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Socialist Organiser

Against all bans and proscriptions!

New anti-union laws planned

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

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

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

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

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

Paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance. No. 91 JULY 1, 1982 (Claimants and strikers 10p) 25p

SABOTAGE!

Union leaders split struggles

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

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

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

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

Then came sabotage – from the terrified union leaders.

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

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

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

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

BUT the struggle con-

tinues.

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

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

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

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

refusing solidarity.

NUR members are bitter. But they are not despondent.

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

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



JOHN HARRIS

FIGHTBACK

—we can still
unite and win!

Inside:

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



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

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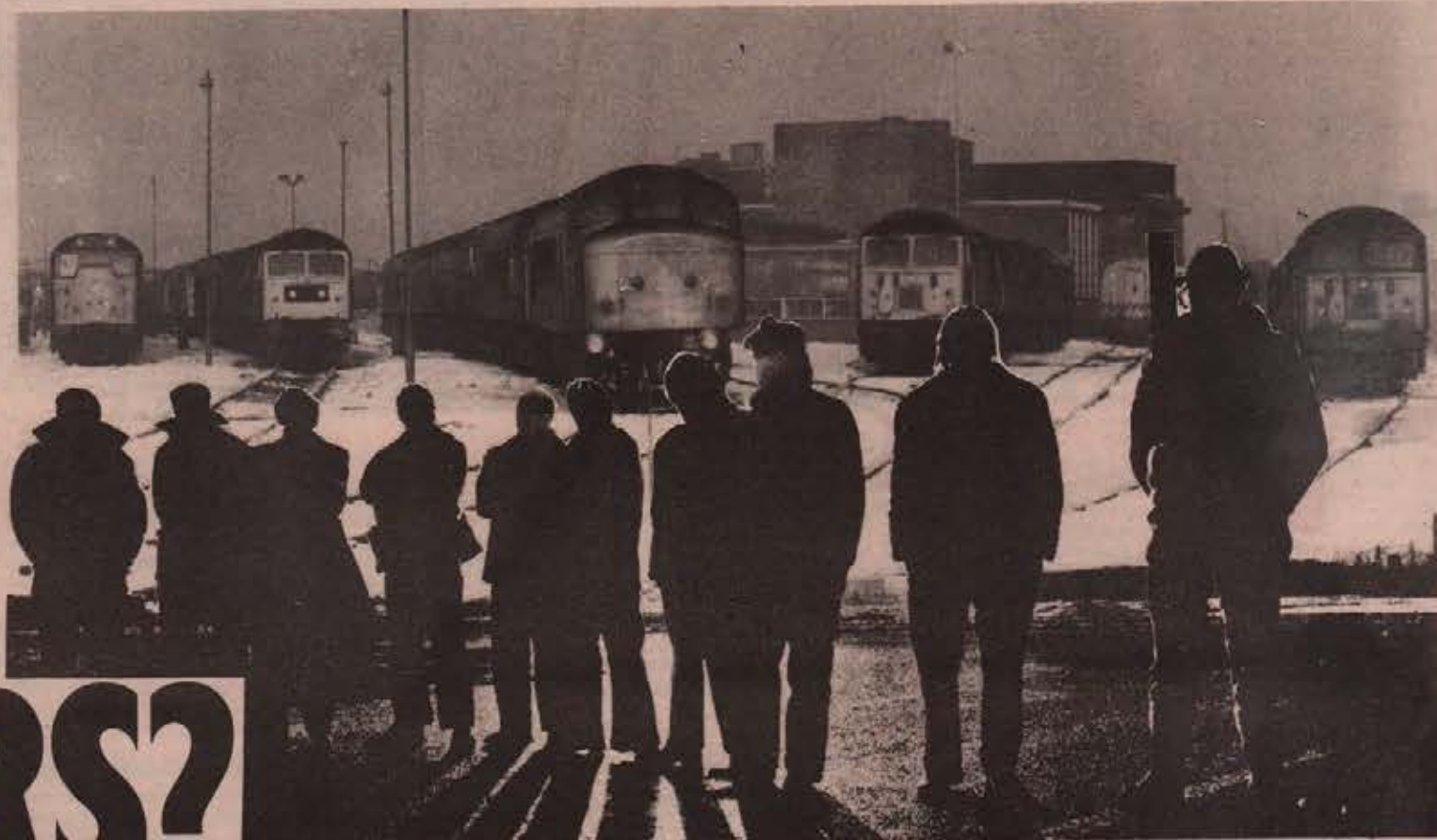
STAND AGAINST FOOT!

AN OPEN LETTER TO TONY BENN

Whose side are you on?

SEE INSIDE, PAGE 15

ASLEF? or the UNION BUSTERS?



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

picket lines.

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

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

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

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

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

In fact BR on Wednesday claimed only 1,000

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

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

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

Tory backers.

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

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

Tory axe over rail network

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

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

unsafe.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rally round the rail strikers!

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

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Going from strength to strength

Steve Good (asst.
branch sec., Kings X
ASLEF) told us:

I THINK the dispute is going
from strength to strength at

the moment.

We had 60 pickets in Gill
ingham the day before yest-
erday, and 30 or 40 today.
There were 20 men going in
to work there. Now it's
between 8 and 10. Yesterday
they had to close down the
service.

Picketing was very slow
when this dispute started,
but now it is increasingly
effective.

Not much thanks to the
union leadership, though.
There is a 'Central Strike
Committee' in London. This
committee sees its role, as
far as it has been explained
to me, as instructing branch-
es to set up meetings to co-
ordinate picketing. It doesn't
send out or organise pickets.

Kings Cross has had to
play a central role in picket-
ing.

We were down at Victo-
ria today. Most of the extra
coaches are run by non-
union drivers, but there are
TGWU members too. The
story we're getting time and
again from the TGWU mem-
bers is: "I've had no instruc-
tions from my union".

There is no positive lead-
ing being given by the TGWU
officials — though we did get
a number of TGWU mem-
bers today saying that if BR
sacked us they'd take action
themselves.

We need other sorts of
support, too. Money is going
to be very important. At
Kings Cross we've had some
generous donations. More
collections will be needed.

A lot of our members
have been going round to
local Labour Party meetings
and there has been a good
response.

If the BRB go ahead with
sackings, the dispute can go
one of two ways. The
ASLEF leadership went into
this dispute prepared to
compromise on flexible
rostering — prepared to work
an experimental scheme. The
threat of sackings could
aggravate the weakness at
leadership level.

Or the sackings could
lead to an escalation.

This will depend very
much on what the rest of the
trade union movement does.

IAN WILLIAMS
(NUR Executive, in
personal capacity)

SID WEIGHELL's attitude
to the ASLEF dispute is, like
his attitude on many things,
completely unreasoning.

We've got two Executive
decisions, back in January,
saying that the ASLEF posi-
tion was justified. And what
we've got now is a threat by
the Board that as of July 3
they would impose new
working conditions on a
trade union in the railway
industry.

Whether or not the NUR
has accepted flexible roster-
ing, we can't as a union say
that the Board has a right to
force working conditions on
another union. ASLEF had a
choice between a strike or
capitulation.

My own NUR branch has
advised its members to
donate the strike pay they
received for their two days
on strike to ASLEF.

ASLEF face a life and
death struggle, and if they
are defeated, we'll be next.
It would be entirely criminal
of the Labour Party not to
support them.

Weekly paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance.. No. 93 July 15, 1982 (Claimants and strikers 10p) 25p

Tories out to smash ASLEF

ALL OUT TO DEFEAT TORIES!

by Harry Sloan

SO it's war on all fronts. Apparently the Tory high command, carried away with its Falklands victory, feels able to take on the labour movement at home. It bases this on intelligence reports on the state of readiness of the trade union leadership.

As we go to press, BR management seem certain to issue sacking notices to the striking ASLEF train drivers.

The aim is to break the back of ASLEF. Drivers will be taken back only if they individually break ranks and accept flexible rostering.

BR doubtless know that this manoeuvre will not succeed if ASLEF stays solid. But they reckon on the ASLEF leaders losing their nerve and opening the way for the union to be humiliated.

At the same time Norman Fowler, Tory Secretary for Health and Social Services, has adamantly restated the government's refusal to increase the miserable 6-7½% pay offer to a million workers in the health service.

Next week will see a 3-day action by NHS workers coinciding with an all-out ASLEF stoppage, and probably spilling over into a wave of unprecedented supporting action.

London Transport ASLEF drivers have said they will strike if their BR colleagues are sacked. NUR members on LT have said they will not cross picket lines. Miners and other sections who have supported previous stoppages by NHS workers could well be out again. The Tories could face a wave of simultaneous strike action bigger than anything since the 1920s.

And so they should. The attack on ASLEF is one of the boldest steps yet in a determined Tory drive to break the strength of the unions, drive down living standards and smash up established working conditions at the expense of thousands more jobs. Even now Norman Tebbit is talking of a third anti-union Bill to dictate the rules of unions.

But while the Tory class war cabinet leads its troops of managers into battle, the trade union general staff is cowering in its bunker at Congress House.

As the Tories fire salvoes of threats, ultimatums, lock-outs and legislation, the union leaders fire back with wet lettuces of compromise and attempts at capitulation.

But if the generals of the labour movement won't lead the fight, the ranks are nevertheless coming out of their trenches and advancing against the Tory enemy. Health workers have stood firm against demoralisation and sell-out "compromises"; ASLEF drivers have responded solidly to the threat to their jobs and their union.

Miners, too, and other sections of workers have shown their readiness to join battle with the Tories, striking alongside the health workers.

Next week must see the maximum turn-out for the 3-day action, in solidarity with the NHS workers and ASLEF, and a tenacious fight to go beyond that to all-out action by the whole workers' movement to defeat the Thatcher government once and for all.

Editorial — page 3

Thatcher's boys return



When the troops got back from the Falklands on the Canberra, they had a message for us all.

For trade unionists, a banner draped over the ship's side read: 'Call off the rail strike... or we'll call an air strike!'

For women there was a banner reading: 'Lock up your daughters! The bootnecks are back! For Labour supporters — 'Maggie rules OK'.

Together with their gesture on the way out, when troops spat over the side of the ship at black dockworkers in Sierra Leone 'because they were black', the messages make up a pretty comprehensive manifesto.

During the war, Socialist Organiser argued that the main enemy for British workers was not Argentina but the British state. See what we meant?

CALL OFF THE
RAIL STRIKE
...OR WE'LL CALL
AN AIR STRIKE!

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THIS ISSUE

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

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

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

Next issue — August 12

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

ASLEF cut down by

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

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

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

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

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

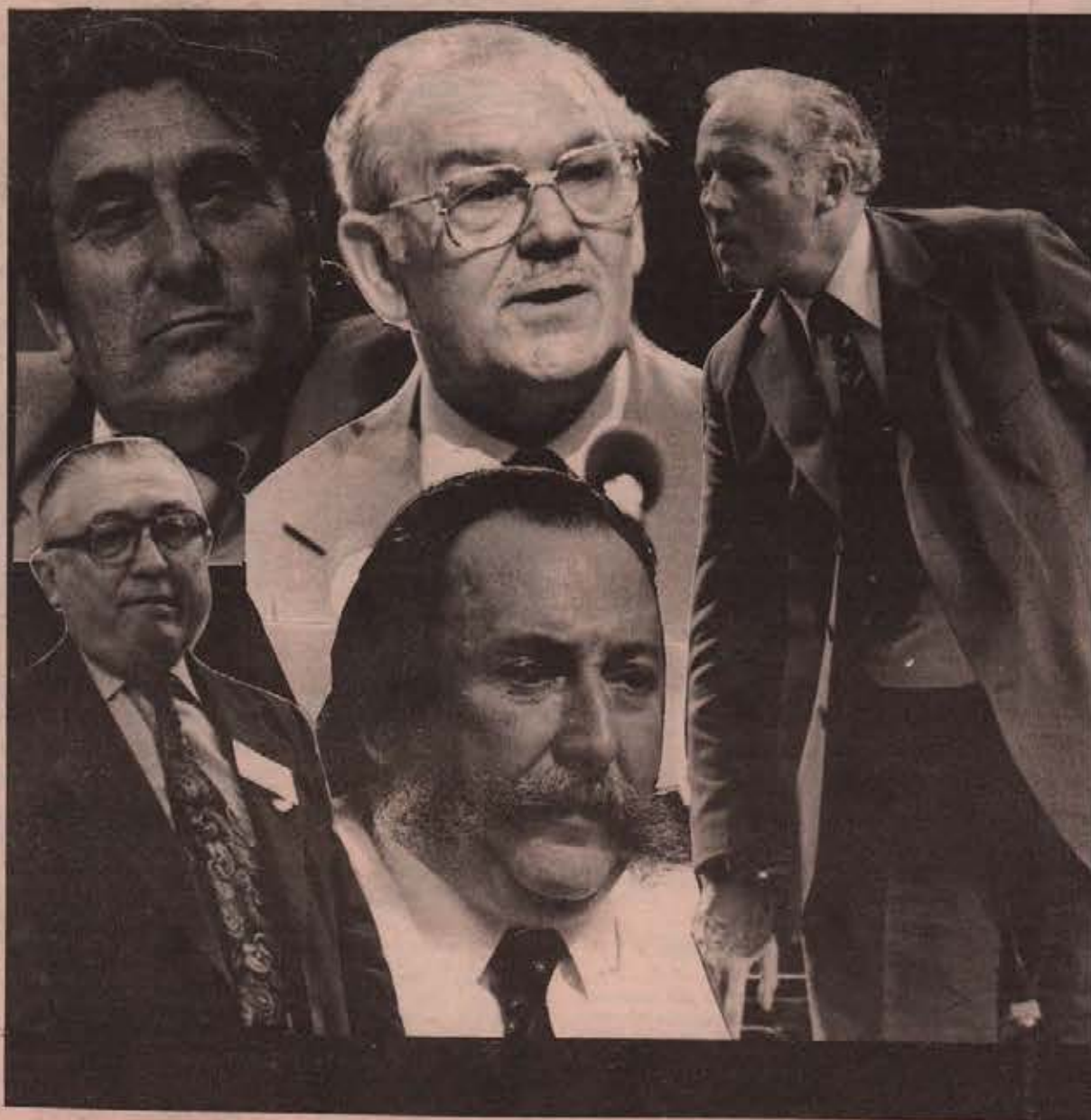
"The public utterances of the general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen have been contrary to every principle of trade unionism. He has, by his actions, assisted the British Railways Board at every stage."

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

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

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

TORIES' HIT-MEN!



We
didn't
expect
much

By Steve Good
Kings Cross ASLEF

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

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

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

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

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

NHS: we can still win

Articles see
pages 2 and 11

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Weekly paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance. No. 95 August 12, 1982 (Claimants and strikers 10p) 25p

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

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.

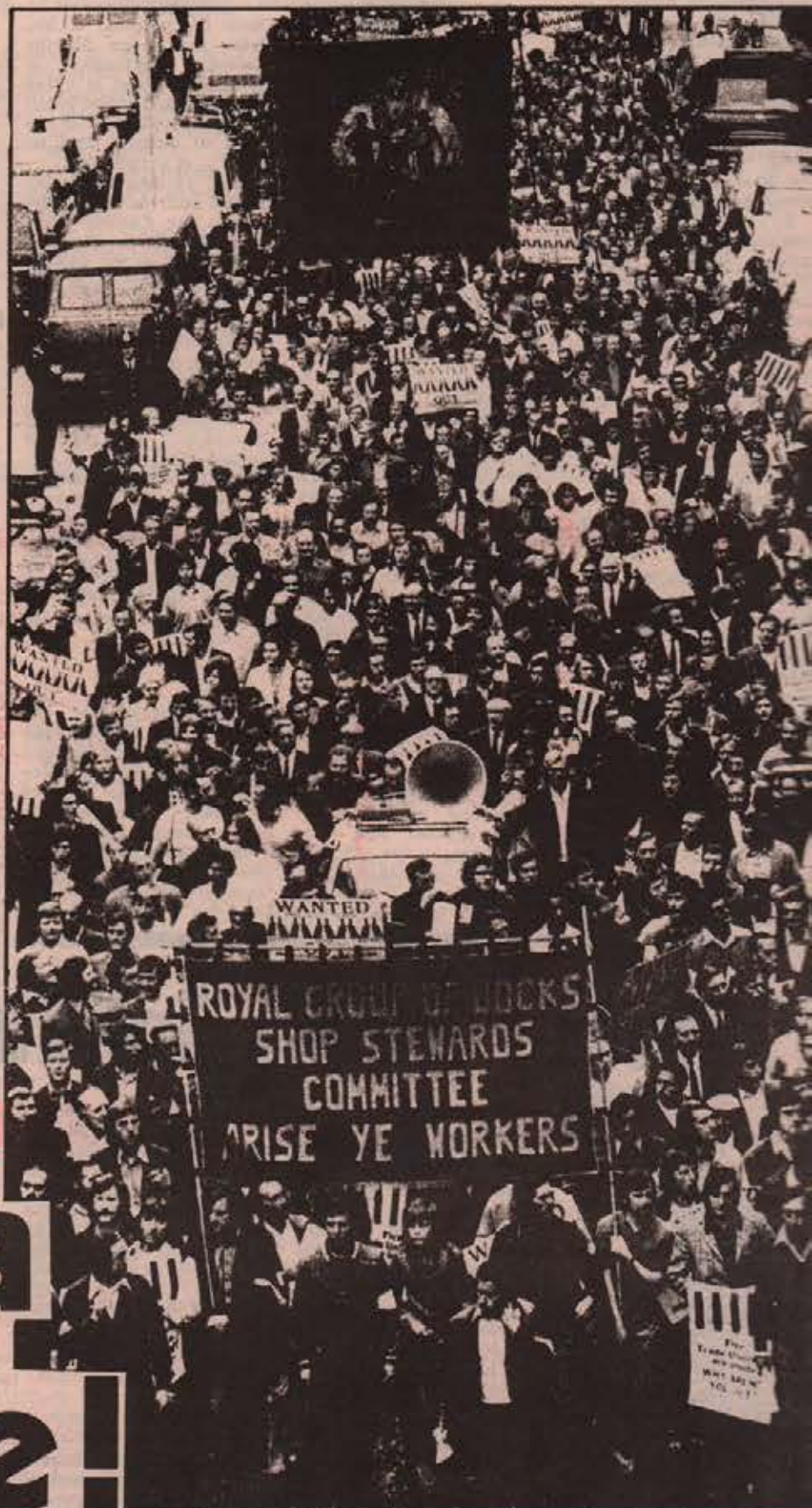
We demand TUC action: but we must not wait for them before we begin to organise.

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

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INSIDE:



NHS dispute reports — page 15

Weekly paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance. No. 96 19 August 1982 (Claimants and strikers 10p) 25p

A VICTORY FOR SOLIDARITY

THE Sean Geraghty case has transformed the health service dispute and the fight against the Tebbit law.

The Fleet Street electricians' defiance last Tuesday, striking in solidarity with the NHS workers despite a court injunction obtained by the newspaper bosses, boosted the health workers. Then the solidarity from NHS and other trade unionists for Sean Geraghty, the electricians' branch secretary, blocked the press millionaires' attempt to get Geraghty jailed for contempt of court.

The lesson is that with militant action and solidarity strikes the health workers can win their 12% claim. With direct action across different industries, the Tory anti-union laws can be beaten.

If Geraghty had been jailed, then thousands of NHS workers would have been out on strike straight away. Fleet Street would have been stopped. The national council of the print union NGA had declared for "support to the extent, if necessary, of industrial action" if the judge imposed a prison sentence. And certainly the strikes would have spread.

That is why the judge decided that it was 'not a very serious contempt of court'.

At the EETPU Press Branch meeting

on Tuesday 17th, the 'Health Workers for the Full Claim' group distributed a leaflet:

"We won — but Richard Marsh (of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association) made the reason for the court action clear. He and the class he represents wanted to use the present law to challenge the trade unions and to establish the precedent that supporting strikes can be dealt with through legal machinery.

"Next time the courts are used it might be against a far weaker section of workers. We urge you to vote against paying the fine."

The meeting did vote against paying the legal costs imposed by the court, and to postpone a decision on the fine. The branch committee is due to report back to a branch meeting with more members present on the question of the fine.

As one electrician told Socialist Organiser after the meeting, the problem is that delaying the decision lets the issue cool and thus reduces the chances of defying the courts.

But in any case a victory has been won. More of the same methods can produce more victories.

NHS:

Now for all-out!

CONVENTRY health workers' stewards have already called for an all-out, indefinite strike (with emergency cover) from the beginning of September. This Monday, 23rd, the Oxford NUPE district stewards' committee made the same call with only one vote against.

Six pits in Barnsley have sent motions to the NUM executive calling for a one-day strike in support of the health workers, and pressure on the TUC to make it a one-day general strike.

The feeling is growing for decisive action. The Oxford NUPE meeting voted to support a lobby of the TUC Health Services Committee on August 26 (9am at Congress House, Great Russell Street), and Islington health workers are planning to strike on September 3 and go to Brighton to lobby the TUC Congress on September 6.

Be there on August 26!

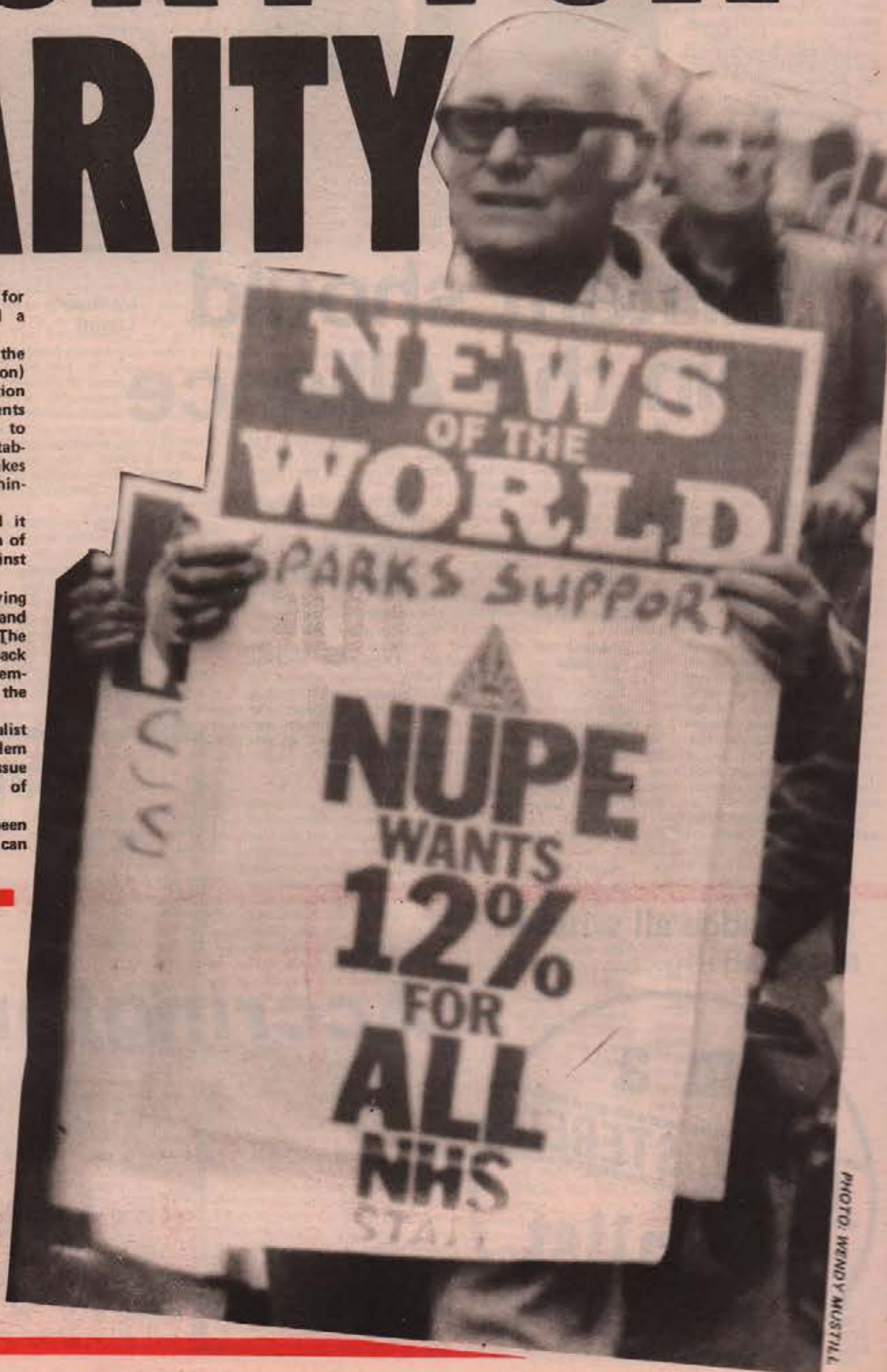


PHOTO: WENDY MUSTILL

The left ducks a challenge

LAST week the Labour Left conceded defeat. It was just one battle in a continuing campaign — but it was a defeat without a struggle.

Nominations closed for the leadership and the deputy leadership, and only one name had been put forward for each position — Michael Foot for leader and Denis Healey for deputy.

Denis Healey is no less committed than he was last year to sabotaging Labour Party policy. He is still pledged not to join any Labour Government that implements unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Rally

Michael Foot is hand in glove with Healey now.

So why no challenge? Some Labour Party activists will want to know. CLPs including Islington South, Islington North and Hornsey had nominated Tony Benn for leader against Michael Foot.

In an open letter to Tony Benn last month, Socialist Organiser wrote:

Challenge Foot for the position of real authority.

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



Tony Benn — a defeat conceded

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

It would be a warning to those who will control the next Labour government that this time they had

better not ignore the movement. It would be a beginning on organising the rank and file to resist the right and soft left in the next Labour government.

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

democracy.

But Tony Benn has ducked the issue. He has conceded that for now the Right and soft left is on top. He has taken a step back towards the old stand of the Left — good losers rather than winners.

Let's make sure it's not the start of a general shift that way by the whole Left.

THE urgent need to campaign in the unions for a commitment by union leaderships and conference delegations to overturn the NEC proposals and defeat the APEX resolution supporting them was emphasised by two decisions taken at the ASTMS executive last weekend.

It voted 14-5 against a resolution that the conference delegation should be recommended to oppose the NEC decision on the register; and 17-3 against a resolution "deploring" the action against Militant.

Clearly the decisions will now put real pressure on the ASTMS Conference delegation, although they are not mandatory and there have been cases in the past where the delegation has overturned an EC recommendation.

Branches and committees should send in resolutions opposing the EC decisions.

PHOTO: JOHN HARRIS

Militant should join the Alliance

by Mick Liggins

THE MESSAGE spelled out by Militant at the YS summer camp as far as the witch-hunt is concerned is that they intend to go it alone. The most worrying thing about the camp was the sectarianism of the majority of the Militant supporters towards other left groupings in the Labour Party.

In the debate on the witch-hunt we saw new Militant supporters declaring that they 'would never work with sectarians' (sic), and being cheered on by more experienced supporters. This attitude has not come out of thin air; it has come, discreetly, from leading Militant spokespeople.

Not so discreet was the statement by Laurence

Coates at the YS conference a few months ago, when he said of groups like the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and the Rank and File Mobilising Committee: "We don't need these people". He was replying to a resolution from Wallasey YS which called for a revamped RFMC to fight the witch-hunt.

Join

Class Fighter and Socialist Organiser supporters at the camp argued that Militant should join with others on the left fighting the witch-hunt through the Unregistered Alliance.

We say the Left should work together. That does

not mean that Militant or any other tendency on the Left will have to bury their policies.

Working together means organising such things as public meetings, working out tactics for Labour Party conference, grouping the constituencies that are not prepared to go along with the register, and campaigning throughout the labour movement to defend the YS. Organising separate public meetings against the witch-hunt in addition is of course not excluded, and Socialist Organiser and Class Fighter will do this as well as Militant.

Serious

There is also a serious tactical disagreement that needs to be cleared up. The supporters of Militant (or most of them) are not campaigning for constituencies to refuse cooperation with the register. We would say that the constituencies must refuse — not just one

or two of them; which could result in isolation, but in the same numbers that supported Peter Tatchell's right to be selected.

Militant's 'cautious' line will weaken the whole campaign. All groups on the left must state openly now that we are not going to register and that we will fight to the end against it.

Defeat

Even if Militant decided to register, the Right could easily declare them unacceptable — and they would be in a position of strength as Militant would have already gone some way towards accepting defeat.

Comrades from Militant should join with the Unregistered Alliance, maintain their political independence, and join in an effective fight by the Left to bury the witch-hunt.

Labour witch-hunt



September 11 — a chance to organise

by John Bloxam

Labour movement conference: September 11
Fight the Tories, not the Socialists!

At Wembley Conference Centre, London

All bona fide labour movement organisations are entitled to send delegates (maximum 5 per organisation), and are invited to sponsor the conference. Credentials fee £1 per delegate.

Credentials from Tony Saunois, 23 Ironside House, Homerton Road, London E9 5PW.
Cheques payable to Labour Movement Conference Fund

THE 'Labour Movement Conference' — "Fight the Tories, not the Socialists" — on Saturday September 11 could be the major national rallying point against the right's intended purge in the run-up to this year's Party Conference in Blackpool.

If the Left can fill the 2,500 capacity Wembley Conference Centre with delegates from the labour movement, we will make it a massive demonstration of rejection of the witch-hunt.

But we need to do more than just fill the seats. If the Conference — initiated by Militant — turns out to be just a large spectacle, a rally with speeches to the converted, then we'll have missed a chance.

The basis exists for organising resistance to the witch-hunt. According to the conference organisers, "well over 200 CLPs have opposed... (this witch-hunt) ... along with hundreds of trade union branches and shop stewards' committees".

Most groups in the Party have so far refused to register. Even the LCC (England), initially favourable to the NEC decision, has refused to register, for now at least.

But this decision came more from the pressure of opposition, including threats of disaffiliation, than any new-found sense of principle among the majority of the Executive.

What the Conference organisers intend is, at this stage, not clear. They state simply that: "The Conference is being convened to oppose the witch-hunt and launch a campaign to 'Fight the Tories not the Socialists'".

Talking to SO, the organisers indicated that a statement will be presented to the Conference. It will be circulated, probably next week, with a Conference agenda and credentials.

We asked the organisers whether resolutions would be allowed from delegating organisations, but we have had no clear yes or no.

The issue of resolutions and amendments at the

Conference is extremely important. The possibility of having a full discussion, putting forward additional or alternative proposals, and taking clear decisions, will determine how far the Conference will play a role in organising the opposition.

The Conference will not play such a role if it turns out to be a cross between a Militant Rally and an LCDTU organised 'conference', heavily stage-managed around a previously fixed and completely unalterable statement that is 'presented' for 'approval'.

The call for a democratically organised conference, with the possibility of discussing different proposals and taking decisions on action, should be made to the Conference Organising Committee (address below) as soon as possible from delegating organisations. They should also send off any resolutions they wish to see discussed.

In addition to deciding to call for a democratically organised Conference, the last meeting of the Unregistered Alliance also urged delegating organisations to submit resolutions along the following lines.

That the Conference should express:

*Total opposition to the NEC decision, the compulsory register of groups, (the new proscribed list), and any disciplinary action arising out of it.

*Full support for refusal to cooperate with any inquiries into groups and organisations in the Party.

*Full support for those groups and organisations who have refused to 'register'.

*Full support for those CLPs who have already indicated that they will refuse to discipline or expel any member for any reason arising out of the NEC Report on the Militant Tendency.

*Support for the Conference of Constituency Parties Against the Witch-hunt (Saturday 30 October).

Co-ordinating meeting of Labour Parties Against the Witch-hunt on Saturday 4 September at 2.00pm at County Hall, Westminster SE1.

UNREGISTERED ALLIANCE. Next meeting, Thursday September 2 at 7.30pm in County Hall, London. Contact: 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.

The badge all witches are wearing.....



25p each, plus 12p for postage. (Orders of more than 10 post free). From Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Accrington right routed

A SHOW of solidarity by the left wing of Accrington Constituency Labour Party prevented an attempt by the right to shelve three resolutions opposing witch-hunting in the Labour Party.

At a meeting on August 11, the left wing of the party, including the Socialist Organiser support-

ers, pointed out the functions of the official delegate meeting, the right's anti-socialist manoeuvring was exposed and the meeting ended a debate on the

Eventually

would be automatically defeated. When the left, including Socialist Organiser support-

ers, pointed out the functions of the official delegate meeting, the right's anti-socialist manoeuvring was exposed and the meeting ended a debate on the

hunts in the Labour Party. A composite of the resolutions is as follows: "Accrington CLP considers that there should be no witch-hunt against the Militant and other groups

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hunts in the Labour Party. A composite of the resolutions is as follows: "Accrington CLP considers that there should be no witch-hunt against the Militant and other groups

tendency, but they would insist that criticism of Militant should be by argument and democratic discussion.

Reject

criticism of the tendency becomes a crime punishable by expulsion and ensures totalitarianism which any democratic socialist should

Accrington SO supporters

An open letter to Tony Benn

MARTIN THOMAS addresses an open letter to TONY BENN about the lessons of the Lebanon

Why does Israel wage war?



MIDDLE EAST

NO DOUBT you share our anger at the horrors of the Israeli invasion of the Lebanon. Last week you gave your signature to a statement in the press — 'Let the Lebanese and Palestinians live'.

You called for 'the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli military forces' and 'the right of self-determination and an independent state in Palestine' for the Palestinian people.

Yet at the same time — so far as we are aware — you remain a supporter of the Labour Friends of Israel. The attitude of the Labour Friends of Israel to the invasion is well expressed in a letter by the group's Director and Assistant Director to Labour Weekly (July 9):

"We totally reject the charge of 'brutal insensitivity' to the plight of present-day Lebanon. For it is not solely as a result of Israel's actions that the Lebanese have for the first time in seven years the chance to throw off PLO and Syrian domination and restore sovereignty to their dismembered territory..."

Stress

They stress "the uniquely democratic nature of Israeli society which exists within a feudal and totalitarian Middle East region". Israel's wars are thus in their view at worst self-defence for the oppressed Jews, at best positively beneficial to surrounding peoples like the Lebanese.

To this view have been sacrificed ten to fifteen thousand dead in the Lebanon invasion, more than 25,000 injured, and some 250,000 to 300,000 homeless.

It is, you might reply,

possible to be a friend of Israel without supporting its every action. Can we not support both Israel and the Palestinians, oppose aggression on both sides, and seek reconciliation?

In truth no such even-handedness is possible, because the situation is not even-handed.

The idea used to be common on the left that Israel was a socialist state. Few claim that any longer. The kibbutzim are marginal to the economy. The state is the closest ally of US imperialism in the region, and an ally of reactionary forces around the world: Central American dictatorships, Argentina, South Africa.

Promote

The Histadrut, the Israeli 'trade union' organisation, was set up as an organisation to promote Jewish labour as against Arab labour. It is more an arm of the state — and the second largest employer in the country — than a trade union. Employers join it alongside workers.

The Israeli Labour Party also is not an independent workers' organisation, even in its social base; rather, its base is the European-origin section of the population, the Histadrut, and the kibbutzim.

Israel is a capitalist state. The Palestine Liberation Organisation also is not a socialist and 100% progressive force. But the difference is that one is the oppressor and the other represents the oppressed.

Israel was established as a Jewish state by driving out the Palestinians. When the state was established, under the sponsorship of the big powers, in 1948, many Palestinian Arabs were massacred, and some 600,000 were made refugees.

Since then Israel has been pitted in permanent hostility to the surrounding Arab states. In successive wars it has expanded its borders, creating more refugees.

The establishment and expansion of Israel has been carried through as if the Palestinians had no rights — almost as if they did not exist. And not by accident. The project of establishing an exclusive Jewish state on land already occupied by another people could be carried through no other way. The atrocities in the Lebanon are one more episode in this history.

Today some 600,000 Palestinian Arabs live in Israel proper — as second-class citizens. About 1.2 million live under Israeli military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, areas overrun by Israel in the 1967 war.

About 500,000 live in Lebanon (or used to), about one million in Jordan, and another 700,000 or so scattered through other Arab countries. Nearly two million of them are registered with the UN as refugees, and about 700,000 live in refugee camps.

Bloody

As well as the attacks on them from Israel, the Palestinians have also faced attacks from the Arab states. In 1970 King Hussein launched a bloody attack on the Palestinians in Jordan. The Palestinians in Jordan have faced attack both from the Lebanese Right and from Syria.

Why are the Palestinians in Lebanon? According to the Labour Friends of Israel, "the PLO have deliberately subjugated Lebanon for the purpose of destroying Israel".



Ten to fifteen thousand dead, 25,000 injured....

The Palestinians are in Lebanon because they were driven out of their own homeland by Israel. Lebanon is important to the Palestinians because it has been the one country where the PLO armed forces could find a base.

Of course the PLO is armed for war against Israel — not nearly so heavily armed as the Israeli stated is for war against them. Yes, the PLO sometimes carries out desperate and indefensible actions — they are in a desperate situation.

The truth is that Israel is deliberately subjugating Lebanon for the purpose of destroying the PLO.

Maxime Rodinson has summed it up like this:

"The conflict therefore appears essentially as the struggle of an indigenous population against the occupation of part of its national territory by foreigners..."

"When a people is subjected to foreign conquest, the moral wound it receives is in no way alleviated by the spiritual tendencies observable within the conquering group, nor by the motives for the conquest or the aspirations they may express..."

Sufferings

"Again, the same applies to the sufferings of the Jews. Those sufferings might, perhaps, justify the aspirations felt by some Jews to form an independent state. The Arabs cannot be made to see this as sufficient reason why such a state should be formed at their expense..."

"In just the same way, the qualities and faults which may be attributed to the Arabs, and the various judgments which might be expressed on their political or social structures, have no bearing on the analysis of the nature of the conflict. It is self-evident that no one has the right to make the lordly judgment that a people or group of peoples has such faults that it deserves to have slices of its territory forcibly taken away..."

Concerned

Rodinson is not anti-Jewish. He is a Jew, concerned for the rights of the Jews, but also concerned for the fact that no nation that oppresses another can itself be free.

Isn't the best course some compromise achieved through the influence of

the big powers? That is what the statement 'Let the Lebanese and Palestinians Live' suggests. It is co-signed by Tory and Liberal MPs, it refers to the United Nations, and the Palestinian 'self-determination' and 'independent state' evidently refer to a 'mini-state'.

Warning

The record of the big powers in the region is a conclusive warning against this perspective.

The region was formerly ruled by the Ottoman (Turkish) empire. After World War 1 the imperialist powers of Britain and France grabbed it and carved it up. It was British imperial power in Palestine which sponsored the beginnings of Zionist colonisation.

Dividing

When Britain and France released their colonial grip in the 1940s, they left a patchwork of frontiers dividing the Arab peoples. In Lebanon the French left sectarian arrangements which helped generate the communal conflict.

The big capitalist powers helped set up Israel, then used it as an ally and weapon against all radical movements in the region — as with the British-French-Israeli assault on Egypt in 1956.

Today the US remonstrates with Begin about his methods, but fully shares his aim of driving the PLO out of Lebanon.

Oppression cannot be smoothed out of existence by compromises among the oppressors. It can only be fought by the oppressed.

In the Middle East, that includes the oppressed Israeli Jewish workers.

Their interests are certainly not identical with those of the Israeli oppressor state — which, contrary to Zionist promises, is not a haven but a death-trap for the Jews.

The aim of a democratic secular state proclaimed by the Palestinians offers a place for the Israeli Jews as equals. It is compatible with (and we would fight for) maximum cultural and communal rights for them.

It excludes a racist Jewish state based on the dispossession (with the aid of the big powers) of the previous population — but it is, we believe, the only way forward for the Israeli Jews, too.

True, the vast majority of the Israeli Jews do not believe that. But the Palestinians are not willing (and why should they be?) to delay a fight for their rights until the Israeli Jews change their minds, or until socialists develop a united Arab/Jewish working class struggle.

Some of them would settle for a 'mini-state' as a lesser evil; but the more militant insist that such a solution is unjust and unworkable.

A just solution will only be achieved by a struggle. And the Palestinians — together with the anti-Zionist opposition inside Israel — are the force struggling against oppression today.

Appeal

The statement 'Let the Lebanese and Palestinians Live' was addressed to the governments of Europe and the UN Security Council. Wouldn't the struggle against oppression be better served by an appeal to the British and international labour movement to black the Israeli war machine?

Torture in occupied Lebanon

Report from Socialist Organiser's correspondent in Haifa

THE worst fears about the fate of the Palestinians in Israeli-occupied Lebanon have now been authoritatively confirmed, even by Israeli sources.

Lieutenant-Colonel Dov Yirmiya, who served in the military administration of southern Lebanon, has disclosed that in a meeting between the military government's officers and the Israeli minister responsible for the "reconstruction" of the area, they were explicitly ordered to "push the Palestinians eastward, and not let them come back."

The Palestinian population of the region was some 200,000 women, children and old people, all the younger men had either fled or were killed or arrested.

After the occupation the camps are being systematically razed to the ground, and the people are prevented from putting up tents (even though there are plenty of tents, some contributed by an Arab millionaire).

Some 10,000 Palestinians who found refuge in half-built houses and shops in Sidon, getting water and some help from the local population, were expelled in a special "operation".

From the concentration camps, further news of torture arrives. One Israeli officer reported "three stage" torture for prisoners: electricity, nails and cold water with little cells for each treatment, organised on the "line" system.

Nominated heads of groups of prisoners are forced to beat their mates with a heavy stick. One who the guards said "didn't beat hard enough" was taken by

them and beaten till his bones were broken.

No wonder many Palestinians prefer fighting to the death in Beirut to the fate threatening hundreds of thousands of them if the Israelis get in.

Mass arrests, torture and concentration camps also face the Lebanese suspected by the Israeli military government of belonging to left parties. The occupation brand them all as "terrorists" and disclose no numbers, but it has already been said that "the second largest component" in the concentration camps are Shi'a — mostly the poor villagers of the south.

A video movie telling the story of a Druze family is now circulating the Druze villages inside Israel. One day the Falangists were looking for the husband and didn't find him. At night they came back and killed his wife and little daughter, wounding another child.

The Druze were generally better protected, as there are Palestinian Druze in the Israeli army, and the military government wants to keep its divide and rule policy. Now there are protest meetings in the Druze communities in Palestine, and a senior Druze officer who had served as Governor in Lebanon was removed.



SPAIN: 2. The economy

FROM MIRACLE TO MORASS

Last week Henry Phillips described the disarray of Spain's bourgeois parties and the rise of the PSOE (Socialist Party). This week: the economy.

NEITHER the snowballing crisis of the bourgeois parties nor the role of the PSOE and the collapse of the CP can be fully understood without reference to the profound and seemingly unstoppable worsening of the Spanish economy which has occurred in the last few years.

If those tears of blood wept by the Virgin of San Juan de Dios in Granada were a new miracle, it is evident today that an old one has now passed beyond recall — the famous Spanish economic miracle.

At the time of the Civil War in the late 1930s, Spain's economy was still very backward in relation to the rest of Europe. Two areas, Euzkadi (the Basque country) and Catalonia, had undergone some industrialisation. But the economy of most of the country was still based on semi-feudal agriculture.

The first 15 years of Franco's dictatorship was an economic as well as a political dark age for Spain. The few industries declined, wages were cut in half and the country stagnated in almost complete isolation from the rest of the capitalist world.

Bloom

Then suddenly in the mid-1950s this seemingly barren plant began to bloom. Spain's economy grew and industrialised at an astonishing rate.

Peasants and landless labourers left the land to migrate to new jobs in the towns or in the more developed countries of the rest of Europe.

A change in Franco's policies led to a huge inflow of foreign investment as well as a new upsurge of Spanish investment in response to new opportunities for quick profit. A fast rise in imports was

paid for by the growth of manufactured exports and the phenomenal rise of tourist spending. In the 1960s production grew at over 7% a year, a rate exceeded only by Japan.

Ironically, the economic miracle died at about the same time as the dictator.

Boomerang

Since the mid-1970s, Spain has not only shared in the general crisis of the world capitalist economies, it has fared a good deal worse. The factors which had previously been Spain's special advantages have boomeranged and become special disadvantages.

In the 1950s and 1960s and early 1970s, labour

emigration was a safety valve needed even in an economy growing as rapidly as Spain. Now the crisis in the rest of Europe causes Spanish workers to be repatriated. So labour immigration became an extra source of pressure in a declining economy.

During the boom, Spain benefitted from the fact that tourism was one of the most rapidly growing areas of spending in Europe. Now, with the recession, tourism is one of the worst hit sectors of all.

Spain's miracle included a massive construction boom associated with urbanisation and tourism. That too has collapsed, causing an exceptionally high concentration of business failures and unemployment in that sector.

Some idea of the severity of the Spanish crisis can be seen from the figures for firms taking 'expedientes de crisis' — closures and sackings which the law protecting unemployment allows when firms are in financial straits.

Redundancies

In 1973 about 2,000 firms took such measures and they affected 75,000 workers. In 1979 (the latest year with complete figures available) 14,000 firms and 334,000 workers were involved (3% of the labour force). Everything suggests that the figures are much higher today.

Redundancies fuel unemployment from one side while the return of immigrants and the arrival of young people onto the labour market fuels it from the other.

The combined result has been a rapidly rising unemployment rate as a whole and an almost unbeliev-

ably rising level of jobless youth.

The overall Spanish rate of unemployment is now over 15%, the highest in Europe — over 2 million of a workforce of 11 million.

This is itself an underestimate since the size of the total labour force on which the figure is based has fallen in recent years despite population growth. 1½ million people have statistically 'disappeared' from the workforce since 1976.

Jobs

That means many people are giving up even half-heartedly looking for jobs since there are none available.

This is, of course, especially true of women

and so the official employment statistics disguise the extent to which women are being hit by the recession.

Even at the peak of the boom only 25% of women were regarded as participating in the labour force while now the figure is reduced to 20% (compared with 35% in Britain).

And even with this withdrawal from the statistical labour force adult women's unemployment is about one quarter higher than for men.

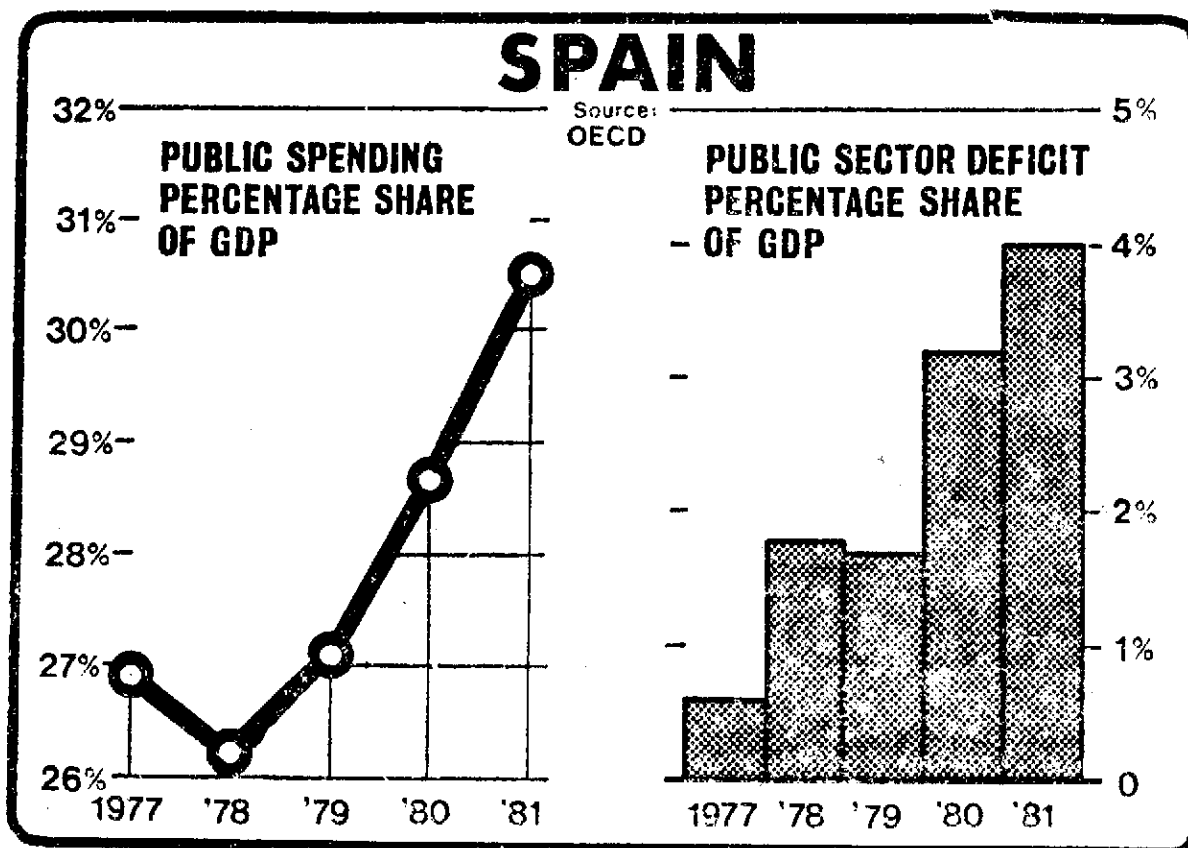
In reality the real overall unemployment rate in Spain today is almost certainly over 20%.

These shocking figures, however, pale in comparison with youth unemployment. In 1981 when the national unemployment rate was 14% the level for

teenagers (15-19) was 43%.

Today, probably three teenagers out of four are without work. And what is more, they have no prospect of getting work in the foreseeable future. Economic projections show that the rate of growth to make a significant dent in the unemployment figures are way beyond the rates previously hailed as miraculous. They must be deemed beyond the powers even of the Virgin of San Juan de Dios.

Spain has been relatively steady at about 14% — a few percentage points in practice above official predictions. That fact is a means of reducing real wages by getting the unions to accept a national wage norm to coincide with the predicted level of inflation. Union leaders forced workers a year ago into a national social contract which has kept wage rises down to under 11%. The other, forgotten clause of the social contract



Youth unemployment in Spain

Age group	Unemployment rate (%)					
	Total		Male		Female	
	1974	1981	1974	1981	1974	1981
14-19	9.3	43.4	9.7	41.7	8.7	45.7
20-24	4.3	28.3	4.5	28.3	4.1	28.4
All ages	2.9	14.3	2.8	13.7	3.2	16.0

Is there then a way out? So far the UCD government has taken the same kind of feeble steps to create artificial jobs as other capitalist states have taken. Youth unemployment schemes have been derisively small.

The state has also propped up firms which would otherwise have collapsed. Partly as a result of this the Spanish budget deficit is currently running at over 4% of the national product. There is nothing very unusual about that since Italy's is twice that level. What is unusual is that over 80% of Spain's deficit is financed not by borrowing on the money market but by borrowing from the Bank of Spain — that is by just printing the money. Even in times of slump this method of finance has a tendency to be associated with rising inflation.

Recently inflation in

committed the government to create 350,000 new jobs. In fact that is about the annual rate at which jobs are being destroyed.

There are now pressures, including accelerating devaluation of the peseta which make faster inflation seem likely and which seem destined to force the state deficit to soar further out of control as well as drain the foreign exchange reserves.

The deplorable economic situation is, of course, one of the reasons why the UCD has lost so much popularity and why it cannot hope to win another general election.

Does Spain have a coherent alternative economic strategy? The answer to that requires an examination of the workers' organisations especially the supposed victors of the forthcoming elections, the PSOE. These are the subjects of a subsequent article.

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Union leaders forced workers into a 'social contract'

World News

Solidarność is still one million

What do you know about the recent demonstrations in Poland?

About the demonstrations that are taking place now I know as much as you do until the underground bulletins reach us from Poland, which takes about two weeks.

One point worth noting however is that usually, Solidarity sources put the numbers of people participating in demonstrations ten times as much as the figures reported in the Western media.

The only explanation I can give for that is the fact that all Western correspondents have been kept in Warsaw since December, with only a few in Gdansk so that 95% of the country is cut off from the reporters.

How do you think the regime will react?

I think the regime plans to crack down. We are very worried about that because with all the anger and frustration, especially among young people, we are afraid that they may take actions which will be simply provoked.

Officially Solidarity is not disbanded. Officially it is suspended. We are afraid that the government will use it as an opportunity to totally disband Solidarity.

That will enable the government to change the status of the internees into prisoners, because then they will be members of an illegal organisation.



'Women are the most militant because it is they who stand in the queues....'

I said in January that the end of August and the beginning of September will be a crucial period, and I say it again now. The situation that will prevail at the end of September will prevail for the next three to five years.

Someone who came recently from Poland told me that the most militant people are the women because they are the ones who stand in the queues, and he said it is quite visible

if you look at the demonstrations, that they are mostly women.

The problem for the government is productivity. It was dropping all the time but now it is non-existent. My recent visitor from Poland is an English businessman of Polish origin who goes almost every other month to Poland and he told me that nobody works in the country and they see no reason to work because they are not working for themselves - they are working for the oppressive government which they are opposed to.

We believe that is the ultimate form of resistance when people refuse to co-operate with the government. Even though it isn't very visible, I believe that this will affect the situation in Poland in the long run much more than street demonstrations.

Do you have any impression of how strong Solidarnosc is in Poland today?

To be honest, no. It is something different when you have a mass organisation, and Solidarity was really ten million people. We counted almost every

New demonstrations are planned in Poland on August 31, the second anniversary of the Gdansk agreements. The anniversary of the beginning of the Lenin shipyard strike - August 13 - was marked by demonstrations in Gdansk, Wroclaw and Cracow. According to the press there were 10,000 on the streets in Gdansk. All the demonstrations were attacked by police.

On Monday 16th a demonstration of 'several hundred' in Warsaw was dispersed by police, and police cordons were stationed outside the Lenin shipyard.

person before the national conference of Solidarity because it was a question of how many delegates each region was entitled to.

You cannot have a ten million member underground organisation. And we thought there may be no more than 10% left, which still makes a million people in the underground.

My businessman contact had visited Gdansk and Poznan and spoke to people there, including directors and managers who reckoned that no more than 20% left Solidarity. I was quite amazed to hear it. I think he is rather optimistic.

Do you have any picture to what extent the protests - whatever form they take - are organised and to what extent they are spontaneous?

Yes. A fortnight after they happen we always get the bulletins and information. Firstly, the 13th of each month is always commemorated with strikes, work stoppages, silent protest, laying of flowers at Wujek mine where the miners were killed on 16 December so the 16th also is commemorated in the factories, on the streets, in

the schools - where the school students wear black bands.

As far as I can see the most effective way of oppressing society by a totalitarian regime is by cutting its link with information. And this is the area where the regime was least successful.

An enormous number of underground bulletins, newspapers appeared. In one city the local Solidarity bulletin has a daily circulation twice that of the Party paper.

Yet to be caught with a copy of this bulletin is enough to land you in jail for three years!

A society that is able to organise itself and maintain links between cells, between factory organisations, between regions is very important, especially if the outcome of the current struggle is the disbandment of Solidarity.

It is not a fight for days or a fight for months. We are quite prepared to fight for years because we are not going for half measures - that must be made very, very clear. We are not going for some corrections of the system. That is long gone. The system has had

5,000 marched in Szczecin on August 10 in a funeral procession for the son and daughter-in-law of Solidarnosc leader Marian Jurczyk. (They had committed suicide). And the biggest demonstration was on August 6, when thousands in the streets of Warsaw used the event of a religious pilgrimage to make (despite all the Church's efforts to prevent this) a pro-Solidarnosc demonstration.

Marek Garztecki of the Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group in Britain believes that the next few weeks could be very important in Poland. He explained why.

DEMONSTRATE

A MASS demonstration has been called to mark the second anniversary of Solidarity's birth. The demonstration, on Tuesday August 31, will begin with a rally at Speakers' Corner at 6pm, followed by a march to the Polish Embassy and a vigil from 8pm to 12 midnight.

Similar marches and rallies are planned in several other capital cities, including Stockholm and Paris. All these protests are aimed to show solidarity with those who will be demonstrating in Poland on that day.

The London demonstra-

tion is called jointly by the Solidarity Trade Union Working Group in the UK, the Polish Solidarity Campaign, British Solidarity with Poland Campaign, Solidarity with Solidarity and the Federation of Poles in Great Britain.

Further information can be obtained from:

Wiktor Moszczynski at the PSC: 01-748 3085 (daytime and evenings).

Marek Garztecki at the Solidarity Trade Union Working Group: 01-837 9464 (day).

Naomi Hyamson at the PSC: 01-960 7250 (evenings)

AUG 31

more than enough chance to correct itself during Solidarity's legal existence.

weaken them further.

Personally, I would prefer these demonstrations not to take place. I would prefer to wait until the end of the year when cracks begin to appear in the military establishment. When that happens, it will be easier in a more revolutionary situation to have a part of the army with us.

Without that we don't stand a chance of winning. We especially need the conscripts on our side. Even if they won't shoot in the other direction, at least we don't want them shooting at us.

Blacking

We have argued for trade unionists to support Solidarnosc by blacking particular contracts for the regime in Poland with the idea of making it very clear that we see defence of Solidarnosc as a working class issue. We contrast that with what Thatcher and Reagan say in favour of Solidarnosc although, of course they are not prepared to do anything.

What we would like to distinguish between is words and deeds. I am sure the people of Poland can distinguish between their real friends and those who are using Solidarity as part of their power games.

Snouts in the trough

ITALY'S prime minister Giovanni Spadolini is trying to put together a new government following the collapse of his previous administration on August 6.

The administration had lasted 13 months, above average for post-war Italian governments. Although Spadolini is a member of the tiny Republican Party, his ministers came mainly from the Christian Democracy (CD), Italy's biggest bourgeois party, and the Socialist Party (SP).

The fall of the government was provoked by the SP. A law proposed by the SP minister of finance against tax evasion in the oil industry was rejected in a Parliamentary secret ballot. The SP said it was because of CD members connected with the tax evaders voting against their own party line under cover of secrecy, and the SP ministers resigned from the government.

The SP is the only major party that wants early elections. Under the leadership of Bettino Craxi, the SP has developed a very right wing profile. With the CD hit by repeated scandals, the SP has posed as a stable, moderate alternative to it as bourgeois governing party. It has tried (successfully) to win middle class votes from the CD.

Some bosses also want an election. De Benedetti of Olivetti wants an immediate election, Agnelli of Fiat wants one in the spring.

The Communist Party, however, is keen to keep



CP leader Berlinguer

Spadolini in - for its main aim, as for many years past, is to break the bourgeois veto on CP participation in the government. This veto - putting one of Italy's biggest parties permanently in opposition - is (in combination with the electoral system) what makes Italian governments so unstable.

Some sections of the bourgeoisie are therefore becoming less hostile to CP participation - and Spadolini represents those sections. The SP, in contrast, is very hostile to the CP.

The CP has therefore pledged support to a new Spadolini government on condition that it is made up of non-party 'technocrats'.

The Italian working class finds both the parties based on it following lines based on naked bourgeois careerism.



Marek Garztecki speaking at the Socialist Organiser/London Labour Briefing Poland solidarity march earlier this year

Solidarność



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SEXUAL HARASSMENT FROM JOKES TO TERROR

Deborah Knight (a member of GLC NALGO and delegate from Brent East CLP women's section) reports on a conference held against sexual harassment at work.

THE NCCL (National Council for Civil Liberties) women-only conference on 'Sexual Harassment at Work' which was held at County Hall, London, on June 26 was the first of its kind in Britain.

The term 'sexual harassment' originated in North America, where it has long been a feminist issue. In Canada it is recognised as the single biggest health hazard for women at work.

But the British trade union movement has long neglected to accept sexual harassment as a very real problem for many working women.

NALGO, a white collar union with a 51% female membership, has recently accepted that sexual harassment is a trade union issue and that its female members have a right to protection from men who practice it.

This can vary from the simply irritating - leers and 'jokes' - to the nerve-racking and even terrifying ordeal of (the threat of) rape, molestation or moral blackmail via the power structure of the workplace.

White collar sections of other unions seem set to follow NALGO's example but there is still a lot of resistance from some male trade unionists.

Tess Woodcraft from NALGO told us that in many workplaces male stewards have refused to distribute questionnaires to women workers, and some of our less enlightened 'brothers' have been seen sporting badges at Annual Conferences bearing the message 'Please harass me, I'm only here for the week'.

It is clear that although we must use the trade union structure to combat sexism and sexual harassment, we cannot rely on the support of a number of our male 'comrades'. Only through raising our voices in the movement and at conferences can we force this crucial issue to become normal policy.

Along with groups such as Women Against Violence Against Women, Rape Crisis and politically organised women's groups, women in the Labour and trade union movements have forced issues such as abortion, time off work for mothers to nurse sick children, decent terms of maternity leave and

sexual violence (such a cross-section of issues!) into both the public and trade union arenas. The same must happen with sexual harassment if women workers are to enjoy the same sense of freedom to get on with their jobs unhindered by sexual advances of the unwelcome kind as men do.

Sexual harassment is defined in the NCCL booklet ('Sexual Harassment at Work' by Ann Sedley and Melissa Benn), published to coincide with the conference, as "repeated and unwanted sexual advances". These can range from nude calendars and pin-ups, through the whole gamut of staring, suggestions, sexy 'jokes', to touching, heavy and persistent advances, and rape.

Contempt

Sexual harassment is a form of power expression and the contempt that many men feel, at heart, for women. Proof of this is that harassment is not confined to areas where the man/men are in a superior position at work to the woman/women.

Female lecturers have experienced it from male students, women in executive positions from men lower in the work hierarchy.

Mary Miles of AUEW TASS stressed the need to by-pass male-dominated committees wherever possible by organising all-women sub-committees in trade union branches and to organise all-women meetings in workplaces where women may be suffering sexual harassment without knowing it even has a name. It should not be a feature of working life that has to be faced with resignation and bottled-up resentment.

Judges

On the legal side Tess Gill, a trade union lawyer, pointed out that if a woman leaves her job because of harassment it can be called Constructive Dismissal; if she is sacked for resisting she can bring it before a Tribunal as unfair dismissal. However, the case must be proved before the Tribunal and this can be an insurmountable obstacle in some cases as the Sex Discrimination Act can be interpreted as judges see fit.

In the USA some women

have lost cases because the defence argued that they were trying to use the law to defend their *sexuality* rather than their *sex*!

Questionnaires were sent out to a cross-section of women workers which proved that men harassed women of all ages, from 14 to 82, and that it was by no means restricted to women who could be considered stereotypically good-looking or sexy.

The last speaker came from Leeds Trade Union Resource Centre and she emphasised the need to organise women-only meetings about sexual harassment

and to make it a broad women's issue to counter the media's attempts to seize on individual spokeswomen and portray them as frustrated women's libber killjoys.

Already we have seen articles in the gutter press tabloids about "Office Romeos Feel the Pinch", in offensive attempts to dilute and trivialise the impact of the current campaign and present these obnoxious men as glamorous hot-blooded rakes.

The second half of the conference, following speakers from both the platform and the floor, was for me the most enjoyable. We split into

several groups and had block workshops in which we dealt with four topics: What is sexual harassment? What is the difference between sexual harassment and sexism generally? What can trade unions do about it? And, most importantly in the long-term, what can women in non-unionised workplaces do to protect themselves?

In the more relaxed atmosphere of workshops, women delegates were able to discuss these questions with reference to personal experience and observations.

The feeling of solidarity was complete and the

massive task of forcing men both within the trade union movement and outside it to treat women colleagues as sexual equals seemed less formidable.

To summarise, all the women present agreed that any form of reference to sexuality, by word, look or action, whenever it is not welcomed or initiated by the woman (i.e. we accept that women do wish to have relationships with colleagues sometimes) must be construed as sexual harassment.

It is a part of sexism in the general sense, but a very specific area of oppression which can have many repercussions such as secondary illness, nervous problems, interrupted career, depressing aggravation and fear.

Furthermore sexual harassment can be a form of patronage and blackmail, particularly in the case of younger, more vulnerable women who may be susceptible to the flattery of their boss and the lure of favouritism and promotion.

On the third question no-one was in any doubt that women who are active in their unions should organise meetings with speakers and show films, press for trade union recognition of the campaign and distribute literature where possible.

On the question of non-union workplaces, the mood was less optimistic. It is clear that most of our male trade union leaders are not terribly interested in the huge workforce of women who work in non-unionised jobs and have no recourse to official trade union means of protection. These are the women who are most vulnerable, and the only way in which they can obtain some measure of support and protection is by (hopefully) encouraging trade union

organisation among the more potentially militant in their ranks and by making sexual harassment as broad a women's issue as abortion has become.

Our sisters in non-unionised jobs are already more exploited, by and large, and it is the duty of all organised feminists to press home the message that there is a large body of women ready to give support, that one needn't have been raped or seriously assaulted to contact Rape Crisis or Women Against Violence Against Women and that they should talk to other women in their workplaces to see if (and this is usually the case) the harasser has bothered other women in the same way.

It is of paramount importance that women are not intimidated into remaining silent, nor that they should feel in any way responsible for "leading him on" when they have done no more than fail to object loudly at the time the harassment began.

It is absolutely vital that all women should be aware of the fact that their body is their own, and sexuality is ultimately a matter of personal choice and dignity. Obligation, fear of the sack or demotion and fear of the harasser should be seen as weapons by which some men oppress us at work.

Before we can achieve complete equality for all our sisters, much more of the male-dominated trade union and labour movement must be forced into accepting sexual harassment as a crucial feature of male power games and the sexual oppression of women which still pervades the organisations which are supposed to give us protection and a modicum of equality.



Round-up: jobs, fares, schools

OUT of 874 public bodies surveyed recently by the Equal Opportunities Commission, there were no women at all on 304. The percentage of women members on the various committees varied from ministry to ministry, but was generally around 20%.

The EOC is full of bureaucratic good ideas to increase the number of women. But as long as the system of running the state through hundreds of committees of upper class worthies continues, it is difficult to imagine much good result.

The London fare rises imposed by the Law Lords hit practically everyone, but it turns out that they hit women harder.

Just over half of London women with full-time jobs go to work on public transport, but only 35% of the men do. Half the women in full-time jobs earned less than £100 a week (1981 figures), while only 15% of the men did.

One London woman in four is 'head of a household'.

One example of how women get lower pay and worse

jobs, even when there is formal equality, comes from London again.

Among ILEA primary school teachers, 80% are women. But only 54% of primary school head teachers are women - despite the fact that women teachers were on average just as qualified as men.

Nationwide, average earnings for women teachers were £5,726 and for men £6,609 (1980 figures).

The level of general emancipation can be gauged by the position of women, wrote Marx and Engels, echoing Fourier.

Within capitalism that principle translates into the rule that the more prosperous and fully developed the capitalist society, the higher the proportion of women in waged work (or recorded as seeking waged work).

The variations, as a recent report shows, are quite large even among relatively advanced capitalist countries. In Denmark, 45% of women are in waged work or recorded as seeking it; in the US, 40%; in Ireland 18% and in Spain 20%.

Britain ranks relatively high at 35%.



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.

How union action beat anti-union law



PHOTO: JOHN HARRIS

Jeremy Corbyn — a NUPE official and also Labour prospective parliamentary candidate for Islington North — was one of those centrally involved in organising the demonstration of support for Sean Geraghty at the hearing last Friday. He told Socialist Organiser about it.

"FROM Wednesday the NUPE divisional council mobilised as quickly as we could for a march from St Barts to the Law Courts, to support Sean Geraghty. There wasn't a meeting. There was never any question about us supporting him".

The divisional council had a banner specially made for the demonstration — 'Would you jail someone for supporting nurses?' — and there were thousands there on the day, despite the details of the hearing constantly being changed. (Originally it was said to be at the Law Courts at 10am, eventually it was 2pm in Fetter Lane).

The electricians' strike gave a big boost to the health workers — "it lifted the dispute off the floor. On Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, people were

much more confident than they had been after the ASLEF sell-out".

The solidarity was quickly returned. "At St Mary's Hospital W2 they had a joint shop stewards meeting at 6am on the Wednesday and went straight down to Fleet Street to express their support. A lot of other hospital workers went down to Fleet Street too".

Responding to the feeling from the membership, NUPE general secretary Rodney Bickerstaffe went on radio Wednesday morning to support the electricians' action. It became clear that Albert Spanswick's call to abandon the action — supposedly a call on behalf of all health workers — was made with no authority.

On the Friday there were delegations there from Scotland, from Wales, from Manchester, from Leicester, Coventry, Oxford, and other areas.

Jeremy Corbyn concludes: "The most important thing now is to step up the dispute as rapidly as possible by gaining support action from other industries, and to force the TUC Health Services Committee to call all-out action. The health workers are in the forefront of the fight against the Tory government".

New threat from Tebbit

ACCORDING to the Financial Times (Monday 16th), TUC officials reckon that a House of Lords amendment to the Tebbit law will have devastating effects.

The amendment removes a clause saying that workers taking industrial action cannot be sued for damages simply on the grounds that the action 'interferes' with someone's business. The exact effect is dubious, but, depending on judges' interpretations, it could take us

back to before 1906 and virtually abolish the right to strike.

The Department of Employment told the Financial Times that this was "a complete misinterpretation" and the amendment concerned only "a dusty corner of the law". The problem is that all sorts of things have been dragged out of "dusty corners of the law" by judges at one time or another to hit the unions.

The TUC assessment is in a confidential paper apparently leaked to the Financial Times. Trade unionists will have several questions to ask:

1. Why is the paper 'confidential'? If the threat is so serious, then it should be publicised widely.
2. Why is the TUC still doing nothing about the Tebbit law except making speeches?
3. Why did the TUC do nothing to support Sean

Geraghty? We know about the TUC right wing, but what happened to all the left trade union leaders who had been making big speeches about how they would call strike action if a single trade unionist were jailed?

4. Why doesn't the TUC break off links with the Tories and the bosses?

5. Why doesn't the TUC call a one-day general strike against the Tebbit law, as the first step towards the all-out action necessary to defeat it?

Here to stay! Here to fight!

LAST Saturday, August 14, around 500 people marched in Sheffield against the arrest of local restaurant owner Ahmed Khan.

His restaurant has suffered constant attacks from racists.

In the latest, "customers", obviously out to cause trouble, refused to pay the bill and proceeded to attack Ahmed Khan.

He defended himself and was arrested by South Yorkshire police.

The demonstration, focussing on his case, became a demo against racial discrimination and harassment in general, with speakers from the Asian Youth Movement, Asian leaders and

an Asian doctor. A speaker from the local hospital workers also gave solidarity.

Asian speakers said that if negotiations with the police weren't successful, they would use arms to defend their communities against further oppressive laws.

An anxiety about the further racist drift in the Tory Party was evident and the slogans chanted by most Asian and black youth were "Here to stay, here to fight" and "Black and white unite and fight".

They stressed that the campaign against Ahmed Khan's arrest would carry on — and they meant it.

SO info

S.O. INFORMATION
THE next delegate meeting of the Socialist Organiser Alliance will be held on Saturday September 4 in UMIST Students' Union, Manchester, 11 — 4.30pm.

*Party Conference, Blackpool September 26 to October 1.

All SO supporters who are going to Party Conference should contact Nik Barstow (41, Ellington St., London N7, 01-607-5268) as soon as possible.

*SO is directly involved in two fringe meetings during the Party conference.

Monday September 27.

Joint SCLV and TU & LP Democracy Campaign meeting, sponsored by Llanwrn Steel Action Group. Showing of the film 'A Question of Leadership', followed by discussion including: Ken Loach; Ray Davies; Alan Thorne; Reg Race; Peter Tatchell; Anna Lunts; Andrea Campbell. The Lobster Pot Restaurant, Market St., 5.30pm.

Thursday September 30.

'What Socialist Organiser Stands For'. Chair: Wendy Mustill. Speakers: Gerry Byrne; Anna Lunts; Andrea Campbell; Winnie Murphy. Chamber of Trade, 53 Queen Street, 5.30pm.

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Patrick Spilling



THE KRAY brothers' first public appearance in 13 years was something of a media event.

Actress Diana Dors was at their mother's funeral. So was Barbara Winter, and the former boxer Terry Downes.

The Daily Express had six photographers there. The Sun had three. Other papers made do with no more than two.

Their front pages were filled with pictures of the twins, showing the contrast between the hard-faced gangsters of the 1960s and the tired men, older than their years, who left their security prison to see their mother buried.

In a week when the remains of West Beirut were being torn apart again, and when the papers themselves were exacting their revenge on Sean Geraghty, who had been hauled into the High Court, it was an odd, anachronistic subject for the papers to choose as their main feature.

It was as if the press was nostalgic for the days when the cardboard characters they described in their pages seemed to have their reflection in real life.

It gave scope for endless moralising. The Daily Express said: "Odd how the most vicious humans always have a tremendous capacity for family love. If only they had realised that the greatest compliment they could have paid their mother was to stay away from the church".

The Sun said: "For Violet Kray's mourners it was a moving service they will never forget. For the rest of us it was a sickening exercise in vulgarity. A million rose petals could never hide the scent of perversion, murder and cruelty that surrounded the brothers". That is exactly the reason why the funeral filled the first three pages of that newspaper.

Claimed

The Daily Star, whose reporter claimed to have been "invited" to the funeral, said: "Nobody who saw these pale, somehow insignificant, men could doubt that the Kray twins have been utterly destroyed as forces for evil. But we should remember that they committed terrible crimes.

The debt they owe is not yet honoured".

The Daily Mirror sent their social diarist Paul Callan to cover the funeral, which he described as "an emotional lap of honour for the Kray twins".

The Krays were responsible for a number of deaths. They ruled their gang through fear and intimidation. They probably even voted Tory, since they had taken Thatcherite self-help to its logical conclusion.

Misery

But in terms of misery they are poor relations.

Their exploits with hammers, nails and guns are puny when put next to the attempted murder of an entire people, such as that carried out by Begin and his cabinet.

Yet even the harshest critic of Begin and Sharon in the pages of the bourgeois press would not compare them to the Krays.

The Times, in the strongest condemnation of the massacre of the Palestinians so far published in one of the capitalist papers, headed its leader: "Dare

to call them terrorists".

But Begin and Sharon are still treated as misguided leaders who have miscalculated the effects of their actions on world opinion. The Krays are blackguards to be locked away for life, but Begin is a local tearaway, basically good-hearted, but with a tendency to get a little carried away.

This capacity to tolerate genocide while being unable to stomach a single death is one of the most sickening hypocrisies of the petty bourgeoisie — and therefore of the ideology which the papers pump out.

The nine-year old girl murdered in Staffordshire died a horrible death. But hundreds of her brothers and sisters in the Lebanon have died more horribly, coughing out their phosphorus-riddled lungs. Nurses have dumped dead bodies of children in buckets of water overnight to stop them burning. The press does express its horror. It does not condemn the murderers.

In Britain, the press habitually makes jokes about Lord Longford —



Ronnie Kray — Begin's poor relation

possibly justified — and his eternal plea for compassion for the most celebrated murderers of our age.

Yet on the international stage Begin has a thousand Lord Longfords heading the most thoughtful editorial columns in the world's press.

Disgust and horror in the newspapers comes out of a tap.

The delicate sensitivities of the editors can be turned on for victims of IRA bombs, sordid domestic murders, and the victims of once-vicious hoods.

But when the massacre reaches a certain stage, when the stakes are the de-

struction of an entire people or even half the world in a nuclear war, then a kind of worldly-wise cynicism descends on their pages.

At Begin's funeral, the hymns will be different, but the gang will still all be there. There will be crying in the aisle, and the press will even send six photographers.

The security will probably be even tighter than that around the Kray twins.

But the epitaph will be kinder.

What the Tebbit Law

THE RULE OF

"I use the word 'neuter' because I've been told I must not use the vernacular when describing what I'm doing to the unions."

Norman Tebbit in the Guardian, 25 November 1981

Why are the Tories introducing more anti-union legislation? Haven't they got the unions on the run already? Why alienate the union leaders and stir things up?

Isn't it true that even Michael Edwards still relies on the cooperation of the union leaders to hold down the Leyland workers? Won't breaking up closed shops alienate even Boyd, Duffy and Chapple?

Aren't the Tories allowing class hatred to obscure their real interests? Isn't this Bill placing the power to go to law in the hands of backward employers and disgruntled individuals likely to precipitate an explosion outside the political control of big capital and the state?

Tebbit has not been introduced simply because Thatcher doesn't like trade unions or because Tebbit is a skinhead! It has to be related to the specific needs of Tory strategy itself, a product of the present necessities of capital accumulation.

Galvanise

The Tories came into office believing that by limiting the money supply, by cutting public expenditure, by reducing consumer spending, by allowing interest rates to rise and withdrawing from intervention in industry they would galvanise the bosses into facing 'reality' and improve productivity. Increasing unemployment would dampen workers' expectations and weaken their bargaining power. Managements would resist wage claims because of the threat of bankruptcy. The inefficient would go to the wall and the overall average productivity would be jacked up.

Artificial restraints which interfere with the proper working of the market and enable workers to resist the rigours of economic policy such as trade unions and 'reasonable' levels of unemployment pay also require control. The central objective of the Employment Act was to weaken union organisation and its ability to interfere with the operation of the Thatcher strategy.

Yet the Thatcher strategy has met with only limited success. Her efforts to control the money supply, government spending and aid to industry have failed. Four million unemployed has led to deep political disillusionment.

Electoral

In this situation with time running out there is a need for new initiatives. Further moves against the unions are seen as attractive. They are perceived as electorally popular. The tame response of the unions to Prior's Act makes their success more possible.

They will have a few more years to live. The Tories will have a few more years to live. The Tories will have a few more years to live.

supine leadership, and to remove what is still an important barrier to reducing wages and saving conditions and produce a lasting transformation in the nature of British trade unionism.

Many capitalists are hesitant about these measures. But Thatcher believes that if an explosion comes she can win it. Thatcher and Tebbit possess a relative autonomy from the immediate interests of particular sections of capital.

Donkeys

They are pioneers attempting to secure the general social, political and economic conditions for a capitalist revival. They are impressed by the weaknesses of the workers' movement in particular the docility of the donkeys who lead it.

They are attempting to galvanise more cautious sections of capital into accepting their leadership in a sharper frontal assault, applying fire rather than syrup to the union tops.

Incorporationist strategies, with bribes to union leaders and 100% unionism, they would argue, may be useful with minimal unemployment. But these are not the tactics required when you have four million unemployed. Now is the time to kick union leaders into disciplining their members and weaken their membership.

They may be wrong. Their strategy may fail. In the end it all depends on our response.

A major aim of the Tebbit Bill is to outlaw certain kinds of industrial action. If workers accept this then they will be fighting with one hand tied behind their backs.

Solidarity

Few disputes can be won today by workers acting alone. In particular Tebbit attempts to outlaw solidarity action. The new proposals are built carefully onto those in Prior's 1980 Employment Act.

When workers go on strike they often break the law as developed by the judges - the common law. The most important common law wrong today is inducing a breach of contract.

When workers strike, they break their contracts of employment. Rather than suing hundreds or thousands, it is far more convenient if you can locate those responsible, those who may be able to bring the action to an end.

If a shop stewards committee or a union executive call their members out on strike then they can be said to be inducing them to break their contracts of employment. By doing this they may also be said to be inducing a breach of contract. This is the common law. This is the common law. This is the common law.

If you black work from a particular employer or successfully urge a worker to cross a picket line then you too may be inducing breaches of contract. But you might point out there is often no inducement. Workers themselves decide whether or not they want to strike or turn around at a picket line.

These kind of arguments will generally be dealt with at a full trial. But that may take 6 or 9 months. All the cases that have come up in the last few years involving industrial action are cases where the employer is seeking an interim injunction - an order that the industrial action should be suspended until the full case can be heard.

At this hearing the court will not ask the employer to prove his case to the hilt. They will simply ask: 'Has he got some kind of case?' If so, they will generally find that the balance of convenience is such that an injunction should be granted.

You can easily go on strike again in six months. If no injunction is granted, then your employer may lose thousands of pounds' worth of production over something which is later found to be illegal. This argument, of course, ignores the realities of union action and shows how judicial bias operates.

Legal

Almost every strike opens workers to these legal liabilities. If things were left at that unions would be unable to operate at all. Parliament has therefore said in the past that unions would be given immunity from these laws in certain circumstances where the action was taken in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute.

For action to be a trade dispute in the past it had to be connected with one of a detailed list of matters: terms and conditions of employment, physical conditions of work, engagement or non-engagement of workers, discipline, distribution of work, union rights, negotiating machinery.

The Tories have tried to change the law here in two main ways. First of all, Prior's Employment Act made it unlawful for you to interfere with the commercial contracts of an employer who was not party to your original dispute through interfering with the employment contract of his employees unless:

a) that employer is a customer or supplier of your employer;

b) your purpose is to disrupt the supply of goods;

c) your action is likely to achieve that purpose.

If you are on strike and you ask the workers at a direct supplier of your employer to black deliveries then you are okay as long as your purpose is to win your dispute and your action is likely to achieve that purpose. This means, however, that all action outside your direct employer will be open to decision by judges as to whether or not its purpose is to win the dispute and it is likely to achieve that purpose.

Blacking

If they think that the answer is 'no', because your real purpose for example is to punish your employer, then it will be unlawful.

If, however, you asked for blacking of employees of an employer who supplied components to your employer's supplier, perhaps because you could not get support at the direct supplier, then that would not be covered.

The problems can be seen from a case in 1979. The NUJ on strike against the Newspaper Society, the Provincial Employers Association, asked their members at the Press Association to black copy to local papers. To further escalate the dispute they asked members on national newspapers not to handle copy from the Press Association.

Under Tebbit the action on the nationals would be automatically illegal. The action at the Press Association would be subject to the tests of purpose and likelihood of success.

In this case the Court of Appeal said the purpose was not to win the dispute but to raise the morale of the strikers and was not likely to achieve the purpose of winning the dispute anyway. This shows the way judges will deal with future cases.

Tebbit now goes further than Prior and attempts to make all sorts of industrial



Tebbit would...

action illegal by changing the definition of a trade dispute. The definition will be restricted so that action should relate wholly or mainly to a trade dispute rather than as now simply be connected with it.

Again this gives the judges tremendous discretion. In 1980, for example, they decided that instructions to strike on May 14 against Prior's Bill was not even connected with a trade dispute. Tebbit gave the example of strikes against the privatisation of gas showrooms as not being wholly or mainly related to a trade dispute and the withdrawal of rate opposition to cuts in services could be outlawed as partly political.

The one-day strike against fare increases on London Transport would also have been open to injunctions as would any strike which has some element of anti-government content.

Under Tebbit's law it will be illegal to take action in support of workers in other countries unless your own terms and conditions are

likely to be affected by the dispute.

The blacking of goods to Chile or South Africa would be outlawed. Workers' calls for support to the PATCO air traffic controllers would be illegal, workers like those at Massey Ferguson blacking parts from Ursus could be hauled before the courts.

Tebbit then attempts to hit pure solidarity action within the UK by stating that for a trade dispute to exist there must be a dispute between workers and their employer.

If workers at factories walked out to support the People's March or to demonstrate against Tebbit's Bill, the courts would find that they were not acting in pursuance of a trade dispute as there was no dispute between them and their employer.

If workers not on strike themselves asked for action from other workers, that action would be illegal.

Finally, the definition of a trade dispute will exclude disputes between workers and workers. Again the definition of this will be up

to the judges. The type of things that they will go for will be demarcation disputes or disputes over the use of non-union labour. Situations like the Isle of Grain could now lead to legal action.

Pickets have always been open to criminal prosecution for obstruction of the highway, obstructing a policeman in the course of his duty, assault, intimidation or public nuisance. This is still the most important legal weapon against workers, as seen at Laurence Scott, Staffa or Hunterston.

In a series of judgements in the '60s and '70s, the courts held that if pickets stopped workers or vehicles against their will even for a short time they were guilty of obstructing the highway. If they did not move on when told to by the police they would be convicted.

Pickets

Prior's Act aimed at bringing the employer into the picture. It limited your already negligible right to picket to picketing at your own workplace. So when the Laurence Scott workers picketed their employers' main premises at Doncaster, Arthur Snipe was able to get a civil injunction against the workers while the police were able to arrest others for criminal offences.

When Liverpool TGWU members picketed the docks to try to control the growth of cowboy road haulage companies, the judge, because of their mobile workplace, was uncertain whether they were covered by Prior's Act.

He therefore plucked another ball out of the air and issued an injunction banning the picketing on the grounds that the workers were committing a public nuisance!

As big struggles break out

PHOTO: WENDY MUSTILL



Not a participant in a trade dispute...

means

by John McIlroy

FEAR



THE TEBBIT Bill is currently in the House of Lords, having completed all its stages in the House of Commons. In October, any Lords' amendments that have been made will come back to the floor of the Commons for endorsement or rejection. The Bill will then receive the royal assent before the beginning of the new parliamentary session in November.

Labour MPs in the committee stage and others have put up a tough fight against the provisions of the Bill. Success can only be achieved by the trade union movement mobilising to take action to defeat the bill.

REG RACE, MP for Wood Green



Prior pioneered, Tebbit follows

covered by the closed shop in which 80% of those eligible to vote voted for a closed shop.

Even if the employer can show that he has done this he may still lose the case if the worker was an employee at the time of the ballot. In other words, this ludicrously rigged ballot is not binding on those who it covers. You can vote against, lose and then still opt out of the union.

If the employee was not working at the workplace at the time of the ballot, he will not have an untrammelled right to opt out, but he will still win his case if he can show that he objected to membership of the union involved on genuine grounds of conscience or other deeply held personal convictions.

Those wishing to leave the union will therefore have an excellent chance of winning their case. But what is in it for them?

To make it worth their while, compensation is grotesquely inflated compared with awards for other forms of unfair dismissal in industrial tribunals. If blacklegs ask for a recommendation of reinstatement or reengagement to be made by the tribunal (and they will!), then if the tribunal decides not to make such a recommendation they will receive a special award between £10,000 and £20,000.

If a recommendation is

made and refused then they will receive a minimum of £15,000 with no maximum.

On top of that, they will receive, as do all those who win unfair dismissal cases, a basic award. 18 months ago the Tories abolished the minimum £200 basic award. In these closed shop cases the minimum is to be £2,000, ten times that amount!

Blacklegs

On top of that, blacklegs will receive an award compensating them for the actual loss they have suffered through the dismissal — loss of wage, loss of future earnings, pensions etc. Workers could easily take down £20-£25,000 under Tebbit's law. Many workers have been willing to sell their jobs for far less.

Here comes the final sting: if a steward or any trade unionist threatens industrial action to pressure the employer to sack the non-unionist, then that non-unionist can join the steward or the union to the action. Some or all of the compensation could then be awarded against the steward or the union who would have to fork out thousands of pounds.

In an attempt at even-handedness and to try to cloak the assault on 100% membership, the Bill applies the new levels of compen-

sation to those dismissed for union membership and activities. It also provides a procedure by which a worker sacked in a closed shop situation can get interim relief.

The aims are clear. Even holding ballots raises the issue of non-membership. Employers will be reluctant to maintain closed shops, trade unionists will be scared off fighting to do so, scabs will be encouraged to leave the unions. There will be a haemorrhage of members and unions will be far weaker.

If Tebbit becomes law it will place a rich crop of unfair industrial practices on the statute book which can gradually be used against trade unionists.

*Clauses in contracts requiring the employment of trade unionists by subcontractors are to become unenforceable in law.

*Discrimination through lists of approved sub-contractors who employ only trade unionists or inviting tenders for the supply of goods or services only from union employers will become unlawful.

*Workers organising or threatening industrial action to put pressure on an employer to employ only trade unionists will be open to legal action.

*Workers who strike because they are not prepared to work with non-unionists will lose their

immunities and be open to legal action.

*The Prior Act drew back at imposing compulsory secret ballots. It provided government funds for secret ballots over industrial action and union elections if the unions wanted them.

But even the EETPU and the AUEW, despite making noises, have not asked for state funds. Now Tebbit is talking of adding to his bill a clause making secret ballots compulsory.

*The Bill will change the law so that it will no longer be unfair for an employer to dismiss workers on strike while continuing to employ other workers who have been on strike but who have already returned to work.

Sack

At present employers have to sack all workers who go on strike if they are to be protected against unfair dismissal proceedings. If they take some workers back and then later sack those remaining on strike they will be open to legal action.

The Tebbit proposals will allow employers to discriminate in such a way as to weaken strike action. Employers will be able to give four days notice that any worker who has not returned by the end of that period will be sacked.

The result will be to isolate and dismiss the strongest sections and intimidate the weaker.

will also see more course to the Code of Practice Prior published with his limiting pickets to six gesting that they be served by union officials attempting to stop ons taking disciplinary on against those who ak the lines.

Since 1906, when the des Disputes Act overed the House of Lords gement in the Taff Vale e, union funds have not n liable to pay compenon to employers and ers directly affected by awful industrial action. al cases have been ight against individuals. w they can be brought inst the union itself.

the strikers first picketed Doncaster, when the strike was official, then Boyd and Duffy, to get off the hook, would have had to repudiate the action. Would a statement be sufficient or would they have to cut off all support to the strikers? Or would they have done nothing?

In this unlikely event the injunction would have been granted against the AUEW. If the picketing then continued, the union would have been fined large amounts for contempt of court pressuring them to disown the strikers.

Damages

Moreover, the employer would eventually be able to go to court and get damages against the union for loss of production.

There is a sliding scale from unions with fewer than 5,000 members who will have to pay damages up to £12,500 in each case to unions with more than 100,000 members who will have to face damages up to £250,000. In this kind of situation what do you think Boyd and Duffy would have done?

The aim is clearly not to bankrupt unions but by threatening to do so, to pressurise union leaders to take action against those who are trying to win a dispute. As we have seen, most of the means necessary to win a dispute are now illegal.

The long term aim is to push union leaders into what is logical: instead of having to have a 'repudiation officer' proclaiming lack of official support for picketing and blacking which is essential but illegal, why not concentrate decision making on these matters at the top with the executive so that there will be no question of liability?

Why not make it clear to stewards and districts that they have no powers to initiate picketing or blacking even when a dispute is official?

This would mean that all strikes would be run ineffectively. It would mean playing to lose. It would mean undermining steward autonomy. This is the Tory aim. The castration of union power necessitates the gelding of union democracy.

Unlike Labour's leaders, Thatcher and Tebbit are class warriors determined to fight for the interests of those who put them where they are. Where in 1974 the Labour Cabinet ran away from retrospectively wiping completely clean the record of the Clay Cross councillors, where Roy Jenkins refused even to grant a pardon to the Shrewsbury Two, Tebbit rewards those who have suffered in the cause of the ruling class.

Cut here, cut there, but establish a £2 million fund to compensate blacklegs who lost their jobs between September 1974 when Labour introduced its closed shop legislation and August 1980 when Prior's Act became law.

Reward

Workers who had no legal rights under the 1974 legislation but who would have won their case under Prior's Act will be entitled to apply to Tebbit for a reward based on the actual loss they sustained with interest.

If a worker, once Tebbit becomes law, rips up his union card and is sacked by his employer in pursuance of a closed shop arrangement then that worker will automatically win his case at an industrial tribunal unless the employer can show that in the last five years he has held a secret ballot of those

Join the campaign

THE MOBILISING Committee for the Defence of Trade Union Rights developed out of a conference on trade union democracy held by Socialist Organiser and London Labour Briefing. Trade unionists at the conference decided that it was no good simply bemoaning the fact that neither the TUC nor the majority of trade union leaders have failed to do anything about the Bill. We had to start doing something about it ourselves.

To that end the committee was formed, to alert the movement to the dangers of the Bill, to start calling our leaders to account for their failure to organise, and to say quite clearly that at the end of the day the only way the Bill will be defeated will be the same way that In Place of Strife and the Industrial Relations Act bit the dust — through industrial action on a mass scale.

With this aim, supporters of the campaign have produced leaflets and factsheets, and spoken at trade union branches, shop stewards' committees and Labour Party wards.

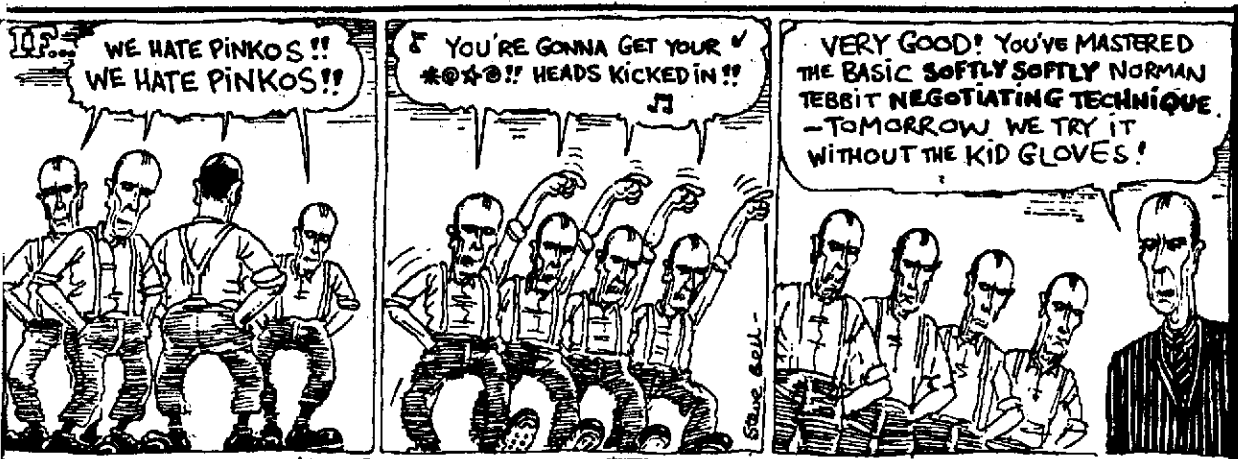
What has become clear from these meetings and the general response to the campaign has been, the willingness of rank and file members of the unions to fight the Tory onslaught, and anger at the TUC's failure to coordinate action.

In particular, women workers and public sector trade unionists have realised how hard they will be hit if the Bill is allowed to become law.

The Mobilising Committee has made a start in co-ordination of that groundswell of support for action. But we must broaden the fightback. You can help by:

- * taking action in support of the NHS workers,
- * affiliating to the campaign,
- * calling for trade union leaders to break off links and collaboration with the Tories,
- * calling for and supporting industrial action against the Bill.

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



London Labour challenges ILEA sacking

Anselm Samuel, a black ILEA (Inner London Education Authority) youth worker, is fighting to get his job back.

The Further and Higher Education Committee of ILEA sacked him at the end of July.

It was only thanks to the virtually unprecedented move of requisitioning a full ILEA meeting by Hackney GLC Councillor John Carr that Anselm Samuel was relieved from dismissal. He is now suspended without pay and with no job offer until the ILEA meets on 14 September.

The Greater London Labour Party Regional Executive Committee at its meeting on Monday 26 July, passed an emergency resolution proposed by Ken Livingstone and seconded by Vidya Anand, supporting Anselm.

The run-up to the sacking included disputes over Anselm Samuel going from a 15-hour a week job to 20 hours, and then getting a full time lecturer job. But the immediate pretext was a fight outside Stamford Hill Youth Club (not where Anselm Samuel worked) in early November 1981.



An argument developed about the parking of cars. Anselm Samuel was assaulted, threatened and intimidated, and he defended himself. The young man then went on to assault a passenger in Anselm's car. This passenger had to attend hospital and was off work for a week as a result of the incident.

Most people thought that that was the end of the matter and that no legal proceedings were to be taken by anyone. However, ten days later the young man who had assaulted Anselm Samuel brought charges.

Anselm Samuel and his passenger brought counter-charges of an assault as a consequence. It was understood that the young man was pressured by the ILEA officers into taking out legal proceedings.

Eventually Anselm Samuel was found guilty and fined £350. Anselm Samuel told us:

"NATFHE (the lecturers' union) has refused to act. It has also prevented NALGO from negotiating claiming that they have got the right to negotiate with employers for teaching staff.

ILEA have broken all their staff code practices to implement their decisions. The members of the Further and Higher Education Subcommittee are being controlled by the officers. Who is running the ILEA?

Stamford Hill Youth Club is a club with 90% black membership and 86% black staff. The head of the centre's staff is being used by the ILEA officers to keep black youths in check.

The chairman of the Management Committee is Inspector Heame of City police station who uses the club as a police informer base and for getting information from certain youths and staff.

The question that needs to be asked is, with the eroding relationship between the black community and the police, why is this police officer chairman of the club's committee?

Did ILEA know that Tony Roberts, who attacked me and my passenger, had been suspended from school at least ten times for attacking teachers?

Do they know he has a court record including violence?"

Contact: A. Samuel, c/o O Nobleman, 38 Cranwick Road, London N16.

Housing

SELLING THE PROBLEM

1 GLASGOW LABOUR

"PRIVATE housing in the Gorbals - that's the ultimate insult." This is how Bill Sharkey, vice-president of the Gorbals Anti-Dampness Campaign (GADC) summed up local reaction to the announcement that the Labour-controlled Glasgow District Council plans to sell off to private builders the housing scheme in the Hutchesontown 'E' area of the Gorbals. This scheme, built at a cost of £7.5 million, was opened almost exactly ten years ago. Right from the outset, tenants were plagued by the problem of dampness.

At first the council fobbed off complaints by claiming that a bit of dampness was only natural in new houses and that it would soon disappear.

It didn't. On the contrary it got worse, and by the mid-seventies the GADC was well under way.

Its methods of struggle ranged from petitions and letter writing to court actions, rate appeals, demonstrations and rent strikes.



The council was forced to rehouse more and more of the tenants.

Then, a year ago, the council changed tack and announced it would be clearing the area completely.

For the last 12 months

tenants have been pressurised into accepting whatever alternative accommodation was "offered" to them. Kernaghan (convenor of the Council's Housing Committee) told us that they had the power to evict people and that they would

do so if necessary.

"A taxi would arrive to take tenants to see another place, then they would be whipped into the housing office. People never had a chance to have a proper look at what they were being offered, they ended up just signing," explained Willie McLean, secretary of the GADC.

Out of the 759 houses in Hutchesontown 'E' only nine are still occupied.

With the scheme now virtually uninhabited, the council seems to think that the time is now right to make its announcement about hiving off the property.

Future

The announcement was made last Thursday (12th) - the very same day on which District Council officials were informing members of the GADC that the decision on the future of the scheme was at least two or three months away.

The Tory Group on the council, needless to say, are fully in favour of the proposals.

The Housing Committee argues that because the council cannot afford to refurbish the damp-ridden

houses, it will sell them off and use the £2 million profit made in the deal to fund a sheltered housing project in nearby Govan Hill.

Presumably the Council will present the plan as a way of improving the housing stock and play off the Govan Hill tenants association against those in the Gorbals.

The Council's plan to hive off council housing to private profiteers must be opposed by the labour movement throughout Glasgow.

The time is long overdue for Kernaghan and his fellow travellers in the Labour Group to be kicked out once and for all.

It is a tragedy that councillors like Pat Keegan who fight the council's cuts should be kept out of the Labour Group, while Kernaghan and Co. continue their Tory-style administration of the city.

Full support must be given to the GADC's campaign against the council's sell-out on the housing scheme. Labour Party branches and GCs must force Labour councillors to get the decision reversed, and call to account Kernaghan and the other councillors who support this shameful proposal.

by Stan Crooke

2 EDINBURGH TORIES

FOLLOWING on from their cut-price sale of Martello Court (known locally as "terror tower"), the highest multi-storey in Edinburgh, the Tory-controlled Edinburgh District Council is now planning to "home-stead" 112 other council flats.

This is a pilot scheme, and if it is successful the same operation will be attempted elsewhere in Edinburgh.

"Homesteading" means the sale at a cut price of the 112 flats in two run-down council housing schemes, Bingham (40 flats) and Broomhouse (72) at £5,000 each.

In Bingham, of the 40, 32 are still occupied. According to a District Council spokesperson, "sitting tenants will be offered other suitable

accommodation." (Unemployment is very high in Bingham and most tenants will not be able to buy the property they live in).

This will probably mean a shift down the road... to another "unlettable" council flat, with all the removal expenses and the cost of decorating a "new" flat.

Opposition to the sales is growing. Bingham and Broomhouse Tenants Associations sent a deputation to the District Council on August 5, with the Labour MP for Edinburgh East (which encompasses Bingham), Gavin Strang.

The Bingham deputation told the Council, "Homesteading is no solution to the area's problems. The way to improve Bingham is to spend some money on doing up the houses.

"The whole place is going downhill. It is about time the Council woke up. We are fed up with being ignored."

What the Bingham tenants said is true of every housing scheme in Edinburgh. We are now triply Tory-controlled - nationally, Regionally and in the District.

The same week heard a deputation to the Regional Council from the Niddrie House/Greendykes Tenants Association complaining against the decision taken recently to abolish free school milk in the schools.

The tenants associations in Edinburgh will have to begin campaigning in the housing schemes to build up organisation, so that the cutters in the District and the Region can be stopped.

RICKY HOUSTON

SCIENCE Where rain is like vinegar

by Les Hearn

THE massive increase in the burning of fossil fuels, such as oil and coal, over the last few decades, has brought something we are going to hear more and more about in the future - acid rain.

All fossil fuels contain a few per cent of sulphur which turns into the gasses sulphur dioxide and trioxide when the fuels are burnt. These gasses combine with rain to make sulphuric acid.

Together with nitric acid produced from motor vehicle exhaust gases, this makes up acid rain.

Some acids have always been present in the atmosphere, but about 90% of all sulphur falling on the fields, forests and lakes of Europe and North America is of human origin.

Acid rain sounds bad, but what does it do?

Firstly, it destroys metals and stone. The Acropolis in Athens is now pitted with corrosion, having suffered more damage in 20 years than in the previous 2,000. The gold foil covering the

dome of Cracow Cathedral has been eaten away by a potent cocktail of acids.

Secondly, it dissolves many metal compounds, not soluble in ordinary water, corroding water pipes, discolouring drinking water (and incidentally endangering dialysis patients who cannot control their intake of dissolved minerals). This dissolving of metal compounds has other more serious consequences for plant and animal life, as we shall see.

According to new ideas from a German biochemist, Professor Bernhard Ulrich, acid rain works in three phases.

Phase 1. Increased nitrogen content provides more nutrients and actually stimulates plant growth.

Phase 2. Acids combine with essential nutrients such as magnesium and calcium, making them insoluble. For a time, the soil can neutralise the acid and replace nutrients from the bedrock underneath, but eventually acid starts to accumulate and plant life displays symptoms

of magnesium and calcium deficiency, such as yellowing of leaves and dying off of tree tops.

Phase 3. Increasing acidity makes normally insoluble metals become soluble - most seriously aluminium. This toxic metal attacks the fine hairs on tree roots, which extract moisture and nutrients from the soil.

The ability of these root hairs to control the entry of substances is destroyed and the damage spreads further into the roots. Various disease organisms can then invade so that tree death comes from starvation, disease and poisoning.

Phase 1 still continues in Scandinavia, while Phase 2 reigns in West Germany (with Phase 3 starting to look in). Phase 3 is well established in Poland, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia, all of which now possess dead forests.

Some parts of Britain seem to be suffering Phase 2 damage, but the amount of research into acid rain in Britain remains pitifully

small.

The most dramatic effect of acid rain has been the death of the Scandinavian lakes. In south Norway, over half the fish have disappeared in the last 40 years, while in Sweden 9,000 lakes have suffered serious loss of fish and 4,000 are effectively dead.

Again, the problem is aluminium being dissolved in the soil and then washed into the lakes. It then clogs up the gills of fish (as it is insoluble in body fluids), killing them by suffocation. Rather unjustly, most of Scandinavian acid rain comes from Britain.

This process is also starting in the northern British Isles. Already the Forestry Commission is adding lime to lakes in Galloway to neutralise acid. Also in Scotland, Pitlochrie has gained the dubious honour of the most acid rain ever recorded - more acid than vinegar!

There are various solutions to the problem of sulphur (removing it from the fuel, burning the fuel in a different way, or remov-

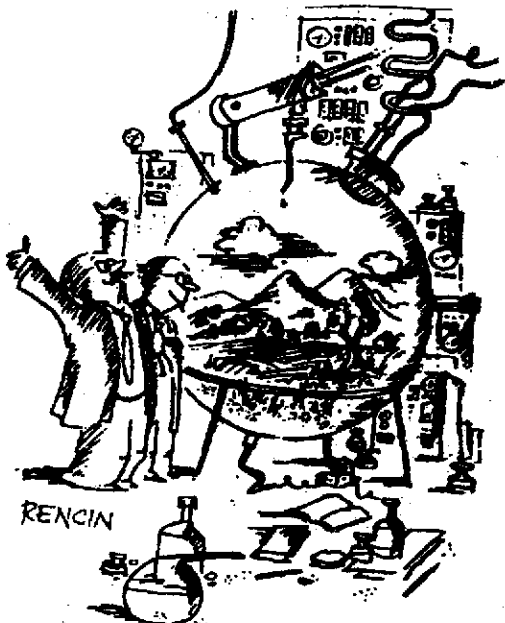
ing the gases from the flues) but all suffer from an overwhelming (to capitalism) objection - they all cost money, which capitalism is little disposed to spend in the absence of overwhelming pressure.

The bureaucratic police states of East Europe are even less disposed to deal with their pollution since they are subject to virtually no internal pressure to mend their ways (with the temporary exception of a group of Polish environmentalists during the pre-marital law phase of Solidarnosc).

Halt

Once again, therefore, it is up to the labour movements of Europe and North America to call a halt to the despoliation of our environment. In many ways the problem is a more serious one than that of radioactive pollution which exercises so many on the left.

This world belongs to the workers - let us protect it. (Information from New Scientist)



Marx in London

Why your rent keeps going up

A NEW pamphlet published by the Labour Housing Group and written by Lambeth Labour councillor Stewart Lansley examines the system of state subsidies to housing.

About £2,700 million a year is spent on these subsidies for some five million council tenant households and 5% million owner-occupier households. How is it distributed? What are the effects? What changes should Labour propose? These are the questions the pamphlet discusses.

We publish extracts to help begin a discussion on these questions — and on whether they are the right questions for Labour to be asking.

Why subsidies?

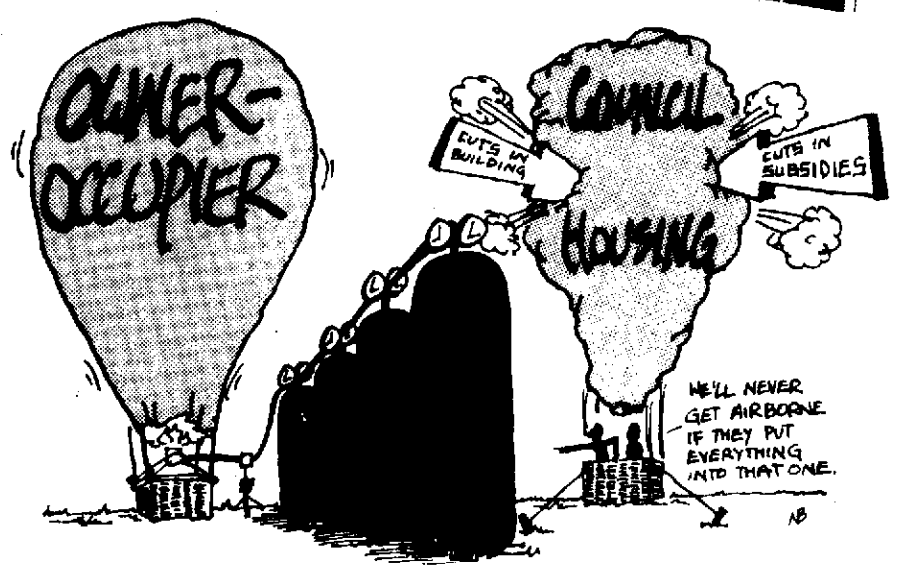
Subsidies are needed to ensure that all households can obtain housing of some minimum standard. Without financial assistance to reduce housing costs, a significant proportion of households would be unable to pay for decent housing. Left to itself, the private market would produce both insufficient homes, often of an inadequate standard, and produce a very unequal distribution of housing resources.

Lower income groups would be concentrated in poor quality and overcrowded conditions, often paying rent accounting for an unacceptably high proportion of income. This is indeed just the kind of housing situation that prevailed in nineteenth-century Britain. Moreover, despite 60 years of government intervention in housing markets, we have still not eliminated such problems.

What about the 'subsidy' to moneylenders through debt charges?

It is sometimes argued by socialists that such debt payments are exploitative, that housing problems could be solved if they were abolished. This is not so. It is in fact more economical to finance housing investment by borrowing if interest rates are lower than inflation as they often have been in the last two decades.

This means that the real cost of borrowing is actually negative. That the total cost of debt charges over time can be much higher than the original cost of building is an illusion created largely by inflation. Even if real interest rates are positive, there are still reasons for financing capital spending by borrowing. Another factor concerns who receives the interest on such borrowing. Often it accrues to working people who take out life

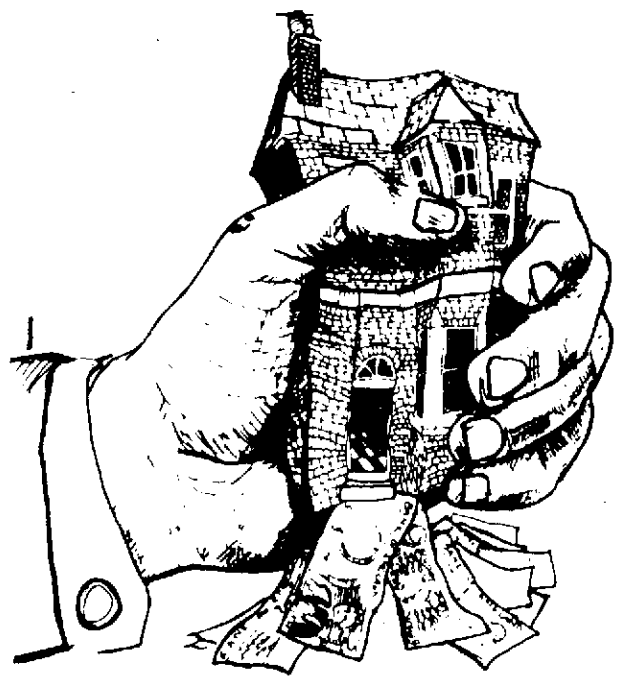


insurance and contribute towards pension schemes.

Who gets the subsidies?

Cash assistance received is the conventional way of defining housing subsidies, and includes exchequer subsidies, rate fund contributions and rent rebates, in the case of public tenants; option mortgage subsidy and tax relief in the case of owner occupiers; and rent allowances in the case of private tenants. In 1981/2, on average, council tenants received £183 p.a., excluding rent rebates, and £241 p.a. including them. The average subsidy to owner occupiers with a mortgage was somewhat higher at £285 p.a. Private tenants, on the other hand, received minimal state assistance.

Subsidies reduce the housing costs of the great majority of households but in a wholly indiscriminate way.



Increase in Local Authority Rents, England and Wales.

	Average weekly rents £	Index	Index of retail prices
April 1979	6.40	100	100
April 1980	7.71	120	122
April 1981	11.39	178	136
April 1982 (a)	13.14	205	150
April 1982 (b)	13.89	217	150

Notes: (a) Assuming an average rent increase of £1.75 and a 10% increase in prices from April 1981 to 1982. (b) Assuming an average rent increase of £2.50, the government's guideline for April 1982.

On average, owner occupiers with a mortgage have household incomes which are nearly twice as high as those of local authority tenants, live in larger accommodation, yet receive more subsidy on average.

Cuts for tenants, owners protected.

In 1981/2 this inequity has been further accentuated by a cut of 45% in subsidies to public tenants while owner occupier tax concessions have been protected. In 1982/3 local authority subsidies are to be cut again by an estimated 28% while tax concessions are again protected. This has led to

rent increases that are much higher than the rate of inflation.

The effects: 1. The supply of housing.

By reducing housing payments, subsidies have boosted demand yet supply has in general failed to keep pace. The resulting excess demand has led to higher prices in the private and longer queues in the public sector.

Since the War, private sector house prices have risen at nearly double the rate of inflation. Only a portion of this is accounted for by improved standards. In stimulating demand, especially in the private sector, some of the 'benefit' of tax concessions has

shifted through higher house prices from new buyers to existing owners and to landowners.

No money for the poorly housed

The system of subsidies has also encouraged under-occupation and a waste of limited housing space, especially in the owner-occupied sector.

Problems have also been created because of the nature of the accounting arrangements for public expenditure on housing whereby current and capital spending compete on equal terms under increasingly tight cash limits.

In consequence, the share of total public spending on housing devoted to investment has fallen from 70% in 1975/6 to 48% in 1981/2. In effect, public spending has increasingly been used (at least until 1981/2) to moderate the housing costs of those who are already relatively well housed instead of improving the housing opportunities of the poorly housed.

Effects 2: Public provision.

That the financial scales are weighed heavily in favour

of owner occupation has also helped to distort tenure preferences. The 'preference' for owner occupation has also been fueled by rising inflation and unequal social and legal benefits. As a result, those young and well off enough to make a choice have inevitably opted for purchase. In consequence public housing has increasingly catered for those unable to take advantage of the artificially created benefits of home purchase.

The Tory view of the role of council housing is unequivocal — that it should cater only for the needs of those unable to make their own way in the private sector. Since 1979, the whole thrust of Tory housing policy — higher rents, cuts in public sector investment and compulsory council house sales — has been the relentless pursuit of this objective, the 'residualisation' of council housing.

Labour's approach, in contrast, has been confused. Labour has paid lip service to the idea of public housing catering for all those wishing to rent but has helped to create the conditions in which public housing is drifting slowly towards a residual, welfare role, catering largely for lower income and disadvantaged groups.

What changes could be made?

Two alternative proposals are examined:

1) The replacement of tax relief on mortgage interest payments with interest rate subsidies, phased out gradually over the life of the mortgage. This would concentrate help where needed, on first time and lower income buyers.

2) The re-introduction of a tax on the imputed rental income from ownership (i.e. if you own a house which would rent at £50 per week, you are taxed as if you had £50 extra income).

Both proposals could be combined with the ending of the present effective tax exemption of the personal wealth accumulation enjoyed by owner occupiers, parallel reforms in the public sector, and the abolition of stamp duty and reduced costs of buying and selling aimed at improving access to home ownership.

The second could also be combined with a system of universal housing allowances to both tenants and owners in place of the existing system of means tested benefits for tenants.

"Housing Finance — New Policies for Labour". 75p including postage from M. Hudson, 1 Westmead Close, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, EN7 6JP.
Contact: Labour Housing Group, Anne Sullivan, 84 Turney Rd., London SE21. Affiliations £10 per year, individual membership, £5.

ERNIE STUBBINS reviews 'Marx in London', by Asa Briggs (produced by BBC publications).

THE author of this little book is not by any means a Marxist, and this fact shows through strongly in his text and his approach to his subject. A much better book on Marx in London could have been written by a serious Marxist scholar interested in placing Marx and Marxism in their historic context.

Briggs provides a guide to the places in and around London where Marx and his family lived and worked. Some years ago the Marx Memorial Library produced a similar but less comprehensive pamphlet, which in addition referred to other revolutionaries passing through London.

Briggs provides more detail, and brings the information up to date, dealing with demolitions of places where the Marx family lived.

Directions and travel information are clearly presented, the illustrations are well chosen and the layout attractive. Some of the historical photographs are exceptionally interesting, most notable being a daguerrotype of the great Chartist rally on Kennington Common in 1848.

If you want to find your way to the places where Marx lived and worked, then you will find Briggs' booklet useful, although you may well find Briggs' refusal to give sources or references frustrating.

But really something more is needed to do justice to the subject and Briggs fails to provide this.

Marxists will scan Briggs' pamphlet for evidence of how Marx, Engels and the other revolutionaries of the time connected with the living struggles of the working class in London. They will be to a large degree disappointed. The work of Marx and Engels with the left wing of the Chartist movement is virtually ignored, and Briggs' view on the alleged 'backwardness' of this movement in the London area is recited once again.

The work of the First International, led by Marx, in a wide range of trade union and other fights in the London area, is well documented in the papers and minutes of the First Inter-

national, but disregarded entirely by Briggs.

Briggs is more interested in commenting on Marx's links with the other exiled revolutionaries in London, but even this is hard to do without a serious assessment of the First International. (The absence of references to the literature could deny the reader the pleasure of E.H. Carr's *The Romantic Exiles*, on the extraordinary lives of Herzen and other Russian exiles in London).

Sometimes, Briggs is forced to extremely bizarre lengths to establish the 'links'. Thus we are treated to the knowledge that the exiled Italian revolutionary Panizzi fled from the Duchy of Modena, whereas Marx later went to live in a street in Kentish Town called *Modena Villas*. Can this be the flower of decadent bourgeois scholarship?

Briggs treats his sections on Marx's home and family life less as occasions to illustrate the social conditions of the revolutionary exiles and more as opportunities to deploy totally ahistorical arguments ad hominem. We learn for example, in the words of a police spy, of Marx's habits of drinking, smoking and worse yet, of sleeping fully clothed on a sofa!

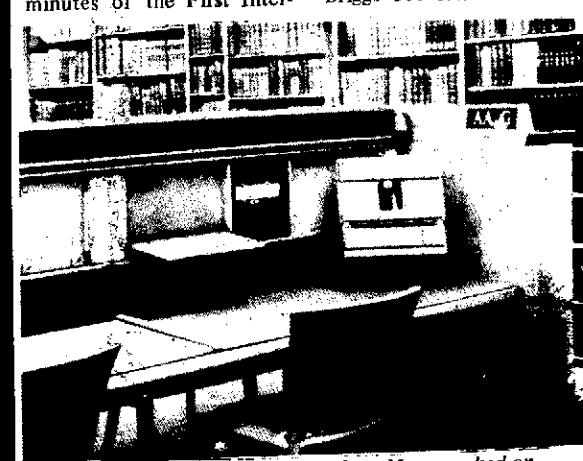
Academic

How rarefied must be the atmosphere of Worcester College, Oxford, for 130 year old tobacco smoke to obscure from academic view the fact that this disreputable foreigner changed the course of human history by providing a true armoury of insights into the world that can never be extinguished. It takes a skilled historian indeed to miss this historical fact.

But assertions that Trotsky led the Mensheviks in the 1903 split in the RSDLP and that 'There is no evidence that Lenin interested himself in the details of British politics' might cause eyebrows to be raised, even in the Oxford common rooms.

It is not only socialists who would take issue with some of Briggs' assertions. Enthusiasts of good food will be astonished to find Manzi's, which was once the German Hotel and accommodated the Marx family until they could no longer afford the rent, described as 'a fish restaurant'. Surely an academic of Briggs' reputation could have been expected to venture past Wheelers to discover that Manzi's is the fish restaurant.

This reviewer recommends it more highly than Briggs' booklet.



The desk in the British Museum where Marx worked on 'Capital'

Writeback Points on Zionism



We invite readers to send us their letters, up to a usual maximum length of 400 words. Send to 'Writeback', Socialist Organiser, c/o 28, Middle Lane, London N8.

A FEW minor quibbles about your article 'Zionism Red in Tooth and Claw' (incidentally, wouldn't it be better for a socialist journal to avoid that particular imagery: red is not normally a colour of which socialists disapprove).

Firstly historical: there is some evidence of independent Jewish states before Israel in, for example, areas of Africa.

Coming more recently, whatever the subsequent

evolution of Mapam, it is unfair to ignore the past of Left Poale Zion and Hashomer Hatzair by claiming that they were pro-imperialist, or ignoring their efforts to organise the working class across the ethnic/national divide.

On the other hand it was a mistake to omit the evidence (so amply recorded by Hannah Arendt in 'Eichmann in Jerusalem') that anti-semites were prepared to back Zionism as a

way of getting rid of Jews from Europe. There are East European Jewish socialist refugees in Britain from before the war who can remember Jabotinski's thugs joining with pro-Nazi gangs to attack socialists, both Jewish and goyim. Begin's own record as stemming from a movement that was prepared to cooperate openly with Nazis needs to be mentioned.

Finally it would have

been worth going further into the Law of Return; this truly demonstrates that there is racialism in Israel, not just against Arabs.

Arab jews

Jews from the Yemen have been refused rights to go to Israel, not because of Arab blood but because of Hamitic blood, to say nothing of the close Israel-South Africa axis. Afro-

Americans who have embraced Judaism have been refused entry as not being racially Jewish. And of course people of Jewish descent who are not religiously Jewish and have embraced a differing religion can also be barred.

I appreciate that space was limited and to cover all such quibbles would have unduly lengthened the article.

LAURENS OTTER

DIFFERENT CRITICISMS

I appreciated the article on publishing the Socialist Organiser that appeared in the 1 July 1982 issue. I would differ with some of the criticisms you were said to have received:

Learning Trotskyism is easier when SO is around: compared to journalism here, you are quite vivid and literate, that your articles are long and "written in the language of theoretical journals" makes them especially valuable to a foreign reader and beginning socialist.

Moreover, there's no use

pretending that understanding current politics doesn't require Marxist theory and historical data. Any length you devote to pertinent discussion of the latter is justifiable. I assume you aren't going to be moved by any critic who says you're writing over the heads of your working class readership.

Perhaps you could pacify those not wanting to read 14 columns of fine print on major issues by accompanying some long articles with a non-"technical" abstract.

Bold-facing might aid skimmers also.

Looking for more articles on African, Caribbean, and North American struggles - more foreign coverage generally might be beyond your means, but the farther you look the larger the international workers' movement will become.

Very impressed by design and production as well as by writing in SO. Keep up the good work.

Thank you, PAUL GRAMS, Ann Arbor, USA



Trevor Haigh: no hint of a policy?

Whose policy?

TOGETHER with our interview of Trevor Haigh, the GMWU convenor at Rowntrees, about solidarity with striking black workers in South Africa (SO93), a short snippet called 'Our Policy' was included.

But we have to think hard about what our policy is and should be. We cannot just assert it on the basis of first principles.

More specifically, it is not true that Trevor Haigh gave 'no hint' about a way

forward: his hint was that first the AAM's boycott campaign was not a way forward; second, that the forging of direct links with the unions in South Africa, including the exchange of visits, is an important basis for further solidarity action, and third, that the forms taken by solidarity action should not be worked out in isolation from the workers who are meant to implement them.

The notion that the

TGWU should impose full scale blacking of Rowntrees here is a wild idea, not thought through, not prepared for, and not as far as I know 'our' policy.

Finally the call for a new revolutionary leadership and the denunciation of one of the more progressive of the TGWU bureaucrats Bob Harrison (progressive, that is on this issue), sounds to me little more than a ritual incantation here.

Fraternally, BOB FINE

Mods and skinheads

June 1982 and Britain's disaffected youth, in the shape of the football fans in Spain singing 'God Save the Queen' and millions empathising with the exploits of the Paratroopers is mobilised behind the Union Jack. Socialists

look on with chagrin and wonder what to do.

My suggestion would be to attempt to inform and politicise the two movements, mods and skinheads, which have a lasting sway over the outlook and attitude of the young.

These two basically working class manifestations have in common a stance of toughness and "hardness" and it is these elements which are mirrored in their admiration of the SAS and Paras.

However, because they

are working class, and their aggressive attitude, in many cases, is a symptom of the economic oppression of their upbringing, I believe they properly belong in the socialist fold.

The fact that skinheads should now be synonymous with patriotism and racism is a source of dismay to the mods of the sixties, who identified with the lifestyle, as well as the music, of the Black American working class.

I think a politically aware mod movement could be a potent force in unifying and motivating a demoralised youth who, anaesthetised by the Tory press, have previously sought to express their passion and anger in music and football violence.

JOHN ELLISON Wallasey

Long live the Palestinian revolution

AS a reader of SO and a member of the Palestinian Workers' League I was thankful for your publishing our statement against the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

It is understood that some abridgement could be made, but it was in my view unfair to omit, with other things, the whole headline: "Long live the Palestin-

ian revolution! Long live the Lebanese revolution! Fight the murderous imperialist-Zionist-fascist aggression against the Palestinian people and Lebanon's masses! Long live the revolutionary unity of the working class and the oppressed masses in the Arab East!"

With this and other cuts the whole document loses its

militant character and becomes 'objective' analysis, which in the face of current bloody attacks is unbearable.

Please, publish this short letter in full, and with its headline. SO could be proud to hail the revolutionary fighters giving their lives daily here.

YOAR BAR, Haifa



At the Socialist Organiser AGM this April, supporters criticised the paper for too many long articles and complicated arguments

An anti-colonial war

AS a subscriber to Socialist Organiser I am worried at seeing the line of the paper on the Malvinas. I disagree with the line, and I believe it is wrong and harmful. Therefore this letter.

SO believes that the defence of the islanders' right to self-determination is the central issue in the conflict. But, under pressure from the masses, the Argentine junta has - via a populist manoeuvre - challenged British imperialism. As the Bonapartist dictatorship that it is, it dictatorially didn't mobilise the masses for a genuine anti-imperialist struggle. Nevertheless, the junta's step is objectively anti-imperialist and historically progressive.

The central issue for the conflict is that Argentina is a country under the dominance of imperialism, and that Britain is an imperialist country. But SO's defeatist line calling for a defeat of

both Britain and Argentina by the working class overthrowing their "own" bourgeoisie in the two countries, indicates in fact a viewpoint that it is a matter of two imperialist powers at war with each other and obscures thereby the fact that it is a matter of an anti-colonial war. It must not be forgotten that SO talks of self-determination for the 1800 islanders who have chosen to remain supporters of British imperialism's dominance over the islands. They have expressed themselves in favour of the islands remaining a part of the British Empire.

"Supporting rights does not mean supporting every action that is supposed to defend those rights," says SO, and "By the very nature of the British state Thatcher's fleet acts in the interests of Tory and British ruling class prestige." "Any benefit to the islanders is

doubtful and strictly incidental."

Therefore, according to SO, a class struggle against Thatcher's war must be waged in Britain. But SO's leader writers know just as well as I that it is a question of settlers on the Malvinas. Since when has it been Marxist policy to support imperialist settlers?

The main orientation in Argentina must be: "To counter-attack against imperialism on all fronts": support for the reconquest of the Malvinas and the war against British imperialism; expropriation of all imperialist property without compensation; stop the payment of debt to imperialist banks and governments; the burden of the crisis must be paid by the imperialists.

Thereby must the masses be prepared to overthrow the junta and bourgeoisie in Argentina.

It involves, of course, not support for the junta, but struggle for an independent revolutionary programme. It must mean a constant attack on the junta for not carrying out an anti-imperialist struggle, and for the working masses independent organisation and struggle.

The working class in Argentina cannot overthrow the Bonapartist junta and Argentine bourgeoisie without anti-imperialist struggle, precisely because Argentina is dominated by imperialism. SO with its self-determination viewpoint on the Malvinas question stands as a hindrance to building a bridge between the consciousness of the oppressed masses and their actual problems, and the necessary task of making the revolution.

Comradely, Jette Kromann (member of the Trotskyist Workers League, Denmark)

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Bombs in the ocean of peace

SINCE THE END OF World War 2, the islands of the Pacific have given vital support for nuclear weapons development. On August 6, 1945, the US bomber Enola Gay took off from Tinian in the Northern Marianas, and dropped the atomic bomb on the people of Hiroshima.

From that initial use of nuclear weaponry until today - when thousands of nuclear warheads are deployed throughout the world - the Pacific Islanders have continually been the victims of the nuclear and military strategies of larger powers.

The people of the Marshall Islands, in eastern Micronesia, became the first victims. In 1946, the US military governor visited the islands, and proclaimed to the people that American scientists were experimenting with nuclear weapons "for the good of mankind and to end all world wars." In the detonation of at least sixty-six nuclear bombs in the 1940s and 1950s, some islands were literally wiped off the face of the map.

The Marshallese, treated as guinea pigs by the American military, continue to suffer from their exposure to

To the world's warmongers, the Pacific looks like an acceptably remote place to test nuclear weapons. But it doesn't look like that to the people who live there.

high levels of radioactive fallout. Even while many have become afflicted with cancer, the US government still attempts to prevent residents from understanding the problems of radiation sickness. It remains impossible for residents to return to some of their home islands; one island, Bikini, remains off-limits for at least another half a century.

US nuclear weapons testing in the Pacific ended in the early 1960s, but was replaced with the testing of nuclear weapons delivery systems, also in the Marshalls. The people of Kwajalein were evicted from their homes in 1964 so that their island, the largest atoll/lagoon in the world, could be used as a target for long-range missiles fired from California 4,700 miles away.

Today, Kwajalein is vital to the development of the nuclear arms race, since it is the only US facility available for the testing of new weapons systems such as the

MX, the Trident, and the Minuteman III.

Sacrificed for the cause, the 8,000 people of Kwajalein are crowded onto 66 acres on nearby Ebeye - existing in some of the worst poverty found anywhere in the Pacific Islands.

The US government considers the Pacific a vital strategic preserve in many other ways as well. In Tinian, north of Belau, large tracts of fertile land have been set aside for an Air Force base. Some of the Pentagon's most important strategic nuclear weapons, the B-52 long-range bombers and Polaris and Poseidon submarines, are based in Guam, a US territory.

Navy

In addition, the Navy depends upon its strategic forces having transit through the Pacific, and military analysts expect the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean



They don't test nuclear weapons in Paris.....

to become more important areas for the deployment of

US submarine-launched nuclear missiles.

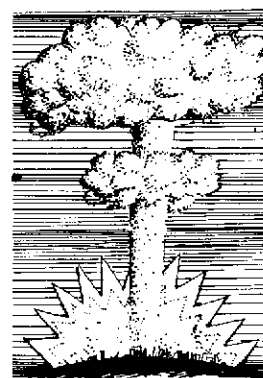
The French and the Japanese governments are also active in the Pacific. Even now, the French test nuclear weapons in their Polynesian colony, where over seventy nuclear bombs have been detonated since the early 1960s. According to an independent French study, the testing leads to more than 40 cancer cases each year among the native population.

French

Despite continuing protests from the people, the French have made no concessions, other than to switch from atmospheric to underground testing in 1975. Nonetheless, underground testing causes destruction to both the environment and to the health of the Polynesian people as well.

The Japanese, who have accumulated more than 200,000 55-gallon drums of nuclear wastes from their expanding nuclear power programme, are looking to the Pacific to dump their radioactive garbage.

The Japanese government's Science and Tech-



nology Agency has proposed disposing of the wastes between Japan and the Northern Marianas, and Japanese scientists have been dispatched to try to convince the Micronesians that the proposed dumping would not harm them.

The people of the Pacific, however, cannot be so easily persuaded. "If it is safe," they inquire, "why don't you dump it in Tokyo?" Polynesians ask the French to test their bombs in Paris; Micronesians demand that the US take their nuclear weapons back to Washington.

Equal before the law

ACCORDING to Sir Richard Marsh - he's chairman of the Newspaper Proprietors Association these days - the court's judgement on Sean Geraghty was fair.

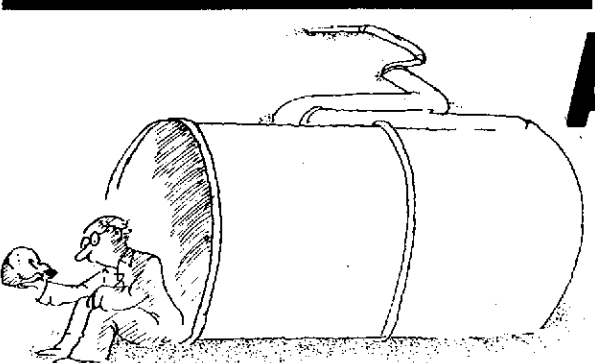
"The important thing," he says, "was to establish that you cannot have a situation where the law does not apply to any particular group whether they are trade union officials, army officers, or members of the CBI."

Very fair! Certainly CBI members should be fined for encouraging solidarity strikes and army officers should be arrested for supporting the hospital workers. As Anatole France put it: "The law in

its majestic equality forbids the rich as well as the poor to steal bread, to sleep under bridges, and to beg for food."

But Bob Jones, health service officer of NUPE, was so cock-a-hoop at the small fine imposed on Sean Geraghty that he now thought "perhaps it indicates that behind the scenes the judges support the health workers' claim."

Perhaps soon the judges will stage a solidarity strike and then, in the interests of the fairness that Lord Marsh values so highly, turn up to work the next day to fine themselves a couple of weeks' wages.



No jobs for blacks

Mrs Geraldine Ambrosius has resigned from her job as manager of a Liverpool employment agency trying to find work for blacks. She estimates that 75% of blacks in the city are unemployed: "Trying to find work for blacks in Liverpool is like hitting your head against a

brick wall."

In Oldham 680 black and Asian claimants were refused supplementary benefit payments or increases in such payments. Once the refusals were challenged by welfare groups, DHSS officials changed their minds on 676

of these cases.

Camden council has done better, appointing a race relations advisor for its social services. Good move. But some of the ethnic minority organisations were less than impressed when they found out that a white South African had been appointed.

Anti-Begin, anti-Arab

LAST week the Guardian had a leader headlined "The impact of General Sharon" while below it James Cameron's column spoke of Begin as "the embittered mini-fuehrer of the 1980s".

Similar articles abound in the British press. The theme

is that Begin and Sharon are doing what "Labour" Zionists would never dream of doing. Cameron even talks of how shocked Israel's first prime minister, David Ben Gurion, would have been.

SDP (ex-Labour) MP Neville Sandelson put it more crudely. Having resigned from the SDP Friends of Israel, bitterly condemning the blitzkrieg on Beirut, he was asked by an interviewer to explain how Israel could do such things. The problem, Sandelson replied, is that Israel's (Jewish) population has changed.

A lot of the recent immigrants - Oriental Jews - "are scarcely different from the Arab peoples around them". And this is the section of the Jewish population that most strongly supports Begin.

Milton Viorst in the Guardian on August 5 puts a similar line: a protest against Begin's anti-Arab blitzkrieg which itself is coloured by anti-Arab racism.

Yet it was under Ben

Gurion that Israel participated in the Suez invasion. Another "Labour" Zionist, Golda Meir, denied the very existence of the Palestinians. "Palestinians? What Palestinians?" she asked in reply to a question about the fate of the Palestinian people.

Later, "Labour Zionist" governments occupied the West Bank and began the settlement policy, extending onto that territory the policy of continual robbery of Arab land by the Zionist state.

Of course, there are different trends within Zionism. The Israeli "Labour" Party's policy is far more supinely pro-US than Begin's.

What is happening in Lebanon now, however, is fundamentally the logical outcome of the establishment of the Zionist state. And the Guardian, after all, was the chief mouthpiece of Chaim Weizman, Israel's first President, while he worked and lived in Manchester.

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.

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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.

LAMBETH/SOUTHWARK Socialist Organiser Group Open Forums. 8.30pm at 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5. September 2: Zionism and the Jewish Question. September 16: The Fight Against Black Oppression. September 30: Fighting Women's Oppression.

ISLINGTON SO' Group. Next meeting: Sunday 29 August at 3pm, Thornhill Neighbourhood Project, Orkney House, Caledonian Road.

Tea and sandwiches provided. For baby-sitting, phone Nik (607-5268) in advance.

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.

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.

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

'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.

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

PRIVATISATION

Liverpool NALGO draws the line

Pete Cresswell, NALGO branch secretary at Liverpool City Council, spoke to Socialist Organiser

"THERE are very few council services that can't be privatised. Our members are coming to realise this, and that a line has got to be drawn somewhere."

Since last week Liverpool NALGO members have been blacking work on the Liberal controlled council's plans to privatise refuse collection and housing management.

Similar action is being taken in Birmingham against moves by the Tory council there to get bids from private companies to take over refuse collection.

Sack

Birmingham council has threatened to sack the NALGO members. Liverpool council has made no response yet, but Pete Cresswell says: "If they try sacking anyone, we'll have an immediate mass meeting of our 5,000 members in work time to decide on strike action."

40 NUPE members have already been on strike for four weeks in Liverpool, against moves by the council to privatise the cleaning of the city centre market. They are picketing the market, but enough lorries are crossing the picket line to keep the market going.

The executive of the council Joint Shop Stewards' Committee called a mass meeting to discuss all-out

action in support of the 40 NUPE members. They felt the attendance was not sufficient to go ahead with action.

"But, says Pete Cresswell, 'the market is only the beginning. The council plans to move on to much larger-scale privatisation, and that will mean redundancies."

"The proposal to privatise housing management is an innovation. It has never been done before. The council want to do a trial with two large estates. They have already had a lot of inquiries from property management companies and estate agents."

"Our members are becoming more aware of the issues, and more determined."



Birmingham threats

by Jim Denham

"I would hope that all those who are minded not to co-operate will reconsider their position... I must make it clear that any employee taking such industrial action after Monday August 23, 1982 will be dismissed."

That was the chummy message from Neville Bosworth, leader of Birmingham City Council to NALGO members who are currently blacking the Council's privatisation plans.

As well as demonstrating the Tory council's determination to force privatisation in for housing, amenities, architecture, solicitors, school meals, recreation and refuse, the sacking threat is also a blatant attempt to smash the closed shop.

Earlier in the letter Bos-

worth states: "I can assure all employees that no-one would be dismissed through losing union membership through discharging his (sic) duties to the council."

The Tory cuts and privatisation plans (amounting to £17.4 million, 80 jobs in the rates department, 100 in housing and 212 in social services just for starters), comes on top of £15 million worth of cuts (and 2,000 jobs lost) made last year by the right wing Labour administration of Clive Wilkins.

Determination

Now there is an increasing determination amongst the rank and file (and even amongst many of the officials) of the council unions that the time has come to stop all cuts and job loss.

NALGO's strong response to the privatisation plans is a reflection of this.

Unfortunately, not all the unions have responded so well. TGWU union official Doug Fairburn, has already weakened the unity of the response by suggesting that the union side put in its own tender for refuse collection - a tactic that can only mean sacrificing jobs, conditions and wage levels voluntarily!

Council workers must reject any suggestion of such a sell-out, and establish a joint union strike committee. (NALGO, NUPE, TGWU, GMWU) covering all departments to coordinate all-out strike action from 24 August. That is the only way to answer Bosworth's blackmail and stop the Tory cuts in Birmingham.

UCW exec attacks left

THE UCW Executive Council is planning a big clamp-down on the activities of the Broad Left in the union. At the rules revision conference this coming weekend they will propose two amendments directed against 'fringe groups', i.e. mainly the Broad Left.

In an unprecedented move, they have issued an explanation of the amendments which makes their intentions clear.

The first amendment forbids the use of the name 'Union of Communication Workers' or the initials 'UCW' in any name or title without the permission of the EC.

This, the EC explains, is an attempt to prevent 'fringe groups' using the union's name to 'interfere with' union policy decisions.

The second amendment outlaws the discussion of union business at any meet-

ing or conference unless it is authorised for such discussion under union rules or specifically by the EC.

This, the EC explains, is the second part of their attempt to stop 'fringe groups' influencing union policy 'especially during annual conference'.

The effect is a Stalinist-type ban on all unofficial meetings or groups.

It is no accident that the UCW leaders are trying to introduce rules such as these now. Recently the EC voted to support the register in the Labour Party, and they have been a mainstay of the Right in the Party.

The last rules revision conference, in contrast, relaxed the rules somewhat, for example removing the ban on direct contact between branches.

But now the EC have clearly decided to go out to smash the Broad Left.

Air India fights for union rights

ALONGSIDE the health workers' and Fleet Street union banners outside Sean Geraghty's hearing last Friday was a banner from the strike committee at Air India.

A member of the strike committee explained to us. "It was a simple decision for us. Here was one trade unionist who was acting like a trade unionist, and he deserved support".

The Air India workers themselves are fighting for basic union rights. "The intention of the management from the beginning was to wipe out our union. We have challenged the commercial policies and the malpractices of the management, and they are attempting to silence and nullify the criticisms of the union".

Of a hundred-odd workers on strike since early July, 91 have now been sacked. Their demand is simply that management returns to status quo and respects the agreements it has signed. But the management is not even willing to take the dispute to ACAS.

They provoked the dispute in early June, by attempting to impose changed rosters, without consulta-

tion and in violation of agreements they had signed only a few days before! They also suspended shop steward Aloy de Silva, again without respecting agreed procedure.

The union imposed an overtime ban and work-to-rule. It became a strike after Aloy de Silva was sacked on July 2. Then two weeks ago the management responded with sacking letters to 91 strikers.

Air India are still maintaining some operations with non-union staff and some trade unionists who are crossing the picket lines. But an Air India Support Committee at Heathrow has organised effective blacking of cargo transshipments, and the reservations department has been totally shut down.

The dispute has been made official by the TGWU.

The strikers' aim is to extend the blacking to complete withdrawal of cooperation with Air India by all trade unionists. Donations are also needed, and should be sent to: TGWU Air India branch 1/1305, c/o Transport House, 7-9 South Road, Southall, Middlesex.

Sun sets for pioneer profiteers

by Stan Crooke

THERE is a grim irony in the fact that the closure of three foundries in the central region of Scotland should occur so soon after the Tories' Falklands foray.

For while the Tories were attempting to re-live the gunboat diplomacy of the heyday of British imperialism, the stagnation of latter day British capitalism was finally taking its toll of firms that had their rise to its expansion.

On Thursday 5 August, the closures of Jones and Campbell (Larbert) and Smith and Wellstood (Bonnybridge) were announced, involving a further 70 job losses in an area that has already witnessed a disastrous rise in unemployment in recent years.

It was Smith and Wellstood who made the stoves used by Florence Nightingale at Balaklava, and by Scott and Shackleton on their expeditions.

Drop

But the closure of these three foundries was only a drop in the ocean compared with the announcement made three days earlier that receivers had been appointed to the Carron Iron Works (Falkirk).

As every Scottish school-

child knows, Carron was the birthplace of the Scottish Industrial Revolution.

Carron's contributed rather more to Wellington's victory at Waterloo than did the playing fields of Eton, by supplying the British Army's cannons, and Nelson had Carron cannons fitted to his flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar.

James Watt went for the cylinders for his steam engines to Carron's. The foundry was also immortalised in a ditty penned by Robert Burns in an adjacent pub, after the foundry's security police had refused to let him make a Sunday afternoon visit to the foundry.

Unique

In a truly unique moment, Scottish nationalists will have clutched British Empire nostalgics in an embrace of mutual despair and wept into each other's hankies in hearing of the bankruptcy of Carron's.

In the early years of the century the foundry switched from production of cannons to bathroom appliances, and grew to become one of the leading manufacturers in this branch of industry. But then the recession pulled the plug on the company's profits.

The company responded in the time-honoured fashion

obligatory for the founder of the Scottish Industrial Revolution: they slashed their workforce from over 1,600 two years ago to 800 at the time the receivers were brought in.

But such measures proved of no avail: the firm's market value slumped to £3 million, whilst debts piled up to £11.7 million, and the price of the shares collapsed from 258½p (1973) to 18p today. The sun may never set on the British Empire, but the same certainly cannot be said of the firms which grew fat off its rise.

The crunch finally came as a result of a further attempt at rationalisation begun earlier this year. Management foolishly heeded the Siren's claims that the recession was over, and borrowed heavily in the belief that the market was about to pick up. But then the firm found itself left high and dry as the market remained depressed, and was ultimately ship-wrecked by the high interest rates being charged on its debts.

Volley

A volley from Carron's cannon could not have had a more devastating effect on the workforce than the announcement of the arrival of the receivers:

"It was all a bit much

for them to take in," said Harry Donaldson, GMWU senior shop steward at the foundry. "They were obviously shattered by what has happened." He described the workforce as "stunned".

Heather Lyon, assistant secretary of Falkirk Trades Council, and a former employee of Carron's herself until sacked, described the impact of a closure on the area: "Carron's is the last big workplace in this area, and in many cases all the wage-earners in a family work there. Closure would mean the complete decimation of local villages like Airth, and unemployment in the central region would rise to 17%."

Slim

The prospects for a fight-back look slim. Harry Donaldson described his strategy for saving jobs: "We tried to impress on our members that the major thing was to buckle down and work as hard as we can in order that we can save as many jobs as possible."

But in practice this will mean either all workers working themselves out of a job quicker than ever, or a fraction of the jobs being maintained at the price of a drastic deterioration in working conditions. It certainly isn't any way to begin a fightback.

Glynwed to black Glendale

AS the Glendale engineering strike enters its eighth week, there have been significant developments in favour of the strikers.

There is now a firm promise from Glynwed Foundries in Telford to black Glendale goods.

Trade unionists at another firm are also likely to begin blacking.

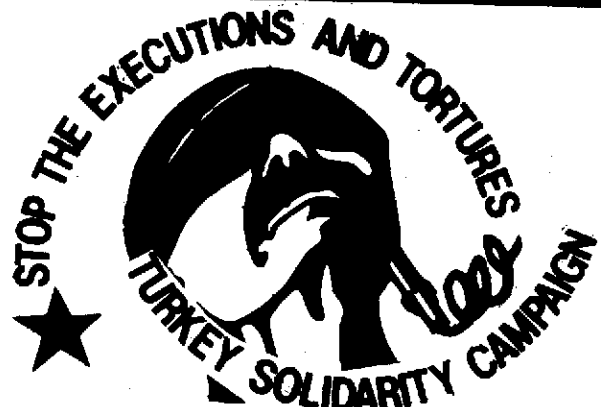
These developments are the result of the tenacity of the struggle put up by the Glendale workers who have been picketing for eight weeks, often confronting non-trade union drivers on the picket lines and facing threats from management.

The mass picket which has been held over the last three weeks has made a considerable impression on the attitude of both management and the scabs still working in the place.

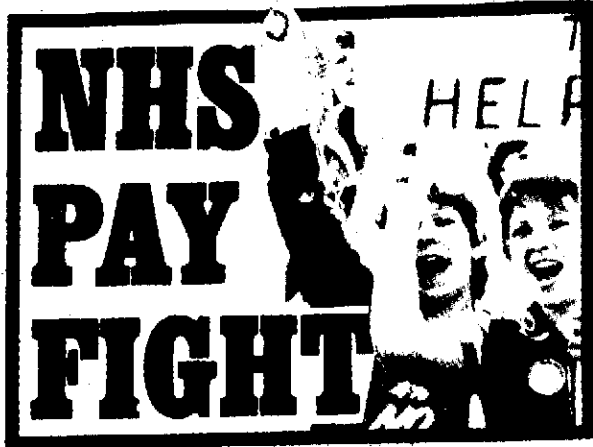
It is essential that these mass pickets - which take place every Monday - are kept up.

Join the picket at 7am outside the factory in Hythe Road, London NW10.

Donations and messages of support should be sent to: Glendale Strike Committee, c/o Mick Woods, 76 Austen House, Cambridge Road, London NW6.



Affiliate to the Turkish Solidarity Campaign. Write to: TSC, BM Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX.



STRIKE AGAINST SACKING

PHIL McEntee, a NUPE shop steward at the London Hospital, Whitechapel, has been suspended from duty and accused of fraudulently altering a control sheet.

Management had a hard time finding a charge that would stick. They first said he had been seen outside the hospital at 3.05pm on 4 May by a hospital administrator who was taking a "late lunch break".

But they then realised that this was during Phil's tea break.

So they changed the time to 2.55pm - outside his teabreak.

Next Phil was asked to account for the whole afternoon up to 2.55pm.

At a hearing with management on August 12, Phil accounted for the work he had done that afternoon. His case was supported by NUPE and his supervisor.

After the hearing had finished management presented "new evidence" - a typewritten, unsigned statement by an unnamed patient.

Suspended

Undeterred, management have now suspended him and want a new hearing.

As a NUPE leaflet from the hospital put it: "The shifting nature of the allegations, with the charges now changing three times, gives rise to the belief that management is desperately looking for a way to dismiss Phil McEntee."

The porters went on strike immediately, demanding the reinstatement of their steward. On Tuesday 17 August a NUPE mass meeting of 400 workers voted overwhelmingly for all-out action and the withdrawal of emergency cover.

It is the first real decision for all-out action in living memory at the London. The London Ambulance service are being approached for backing of the London Hospital.

Phil's reinstatement is vital. Management have already been making threatening noises to other stewards about the amount of time being spent on union activities. They're clearly going out to destroy any union strength that has been built up, especially since the start of the NHS pay campaign.

Phil McEntee told Socialist Organiser: "I think members have clearly shown that they understand that this is a fundamental attack on the union, and that they're prepared to stand up to Thatcher and Fowler and their agents in local management."

A NUPE member, commenting on the decision to withdraw emergency cover, told us: "Emergency cover had to be withdrawn. It is the only way of getting management to settle this dispute quickly. It's different from withdrawing emergency cover nationally. In this situation local management can act quickly to settle this dispute locally."

Support for this action is vital! Send messages of support and donations to the NUPE branch, c/o London Hospital, Whitechapel, London.

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

Pickets arrested

EIGHT pickets were arrested at Halifax General Hospital on Wednesday/Thursday 11/12 August. In a deliberate planned exercise, management came out to negotiate with stewards over emergency cover but only as a cover for an attempt by a laundry van to cross the picket line.

It was being driven by the District Nursing Officer. Coincidentally the police arrived at the same time.

Four pickets were arrested, to be followed later by two more.

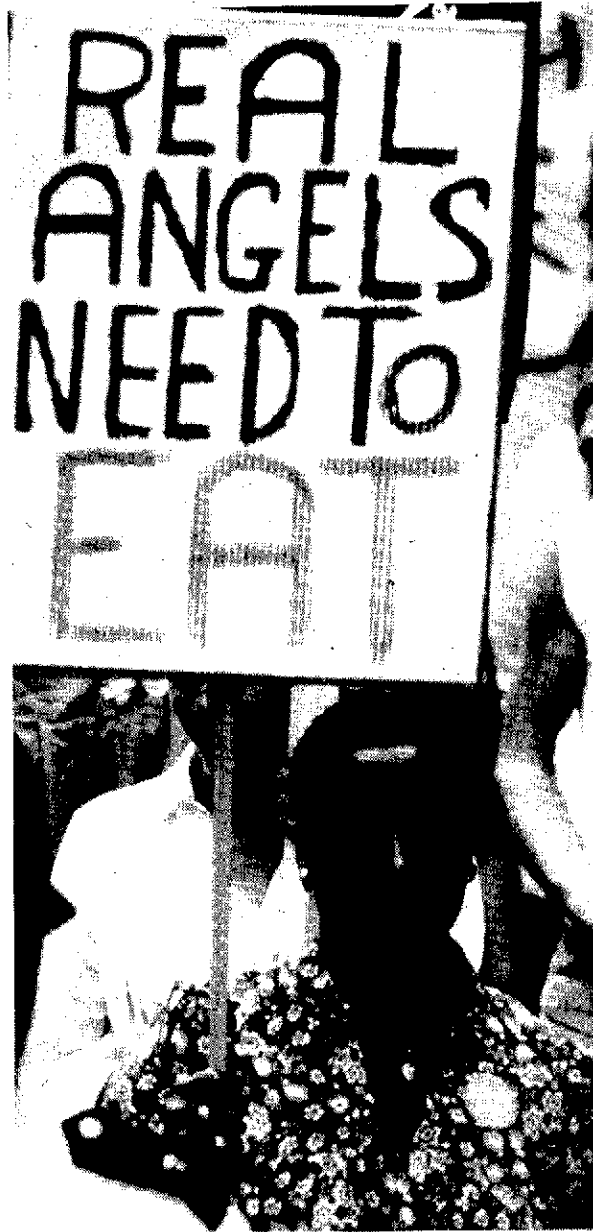
*Picket Calder Magistrates Court, 9.30 am on Friday 3 September.

*Donations and messages of support to Halifax Health Workers Defence Fund, c/o Jean Normington, Branch Secretary, NUPE Health Workers, 3, Newstead Place, Halifax, West Yorkshire.

We've had days, weeks hours - now all out!

MARTIN THOMAS reports on a week of very militant activity by workers in support of the health service pay claim.

GLASGOW'S WEEK



Health workers for the Full Claim is producing a leaflet to mobilise for the lobby of the TUC Health Services Committee on August 26. Copies can be obtained from Anna Lunts, 78 High Street, Atherton, Lancs. (0942-877296).

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

The next meeting of the stewards will be on Monday 23 August at 6.30pm at the Nevin Lecture Theatre in St Thomas's Hospital. Representatives of health workers' Joint Stewards Committees will be particularly welcome.

In Edinburgh, the Western General Hospital was all out last week, leaving no emergency cover. This week workers there have decided to keep the action going by calling different sections out each day.

Office workers at Trinity House, the main NHS administrative centre in Edinburgh, may also go on all-out strike. They are meeting as we go to press to decide on their response to management threats to dock their pay because they have been blacking mail.

Demonstration

London action included a South East Region TUC demonstration at DHSS headquarters on Wednesday. About 1500 to 2000 were there throughout the day,

and Sean Geraghty spoke.

Other militant areas included Sheffield (Middlewood hospital was out all last week), Bradford (where a surgeon who insulted strikers is being blacked), and Derbyshire (where ambulance workers are on strike).

Some previously militant areas, like Manchester, were weaker this time: but this reflects not a collapse by the members or the stewards, but a natural result of the union leaders' dribs-and-drabs policy.

Stronger

Solidarity got stronger towards the end of the week. And there was also support from some less expected quarters. A brain surgeon spoke in support of the NHS workers in Glasgow, eight doctors in Yorkshire donated a week's wages and joined the picket line, the medical journal the Lancet called for the resignation of Tory minister Norman Fowler, and patients in Ipswich refused meals as a gesture of solidarity.

Monday. 900 workers at Hartwood Hospital in Shotts in Glasgow go on strike, hospital on emergency cover only.

Reception staff at Gartnavel General Hospital go on strike for entire week, due to anger at the government's adverts in papers about alleged pay of ancillaries.

Norman Tebbit meets STUC at their head office in Glasgow. Hundreds of NHS strikers picket meeting. Andy Barr, STUC vice-president, pledges STUC's support for healthworkers from steps of building before meeting Tebbit, whose laws will make illegal solidarity action with NHS strikers. NHS strike not discussed at STUC-Tebbit meeting.

Open-top double-decker bus sets off on tour of Scotland, containing an assorted medley of health union officials, MPs, health workers, going round the various areas to "boost morale". At least it clears some bureaucrats and officials out of Glasgow.

Day one of holiday of Bob Thomson (NUPE Glasgow full-timer, hitherto the leading organiser of the strike) in the Canary Islands.

Tuesday. Medical records staff at Victoria Infirmary begin strike to last rest of week. More than 100 laboratory, pharmacy and medical technicians also walk out.

Other ancillaries ban all overtime. Hospital on emergency cover only.

Reduction

Greater Glasgow Health Board produces document proposing massive reduction of health service facilities in Glasgow including possible closure of Bath St physiotherapy unit, Yorkhill Hospital for sick children, creche facilities in Glasgow West and East districts, radiology service in Glasgow Royal, anti-dermatology unit at Southern General, laboratory services at Royal Samaritan Hospital for Women, David Elder Infirmary, Darnley Geriatric Hospital. Day two of Bob Thomson's holiday.

Wednesday. 24 hour strike by ambulancemen in Glasgow and West of Scotland. Glasgow, Renfrewshire, Dumfries and Lanarkshire lose all ambulance services. Ambulancemen join picket lines at hospitals. Only exception to this. ambulancemen who belong to "Association of Professional Ambulance Personnel".

At Southern General, over 250 porters, catering, linen, sewing room, transport workers strike. 400 plus march from hospital through Govan. March supported by shipyard workers from UCS, Govan sewage works, local Labour Party members and councillors (including Pat Keegan), and delegation from NALGO Strathclyde region.

Porters at Royal Infirmary withdraw emergency cover.

Porters at Gartnavel General go on strike, but leave emergency cover. Porters at Yorkhill Hospital for Sick Children are suspended for refusing to move rubbish. Other porters walk out in support, leaving only head porter and deputy on duty.

Day three of Bob Thomson's holiday.

Thursday. 500 shipyard workers in Greenock strike for 2 hours and join demonstration in support of NHS strike.

3,500 shipyard workers from Govan vote a 50p per week levy for NHS strike and pledge strike action if there is an official call for it.

Porters and technicians at Inverclyde Royal Hospital walk out on indefinite strike after management misuses workers' provision of emergency cover. Day four of Bob Thomson's holiday.

Friday. Over 3,000 attend rally in George Square in support of NHS strike. Marches organised from different areas of city to converge on George Square. 1,000 march in from West End alone (Gartnavel General, Gartnavel Royal, Canniesburn, and Western Infirmary contingents).

Marches/rally supported by miners, steelworkers, shipbuilding workers, engineers, local council workers, etc., Education Institute of Scotland, POEU, Glasgow District Council and Council sub-committees cancelled to let councillors attend picket lines and rally.

Tory councillors condemn this as "deplorable and undignified". "The leftward drift of the Labour Group is becoming alarming" says Tory Group leader Bill Aitken. Labour activists stunned - what leftward drift?

Deadline

UCS convenor Sammy Gilmour says: "It's time for us to set a deadline for the government, and if there's no settlement by then, then there's no workers" (i.e. everyone out on strike).

George Boulton (assistant secretary of Scottish NUM) says: "If they put him (Geraghty) in, then we all come out," and calls for a one-day miners' strike nationally in support of NHS workers. Very political speech: points out how stakes of the dispute have been raised and how a political challenge to union movement as whole is involved in the prosecution of Geraghty.

General theme of speeches was the need for workers outside the health service to take strike action to help NHS workers win.

Day five of Bob Thomson's holiday - only another nine days to go.

A coordinating committee against the NF stall in Brick Lane has been set up in Tower Hamlets.

Sunday August 29 has been selected for a demonstration.

Time: 10am.

Venue: Brick Lane /Bethnal Green Road.

Supported by: Tower Hamlets Labour Party, Tower Hamlets Assoc. For Racial Justice, Tower Hamlets Trades Council, Bengali Welfare Assoc., Bengali youth organisations, East London Workers Against Racism.

Socialist Organiser



WHO ARMED BEGIN?

EVEN if the US-sponsored plan to evict the Palestinian Liberation Organisation fighters from Beirut goes through smoothly, the agony will not be over.

In Israeli-occupied Lebanon, hundreds of thousands have been put in prison camps. Reports of torture are now coming out of the prison camps (see page 3).

In Beirut itself, the Israeli forces will insist on using what they call 'the military option' against anyone left there who they think is PLO.

The established media express horror. But they accept that the solution is for the Palestinians, having been driven from their homeland and then harassed again and again in the Arab states, to submit to being driven out by armed force once again.

They do not turn the question round and ask why

the Israeli troops do not withdraw, and why the Palestinians cannot return as equal citizens to their homeland.

And they do not ask who armed Begin. For the Israeli war machine has been sponsored, built up, supplied and subsidised by the same people — notably the US ruling class, but also the West European ruling classes — who now deplore the holocaust in Lebanon.

Against our ruling classes, who share complicity in the slaughter, the labour movement in Western Europe and the US should fight for blacking of supplies to the Israeli war machine.

SEE INSIDE — Page 3: Open Letter to Tony Benn, 'Why does Israel wage war?'; report from Socialist Organiser correspondent in Haifa.

TUC Tebbit lobby called for Sep. 6

THE failure of the newspaper owners to get Sean Geraghty sent to jail was a big blow to the Tories' anti-union law. An injunction had been served against Geraghty under Prior's 1980 Employment Act.

But the blow is very far from a death-blow for the Tories and the bosses. They can bide their time and pick a weaker section of workers for their next attempt to establish the authority of the law — unless the labour movement presses home the advantage now.

General strike

Steps now to break off TUC collaboration with the Tories in committees like the NEDC, to call a one-day general strike against the Tebbit law, and to commit

unions to strike action if any move is made against Sean Geraghty for non-payment of the fine and costs, could get the Tories on the run.

But the official leaders of the labour movement plan no such steps. The solidarity with Geraghty came almost entirely from the grass roots, and not from them. The only national union leader on Friday's demonstration of solidarity with Geraghty was Bill Deal, president of the Fire Brigades Union. No national leaders of the health unions or of the NUM were there.

Some union leaders actively opposed solidarity. Albert Spanswick tried to speak in the name of all health workers against the Fleet Street action. EETPU leader Frank Chapple disowned it.

The next step in challenging the inertia of the official labour movement leaders, and mobilising for a fight against the Tebbit law, is on Monday September 6. On that morning the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions will be organising a lobby of the TUC congress in Brighton.

Break links

The Mobilising Committee for the Defence of Trade Union Rights will be organising a contingent with the slogans 'Break Links with the Tories', 'Call a one-day general strike'.

SEE INSIDE: Page 7: How union action beat anti-union laws. Centre pages: The Tory strategy behind the Tebbit law.

£6000 fund



The fund total now stands at £3450.96 — about 58% of the £6,000 target. As the table below shows, progress varies a lot from area to area. But local groups are making their plans for fund-raising in September. Let's see the laggards catch up!

Glasgow	41.40	34%	Birmingham	448.00	87%
Edinburgh	40.00	22%	Coventry	574.80	137%
Stirling			Nottingham	114.00	114%
Carlisle			Leicester	86.00	22%
Durham	110.00	110%	Northampton		
York			Cardiff/Bristol	45.00	45%
Bradford			Oxford	423.50	83%
Leeds	68.00	68%	Southampton		
Hull	1.25	0.2%	Basingstoke	45.00	45%
Sheffield	102.50	103%	Brighton		
Merseyside	120.00	38%	London	304.00	14%
Manchester	163.00	42%	Miscellaneous	744.51	
Winsford			Total	3450.96	
Stoke	20.00	67%			

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

The left ducks a challenge

LAST week the Labour Left conceded defeat. It was just one battle in a continuing campaign — but it was a defeat without a struggle.

Nominations closed for the leadership and the deputy leadership, and only one name had been put forward for each position — Michael Foot for leader and Denis Healey for deputy.

Denis Healey is no less committed than he was last year to sabotaging Labour Party policy. He is still pledged not to join any Labour Government that implements unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Rally

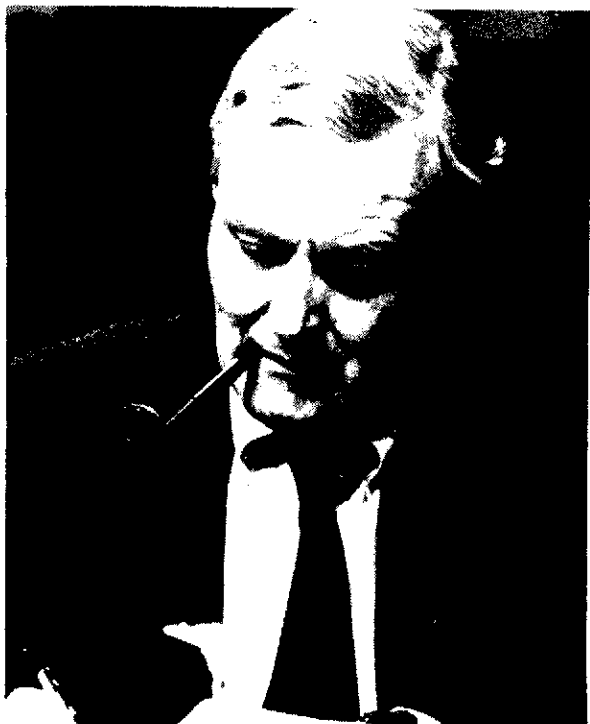
Michael Foot is hand in glove with Healey now.

So why no challenge? Some Labour Party activists will want to know. CLPs including Islington South, Islington North and Hornsey had nominated Tony Benn for leader against Michael Foot.

In an open letter to Tony Benn last month, Socialist Organiser wrote:

Challenge Foot for the position of real authority.

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



Tony Benn — a defeat conceded

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

It would be a warning to those who will control the next Labour government that this time they had

better not ignore the movement. It would be a beginning on organising the rank and file to resist the right and soft left in the next Labour government.

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

democracy.

But Tony Benn has ducked the issue. He has conceded that for now the Right and soft left is on top. He has taken a step back towards the old stand of the Left — good losers rather than winners.

Let's make sure it's not the start of a general shift that way by the whole Left.

THE urgent need to campaign in the unions for a commitment by union leaderships and conference delegations to overturn the NEC proposals and defeat the APEX resolution supporting them was emphasised by two decisions taken at the ASTMS executive last weekend.

It voted 14-5 against a resolution that the conference delegation should be recommended to oppose the NEC decision on the register; and 17-3 against a resolution "deploring" the action against Militant.

Clearly the decisions will now put real pressure on the ASTMS Conference delegation, although they are not mandatory and there have been cases in the past where the delegation has overturned an EC recommendation.

Branches and committees should send in resolutions opposing the EC decisions.

PHOTO: JOHN HARRIS

Militant should join the Alliance

by Mick Liggins

THE MESSAGE spelled out by Militant at the YS summer camp as far as the witch-hunt is concerned is that they intend to go it alone. The most worrying thing about the camp was the sectarianism of the majority of the Militant supporters towards other left groupings in the Labour Party.

In the debate on the witch-hunt we saw new Militant supporters declaring that they 'would never work with sectarians' (sic), and being cheered on by more experienced supporters. This attitude has not come out of thin air; it has come, discreetly, from leading Militant spokespeople.

Not so discreet was the statement by Laurence

Coates at the YS conference a few months ago, when he said of groups like the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and the Rank and File Mobilising Committee: "We don't need these people". He was replying to a resolution from Wallasey YS which called for a revamped RFMC to fight the witch-hunt.

Join

Class Fighter and Socialist Organiser supporters at the camp argued that Militant should join with others on the left fighting the witch-hunt through the Unregistered Alliance.

We say the Left should work together. That does

not mean that Militant or any other tendency on the Left will have to bury their policies.

Working together means organising such things as public meetings, working out tactics for Labour Party conference, grouping the constituencies that are not prepared to go along with the register, and campaigning throughout the labour movement to defend the YS. Organising separate public meetings against the witch-hunt in addition is of course not excluded, and Socialist Organiser and Class Fighter will do this as well as Militant.

Serious

There is also a serious tactical disagreement that needs to be cleared up. The supporters of Militant (or most of them) are not campaigning for constituencies to refuse cooperation with the register. We would say that the constituencies must refuse — not just one

or two of them, which could result in isolation, but in the same numbers that supported Peter Tatchell's right to be selected.

Militant's 'cautious' line will weaken the whole campaign. All groups on the left must state openly now that we are not going to register and that we will fight to the end against it.

Defeat

Even if Militant decided to register, the Right could easily declare them unacceptable — and they would be in a position of strength as Militant would have already gone some way towards accepting defeat.

Comrades from Militant should join with the Unregistered Alliance, maintain their political independence, and join in an effective fight by the Left to bury the witch-hunt.

The badge all witches are wearing.....



25p each, plus 12p for postage. (Orders of more than 10 post free). From Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Labour witch-hunt



September 11 — a chance to organise

by John Bloxam

Labour movement conference: September 11
Fight the Tories, not the Socialists!

At Wembley Conference Centre, London

All bona fide labour movement organisations are entitled to send delegates (maximum 5 per organisation), and are invited to sponsor the conference. Credentials fee £1 per delegate.

Credentials from Tony Saunois, 23 Ironside House, Homerton Road, London E9 5PW.
Cheques payable to Labour Movement Conference Fund

Conference is extremely important. The possibility of having a full discussion, putting forward additional or alternative proposals, and taking clear decisions, will determine how far the Conference will play a role in organising the opposition.

The Conference will not play such a role if it turns out to be a cross between a Militant Rally and an LCDTU organised 'conference', heavily stage-managed around a previously fixed and completely unalterable statement that is 'presented' for 'approval'.

The call for a democratically organised conference, with the possibility of discussing different proposals and taking decisions on action, should be made to the Conference Organising Committee (address below) as soon as possible from delegating organisations. They should also send off any resolutions they wish to see discussed.

In addition to deciding to call for a democratically organised Conference, the last meeting of the Unregistered Alliance also urged delegating organisations to submit resolutions along the following lines.

That the Conference should express:

*Total opposition to the NEC decision, the compulsory register of groups, (the new proscribed list), and any disciplinary action arising out of it.

*Full support for refusal to cooperate with any inquiries into groups and organisations in the Party.

*Full support for those groups and organisations who have refused to 'register'.

*Full support for those CLPs who have already indicated that they will refuse to discipline or expel any member for any reason arising out of the NEC Report on the Militant Tendency.

*Support for the Conference of Constituency Parties Against the Witch-hunt (Saturday 30 October).

Co-ordinating meeting of Labour Parties Against the Witch-hunt on Saturday 4 September at 2.00pm at County Hall, Westminster SE1.

UNREGISTERED ALLIANCE. Next meeting, Thursday September 2 at 7.30pm in County Hall, London. Contact: 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.

Accrington right routed

A SHOW of solidarity by the left wing of Accrington Constituency Labour Party prevented an attempt by the right to shelve three resolutions opposing witch-hunting in the Labour Party.

At an official delegate meeting held on July 14, the right, realising that they would be unable to successfully oppose any resolutions supporting the right of Militant and other left groups to organise in the Labour Party, endeavoured to suspend any debate or subsequent vote around the witch-hunt issue by demanding a full delegate meeting.

Ostensibly, this demand was made so that a democratic discussion could take place to determine the party's attitude to the witch-hunt. In reality, however, it was made for one reason only — that the right would be able to mobilise enough support (mainly from those of its delegates who do not regularly attend GMC meetings) to effectively stifle any debate on the issue, with the inevitable result that any anti-witch-hunt resolutions would be automatically defeated.

When the left, including Socialist Organiser supporters, pointed out the functions of the official delegate meeting, the right's anti-socialist manoeuvring was exposed and the meeting sanctioned a debate on the resolutions.

Eventually

The resolutions, two submitted by local branches, and one by the LPYS, were eventually passed by 2-1 majorities, and forwarded to the NEC.

The right are expected to initiate an organised campaign aimed at negating them by submitting resolutions demanding witch-

hunts in the Labour Party.

A composite of the resolutions is as follows:

"Accrington CLP considers that there should be no witch-hunt against the Militant and other groups in the Labour Party. The decision to recommend expulsion of members of the Militant tendency can only be a prelude to attacks on other groups or individuals whose point of view disagrees with that of the party leadership.

Many Labour members may be opposed to some or all of the points of view proposed by the Militant

tendency, but they would insist that criticism of Militant should be by argument and democratic discussion.

Reject

Once criticism of the leadership becomes a crime to be punished by expulsion a party acquires totalitarian features which any democratic socialist should reject."

Accrington SO supporters