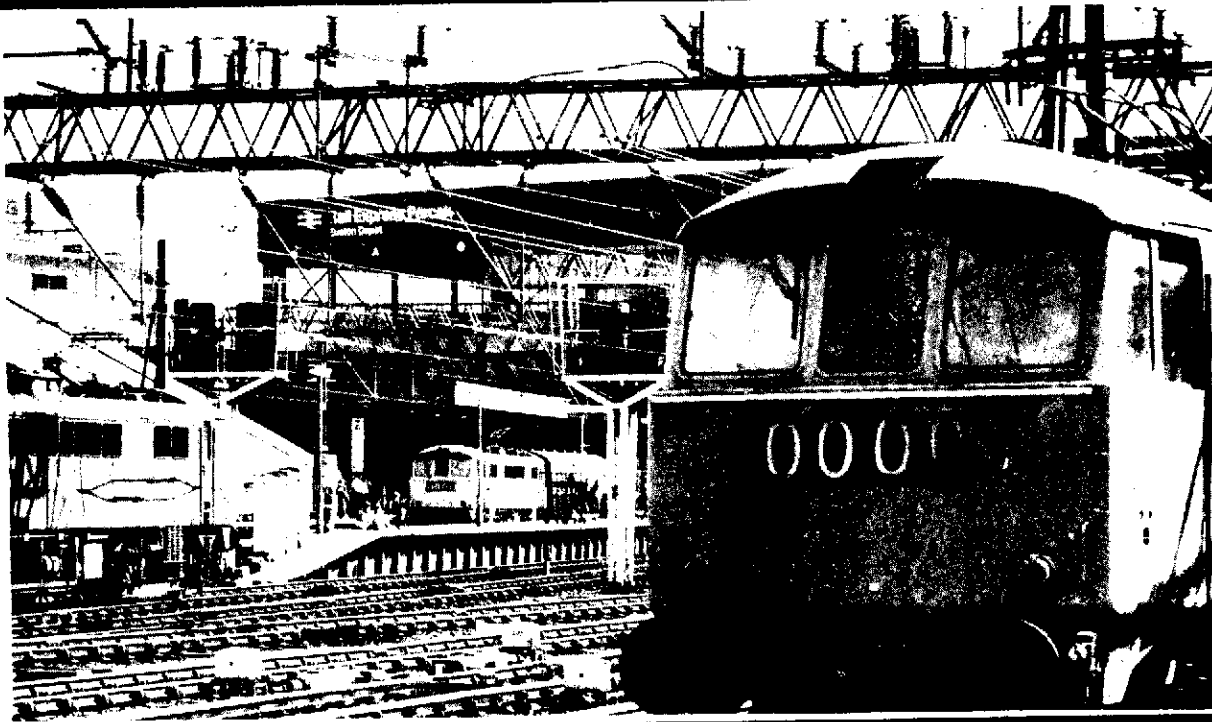
From the point of view of transport as a public service, rail has many advantages. It is cleaner than road transport. It is safer. The deaths per ton-mile for freight are about 15 times higher by road than if transferred to rail; deaths per passenger mile are about four times higher by bus, and eight times higher by car, than if transferred to rail.

All overheads and side-effects taken into account, rail transport is also, probably, cheaper than road transport. And a general shift to rail would make the remaining road travel less congested, therefore quicker

and cleaner.

But more profits are made from road transport, one way or another, than from rail. Profits rank higher with capitalist governments than social need. Moreover, trade unionism in road transport — where there are thousands of small operators — is more easily subdued than in rail.

In the US, where the profiteers of road transport rule supreme, public transport hardly exists at all in many large cities. The drift of Tory policy, on London Transport and on British Rail, is in the same direction. Not only ASLEF members, but all working people have an interest in resisting it.





Flying pickets could have tipped balance in our favour

by Martin Thomas

WHEN British Rail delivered their sacking threat, the TUC leaders' spines immediately turned to jelly.

How could the workers win? On one side were stacked all the forces of the ruling class. The British Rail Board was determined and doubtless willing to see the railways shut down for a good long while. The Tory government was 100% behind them — indeed, pushing them on.

The media backed the bosses. So did the police, the courts, the whole edifice of capitalist power.

Side

On the other side — 24,000 workers, in a declining industry. So the TUC leaders scurried to find a compromise. But was their perception of the balance of forces real? Or was it moulded, biased, and conditioned by their mortal fear of free-wheeling working class mobilisation which escapes their control?

Remember 1972, when the miners humiliated the Heath government? The government was fresh from victories against the post workers and the power workers. The mines had long been a declining industry; and before that decline started, in 1926, Britain's bosses had shown their ability to stick out nine months of a miners' strike.

Change

Yet the miners won spectacularly — because they did not accept the existing balance of forces, but went out to change it.

They did it with flying pickets. Lines of miners outside power stations and depots magnified the strike's power many times over.

Flying pickets were not a new invention in Britain in 1972. They had been pioneered in the US in the 1930s. Yet they had been unknown in Britain for decades.

Once rediscovered by the miners, the flying picket tactic



The majesty of the Establishment can quickly vanish . . .

tic was quickly copied by other workers. It was important in the mass strike movement of July 1972 which forced the Tories to release five docker pickets jailed under the Industrial Relations Act. It was crucial in the building workers' strike

of summer 1972.

In the ten years since then it has become almost commonplace — despite the Tories' legal threats. The NHS workers have used flying pickets to help generate solidarity action on a scale seldom seen.

For flying pickets are the bridge via which a sectional strike can cease to be just a sectional strike, and can become a self-multiplying self-expanding class mobilisation.

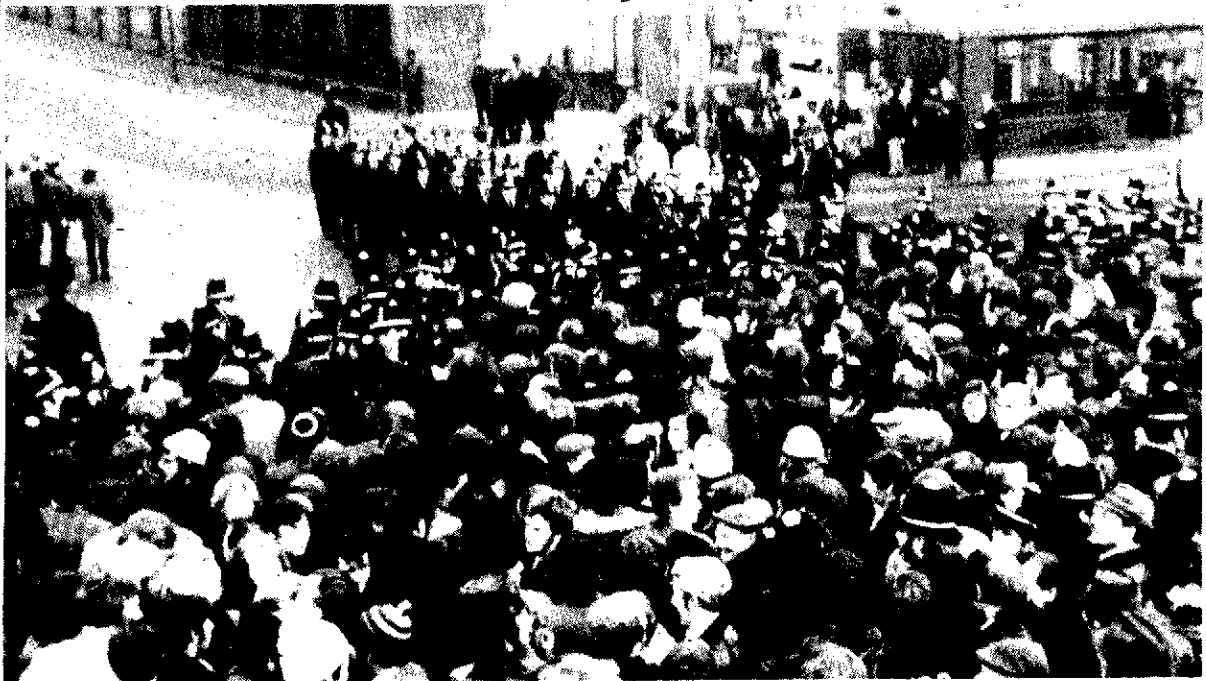
A king is a king only because everyone thinks he

is a king.

Likewise, to a large extent, the capitalist class is powerful because people think it is powerful. Once workers lose the habit of obedience, and begin to learn self-confidence, the majesty of the Established Order can crumble very quickly. (In Quebec in 1972, when workers responded to the arrest of union leaders by a general strike, the bosses even had trouble finding prison guards to lock up the unionists! The secretary of the guards' union advised the guards to refuse).

Train drivers' flying pickets had already crippled BR's attempt to keep a viable service running with scab labour. Spreading further afield, to the pits, the docks, the steelworks, the container drivers, the post offices, they could have turned the tables on the government. Each success for the flying pickets makes further successes easier, as confidence grows.

With a leadership worthy of the name, the labour movement would have little to fear from threats like BR's. But even against and despite the leadership, mass and flying pickets can win struggles by reaching out directly to the rank and file.



Saltley 1972: the miners didn't accept the given balance of forces, but went out to seek solidarity

it amounted to "are you for or against the survival of BL?" The vote was not surprisingly 7-1 in favour — helped by the fact that the TGWU leaflets calling for a "No" vote were not available until after the ballot!

Small wonder that today as BR management prepare the ground for their own ballot of the workforce, the parallel with BL is being cited as an encouragement.

The scene has been set on the railways: there is unending talk about the financial plight of the rail system, the need for huge new government finance and the certainty of closures if this is not forthcoming.

Union leaders — especially Sid Weighell and Tom Jenkins of the TSSA — have already accepted this tale of woe at face value and agreed that their members should bear the cost of baling out BR. Nor has the ASLEF leadership offered any serious challenge to this view: indeed ASLEF's "alternative" proposals to flexible rostering themselves offer to slash jobs and conditions in the name of saving money for its industry.

But there is another factor that should not be forgotten when we assess the Edwardes tactic and its echo on BR. At no point have any of the most extreme threats issued by management been implemented.

When Edwardes threatened that any worker who did not clock in on April 8, 1980 would be sacked, he was defied by 19,000 TGWU workers in the Midlands.

The strikers were not sacked. They were sold out by Moss Evans, who was met by Michael Edwardes, given his own conducted tour of BL finances, and his own look "over the precipice". He came out and announced a total surrender to Edwardes.

And when last November Edwardes threatened that strike action against his 3.8% pay offer would bring the closure of the Cars Division and the sacking of all 58,000 BL car workers, he was again

rebuffed. Mass meetings voted 8-1 for strike action — and the strike actually began before union officials once again staged an 11th-hour sell-out.

Despite all the tough talk beforehand, nobody was sacked, and no plants closed as a result of the strike. At each stage Edwardes' threats have been sufficient to put the fear of death into the hearts of the union bureaucrats.

We have, therefore, still not seen whether Edwardes or the Tories would actually go to the extent of shutting down the last remnants of the British car industry. Still less can it be assumed that British Rail could simply close down — throwing hundreds of thousands out of work and causing long-term chaos in national transport arrangements.

Union leaders however in general identify more closely with the problem of the employers with whom they negotiate than with the membership, whose militancy and political awareness they regard as a threat to their own positions of privilege and influence.

We have seen in the last ten years of economic crisis that the most powerful argument in the hands of an employer is the claim of impending bankruptcy and closure.

In the face of such threats, reformist union leaders whose whole political horizon is restricted to seeking the best possible conditions within the existing system, have no answer to offer. They simply throw in the towel and concede jobs by the thousand, sacrificing living standards and working conditions, in the hopes of making the firm in question "viable" in capitalist terms.

It is vital on the rail and throughout the trade union movement that a new leadership is built which is prepared to challenge this position of abject surrender and defend the interests of the working class.

Rayner report singles out women and blacks

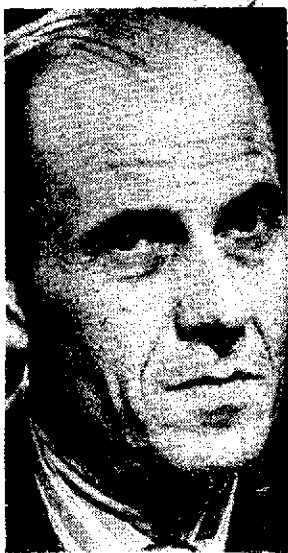
IAN LEEDHAM (national chairperson, MSC trade union side, and CPSA) describes the Tories' plans for a clampdown on the unemployed and on job centre workers: changing the workers' role to 'policing the workshy' rather than helping find jobs; letting private agencies take over job-finding; and introducing ethnic monitoring

As part of its continuing attack on the working class, this Government is now mounting a further assault on the victims of its own corrupt policies - the unemployed.

A series of 'reviews' by Sir Derek Rayner into waste and inefficiency in the civil service will result in the decimation of the jobs of the workers in the dole offices and Jobcentres, and the reduction of services to the unemployed already strained to the limit by public expenditure cuts. For example, the MSC anticipate that by 1984 there will be 820 less staff working for the Employment Service than there were in 1974, when unemployment was 600,000. There were 15,280 staff in the Employment Service in April 1979, and by April 1984 there will be 11,580.

The first Rayner review was the 'Payment of Benefit to Unemployed People'. This made a number of cost-cutting recommendations, the most significant being the abolition of the need to register at a Jobcentre as part of the process for claiming benefit. The Rayner team felt that making people register was an ineffective method of checking whether people were available for work, or as they put it 'policing the workshy'.

This narrow definition of the role of Jobcentre staff as agents of the benefit service is one that they have never accepted, believing that the purpose of the job was to help and advise people who are seeking work, not to police



Tebbit

them.

The introduction of voluntary registration (VR) will however mean a dramatic cutback in our ability to help people, because Employment Service staffing figures are based on the number of registrations taken. As the figures drop when people fail to register so will the number of staff employed. As the service declines because of a lack of staff to run it, then less people will use it and we will be quickly into a spiral of decline. To compound the sin, the Government have already told the service to anticipate staff cuts of over 500, ignoring the wishes of the MSC who wanted to at least see what effect VR would have on the Jobcentres before implementing the cuts.

The other consequences of VR will be that the current statistics on unem-

ployment will be inaccurate and inadequate. Figures will be based on the number of people on the benefit computer, not those registered for work - unemployment will magically drop by 50,000, and unemployment amongst women (who in general are less likely to be entitled to benefits) will no longer be an embarrassing problem for the Government.

The only statistics this Government felt it was important to keep are the count of ethnic minorities. It doesn't take much imagination to realise why.

This count will be administered in one of three different ways currently being discussed.

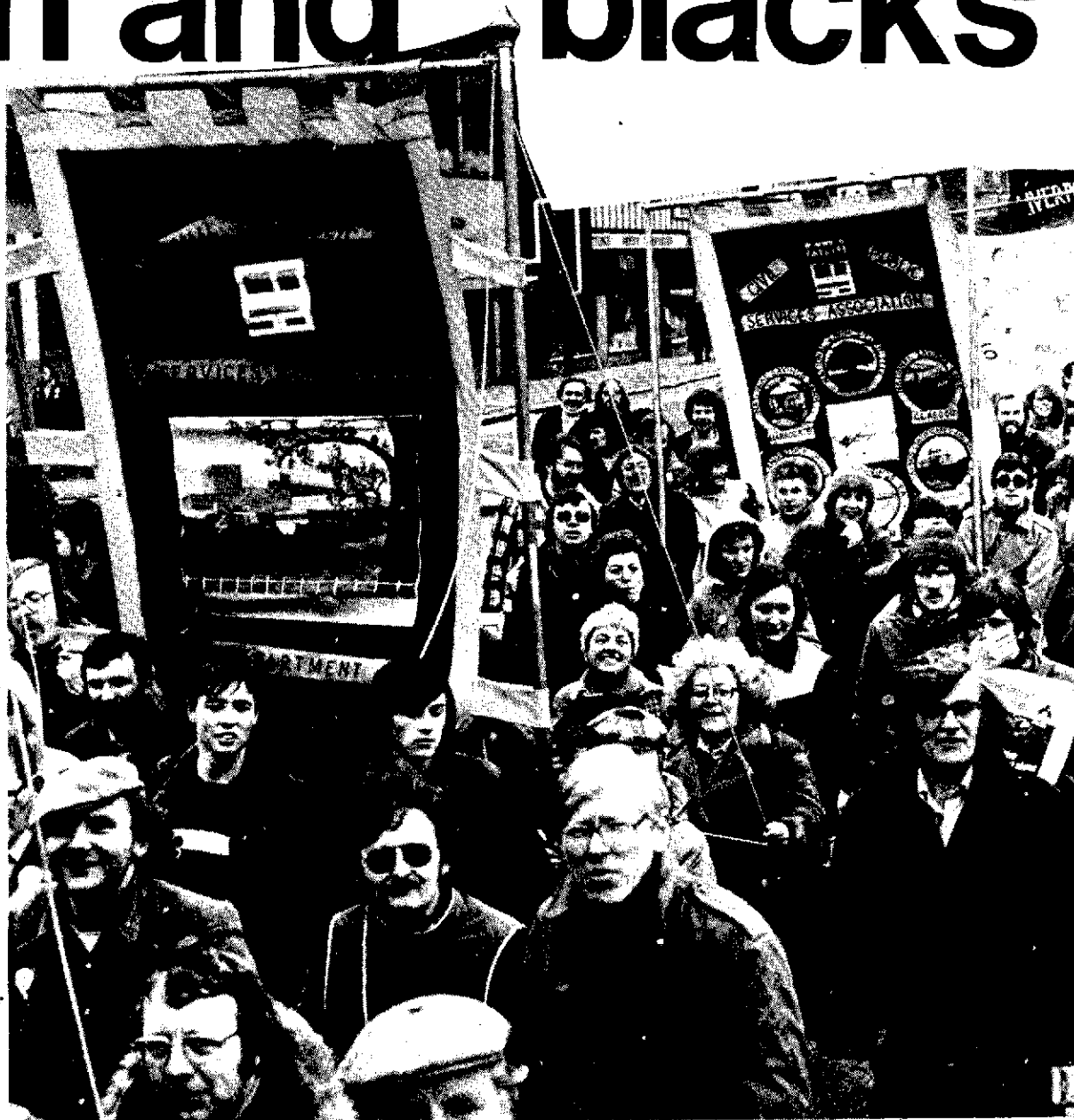
1. To issue a card to suspects whose appearance or speech suggests that they are in one of a number of specified groups. The card to be completed by the claimants.

2. Staff will make a visual assessment using four broad-based categories - West Indian, Asian, African and 'other'.

3. A straight-forward black or white assessment.

At the time of writing this article, the signs are that they will opt for the last method. Interestingly enough the Commission for Racial Equality condemned these checks until the Government replaced the CRE chairperson. They have now withdrawn their condemnation.

Members in the benefit offices will also be told to institute 'availability tests' on all people claiming



Civil service workers under attack - it is now urgent to prepare the fightback

benefit - because the Jobcentre will not be doing this any more.

Every claimant will be asked the following question on a form: "Would you take a full time job which you can do?" If the answer is 'yes' then it would mean giving a commitment to take any job regardless of the wages. Should any job be refused, then benefit could be withheld or suspended.

If the answer is 'no' then claimants will have to fill in further more complicated form on the type of work being sought, the required working hours, travelling arrangements and particular questions for women such as 'Do you have any children or anyone else who needs your care during working hours' and 'If yes, what arrangements have you made for their care while you are at work?' On answering these questions the case can be referred to the supervisor who can suspend benefit immediately or refer it to the Unemployment Review Officer for 'regular review'.

Rayner's second review on the 'General Employment Service in Great Britain' has just been issued to 'interested parties' (CPSA Headquarters received one copy at the beginning of June. It took a further week to get some more copies). The Trade Unions were given until July 9th to respond to the 87 recommendations in the report.

It recommends the early closure of 125 Jobcentres in rural areas on the basis that they are not busy enough and the removal of a further

42 offices from the high street to back street premises - clearly an attempt to give the work over to private agencies.

This expectation that the private agencies can step in and do the work of the State employment services ignores the fact that the private agencies are solely concerned with making a fast profit rather than helping disabled people find work, or giving advice and guidance to long term unemployed people and young people, or providing the other myriad services which can only be made available in a Jobcentre. All of the report's recommendations mean a severe cutback in the services provided in the Jobcentres, in order to prevent them from unfair competition with the private agencies.

For example, we will still be able to run a 'temps' service, but it should no longer be marketed in an 'aggressive' manner and we can no longer use the word 'temps' but should call it 'the short-term placing service'. The report will shut down the most effective 'temps' service in the country, significantly situated in Holborn in London, an area surrounded by private agencies.

Doubtful

We await the deliberations of the MSC and Tebbit with interest, although it is doubtful whether our 'representatives' on the MSC will be able to prevent these draconian measures.

The President of the Federation of Personnel Services Ltd. is none other than Lady Howe. Already we are being told to display names and addresses of private agencies in the Jobcentres and to help them fill some of their vacancies - a deal done between our senior management and FPS Ltd.

The answer to these attacks lies in the hands of the workers in the Jobcentres who will have to take direct action by occupying Jobcentres about to close, and mounting a campaign amongst the community to retain the service. But we also need to build on our links with the wider movement in order to build a mass campaign to save the State

Employment Service and prevent the immoral traffic in people looking for jobs by the sharks and profiteers in the private agencies.

Links with other unions in the Health Service and teaching will have to be established to fight the race checks everywhere and we will have to call upon welfare rights groups and unemployed unions to band together with us in the fight.

The Tories have a vested interest in shutting down the State Employment Service and handing it over to private agencies. The working class have a similar interest in expanding it. It is up to us all to fight for this key service.

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"This government is determined to crush the NHS"

CoHSE activist JANE GOSS spoke to Socialist Organiser

IN real terms the cash limits on the NHS have meant cutbacks - wards closed, hospitals closed, less money for staff, more infection, dirty wards.

They have increased staff side interest in bonus schemes because of the continuous low wage rises we've had over the past three years.

And they've meant an inevitable increase in private medicine.

The service to patients is declining. Some areas of high technology, because they are popular with doctors who control quite a lot of budgets, are holding up.

But basic services like, for example, hip replacements, are cut back.

The effect on patients is longer waiting lists and less time with doctors when they do actually get to see them.

2,000 general hospital beds have been lost in London in the last two years, and another 4,000 are due to go by 1988. Even in hospitals that remain open many casualty departments have been completely closed or only operate on a 9am to 5pm basis.

This means longer waiting lists and further to travel. In Woolwich, they had quite a campaign to keep the casualty open because of the frequency of industrial accidents.

Occupations

But over the last five years a fightback has developed - particularly in the last couple of years, since the Tories came to power.

People learnt from the first battles at Hounslow and the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospitals.

They realised they could do something to stop the cuts. This has resulted in a much greater degree of unionisation, and stronger stewards' structures.

So my personal opinion is that although they are working under much more difficult conditions, health service workers have gone from demoralisation to a willingness to fight back.

But now Fowler has stated that even the small concessions made of 1½-2% on top of the original 4% have got to be taken out of cash limits.

Any extra money we get above and beyond the 4% has got to be taken from cash limits - so that to go from a 4% to a 6% wage increase will mean the loss of 110 nursing jobs in an average health authority.

More and more often doctors are telling patients that treatment is unavailable on the NHS but it can be got privately. A picture emerges of a government determined to crush the NHS.

If the government wins it will mean a loss of services to patients, a massive loss of



PHOTO: JOHN HARRIS



jobs, and moves to contract out ancillary services such as laundry work.

But on the other hand, the solidarity action that has been seen in hospitals and the establishment of joint

shop stewards committees, initially as strike committees, is going to give us a much firmer basis to fight privatisation.

The NHS is going to go apart from the mentally

handicapped, psychiatry and geriatric care - all areas where there is probably little or no profit to be made.

There has to be a clear commitment from the Labour Party, that when it is

returned to power it will pursue socialist policies for the public sector and the health service.

The major cuts were brought in by the last Labour government. The

Tories have merely continued that.

There has to be a commitment to an expansion of the NHS, to the nationalisation of all the private hospitals and the

AFTER we beat you down and force you to accept a 6%-7½% pay deal - a cut in real wages - we'll impose cuts and 'privatise' your job. That is the Tory government's message to the health workers.

The government has decreed a cutback in growth for the rest of this year and a standstill in new funding until April 1985. From next April there will be a freeze on new jobs for consultants, dental, and senior medical staff.

Meanwhile, other jobs

will be cut by the privatisation of cleaning, laundry, and catering services.

Last week Social Services secretary Norman Fowler nervously disavowed a draft official circular - leaked in the Health and Social Services Journal - which proposed the contracting-out to private enterprise of thousands of jobs. But a couple of days later his deputy Geoffrey Finsberg was stressing that privatisation would go ahead, if not immediately on the drastic scale indicated in the circular.

drug companies without compensation.

The struggles we are involved in at present against cuts and for decent wages will only be effective if the Tories are replaced with a government committed to a genuine national health service which focusses on prevention and primary care.

The present reorganisation, of the NHS looks more effective from the consumer point of view. But in many ways there is less input by people who actually use the health service, particularly in inner city areas, where the bulk of health authority members live out in the green belt and have no idea what it is actually like to live in an inner city area.

The Tories have also attacked Community Health Councils, the only bodies to represent patients of the NHS. The Tories are very keen to disband the CHCs but they have been unable to do so.

So instead, they have set out to curtail their powers.

The lesson is that we - workers and the community - have to be in control of our health service.

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Why socialists must

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Arab military dictators and medieval-style monarchs on one side, the long-persecuted Jews on the other. No wonder large sections of the Left side with Israel. But the horror of Begin's raid on Lebanon has made many reconsider. Harry Sloan argues that the interests of liberation for both Arabs and Jews demand support for the oppressed — the Palestinians — and for the overthrow of the Zionist state.

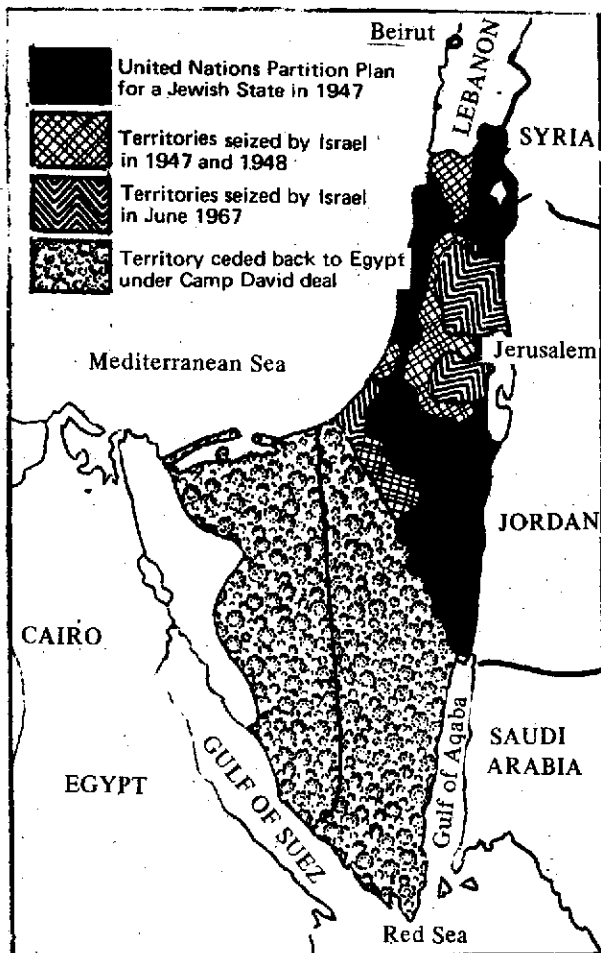
Isn't it true that those who condemn Israel and Zionism are anti-Semitic?

No. Many Jewish socialists are anti-Zionist. They explain that Israel is not a haven, but a death-trap, for the Jews. And they stress that no nation that oppresses another can itself be free: the militarisation and brutalisation of Israeli society inseparable from its warfare against the Palestinians and the Arab states are no liberation for the Jews.

They argue that Jews can fight the centuries of prejudice and discrimination against them only by allying with other oppressed peoples and with the struggle for socialism — not through a racist state like Israel which has made itself — and therefore the Jews of Israel — a tool of imperialism in the Middle East.

Zionism is a distinct political philosophy, linked to the creation of a racially exclusive Jewish state "as Jewish as England is English". Exponents of this view set out to achieve this goal by the forcible dispossession of the Palestinian Arabs from their own homeland and by the establishment of a state which denies to the Palestinians the most elementary rights.

To oppose such a political philosophy and the state based on it is not anti-Semitic. Indeed Zionism is and always was in essence a capitulation to anti-Semitism.



ism, accepting the racist claim that Jews and gentiles can't mix. It is not unknown for Zionists to actually collaborate with anti-semites.

But isn't it true that persecuted Jews all over the world see Israel as a refuge — as their home?

It is a fact that the Zionist cause gathered massively more support as a result of the Nazi holocaust of the 1930s — and that thousands of European Jews fled at that time to Palestine.

But in many cases they went to Palestine not through choice but because the so-called "democratic" countries, including Britain and the USA, refused to allow fleeing Jewish refugees to enter.

It is by no means the case that it is every Jew's dream to settle in Israel. Indeed, despite the fact that the Zionist state enshrines a constitutional "right of return" for any Jew anywhere, it has failed to

attract more than a tiny fraction of them. Even where anti-semitic persecution continues to be a major scandal — in the Soviet Union and the deformed workers' states — emigration figures show that less than half of the Jews leaving the USSR want to go to Israel: most head for the USA!

Most important — as a belligerent, militaristic state, built upon the forcible eviction of the native population from their land, the Zionist state of Israel is probably the most dangerous place on earth for Jews to live.

What would happen to the Jews if the Zionist state were destroyed?

It is no part of the programme of the Palestinian nationalists to drive out the Jews. Their struggle is first and foremost for the right of return to their own land, and for their legitimate rights within that country to be respected.

The Zionist state, constructed to perpetrate exclusive Jewish control, stands as an armed obstacle

to this objective.

The overthrow of that state machine, however, is not simply in the interests of the Palestinian people. The same state, based on a structure of class collaboration which denies the Jewish working class any trade union or mass political party independent of the Zionist bourgeoisie, also perpetuates the exploitation of Jewish workers.

The inherent racialism of the Zionist ideology also buttresses discrimination against Jewish workers of non-European origin. And the whole apparatus of repression and military aggression runs at the expense of the Jewish working class.

In fighting for an end to this system and for a democratic Palestine in which Arab and Jewish workers can enjoy equal rights, the Palestinians are in reality spearheading the struggle against oppression and exploitation of both.

We should not be taken in by the characteristic Zionist trick of reading every reference to the destruction of "Zionism" or of the "Israeli state" as meaning

the expulsion of the Jewish people. Repeatedly Yasser Arafat and other PLO spokespersons have made it plain that they do not favour such expulsions.

"I proclaim before you that when we speak of our common hopes for the Palestine of tomorrow we include in our perspective all Jews now living in Palestine who chose to live with us there in peace and without discrimination." (Arafat speech to UN, 1974)

Surely compared to the surrounding states Israel is more democratic? Weren't its founders like Ben Gurion members of the Israeli Labour Party?

There is of course more formal democracy for Jewish people in Israel than there is for the Arab masses in the Arab states.

But the reality is that the Arab population in Israel have suffered since 1948 a form of apartheid rule which effectively debars them from democratic rights, and

discriminates against them politically and economically.

The Mapai (Labour) party certainly is still a component of the Second International: but as we have seen in Britain and elsewhere, the policies of such parties by no means necessarily reflect the interests of the workers and oppressed masses they purport to represent.

The Israeli Labour Party is not even socially based on the working class as the British and other Labour Parties are. In fact, it generally draws its support from the better-off sections of the population.

What about the Kibbutzim? Aren't they forms of socialist cooperative?

Israel is a major bastion of capitalism in the Middle East, with its economy dominated both by US aid payments and by big capitalist firms. The top 10% of Israeli share as much of the national income between them as the bottom 50%.

Within this capitalist class society there exist tiny

settlements called Kibbutzim which embrace less than 5% of the population. These settlements depend upon the banks for their supplies of credit. One Israeli banker points out that:

"To the outside world, the kibbutz behaves exactly like a capitalist enterprise, and keeps to its contracts better than an individual. If the kibbutz is internally composed of people who renounce private property, who bring up their children collectively, or who crawl about on all fours, that is none of our concern."

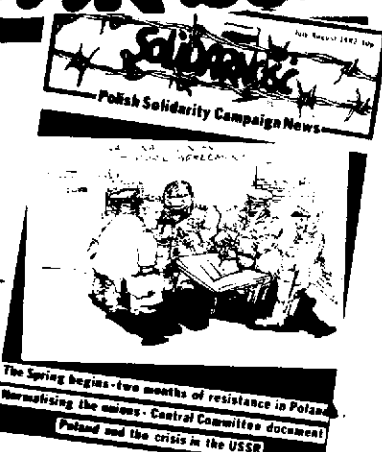
We can no more establish the nature of the Zionist economy from the kibbutzim than we can deduce the nature of the British economy from the existence of the cooperative at Meriden.

Moreover, the kibbutzim are not egalitarian. They use and depend on cheap Arab labour, excluded from the benefits available to the Jewish members of the kibbutzim.

And they serve as military outposts to preserve the domination of Zionist rule over occupied territory.

Solidarność

Latest issue of Polish Solidarity Campaign News — articles on resistance in Poland and solidarity in Britain and abroad.



Available from SO, c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL. 30p plus 20p p&p.

'Divide and rule' in Lebanon

by Andrew Hornung

WHEN the French developed the 'confessional' system in Lebanon following 1922, they thought they had fashioned the perfect antidote to Arab nationalism.

They had done better than that, though. They had built a system based on religiously defined communities which was to retard the development of any modern politics in Lebanon.

The confessional system makes religious sectarianism the official system of the country. It provides that all important, and many not-so-important, state posts be distributed according to religious community. The President, for example, is always a Maronite Christian,

the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim, and the President of the Chamber of Deputies, a Shi'a Muslim.

Maronites

The Maronite Christians dominate. They have refused to participate in any Arabist movements, and evolved an ideology — based on a completely spurious history — according to which they are the last crusaders, an outpost of Western Christian civilisation and a bulwark against Arab-Muslim backwardness. The Zionist racists of Israel have not been slow in recognising the similarity of this view to their own.

Each confessional group, Maronite, Greek Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox,

Druze, Sunni, Shi'a and so on, each has its place in the sectarian state order, based on its population size as recorded in a 1932 census. In 1932 the ratio of Christians to Muslims was six to five. Today about 60% of the population is Muslim.

This population change made a conflict between the Christian communities and the Muslim communities inevitable.

Sectarians

But the struggle has been against confessionalism itself and not for rejigging the sectarian balance. This reflects a growing social differentiation, the relative impoverishment of the Muslim population and their radicalisation (in part as a

result of contact with the Palestinian refugee population in Lebanon).

The reformers, people like Raymond Edde, who were in favour of concessions to the Muslim bourgeoisie by adjusting the confessional system to the new demographic realities, have been increasingly isolated.

Clans

On one side, they are faced with the ultra-conservative Christian parties, the National Liberal Party (headed by the Gemayel family) and the many clan-based militias; on the other side there are the components of the Lebanese National Movement — a front of more than a dozen organisations and their

militias, which is in alliance with the Palestinians.

There are, of course, some Muslim reactionaries on the side of the so-called Lebanese Front, as well as Christian leftists (not to mention the many Christian Palestinians) on the side of the National Movement.

One of the central points of the programme of the Left is the "abolition of sectarianism as a basis for political organisation and appointments."

So the Lebanese internal conflict is not simply a squalid affair of communal rivalry. The Muslim-Left forces are fighting to end confessionalism. And they reflect the growing social consciousness of the swelling ranks of the poor.

support Palestinians



Well, why won't the Palestinians' supporters among the Arab regimes allow the PLO members from West Beirut settle in their countries?

The Arab leaders have all to one extent or another cemented their own deals or basis for "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism and with the Zionist state of Israel.

They make rhetoric against the Zionists; but they themselves rest upon a political balance in the Middle East of which the Zionist state is a component part.

Indeed for regimes such as the Saudi monarchy and the Gulf states, which have no borders with Israel, the existence of the Zionist state complements their own direct military alliances with US imperialism. For the Palestinian problem is for them, on the one hand an irritating element of instability in the Middle East for which they would like to find some compromise formula — such as a "mini-state" on the West Bank; on the other hand it offers them the chance to pose before their own work-

ing class and peasant populations as defenders of the Arab cause by giving cash and a measure of diplomatic support to the PLO.

While the degree of direct dependence of the Arab regimes upon imperialism plainly varies, all of them — including Syria — share the Saudi desire to appear as champions of the Palestinians without being thrust into any struggle against the Zionist state.

The PLO leaders themselves obviously feel that only by remaining in a state bordering Israel can they hope to retain a political credibility in pursuing their demands.

There is thus a conflict of interest. And in addition many Arab bourgeois regimes look with alarm at the success and extent of the alliance developed in recent years in Lebanon between the Palestinians and the forces of the Lebanese Left: they fear that the political dynamic of this might disrupt the delicate political balance upon which they rest in their own countries.

But even if we defend the Palestinians against Zionism, what right have they got to



Israel's rampage through Lebanon... who can still believe that Zionism is really about letting the Jews live in peace?

drag the Lebanese people into their struggle?

The Zionists have since the 1950s discussed the possibility of invading the South of Lebanon as far as the Litani River, or other measures to establish firm control over the Lebanon. This has been the case since long before the PLO even existed as an organisation.

The Palestinians in Lebanon — 240,000 in 1964 — are first and foremost the dispossessed victims of Zionism. Their objective has increasingly been to defend themselves, to survive and to create conditions to return to Palestine.

But at the same time they have come under attack not only from the Zionists — in repeated air raids, artillery strikes and partial invasions — but also from forces of extreme right wing reaction in Lebanon itself whose objective is to crush not only the Palestinians but also the Lebanese left wing organisations.

These right wing forces, including the private army of Major Haddad in South Lebanon, and the fascists of the Phalange, have been extensively supported by the Zionists with arms and cash.

In fighting back, the Palestinian forces have made an important development beyond the previous position of non-involvement in the political struggles in the countries where they were settled. And, together with the left, they have inflicted serious setbacks on the Phalangist militias, establishing virtual dual power in parts of Lebanon.

These are real gains for the Lebanese workers and peasants: they are the fruits

of their alliance with the Palestinians.

But this strength of the left is also a major thorn in the side of the Zionists — and a factor motivating the present invasion.

We must understand that in the present context the interests of the Palestinians and the oppressed Lebanese masses are both equally counterposed to the Zionists, the imperialists, and their tools in the Phalangist militias.

The enforced withdrawal of the Palestinian fighters from West Beirut would offer no reprieve to the Lebanese masses: instead it would leave them further exposed to the violence of the Zionists and the extreme right wing.

What about the evidence that the Zionists want peace in the Middle East? After all, they have given back the Sinai to Egypt, evicting the Yamit settlers.

For the Zionists to hand back the empty desert land of Sinai in exchange for a military alliance which protects them against danger of attack by its most powerful neighbour is a good trade indeed — particularly since even this land was seized from Egypt in the first place!

We should note however that economically, the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip are territory worth far more to the Zionists — providing them with abundant, cheap, exploitable Arab labour, and markets for their domestic industries.

And, unlike Sinai, both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are included in the Biblical land of Israel, which Begin and the Zionist leaders feel duty-bound to retain, no matter what pressure is brought to bear upon them.

Meanwhile the Egyptian bourgeoisie through the Camp David deal, Begin has been able to focus the whole weight of the Zionist offensive on his northern borders — annexing the Syrian Golan Heights, intimidating the Syrian rulers, and brutally invading Lebanon.

These are not peaceful gestures but further evidence that the Zionist state is an aggressive, expansionist state.

OK, but if we condemn Zionist aggression and nationalism shouldn't we also

condemn the nationalism and violence of the Palestinians?

The violence meted out by the Zionists is institutionalised state terrorism, with the objective of driving out or permanently subjugating the Palestinian people. The armed struggle of the Palestinians is not only dwarfed in comparison to that of the Zionist military — 10,000 dead so far in the most recent invasion of Lebanon alone! — but must be understood as primarily a defensive reaction, an attempt to hold off further Zionist attacks or regain what has been seized by



force.

Socialists do not condone attacks on civilian targets nor do we believe that guerrilla actions against the Zionist military machine can liberate the Palestinian

people. But we must at all times defend the right of an oppressed nation to struggle, arms in hand, against its oppressors. The Palestinians are the oppressed, the dispossessed, and the Zionists are the oppressors.

While the Zionists openly argue — echoing Nazi phrases — that Palestinians are "two legged animals" and state their objective of crushing them, we have already seen that the leaders of Palestinian nationalism advocate no such racialism in relation to Jewish people.

And, as one Palestinian speaker recently pointed out in a public meeting in Oxford, when we come down to individual actions by Palestinian militants against Jews, we may oppose them, but who would compare the despairing punches and kicks of a man being hung with the violence of the executioner who coolly tightens the noose around his neck?

Move this resolution

This Labour Party/Trade Union branch:

1) Condemns the Israeli invasion of the Lebanon aimed at driving the PLO out of Lebanon and imposing on the Lebanese people a right wing government sympathetic to Israel.

2) Calls on the Labour Party NEC to state publicly its condemnation of the Israeli invasion and to recognise the PLO as the chosen representative of the Palestinian people in their struggle for self-determination.

3) Welcomes the blacking action against Israel initiated by Australian and Greek trade unionists and the stand taken by the Scottish TUC against the invasion. We call on the TUC to instruct member unions to black all trade with Israel until its armed forces have completely withdrawn from Lebanese territory.

4) Agrees to affiliate to the Labour Committee on Palestine which is committed to these policies.

The Labour Committee on Palestine can be contacted at 28 Carlton Mansions, Holmleigh Road, London N16.



Turkey Solidarity Campaign

Contact: BM Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX.



Beirut: Israeli bombs blast a woman out of her third-floor flat



Strike wave rocks apartheid state

by Jim Farnham

MILITANT black carworkers in South Africa have come out on a month's strike over wages.

About 15,000 workers came out last Thursday July 15 at the Ford, General Motors and Volkswagen plants in the Port Elizabeth industrial area. The workers have rejected a 7.5% offer from the regional employers' council.

The existing minimum wage is £1 per hour. Workers are demanding £1.75 as a minimum living wage.

The carworkers have a history of militant struggle. In a series of strikes from 1980 throughout the motor industry, the workers have built a strong union organisation on the shop floor and have won significant wage rises.

As with most of the recent strikes, this latest mass strike has been mounted by the workers themselves, using the organised strength they have built. It

follows recent smaller strikes in the industry, over redundancies and victimisations.

Last month about 500 workers in the Volkswagen paint shop went on strike for the reinstatement of a victimised shop steward. This followed another strike by the whole black workforce at Volkswagen in May. The workers were striking for the reinstatement of 316 workers made redundant.

Such militant action shows that workers are not prepared to accept the wage cuts and job losses that the bosses are demanding. After an unprecedented period of boom, the motor industry is running into a crisis of profits. Last year 301,000 cars and 115,000 trucks were sold. This year the figures are expected to drop to 275,000 and 135,000.

Under these conditions bosses are desperately seeking to protect profits at the expense of workers.

The strike action may well spread and develop in the motor industry and among other workers in the Port Elizabeth area. The carworkers' mass strike is part of a wave of mass action also mobilised in other industries and areas.

Workers are striking despite massive repression and despite the fact that unemployment is 20 to 25%.

Only weeks ago, at least 30,000 black mineworkers came out on strike in protest against a wage offer that meant cuts in the already starvation level of wages.

The mining industry ex-



In the forefront - both well-unionised carworkers and miners who are banned from unionising by law

ploits a huge black workforce of 700,000, and the bosses were desperate to ensure that the strike did not spread. At least ten workers were shot dead, and thousands were sacked.

The largest section of manufacturing industry, the

metal industry, which exploits about 400,000 black workers, has also been hit by a wave of wage strikes in recent months.

As well as these major strikes, there is other ongoing strike action across the country. For example, the

industrial port Richards Bay was last month hit by strikes in the docks, in the aluminium smelting plant, and on building sites. The militant and increasingly organised black workers' movement is pushing forward in struggle against its terrible poverty

and oppression under the bosses' apartheid system.

The bosses and their government are growing more and more desperate to control this movement and protect profits at a time of deepening economic crisis.

As the struggle grows

sharper, the black workers' movement needs maximum support from the international workers' movement and from our labour movement in particular. This is especially true in cases where South African workers are on strike in subsidiaries of firms also based in Britain, for example Ford.

Workers at Ford Britain could mobilise appropriate supporting action, with blacking and protest strikes, to help the struggle of the workers at Ford South Africa.

Trucks

Some Ford light trucks are exported to Britain from South Africa, and Ford workers and dockers are in a position to organise blacking in support of the strike.

Last Monday, July 13, a call was made at the UN for the international labour movement to take solidarity action in protest at the repression and victimisation of the South African mineworkers.

Leaving aside the hypocrisy involved when some black African governments verbally support South African workers, this is an important call and should be taken up as widely as possible.

For example, a period of protest blacking action against goods to and from South Africa, or protest action by NUM workers - any solidarity action taken by our labour movement will strengthen the morale and the struggle of our brothers and sisters in South Africa.

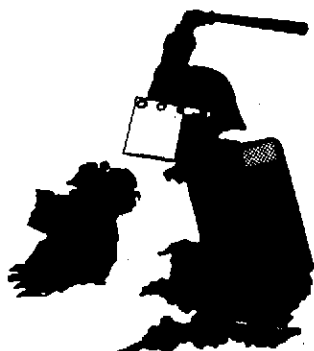
It is necessary for leaders in the labour movement to turn words into action, and to campaign and organise for working class solidarity action.

FIRST IRISH VICTIM

LAST Tuesday, 13th, Gerard Tuite was jailed for ten years by the Dublin Special Criminal Court.

It was the first use of laws drafted by the Dublin government to enable them to get round Irish courts' refusal to extradite people to Britain. Under the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Act Tuite was tried in Dublin on charges of keeping explosives in Britain.

Republicans demonstrated outside the court. For them Tuite is not a criminal, but a soldier in his country's fight to be united, independent and free of British troops.



That the IRA is an irregular popular militia, which has to operate on the run, rather than a regular force with all the pomp of state militarism, makes no difference. Britain has no right to 'criminalise' Republican volunteers; and an Irish government has no business to do Britain's work for it.

For all that, the conviction continues a decades-long record of repression of Republicans by the Dublin government.

Today's repression is no more likely than previous decades' to extinguish the Republican cause or stop the war in Northern Ireland. Only the creation of a free and united Ireland will end the war.

7 months of martial law

TODAY marks the seventh month since the state of war (martial law) was declared in Poland.

Despite government claims to have 'liberalised' its internal policies, the number of people persecuted is now much higher than at the time of the coup. Growing numbers of internees are being formally charged and transferred from the camps to maximum security prisons.

Well over 900 people have already been sentenced under martial law regulations. Among them is Ewa Kubasiewicz, aged 26, mother of two small children, who received a ten-year sentence for helping to organise a strike in the Maritime Academy in Gdansk. She has been recently adopted by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience, after it was established beyond doubt that she never advocated the use of violence.

Even so, Ewa Kubasiewicz and hundreds of Solidarity people like her are being treated as common criminals and denied political prisoner status.

More than 3,000 people

are being interrogated now and this often means physical abuse and blackmail. Solidarity has records of several instances of torture and killings. 17-year old Emil Barchanski was found dead in Warsaw on June 3, after being beaten and tortured under interrogation.

A recent session of the Polish Sejm (Parliament) incorporated most of the martial law provisions into civil law. Therefore the much-touted lifting of martial law on July 22 will amount only to a cosmetic change.

The Solidarity Trade Union Working Group in the UK, recognised by the TUC as the representatives of Solidarity, is now running an Information Office in London. The address is: Acorn House, 314/320 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP, telephone, 01-837 9464, an office kindly loaned by the National Union of Journalists. We receive a steady flow of underground leaflets, bulletins and information from Poland. We would be happy to send you any information you want.

Marck Garztecki, 13 July, 1982

Khomeini's troops set off for Jerusalem!

By Harry Sloan



WHEN THE Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein first declared war on Iran two years ago, a lot of people in the workers' movement saw this as an imperialist-sponsored attack on the Iranian revolution.

Washington indeed made no secret of the fact that it would be far from dismayed if Khomeini's turbulent regime, with its anti-imperialist rhetoric and its disruptive impact on the Muslim masses, were overthrown.

Saddam Hussein's regime, on the other hand, appeared to be deliberately distancing itself from its previous hard-line 'rejectionist' stance towards Israel and seeking to consolidate its links with imperialism.

Saddam Hussein's war effort against Khomeini won the active assistance of King Hussein in Jordan and of a number of ultra-conservative Arab Gulf states, themselves alarmed at the possibility that pre-Khomeini forces might

topple them from power.

The initial pretext for the war was a long-standing territorial dispute dating back to the reign of the Shah. The refusal of the Khomeini regime to negotiate a solution to the dispute was part and parcel of its attempt to cling on to the whole of the Shah's territory - with the forcible suppression of the Kurdish people and other national minorities.

The anti-Shah revolution had already been turned by Khomeini and the mullahs away from any anti-capitalist dynamic, and into the mobilisation of lumpen mobs against the forces of the left. The oppression of women and gays had been institutionalised.

Between the bloody anti-communist terror of Hussein's Ba'athists and Khomeini's clerical regime there was nothing to choose politically: for the masses of the Middle East, the revolutionary overthrow of both offered the only way forward.

Since then the assessment of the war as reactionary on both sides has been vindicated. Hussein's apparent 'imperialist backing' has proved to have been largely an illusion, while Khomeini's forces received material support from - of all people - the Zionist state of Israel.

As Khomeini's troops gained the upper hand, and drove back the Iraqi invaders, so the imperialists have let it be known that they will not move to protect Hussein.

And now Iran has turned the tables, mounting its own invasion of Iraq, besieging Iraq's second city, Basra - its only port and centre of its main oilfield. This new phase of the conflict is an undisguised aggression by Iran.

The issues before the

workers and peasants of Iraq and Iran are in essence still the same. While neither side is a direct tool of imperialism, Khomeini's invasion is as reactionary as Hussein's was two years ago.

Despite breast-beating talk of Iranian troops proceeding 'through Iraq (and Jordan!) to Jerusalem', their mission is no liberating, anti-imperialist crusade, but the extension of Khomeini's rule of reaction and repression into Iraq - and possibly elsewhere on the Gulf.

The real path to liberation for the workers, peasants and soldiers of Iran and Iraq is to mobilise in revolutionary struggle against the war, and for the overthrow of their present rulers.



Rulecan women battle on against the odds

Chris Erswell reports

THE Rulecan women at Runcorn, Cheshire, are still fighting for their jobs after months of bitter struggle.

Management have reneged on their offer to take the women back at a new factory.

To restart the campaign, the women, members of the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers, called a public meeting on Friday July 9.

The executive member for the area reported that blacking of Rulecan goods would be re-started, although nothing would be "written down officially on paper".

Mass pickets

A campaign of mass picketing on Mondays and Thursdays has begun. In addition the retail outlets for Rulecan goods such as C&A and Mothercare are being leafleted.

Local NUTGW official Derek Cattell informed the meeting that the strikers had received a setback in their attempts to get speakers at the Liverpool Trades Council anti-Tebbit rally on Monday 12 July.

Trades Council secretary Alex Doswell said that the speakers had already been allocated their speaking time and it "couldn't be altered".

Evidently Doswell has no time for the real, living struggle against Tebbit, only for windbagging about it.

This follows on him cancelling a coach decided by the trades council to take people to a mass picket in an earlier stage of the struggle.

The Labour Party Women's Festival also refused to take a speaker from Rulecan. But the meeting on July 9 decided to picket the Liverpool Rally and protest vociferously against the disgraceful cold-shouldering of the Rulecan



struggle by the labour movement. This was successful in forcing a speaker.

Rulecan management have threatened to use the law to stop blacking of their goods. This is a foretaste of what is to come under the Tebbit Bill. If the labour leaders are incapable of assisting this small, isolated group of women to win this struggle, then it is clear that they are only fit for hot air and arm waving and should be thrown out.

The union executive should be convening a NUTGW shop stewards' conference to inform them of the gravity of the manage-

ment use of the law, anticipating as it does the Tebbit Bill, and to organise national supporting strike action by all NUTGW members.

And in any case the strike committee should consider convening a labour movement delegate conference immediately to rally support for their struggle.

At the Rulecan public meeting, a suggestion by Socialist Organiser supporters that the women consider occupying the plant was discussed but not resolved.

It is clear that a small number of women have considerable problems in mount-

ing an occupation.

But only an occupation of the factory would stop the scabs and force the hand of management.

Management claims of financial losses and inability to open a new factory as promised must not be accepted at face value, but questioned. The demand to see the firm's accounts must be the answer to their crocodile tears and evasions.

Proposals were made by people at the public meeting that local factory convenors be asked to form a support committee with the strikers.

They should certainly be asked to organise support for

the mass pickets. But much more important, in terms of likely immediate results, is to involve the unemployed in the struggle.

The organised unemployed, and those like Rulecan who are struggling for jobs, must be brought together in a joint committee for the purposes of meeting both their needs.

The demand for work sharing on full pay based on a sliding scale of hours is the crucial slogan for uniting the struggling employed with the struggling and organised unemployed.

The organised unemployed should be ready to occupy Rulecan with the striking women. If the bosses are incapable of organising their capitalist system to provide work for all, then the demand must be raised, by the union, for the expropriation of the clothing industry and the banks under workers' management without compensation.

A workers' plan of production for the clothing industry should be drawn up by the occupying workers based on need not profit.

The unemployed should likewise campaign for a programme of useful public works financed by central government in which new jobs are created and new factories are opened up, not closed down.

The basis for this could be laid now by workers' inquiries into the basic clothing and other needs of the estates and communities in which the occupying workers and unemployed live.



Cuts: fight must go on

The Tories' budget plans for next year mean some shocks for new Labour councils. Martin Thomas reports.

LABOUR councils elected this May who thought that somehow they would be able to muddle through, keeping manifesto promises but avoiding ruinous rate rises, are in for a shock.

In a series of articles last week the Guardian leaked an official report on the implications of the government's cash limit plans.

If the local authorities keep to those plans, 20% of fire service jobs will go next year. 28,000 jobs will go in social services. 14,000 teachers will be sacked, another 15,000 teachers' jobs will go through 'natural wastage', and non-teaching school jobs will be cut by 3 1/2%. In higher and further education, one lecturer in 12 will be sacked.

There will be 11,000 fewer places in old people's homes, 3,300 fewer in children's homes and 1,400 fewer in homes for the mentally handicapped. 70,000 fewer people will have home help.

Altogether, 120,000 local authority jobs will go by 1983-4. The only consolation is that police force numbers will be cut by 10%.

"These figures", the Guardian warns, "are not a prediction of what will happen. Indeed, they are regarded by most civil servants and council representatives as unthinkable harsh."

"They are, however, the best estimate that senior officials can make of what councils could afford if they stuck to the cash limits which ministers tell them they should observe."

The rate support grant figures for next year are not yet fixed. But it seems plain that they will present councils with the choice of making big cuts - if not quite as big as those sketched out in the report - or imposing huge rate rises, or both.

There is no sign that even the most left-wing councils are preparing for this prospect.

For example, Islington council, won from the SDP this May by a left-wing Labour slate, is currently discussing budget plans with the local Labour Parties. This year the council leadership plans to spend what little reserves

the SDP left, and so make slow but real progress on the manifesto. So far, so good. But next year?

Labour group leader Margaret Hodge estimates that a 42% rate rise will be needed to continue with the manifesto. And no plans are indicated for campaigning to force more money from the government, other than meetings of Labour leaders from different councils, representations to Heseltine, etc.

In a document circulated for the discussion in the Labour Parties, councillors Pat Longman and Alan Clinton and Local Government Committee chair Nik Barstow write:

"Our basic manifesto commitment is to campaign to force more money out of the government so we can improve services and make them more accountable, freeze rents, and hold down rates..."

Islington Council should draw up a detailed assessment of how much extra money we will need from the government to carry out our manifesto commitments without placing extra burdens on Islington tenants and ratepayers. We should then go out and publicise the facts in a massive campaign among tenants, council workers and community groups explaining, in simple terms, why we need the extra money, what the benefits should be, and why they should join with us to demand the government pays up."

Without campaigns like that by many Labour groups, the promises of May could turn sour quicker than we think.



OUT! Class Fighter, articles on Defend the YS!, YCND, Clash, comment, opinion, letters and lots more. Only 10p. New Address, 214, Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

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WHAT'S ON

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

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.

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.

Oxford Socialist Organiser Thursday July 22 at 7.30pm. Prince of Wales, Cowley Rd. "Defend Militant, fight the Register!" All socialists welcome.

SHEFFIELD Socialist Organiser. PUBLIC MEETING. "All out and defeat the Tories! Wednesday July 22, 7.30, Red Cow, The Wicker. Regular (open) meetings. August 11. Trade unions in the crisis. August 25: Palestine September 8: The Alternative Economic Strategy. September 22 The Labour Party witch-hunt. All at the Red Cow, The Wicker, starting 7.30.

Socialist Organiser delegate meeting: Saturday July 24, 11.30am to 4.30pm, at Birmingham Labour Club, Bristol St, Birmingham. (Opposite 'Night Out' restaurant: 5 minutes' walk from New St BR station & main bus station)

"Voice of Solidarnosc": weekly bulletin of the Solidarity Trade Union Working Group in the UK. Subscription £5 for three months, from STUWG, c/o Acorn House, 314-320 Grays Inn Road, London WC1 (837 9464)

POLISH SOLIDARITY Contact addresses. Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group, Acorn House, 314/320 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP. Tel: 01-837 9464. Glasgow Polish Solidarity Campaign. Ian McCalman, 18 Mossiel Rd, Glasgow G43. 041-632 1839. Edinburgh PSC. C/o Edinburgh Trades Council, 12 Picardy Place, Oxford Labour Committee on Poland, 468 Banbury Road, Oxford, 0865 58238. Coventry PSC. John Fisher, c/o ASTMS, 26 Queens Rd., Coventry. Labour Poland Solidarity Fund, c/o Cooperative Bank, 110 Leman St., London E1.

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

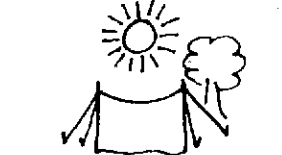
WORKERS' march against Racism: FROM Brick Lane through Brixton to TUC conference in Brighton. September 4 to 8. Sponsors include: Jayaben Desai, Anwar Ditta, Nasira Begum, Tony Benn, Ted Knight, Ken Livingstone, Paul Boateng. Details 01-274 3951.

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.

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



FIGHT THE TORIES, NOT THE SOCIALISTS! Labour movement conference, sponsored by several CLPs, the Bakers' Union executive, and the LPYS National Committee. September 11 at Wembley Conference Centre. Delegates' credentials £1 from 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.



LPYS Summer Camp Go wild in the country! Only £20 for a week at Bracefields Camp Site, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire (Sun guaranteed!) All Class Fighter supporters should attend. Further details from Jane: 01-609 3071.

Socialist Organiser

Lebanon: **FASCISTS LOOK TO ZIONIST VICTORY**

ISRAELI troops remain stacked around west Beirut, ready to blitz the city if the Palestinians do not withdraw.

Behind them, the right-wing Lebanese Maronite armed gangs rush to extend their control over war-shattered southern Lebanon. Falangist leader Bachir Gemayel especially wants to consolidate his position in preparation for winning the forthcoming presidential election.

What he hopes for — and Israel hopes for too — is a reconstructed Lebanese state, dominated by the Maronite right wing, allied to Israel, and able to keep out the Palestinians and crush the mainly Muslim Lebanese left.

According to the Paris daily Le Monde (July 16) the PLO still retains 60% of its military strength in Lebanon. But its 6,000 or so fighters, together with their Lebanese allies, are still massively outgunned by the Israelis.

The Arab states are little help to the Palestinians. They make protests but do nothing. PLO leader Yasser Arafat at the weekend

denounced the "utter silence" of the Arab regimes.

It is, he said, "as though the Arab nation has fallen into a deep slumber, dreaming happy dreams, blind, deaf and dumb to the world."

"It is the right of the masses to ask questions today, and to punish those responsible tomorrow."

Syria has announced that it will not let the Palestin-

ians in if they withdraw from Lebanon — though it seems that it might shift on this in exchange for economic and other concessions.

Still less help to the PLO are the capitalist big powers that have issued protests against the Israeli invasion. France, one of the most outspoken, has offered to send troops along with the US to supervise a PLO withdrawal. The US government concerns itself with 'liquidating' the Palestinian presence in Lebanon — by negotiated means.

In the negotiations, the PLO has been trying to get agreement for some armed Palestinian presence — a few hundred or a few thousand — to remain in Lebanon. Without this,

the PLO could be deprived of any military base at all.

But the PLO as a military force has not been the only target of the Zionist onslaught. The whole of the Palestinian population in Lebanon — some half a million — and their mostly Muslim left-wing Lebanese allies, are also targets.

About 400,000 people have had their homes destroyed. The Lebanese police reckon over 10,000 people have been killed — Lebanon's prime minister says 15,000. Several thousand have been herded into Israeli prison camps.

This, remember, according to the official Zionist account, is all for the sake of guaranteeing peace for Galilee! Such atrocities flow from the nature of the Zionist state. Founded on

the dispossession and driving out of the Palestinians, it constantly seeks new 'buffer zones' to bolster its security. The mass of oppression and denial of rights on which it is erected increases; and so also increases the need for 'security' against the rebels who fight back against that oppression.

Among the most valuable assistance for the beleaguered Palestinians has been from an increasing number of Jews who — without necessarily questioning or renouncing the fundamentals of Zionism — have protested against Begin's war. Although majority opinion in Israel is still firmly with Begin, the demonstrations of 20,000 and 100,000 against the war have been massive-

ly larger than anything similar before.

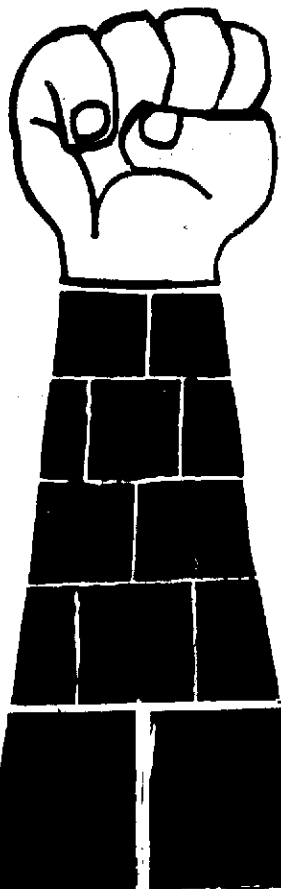
In the usually unconditionally pro-Israeli American Jewish community, louder and louder voices of dissent have been raised.

Labour and socialist movements internationally should be adding their voices, asserting explicit solidarity with the Palestinians and a commitment to assist the struggle for a socialist Middle East in which Arabs and Jews can live as equals.

Despite the break in the momentum of Begin's war machine, an all-out assault on West Beirut is still not excluded. Nothing that is possible to halt or hinder that should be left undone.



£6000 fund



This week we have £50 from Oxford carworkers, bringing our total to £2732.50 towards the £6,000 total. Area by area, the amounts collected and the percentages towards local targets are:

Glasgow	26.40	22%	Nottingham	114.00	114
Edinburgh	40.00	22%	Leicester	86.00	22%
Stirling	-	-	Northampton	-	-
Carlisle	-	-	Cardiff	45.00	45%
Durham	110.00	110	Bristol	-	-
York	-	-	Oxford	407.00	81%
Bradford	-	-	Southampton	-	-
Leeds	68.00	68%	Basingstoke	45.00	45%
Hull	-	-	Brighton	-	-
Sheffield	102.50	103	London	274.00	13%
Merseyside	120.00	38%	Miscellaneous	138.80	-
Manchester	148.00	38%	-	-	-
Windsor	-	-	-	-	-
Stoke	20.00	67%	-	-	-
Birmingham	413.00	83%	-	-	-
Coventry	574.80	137	-	-	-

Send donations to: Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.

OVER 70 people — workers, students and Labour activists — supported a public meeting against the Zionist invasion of Lebanon called by Oxford Trades Council on July 15.

Speakers included Tony Greenstein from the Labour Committee on Palestine, a Palestinian speaker, and local Labour councillor David Whitfield. Those present were urged to fight for blacking action by trade unions and for Labour Party support to the Palestinian struggle.

July 23 — Public meeting: The War in Lebanon: the Logic of Zionism (organised by Labour Committee on Palestine). Speakers: Ken Livingstone, Stuart Holland MP, Peter Tatchell, Lebanese, Palestinian and anti-Zionist Israeli speakers, County Hall, 7.00pm.

July 31 — Demonstration and Rally (organised by Palestine Solidarity Liaison Committee). Meet Speakers' Corner, 12.30. March to Trafalgar Square Rally — 2.30pm.

August 2 — Organising Committee of Labour Committee on Palestine, County Hall, 7.00pm. All supporters welcome.

Sandinistas face invasion

FOLLOWING last week's news that some 2,000 Honduran troops had entered El Salvador to join the military regime's fight against left wing guerrillas, the Sandinista government in Nicaragua has announced that "a big, well-organised military force" from Honduras has started war in Nicaragua.

The forces from Honduras have, say the Sandinistas, "the organisation and armaments of a regular army".

Sandinista minister Luis Carrion said, "Their plan is to create the impression of an internal war when in reality it is an invasion from Honduras. We cannot now call them simply guerrilla bands. They are counter-revolu-

tionary military units".

Cross-border harassment is now new. Some 5,000 members of the notorious National Guard of the former dictator Anastasio Somoza took refuge in Honduras after the 1979 revolution in Nicaragua, and have since carried out raids and sallies into Nicaragua.

But — since the anti-Somoza revolution — Honduras has also been the US's strategic bastion in Central America. Less affected by internal rebellion than El Salvador and Guatemala, it has been pumped full of military aid.

Opposition to war by the

American people still hinders Reagan from using direct US military force to crush the revolutionary movements in Central America and to overturn the radical regimes in Nicaragua and Grenada. Instead the US government has used threats, harassment, and the intermediary of local armed forces sustained and trained by the US.

Suspensions of a US hand in the latest attack must be raised by the fact that Honduran president Roberto Suazo Cordova visited the White House only last Wednesday.

The US has conceded that there is what they call "limited military action" along the Honduras-Nicaragua border.