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Socialist Organiser

Against all bans and proscriptions!

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Scandalous!

A COHSE militant spoke about her General Secretary's antics.

"It is absolutely scandalous that Spanswick, acting for the Health Services Committee, should meet with leaders of the print unions and negotiate a back room deal to sell out one of the major promises of solidarity yet seen in this dispute.

It smacks of the TUC tactics used to sell out ASLEF. His actions are now shouting out his feelings about this dispute. No one should give any credibility whatsoever to Spanswick's hollow promises of escalating the struggle.

The decision of the Electricians to carry out their



strike is a correct response to Spanswick.

It is up to us as workers to get people out, to build the solidarity action and to keep the health workers out till we win."

Press barons demand jail

SOLIDARITY

SEAN Gerahty, secretary of the London Press branch of the EETPU, will appear in court on Friday. The press barons of Fleet Street are demanding he be sent to jail.

If he is imprisoned, the whole labour movement must demand that the TUC call a general strike.

Since the NHS pay struggle began tens of thousands of workers have taken sympathy strike action. But the Tory news proprietors have once again been the first onto the warpath against trade unionism.

In May 1980, the same employers obtained an injunction against a one-day strike by Fleet Street workers in protest at James Prior's anti-union Bill. The strike went ahead regardless — but no attempt was made to penalise the union leadership.

Now, with Prior's law already on the statute book, a follow-up Bill from Norman Tebbit due to become law soon, and a third Bill in the offing, the newspaper proprietors have decided to have another go.

Their High Court injunction scared the wits out of the TUC leaders. Albert Spanswick, chair of the TUC Health Services Committee, and General Secretary of COHSE, at once called on Fleet Street union leaders to call off their strike (with Spanswick around, who needs Tebbit?).

Under this pressure both NGA and SOGAT 82 climbed down from their strike decision. Only Gerahty and the 1,000-strong EETPU membership stood firm, rejecting the High Court's dictate and paralysing newspaper production on Tuesday

IN THE DOCK

night.

The action has thus been the most effective solidarity action yet seen in support of the NHS struggle — underlining for all to see the connection between the fight on pay and the battle against anti-union legislation.

After months of feeble TUC protests and empty speeches against the Tebbit Bill, the Fleet Street strikers have at last given a real focus for the struggle — and thrown down a major challenge to the Tories.

If Gerahty is not jailed on Friday, then the whole credibility of the Prior and Tebbit laws is thrown into question: a huge blow will have been struck for trade unionism.

Yet if he is jailed, there is every prospect of reverberating action throughout

Fleet Street and other sections of the working class, with the potential once again of a developing general strike against this anti-union government.

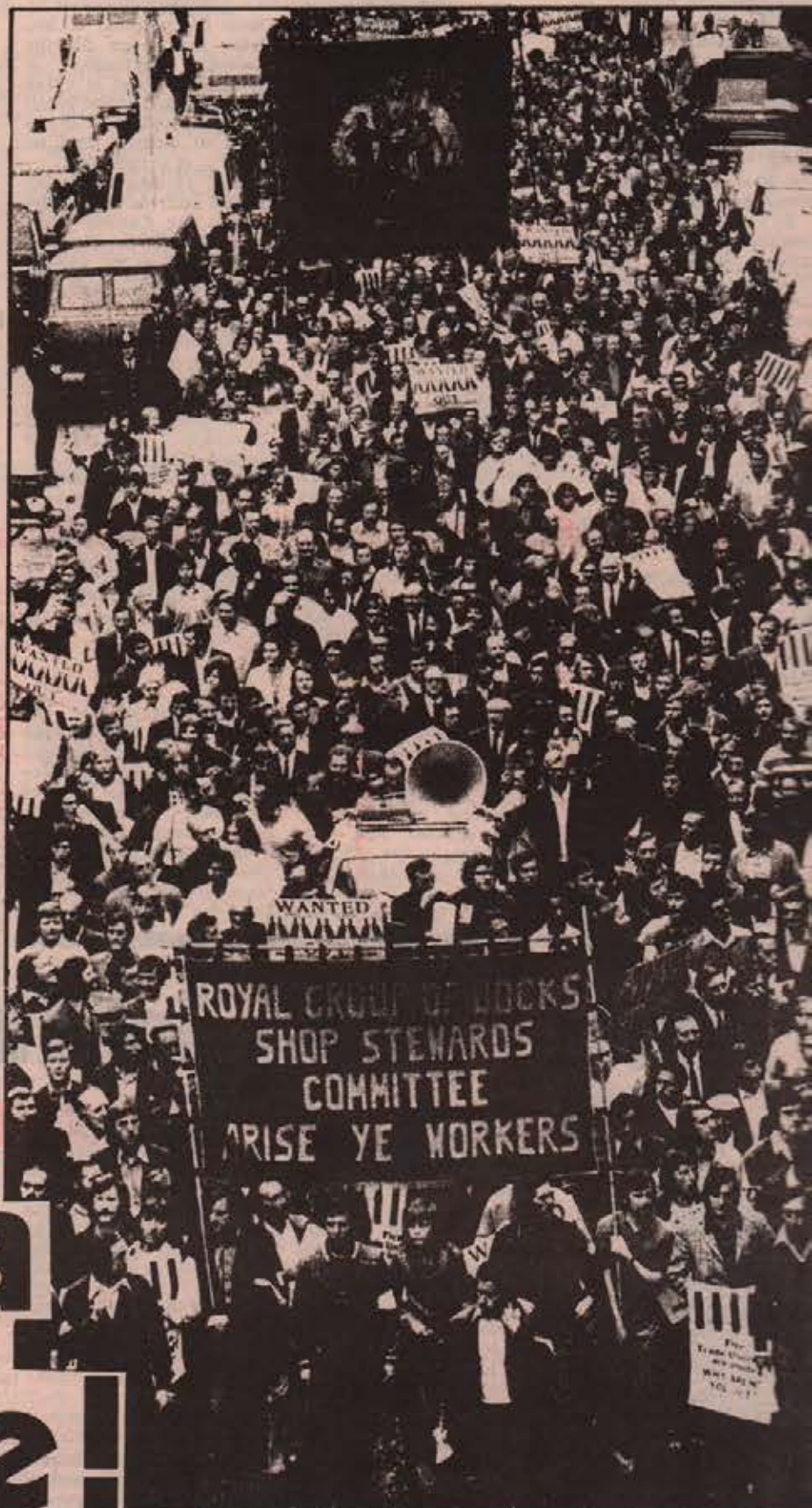
We demand TUC action: but we must not wait for them before we begin to organise.

Our task now must be to prepare in every workplace, union branch and Labour Party for a struggle to spread strike action if Gerahty is jailed. Co-ordinating committees should immediately be established between groups of strikers, and steps taken to organise flying pickets and local councils of action drawing together delegates from all working class trade union and political organisations to strengthen and extend the struggle into one with the

scope and momentum to defeat the Tory government.

In doing so, we will need to confront the opposition of the TUC leadership who — fresh from their betrayal of ASLEF — have no intention of confronting the Tory government. And there must be a fight within the Labour Party against those advocates of "Parliamentary democracy" who will — as they did in 1972 — oppose mass action to free a jailed trade unionist.

To answer the Tories' attacks we need a leadership which will rest upon the strength of the working class and carry through the fight to replace Thatcher not with a miserable repetition of the Wilson-Callaghan governments but with a genuine workers' government.



Organise for a General Strike!

In 1972 mass strike action forced the Heath government to release the jailed dockers

PRIOR'S ASSEMBLY WON'T STOP IRISH WAR

by Martin Thomas

THE Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), the major political party in the Catholic community of Northern Ireland, looks like contesting the October 20 elections for the new six-counties 'Assembly'.

According to the Financial Times (July 29), a consensus for participation exists among top SDLP leaders, and this is likely to be confirmed at the next SDLP executive meeting on August 24.

So the Assembly — designed by Tory Northern Ireland Secretary James Prior — may yet 'take off', despite being criticised or condemned by practically every force in Irish politics.

Prior's plan is for gradual devolution of power to the Assembly. Prior himself will keep the power in his own hands, and transfer it in dribs and drabs to the Assembly if, when and to the extent that the Assembly is able to elect an Executive enjoying 'broad support'.

The Loyalists are dissatisfied because the plan is not for straight majority (i.e. Protestant sectarian) rule. Irish nationalists are dissatisfied because the plan is another attempt to square the circle — to patch up a (more or less) democratic solution in the framework of the anti-democratic, British-imposed, sectarian partition of Ireland.

But Prior's calculation must be that the Assembly can scarcely make things worse for him — and, if the

spoils of office prove sufficiently attractive, it may just strengthen his position.

The chances of it leading to a just solution are zero. It was, after all, a 'devolved' Parliament for Northern Ireland — Stormont — and the ruthless policy of 'a Protestant state for a Protestant people' pursued through it, that led to the current war in the North.

In the meantime direct rule and British army repression continue. So does the justified response of Irish republicans who see the British troops in the North as no better than any other foreign army of occupation anywhere.

The Republican paper An Phoblacht commented after the London bombings on July 20 that: "The screaming, abusive headlines showed just how hypocritical the British press can be within weeks of declaring jingoistic 'Gotcha' headlines when

their forces in the South Atlantic killed 340 young Argentinian sailors of the General Belgrano..."

As long as British troops are installed to maintain by force the partition of Ireland, the choice for the Catholic community in Northern Ireland is either to submit and suffer indefinitely — and who has the right to demand they do that? — or to fight back.

And as long as British troops raid, terrorise, and kill in the Catholic communities, who has the right to demand, or the foolishness to expect, that the fightback will be non-violent?

Whether the IRA's bombing of British soldiers in central London last month should be approved of as good tactics in that fightback is another matter. But clearly it was part of a war between the IRA and the British state in which the IRA — for all the bitter criticisms that socialists would make of it — is fighting for a goal, a united Ireland, which offers at least a chance of ending the violence.

In comments on the bombing, Republicans stressed "the IRA's real and painstaking efforts to safeguard civilian lives, of whatever nationality", and contended that despite contrary impressions given by the British press, only one civilian was hospitalised for a substantial time

after the bombings.

This idea that their fight is with the British capitalist state, not the British people and still less the Protestant Irish, is one constantly proclaimed by the Republicans. The 'problem is however to draw the full conclusions.

As can be seen notably from a discussion on strategy currently going on in the pages of An Phoblacht, the Republicans oscillate between aspirations to become a socialist movement, and tendencies to fall back on 'the national question first' and a long war of attrition narrowly

based on the Northern Catholics. (The second option, objectively a blind alley, is one that must drive the IRA into the desperate militarism which historically has crippled Irish radical politics again and again).

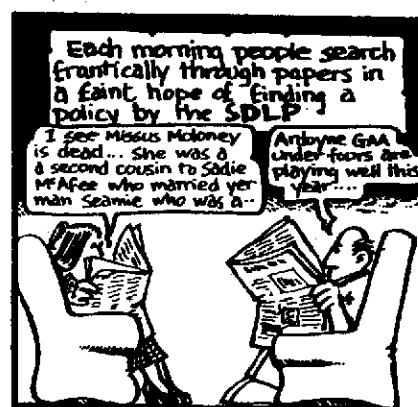
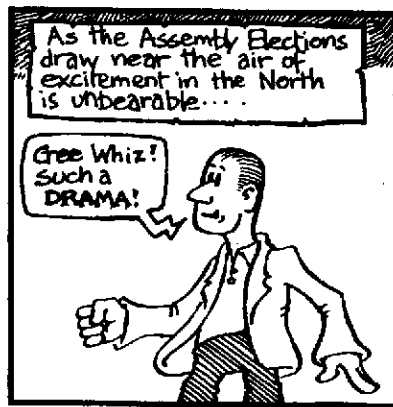
On the Prior Assembly elections, the Republican political movement Sinn Féin — has now taken a position of seeking a joint boycott by all nationalist parties, but participating themselves if a joint boycott is not agreed. From this position they criticise the

SDLP and the Irish Independence Party (a more purely 'green', less 'social' split-off from the SDLP) as 'breaking nationalist ranks'.

But the idea of being, or desiring to be, in common 'nationalist ranks' with the utterly compromised and bourgeois SDLP and IIP — parties which represent in the North the same brand of politics as Fianna Fail in the South — is one which must tie the Republicans to Catholic communalism and thwart their desire to

be the force which unites Irish working people, Catholic and Protestant, north and south, in a common fight for liberation.

For Irish socialists the task is to build that force. For British socialists the task is to build a campaign in the working class to force our ruling class to withdraw from Ireland and to end the terrible oppressive grip which now moulds and twists Irish politics.



from An Phoblacht/Republican News

Troops Out Now!

Hiroshima — will they do it again?

by Colin Foster

ON Hiroshima Day, last week, no-one spoke up to justify the dropping of the atom bomb on the Japanese city on August 7, 1945. No-one said it was necessary that 140,000 should be killed through blast and radiation.

No-one questioned what is now generally accepted — that Japan was already willing to surrender, and the bomb was dropped only to assert US military

might in the post-war world.

No-one said: "We would do the same again".

But there are plenty who would do the same again. There are plenty who have done very similar.

With 'conventional' fire-bombing, Britain's air force in February 1945 killed perhaps 100,000 civilians — many of them refugees — in the German city of Dresden.

The US assault on Vietnam from 1965 to 1975 — also using conventional weapons — was the biggest in human history. In just eleven days (December 18 to 28, 1972), for example US bombing exceeded the total tonnage dropped by Germany on Britain in the whole of World War Two.

In El Salvador, imperialism's killing has mostly been done small-scale and by the local death-mongers rather than directly — but the toll over three years now stands at 30,000.

Small

That's still a small figure — compared to horrors like the several hundred thousand (maybe one million) Algerians massacred by French troops and police, and by the settlers' racist gangs,

during their country's fight for independence.

The ruling classes who were responsible for these slaughters did not even have their backs to the wall. The US ruling class did not want to lose Vietnam, the French did not want to lose Algeria, but in both cases the loss was far from fatal.

Choking to death in their recession-racked capitalist economy, desperately seeking new areas for exploitation, the ruling classes certainly will be ready to repeat Hiroshima many times over when they face real mortal threats.

If we let them... For the ruling class can make war only with the assent of our class — the class

which manufactures and transports the weapons and other supplies, and which fills the ranks of the armed forces.

There is, to be sure, no 'peaceful road' to peace. Only if the main forces of the working class show themselves ready to fight, arms in hand, for liberation, can we hope to split the army ranks and to isolate and overpower the hard-core supporters of the warmongers.

But the Vietnamese and the Algerians won, and we can win. We have to win. The sure alternative, if socialism does not triumph, is the nuclear annihilation of humanity.

'I realise that some people will not understand why I support Republicans in their demands for an end to partition. The reason is quite simple. The bombs will continue as long as the war continues, and I wish to see an end to death in the North of Ireland and in London.'

The end to the war could be brought about quite quickly if the troops were brought out.
GLC Labour councillor Steve Dundred, in a speech in Belfast which earned him hysterical abuse from Britain's gutter press.

Skinner backs Solidarnosc



"I used my vote on Wednesday 28 July to protest at the cold state slaughter of seven fellow miners in Poland last year. Since I do not attend embassy junkets, where perhaps private words of regret may be uttered, my protest has to be a public one."

In these terms Dennis Skinner MP (in a letter to the Morning Star) explained his support for the successful resolution at the July Labour Party NEC not to invite any of the Warsaw Pact 'Communist' Parties to this year's conference.

"I have a constructive

suggestion", he continued, "to offer those in Poland who make the decision about who attends Labour Party conferences."

"Why not include the delegation representatives not from any church-dominated grouping but from the families of the miners killed in last year's senseless action? I am certain they would get a good working class welcome."

Left

Yet several left-wingers on the NEC still voted to

invite the people who organised the shooting down of miners — Tony Benn, Frank Allaun, Les Huckfield, Joan Maynard, Jo Richardson.

And all the left bar Laurence Coates of the LPYS united with the right and centre on the NEC to vote down an amendment from Dennis Skinner "in which", as Skinner explains, "I called for a ban on all those representatives from parties with big business links, embassies and high commissions."

SELF DEFENCE IS NO OFFENCE

Martin Thomas reviews a new pamphlet

"PEOPLE say it's victory for the Bradford 12. But it's not. It's freedom for us, but victory for black people generally: the right to defend ourselves.

"The end result will encourage black people to not simply lie down and be murdered, but to take actions to prevent it happening."

The decision of a Leeds jury on June 16 to clear the Bradford 12 on charges of making explosives and conspiracy to make explosives was a vindication, as defendant Saeed Hussain pointed out, of the fight for black self-defence.

The campaign for the Bradford 12 is described in a new pamphlet just published by the Leeds Other Paper ("Self Defence is No Offence", 60p from 59 Cookridge St., Leeds).

The 12 — black youths who had been active in anti-racist campaigns in Bradford — were arrested on July 11 last year, while riots were raging across the country. They were charged with making petrol bombs. They replied: yes, they had made petrol bombs but it was self-defence.

On July 11 Tarlochan Gata Aura, one of the 12, heard at a local left bookshop that racist skinheads were coming to attack Bradford. There was every reason to take the threat seriously.

On July 3 Southall had been invaded by racists. On July 2 an Asian family in

Walthamstow had been murdered by a racist firebombing. In Luton on July 11 gangs of skinheads had roamed round Luton, abusing black people.

And, as defence lawyer Paddy O'Connor pointed out in the trial: "There was no second class citizenship for British businessmen and soldiers who went to India.

Ghettos

"But when Asians wanted to come here, they were degraded, pushed into ghettos, and forced into second-class citizenship. And when they see racist groups on the rise and racist violence increasing, 'ignore it', say the same people who went over to India and who pushed them into second-class citizenship when they arrived here.

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

Tarlochan put it more simply: "My personal experience is that the police have never defended our community. There is an absence of a will to help". So the community had to defend itself.

Some of the 12 had been less involved in politics than Tarlochan. But they soon learned. Vasant Patel said: "It was my first real contact with the police. I really didn't realise the



JOHN HARRIS



JOHN HARRIS

police could be such bastards. You hear stories about them, but you think they might be exaggerated.

"They tried to make us scapegoats for what was happening in the country at the time" — forcing "confessions" out of some of the 12 by maltreatment and pressure.

The police officer in charge of the Bradford 12 case had previously said in public: "Police officers must be prejudiced and discriminatory to do their job. Prejudice is a state of mind drawn from experience.

"Searching long-haired

youths in bedraggled clothing could produce drug seizures, and searching West Indian youths wearing tea cosy hats and loitering in city centres could detect mugging offences.

"Subordinate officers are expected to act in a discriminatory way; that is against those people who by their conduct, mode of life, dress, associates and transport, are most likely to be criminals."

Some of the 12 had helped found the United Black Youth League just a few months before the arrests. Saeed Hussain

explains: "It was basically an anti-racist and anti-fascist organisation, aiming to unify the Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities. We were involved in various campaigns, against deportations and in defence of black people.

"As far as I know, there isn't another organisation trying to unify both Africans and Afro-Caribbeans.

"We acted in support of the hunger-strikers, and openly supported all anti-imperialist movements. We felt very strongly the need for links with anti-imperialist movements nationally

and internationally. It was a class-conscious organisation."

Anwar Ditta

Anwar Ditta — whose campaign to bring her children to this country from Pakistan Tarlochan helped lead — testified in court for the Bradford 12. Many others who have fought battles against the racist immigration laws — like Jaswinder Kaur, Nasira Begum, Cynthia Gordon, Nasreen Akhtar and Najat Chafee — also joined the mass pickets of

the trial.

With support from the labour movement too, the Bradford 12 campaign won a great victory for the black communities' resistance to racism. But as Tariq Ali — another of the 12 — puts it, "It is unlikely that the state will leave this decision be as it is". The fight to consolidate the victory — to organise black self-defence, or united black/white anti-racist defence squads — will be a continuing one.

Women attacked

by Rachel Lever
(Women's Fightback)

ON a sunny Sunday, August 8, a group of women were selling kebabs at a community festival at Islington's Paradise Park, to raise funds for Women's Fightback.

It had been a lovely festival, with lots of fun for kids, nice music, a real ale tent. We'd had a steady stream of appreciative customers and were nearing the end of our supplies when five male louts came up.

After ten minutes winding us up, they picked a fight in which one of us

was punched and kicked and both got burning charcoal thrown at us. A woman bystander was also punched.

The hatred, destructiveness and violence directed at us were due to nothing other than that we were women. We feel that incidents like this one should not be let to pass unnoticed.

The previous day, we had done our kebab stall at a CND festival in Leytonstone, where women were insulted by a band called Jimmy Riddle and the Piss-pots, which included three women done up in black satin corsets, suspenders and various S&M accessories. The band's advance publicity in the local paper had boasted that it was unashamedly sexist, but because it had played for nothing, CND had gone ahead with the booking.

If the so-called left puts on stuff like that, and puts up with it, it's little wonder that a woman's group can't even run a kebab stall at a local festival without facing violence.

We're still desperately short of funds, and would welcome donations.

**WOMEN'S
FIGHTBACK**

Women's Fightback badge, in yellow and red. 20p (plus 15p post) for one, 15p each post free for orders of ten or more, from 41 Ellington Street, London N7.

POLICE PRACTICE VIOLENCE



Practice makes perfect...

THE Metropolitan Police are using derelict industrial land in south London for 'riot training'. They have leased ten acres on River Way, Greenwich, near the southern end of the Blackwall Tunnel, from the South-Eastern Gas Board.

The way this has been done highlights the special powers the police have built up. The London Borough of Greenwich was notified under the 1971 Town and Country Planning Act, but it cannot refuse planning permission. All it can do is 'raise objections'.

Not only that, but the police only had to give two weeks' notice instead of the usual two months.

One Greenwich councillor who watched the training told the Greenwich Mercury that the police were wearing green boiler suits and helmets, carrying out 'shield exercises' and practising unarmed com-

bat. There are rumours that CS gas has been used.

Greenwich MP Guy Barnett has been contacted by two people who "were seen off the premises in rather a rough fashion".

He has put down a question to the Home Secretary. The borough council has raised an objection and will press for a public inquiry.

The recent record of the police in south-east London makes the purpose of this 'riot training' clear enough.

In 1977 they attacked anti-fascists when the National Front marched through Lewisham. Since then they have done nothing to stop racist attacks on black people.

When the Sikh temple in Woolwich was under nightly attack from the British Movement the police came and searched the temple for weapons.

When 13 black youth

were killed in the Deptford fire in January 1981, all the efforts of the police were directed to finding a black culprit.

Later last year the police arrested four 'right to work' campaigners on a local demonstration and physically attacked an officer of the Thames Polytechnic Students Union, which was supporting the demonstration. Another 'right to work' campaigner was arrested for leafleting outside a secondary school.

Greenwich

The leader of the Tory minority on Greenwich council declared that the police should be allowed to prepare to defend themselves against organised violent attacks.

In reality, 'riot training' threatens violence against unemployed youth, blacks and anti-fascists.

TONY GARD

Call to action — Solidarnosc

by Harry Sloan

The undernourished sprat thrown out by Poland's Stalinist rulers last month has failed to lure their intended mackerel — the leadership of the still functioning underground trade union Solidarnosc.

Military leader General Jaruzelski outlined proposals for a few cosmetic changes in the martial law repression which has been in force since last December.

1,227 internees were released — including all of the women internees. Domestic and foreign postal restrictions were marginally eased. A handful of societies suspended under martial law were reactivated. There was vague talk about a possible suspension of the martial law before the end of this year 'if there is no return to tensions and if the changes in the country indisputably show that the situation is normalising and calming down.'

Quite apart from the evasiveness of this commitment, Jaruzelski made it clear that the suspension of martial law would mean little in real terms, since it would be replaced by 'special powers' for the government, almost certainly including a continued ban on the right to strike and the militarisation of some sectors of the economy.



The Solidarnosc ranks are rebuilding their links

Meanwhile an idea of the unease felt by the ruling bureaucracy is given by the cancellation of the planned visit to Poland of the Pope, originally scheduled for this month.

Jaruzelski and his fellow Stalinists plainly fear that the huge crowds that would certainly turn out for the Pope's visit could get out of control, and that the occasion could rekindle the flames of Solidarnosc militancy.

But the bureaucrats have found a reserve of political support from the Church leaders themselves. Archbishop Glemp was quick to welcome the puny 'liberalisation' measures, and lent his effective endorsement to the cancellation. The Polish Church, he declared,

wanted to receive the Pope in an atmosphere of calm rather than 'irritation' or 'commotion'.

This stance by the Church echoes the consistently conservative line taken by its leaders in the face of the rising tide of militant working class struggle from 1980 up to the declaration of martial law.

Having established what for them is an advantageous mutual working relationship with the Stalinist leaders, Glemp and his henchmen do not want their position jeopardised by revolutionary changes.

Yet if Jaruzelski knew in advance he could count upon Catholic Church backing, he may well have

been disappointed that his so-called 'concessions' were rejected by the underground leadership of Solidarnosc.

In expectation that there might be something more approaching a compromise in the offing from the bureaucracy, these leaders — in Gdansk, Krakow, Warsaw and Wroclaw, had issued an appeal on June 26 for a suspension of strikes and demonstrations during the month of July.

The statement claimed that the extent of strikes and demonstrations up to that point had proven the strength of Solidarnosc, and 'eaten a new political situation', in which 'the authorities are now aware of the extent of resistance

and the degree of determination among society.'

'We will never give up the battle for the return of society's inalienable rights.'

'Let the suspension of strikes and street demonstrations till the end of July 1982 be proof of our own strength, unity, discipline, organisational effectiveness and immunity to provocation.'

The appeal makes no secret of the intention of the Solidarnosc leaders to seek a deal with the bureaucracy: it almost amounts to asking Jaruzelski to make an offer which the more 'moderate' Solidarnosc leaders could accept.

'Suspension of strikes and demonstrations is yet another expression of our readiness to seek a national understanding. We expect concrete moves by the authorities indicating their readiness to renew the dialogue.'

Balancing

In fact Jaruzelski, balancing between the most authoritarian hardliners in Moscow and Warsaw on the one hand, and more 'liberal' elements who look to some form of accommodation with Solidarnosc on the other, did reject the initiative. His proposals proved inadequate to draw even the more moderate leaders into collaboration with the government's projected 'social coordinating committee' which

has the task of finding a suitably subtle means of asserting state control over a 'reborn' trade union movement.

The Solidarnosc leaders on August 1 opposed Jaruzelski's proposals, pointing out that the release of internees leaves over 2,000 people under arrest or already in jail having been sentenced for violating the martial law. He offers no plans for economic recovery other than making people work harder, they argue.

Call

Solidarnosc supporters should mobilise on August 16, the two-year anniversary of the establishment of the inter-factory committee in Gdansk, they say.

And the statement calls for demonstrations on August 31 to mark the second anniversary of the historic Gdansk agreement which first conceded the right to independent trade unions and paved the way for Solidarnosc.

There is no doubt that these Solidarnosc leaders have misjudged the position of the bureaucracy, and are sailing dangerously close to the wind of a compromise which would question the genuine independence of the union.

Yet there are signs that Solidarnosc rank and file members at factory level are far more hostile than their leaders to any accommodation to the bureau-

cracy, and rebuilding their organisation and inter-factory links under conditions of clandestinity.

Obviously this groundswell of unbroken militancy is a major factor limiting both the scope of Jaruzelski's 'compromise' proposals and the ability of Solidarnosc leaders to accept what was on offer.

While the constant pressure of the martial law has plainly taken a toll of the leaders it has not cracked the resolve of the membership.

The international workers' movement — and in particular the British labour movement — must take its responsibility to render political and practical support to Solidarnosc in its struggle.

A genuinely independent workers' movement is incompatible with the Polish bureaucracy which — like its fellows in Eastern Europe, the USSR and other Stalinist states — feeds off nationalised property relations, relying for preservation of its power and privilege upon a dictatorial repression of the working class.

By supporting the Polish strikes and demonstrations on August 16 and 31, workers throughout the world can lead their support to the struggle for the political overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy and the establishment of a revolutionary government in Poland based upon the mass organisations of the working class.

Workers' movement must act against apartheid STOP THE HANGINGS!

THE apartheid/capitalist state of South Africa does not fail to make the anniversaries of its own repression.

As internationally-known class war prisoner Nelson Mandela entered his third decade of imprisonment on Robben Island, the regime in South Africa marked the occasion by condemning three militants of the African National Congress to death, and by murdering a further black militant in his prison cell at Johannesburg police headquarters.

Ernest Depate, aged 21, was claimed by police to have made a 'confession' to charges under the Internal Security Act. He was then allegedly 'found' dead in his cell, hanging from a strip of blanket.

In February of this year, in the same police headquarters, Dr. Neil Aggett, a white full time official of a black trade union, became the first white prisoner to die in this way. He had been held without trial for three months.

Since 1963, 47 people have 'died' in custody, 13 of them by hanging.

Such killings are part and parcel of the climate of torture and terror utilised by the state forcibly to extract 'confessions' from prisoners.

The trial of the three ANC militants last week saw the judge reject appeals from the defence that statements obtained

under torture should be disallowed as evidence.

The three men, Simon Mohoerane, Jerry Mosolli and Marcus Motaung, were accused of carrying guerrilla attacks on police

THAT solidarity resolutions and action in Britain have a real impact on black trade unionists in South Africa is confirmed by the latest issues of KWASA, the journal of the Media Workers Union of South Africa.

KWASA quotes the resolution of solidarity adopted by this year's Annual Delegate Meeting of the National Union of Journalists. And it reports also on the 'week of action' and demonstration called in Britain by the Anti-Apartheid Movement in solidarity with the 16-month strike at Wilson Rowntree in South Africa.

stations at Moroka and elsewhere.

Mohoerane described in court the horrific ways in which he was tortured, and pointed out that he made a statement only because police then threatened to torture his mother.

The heroic but isolated armed actions of the ANC's armed wing offer little more than nuisance value to the armed forces of the South African state. But that is a strong additional motive for the regime to

met out heavy penalties to those involved.

At a time of rising class struggle in the black proletariat of South Africa, the repression meted out to these ANC militants is designed to terrorise and intimidate leading activists.

It is doubly vital therefore that the labour movement internationally rallies against this barbaric trial and demands the lifting of the death sentences against brave men who have fought arms in hand against oppression.

Sell GLC shares!

VIDYA ANAND, a member of the Regional Executive of the Greater London Labour Party, spoke to Socialist Organiser last week, giving his views on how the labour movement should help the fight against apartheid.

I have no doubt that the articles that have appeared in the Labour Briefing (in two successive issues), in Labour Herald, in Tribune, in The Observer, Time Out,



Last week ANC leader Nelson Mandela completed 20 years in jail on Robben Island

the Militant and Socialist Organiser have made the crucial point that there are comrades both in County Hall and in the town halls who are, and in many cases, have been for years, able to decide whether to support the apartheid regime or the oppressed peoples of South Africa.

Whilst the dogma of apartheid itself, represented in South Africa by the forced separation of the races, is a sickening abhorrence to all just and free thinking people, the central struggle for South Africa's

blacks remains the fight for economic survival. Paying lip service to the liberation movements by condemning ideological apartheid on platforms and in articles has been the traditional and historical way party comrades have contributed to the anti-apartheid struggle. It has never been enough!

If the Labour Party honestly wants to contribute to the struggle of the South African oppressed then it must do so where it counts — by forcing those it has voted into power in County Hall, and the town halls to

dis-invest in companies which prop up the apartheid system! Anything less is a clear and unequivocal YES to apartheid policies!

This is the point I wish to drive home for once and for all. If we don't attack apartheid when we're clearly able, then we are supporting it.

The irony where we read of comrades calling for the withdrawal of the British Fleet in the South Atlantic (an issue over which we have minimal influence), and continue to invest in RTZ (one over which we have direct control) displays crass hypocrisy.

What support have you received in the labour movement in London?

I have had very encouraging support from the Regional Executive committee of the London Labour Party. And at the last meeting a motion was passed calling for the GLC to dis-invest from RTZ.

That went some way to righting the ridiculous situation the GLC seem to have got themselves into, namely, that after one year they had to be reminded of the policy they themselves had passed men con.

Comrade Ted Knight played a significant part along with comrades like Jeremy Corbyn and others from the Militant Tendency in defeating Mike Ward's and Ken Livingstone's attempt to torpedo the motion.

More important still is the measure of support I have received to a motion I have submitted for the forthcoming meeting of GLRC

calling on the Labour-controlled authorities to sever all links with Rowntree Mackintosh and support the sacked strikers in South Africa.

At the ILEA Labour Group meeting on July 12 a motion was carried about Rowntree Mackintosh on these lines. I was particularly encouraged by the attitude and support of comrades Bryn Davies, Frances Morrell, Deirdre Wood and Keith Veness who went out of the way to speak out in support of my call for action against Rowntree Mackintosh.

Where do you go from here?

Widening the battle for disinvestment and linking it with the TUC's own campaign to bring the public sector into play on the side of disinvestment — trade union, Co-op and local authority pension funds. Pressure can and should be applied to link up with the Co-op Bank rather than those banks such as Barclays (who had at one time actually invested in South African Bonus Bonds — South African Army shares!) and Nat West, (also directly connected with the apartheid regime).

We must follow the example of Camden on Rowntree Mackintosh, and the Labour Group in Lewisham which transferred its account from Barclays to Co-op. It can be done. It must be done.

The best practical form of action we can take is to sever all links with the South African apartheid regime and those who give succour to such despicable policies.

JAIL FOR CHINESE SOCIALISTS

by Chan Ying

A LEADING activist of the Chinese Democratic Movement, Wang Xizhe, was sentenced to 14 years imprisonment by Guangdong People's Court on May 28.

The court further stripped him of all political rights as a citizen for 4½ years after completion of the sentence.

Another leading activist, He Qiu, was sentenced to ten years imprisonment.

Both Wang and He were central in setting up the National Association of Unofficial Journals of China, the umbrella organisation for dozens of democratic movement magazines throughout China.

The latest bulletin of the Hong Kong-based Chinese Democratic Movement Resource Centre (CDMRC) gives details of the trials. The Chinese authorities stressed to a Hong Kong student delegation that they were properly conducted public trials, with 40 people in the courtroom. Yet the two men's families were not informed of the trial, let alone allowed to attend!

The authorities have refused to make available court transcripts specifically demanded by the dele-



He Qiu

gation from Hong Kong's two university student unions.

Since Wang and He were arrested in April 1981, their families and friends have repeatedly asked for news and visiting rights, to no avail. They have not been told their whereabouts, what the charges were, or even if they were dead or alive.

There is still no news of over two dozen other activists arrested in April 1981 and earlier.

Wang Xizhe was charged with:

1) Agitating to subvert the country's legal system.

2) Making counter-revolutionary agitation and propaganda.

3) Organising a counter-revolutionary organisation.

The authorities' evidence for the first charge consists simply of the fact that Wang wrote to the National People's Congress to protest at the three year labour camp sentence imposed on Liu Qing by the



Wang Xizhe

Peking Bureau of Public Security for publishing the court transcripts of the trial of Wei Jingshen.

As evidence for the second charge, the authorities cited Wang's numerous essays and articles.

As a veteran of the movement, Wang had already served a prison sentence in 1974 (during the days of the Gang of Four) for his contribution to the famous "Li Yizhe" wall posters, urging China's rulers to implement a system of

socialist democracy. Even after the Gang of Four were deposed in 1976, it took much petitioning of the new leadership before he and his comrades were eventually freed (and their convictions annulled) in late 1978.

Wang became the most active campaigner in the "Li Yizhe" wallposter group, and threw his energies into the new-born democracy movement. He and He Qiu were both on the editorial board of the

founding issue of "Responsibility", journal of the National Association of Unofficial Journals of China, campaigning for socialist democracy and characterising the Chinese Communist Party as bureaucratic and oppressive. This is what the Chinese state calls "counter-revolutionary"!

As for the third charge, the authorities used the pretext of national security to refuse any information regarding their evidence.

Clearly Wang is once again being imprisoned for his political views.

He Qiu has also been charged with 'counter-revolutionary' agitation and organisation on the same sort of 'evidence'.

He, who like Wang was a Red Guard in the days of the Cultural Revolution, became disillusioned with China's domestic and foreign policies. A letter to his brother in 1972, expressing his critical views, was intercepted by the authorities and he was sentenced to three years' jail.

When the democratic movement began after the 100,000-strong Tiananmen demonstration and the fall of the Gang of Four, He became active in unofficial journals.

He later founded "Road to the People", the most influential journal in Southern China.

Both Wang and He, along with two dozen others have been adopted as political prisoners of conscience by Amnesty International since their arrest in April 1981.

Appeal

Wang has demanded the right of appeal against his sentence. Hong Kong literary and student groups have demanded the following:

1) that the appeal proceedings be fully public, allowing Wang full rights to defend himself in open court.

2) that Wang's family, and delegates from Hong Kong academic and student organisations, be allowed to attend the appeal.

3) that the Hong Kong delegation be allowed to meet and discuss with Wang's defence counsel.

5) that full court transcripts of the entire case and appeal be made available to the public.

Demand

All socialists should further demand that Wang Xizhe and He Qiu be released immediately, alongside all others in the democratic movement now in detention.

Send letters, telegrams to the Chinese Embassy, Portland Place, London W1 (with copies to Socialist Committee for the Defence of the Democratic Movement in China, 41 Brondesbury Rd., London NW6 and to CDMRC, Kowloon City PO Box 89278, Hong Kong).

Get your Labour Party and trade union branch to ask for a speaker to its meeting.

Subscribe to the UK-based Committee newsletter, £3 a year.

Send for copies of the petition demanding the release of Wang and He.

Reagan thumbs-up to torture regime

AMID embarrassing revelations of the torture inflicted by the military regime in El Salvador on a volunteer worker for the Green Cross, Ronald Reagan has been attempting to certify that the junta is respectful of human rights and implementing land reforms.

The victim of the torture was committing the "crime" of distributing medicines to displaced people. He was arrested

and subjected to savage torture in soundproof rooms at military headquarters.

The Washington Post has revealed that he was strapped to a rotating wheel, similar to a mediaeval rack, beaten, forced to inhale lime, and suspended by ropes while wire was used to apply pressure to his testicles.

The case is not unique. But it is publicised in the USA at the very time that Reagan is fighting in Con-

gress for renewed aid to the junta.

All of the evidence points to an unending tide of military violence by the Salvadorean regime in its struggle to repress the workers and poor peasants. And in this war, the overt military and economic aid provided by Washington has been supplemented by clandestine aid through the CIA.

As CIA director William Casey has publicly admitted, the agency has:

"provided the Salvadorean government with information and capabilities which helped it to reduce the supply of weapons from Cuba and Nicaragua and to break up guerrilla formations intended to destroy the election by creating disruptive violence."

In addition to CIA "dirty tricks", the Salvadorean junta has been able to enlist the aid of the Honduran army, patrolling the long common border with El Salvador — and in some areas linking up with Salvadorean troops inside the country itself.

The final week of July saw this combination of forces begin a renewed offensive against positions held by the left wing guerrilla forces of the FMLN.

Earlier such offensives have wound up costly failures for the junta. Perhaps expecting that a further failure is already in the making, US Democratic Party Senator Christopher Dodd has warned of the

likelihood that the Reagan administration will soon be forced to send troops as well as weapons to prop up their bloodthirsty client regime in El Salvador.

Meanwhile the united front of extreme right wing parties, which has been constructed since the so-called "elections" to the Constituent Assembly in March, has agreed a common platform — consisting of largely meaningless pledges to end human rights abuses, continue with land reform, and announce a timetable for general elections.

With the escalation of repressive violence by the right wing regimes in Guatemala (61 left wing guerrillas killed in the last two days of July) and Honduras, and continuing US pressure on Nicaragua, the struggles of the workers and peasants of El Salvador remain key to the development of the struggle against imperialism in the whole of Central America.

Reagan's administration is plainly prepared to pull out all the stops in order to lend its material and political support to the junta: it is more vital than ever that the workers' movement rally behind the workers and peasants of El Salvador, taking action to block the imperialist war effort, and demanding that Cuba's Stalinist government turn some of its endless windy rhetoric into tangible arms and aid for the forces fighting imperialism in El Salvador.



New crisis hits Turkish junta

TURKEY's military junta headed by General Evren is picking up the pieces of a disastrous failure of its monetarist economic policy.

Finance Minister Turgut Ozal has resigned following the collapse in June of Banker Kastelli, the country's largest money-broker which had mushroomed under Ozal's policies of high interest rates.

Source

Kastelli had represented an attempt to generate a domestic source of finance capital for the development of Turkish industry. It siphoned off the savings of over five million small savers — one in eight of the Turkish population, many of them the officers of Evren's military apparatus. But it crashed, owing \$1 billion, leaving the government to take emergency steps to preserve confidence both in the banking system and in the

military junta itself.

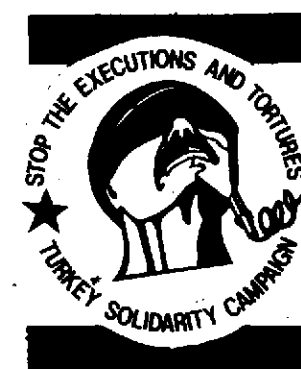
Indeed the collapse of Kastelli has been followed by publication of a draft constitution which appears to offer an extension of democratic rights — to all but trade unionists and communists!

And Ozal — seen by the international banking fraternity as a model Friedmanite monetarist, has been replaced by Adnan Kafaoglu, who describes himself as a "liberal pragmatist" — but has declared his commitment to stick to Ozal's agreements with the IMF and to a continuation of tight monetarist policies.

Junta

The acute economic weakness of Turkey is the factor which continuously raises problems and contradictions for the Evren junta as it struggles both to contain the strength of the working class and to solve the problems of Turkish capital.

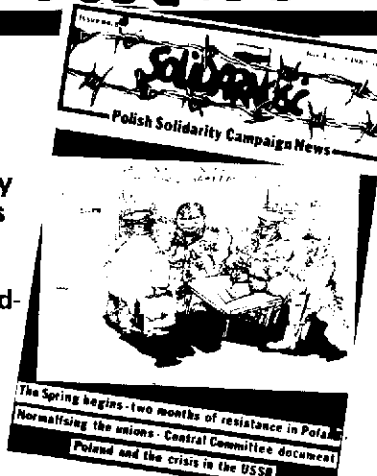
But no answer to this situation can be found within the framework of capitalism — the defeat of the junta and establishment of a workers' and peasants' government is the only way in which a planned economy can be developed.



Turkey Solidarity Campaign
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Why not positive discrimination?

by Gerry Byrne



THE argument for positive discrimination is dead simple. Women are as good as men, yet everywhere you look, in politics, in the unions, we're pushed into the back seat. Something must be operating to stop us taking our rightful place, and positive discrimination is the attempt to overcome it. Even calling it 'discrimination' is misleading, since all we're talking about is women getting a fair deal for a change.

Actually, the arguments against positive discrimination are dead simple too: women are inferior. Of course, it's not presented like that, but that's what lies behind it. So here's a guide to the various disguises that the argument for women's inferiority gets dressed up in.

1) 'We want to choose on merit, not on the person's sex'.

But that must mean you're assuming that women have less merit, otherwise the argument's irrelevant. Unless you're prepared to accept that women have only 5% the capability of men, then how do you explain the pitiful number of women MPs for example, who have been

JOHN HARRIS



Yes, yes, you've had a bad deal — but we must choose on merit...

selected on the basis of merit?

2) 'We want someone with experience'. This is just the merit argument pushed one step back. If you've been consistently discriminated against, so you've never got into positions in the first place, then of course you'll be lacking in experience. This is saying:

discrimination is out from today, but we won't bother about the effects of yesterday's discrimination.

Thatcher

3) 'Margaret Thatcher's a woman. You wouldn't want her?'

Margaret Thatcher's a woman. So too is Shirley Williams. So too was Hitler's mum and Atilla

the Hun's granny. Does that make all women Margaret Thatchers?

Are there no socialist women? That's self-evident nonsense. If anything is the case it's the exact opposite — more women vote Labour than men now, within the Party women consistently take positions to the left of the party as a whole, and similar things

could be argued within the unions. Besides which, has anyone yet discovered a supporter of positive discrimination who wants to put the Margaret Thatchers of this world on their short-list? It's a blue herring.

4) 'We want politics in the interests of women, not women politicians'.

True, but the whole experience has been, the protestations of left-wing men notwithstanding, that it has only been when women have got together and decided to push for policies that they wanted, that those policies have been taken up. We can all now grandly proclaim that abortion, for instance, is a class issue but it was never seriously seen as such until women within the labour movement had fought tooth and nail for it. Of course men are capable of taking up and understanding 'women's issues', but they only ever seem to do so when women take the initiative.

5) 'We're interested in politics, not structures. All this tampering with the forms won't work'.

But politics is also about forms. Who is and who is not allowed to take part in political decision-making is

a central political question. We would not argue for Polish workers, for example, to only concern themselves with wages or the price of bread and not bother with the nature of the political regime that's oppressing them or the fact they have no say in the running of the economy. Political democracy is a major advance in the conditions under which we can wage our struggles, and for women, while we have the formal right to vote, effectively we're denied any role in shaping policies.

6) 'It will only benefit ambitious, middle-class women.'

Arguably true, initially. Those who are better placed by their education and class background will be the first to take advantage of any gains for women. We've had ambitious, middle-class men running the show for long enough, it can't be any worse. If these relatively privileged women can't even get a look-in, what chance is there for the rest of us? Any advance in the position of women as a whole will, ultimately, benefit underprivileged, black, working class women more because of their double or triple burden.

7) 'Aren't blacks/ manual workers even worse off?'

That's debatable. Certainly, black women, working class women, are right at the bottom of the heap. Anyway, it's a foolish way of going about things to set one badly-off section against another and dispute who's worse off. It's actually in the interests of black and working class men to unite to end the white, middle class, male domination of our movement.

8) 'It's divisive'.

No, the system whereby women have no rights is divisive, and as has been shown so often, destroys the possibility of real unity in the interests of the whole

class. Unity that does not rest on equality, that's based on the suppression of one section's rights, is not worth the proverbial carrot.

9) 'It's just tokenism'.

We should have such tokens! At the moment we've got nothing, anything would be an improvement. The way to ensure that it doesn't just remain on the level of tokens is for us to organise to fill out the hollow forms with substance. It's curious that those who raise the objection of tokenism, don't follow their logic through to its conclusion. If, for example, one woman on a short-list is token, then why not go for all-women shortlists until the balance is righted? Then we get accused of being silly, though it's perfectly logical.

For the moment, I'm content to start with tokens, though we have to battle ferociously to get even these. When we've made some headway on that, then we can look to genuine equality.

10) 'I agree with you, but the voters/membership/etc won't wear it.'

Have you tried them? This is the final ploy of every jumped-up petty bureaucrat in the game. Do they ever ask themselves whether they might not have a responsibility to give a lead? Do they ever question whether it might not be their own prejudices speaking?

To ask the question is to answer it. Insofar as there has been any work done on voter behaviour in this area, the figures indicate that the electorate in general is actually less sexist than selection conferences. It would not require a wild leap of imagination to expect the same might also be true of the membership of trade unions if they were given a positive lead.



Out of the dock

"FORGET about politics, then. Are you conservative with a small 'c' or liberal with a little 'l'?"

"Oh, I'm not conservative. People have said the Court of Appeal's very conservative. They forget that when Donaldson put the three dockers in prison in the Industrial Court, we

let them out. Well, we'd been told there was the danger of a general strike. Most lawyers are conservative. That's what's wrong with them. They seem to have a vested interest in not changing the law."

Lord Denning, interviewed in the Sunday Times, August 1.

Routine?

US transport planes are regularly ferrying Honduran troops to the border with Nicaragua. US officials say that they are only doing routine training exercises, but the Nicaraguan government reports that "a real state of war" exists along the border.

Hundreds or thousands of troops, mainly ex-members of the National Guard of former Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza, have invaded Nicaragua from Honduras.

Certainly the US is arming and aiding the Honduran dictatorship, which in its turn aids the Somozists. Probably the US is directly aiding the war against Nicaragua's left-wing government.

Disgrace

MARCHERS attending a big demonstration protesting at the Israeli invasion of Lebanon last month had to listen to two Tory speakers at the Trafalgar Square Rally. The organisers refused to read out messages of solidarity smuggled out from Republican prisoners in the North of Ireland.

The biggest disgrace however, is that there were only three Labour Party banners on the demonstration. Until the Labour Party and the trade union movement can claim to be a pillar of support for the Palestinian cause, it will have little chance of driving the Tories — including racists like Tony Marlowe — out of such campaigns.

The profits of patriotism

LORD Victor Matthews, the chair of Cunard's, is an unselfish patriot. He is in favour of buying British. No Golden Delicious or Dutch lettuce in his lunch-box.

As we reported last time, he even sacked his Asian and African crew members so that the Task Force could be an all British affair.

Soon after Cunard's Atlantic Conveyor was sunk, Matthews declared that regrettably he might have to place the order for its replacement with

Korean or Japanese shipbuilders. British quotes were too high.

The Daily Express — normally another keen "Buy British" campaigner — sympathised with the noble Lord's plight. Mind you, value-for-money-Victor is a director of Trafalgar House which owns the Express.

The Express — hitperson for the Kill-A-Lame-Duck-A-Day Campaign — felt that an exception should be

made for Cunard's sake: the government should subsidise the cost of having the ship built in Britain. The Thatcher government has been quick to respond.

British Shipbuilders will drop their price by £4 million, the Department of Industry will shove £5 million into Matthews' pocket and the Ministry of Defence is topping that up with another £4 million.

"I suppose it must be a contradiction of the government's philosophy and my own," admits Matthews.

But that's not all. The affair has been pushed through on the ocean wave of patriotism: it would be wrong for a replacement for the gallant Conveyor to be built abroad, said Thatcher. In reality, Atlantic Conveyor is not being replaced because it was sunk. It is being replaced because it was too expensive to run.

The ship had been laid up in Liverpool for over nine months before the South Atlantic war. Cunard thought it was better to

pay £1,000 a day to keep the ship from sailing, so uneconomical was it to run the Atlantic Conveyor at current fuel prices.

Once the Navy commissioned the ship, however, Cunard started earning £6,000 a day for its use. They also stand to receive £9.5 million in insurance, although its scrap value (the only value it had by the time it sailed!) was no more than £2 million.

Pricy business this patriotism!

Matthews' rip-off has been inadvertently aided by shipbuilding union leaders. Their attitude has been that the Korean workers or Japanese workers are enemies of British workers.

The likes of Matthews must have been laughing: having made millions out of the South Atlantic war, claiming that the Argentinians are our enemies, they are now helped to millions more by trade unionists who ought to realise that Matthews and his ship-mates are the real enemy.



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JOHN HARRIS

Health workers protest at advert

by Wendy Mustill

5,000 hospital workers walked out in protest last Friday over a grossly misleading advertisement in the national press about their pay offer. The ad — reputed to have cost the DHSS £85,000 — claimed that the government's pay offers would bring the lowest earnings to £91 a week for men and £82 for women.

But these figures disguise the true position. To earn even £91, hospital workers have to work much longer than average overtime. That figure also includes premium payments for round-the-clock anti-social hours — and shift-work is increasing faster amongst nurses than almost every other group of workers.

Poverty

The figures also distort the fact that thousands of hospital ancillary workers are women working part-time. And the ad also failed to make any mention of the poverty-line basic wage, which is currently a paltry £59.05 for the lowest grade.

6% would make it £62.59, which is only just above the legal minimum in almost all industries

covered by Wages Councils.

The ad referred to the 6% awards made to teachers and the civil service, but failed to mention the 13.1% awarded to the police last September, with another award in double figures in the offing.

In the five years from July 1976 to 1981, nurses' pay fell in real terms by 3.5% whereas average earnings rose by 3.1% in real terms. They have seen police pay — 'a special case' — rise by 244% in that period while their own has lagged behind by half that amount (110%).

The government has

repeatedly claimed that it can afford no more than the 6 and 7.5% currently on offer. The Under-Secretary of State for Health recently reiterated the offers as 'very adequate'.

Who are they kidding? Next year, each British household will spend £13.50 a week on the 'Tories' defence budget. The Trident D5 submarine missile system alone will cost £7,500 million at September 1981 prices.

Under a social system committed to saving lives rather than killing people, this money would pay for 330 new hospitals at £23 million each. Put

another way, it would increase the budget of the Medical Research Council 75 times. And for each £2.7 million spent on every army Lynx helicopter, we could create jobs for 500 more nurses.

Britain is now spending 20% more on defence than on the entire national health service. But isn't our health service the pride of the western world?

Not so. According to Hansard, we spend the lowest proportion of Gross Domestic Product on health care than any other EEC country except Greece.

Glendale strikers battle on

AUEW members at Glendale Engineering, North-West London, are in the 7th week of a strike to secure union recognition.

On an average take-home pay of £60 a week, and working in what they considered to be unsafe, unhealthy, and degrading conditions, they sought recognition in order to get changes. The response of the employer, George Banborough, was to threaten the shop steward with the sack.

The rest came out on strike, and were all sacked.

Success

Since then they have picketed the factory. Despite their success in turning away trade union

drivers, Glendale have succeeded in maintaining production via cowboy delivery firms and scab labour recruited through local Job Centres.

The response of most of the labour movement has been good. Trade union branches, Labour Parties, and Trades Councils have sent collections and donations to the strike fund.

Drop

However, the North London district committee of the AUEW, dominated by the Communist Party, is looking for ways to drop the strike. Although it has been made official by the national executive, the strikers have yet to receive any strike pay.

Successful, large, pickets have been held on Monday mornings, and they have obviously shaken management, scabs, and police. On Monday 9th two scabs turned back.

Blacking

The important issue at the moment is blacking of Glendale products. Post, dust, and deliveries are being blacked already.

Today, August 10, there was an ACAS hearing. George Banborough obviously believed that ACAS was some sort of court of law, since he produced a document listing what he considered to be the pickets' crimes, such as persuading people not to go into work. He had no intention of taking the strikers back or recognising the union.

The strikers intend to stay put, and build on the support they are receiving. They need help on the picket line between 7am and 5pm, Monday to Friday — particularly 7am to 8am on Monday mornings, at 19 Hythe Road, London NW10 — and financial support (to Glendale Strike Committee, c/o Mick Woods, 76 Austen House, Cambridge Road, London NW6).

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PRESS GANG

Daily Mail
DAILY EXPRESS
FINANCIAL TIMES
The Daily Telegraph
THE Sun

TWO weeks is a long time in the sewer rat business. Since the last edition of Socialist Organiser was put to press it would have been possible to collect a miscellany of outrageous and ludicrous postures from Fleet Street.

It could have started with the London bombings, the first since the victorious return of the Falklands warriors. We could have noted how quickly the press adjusted its prim mask of distaste at blood and gore, scarcely having wiped the blood of the Argentine conscripts from its mouth.

□Sergeant Major Wager said later: "The Princess spoke of the terrible tragedy of the horses caught by the IRA bomb." Sergeant Cook added: "She was also very sympathetic about the people who lost their lives and were injured."

Daily Mirror

In addition we would have been bound to point out how the horses upstaged the soldiers in the mass media. The Sun — which welcomed the sinking of the Belgrano with the word 'Gotcha' — reported the bombings

under the curious headline "All the Queen's Horses and All the Queen's Men". The television gave more prime time to the recovery of the wounded steeds than to the funerals of their riders.

There was more material from the courts as Brian Radley was fined £100 for delivering his girlfriend's baby without supervision.

This left the moralisers of Fleet Street in a quandary. Should a chap be permitted to deliver HIS baby from HIS woman however he chose. Or should he be forced to allow someone else to do it whatever he thought. As for Michelle Williams — who played a minor walk on role in this drama — well who cares what she thinks.

The Guardian got its liberal knickers in a twist. It declared that the health authority, rather than prosecuting, should have obtained an injunction, which would have put Radley in prison, and in the immortal words of their editorial, "Mr Radley could have been placed in a position from which he was no longer able to influence Ms Williams."

The Guardian was not ignorant of the fact that

Michelle Williams herself was the one who did not want to go into hospital.

Indeed the editorial went on to chastise a hospital system which alienates women expecting babies.

The Guardian solution might leave little to be desired in this direction. Presumably Michelle Williams would have her baby, with several strong doctors sitting on her chest to stop her leaving, her arms tied to the bed to prevent her adopting the squatting position, and in the reassuring knowledge that her lover was being well cared for in one of Her Majesty's prisons.

There were other candidates for this week's press gang. The ludicrous pictures emerging from the papers of Mellish as some kindly old socialist from the docks adrift in a sea of ruthless hard left manipulators.

There could have been some mileage in Bradford City Council offering grouse holidays to businessmen so that they could lose their cloth cap image.

Or the way that the 'peace convoy' was hounded to try to discredit the peace movement on the anniversary of Hiroshima.

But this is the silly season — the season when nothing happens except trivia. So Press Gang obviously has to be on the most important event of the fortnight. And there is no doubt what that was.

There is only one question that has allowed the press we have come to love and admire to show their talents to its highest degree.

And that is the National Anthem, and the outrageous suggestion by some jumped up Church of England trendy cleric that confounding our enemies and sending her victorious were not the sentiments of the age.

In this post-Falklands world you would think they would know better. It is more likely that the Poet Laureate, whoever he is, will be ordered to write extra jingoist verses to bring our boys brave efforts on Goose Green, etc.

It is no wonder that some of the press is suggesting that the Church might have to be disestablished if it comes up with barmy suggestions such as this. They'll be talking about irreversible shifts in the balance of wealth next.

Textile cowboy thwarted

AFTER STICKING out for 24 weeks, the Rulecan women have ended their dispute. But they can claim a partial victory. The firm is now closed.

Two weeks ago it was announced on the picket line that the firm had gone bust — and not a tear was shed!

When Rulecan boss Rattles took over the firm last year, his sole intention was to pay starvation wages

to the women, and break any union organisation. But he came unstuck — he didn't reckon with the militancy of the women working there.

For all Rattles' threat of using the law against the pickets and standing by his scabs, the strikers were not broken. The tragedy was the lack of support they got from their union leadership and from the rest of the labour movement.

Mersey school occupied

PARENTS AND pupils are occupying Croxteth comprehensive school, in Liverpool, to stop it being closed.

The occupation began three weeks ago, at the end of term, when equipment was being moved out to prepare for the merger of Croxteth into a comprehensive school two or three miles away and on an inferior site.

Despite electricity and gas being cut off from the

school, the occupiers have already begun a successful programme of classes — and are determined to keep the school running.

A demonstration of 250 round the local estate last Saturday, 7th, drew support from Knowsley Trades Council and other trade unionists. Money and messages of support to Croxteth school, Stonebridge Lane, Liverpool 11.

Israeli invaders

IMPERIALISM'S MAILED FIST

Socialist Organiser analyses the background to the Lebanon holocaust

AS Israel's artillery pounds Beirut into bloody wreckage, the US is posing as a force for peace.

But in truth the Zionist state has been acting as the mailed fist of US imperialism.

The EEC states, while condemning Israel's invasion, continue to supply arms to the Zionists. There has been dissent within the US ruling class (possibly reflected in the replacement of Haig by Schultz). Indeed, there are even differences between the Begin-Sharon leadership and the more reliable interpreters of US foreign policy in the leadership of the so-called Israeli Labour Party over precisely how to effect a final solution.

But whatever differences there may be, all these forces are united on the need to crush the Palestinians and defeat the Lebanese National Movement.

The Arab regimes too have no wish to see the victory of the Palestinians and the Lebanese National Movement. At present a victory of this alliance would be incomparably more threatening to them than a strengthening of imperialism through the victory of Zionism and the Lebanese Right. Their play at "forcing concessions" from imperialism and Zionism is a show in response to the pressure from the masses.

The invasion of Lebanon by Israel was aimed at delivering a crushing blow to the Palestinians and creating, through the defeat of the Lebanese National Movement, the conditions for the reestablishment of Lebanon on the basis of the rule of bourgeois reaction.

Its timing derived from the pressure on the Zionist state coming from the mounting Palestinian action on the West Bank on the one hand, and on the other the freedom of action granted to Israel by Egypt's signing of the Camp David Agreements and Iraq's embroilment in the Gulf



The aim of the atrocities: to crush the PLO and restabilise Lebanon

War.

More fundamentally, however, the invasion connects back to the Lebanese civil war. This war was the outcome of two intersecting developments.

On the one hand the distribution of state power enshrined in the National Pact of 1943 no longer represented the communal balance within Lebanon as the Muslim population increased. On the other hand a radicalisation had taken place among the Lebanese working class and petty bourgeoisie (mainly in the Muslim communities), catalysed by the presence of the Palestinians.

Both developments threatened the relatively privileged position of the Maronite community and the position of the Maronite bourgeoisie in particular. And while the class struggle had not advanced to the point of challenging bourgeois power, it created instability (in itself worrying for imperialism) and conditions which permitted the Palestinians a considerable freedom of action.

Mid-70s

The mid-70s saw the beginning of a systematic offensive by the Lebanese fascists, playing on the existing communal divisions,

directed at the forces challenging the traditional allocation of power.

In the course of the counter-offensive against the fascists and their allies, there evolved an alliance between the PLO and the LNM — an alliance which not only constituted an immense step forward in the fight against Lebanese reaction and Zionist attacks, but pointed towards the strategic alliance necessary between the Palestinians and the oppressed masses if Zionism is to be defeated.

The refusal at first by the PLO leadership — effectively the leadership of Fateh — to involve their

forces in domestic struggle in Lebanon, constituted a criminal repetition of their line that in 1970 enabled Hussein to slaughter the Palestinians in Jordan. It permitted the advance of the Lebanese fascists against both the Palestinians and the LNM.

Alliance

The course of events and pressure from the base forced the PLO leaders belatedly to create an alliance with the LNM.

The recent desertion from this alliance of sections of the LNM, above

all of Walid Jumblatt, represents, whatever statements may be made about the continued commitment to fight Zionism and Lebanese fascism, an historic betrayal.

It weakens not only the Palestinian struggle, but also the fight against the extreme Right and opens up the possibility for imperialism to impose its solution, drawing in some of those elements until recently fighting on the side of the Palestinians and the forces opposing fascism.

Role

The role of Israel flows from the nature of the Zionist state. It was established by dispossessing the Palestinian Arabs. Its establishment and continued existence have only been possible with imperialist support — a support given because Israel is the watchdog of imperialism in the Middle East, the servant of its interests, in particular the interests of the dominant imperialist — the United States.

Although this support gives rise on occasion to complications for imperialism in its attempts to relate to the Arab bourgeois and feudal-bourgeois regimes, Israel remains the primary military instrument for maintaining imperialist order and imperialist interests in the Middle East. Imperialism's reliance on Israel is qualitatively different from its reliance on other agencies.

Occupy

Having expelled the Palestinians, and being a

weapon against any Arab initiatives opposed to the interests of imperialism, the Zionist state is compelled to try to impose its will over, and sometimes to occupy, ever-wider surrounding territories, either for its own security or to do the bidding of imperialism.

Victims

The Palestinian people are the direct and central victims of the imperialist-sponsored Zionist settlement. A just solution in the Middle East demands the destruction of the Zionist state and unconditional support for the struggle of the oppressed nation, the Palestinians, against the oppressor, Israel.

What should replace the Zionist state? The Palestine Liberation Organisation has called for a democratic and secular state in all of Palestine — that is, a unified state respecting the right of all those who presently live there to live side by side with the returning Palestinians as citizens.

Socialist

This demand deserves support from socialists. But while the PLO leadership — because of its own class interests and because of pressure from Arab regimes and from the Soviet Union — struggles in reality for a bourgeois state and develops consequent strategic and tactical positions, socialists have to point out that the destruction of the Zionist state will necessarily be the task of the oppressed masses under the leadership of the working class, and is prac-

Why Labour should support Palestinians

I AM pro-Palestinian, pro-Jewish but anti-Zionist. Israel is a colonialist settler state established in part by force of arms, including terrorism, by a largely immigrant population which has forced the majority indigenous Palestinian people out of their own homeland.

Zionism is a racist ideology which discriminates against the Palestinian population. It has turned them into a minority and second class citizens in their own country. Zionism has forced millions of Palestinians into exile in neighbouring Arab states. The Palestinians are today's diaspora.

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon is holocaust 1982 — an act of indiscriminate terrorism and geno-

cide against the Lebanese and Palestinian populations of Beirut. The Israeli bombardment of Beirut and the hunting down of Palestinians is a slightly less barbarous modern equivalent of what the Nazis did in the Warsaw ghetto.

I fully support the Palestinian struggle. It is an anti-imperialist and anti-colonial fight for independence and self-determination — a just struggle for national liberation.

Whilst I am opposed to the indiscriminate terrorism practised by some factions of the PLO, the Labour Party should recognise and support the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The Labour Party and

British government ought to support full and equal status for the PLO with all other parties to negotiations for peace in the Middle East.

Constituency Labour Parties and trade unions should flood the NEC with resolutions to ensure that Labour is committed to a democratic and secular state of Palestine, incorporating within it the present state of Israel, where Jews and Palestinians can live together in peace and tranquility.

Peter Tatchell, non-endorsed Labour candidate for Bermondsey, speaking at the founding meeting of the Labour Committee on Palestine.



The Palestinians — today's diaspora

How the war is seen by Israelis

Special report from Socialist Organiser's correspondent in Haifa

EVERY democratic slogan could have its barbaric twist.

This week the call by imperialism and the "dovish" Israelis among the Sharon-Begin command not to enter West Beirut received the most barbaric "yes" by the fiercest-ever bombing of the city, while water, electricity, food and medicines were all shut off at the check points.

While Sharon and his staff were still pushing for total occupation in order to prevent any political negotiations over the Palestinian question, the main call for "tightening the

siege" came from the ex-"Labour" premier, Rabin, specifically calling for less water supply, as a "humanistic" way to get the people out of the city.

The Peace Now leadership, which organised the 100,000-strong demonstration after the first month of the war has now reasoned that if they struggle against the occupation of the city, then the PLO can refuse to go, leaving Sharon at the end to move into Beirut... so they avert any further demonstrations, leaving Sharon a free hand.

As the occupation of south Lebanon is prolonged

its terrible face is revealed. The greatest suffering always falls on the Palestinians.

All youth and men that have not been killed are imprisoned, devoid of any legal rights, facing the choice between being beaten to death and "confessing".

Those who appear in the lists of the Israeli "Shin-Bet" as responsible for known attacks do not have even that choice, nor any trial — they are just shot.

The prisoners are taken for interrogation inside Israel, and most of them later return to the concen-

tration camp "Al Antzar" near Nabatiye.

There they are crowded in the hot sun in tiny tents, and usually not allowed to move, even to stand near the tent. Machine guns all around will shoot at any suspicious move, they are told.

The Red Cross was once allowed in, with many TV cameras, but later refused even to come, as it couldn't relieve the inhuman treatment and wouldn't like to cover for it.

An American congressman who came was also refused entry and an American photographer who

came with him was beaten up by the officers. An Israeli soldier tells that, after one guard was wounded by a prisoner, dozens were summarily executed.

The fate of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian women, old folk and children is no better.

Their houses are systematically destroyed. For many this is their fourth exodus, after 1948 when they had to leave their villages, 1967 when they were expelled from the West Bank, and 1970 from Jordan.

From about a quarter of a million Palestinians in the area occupied by Israel, the military governor admit today the existence of 32,000.

Where are the rest? No official would care to say. Stories go that tens of thousands of families lie between the Israeli and Syrian lines, just on the bare ground.

The horrors of occupation have produced further resistance from the Lebanese population. By the second half of July the military authorities began to admit growing guerrilla activity, saying the guerrillas were operating "in their natural ground, with the sympathy of the population".

An attack in Sidon on the military government's headquarters this week was followed by sharp reprisals against the whole city.

Today the Israeli TV reported fighting within their occupation area, between Falangist and Druze, and the Israeli army, with mortar fire, and admitted unspecified "casualties on all sides".

The first period of shock and despair has passed and agitation continues all around between the two million Palestinians under Israeli occupation from both 1948 and 1967.

In the West Bank the sharpened oppression is still successfully preventing a mass organisation or prolonged strikes, but the past shooting by the soldiers and their "village leagues" collaborators is not a sign of strength.

Two Israeli officials in the West Bank and some of their local gunmen were

also killed by guerrilla action.

Just today, in Nazareth, at the centre of the Galilee, the biggest city in the territory occupied in 1948 and the centre of the Communist Party support, a 25,000-strong demonstration against the Israeli aggression took place.

It was the first demonstration in the city for decades, as the police wouldn't allow any to take place. The permission to make this, with the persecuted Palestinian flag at the side of the Israeli flag, show the government is scared.

The "Sons of the Country" movement agitate daily for a general strike of the Arab population. No demonstrations for them, said the police.

In a 1500-strong meeting in Taiba township near Tel Aviv they called "from Taib to Beirut our people live, won't die", and, "In our souls and blood, we will liberate Palestine."

In all interviews, most Israeli soldiers just say they would like to go home soon. The military command try to convince them that the shortest way home is through the occupation of Beirut.

The whole operation would be regarded as a failure if it didn't create a stabilised Lebanese government that would prevent further organisation of the Palestinian masses, and will justify American support by securing its objectives in Lebanon.

The resignation of the Israeli armoured division colonel Geva has highlighted the second thoughts arising among the soldiers in the face of the continuing resistance. While the colonel went peacefully back to his lavish home, applauded as a hero by the "doves", a soldier who refused to enter the Lebanon was quietly thrown into prison.

This will not prevent others following his example.

Some say the right of conscience should not be confined to senior officers; others just prefer prison to death.

But with the present Israeli military superiority this reaction is still limited.

The most common prayer today amongst the soldiers is that they will not become involved in full-scale fighting against the Syrians. Shooting civilians is not pleasant, but not so dangerous.

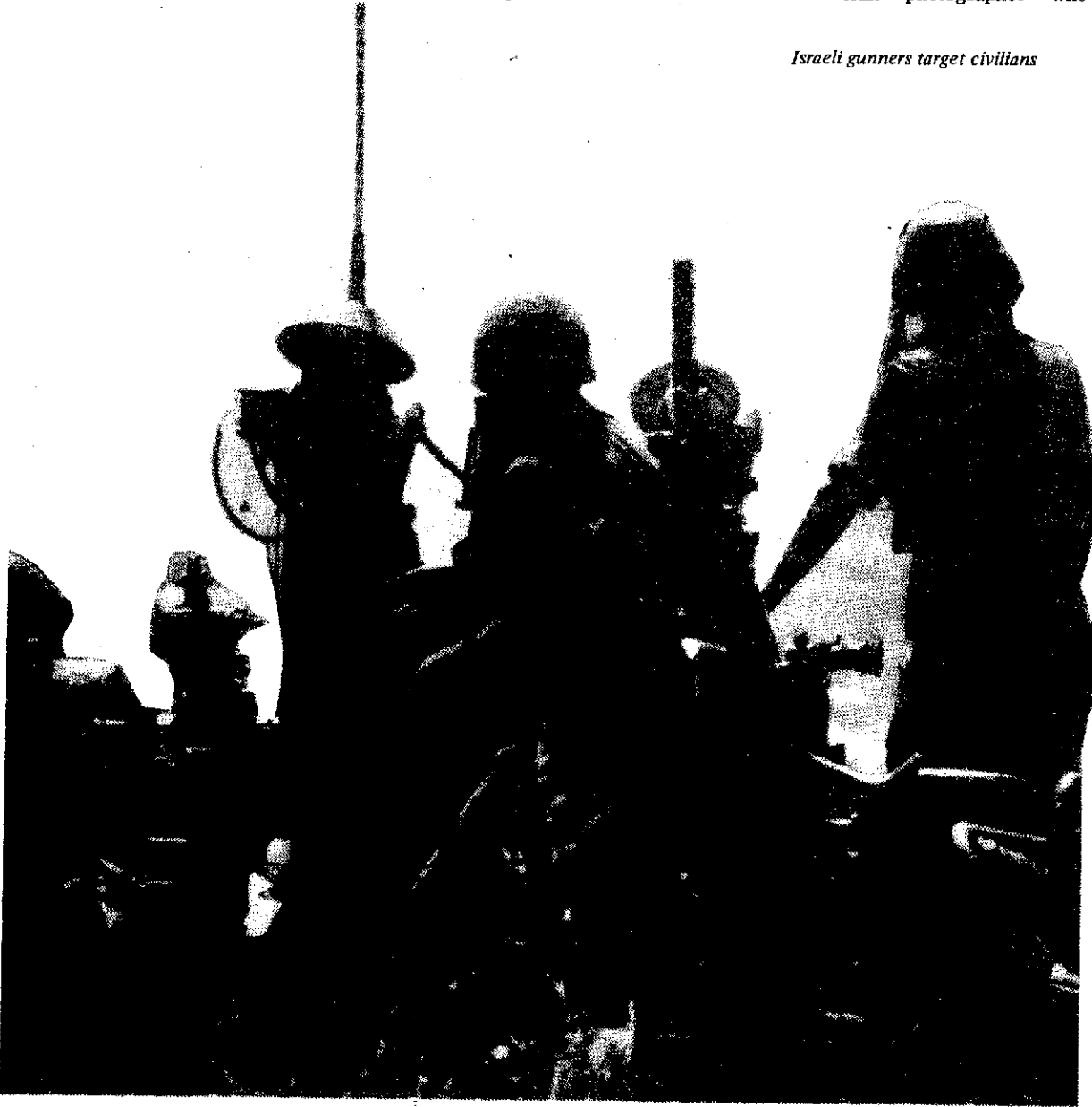
Everything in racist Israel is seen from the Jewish point of view, even the courage of the people of Beirut.

After a month of war we were told that there is a chance that Beirut's Jews will come to Israel: "They refused to come in '76... we were told, 'but they might have changed'".

Some two weeks later we heard that a special envoy of the "Jewish Agency" was in West Beirut and spoke with those Jews — but they still refused to come to "their Zionist homeland", or even to leave West Beirut!

No wonder the operation is not complete and the bombing continues...

Israeli gunners target civilians



Palestinian students arrested

THE third closure of Birzeit University — a Palestinian university in the West Bank — during this academic year has been accompanied by mass arrests of 82 students.

It started on July 6 when Israeli military forces invaded Birzeit village and attacked students who were demonstrating against the war in Lebanon. By mid-afternoon a heavy cloud of tear gas hung over the village.

During the night soldiers and interrogation units visited most houses in the village, searching for students, confiscating IDs.

The next day roadblocks were set up on the main route into Birzeit village from the neighbouring

West Bank town of Ramallah. Students and staff were herded off buses and were searched. ID cards were taken and about to students were detained. The students were then pursued by a low-flying helicopter firing tear gas canisters as they attempted to leave the area through the fields, near the village of Abu Qash.

Spot arrests and detentions of large numbers of students continued from July 8 when the university was cut off by army vehicles. Schools in the West Bank have been threatened with closure if they offer facilities to BZU, and on Saturday July 10 three Jerusalem schools were surrounded by jeeps from 6.30am.

Over 100 students attempting to attend alternative programmes were arrested.

Under the military occupation persons may be held incommunicado for 18 days under "administrative detention": a procedure similar to Britain's Prevention of Terrorism Act.

All members of the student council are either in prison or under house arrest and Israeli tactics have been aimed at forcing students to return home to their camps and villages.

The case of Anne Scott, a British research assistant at BZU, has received wide publicity in Britain. Anne was detained on Sunday July 11 at Ramallah military headquarters and

prison while accompanying two students trying to retrieve their ID. During her interrogation Anne refused to answer further questions without the university lawyer, and was beaten with a softball bat. On the same day she was transferred to Moskobiya Prison in Jerusalem and released two days later.

In the face of widespread criticism from outside Israel the authorities hastily mounted an inquiry and have announced the trial of the soldiers involved.

But regular and routine beatings and tortures of Palestinian prisoners and arrested persons continue unabated.

LOUISA SADLER

An eye-witness report from the West Bank



Begin



Defend Judith Williams!

JUDITH WILLIAMS was a house parent in a home for adolescent girls in North Wales. She'd been working there for several months with no complaints from anyone. Then at the end of May she was sacked. She was sacked for being a lesbian.

The organisation who run the home and four others around the country, Care Concern, said that she was 'temperamentally unsound' for the job.

Judith told us: "A more senior job than the one I was doing came up at the home, and I went to ask Mrs Smith-Jones, my boss, if I could have it. She told me that I didn't have enough experience and I should apply in six months time.

She asked me then if I was a lesbian — and I told her I was.

Then a week later I was called back to her office

and asked if I would resign. I said I wouldn't, and they said I'd be sacked anyway.

I then went to the senior social worker at the home

who told me it was all too political, and that the only way I could be kept on would be if they treated me as a 'male' member of

staff. As it was a home for girls, all males were accompanied whenever they met the girls.

They never complained about my work before.

So shortly after, on May 27, I got a letter saying I was sacked as 'temperamentally unsound'. They told me not to come to the home and paid me six weeks' money for notice.

I'd contacted the Gay Social Workers' Group. They had a meeting with Gay Rights at Work people, and the campaign to try to get my job back was launched.

We've had tremendous support. Loads of ordinary working class people have sent in the pink cards [addressed to Care Concern, demanding that Judith gets her job back]. The best support has been from NALGO. They passed a resolution of support at their annual conference and have been 'blacking' Care Concern — that means that they've been refusing to refer any children to the Care Concern homes.

That's been really good — it's what will hit them most. The probation officers have given a lot of support too.

Just a word about Care Concern. It's run by a man called David Rattray, who used to have night clubs instead of children's homes.

Local authorities give £300 a week for the care of each child, and Rattray worked out he could make more money through children's homes than he could with night clubs — there's your capitalist for you! I don't think he'll reinstate me, but we can make sure that this private money-making operation suffers.

I've just seen in the paper a report of Islington Council's declaring that they will not give grants to organisations that discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation. That's very good. We need to make sure that every employer does that too.

The Defend Judith Williams Campaign can be contacted at 123 Green-croft Gardens, London NW6 3PE. You can get literature, petition forms, pink cards to send to Care Concern and posters from this address.



LCGR answers Labour's NEC

ANGER at the Labour Party NEC's recent draft policies on gay rights was one key-note of this year's AGM of the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights (LCGR). But equally important was the determination of members to work collectively for a gay socialist future.

The last year has seen a significant growth in the activities and successes of LCGR.

For example, some Labour-controlled local authorities now specifically protect the employment of gay people because of the initiatives taken by LCGR members. Nine CLPs have affiliated for the first time and others are about to do so.

We have written to a large number of CLPs publicising the Labour Party document, The Rights of Gay Men and Women (available from Walworth Road or from us). We know that a substantial number of CLPs have subsequently written to Walworth Road supporting the document's proposals as a starting point for gay rights legislation by the next Labour government. We are reliably informed that not one CLP responded opposing the document.

So although we regard the proposals as inadequate we were shocked by the NEC's decision not to adopt them in their entirety.

The document fails on three main counts. First, it

The Labour Campaign for Gay Rights is appealing for support on its objections to the Labour NEC's cowardice on gay rights

does not deal with the specific ways in which lesbians are discriminated against. Indeed it seems not to recognise the sexuality of women.

Secondly, just as gay rights without a wider ideological basis are illusory, so socialism cannot exist without gay liberation being one of its components. Thus the document's failure to place gayness in the context of socialism is a major fault.

Thirdly, as a result, the draft policies do not recognise the need to positively encourage homosexuality and oppose the institution-alisation of heterosexuality.

We decided that we would publicise these shortcomings within the Party. We will also publicise the absurd self-contradiction of the NEC's decisions, which on the one hand recognise the need for equality, whilst on the other denying precisely this promised equality by restricting the age of consent for gay men to 18 (it is 16 for heterosexuals).

However, we recognised the dangers of a reference back which would mean no policy rather than an unsatisfactory one. So we are writing to all our supporters — actual and potential — asking them to positively support the NEC on this in any vote, rather than have it defeated by the conservatives of the left and the right.

At the same time we ask them to propose amendments to motion 514, so as to endorse 16 as the age of consent, as a tactic to get gay rights discussed at Conference. We aim to be present in force at Conference to leaflet delegates, and a fringe meeting with major speakers is being organised.

We decided to oppose the NEC's decision to set

up a register of groups, and although we disagree strongly with Militant's treatment of sexual politics we vigorously oppose any proscription on the basis that the NEC intends to deal with the Militant.

Labour movement conference mooted

Will Adams reports

ABOUT 60 people, almost all men, attended the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights national conference and AGM in Nottingham on July 24.

The day was mostly taken up with discussing the problems of being gay in the Labour Party and trade unions and the current Labour Party position on gay rights.

The discussions on being gay in the labour movement raised several problems. There is the self-oppressive argument that there are too many other important issues that need to be taken up at the present, so it seems petty to insist that the "trivial" issue of gay rights is discussed.

In some Labour Party branches motions on gay rights will be accepted but members will be unwilling to discuss the issue further or take any practical action.

We discussed the LCGR newsletter Gay Socialist, which is supposed to appear quarterly but which has only appeared twice in over a year. Despite practical problems we felt that a regular newsletter was important for keeping

the membership informed and for giving us ideas to suggest for practical action.

The discussion on the current Labour Party position on gay rights centred on the recent NEC decision to include a proposal for reduction of the age of consent for gay men from 21 to 18 (see separate item from LCGR).

There was a proposal to organise a large labour movement conference on gay rights on the model of the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign and Labour Committee on Ireland/Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland conferences. This is to be further examined.

We agreed to try to get more material in left and trade union journals

explaining why the Labour Party and trade unions need to campaign seriously for gay rights.

Finally we agreed to join the growing campaign against the witch-hunt in the Labour Party by refusing to register with the NEC's 'Register of Non-affiliated Organisations' and to join the Unregistered Alliance.

"The Bedbug"

Jacob Sanders, a supporter of the youth paper Class Fighter, recently saw Mayakovsky's play 'The Bedbug' performed in Oxford

'THE Bedbug' was written by Mayakovsky, a Russian (as you may have guessed) in 1929. It is about an ex-worker, ex-party member who is fast turning bourgeois.

He counters the view, constantly pushed by those around, that he is 'betraying the revolution' by making excuses. (What did we fight for, anyway, if I can't even enjoy myself?)

He then caps it all by deciding to get married. However, during the drinking bout at the wedding party, there is a fire in which everyone present dies.

His corpse is not found,

and it is presumed that his body has been totally consumed by the flames.

One hundred years later his corpse is found, frozen and preserved. It is decided to resurrect him using the technology of 2029. In this way, a flamboyant member of the bourgeoisie finds himself in the new, communist world. All attempts to civilise him fail and he is finally locked up in a cage as an exhibit. At the end of the play he invites the members of the audience to join him in his cage.

I found this an extremely good play, very well written and also well performed (which makes a difference). It is quite clear that Prysipkin, the central character, is not just one individual, but is intended to represent the whole of the bourgeoisie, or at any rate the bourgeoisieification

of the working class (or certain sections of it).

If he had been just one individual, locking him up in a cage would have been cruel, but as a way of life, bourgeois habits could be extracted and locked up without any individual being caged.

It seems to me that this play was intended as a warning, an attempt to tap the consciences of those who would like to settle down into their old, corrupt way of life, enjoying their rather pathetic pleasures which merely mitigate the surface of life, and say 'what did we fight for anyway, if I can't even enjoy myself'. But the warning was not heeded, and Mayakovsky's fears were realised in Russia, but also in Spain, Yugoslavia, and to a lesser extent, China. I think it is the best, and (unfortunately) most

prophetic play I have ever seen.

However, I do have one very strong criticism and that is the space-age creatures. They are obviously cleaner, healthier and more virtuous than their 1929 counterparts, but they do not seem to be enjoying their lives very much which is presumably what socialism is about.

Jokes

But on the whole, I found 'The Bedbug' an extremely good play, obviously written by someone who knows what he is talking about and with a few good jokes ('What year is this?' '2029'. 'Christ! (he counts on his fingers) 'Christ, I'm 100 years behind on my union dues!') taking some of the edge off the politics.

JACOB SANDERS

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SWP TURNS ITS BACK ON RANK-

AND FILE

THE pressure of the economic slump, and the aggressive stance of the Tory government, have made the last three years tough going for trade unionists. And top TUC leaders, wedded to the idea that mass struggle is too risky, have blocked all moves for a fightback.

But this year's union conferences have shown that determined resistance is growing among the rank and file. 'Health Workers for the Full Claim' organised the biggest fringe meeting ever at the NUPE conference.

New Broad Lefts have been established in the NUR and COHSE. Broad Left groupings in the TGWU are becoming more active and coordinated. The Broad Left in the tax workers' union IRSF is fighting moves by the union executive to victimise its leaders. In the CPSA the Broad Left has regained a majority on the national executive.

These Broad Lefts are not like those of the '60s, totally dominated by the Communist Party, but are more left-wing and less bureaucratic.

In BL over the past year the Leyland Action Committee has been more active than ever before.

Yet this is the time chosen by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) to scrap the rank-and-file trade union groups which it has built or encouraged over the past ten to fifteen years. The SWP leadership has directed SWP trade unionists to turn, not to broader left groupings, but to strictly 'party' activity.

Stan Crooke and Ian McCalman report.

"YOU don't get letters saying, 'Where is the Car-worshiper?' or 'Why don't the dockers publish the Dockworker?' Nobody asks for these papers," reports SWP leader Tony Cliff in the May/June edition of the SWP's magazine Socialist Review.

Cliff concludes: "The downturn means that we must relate politically to everything, not just our own little patch."

Translated into plain English, this means scrapping all the rank and file organisations sponsored by the SWP and relating to struggles by attempting direct recruitment into the SWP. "If we stop pretending that we are something bigger than we really are, we will actually become more enthusiastic socialists and better trade unionists," Cliff concludes.

The shift is of some importance. Since the late 1960s — when the SWP launched its first rank and file trade union grouping, among teachers — the rank and file groups have been presented by the SWP as a key element in their strategy for socialism.

In the early seventies they claimed on the strength of these groups, to be the organisation of the Left with the most serious orientation to, and implantation in, industry.

Cliff's explanation runs as follows:

"For rank and file movements you need three cogwheels: the tiny cogwheel of the party, the middle cogwheel of the Rank and File and the biggest cogwheel of mass trade union membership."

"We were able to build it (the Rank and File organisation) because there was a mass movement of self-confident workers, and the struggle was generalised

... We had always wanted to build it but couldn't until the struggle was very highly generalised."

"There is always conflict between the rank and file and the bureaucracy, but unless it can be generalised, you can't have the three cogwheels."

What was forgotten

With the slump this has become impossible. "I saw the problems staring me in the face ... in November 1977 ... to me it was absolutely clear by January 1978 that we were wrong," Cliff writes.

The evidence was provided when 520 delegates at an SWP-sponsored Rank and File conference voted for a one-day strike (December 7, 1977, in support of the firefighters) — and no-one came out on strike.

"On December 7, the penny dropped. Nobody came out on strike! How did we make this mistake? ... We forgot that the job of the party is to generalise."

The explanation hardly helps. What was 'forgotten' in 1977 was not 'the job of the party is to generalise' but a sober, realistic approach to the official labour movement.

The official movement should not be superstitiously worshipped. It is often ramshackle, passive, and even partly hollow. Yet it remains immensely powerful. It cannot be by-passed. Attempts by small groups of left-wingers to hurl calls for action over the heads of the official movement are no substitute for a fight to transform, invigorate and renew the leadership of the movement.

That is what the SWP's



Cliff: back to square one

experience proves. "Each sectarian wants to have his own labour movement."

By the repetition of magic formulas he thinks to force an entire class to group itself around him," wrote Leon Trotsky.

Nothing is gained if the SWP replaces the 'magic formula' Rank and File with the formula Party. Indeed, much is lost. Serious work done by trade unionists in and around the SWP will be disrupted. Instead of the faults of SWP-sponsored rank and file groups being corrected, the whole enterprise of grouping militants for the immediate struggle against the bureaucracy, without sectarian preconditions of political affiliation or across-the-board political agreement, is to be abandoned.

Real political processes

Cliff fails to analyse the simplistic anti-bureaucracy approach of the Rank and File groups. Unofficial strike action was always fetishised by the Rank and File groups and involvement in the official union machinery was downplayed. The result was

often that, apart from barracking from the back of a meeting, the union bureaucracy was given a free hand to carry on its betrayals whilst the Rank and File groups attempted to mobilise phantom armies to tilt at windmills.

The actual political processes in the labour movement were ignored, as if strikes, sit-ins, and picket lines existed on a different planet and were enough in themselves to provide an answer to reformist illusions.

Broader political questions — workers' alternative plans for production, such as the Lucas plan, or policy documents by trades councils' conferences on the Alternative Economic Strategy — have been ignored either as a diversion or as an unwelcome intrusion into the 'real' class struggle of strikes and sit-ins.

Sectarian towards Labour

Of late in particular, the Rank and File groups have found themselves victims of the SWP's sectarian attitude to the Labour party. When the question of affiliation to the Labour Party has become a fairly major issue in a number of unions — like EIS, CPSA, NALGO, — the Rank and File groups, paralysed by the SWP's sectarianism, have found themselves standing on the sidelines.

In other unions they have passively ignored battles relating to the fight for Labour Party democracy.

And the result of the SWP's blinkered exclusive focus on direct action is that when reformist illusions and reformist leaders stymie the action, they conclude that the working class has collapsed.

The molecular processes



November 1977, a big Rank and File conference. But in effort to rebuild the official movement failed

by which alternatives to the existing leaders develop, and through which future explosions are prepared, are dismissed by the SWP as 'resolution-mongering'. The role of leadership is minimised.

Thus in recent issues of Socialist Worker Tony Cliff puts all recent working class defeats down to deep-seated 'sectionalism'. Solidarity has to be rebuilt brick by brick, starting with 'the minorities of workers who are ready to fight' and 'tasks which are genuinely achievable'.

Lindsey Greig argues that: "Many organised workplaces today are little better than the unorganised shops of a few years ago." Even 'the principle of not crossing a picket line' often has to be sacrificed

to 'salvaging something from a disastrous position'.

So the job is to rebuild the labour movement from the ground up, not to redirect and revive it by organising the left. The task of the day is not mass struggle but individual propaganda.

A revolutionary organisation maintains its vitality by relating to class struggle. But the SWP's self-denying sectarianism has already led to a serious case of emaciation.

First of all the SWP wound down the Anti-Nazi League. Then Women's Voice was reduced to the women's appendage of the SWP. Involvement by the SWP in international solidarity

campaigns remains non-existent. And the SWP's sectarian attitude to the struggles in the Labour Party reflects a skewed view of the whole development of the British labour movement.

Now it is the turn of the Rank and File groups. In itself such a move is hardly surprising. What is significant about it is that the sectarianism of the SWP's own trade union work — which, in the SWP's mind, was once made a pole of attraction to the left in Britain.

The need to organise the Left in the rank and file won't disappear because the SWP has walked away from the job. Socialist Organiser certainly won't walk away from it.

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Broad Left threat to NUR's Writeback

"Hissing Sid"

AS an NUR activist, I must try to answer Brian Whitehead's questions. (Letters, SO92).

The permanent attack by Sid Weighell on the left is the mark of a man in panic. The Broad Left inside the NUR is a serious threat to Sid's undemocratic rule. The rule changes proposed at this year's AGM are a sign of the growing awareness in the rank and file.

The Broad Left is a grouping of left wing activists campaigning for rank and file control of the NUR (amongst other things). While it's small at the moment, it is an alternative to the right wing dominated bureaucracy.

The fact that 30 AGM delegates were elected

unopposed shows the indifference many people have to the union. This apathy is a big disadvantage to Sid and his right wing reactionaries. The Broad Left must encourage people to stand on a left programme.

The strike date was not the one the NEC wanted. Sid Weighell deliberately delayed the reply from BRB reaching the NEC. This meant that the start of the strike coincided with the start of the AGM. Sid Weighell knew that he could twist the AGM round his little finger as no NEC members are present.

Negotiations on pay were stopped because while the AGM sits it is the ruling body of the NUR and makes

all decisions.

The NEC is composed of 26 members who cannot be everywhere at once. Locally however, NEC member K. Turton attended an open meeting for all NUR members. This meeting helped put over the union message.

But what has been shown is a crying need for an alternative to "Transport Review". This "paper" is usually two weeks late, and puts management's views across better than "Railnews".

Secondary picketing was not mentioned nationally, but any branch activist should have been pushing for flying and secondary pickets from the first. All places where freight and



Sid Weighell should be shamed - but not the NUR ranks

passengers have been transferred to should have been picketed.

Finally, if all Brian Whitehead can see is the loss of two days' pay then he should come north.

In Sheffield area the unity behind the strike was marvellous. Many people showed doubt and worry but on day one we had about 94% out. Even after Sid manoeuvred the AGM to call off the strike we still had less than 10% scabs.

This area now is ready for action.

One picket said that if he had asked the workers to stop out an extra day in protest at the strike being called off they would have.

That is what has been gained from this strike, a sense of unity not known before and a growing awareness that Sid Weighell is not the nice person they thought he was.

Sid may have lost face in front of other unions but the workers have nothing to be ashamed of.

I must say personally that I am proud of the response in the Sheffield area and I applaud the pickets who not only turned up on Monday, but also came on Tuesday, despite having been knifed in the back by the traitorous 'hissing' Sid Weighell.

M. SIDAWAY
NUR member,
Sheffield City Branch
(Personal capacity)



We invite readers to send us their letters, up to a usual maximum length of 400 words. Send to 'Writeback', Socialist Organiser, c/o 78, Middle Lane, London N8.

Confusion of anti-nuke conference

ALTHOUGH the report of the anti-nuclear conference held in Brussels, July 2-4,

in the Socialist Organiser of July 8 did refer to the "great confusion over political aims and solutions" there, the report struck me as insufficiently critical of that confusion.

We learn that "the feeling of comradeship and of being part of a mass movement seemed to overcome the widest differences at this stage." Surely however the differences about how the threat of nuclear war is to be averted are fundamental. We must not go along with the illusions of those who think the threat can be averted by peace conferences, disarmament, etc., whilst capitalism continues in existence.

The report concludes: "A tremendous ovation was given to Fenner Brockway... who proposed that next year, the conference should be held in Berlin and that we should organise a mass demonstration to coincide with it." But the utter bankruptcy of Lord Brockway's politics was already shown, before he entered the House of Lords but when his views were essentially the same, by Trotsky in the 1930s (see Trotsky's 'Writings' published by Pathfinder).

This is not the sort of lead we should be following.

DAVID HARRIS
Amsterdam

LENIN'S POSITION NOT SO CLEAR

JACK Johnson's letter (SO89) finds a worthy successor in Geoff Robertson's (SO91). The only difference is that the latter is that much cruder.

It is necessary first to take up his amazing claim that Russia was "the carrier of capitalist relations and the dominance of finance capital into the parts of the world which it dominated".

The Russian bourgeoisie was in fact so weak that it could not even develop capitalism in Russia, never mind anywhere else. In the opening chapter of his History of the Russian Revolution, Trotsky points out that "from time immemorial" foreign capital took the lead in developing Russian industry. It was precisely this combination of a weak Russian bourgeoisie with a strong working class (created by foreign capitalist investment) which made the October Revolution possible.

It was for this reason that Trotsky in Lessons of

October pointed out that if the February revolution had not been the prelude to the October revolution it would have "thrown Russia back into a semi-colonial existence." (My emphasis).

And if Robertson claims that the above quote refers to the Russian state, the Russian banking system, etc., rather than the Russian bourgeoisie itself, as the "carrier of capitalist relations", then his argument is even more invalid. For isn't it one of the characteristics of the Argentine state, the Argentine banking system etc., to do just that today? An analogy between Argentina and Russia thus becomes even more valid.

Robertson goes on to argue that "when Indian capitalists buy a Swiss concern, they are not asserting national dominance over Switzerland or turning India into an imperialist power." This is true. But also utterly irrelevant. The Indian government does not have any territorial

claims in Switzerland, nor does it organise military coups against the Swiss government, nor does it send military aid and advisors to a Swiss d'Aubuisson.

But Argentina does make territorial claims outside the borders of Argentina, it was involved in the recent coup in Bolivia, it does send support to the El Salvadorean junta, etc., etc.

Then Robertson serves up the following quote from Lenin to show what a muddlehead I am, unable to tell the difference between oppressor and oppressed nations, and no doubt Stork and butter as well: "The world has been divided into a handful of usurer states and a vast majority of debtor states."

If this is the criterion for determining which countries are oppressor and which oppressed, then one arrives at some strange conclusions indeed. The Arab oil states, for example, amongst the leading creditor states in the

world today, would be in the camp of the oppressor nations. Saudi Arabia, instead of being a feudal backwater, would be the world's leading imperialist power.

On the other hand, Tsarist Russia would have been an oppressed state, given that it was up to its ears in debt. And Britain could be classified as an oppressed country as well, because of its debts to the IMF, etc., and the fact that the majority of holdings in the City of London are no longer British.

Colony

(This is, of course, the essence of the Bennite claim that Britain is really a colony of American imperialism. How ironic that Robertson, strutting around as an oh-so-orthodox Leninist, falls in with the political arsenal of Bennite reformism).

I would not go so far as to call Lenin a muddlehead, as Robertson suggests I

should, but Lenin's writings on imperialism are certainly not as clear cut as Robertson makes them out, so that his simplistic approach can cope with them.

Stage

For example, Lenin wanted to define imperialism as a stage in the development of capitalism, hence the title of his work, Imperialism - the Highest Stage of Capitalism. At the same time he (correctly) defined Russia as an imperialist state (although it was also a debtor state).

But Russia was a million miles from having reached "the highest stage of capitalism". On the contrary, it was still clawing its way out of feudalism.

In conclusion I would just like to explain why Robertson's letter is steeped in Menshevism. The Mensheviks rejected the idea of proletarian revolution in 1917 on the grounds that Marx had written that

proletarian revolution would occur first in the advanced capitalist countries (Germany, Britain, etc.), whereas Russia was still in the first stages of capitalist development and therefore "unripe" for revolution.

Lenin criticised them for raising Marxism to a set of "supra-historical laws", for ossifying it into a dogma and thereby depriving it of any revolutionary content. Robertson follows the same approach as the Mensheviks. Oppressor and oppressed nations are raised to a set of supra-historical categories unrelated to reality.

"The laws of history have nothing in common with a pedantic schematism" wrote Trotsky. And the pedantic schematism (oppressed nations there; oppressed nations here; oppressed nations everywhere) of Robertson has nothing in common with either reality or Trotskyism.

STAN CROOKE
Glasgow

The fight for control SCIENCE

THE recent court case in which Brian Radley was fined for attending the birth of a child in the absence of qualified medical supervision (at the request of the mother, Michelle Williams) raises several interesting points - not least that in law a mother-to-be figures as an object with neither rights or responsibilities.

The whole situation arose because of Michelle Williams' experience of ante-natal care (unpleasant) and of giving birth to her first child in hospital (being treated as an object and in particular being given drugs against her wishes).

During the trial, it was implied that Michelle Williams had been irresponsible in not seeking ante-natal care, and indeed it is true that there is a lower incidence of complications among those who attend ante-natal clinics

regularly. However, the treatment of women in such clinics is "undignified, depersonalised and tedious", according to Nicky Hart in the Guardian. Even Patrick Jenkin has referred to their "cattle-truck" atmosphere.

Do they have a beneficial effect despite their shortcomings, or is it that regular attenders tend to be healthier, better off, and living in better conditions?

A survey published in the Lancet in 1980 suggests the latter. Looking at the three most common complications in pregnancy, it found that malpresentation (baby wrong way round) was detected most efficiently - 88% of cases being identified, but only by about week 36 (i.e. about three weeks before birth - about the time Michelle Williams contacted the midwifery service).

Less than half the cases of poor foetal growth were detected and for every correct diagnosis, there were 2.5 wrong ones, resulting no doubt in unnecessary worry for those women. With high blood pressure, there were 1.3 wrong diagnoses for every correct one. The conclusion of the study was that the productivity of ante-natal care was extremely low.

So what did Michelle Williams want? She wanted a "natural" or "active" childbirth with the baby being born from the squatting, "natal crouch" position, instead of a high technology hospital birth with little control over what was being done to her - which could include unnecessary induction of birth followed with doping up with pain-killers; foetal monitoring (which some women find disturbing);

and episiotomies - cuts in the perineum (the skin between the legs) to enlarge the opening of the vagina - often made without anaesthetics (these are the source of extreme pain after birth, though it is downplayed by the medical profession).

Natural

The "natural crouch" position usually does away with the need for such technological or medical intervention, since the birth process is quicker, the woman being able to push more effectively since she has gravity on her side.

The "natural" method has been used throughout human history and by the majority of women in the world today. However, in Britain and other "advanced" countries, the natal crouch was replaced by the "stranded beede"

position, when the monopoly of the midwives was broken by the male-dominated medical "profession". (See "Of Woman Born" by Adrienne Rich).

This undoubtedly accounts for the observation in a standard textbook of human biology that women in the West seem to suffer more complicated births.

So is "natural" childbirth just a trendy, middle class idea? Not according to Professor Roberto Caldeyro-Barcia, past president of the International Federation of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians.

Easier

Formerly a leading supporter of full medical/technological intervention in childbirth, he made a comparison of both approaches and concluded

that where the woman can move around freely in the first stage of labour, has an upright position in a birthing chair during the second stage, has no drugs or oxytocin (a hormone used to induce birth) and has a supportive partner present, then births are quicker and easier, babies are healthier, and there is less need for medical intervention.

There is a further disadvantage to conveyor belt maternity wards, according to Diane Walters in Spare Rib (May 1982).

Many women suffer depression after giving birth. This post-natal depression may have several causes, but according to a survey carried out by Diane Walters, one factor seems to be the experience in maternity wards, particularly the amount of control they felt they had over what was

happening to them during labour.

While in hospital, of those allowed no control, 74% were depressed; some control, 64%; as much control as they wanted, 53%. More alarming still, a month later, back at home, the figures were 79%, 53% and 44%.

Control

Looking at the effect of technological intervention during birth, for 10 out of 11 possible procedures, more women who had them had post-natal depression.

All in all, the actions of Michelle Williams were quite justifiable and the sooner the socialist movement takes up the right of women to control of their bodies during childbirth, the better.

by Les Hearn

TORY PLAN TO RIP UP RAIL NETWORK

The truth about Tory policies for the railways is revealed by a recently leaked document from their Centre for Policy Studies. Noel Hibbert reports.

WHEN Terry Duffy and Sid Weighell prostrated themselves before Thatcher and at the same time deposited a large boot into the teeth of the ASLEF executive, little did they realise that they had become mere pawns in a gigantic manoeuvre to dismember the railway system.

Socialist Organiser has obtained a recent report produced by Thatcher's "think tank" — the Centre for Policy Studies — that argues for the complete ripping up of all rail track and a transformation of these lines into roads. This would result in 200,000 railway workers, not counting those in dependent industries, being dumped on the dole.

"Truth about Transport" is an amazing document, not just because it reveals the monumental stupidity of the TUC leaders in supporting BR against ASLEF, but because, as we shall see, it is motivated by a pathological hatred of the labour movement and of all the gains it has made since 1945.

The Centre for Policy Studies should be taken very seriously. Set up in the early seventies by Sir Keith Joseph, it exercises far greater sway over strategic governmental policy making than many Whitehall departments. Indeed, Enterprise Zones, the Prior/Tebbit legislation and the present denationalisation programme — to name but the most prominent — have all been incubated in this germ factory of Tory prejudice.

With the desired object of destroying "empires of inefficiency" supposedly represented by nationalised industry they have provided Thatcher with the ammunition to launch an onslaught against working class organisations not seen since the Combination Acts of the early 19th century.

Alfred Sherman, Director of the Centre, told The

1972 went down in history as the year of the miners. 1982 may well go down as the year of the railway workers.

The first eight months have seen British Rail shedding jobs at the rate of 1,000 a month. The struggle of the NUR over the 5% increase, the battle to defend the engineering workshops, and the fight of ASLEF against flexible rostering and in defence of the eight-hour day, have placed railworkers in the forefront of the fight against the Tories.

Throughout these struggles, the Tories have said that the "rolling programme of investment in electrification and modernisation in the industry must be tied to increases in productivity." Accepting this line in full, and attempting to thwart effective industrial action from their members at every turn, the right wing in the movement have been nothing but an echo-chamber for Tory propaganda.

On the fight against flexible rostering Terry

Duffy, the Albert Einstein of the AUEW, dazzled his members with "We're saving 10,000 engineering jobs by supporting the BR Board on this issue. It's the only way we will get new investment into the industry."

The article below, based on alarming new evidence, demonstrates that the Tories have no intentions of developing the railways. On the contrary, their goal — strike or no strike — is the closure of the whole rail system.



CPS founder Keith Joseph for the plight of a tottering British capitalism.

In justifying the destruction of British Rail, and in which the assets would be sold off to private enterprise, the report makes a number of farcical assertions.

Firstly, that the railway grew primarily as a result of the greed of northern iron manufacturers for quick profits last century. This class of parvenus lacked the foresight of the southern financiers and in the process they retarded the development of the motor vehicle (which would have developed decades before the train [!]), and hence have lumbered us with an archaic transport system ever since.

Moreover, BR has been defended by successive Labour governments in the past principally because Labour politicians played with toy train sets as boys — hence their romantic attachment to the railways! By the same bizarre pseudo-freudian logic, maybe we could explain the carnage in the Falklands by referring to John Nott's antics with tin soldiers at Eton.

Secondly, some advanced capitalist states, the USA for example, have virtually gotten rich on railways, using road and air instead for moving passenger and freight traffic. The argument is that these forms of transit do not entail financing a large infrastructure (signalling, track maintenance) like



BR chief Peter Parker

rail.

In practice, however, only the USA has gone in this direction. France and West Germany are spending more on railways. And we should remember that the USA also has an almost non-existent social welfare system.

Thirdly, the report states that BR and its "monopolistic unions" have become a self-sufficient bastion of privilege and power for trade union and Labour politicians.

Get rid of this bureaucratic machine and the road is open for creating an efficient market economy. Furthermore, the most ludicrous assertion of all is that there are more deaths and accidents in relation to train travel than there are on the roads. This mind-boggling "fact" is achieved by dividing the number of accidents in each type of transport by the number of trains (on the one hand) and road vehicles (on the other)!

The fact that the Tories are willing to go to this ridiculous extent to justify making a profit shows how capitalism distorts even the most basic of human senses.

Actually, 225,000 people (as many as the population of Derby) have died in road accidents since 1945, with 3.5 million people seriously injured! Transfer existing passenger and freight traffic (including nuclear waste) from rail to road and these figures are bound to escalate dramatically.

Only three years ago a petrol tanker exploded on a Spanish road next to a beach of holidaymakers, incinerating thirty people.

Millions of Britons are in deadly danger in town centres from such accidents.

Hull, for example, has the highest density of inflammable tankers passing through its streets of any town in the country — one every ten minutes — and violent explosions through road accidents are possible at any time.

But of course if you live in Sunbury-on-Thames you have nothing to worry about.

In contrast to the Tories, a genuine socialist government would plan the expansion of the railways. It would encourage the vast bulk of freight to go by rail.

Even in capitalist France, metro systems in cities like Paris and Lille are self-financing enterprises through taxing the local employers. There is no reason why this should not happen in the UK.

Why do the Tories wish to get rid of British Rail? Get rid of BR and you open up the profitable passenger/freight business

to the private coach and haulier firms, virtually all of whom provide finance to the Tory party. Safety standards would go out of the window, profits would go up (and there is no guarantee that they would either stay in the country or be ploughed back into industry).

Just as importantly for the Tories, abolition of BR, would capture yet another piece of the public sector for the "profit motive" whilst destroying a powerful battalion of the labour movement — the NUR and ASLEF — at the same time.

Furthermore, these right wing fanatics make no real distinction between British Rail as a nationalised industry and the labour movement.

For the Tories the Board is an objective achievement of the reforming Labour government of 1945 and therefore something to be destroyed.

So what is the Tory policy for BR?

In public, they say that "investment must be predicated on reductions of overmanning and new productivity agreements" (i.e. flexible rostering). Yet we should note that they have yet to put any new money into the industry.

We would argue therefore on the basis of the policy outlined in "Truth about Transport" that the Tories have no intention of renovating Britain's rail network but are bent on a policy of piece-meal closure.

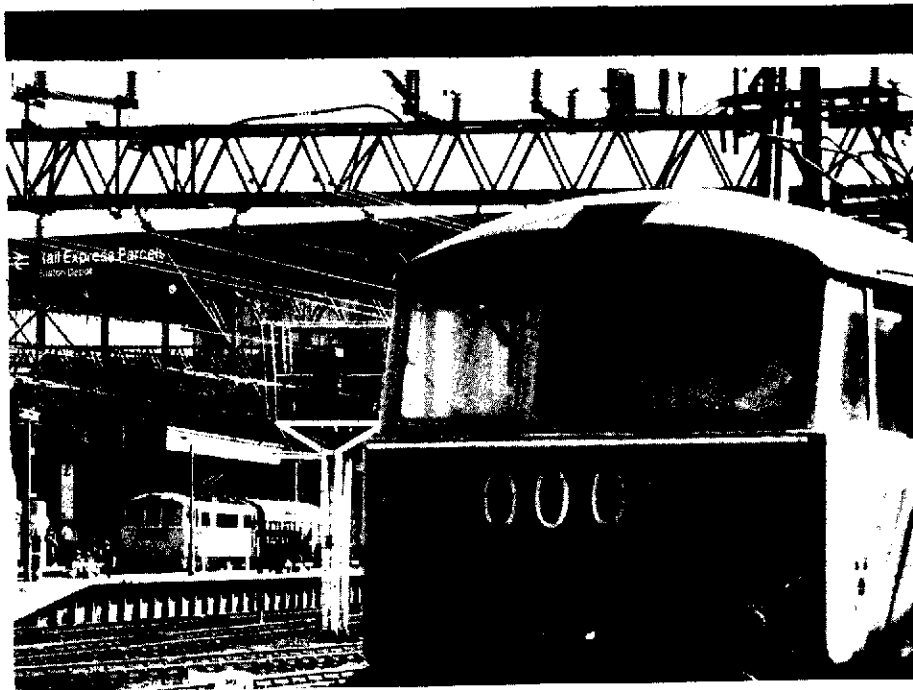
This places the antics of the TUC Finances and General Purposes Committee in sabotaging ASLEF in a distinctly sharper light. Quite simply the Tories led Duffy, Weighell, Murray and Chapple along the garden path like the proverbial donkeys are led along Blackpool beach.

Indeed now that the flexible rostering issue has been "solved", the BR Board have placed compulsory redundancies in the workshops, which if added to the 4,500 jobs axe proposal announced last week amount to the same workforce loss as the original plans to close Horwich in Lancs and Shildon in the North East.

A national campaign in defence of the whole industry needs to be launched that embraces all the issues, from the eight hour day to the national wage review and the defence of jobs. The Tories target is a total dismantling of the network.

This needs to be made clear to all members, officials and Labour MPs connected with the industry. Meetings should be called — whether in the workplace, the union offices, or the House of Commons bar — to prepare the basis for a national struggle to defend the livelihoods of 250,000 workers and their families.

At the end of the day of course, it will be only through uniting the whole movement, spearheaded by a new Triple Alliance of railworkers, miners and engineers that the predatory attacks of the mad axewoman and her underlings on the BR Board will be stopped.



Guardian recently — "British Rail mirrors British society. Anachronistic, wasteful, shabby, epileptic, it not only has resisted change but inhibited analysis of the causes for its shortcomings."

"Successive governments have postponed root-and-branch appraisal of the rail problem and instead thrown large amounts of money at it, tens of millions in subsidies and write-offs."

In an absurd inversion of the power structure of capitalist Britain, the Tory strategists now pose as "radicals" whose modernisation plans are blocked by the "bureaucratic vested interests of the labour movement. Whether it's the health workers, council refuse collectors or rail workers they are all living it up in 'citadels of overmanning, draining away the country's resources.'"

Alfred Sherman forgets

of course that tens of billions of pension funds are invested abroad and also that the vast bulk of decisions about the allocation of UK capital have been concentrated in a four mile zone in the City of London.

A better yardstick for "radicalism" is whether or not you are in favour of expropriating the financiers and exploiters who have traditionally controlled, and are today responsible

'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 Grays 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.

BIRMINGHAM Labour Committee on Ireland social. Friday August 13, 8pm to 12, at the Mermaid, Stratford Rd, Birmingham, with Michael Fox and the Black Velvet Band. Entry £1.20 (60p unwaged).

NORTH London Irish Solidarity Committee: showing of the film 'The Patriot Game', Friday September 3, 7.30, Holborn Central Library, Theobalds Rd. Admission 50p.

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.

ISRAEL hands off Lebanon! Solidarity with the Palestinian people! Recognise the PLO! Down with Zionism! Labour Committee on Palestine picket of El Al, Regent St, London: Saturday August 14, 12 noon to 2pm.

PALESTINE solidarity: exhibition of photographs at Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park, Sunday August 15, 12 noon to 8pm.

PALESTINE Solidarity social to raise funds for medical aid for Lebanon. Sunday August 29, Bloomsbury Theatre.

COVENTRY Palestine Solidarity Campaign demonstration: Saturday August 21 1pm from Edgewick Park. Speakers to include PLO rep and a Jewish socialist.

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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.

SPARTACIST Truth Kit. New pamphlet on the politics and practice of the Spartacist League, by John Lister. 70 pages, £1 plus 26p postage, from WSL, PO Box 135, London N1.

MIDLANDS People's March for Jobs. September 15 to 18: a five-pronged march from Stoke, Derby, Rugby, Hereford, and Shrewsbury, converging on Birmingham. Coordinator: Sid Platt, NALGO, 7th Floor, Tower Block, Centre City, 7 Hill St, Birmingham B5 4JD (021 643 6084).

SHEFFIELD Socialist Organiser. 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.

ISLINGTON Socialist Organiser group meeting: Sunday August 15, 3pm, Thornhill Neighbourhood Project, Orkney House, Caledonian Road. 'Organising the Marxist Left'. Tea, coffee and sandwiches provided. For babysitting phone Nik 607 5268.

"We are defending democracy"

UPON our shoulders rests the responsibility to safeguard trade unionism, the Labour Party, socialism, democracy and peace.

First of all, if we are going to safeguard trade unionism, we have got to re-state the arguments for solidarity. Solidarity means that one trade union supports another trade union. It means that the miners support the nurses, and thank god they have. It means that the nurses picket with the ASLEF strikers. And so they did.

It means the TUC supports workers in struggle. And alas we have not seen that support forthcoming.

Solidarity is the basis of the strength of trade unionism but it can only be understood if we have political trade unionism. Non-political trade unionism is a nonsense.

The second thing we must have is a broad Labour Party. It is totally wrong that the NEC should seek to arrogate to itself the right to excommunicate those with whom it disagrees. I do not believe for one moment that it has anything to do with a party within a party — that used to be said about the Tribune group.

I was present when Socialist Outlook was expelled, when Sydney Silverman had the whip withdrawn, when Michael Foot had the whip withdrawn. My direct predecessor in Bristol was Stafford Cripps, expelled at the 1938 Labour conference on the motion of a young trade unionist called George Brown — and see what has happened to him.

We can never accept that the views of those of us in the party are views that must be licensed by those we elect to lead. Accountability means leaders are accountable to the membership. The register means that the membership is subordinate to the leadership.

We are also defending democracy. And let me ask a few questions about democracy. We have two houses of Parliament. And yet the British people are only allowed to elect one of their two Houses of Parliament. We must be the only country in the world that still allows inheritance to lead to a seat in parliament; that still allows the corruption of mass patronage by prime ministers to pose in the guise of being democratic.

Do you know, the last

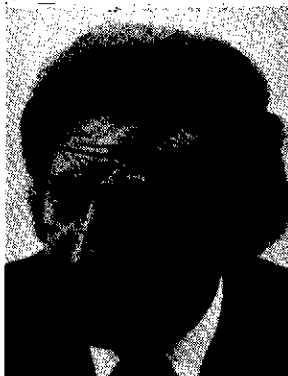


Tony Benn was one of the leading speakers at the London rally organised last month by Tribune to combat the witch-hunt

Arthur Scargill was also there

IF anyone wants to examine closely the credentials of some members of our party, then I'm only too pleased to assist them. And the first question I would ask of any member of our party is this: do you support Clause IV of our constitution which calls for the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. Now if they don't support that, the quicker they join the SDP the better for them.

This party has been through this witch-hunt once before. In the 1950s and in the sixties, the right wing of our party destroyed the chance of an effective socialist alternative policy. And for those historians who want to look back and wonder why our party has gone downhill, I'll tell them why: because ever since 1945 our party has tried to practice capitalism better than the Tories.



measures is to weaken us, to make us fear to continue to operate in the party as well as in the country.

Mrs Thatcher is governing Britain by fear. Our strongest answer is hope.

It is a tragedy that between now and October we shall have to spend so much time on the question of the register. It is dangerous, irrelevant, unworkable, constituencies won't expel people, they'll suspend constituency parties, they'll find it unworkable. But why waste time, when above all the left in Britain and the trade union movement needs to be together.

eight prime ministers have appointed more members of Parliament than the entire electorate have elected members of the House of Commons? 700 MPs — they call them peers — have been elected by seven men and one woman.

We cannot win unless we are united. I don't say unity without debate, because if you're going to be effective you must have unity and debate.

For at this moment one union to let down another union, or for the party to turn upon its socialists and seek to expel them under the excuse of disciplinary

Labour witch-hunt



"A new kind of council"

Nik Barstow (chair, Islington Labour Parties local government committee) reports on a Labour council that is set to fight Heseltine

council. We don't start on the basis of good house-keeping. We start from what people need."

The local rag has branded Alan Clinton as the 'chief conspirator' behind the policy.

But the real reason is that the local Labour Parties have started to exercise a firm control over the councillors who are there to speak for them.

All the major policy issues on the Council, and the committee chairs and the council leadership, are decided at regular joint meetings of the Labour councillors and of the borough-wide Local Government Committee of the Party — so the views and demands of the rank and file can be heard.

Heard

Getting the rank and file voice heard, and acted upon, does take organisation. Islington Socialist Organiser group has been the driving force in a campaign to get the Party to support a strategy that can beat the Tory government's diehard opposition to every single pledge in the local party's election campaign.

The Socialist Organiser group held a series of meetings to work out a clear, but

detailed explanation of our policy to fight the government. Then we approached every single ward party with the policy.

Way

By the last joint meeting between the councillors and the Party it was clear that there was only one set of proposals that outlined any way at all to fight the government. The leadership of the Council was forced to accept them lock, stock and barrel, resisting (unsuccessfully) only the commitment to keep rates down.

The Islington Parties now plan to link all those issues together in a campaign against the government: building up from September to force the government to pay up next March when the council has to make its new budget.

But the resolution-passing is only a start. Many Party activists in Islington still need to be convinced that we not only have a duty to fight but also a real chance of winning.

Only vigorous campaigning will convince people we can win, and draw in other Labour Parties and councils alongside Islington.

Building a left opposition to Militant

Jo Thwaites reports on the LPYS summer camp

IT was a sunny affair this year, as predicted!

If you're gay and unemployed would you take kindly to a socialist saying: stop talking about these minority issues 'like women, blacks and gays', and get on with fighting unemployment? No?

Well, neither did Judith Williams — the care worker sacked for being a lesbian. When this remark was made by a Militant supporter at a meeting on gay liberation organised by Wolverhampton SE YS, she simply said 'I would still have a job if I hadn't been gay'.

The way to fight anything that's wrong under the capitalist system, according to the majority in the YS is to fight for socialism. OK, but Militant insist that there's only one way to fight for socialism... and that's proclaiming the bold socialist programme of Militant.

The problem is that every

other campaign or group of people then aren't really socialist. They can be criticised for some failing or other, and consequently can't be worked with.

For instance, Annajoy David, the national secretary of Young CND, was invited to the summer camp to debate with a YS NC member. Fine... a debate about what way forward for YCND. But no, the YS NC contribution was a denunciation of everything Annajoy said for not having a (sufficiently) socialist perspective.

Annajoy also spoke at a Class Fighter meeting which was much more fruitful. We discussed the need for more of an orientation by YCND to the labour movement and how to develop links between the LPYS and YCND. We asked the YS NC to put its full backing behind the 'Jobs not Bombs' march organised by NW YCND groups from Manchester to Labour

Party conference in Blackpool.

Militant's approach also causes problems in fighting the witch-hunt. Though there do seem to be differences among Militant supporters, the general argument was that Militant was growing as a result of the witch-hunt and could fight off the attacks from the right.

There was hostility to any idea of trying to organise the rest of the Left in the Party to fight the witch-hunt and defend the LPYS together, and the Unregistered Alliance was summarily dismissed.

For the first time a Class Fighter supporter was allowed to debate from the platform with the majority — on women. Jane Ashworth, a member of the National Organisation of Labour Students National Committee, put the argument for positive discrimination (argued elsewhere in this issue of Socialist

Organiser).

The majority's answer to working class women is 'hang on till we get socialism'. We said that we have to organise now.

There was a similar argument on black youth. Neil James from Nottingham pointed out that, while the YS Black Youth Conference was a step forward, there were black youth groups which the YS had no relation to, like the Bradford 12 Campaign, and self-defence groups in London and Coventry.

It is no use saying hang on for socialism. These black youth are fighting now.

A major debate throughout the week was about organisations like the IRA and the PLO, which the majority lump together as 'terrorists'.

Class Fighter held meetings on Ireland and Palestine where the speakers (John O'Mahony from SO and Clive Bradley, respec-

tively) argued that the IRA and PLO were leading necessary and progressive struggles.

We don't support everything that's done in the name of those organisations; but we do support the Republicans' fight against the British Army, for self-determination and to get the troops out of Ireland.

YS camp was smaller than last year. The recession has hit everyone! But Class Fighter is now firmly established as the growing minority in the LPYS.

As Mick Liggins, speaking at the Class Fighter 'What we stand for' meeting said, 'We will not tell youth to wait for socialism. We're about fighting for it now, building the LPYS and drawing working class youth into the YS now — not waiting till they accept all our programme.'

Apart from the political discussions — Class

Fighter won the Camp Quiz so we should get a picture of the team in Socialist Youth, but we didn't do so well in the football! Our meetings were well attended with 100 at the witch-hunt and Ireland meetings, and many new contacts were made.

We'll be holding a conference soon. Watch out for details.



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.



HEALTH WORKERS FOR THE FULL CLAIM • PARITY WITH THE JUDGES!

HEALTH workers for the Full Claim: national meeting. Sunday August 15, 1pm to 5pm, Birmingham Labour Club, Bristol St. (opposite 'Night Out' restaurant).

New issue of Health Workers for the Full Claim bulletin out now, in new big format! 10p (5p to strikers) from Anna Lunts, 78 High St, Atherton, Lancashire.

Socialist Organiser

HEALTH PAY- NO RETREAT!

DESPITE the Health Service union leadership, health workers have responded well to their half-hearted call for five days of strike action this week.

Angered by the government's dishonest advert, many workers who had only intended taking one-day action decided to come out for the full week.

In Edinburgh's Western General, 200 ancillary workers walked out on Monday, furious about the ad. They went into work on Tuesday, held a mass meeting of 400 and voted overwhelmingly for an all-out indefinite strike.

Workers at Middlewood and the Northern General hospitals in Sheffield are out for the whole week. In Oldham hospital, sections including sterile supplies and medical records are out indefinitely, and porters and drivers are out for the whole week. At Withington Hospital, Manchester, two sections are out indefinitely, and at the Hope Hospital 16 laundry workers are out indefinitely.

The picture is uneven, though. In some areas, Leicester for example, the action has not been so successful. Workers are demoralised, having come out on strike to no avail so far.

There has been solidarity action too (apart from the Fleet Street electricians). On Clydebank, shipyards are holding two-hour mass meetings during work-time on Friday, and the workforces will be addressed by striking health workers. AUEW members have been taking strike action in support of Sheffield health workers, and Clydebridge steel works

is holding a one-day sympathy strike on Friday.

Pickets round the country have no illusions about their leadership. Many look at the TUC sell-out of ASLEF and suspect Spanswick and Co. have a similar plan up their sleeves.

More and more workers see that the only way the 12% will be won is through all-out action. That's the slogan that's shouted most on marches so far.

Walkout

A Middlewood Hospital (Sheffield) worker told us about a rally during the last three-day action. "We showed Spanswick what we thought of him. He stood up to address a rally of 2,000 and most people walked out. By the time he'd finished there were only 50 people left in the hall".

This dispute has gone on far too long. The only way to stop the backsliding of the union leadership is to demand that the TUC Health Services Committee calls an

all-out strike now and campaigns for a one-day general strike to back the fight.

The leaders can't say there isn't the support from the membership. Several groups have already come out on all-out strike and have only been forced back by their own union leaders!

All out for the 12%!

HEALTH WORKERS FOR THE FULL CLAIM • But dedication won't pay the rent

OXFORD Health Workers for the Full Claim open meeting: "What more do we have to do to win?" Thursday August 12, 7.30pm, Headington Labour Club.

HEALTH WORKERS FOR THE FULL CLAIM • Scrap the warships pay the health workers

Black the Israeli war machine!

IN the makeshift homes of the refugees, many remained hungry and all were desperate. The whole of West Beirut stank of rat-infested piles of garbage, human excrement and dirt. There was also the distinctive smell of the sweat of fear.

"The politicians", the Daily Telegraph reported

this Monday, "were conducting their negotiations outside all that, with clean shirts and iced drinks. Many felt that urgency might be induced by inviting all those concerned to spend a few nights in West Beirut."

In the meantime the Israeli war machine continues to bomb Beirut into

ruins, and to maintain its threat of a full-scale invasion.

But no better can be expected from the capitalist politicians. The imperialist powers which have sponsored Israel and used it as their number one ally and instrument in the Middle East, are hardly likely to

stop Begin now in his effort to crush the Palestinians.

The responsibility falls to the international labour movement. We should do everything we can to paralyse the Israeli war machine by blacking supplies and equipment for it. Even the smallest beginnings of action can be a boost to the Palestinian resistance and to the peace movement inside Israel.

Already in Australia, Greece and Scotland, the labour movement has called for a boycott of the Zionist state.

Being against the Israeli state has nothing to do with being anti-Jewish. Bombings have been carried out against Jews in Paris by a group called Action Directe, described in the media as left-wing but in fact known to the French left as semi-fascist.

The left should condemn these atrocities just as we condemn the far larger-scale atrocities of the Israeli forces in Lebanon.

Begin's blitzkrieg has nothing to do with security for the Jews. The Zionist state is a murderous, rapacious oppressor for the Palestinians and a death-trap for the Jews.

See centre pages

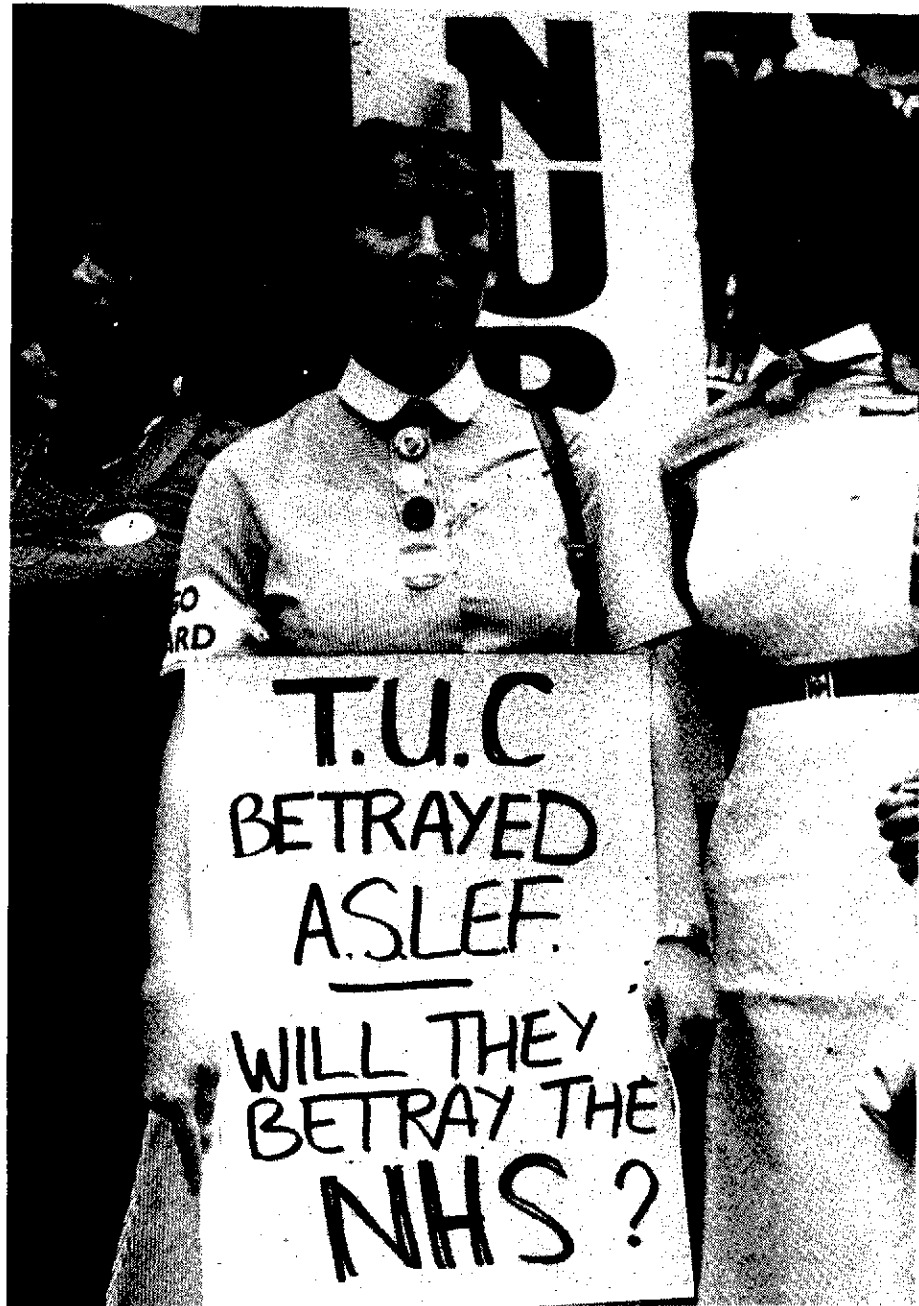


PHOTO: JOHN HARRIS

£6000 fund

So we're going to have to extend the deadline for our £6,000 fund. We had originally hoped to make the target by the end of July, but we've still only got £3,384.91.

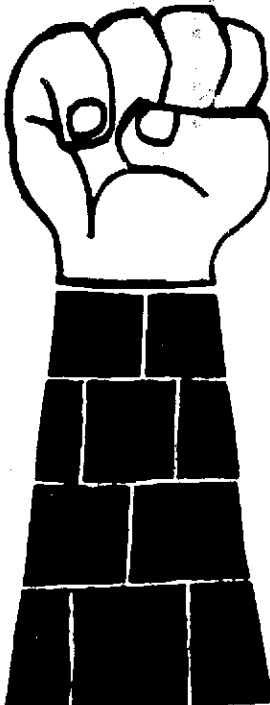
That means we've gone a long way to clearing off our backlog of debts - number one of the fund's objects - but not very far yet in expansion.

Premises, new machinery and equipment is object number two.

We know that many local Socialist Organiser groups have fund-raising activities planned for September. Three Wirral SO supporters are seeking sponsorships for the Mersey Marathon. With a push the £6,000 is not too far off!

Recent contributions include £10 from Glasgow (Fraser Neil [of the Recognitions]), £16.50 from the Oxford bookshop group, £15 from a Palestinian comrade, £35 from Teresa Munby (Birmingham), £31.50 from sales of 'Unregistered Socialist' badges, and £544.42 TUHSG.

Full area-by-area analysis next week. Send money to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.



Unexploded Zionist cluster bomb in Lebanon