

A Socialist ACTION

ERIC HEFFER ON THE TUC AND LABOUR PAGE 3

Heffer and Meacher are the only left alternative

Kinnock shows his true colours

WHETHER OR NOT Neil Kinnock made the insulting comments about Tony Benn and Michael Meacher attributed to him by the press they would be in line with his hostility to the left of the labour movement.

Many on the left have voted for Kinnock in their Labour Parties and trade unions. Labour's disastrous defeat in the general election prompted them to embrace a candidate who had supported the left in the past and claimed to be able to unify the party. It is true also that the defeat of Shore and Hattersley signals the decline of the old PLP right.

But Neil Kinnock's election at the Labour Party conference will mean the beginning of a war against the left.

The reasons for this lie in the response of the labour bureaucracy to the general election. They did not conclude, as this paper did, that the reason for Labour's defeat lay in the four years when the labour movement leadership virtually abandoned the field to the Tories, allowing the healthworkers and other workers to go down to terrible defeat.

No, the reaction of Len Murray and the majority of the TUC leaders was to start talks with the Tories, to throw a question mark over the trades union alliance with Labour and pose a regression to the 'Lib-Labism' which bedevilled the British labour movement at the turn of the century.

Now the trade union bureaucrats are pulling out all the stops to push through their shift to the right through the Labour Party. Frank Chapple's support for Kinnock signals that they are confident they have such an instrument.

Kinnock's election will mark a sharp break from the erratic unitarianism of Michael Foot — instead it

will mean a sapping operation against the left policies adopted by Labour conference and a new round of the witch hunt.

In these circumstances it is criminal that there were those on the left who were hesitating and doubtful in their support for the only left alternative to Kinnock — Eric Heffer.

This even applies to Michael Meacher and Tony Benn who now find themselves the victims of Kinnock's tongue.

It is all the more shameful that there are those who have compounded this error, by calling for support for Roy Hattersley against Meacher.

This includes leading figures in the Communist Party like Hugh Wyper, the Scottish regional secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, who, according to the *Sunday Times*, has been energetically working to reverse the decision of the union's executive to back Meacher.

A stop must be put to this back-sliding. Instead the left must rally the

substantial minority which exists in the Labour Party and the unions to win the majority of the movement for a fight against the Tories. This will mean fighting against Kinnock and his backers among the trade union leaders.

The publication of the national *Labour Briefing*

supplement starting from this Labour Party conference, the formation of groups supporting it and their links with the Broad Left developments in the

unions is a first modest step.

The lesson of the election defeat for the left is the building of a new fighting minority, which

can begin to resist the Tory attacks on every front and open the way for a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

Save the NHS!

THE LAST great achievement of the 1945 Labour government lies on the operating table ready for the Tory knife. The NHS and its patients are going to be murdered by the Thatcher government if we let them get away with it.

In region after region, jobs are to disappear so that money can be saved. In Virginia Water and the other watering holes of the rich they will be rubbing their hands at the thought of the tax concessions to come from their government.

There is less enthusiasm on Merseyside, and in Bermondsey, Swansea and Stockton. In these places the health and lives of the

sick, the aged, the unemployed and the low paid are under threat.

But the Tories don't care. Why should they? After all they are doing their job of making Britain a happy place for the rich and the greedy.

They reckon that people who need heart and kidney transplants and other 'expensive' treatment on the NHS are a liability — and think the sooner they die the better.

Threat

So what is the Labour Party going to do about this threat to the lives and health of the great majority of the population?

Is it going to hide behind the cowardly excuse — mouthed by Chapple at the TUC — that the

Tories are the 'democratically elected government'.

This means giving them the go ahead to wipe out the NHS. For those that think that the health and lives of ordinary people don't matter much such an excuse will do.

But for every socialist, militant and caring person this is untenable. The destruction of the health service cannot be permitted. It must be resisted in parliament, in the hospitals, in the workplaces and on the streets.

Whatever the Tory majority in parliament decides must not stop the labour movement acting to save our hospitals. Parliamentary constitutionalism pales into insignificance compared with the health and life of the people.

EMERGENCY APPEAL

IN THE LAST two months, Socialist Action has been the victim of an unprecedented attack by Fleet Street and the employers.

Our supporters have been hounded out of their jobs in British Leyland.

The right wing of the labour movement have chosen this time to attack our supporters in the Labour Party.

We have campaigned up and down the country against these developments as well as championing the fight of the left. We were one of the few papers on the left which immediately supported the candidature of Eric Heffer when it was announced.

We have also tried to explain the real meaning of what is happening in British politics and the threat posed by the SDP.

But we face massive financial problems as a result of our activities. We appeal to every single supporter to send a contribution, however modest, to aid our fighting fund. The need is urgent: Please act today.





Conference '83

'What went wrong'

No solution to move right

'WHAT WENT WRONG at the general election?' is the central theme running through this year's Labour Party conference. For many delegates a major factor will be that the Party leadership demonstrated a lack of faith both in its own manifesto and its own rank and file.

But underlying this judgement is a growing feeling that the defeat was brought about as a result of Labour surrendering the political stage to Thatcher during the whole four years of the Tories term of office.

The 'Falklands factor' was not due so much to a conversion of Labour's leadership to patriotic Toryism, as to the refusal of Labour's leadership to stand up and be counted. When Kinnock and Healey finally did speak out during the campaign it was too late.

Prime movers of this 'sit and wait' policy have been the TUC. Their failure to campaign for socialist policies and their sellout of the struggles which did take place — such as the health workers, at British Leyland, and the train drivers — paved the way for Labour's defeat.

Whatever else it might show the election result rules out this policy once and for all. But the TUC answer is, if you cannot get what you want by sitting still then move — to the right! In the name of recognising the 'democratically elected government' we get talks with Tebbit and a refusal to oppose anti-trade union legislation.

The Tories 'right to govern' becomes a license to kill — with our jobs the target. Backtracking on policy, such as with unilateralism, is to go hand in hand with weakening the links with the Labour Party. The stage is set for talks with the SDP.

which is prepared to organise from the ranks of the labour movement upwards, in both the Labour Party and the trade unions.

The first obstacle to be overcome must be the question of the block vote. In response to the problems caused by a handful of bureaucrats wielding millions of votes some of the constituency-based left have demanded a radical change in the voting system of Labour Party conference.

We have to reject any moves which seriously threaten the relationship between unions and Party. However, we cannot hide from the problem. In this context Eric Heffer's proposals have the merit of putting the discussion on the right track.

The past practice of some lefts of 'lobbying' trade union leaders has played into the hands of Hattersley and his version of 'one person — one vote'.

As the Broad Left Organising Committee said earlier this year:

'The block vote provides a target for hostile criticism ... aimed at fragmenting our collective decision making ... However the casting of the vote for policies is often done with little involvement of the mass of our movement. This should and must be changed.'

'The block vote should be the reason and basis for involving trade union members in the highest aspect of industrial, political and leadership questions.'

Instead of taking the superficially easier road of weakening the role of the union vote the left has to

confront the question of union democracy.

How much stronger we would be if every union branch has a real say in how their unions voted at Conference.

Shift

But to get to that situation will require a major shift. Already that process is underway as can be seen in the left advances made in the Post Office Engineering Union and the National Union of Railwaymen, but if it is to go any further there is a need for a nationally coordinated fight across the unions. The BLOC is a first step in this, but it will also require the breaking of that long standing 'gentleman's (sic) agreement' which separates off 'trade unionism' from 'politics'.

Nowhere clearer is this agreement than in the rules for workplace branches of the Labour Party which specifically ban discussion of trade union matters.

But how can you build a workplace branch in a hospital, for instance, if you could not discuss how you fight back against attacks on the NHS? Workplace branches will be an important bridge between the constituency left and rank and file trade unionism. Hampered by NEC rules and the reluctance of regional officials to let them get underway their full potential is only just beginning to sink in. Building them will be an important part of the left's work in the near future.

But if you cannot build workplace branches without dealing with trade union matters, how much

more true is this higher up. How can the Labour left win the confidence of the ranks if it is unprepared to organise against the right and build towards mass action in defence of our class.

Our potential strength was shown in the solidarity actions organised in defence of the healthworkers — our weakness in the inability of supporters of the train drivers to organise after the sell-out decision of the TUC.

Long

The Labour movement faces a long hard struggle to lay the ground for the return of a Labour government. The right have shown that they will not fight. It will be up to the left to build a movement which can give leadership. This will mean turning the political strengths of the Labour Party to bear on the industrial battles which will undoubtedly break out.

The POEU has taken a stand against privatisation of British Telecom.

Their decision to approach other public sector unions to fight a coordinated battle against privatisation without necessarily waiting for the TUC shows the direction that needs to be taken. But privatisation is an intensely 'political' act — the labour left must also join forces in the battle that the POEU will be waging.

Only such an active policy of going out, forging links in struggle, between the unions and the Party at all levels can lay the basis for rebuilding Labour — showing in

practice the importance of the political levy and why the Tory attacks on it should be opposed; showing in practice that the Tories are not invincible and that it is possible to stand and fight.

It will not be easy. We need to organise at all levels, from the shop floor to the TUC General Council, from Labour ward branches to the NEC. No single current can do this. Only by uniting the left can we build such a movement. It means learning from our mistakes.

Above all we have to learn that, on issues such as unemployment or unilateralism it is not enough to carry resolutions at Conference. Good sentiments will not save the NHS. We have to be prepared to go out into the population building CND, defending workers fighting for their jobs, throwing the resources of Labour behind the fight of health workers to defend their service. Only by building a united left opposition can we put these tasks on the agenda.

● Greg Tucker is one of the delegates from Vauxhall to the Labour Party conference, writing in a personal capacity.

Fringe meeting

THE NATO QUESTION A DEBATE

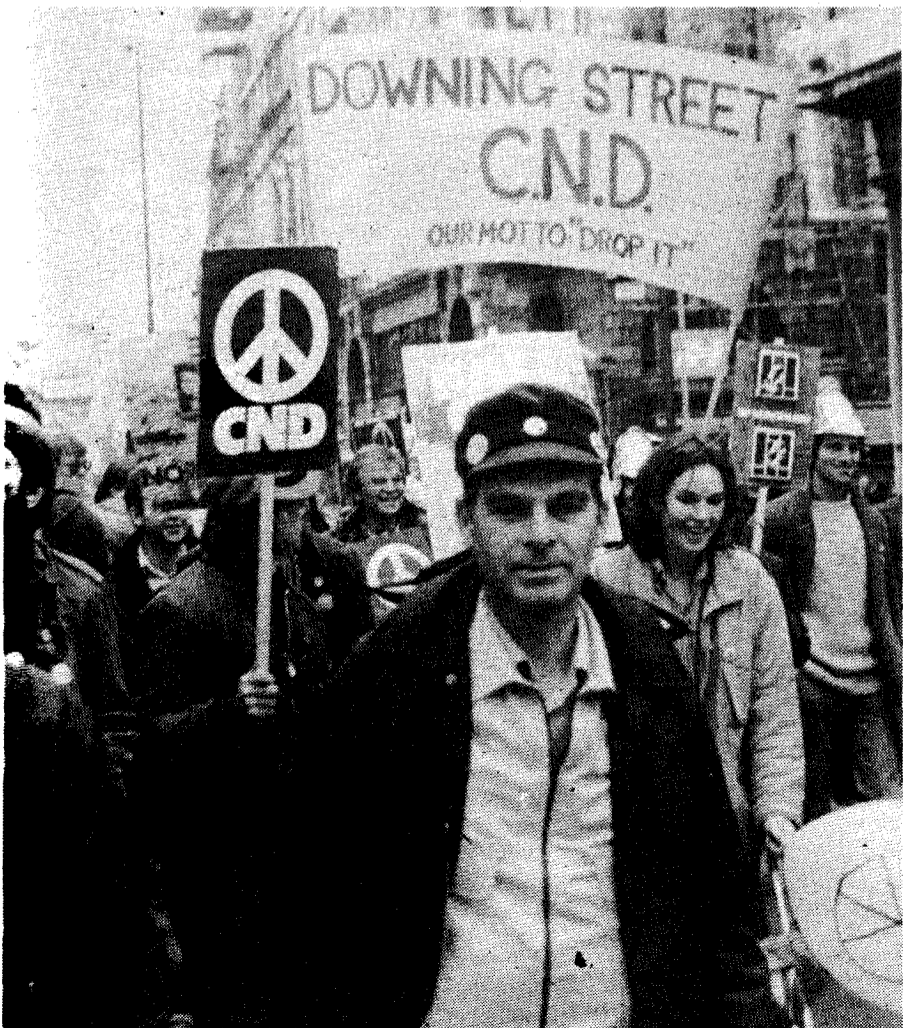
with Jo Richardson MP Denzil Davies MP Bob Cryer and Mary Kaldor

Starts 5.30pm on Thursday 6 October at the Royal Albion Hotel

MODERN TIMES



Personally, I think they got out of the Maze because they couldn't stand to watch the Labour Party conference on TV



Freeze is a cop-out for fighting for unilateralism

Defend unilateralism!

NO ONE FOLLOWING the Labour Party mood in the last few months will seriously expect this year's conference to be dominated by dramatic and public reversals of party policy. What they should be on the lookout for are the insidious shifts in emphasis which are the harbingers of just such reversals in the future.

The debate on nuclear disarmament is one important area where such cracks are beginning to appear.

The preliminary agenda contained only one motion calling openly for a multilateralist position (from the AUEW), now amended by the EEPTU to include support for NATO! The rest contain a commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament in one form or another — but with some important additions and omissions.

A non-nuclear defence thread runs through many of the resolutions, reflecting the pressures from the election defeat to tackle the Tories on their ground for defence, not our ground of disarmament.

Whilst it is necessary to take on this debate, we must do so from a framework of clear, active commitment to unilateralism. The multilateralists in our party will use this terrain as an opportunity to

win back their lost ground.

Similarly, the discussion around a freeze policy. Obviously we should support a freeze position in the United States. In the absence of a CND-type mass campaign, the freeze movement there represents something positive. But what would a freeze position represent in Britain?

By Carol Turner Labour CND Executive

In reality, it would mean a reversal of what CND campaigners inside and outside the party have won over the years. It would allow a campaign to support the status quo, after the missiles have arrived in Britain.

Whilst it's unlikely that the commitment to last year's composite 51 will be openly disregarded, it's on the cards that the overall majority will be reduced. And it's even more likely that the final composite will contain only inadequate proposals for what action the Labour Party should take on disarmament over the next year.

Rub

This is the real rub of this year's disarmament debate: will we make our commitment to unilateralism a formal one and let the leadership off the hook, or will delegates insist the party fights to regain some of the lost ground in the general election?

Committees to discuss the ins and outs of non-nuclear defence policy are no substitute for a public campaign against cruise and Trident. If we sit passively back while the missiles arrive, no amount of sub-committee reports at next year's conference will convince people that the Labour Party is serious

about its disarmament policies. We will abandon the fight against Thatcher's war drive.

The action demands in Labour CND's model resolution call for an anti-nuclear weapons campaign committee to organise public activity and for the PLP to use parliamentary procedures to put the case.

This together with support for CND's 22 October demonstration still represents the clearest course of action. Calls for the NEC defence study group to explore the issue of alternative defence should not be seen as an alternative to a mass public campaign.

Practical

All Labour party members have a very practical opportunity to show their continued commitment to unilateralism by supporting Sunday's demonstration, and by attending the fringe meetings during the week of conference organised around the issue of nuclear disarmament and defence.

Labour and the TUC

MANY TRADE UNIONISTS must view with alarm the TUC's serious tilt to the right at Blackpool earlier this month. What they have perhaps not considered are its longer term implications for the future of British trade unionism and its relation to the Labour Party.

At this Labour Party conference and subsequently we must come to grips the problems which will, in consequence, arise.

The shift should not be overestimated, and the battle for the TUC's soul is by no means over. The block votes may have gone as the so-called 'moderates' wanted, but the rank and file are not all with them. That holds both in the white collar unions such as the Teachers and Local Government Officers and civil service unions, and in the blue-collar unions like the engineers, electricians, General and Municipal and Boilermakers.

But we must ask, what the right's goals are. The Frank Chapples of this world want to transform the British trade unions into an American 'business' type trade unionism, with complete acceptance of the capitalist system. In the USA, most union leaders act like business executives — and some like gangsters.

Objectives

And there is a consequence. Chapple's speech from the chair was a serious attempt to weaken the ties between the Labour Party and the trade unions, as were also the speeches of Alistair Graham of the civil servants' union, despite his protestations of Labour Party membership.

What are we actually seeing? It is 'Gomperism'* in a British context. True, the TUC's actual resolution calling for a fresh look at relations with the Labour Party was not too clear in its objectives. But it is the first step towards the depoliticisation of the unions, and the deunionisation of the Labour Party. This trend has to be opposed and defeated.

There are always voices at given moments of history who argue that things have so changed that the basic socialist concepts are no longer valid. That was argued by Edward Bernstein in the Second International, and in the German SDP before World War One. It has been argued in Britain by Anthony Crosland and other revisionists in the 1950s and now, in a less articulate form, similar arguments are being heard.

But the point is that while capitalism has changed to some degree, it is still capitalism. The class divisions and interests are still

there and cannot be wished away. The capitalist system is basically responsible for mass unemployment. As long as it exists there will be booms and slumps, and the growth of technology makes high unemployment under competitive capitalism inevitable. This truth has to be faced, and it was hardly touched on at the TUC.

Destroy

The government wishes slowly but surely to destroy the trade union movement. It is using both unemployment and legislation to do it, and is stepping up the use of the blacklist. British

'Deunionisation and depoliticisation have to be opposed'



by Eric Heffer MP

emasculate and destroy the trade unions as organisations of working people?

And this is the background to the TUC decision to meet Norman Tebbit. I believe they were

hoped that no concessions are given away to Tebbit and his Tory colleagues. His proposals, in my view, have to be fought both inside and outside parliament.

Above all, the Labour Party has a responsibility to counter the moves, which Tebbit clearly supports, for weakening the links between the Labour Party and the unions.

The Labour Party is unique. With the exception of Australia and other ex-colonial countries, it is the only socialist-oriented party which has organic links with the unions through direct affiliation. This has been the strength of the Labour Party, because it has given it a genuine working class base.

Socialist

It has at times been a weakness — because the trade unions were too often too much interested in the economic struggle at the expense of political struggle. But it was a combination of trade unions and socialist groups which formed the Labour Party and, while for a time it was not socialist in outlook, it was a working class oriented body, and has been throughout its existence.

'Non-political' trade unionism will decisively aid the Tories in their goal of emasculating the unions so that they cannot defend their members against Thatcher's class inspired attacks. These attacks are politically motivated, and the unions need a political response.

That is why I am a great supporter of workplace Labour Party branches. Labour's response must be to create a mass campaigning party. It has to oppose Tory and SDP Liberal Alliance policies, which are both designed to weaken and destroy the trade unions. The time has come

most successfully is at the point of production.

Not only do I wish to see the Party membership dramatically increased, but I also want to see every workplace form its Labour Party branch. If that occurs, that will have an effect on the unions, who will become cemented into the Labour Party, and those who wish to weaken it will be defeated.

Struggle

One of the main reasons I decided to stand for the leadership of the Labour Party was the fact that I had widespread and somewhat bitter experiences in the class struggle. In the past, I have been a senior shop steward in Cammell Laird's shipyard at Birkenhead a National Federation of Building Trades Operatives steward on lump contractor sites and chair of the All-Trades Shop Stewards Committee on the docks in Merseyside.

Over the years I have been involved in many strikes, some of them long ones. I believe I am the only candidate with that experience. To me the class struggle is not something academic. Not something my father was involved in, or that I have read books about. It is in the very bones of my system. That is the reason I did not hesitate to give my support to those who had been blacklisted or sacked because of their political views.

The trade union movement was built by working men and women who suffered for their activities. It was not built by bureaucrats, but by working people at shop floor level. Those who started the unions were often imprisoned, lost their jobs, or in extreme cases, were transported abroad. It was the only way



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perience of legislation being used against the unions which led them to decide to create their own political wing in 1900.

The truth is that everything working people have got in Britain was won by struggle. It was not given to them by benevolent employers or political leaders from above. When progress has been made by legislation, it has been through the combination of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary activity. This is true, both for the unions and for measures such as votes for women.

Deals

There are those in the movement today who would jettison all Labour's basic ideas. They would repudiate its working class base, go for the middle class vote, and try to conclude parliamentary deals with their old friends in the SDP. Labour has to consolidate its basic working class vote, recapture what it has lost, and in the process the middle class vote will come Labour's way.

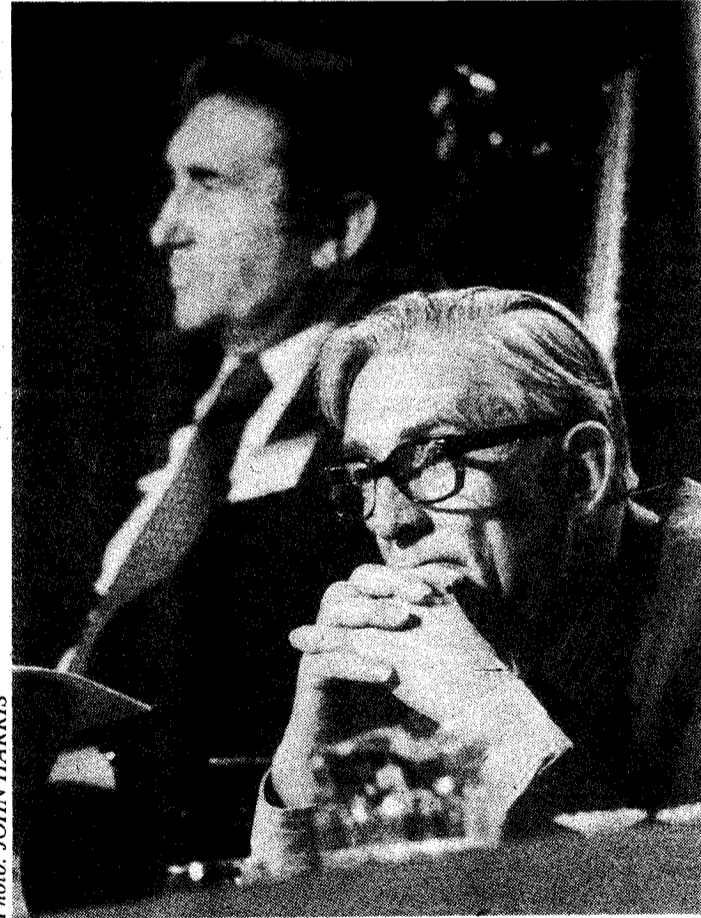
In the leadership election material that I and supporters have circulated, we have said 'mobilise for socialism'. We believe that despite our electoral defeat, despite those in the TUC who wish to sever themselves from Labour, socialism is more on the agenda than ever.

Crisis

The crisis of the capitalist system is profound. It will not go away. Not only do we have a profound economic crisis, we are moving towards World War Three, which if allowed to break out could end in the destruction of humankind.

The election for leader and deputy leader gives us the opportunity to rebuild the Labour Party so that it has a sound socialist basis. It is important that the socialist left fights for the biggest possible vote so socialism cannot be pushed aside.

*'Gomperism' was the name of American trade union leader Samuel Gompers who founded the American Federation of Labor.



Chapple and Murray at the TUC

Leyland is a publicly owned enterprise, and it is there that some of the worst blacklisting and witch-hunting is taking place.

What is the objective of this offensive? It aims to turn the unions into tame pussy cats, with 'responsible' leaders in charge, and shop floor organisation weakened or alternatively destroyed.

There are those who argue that the class struggle is a thing of the past. If that is so, then why do the Tories conduct it daily, bringing in legislation designed to

wrong to do so, and I thought the arguments against, put at the TUC congress, were overwhelming.

Unions

I accept that because of high unemployment, the unions are not in such a strong situation as they were in 1971 when Heath introduced the Industrial Relations Act. But the unions had great difficulties in the interwar years between 1918 and 1939, and they were ultimately overcome. They can be again.

That is why it must be

Peace women confront Reagan



Outside Greenham last December. From 'Wish you were here' — an exhibition of postcards and posters at the Labour Party conference, presented by Card-Tel.

IN JULY this year 75 American women marched from Seneca Falls to the women's peace camp in Romulus, New York. When they arrived they were blocked by 300 townspeople from marching to the camp.

For two days they were subjected to bomb threats, gun threats, actual violence and verbal harassment.

The peace camp attracted hundreds of women, however. Drunken packs of men pursued the women to the camp and rode past waving US flags and screaming 'Dykes go home and take your witchcraft with you', and 'Commie queers go home to Russia'.

Arrests took place when the women sat down in the street rather than fight their way through the mob. Then

they carried out a successful night raid into the Seneca Army depot, where missiles are to be sited. The following day 2000 marched to the depot, in the face of opposition from the military police and local residents.

Undaunted, 200 women, all of whom were later arrested, successfully scaled the fence.

In downtown Newbury women are

facing similar if slightly less brutal attacks. Greenham women are banned from Tesco's in Newbury and banned from pubs and the local baths.

The very latest hypocrisy of the council — after promoting a press campaign to claim that the women's camp is a public health-hazard — is to refuse to collect rubbish from the camp and to stop the women dumping rubbish in the Council's tip.

Greenham women have been subjected to vile abuse in the press — particularly playing on the issue of 'irresponsible mothers' and stirring up hatred against those

who openly admit to being lesbians.

Local residents in 'Get Greenham Out' groups have attacked the women at night with bricks. Stones and maggots have been tipped over the camp. So much for British traditions of free speech and tolerance of dissent!

Political

Sadly, even in CND and the Labour Party there are those who succumb to this foul witch hunt. They conveniently 'forget' that the Greenham women have done more than anyone else to push the political arguments against cruise

missiles.

Jean McKrindle, at a recent meeting of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, said that she was very worried about Greenham and the bad publicity it was receiving. Ian Davidson, who must have been on another planet when the general election was taking place, attacks the Labour left in *Marxism Today* for wanting to fight the election, one year after the Falklands, on the line of a completely nuclear free Britain. Yet no Labour Party leader prominent in the campaign put the disarmament case.

It's a testimony to the resilience and strength of the women's peace

movement in this country that such backtracking is not the dominant view among women today.

On the contrary, although women are aware of the powerful forces arrayed against them, their ingenuity and initiative increases.

On 17 September Star Peace Marchers arrive in Geneva for an 'embrace' of the START disarmament talks.

Last weekend women from all over Britain met in Manchester to plan actions leading up to December. They also discussed their participation in the broader peace movement, deciding to support the Labour CND lobby at Blackpool and build a Greenham contingent on the 22 October CND demonstration.

Finally, we must come back to the USA and how the women's peace movement plan to step up their campaign against Reagan.

American citizens have certain constitutional rights. Only Congress can decide according to this constitution to wage war and there are moves to take the US President to court to ensure that he doesn't have sole control over the decision to press the button.

Greenham Women Against Cruise plan to launch a legal case through the Federal Court in America to explain why it is necessary to break the law to defend international laws and human laws that guarantee the right of people to live free from the threat of war.

Mania

Perhaps at last this may jog the press away from its witch-hunting mania towards mentioning the real issues at stake in the disarmament debate — whether or not the American government has the right to put billions of lives at risk in its ruthless warmongering drive.

● National meeting called by Manchester Greenham Support Group 12/13 November to discuss plans for action in December. All women welcome. (Watch Socialist Action for further details.)

● If you want to know more about the legal fight against the US administration contact Women Against Cruise, 344 South Lambeth Road, London SW8 8UQ, 01-720 1374. (Donations for the campaign are very welcome.)

Photo: MIKE GOLDWATER (Network)

'We still need NAC'

THIS WEEKEND'S National Abortion Campaign conference is the most important since the end of the campaign against the Corrie anti-abortion bill.

An attempt will be made to dissolve NAC and instead set up a new campaign around reproductive rights. This comes at a time of a resurgence of attacks on the right to abortion.

Since Corrie there has been a drop in the number of people actively campaigning on abortion. Some people in the campaign have concluded that this is due to the 'narrowness' of NAC's aims — that it doesn't challenge the new attacks on women's rights which are now much wider.

They believe that abortion can't be isolated but has to be part of a wider campaign, and that broadening out the issues will help stimulate renewed interest and activity.

Other sections of the abortion campaign — especially activists in

Scotland, in the NAC Trade Union Liaison Committee and in the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign disagree with this interpretation of events and what course NAC should take.

By Ann Potter (NAC Steering Committee member)

Alongside them, supporters of Socialist Action will be arguing that the demand for a 'woman's right to choose', far from being a narrow aim, encom-

passes women's needs on all the issues this demand raises. The right of women to choose whether or not to have children is a crucial issue — either for women forced into sterilisation or for women denied abortion.

It is true that fewer people are involved now in actively campaigning for abortion rights. But this is not because they disagree with the politics of the campaign, but because other issues — such as stopping cruise missiles and Trident — have appeared to be more urgent.

If another attack was launched support would flood back. Indeed, it is in the event of such an attack that NAC's role becomes so vital.

NAC is the only organisation which can respond and organise rapidly to repel any moves

to restrict current abortion rights and that can effectively campaign for adequate legislation. If the campaign is 'broadened out' it simply wouldn't have the time or facilities.

All the activists involved in NAC realise that the right to choose is not solely about abortion. Issues such as financial independence, decent housing and good child care facilities are also vital. We believe that the right to abortion remains central because a woman's right to control her fertility is fundamental to controlling her life. This right, only very partially won in Britain, is under great threat.

At present there is an enormous amount of anti-abortion activity which NAC hasn't responded to. The two major anti-abortion organisations,

SPUC and LIFE, have held rallies and meetings with very little in the way of counter-mobilisations.

The right wing offensive against a woman's right to choose has been centred on abortion world wide. The recent referendum result in Ireland, which added an anti-abortion clause to the constitution, shows the strength of these reactionary forces. They will be looking to build on this success. And NAC, along with the international campaign for abortion rights, has been central in providing information about and solidarity with the fight of women world-wide for abortion rights.

NAC needs to be there to fight any anti-abortion moves — whether they come through the courts, the DHSS or through parliament.

No socialism without gay liberation

WHAT HAS the Labour Party done nationally about discrimination against lesbians and gay men? The answer, of course, is very little.

It has been left to rank and file members — and the left wing in general — to agitate at grass roots level.

The national conference is upon us, and as usual socialists in the Party will be interested not only in what is said, but what is left unsaid. Although gays are ten per cent of the population we will be ignored.

By Brian West (Labour Campaign for Gay Rights)

Several attacks have been made on lesbians and gay men since last year's conference. All members of the Party understand the role played by the media in denigrating Michael Foot; in shamelessly denouncing Party policies; in glorifying Thatcher and her escapades in the 'Falklands'.

But when such tactics are aimed at homosexuals, even those sections of the Labour Party who consider themselves enlightened have succumbed to the rantings and ravings of Fleet Street.

Peter Tatchell was not attacked by the media solely because he was gay — he was denounced for putting forward socialist policies to combat years of capitalist rot. Members of more 'moderate' (ie right wing) parties who are known as homosexuals are left unscathed by the press, since they don't pose a threat to free-enterprise Britain.

Anti-gay hysteria surpassed even the campaign against Tatchell recently, as the press showed the world the natural progression between child molesters, paedophiles and all homosexuals. The Brighton gay community, which helped the police inquiry as far as possible, was rewarded with an A-Z of where to find your local queer plastered all over the local newspapers.

It is all too easy to see what the future holds for lesbians and gay men in Thatcherite Britain. The Police Bill is the first in a long line of attacks, aimed predominantly at people who already suffer great discrimination.

The Labour Party, and especially socialists within it, must be able to show what can be done.

Thatcher was elected, partly on the 'there is no alternative' ticket. We must present an alternative to queer-bashing, and to all forms of discrimination aimed at homosexuals.

At this conference, the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights has as its theme 'No socialism without gay liberation'. This is not just a 'good slogan'. It is, in fact, the truth.

● Labour Campaign for Gay Rights fringe meeting with Reg Race, Jo Richardson and Jeremy Corbyn is on Wed 5 Oct. (See listings on page 12 for details).

A PIECE OF THE ACTION BY #26 9/83 CORMAC

Do come in... I'm afraid the place is in a bit of a mess...

...I've just had the Americans in... Doing a little peace-keeping...

They're really experienced at this peace-keeping business...

One day they may bring peace to the whole world...

'We must strengthen the women's organisation'

Eric Heffer on the women's organisation

'IT IS CRUCIAL that women receive a fair deal from the Labour Party. Women inside the Party are rightly demanding greater power and responsibility, and in addition Labour must persuade millions of women to support socialist principles and positive action if a Labour government is to be elected at the next general election.

I am glad that the women's question has been raised by the CLPD Women's Action Committee and the London Region Women's Committee in this leadership election. A Women's Manifesto should be drawn up by the NEC in conjunction with the women's organisation in the Party.

The links between the women's organisation and the rest of the Party could be strengthened by the adoption of a formal constitution and rules in line with the rest of the Party. It is only through such a formal structure that the women's organisation will be able to operate in a truly democratic manner and present itself as a recognised force.

I believe that ways should be found to give policy-making powers to the women's conference: this could partly be done through tabling notions to annual conference from the women's conference.

This will have two advantages for women. Firstly it will give direct access to the policy making structure of the Party to the women's organisation, and secondly it will mean that the views and aspirations of women will be brought directly to the attention of the whole Party.

I support the principle that the women's section of the NEC should be representative of, and accountable to, the women's organisation. I would prefer to see all elections for the NEC conducted at annual conference so that conference remains the supreme policy making body.

I also believe that we may face problems from other groups such as the local government conference and the parliamentary Labour Party who may wish to change the character of the NEC and demand similar representation.

However, the arguments concerning the election of the women's section of the NEC by women are extremely strong, and I would welcome discussion with women in the Party as to how best we can achieve this aim.

THERE IS a massive groundswell of support for women having a far greater voice and influence in the Labour Party. But the present structures are an obstacle to achieving this.

ANN PETTIFOR from the Women's Action Committee spoke to **Jude ARKWRIGHT** about the urgent need for change.

'The most important issues at this year's conference for the women's campaign will be the demand for the election of the women's section of the NEC by the women's conference, and the demand to set up a special rules conference to formally constitute the women's organisation.'

'Of course, the second is the most crucial, because at the moment we have a set of rules imposed by the NEC and its officers which don't correspond to the aspirations of rank and file women in the Party.'

Shambles

'The women's conference at the moment is a shambles. The trade unions are not properly represented, and until we get a formally constituted and democratic organisation we will get nowhere.'

'We must strengthen the women's organisation first in order to have a strong base to go forward on other issues.'

'Our chances of success are good. We expect the T&GWU and ASTMS delegations to vote with us as both have conference decisions. NUPE is also enthusiastic. We want to make more links with the trade unions. We now have a trade union organiser and we're promoting the campaign in all the unions.'

'Of the MP's Harriet Harman, Jo Richardson, Renée Short, Audrey Wise, Dennis Skinner and Eric Heffer support us.'

Debate

'After the conference the next stage of the debate will be to discuss what type of women's organisation we really want. Do we want women from the unions more heavily represented and if so, how? Who should select our executive? And so on.'

It's unfortunate that at this conference we have such a dearth of resolutions on policy for women

— but to me it's not surprising when we have no organisational framework which can enable women to formulate and act on such issues.

'The vital issues are economic independence, fertility control and the exploitation of women's bodies.'

Vital

'These issues were not raised clearly in Labour's election manifesto — they were touched on marginally and often watered down. This shouldn't come as a surprise as it comes from men. Labour did promise to raise child benefits, but you didn't hear it shouted from the rooftops. It was only raised at the end of the campaign as a bribe. Labour just doesn't look credible if it can't promote women.'

Defend Kamal Kumar's right to stay

KAMAL KAMUR has applied to the Court of Appeal to over-rule the Home Office decision to deport him.

This is the first appeal of its kind and will be a test case for the hundreds of black people threatened each month with deportation.

Increasingly, the Home Office is bending immigration legislation in order to harass black people living in Britain.

Kamal's case shows this very clearly. He was admitted in 1978 for three months as a fiancé and then applied for indefinite

leave to remain in the UK through his marriage.

By **Mark Hackett** (Manchester Blackley CLP)

The immigration rules entitle people to indefinite leave so long as the marriage is intact one year after the ceremony, which in this case it was. But the Home Office deliberately delay such applications — sometimes for as long as three years — in the hope that the couple will separate.

The practice is a completely arbitrary extension of Home Office powers. It is so widespread that the majority of people



From 'Wish you were here' (see photo caption facing page). Photomontage: CATH TATE.

deported due to the breakdown of their marriage were still living with their partner at the time they applied to remain here.

This is exactly what happened to Kamal. Kamal's marriage fell apart long after he had made his application, but it was only then that the Home Office would consider his case and decided to deport him.

Kamal is a member of my local Labour Party ward, which along with the Constituency and City parties is supporting his campaign against deportation. A public meeting in August launched a defence campaign and elected a

broad-based committee to oversee it. They have produced thousands of leaflets and petitions and are planning a demonstration and a lobby of the appeal.

There are many, often quite isolated, campaigns defending those threatened with deportation. It is crucial that we begin to fight for the Labour Party and unions like NALGO to organise nationally to coordinate these campaigns and provide a national focus.

● Further information from the Kamal Kumar Defence Ctee, c/o Al-Hilal Community Project, 443 Cheetham Hill Rd, Cheetham, Manchester M8, 061-740 0577.



Photo: JOHN HARRIS

To mark the anniversary of the arrest of the Newham 8 for defending themselves against racist attacks about 1500 people marched through the streets of Newham.

The march grew to 2000 as local youth joined in and finished with a rally at Stratford. The rally was addressed by Kwame Ture (formerly known as Stokely Carmichael).

Unmesh Desai, secretary of the Newham 8 Defence Campaign, called on marchers to turn up at Snaresbrook Court at 10 am on 24 October for the beginning of the Newham 8 trial.

Support black self-organisation

By **Anstey Rice** (Peckham CLP)

THE Peckham CLP motion on race was rejected on a technicality by conference arrangements committee. We therefore sought to bring the issue back into the centre of political dimension at the conference by amending the Richmond and Barnes resolution 81 to include '... Conference recognises in particular the right of black members of the Party to organise together in the same way as Women's Sections and Young Socialist branches.'

The resolution as amended does not, in my view, go far enough. But at least it is an attempt to engage conference and the NEC with the issue of race, to make them recognise race as a serious problem and not just something they notice at election time.

Black people will continue to drift away from supporting the Labour Party, not because of its so-called left wing stance but because of its continued racist practice, both in and out of government.

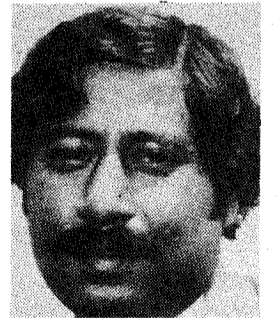
We in the Party are not going to be used to recruit black people to the Party which professes to believe in an equal and just society, but which has been consistently over the years

the instrument to legalise racism in society.

More active black participation will only be brought about by radical organisational changes within the Party. It is therefore in the interests of all sections in the labour movement to seek to have the Richmond and Barnes resolution as amended placed on the conference agenda and debated by any means necessary.

All delegates, especially those on the left, should therefore support it. The Labour Race Action Group at its conference on 24 September at County Hall also called on all its affiliated organisations and members to support Resolution 81 as amended.

* Stop deportations now! *



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Conference '83

Irish debate central to all parties

THE IRISH CRISIS is central to the problems faced by the British ruling class, evidenced by its centrality to all the major party conferences this year.

After an election in which the British labour movement was divided and sent reeling, it was only in the North of Ireland where opposition to Tory policies grew stronger and more radical.

Sinn Fein's victory was not merely the election of Gerry Adams in West Belfast and the 102,000 votes for their candidates; it was the shudder their campaign sent down the spine of the establishment.

'Political initiatives' like the All-Ireland Forum initiated by the Southern Government or Prior's Assembly in the North have been rendered useless — the Assembly because Sinn Fein have forced a nationalist boycott, the Forum because it enjoys no legitimacy whilst Sinn Fein are excluded.

Under these conditions the only voice that has grown in authority is that of Sinn Fein. That is why almost 50 per cent of the Liberal Assembly were in favour of their party having talks.

Responses to the Liberal's debate were predictable. The Official Unionists (regarded by the press as the 'moderate' wing of Loyalism) said that the Liberal policy would 'initiate bloodletting on a scale never previously witnessed'.

As it turned out, none

of the militant Young Liberals' demands such as British withdrawal got through, leaving only the suggestion that Dublin and London should get troops from the European community to step in — much the same as the SDP who hosted a fringe meeting of the Social Democratic and Labour Party at their Salford conference. (The *Guardian* was not slow to point out that there were two EEC governments that were ideal candidates for policing Ireland — the British and the Irish.)

Police

One of the resolutions at the forthcoming Tory party conference calls for a police state to be set up in the North. Never let it be said that the Tories are

frightened of challenging the status quo!

But much the most important conference for Ireland is Labour's. Already Sinn Fein have spoken to a fringe meeting at the TUC in Blackpool. Let's hope the dialogue will be continued in Brighton.

With Tony Benn speaking on the main Irish resolution and the appearance of the Labour Committee on Ireland's new magazine *Labour and Ireland* there will be enough pressure to ensure a decent discussion on an issue so long neglected.

There will be diversions of course. The 'Labour Representation Committee' will be more rabid than ever in their insistence that Labour is being 'racist' by refusing to

allow membership applications from Ulster unionists. Their PR machine will ensure lots of publicity if little sense.

Partition

Socialists will be concentrating their energies on pressing for talks with Sinn Fein and making Labour's policy on Ireland more definite. Delegates will be calling for the Party to reject the Loyalist veto over actions of the British government, given as a result of the 'pretend' majority resulting from partition.

This will strengthen the fight for withdrawal in Britain which is the vital accompaniment to the building of a movement throughout the 32 Counties for a socialist republic.



Ken Livingstone addresses a memorial meeting for the dead hunger strikers

Livingstone brings united Ireland message to Scotland

KEN LIVINGSTONE, leader of the Greater London Council spoke at a meeting organised by the Edinburgh Labour Committee on Ireland on 16 September.

As he arrived at the meeting at the headquarters of the Edinburgh district Labour Party, a mob of 40 members of the local Orange Lodge screamed abuse. One steward protecting Livingstone got a black eye.

It is up to the Labour Party, the overwhelming majority of whose constituency members support British withdrawal, to ensure that future conference motions for a withdrawal of troops are not cynically butchered by the Labour Party leadership and the trade union bureaucrats.

By Neil Cruickshank

Livingstone later told the local Radio Forth that on the few occasions when he'd needed protection, it was from the National Front with whom he understood the Orange Order in Scotland had strong links.

Livingstone explained his message for a united Ireland to the 70 Labour Party members in attendance.

He had gone to Belfast for discussions with Gerry Adams because it is clear that Provisional Sinn Fein are the legitimate representatives of the nationalist community in the six counties.

Stalemate

Peace will only come through the negotiation of a united Ireland and hopefully a socialist one.

Both Provisional Sinn Fein and the leadership of the British army know that there is military stalemate in the six counties and there always will be, so the solution has to be found in negotiation.

Such an approach is not possible until the British government — be it Prior or Concannon — recognise the legitimacy of Sinn Fein and work with them towards an immediate withdrawal of British troops and the re-establishment of a united Ireland.

Vital

Other speakers took up these points. Mary Pearse from Birmingham LCI and Troops Out Movement explained the trouble and harassment people face when they try to discuss British rule in the north of Ireland.

So it is vital that members of the Labour Party and the trade union movement in this country advance the arguments for British withdrawal.

Letter

A letter smuggled out of the H block from the commanding officer of the republican prisoners there was read to the meeting.

This expressed solidarity with those in Britain campaigning against British rule and asked that this should continue and grow stronger until the British government withdraws the troops and ends its intervention in Irish politics.



The Troops Out Movement joined Sinn Fein to picket an army barracks

By Martin Collins

So what can the British government do? When politics reaches a dead end they habitually unleash more repression.

Having failed in their last attempt to criminalise the nationalist prisoners by removing political status, they have now moved into a new area — the super-grass campaign. The security forces have scoured the jails of the Six Counties for prisoners who are intimidated or bribed into incriminating others they may or may not know.

Jimmy Brown in Crumlin Road jail was offered £80,000 to make false statements by the Royal Ulster Constabulary. How much have the RUC got in the bank, and where is it coming from? Convictions are easy if the word of informers, often serving long sentences, is taken as gospel by judges presiding over non-jury courts.

Advertisement

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'Let's continue the dialogue' says Sinn Fein

UNLESS bureaucratic pressure wins the day, delegates at Brighton will be able to listen to the views of Sinn Fein at a specially organised fringe meeting. We asked DANNY MORRISON of Sinn Fein what message they will be trying to get across to delegates.

'WE CONSIDER the decision of the Liberal conference to support a united Ireland as a small but very important breakthrough — although we of course regret the fact that they won't speak with Sinn Fein.

'Although they have hamstrung themselves, we view their decision as a



Sinn Fein MP Gerry Adams visited Britain on Ken Livingstone's invitation

breakthrough.

'We presume the Labour Party conference will be preoccupied with the leadership question. Some of our members will be attending a fringe meeting. I personally don't expect breakthroughs as they seem to be going through a reaction.

'We would call on delegates to support a dialogue with all the par-

ties in the Six Counties. This can lead to greater understanding. We are pleased that Martin Flannery and other MPs met with us despite the attitude of Don Concannon.

'These visits begun with Ken Livingstone's invitation for our representatives to come to Britain. All these things help to support a dialogue.'



Tamil victims of massacre — demand for independent state justified?

Witch hunt rumblings in Birmingham

LABOUR PARTY democracy is under attack in Birmingham Yardley constituency where to date the Acocks Green ward has turned down three transfers and two new applications for membership.

The transfer into the ward of three Labour Party members would in any normal circumstances have been automatic. The three have been party members for two, three and four years respectively — all are active trade unionists. One was previously a GC delegate and vice-chair of a Labour Party branch.

In fact, at their first branch meeting on 4 July, one of those transferring was accepted into membership. At his next meeting on 5 September he was asked to leave as his transfer was 'up for discussion'. The initial decision was dutifully reversed. The other two transfers weren't given even this respite.

At the meeting on 4 July they and two new applicants were singled out for 'investigation' when the Membership Secretary claimed that she had been 'reliably informed' that

'30 Trotskyists had decided to move into Acocks Green, set up a commune and take over Yardley Labour Party'.

By Mick Archer
(Birmingham
Ladywood GMC —
personal capacity)

Since the four were all living at the same address this was itself considered suspicious. Subsequently 'interviewed' by the Membership Secretary for periods of between 15

minutes and three hours, all three were asked questions which throw some light on the process of political vetting employed.

Besides being asked why they had moved to Acocks Green, the interviews included questions like: 'Do public demonstrations help the party?', 'Why did you canvass for CND in the General Election?' and 'Do you belong to CND?' and more bluntly — 'Do you have left wing views like the rest?'

On 5 September both the transfers and new applications were then turned down. The debate lasted approximately one hour and only confirmed what was everyone's suspicion — that they were facing exclusion from the party because of the views which they held and the campaigns which they supported.

To date the five have all indicated their determination to appeal against the decisions. A statement of the facts surrounding their exclusion has been produced, and a statement supporting their right to be members of Acocks Green ward is being circulated within the Yardley constituency.

Support will then be sought throughout the City Labour Party and nationally. As Labour Party activists they recognise that more than their own individual memberships are at stake. Socialists throughout the party should also recognise this and rally to their support.

Sri Lankan Tamils fight for survival

THE organised movement of the Sri Lankan working class, its parties and trade unions, are being systematically demolished by the pro-imperialist government of J.R. Jayawardene. The most vicious attacks however have been and are still being directed against the Tamil-speaking people.

The Tamils are demanding the establishment of an independent state in their traditional homelands, referred to as Eelam, which constitutes the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka. They have opted for this solution as a last resort to ensure their safety and survival.

Today the only effective challenge to the ruthless Sri Lankan regime comes not from the once-powerful left parties, but from the two Tamil liberation groups who are waging an armed liberation struggle to secure an independent Eelam — the LTTE and the PLOT.

While socialists have a genuine interest in the realisation of a socialist Eelam, they are forced to make a constructive and comradely criticism of these liberation groups.

By S. Manickham

Like many groups of their type, they put the emphasis on the military and logistical aspects of their struggle. The necessity of the political mobilisation of the Tamil masses, the need for mass political agitation and self defence, is consistently down played.

The need for active

support from the South of the country, from left and progressive forces, for the Tamil struggle cannot be overemphasised. Without doubt, the national liberation struggle of the Tamil people has an anti-capitalist dynamic. The right of national self-determination should always be championed by socialists.

Unfortunately, the struggle for Eelam is viewed by some socialists as driving a wedge between the Tamil and Sinhala workers. But alas this wedge has already been driven in by the two main bourgeois parties. The failure of the left parties to resist racism since the 1960s when they had the strength to make a real impact, has unfortunately contributed to the tragic situation today.

Therefore to call for

the unity of the Sinhala and Tamil workers as a precondition before any solution can be found to the rights of the Tamil people, is a misconception. On the contrary, the very process of re-unifying the Sinhala and Tamil workers in a meaningful and lasting way can today only be started by fully supporting the Eelam workers and ensuring their struggle culminates in a socialist Eelam.

● The Eelam Solidarity Campaign (ESC), in conjunction with the Labour Group for Human Rights in Sri Lanka, is holding a fringe meeting during the Labour Party conference. Speakers include Jeremy Corbyn MP and Amrit Wilson. Monday 3 October 12.30pm at the Salisbury Hotel, Brighton (three minutes walk from Conference Centre).

Wythenshawe appeals against closure

WYTHENSHAW Labour Party are this week lobbying the Labour Party conference to protest against the closure of the constituency by the National Executive Committee of the Labour party. They will be campaigning for a reference back of the item on Wythenshawe in the NEC report to the conference.

The NEC have recently changed their reasons for the closure of the party. On 27 April National Agent David Hughes informed the constituency officers that irregularities in the annual general meeting of the constituency meant that the party would be closed down.

In the NEC report the closure is based on a 'failure to reply to a letter alleging irregularities in the AGM'. Since that time the administration of the constituency party has been in the hands of the National Agent and his appointed local representative Joe Payne. But it was this same Joe Payne who presided over the administration of the AGM and who would presumably have been responsible for any 'irregularities'. The alleged irregularities (to which the Wythenshawe officers have had no proper right of reply) revolve around a ruling made by Payne,

then the secretary/agent of the CLP, that two delegates' papers had not come through and were therefore not entitled to vote.

Ruling

Neither of the two, Pat Jones from the shop workers union USDAW and Barclay Patois from the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, challenged the ruling at the time. Barclay Patois has still not complained. Neither did the ruling have any significant influence on decisions taken at the AGM.

However Pat Jones, a well known right winger, has since linked up with the NEC right to bring about the closure of the constituency. The result has been a one-person CLP in Wythenshawe since April — during both the local and general election.

The Wythenshawe executive completely deny any irregularities at the AGM and in Pat Jones delegation. Officers like 75 year old Annie Shepherd, who has been in the party for 35 years in Wythenshawe and attended many of its AGMs, refute the charge of irregularities at the 1983 AGM.

The Wythenshawe officers have now reconvened the constituency. More than 40 delegates attended its first reconvened meeting on 9 September. David Hughes has called this meeting invalid, but the constituency chair Councillor Alf Home has declared 'as far as we are concerned the Wythenshawe party is now fully re-established.'

Continue

The NEC is determined to continue with its one-person constituency at all costs. They have encountered problems however. David Hughes has been unable to find sufficient numbers of delegates to attend a reconvened AGM since a large majority of both the Labour Party and trade union delegates continue

to support the constituency officers against the NEC.

The closure of Wythenshawe has to be seen against the attempts to stop the movement to the left in the Manchester City party as a whole, in particular preventing those councillors who support party policy of no cuts and no rent increases becoming the majority on the council.

Vital

It is also significant for the Labour Party as a whole since, as Alf Home says, 'the fight for Wythenshawe is vital if the witch hunt is to be stopped.'

Wythenshawe is calling for this week's conference to reject the NEC's closure of the constituency. They have discussed with the Bakers Union moving 'reference back' of these sections of the NEC report on Wythenshawe. Irrespective of the result of conference, they will be continuing their fight to re-assert a democratic constituency over the next months.

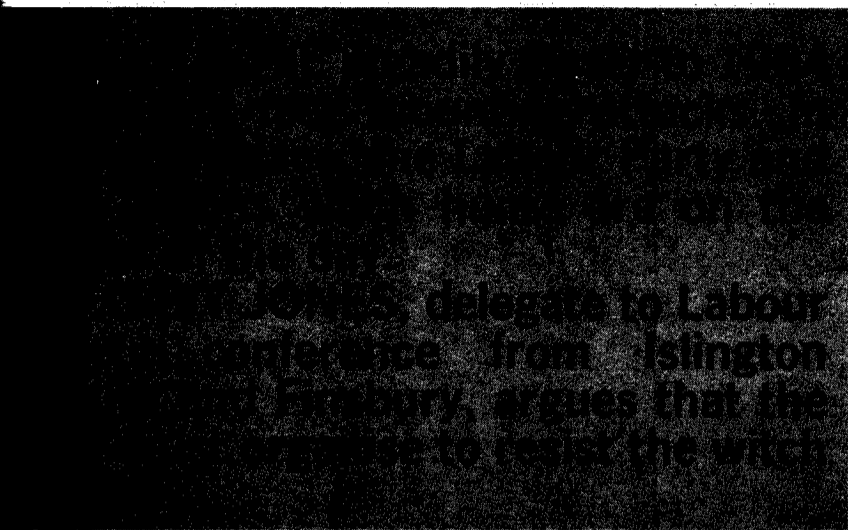
Labour Against the Witch Hunt

Labour conference fringe meeting

Speakers: Ken Livingstone, Anne Pettifor, Jane Stockton, Colin Talbot
Chair: Jeremy Corbyn

Saturday 1 October 6pm. Apollo Hotel, 135 Kings Road (opposite pier)

FIGHT THE EVIL



1983 WILL BE remembered as a fateful year. The year of US imperialism renewing its role as world cop in the Lebanon and Central America. The year of the Tories romping home to a second term of office in the election. This rightward shift is the background to all the current witch hunts.

It has given the green light to employers to root out 'troublemakers' as at British Leyland. It has opened the door to further attacks on civil liberties through the extension of police powers and surveillance. It has prompted the union and Labour bureaucrats to start a purge of any opposition to the TUC's new right wing strategy. Every socialist is now a target, and organised resistance is vital.

The Tories desperately need to drive down workers' living standards still further. The economy is in a dreadful state and getting worse. The miraculous pre-election boom has disappeared, exposed as a vote-winning con. Inflation is up, production estimates are being revised down, and the jobless numbers keep rising despite Tebbit fiddling the figures. Three per cent pay norms, further cuts in welfare services and the NHS and hiving off profitable state concerns like British Telecom to the City are central projects for the Thatcher government.

Bitter

But these plans will meet bitter resistance from many rank and file workers. They will turn to their unions, their shop stewards committees, and to the Labour Party to oppose these attacks. There too the Tories and the employers have plans up their sleeves — compulsory secret ballots before strikes, ballots on the political levy linking the unions and the Labour Party, and moves to weaken shop floor organisation in favour of 'incorporating' the official union structures and officials.

Opposing privatisation and the Tebbit proposals are vital tasks for the left. But incidents like the infamous 'mole hunt' at Cowley — used as an excuse to attack a militant work force and its shop stewards committee — will also be

on the increase. Every union activist is a 'mole' to the Tories and the bosses. That's why the left must respond to the appeal by Alex Lyon and build a national campaign against political victimisation.

But socialists have more than just the Tories and the employers to worry about. There has also been serious rethinking within the labour movement since the general election.

I remember my general management committee discussion just after the election result. A paper was circulated by a right wing delegate arguing that Labour should drop unilateral nuclear disarmament, opposition to the EEC and to incomes policy, and concern with issues like gay rights, if it was to become a party of government again.

Policies

In other words if the electorate don't immediately like your policies then drop them and find some others! This right wing balance sheet of the election result, blaming the left and its policies for the defeat, has been adopted by the TUC leaders at their recent congress.

Rather than rebuilding Labour as a mass campaigning party with more socialist policies, the majority of the TUC have now consciously adopted the reverse approach. They have opted for a move to the right and a course towards coalition with the SDP/Liberals Alliance to get the Tories out.

But just as the Tories will meet resistance to their austerity plans, so too the unions and Labour bureaucrats will not find it easy to drag Labour to the right and coalitionism. A massive left wing exists across the labour movement, especially within the constituency parties, which will oppose this strategy. That's why the union and Labour leaders aim to launch a massive witch hunt against the left.

But the Labour leaders are not stupid. They will not take on Benn, Tribune, Scargill and the best known lefts straight away. After all they have a few years to carry through this project. They will start with those which have the least support within the broad Bennite left, and having disposed of them move on to bigger fish. The witch hunt will not be skin deep this time — it aims eventually to crush the whole Labour left.

The witch hunt is already underway in many areas without many comrades on the left realising it. Not only have the five editorial board members of *Militant* been

expelled, many more are under attack:

- Sales of *Militant* have now been banned from all party meetings and premises — party members locally face expulsion for defying the ban

- The NEC, having refused to admit Tariq Ali into membership on the grounds that he used to be a member of the International Marxist Group, now plans to expel him

- Wythenshawe Labour Party has been suspended for months for alleged 'irregularities' over its refusal to select right wing councillors, and now Party chair Alf Home faces expulsion for allegedly speaking at a WRP rally

- The LPYS as a whole had its budget cut amid threats of closure due to its strong *Militant* involvement.

To carry through the witch hunt the party leadership seems set on banning certain left publications and threatening disaffiliation to parties which refuse to comply with this or with NEC expulsions. Banning left newspapers has always been the decisive step in previous witch hunts in the Labour Party.

The broadest possible opposition to such steps must be organised by Labour Against the Witch Hunt and every section of the left. Socialists inside CND also face a witch hunt. As the CND leadership tries to force the 'nuclear freeze' slogan on to the peace movement instead of unilateralism and no cruise, so it has gone on the offensive against all those on the left who oppose this right wing shift. That's why the CND leadership wound up Youth CND, and why it has put four CND executive

members with veto powers onto Labour CND executive. And that's why CND leadership was not slow to join in the press 'mole hunt' last month as part of its campaign against opposition inside CND.

A vital part of defence against the witch hunt must be *organising the left* throughout the labour movement. In many unions broad left currents have emerged committed to greater union democracy and left wing policies. Women and black trade unionists often play a leading role in these developments. The Labour left has taken the initiative in some areas to start workplace Labour branches to strengthen the links between the party and the unions.

Within the Labour Party itself local Labour lefts have re-emerged often linked to the *Briefing* journal, which has now launched its first national bulletin. Such developments should be welcomed as crucial steps in the fight to organise the left to resist the right wing onslaught. A new national left wing movement is urgently needed, within both the unions and the Labour Party.

The witch hunt will not go away inside society as a whole. It is too important for the ruling class and their Tory government to break the back of any organised resistance to austerity within the working class. But nor will it go away within the Labour Party, as many comrades wrongly suggest, because Kinnock is Party leader with a left NEC.

The majority of the Labour and union leaderships are absolutely determined to crush the left's resistance to moving right towards coalitionism. Opposition to this witch hunt will form a central part of the work of every union and party activist over the coming year.



Build a national campaign against political sackings



Conference The NEC witch hunt

SINCE LAST year's annual conference the NEC has probably spent as much time on witch-hunting as it did on preparing the general election. NEC meetings were dominated by who was being expelled, who was being kept out of the party, who was being suspended, and whose papers had to be proscribed.

The last conference voted to set up a register for non-affiliated groups of Party members. It did not vote to expel people. Undeterred, in December the NEC — after weeks of agonising over how best to expel *Militant* supporters while presenting a facade of 'natural justice' to avoid legal wrangles — defined *Militant* thus: 'a Trotskyist entryist group ... a political organisation with its own programme, principles and policy for distinctive and separate propaganda'.

Having established these ground rules the January NEC went further. It resolved that the key question in deciding whether *Militant* supporters were liable for expulsion was: 'their involvement in financial support and/or the organisation of and/or the activities of the *Militant* tendency'. Having sent letters to the five editorial board members of the *Militant* newspaper with carefully legally worded charges, the February NEC went in for the kill. The *Militant* five were 'interviewed'

WITCH HUNT

SINCE THE Cowley sackings last month, increasing numbers of trade unionists have come to realise how serious are the issues raised by the affair.

No one seriously believes that BL management sacked people for their political views at Cowley. Nor does anyone think that they were terrified of the threat of Socialist Action supporters being in the plant. But what the sensational media 'mole hunt' whipped up by BL management got away with was to legitimise political vetting and victimisations.

For union activists these practices have been commonplace for as long as they can remember. On building sites and in certain industries company blacklists have been standard practice for years. So has the need for activists to bend the truth when applying for such jobs. But rarely has this issue received serious public attention.

By Steph Grant

Cowley has changed that to some degree. Now millions of people know that companies sack people for their political views. And many also learnt about the witch-hunting activities of organisations like the Economic League, who conspire with industry chiefs to keep activists and socialists out of a job.

Hundreds of prominent trade unionists and Labour Party members

have now signed the appeal launched by Alex Lyon, former Labour minister, against political vetting and victimisations. This support should be harnessed into a national campaign which can permanently highlight and fight these practices. There can be no doubt that the need for such a campaign will grow under the Tories, given their plans to defeat the militancy of the British labour movement.

What would such a campaign do? First, it could draw up a charter of employees rights to a job free from harassment for their political views. Such a charter could be fought for throughout the labour movement and win endorsement from many unions.

Second, it could work with other national, regional and local organisations to set up inquiries into the activities of companies operating blacklists, and the national groups like the Economic League. Third, it could act as a focus for workers across the

country who are victimised to make their case heard and to campaign for their reinstatement.

In West Germany they have a law forbidding socialists and communists employment in certain jobs. Despite an international outcry against it that law is about to be reinforced by the Kohl government, which is no more right wing than our very own Thatcher government.

Bosses

We should make sure that Thatcher and the bosses in this country don't try to build on their success over Cowley to go down that road. The best start we can make is to build the broadest support for the Alex Lyon appeal and to turn it into a national campaign supported by the whole labour movement, and civil liberties lobbies.

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and 'questioned' and unceremoniously expelled, at the February NEC meeting. At no time did the NEC ask the views of the local parties of which the *Militant* five were members. Had they done so they would have found no support for their expulsions — all three local parties were on record as opposing such moves. Both Islington South & Finsbury and Hammersmith Parties have not implemented the NEC's request to delete the *Militant* five from their membership records.

By Davy Jones (Islington South & Finsbury CLP)

Throughout the year the NEC was also preoccupied with keeping a member out of the Labour Party — Tariq Ali. His crime? Having been a former member of the International Marxist Group, and disagreeing with Jim Mortimer on the relationship between parliament and democracy. Hornsey party voted each time with a greater majority to admit Tariq into membership but the national party refused to accept him.

In a classic piece of witch-hunting pragmatism the NEC's report to conference this year has the answer — if you can't keep him out then let him in and expel him! It's surprising the party's election campaign was so dull when the NEC is obviously capable of such imagination.

The NEC report says that to test the authority of the NEC's ruling to keep Tariq out could be 'a long and costly process. However the authority of the NEC to expel an individual from

membership of the Labour Party was clearly defined in the constitution. 'The procedure to expel Mr Ali from membership has now been initiated by the NEC'.

Having dealt with the *Militant* talents of the NEC witch-hunters moved on, this time to Manchester Wythen-shawe CLP. In April the NEC suspended the party officers, the GMC and its executive and put the Party's affairs into the hands of the National Agent in London. The reason given was alleged 'irregularities' at the Party's annual general meeting. The real reason was the left wing Party's refusal to select right wing candidates for the council.

With the distraction of the election out of the way the NEC witch-hunters were able to get back to the serious business of uniting the party through purges. The August NEC got its teeth into *Militant* again, this time banning them from using Party facilities, banning the sale of *Militant* at Party events of premises, and collection for its funds.

Presumably the Party intends to implement this at national conference. Certainly it has given the green light to every witch-hunter in the local parties to take action. Already there are moves to expel Party members defying this rule in at least one constituency. Elsewhere, this NEC circular — which lines the waste bins of most Party offices — has been used to start banning other left wing publications like Socialist Action.

This year's conference agenda has a number of resolutions on the witch hunt. There would have been more but Conference Arrangements ruled my party's resolution out of order on the grounds that it referred to more than one subject (which could be said of about three hundred resolutions accepted for the order paper). Could it be that the real reason was its demand for the reinstatement of the *Militant* five two of whom are in our constituency

Five resolutions call for the reinstatement of the *Militant* five, and the amendments centre around opposition to the bans on socialist papers, opposition to future witch hunts as divisive, and a call to expel no-one unless they stand or campaign against Party candidates in elections.

While winning the reinstatement of the *Militant* five is unfortunately unlikely at this year's conference, winning conference support for an end to future witch hunts and the ban on sales of *Militant* and other papers is a possibility. It would put a 'left' NEC in a difficult position to break the conference mandate.

The outcome of this conference fight will be vital for the whole left. Don't forget, there are only the European election next year to distract the NEC from its 'real work' of expelling people!

● See page 7 for articles on the witch hunt in Birmingham and Manchester

Cowley witch hunt

In the September issue of the T&GWU paper *Record* David Buckle, Oxford district secretary of the union, wrote about the so-called Cowley moles. Socialist Action is pleased to reproduce that article.

LAST MONTH amidst screaming headlines from Fleet Street about Red Moles, 13 union members were sacked from the British Leyland plant at Cowley in Oxford. George Orwell's book, 1984 warned of a world in which 'big brother is watching you' and the 'thought police' who make sure that individuals do not think outside accepted lines of thought. Here Oxford District Secretary, David Buckle, argues that trial by media made the thirteen 'guilty' before they had been tried.

THE THIRTEEN BL workers sacked by the company for allegedly making false statements on their job application forms have been denied natural justice by virtue of a massive media campaign.

I am a Justice of the Peace and I know that if their case had been tried under criminal law then all the newspapers which tried and found our members guilty would have been had up for contempt of court.

I am very concerned that they never had a chance in the McCarthyite atmosphere which has been whipped up. Many of our members in the assembly plant are now worried about speaking to anybody in case their views are thought to be contrary to those held by management.

If that is the kind of fear which is becoming common in Britain, designed amongst other things to weaken trade unionism, then I smell fascism around this country.

Concerned

Let me repeat to T&G RECORD readers what I told a press conference last month. It will be new to most of you because the press in the main does

not care to report what the workers' representatives tell them.

First, the matter of the 13 lost jobs is a question of industrial relations to be resolved in the normal way — not a political football for the media to kick about.

Secondly, I do not condone what the members are said to have done but I do understand it. In the inter-war years it was quite common for job applicants to give false information in a desperate attempt to find work.

Thirdly, members are entitled to belong to the political party of their choice. Many are Tories. Nearly three years ago Mrs Thatcher advised the Conservative trade unionists to 'infiltrate' (her word) unions, seek office and bring Tory thinking to bear.

Is there anyone in the media now saying we as a union should weed out conservatives from our ranks?

Is there anyone on TV prepared to support a company which sacks a worker because he is a Tory Party member? Of course not. But it is the height of hypocrisy that our members have been criticised for their political views. It is none of the media's business and it is none of our business to act as the 'thought police'.

Havoc

Fourthly, let us not forget that they are all good workers. They were causing no problems. That is more than you can say for the havoc that this doctrinaire Tory government has been causing. For example:

● 50 per cent of the BL labour force have lost their jobs since the arrival of Michael Edwardes in 1978.

● several BL plants have closed down completely including MG of Abingdon with the loss of 1,200 jobs.

● thousands of export opportunities have been lost to car sales because of the government's slavish adherence to the doctrinaire strong sound policy.

It is a sad commentary on the state of things that even if the British Leyland wanted to give way, accept the basis of our arguments and reinstate the sacked workers they would not feel able to because of the massive political campaign the media has conducted and the difficulties the government would create. The media has denied T&G members any chance of natural justice — and that is a very serious charge.

If you want to put the business of false application forms into perspective take a look at Mrs. Thatcher's record. Didn't she lie to the whole British public that the National Health Service was safe in her hands? But she has still got her job and not a squeak from the great British press!

The national appeal reads: 'WE ARE deeply concerned that the recent dismissal by British Leyland at Cowley of workers for their political views is merely one example of increasing evidence of the victimisation of workers who are considered radical or socialist. In our view an employer is not entitled to censor ideas or penalise normal trade union activity. The press treatment of the Cowley story was gravely disturbing in assuming guilt where non was proven. Yet few voices were heard in criticism. This is a new McCarthyite tendency to condemn people by association and, taken with the activity of organisations like the Economic League, it is a tendency which ought to be reversed. We would welcome your support in forming a committee to counter this tendency and to give support to those who are victimised at work for their political convictions.'

Initial signatories (all in personal capacity)

- Alex Kitson, Assistant General Secretary TGWU
- Terry Marsland, General Secretary Tobacco Workers Union
- Geoffrey Drain, General Secretary NALGO
- Alan Sapper, General Secretary ACTT
- Jim Sizer, General Secretary National Union of Seamen
- Jimmy Knapp, General Secretary National Union of Railwaymen
- Ken Cameron, General Secretary Fire Brigades Union
- Jack Collins, Kent area NUM
- Maurice Jones, Yorks. NUM, editor The Miner.
- Eric Clarke, NUM Executive
- Tony Benn
- Eric Deakin MP
- Joan Maynard MP
- Syd Bidwell MP
- Eric Heffer MP
- Jo Richardson MP
- Martin Flannery MP
- Tony Banks MP
- Michael Meacher MP
- Jeremy Corbyn MP
- Harriet Harman MP
- Dennis Canavan MP
- Ron Brown MP
- Ken Livingstone, leader GLC
- Richard Balfe MEP
- Frank Dobson MP
- Bernard Reegan, National Union of Teachers Exec.
- Oxford East Constituency Labour Party.
- Alan Fisher, NUPE, former President TUC.
- Ken Livingstone, Leader GLC.
- Ted Knight, Leader Lambeth Council.
- Frances Morrell, Leader of ILEA
- Martin Coleman, Leader of Brent Council.
- John Austin Walker, Leader of Greenwich Council.
- John Gaines, National E.C., AUEW, Construction.
- Alex Lyon
- Les Huckfield, Tribune
- Jeremy Hawthorn, Sec Peckham CLP
- Lloyd Trott, Treasurer Peckham CLP
- James Curran, editor New Socialist
- Glenys Thornton, secretary Political Committee Royal Arsenal Cooperative Society
- Anstey Rice, Southwark Black Peoples Alliance
- Peter Carter, Industrial Organiser, Communist Party
- Prof. Sheila Allen
- Prof. Hilary Rose, Bradford University
- Prof. Steven Rose, Open University
- Prof. Stuart Hall, Open University
- Sue O'Sullivan, Spare Rib
- Helen John, Greenham Peace Camp
- Robin Blackburn, editor New Left Review
- Anthony Arblaster
- John Saville
- Anthony Keodall, leader Hackney Council
- Gultekin Bekdemir, executive member of the banned Turkish union DISK
- Michael Bryant, Sec. NUPE Camberwell Green
- Norman Ellery, Chair NUPE Camberwell Green
- Danny McNamara, Chair NUPE Southwark General
- Chr Noel Hayes, Waltham Forest
- Dave Haywood, Sec. Ealing Brentall CLP

New stage of Polish struggle

Interview with **OLIVER MACDONALD**, editor of *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*

What was the function of the Pope's visit from the point of view of the Church and the Polish government?

For the regime the Pope's visit had a number of purposes. First to demonstrate to the world that the regime could handle a visit by the Pope, to maintain order. Secondly, it was hoped that the Pope's visit would help to break the diplomatic isolation of the regime. Thirdly, the visit was designed to offer a focus of attention for the population in the country other than Solidarity.

And the regime used the Pope's visit as a bargaining counter with all sorts of opposition forces, saying that unless they behaved the visit wouldn't take place.

The regime had hoped that by the time the visit was due, the Solidarity underground would be on the rocks. At the beginning of this year they seemed to have achieved success in this with the underground in disarray. However, as things turned out the underground rallied in the spring and managed to mount a political counter-offensive, culminating in the successful May Day demonstration. The central church bureaucracy and episcopate was attempting to use the Pope's visit to clinch its efforts at detente with the regime, and to exert pressure on the opposition to give up their activities.

Calm

Cardinal Glemp repeatedly declared that it was essential that there should be 'calm' in Poland and there should not be public protests — for example, he opposed the May Day demonstrations.

Glemp hoped that as a result of the Pope's visit there would be a deal between the Vatican and the regime, and some sort of blessing from the Pope for Glemp, who was hard pressed by people who said he was too conciliatory towards the regime.

The Vatican was well aware of the importance of trying to consolidate the gains of the Church of Poland, where as a result of the crisis and martial law they had been given big concessions by the regime. They knew that these gains were opposed by Moscow, and a great deal could be lost. So this was a strong pressure for the Pope to use the visit to make a deal with the regime.

Second, the Vatican also saw the Pope's visit in the context of East-West relations. The Pope has carved out a role for himself as being a champion of Catholicism against the left. He has swung forces inside the church quite sharply to the right. Undoubtedly he has done this out of genuine conviction that his task was to engage in a battle against the left, and on behalf of the nationalist forces inside Poland. So the Pope faced very contradictory pressures.

The Solidarity leadership was well aware of the aims of the Church and the bureaucracy and it knew that there would be powerful forces wanting to use the Pope's visit in order to cement a new relationship with the regime, and that the deal involved saying 'goodbye' to Solidarity.

Crowds

So the Solidarity underground and Walesa made big efforts to use the visit to force the regime to make concessions. And it wanted to make sure that Solidarity's presence would be strongly felt among the crowds.

The Pope did a magnificent theatrical job in convincing the Western media and the crowds that he was on the side of Solidarity. At the same time, the Pope's real message was that the fundamental thing in Poland was the Church, that Solidarity



Above, Lech Walesa with supporters. Below Jaruzelski with the deposed Kania (right) and pro-Moscow hardliner Stefan Olszowski (left).

Oliver MacDonald

ty was really just one part of this fundamental thing — and it was just one phase in 'the revival of Christian Poland'. Consequently his public speeches tended to imply that the 'Solidarity phase' has in fact passed.

Solidarity seems to have suffered some reverses since the Pope's visit — in particular the attempted 'go slow' doesn't seem to have been a big success. There is also defection of Hardek. To what extent has Solidarity maintained its popular support, or is it demoralised? Is the underground organisation maintained?

There doesn't seem to have been any fundamental change in the period since the Pope's visit. The underground had lost the capacity to mobilise the mass of workers behind it in 1982. But there are no strong signs that the bulk of workers in Poland have turned their backs on the Solidarity tradition. Indeed the lack of success of the regime in building the new trade unions indicates the contrary.

The problem is that in any set piece confrontations with the regime, the security forces and workplace management have been able to bring gigantic pressure to bear. The mass of workers really indicated early in the martial law period that there was little

possibility of confronting those pressures and defeating them.

What has changed is that inside the middle class and intelligentsia there has been a growing trend to write Solidarity off, and this has borne down very heavily on the Solidarity leadership. These pressures have been heavily reinforced by the Church. The regime is using the same phrases about the underground as is Glemp — that this is a movement without a programme or perspective.

What are the debates inside the underground leadership about strategy?

The recent statement by Walesa — where he is reported to have said that the 'Solidarity phase' is over and should be replaced by another strategy — indicates what is obviously now the chief debate. This is the debate on whether or not to continue to claim the Solidarity tradition for the underground as an *organised* national movement.

This is then tied in with debates which have gone on since the imposition of martial law — whether there is a perspective of being able to overthrow the regime, and if there isn't then is the perspective to make an accommodation with the regime? Or alternatively, to go for a diversified

'underground society', composed of numerous semi and totally clandestine groups doing particular little activities.

The proposal to abandon the name of Solidarnosc, and replace it with different streams of opposition, goes hand in hand with saying two other things. First, that it's not possible to overthrow the regime. Second, that alternatively one shouldn't attempt to get a deal with the regime either.

But it should be said that disclaiming the name 'Solidarnosc' would be interpreted by the government as a very great success. If big strikes or demonstrations broke out, there would not be a central force in Poland able to give any direction. It would mean the end of the TKK — the underground leadership — which has called the mobilisations against the regime.

Great

This would also mean that one of the great obstacles to detente with the regime would disappear — because one couldn't say any more that there were *three* great movements operating in Poland. On the basis of this interview with Walesa, whether or not he said exactly what he is alleged to have said, it's clear that it represents the

pressure of Church forces and intellectual forces.

It is very likely that the regime is using the seven jailed Solidarnosc leaders and the jailed KOR leaders as hostages in this bargaining process about the future of Solidarnosc. It's not impossible that the regime has indicated that if the name 'Solidarnosc' is disposed of and the TKK goes, these trials can be forgotten.

Is there a debate inside the party leadership about what approach to adopt?

There has been a real battle inside the regime and the party since the beginning of martial law and before. It's over nothing less than the future of Polish Communism. Basically there are two schools of thought. One is around Jaruzelski and Rakowski. The other is the so-called 'Grabskite' wing.

As far as the latter are concerned, they basically argue there should be a revival of the party as a so-called 'Marxist-Leninist' party, with a strong workerist anti-intellectual and anti-Church thrust. They want a great effort to try to maintain working class living standards and to make a big onslaught against intellectual dissent at every level, including a purge of party intellectuals.

Order

On the other side the Jaruzelski strategy has involved an emphasis on the restoration of order, a repression of working class resistance using economic and police measures for this, and an attempt to construct a bloc between the Church leadership, the intelligentsia, technocrats and the peasantry against the working class.

You could put it like this. The Jaruzelski leadership has tried to take all the elements of the so-called 'self-limiting revolution' which don't directly interfere with the functioning of the state and apply them. That means they have tried to decentralise the economy, 'marketise' the economy, offer something to the intellectuals (though not much so far), offer a great deal to the Church, maintain and support private agriculture and so forth.

The powerful forces inside the party who oppose this Jaruzelski policy have not been totally crushed because there is every sign that the Soviet Union doesn't want them crushed.

What is your assessment of the relationship of forces, does the regime have the basis to stabilise the situation?

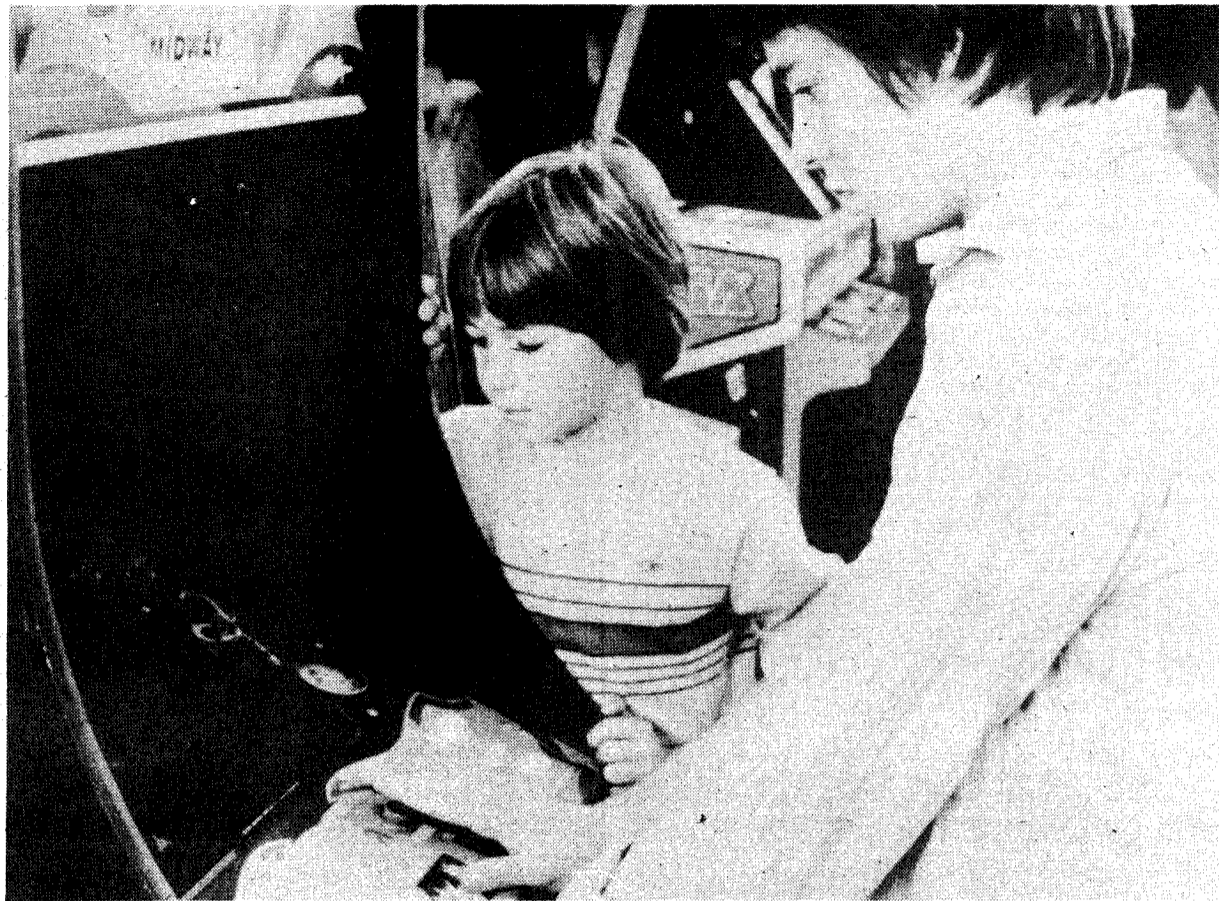
The great success of the regime has been its capacity to demonstrate that it can maintain order. Its second great success up till now has been its ability to do business with the Church.

Its great problem is going to be that it cannot consolidate its relationship with the Church and the intelligentsia until the 'Solidarnosc period' is gone. The problem is how to do that, how to say things are 'normal', without raising working class expectations, and start the working class moving forward. We see this contradiction right now, when you have enormous pessimism inside the intelligentsia, and the first signs of economic strikes.

For the future a lot depends on the Solidarity underground leadership. The regime definitely wants Solidarity to go so it can divide up the opposition and deal with it piecemeal. The great fear of the regime is that the working class will start to move forward on the economic front, and link up with an organised national Solidarity network.

The great card that the regime has had is that of the Church. But its role stores up future problems. The question is: will it give rise to oppositional currents in the future that are much more independent of the Church? If that happens, that spells enormous trouble for the regime.

War Games



For some time now, I've had a sneaking suspicion that the younger generation (for oldies like me that means people born after 1960) had the drop on us. All these seven and eight year-olds who are computer freaks scare the pants off me.

I can just see in twenty years' time everything will be run by computer and credit card, and all us old time computer illiterates will be out in the cold. Time was when you could function by knowing the King's English and your twelve times table, plus a smattering of history and geography. But to proceed.

War Games is a movie about a 17-year old computer genius in the States

who links up his bedroom computer with what he thinks is a toy computer company. 'What games do you play?' asks our young hero. 'Backgammon, poker, chess, chequers ... Global Theronuclear War' responds the computer.

So as they start to play the game, attacking Soviet missiles flash up on the USAF Central War Room display screens deep under the Mid-West mountains.

When Mom calls him down for tea the computer freak stops playing — but the War Operations Planning computer doesn't, and later rings him up to demand the next move. Panic all round.

By Phil Hearse

'War games', frankly, does not have an entirely believable story line. But it's close enough to reality to be a chilling reminder of the precarious state of the 'nuclear balance' and the irrationality of the nuclear arms race. 'Is this a game or is it real?' asks com-

puter freak. 'What's the difference' replies War Operations Planning Computer. Quite.

War Games has a teenage audience in mind, with its youthful central characters and backdrop of young love. But that doesn't intrude if you're fascinated but baffled by computers, terrified of thermonuclear war and like a good thriller. 'Strange game' says the computer 'that neither side can win'. See, they're even inventing computers cleverer than people.

(John Bradham 1983, 113 minutes)

Chilean warning

BESIDES THE usual flood of bills, threats and rent reminders that filled last week's Socialist Action postbag we were surprised to find a single for review.

Chilean Warning is by the New Model Army and comes complete with stickers and factsheets describing the coup in '73 and the repression in Chile today. And as the band's first single released by their own company they've obviously put a lot of energy into getting their message across.

But what of the music? *Chilean Warning* is a vivid description of 'totalitarian repression' which uses guitar and drums to give a hard sound reminiscent of two years ago when synthesizers were still a cheque-book away from your average band-in-the-street. The combination works, particularly the carefully rationed shrill guitar sound — which I've always been a sucker for — and the mumbled background speech, though I didn't catch a word of it.

New Model Army describe themselves as 'a surreal, symbolic dream army, always ready to champion the cause of

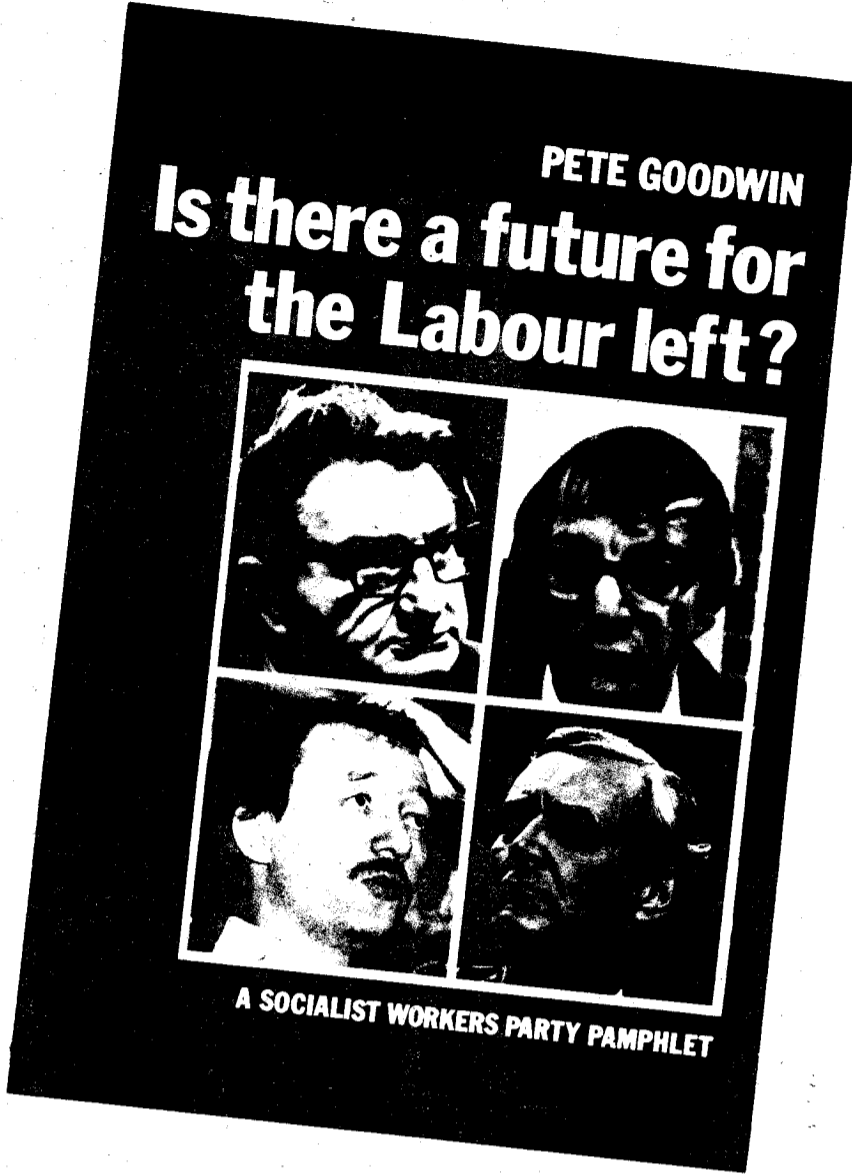
people living under pressure ...'. They 'stress they are not a political band' — and this shows in the way they describe oppression without asking

why it exists or what to do about it.

But since a percentage of the profits from the single go to the CSC that seems like a political act to

me, as does their recent demonstration outside the Chilean Embassy.

Hope the New Model Army wins plenty of recruits.



Is there a future for the SWP?

PETE GOODWIN'S pamphlet *Is there a future for the Labour left?* made me ask the question has the Socialist Workers Party who published it got any future with a line like this?

For five, well-written chapters he details the history of the Labour left and its relations with the right. There it is in all its horror and if you do not have time to read Ralph Miliband's *Parliamentary Socialism* this is a useful short sharp introductory guide to the inadequacies of reformism.

But then comes the snag. His conclusions are about as much use to a British marxist as a pair of snow skis are to a Bedouin. All he comes forward with at the end is an exhortation to build 'the revolutionary party here and now'.

Review by Bob Pennington

This apparently can be done by 'not pretending to be stronger than we are, passing grand resolutions in ill-attended ward meetings or capturing union positions without any real base and building every real workers' struggle we can find, no matter how tiny, and arguing unambiguously for our revolutionary politics with the small minority who will listen.'

This Socialist Party of Great Britain-type approach, which owes more to Fabian gradualism than it does to the traditions of the early Third International is never going to lead to social revolution.

Revolutionary socialism is only going to go on the agenda when millions of people are convinced that things can't go on in the same way. And they are equally convinced that the reformist organisations can't deliver the goods.

This means a mass break with the right-wing leaders. The author admits: 'The unions' predominance in the party's power structure arises from their great weight in the working class itself. They organise and affect the day-to-day lives of millions of workers.' How right he is. So the 64-dollar question is how are the workers going to break with reformism? Pete Goodwin suggests it is going to be done by a revolutionary group building from a never-ending succession of strikes, where presumably a growing number of workers will learn that their leaders are just a bunch of traitors.

But the unions are not made up of, on one side, a perfidious leadership whose task is to sell out and on the other side a rank and file who are straining at the leash to overthrow capitalism just waiting for some erudite marxist to come and show them the way. The majority of workers think that capitalism, apart from a few blemishes is OK. That is why they often give their support to the right wing union leaders and the Labour leaders.

Even the activist wing in the labour movement is overwhelmingly left reformist. They may be more militant than the average rank and file member but they still reckon reform not revolution is the answer. This acceptance of reformism enables the right wing to get away with their policies of class collaboration. But it is these workers that marxists have to convince.

Hidden away in a corner somewhere are not millions of unsullied

revolutionary workers to whom reformism is a dirty word. That was a fact grasped by the 3rd International in the early days when it urged the young British Communist Party to build a bridge to the reformist workers and this led to the formation of the Minority Movement and the National Left-Wing Movement.

They knew that the marxists could only win the leadership of decisive sections of the working class if they could by united action and common work show the reformist workers that there were practical solutions to the crisis which needed independent working class action.

Bridge

The SWP have learned nothing from that experience. Their strategy outlined in this pamphlet will not make a bridge to those workers but will simply erect a pier — and when you step off the end of those you fall over and drown. The pamphlet does not even have the merits of saying anything new or original. The idea that factory floor struggles will triumph over politics was a cherished myth of the syndicalist movement.

It got a new lease of life in the days of 'the third period'. Every now and again when a British far-left organisation tires of the real world it surfaces again, and some group discovers that it all begins at the 'point of production'.

Meanwhile the right wing breathe a sigh of relief, happy in the thought that those bloody marxists won't be disrupting their Labour Party.

Is there a future for the Labour left?
A Socialist Workers Party Pamphlet
Price 95p

DIARY

Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP to arrive not later than Thursday, one week prior to publication.

- **National Abortion Campaign** conference is on Oct 1-2nd. For details please contact NAC at 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1. Tel. 01-278 0153.
- **The Politics of Health in Zimbabwe** Hour long video available for meetings or functions. £10 (payable in

advance). Send to Books for South Africa Fund, PO Box 50, London N1.

- **Labour Movement Conference on Ireland** — Peace through Democracy. Sat 26 Nov. Speakers include Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone, and Clive Soley.
- **Sri Lankan Research & Information Group** will provide speakers on the current situation there for meetings. Write to 9 Grays Inn Buildings, London EC1.

● **Hands off Central America** South London labour movement Rally 28 Oct, Lambeth Town Hall. Speakers include: Alan Sapper, Salvador Moncada (FDR/FMLN) and reps from Nicaragua and Grenada. Further details/leaflets from Vauxhall CLP, 01-582 2955.

● **El Salvador Solidarity national raffle:** 1st prize Holiday in Cuba; 2nd prize Video Recorder; 3rd prize Barrel of beer. Tickets £2.50 for book of five from ELSSOC, 29 Islington Park St, London N1. Draw takes place 21 October.

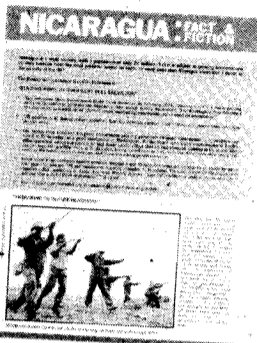


RED MOLE T-SHIRTS, red on yellow. £2.75 or only £2.15 each for orders of 10 or more (includes post). State size: S/M/L. From The other Printshop, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester 1.

● **No Intervention in Central America (NICA)** is a broad based coalition of solidarity groups, human rights orgs, aid agencies and political parties. The NICA petition deadline has now been extended to 24 October. Copies of petitions or more details from NICA 20/21 Compton Terrace, London N1 01-226 6747.

● **Stop 'The City'** protest and carnival against financial institutions backing for military spending. 6am-6pm 29 Sept. Meeting points Finsbury Sq, Tower Hill, St Paul's Cathedral steps all day. General Planning meeting 24 Sept, 10am-6pm, Tonbridge Club Cromer St. WC1. Details 01-809 1346.

● **CND National Demonstration** London, 22 Oct. Details: 01-272 8896.



NICARAGUA: FACT AND FICTION This pamphlet is a must for anyone active in solidarity work. Packed full of information, facts and figures. 10p each, 20 for £1 or 1,000 for £40 — plus postage. From Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, 20-21 Compton Terrace, London N1, 01-359 8982.

Labour Party Conference fringe meetings and events

● **New Socialist forum**, Tue 4 Oct, 7.30pm, the Dome, Pavilion Estate. Speakers: The Leader & Deputy Leader.

● **Chile Solidarity Campaign Latin America Fiesta**, Tue 4 Oct, 8.30pm, Sussex Rm, Bedford Hotel. Chilean folk music & dance, bar extension.

● **Labour CND/debate on NATO**, Thur 6 Oct, 5.30pm, Royal Albion Hotel, Old Steine. Chair: Pat Arrowsmith. Speakers: Jo Richardson MP, Denzil Davies MP, Bob Cryer, Mary Kaldor.

● **Labour Briefing meeting 'Organising the fightback'**, Sun 2 October, after conference session, Queens Hotel. Chair: Jeremy Corbyn MP. Speakers: Ken Livingstone, Jane Stockton, Ann Pettifor, Merle Amory, Colin Talbot.

● **Labour Women's Briefing** discussion, Mon 3 October, 7.30pm, Kings Hotel. Led by Jo Richardson MP and Anne Davis.

● **Abolition of the GLC**. GLC meeting, Mon 3 Oct, 7.30pm, Metropole Hotel. Speakers include Ken Livingstone.

● **Ctee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey** information meeting, Tues 4 Oct, 5.15pm, Old Ship Hotel, Kings Rd. Chair: Ernie Roberts MP. Speakers: Clare Short MP, Tom Sawyer, Aydin Meric.

● **US imperialism in Central America & Chile** Tue 4 Oct, 5.30pm, Bedford Hotel, Kings Rd. Chair: Richard Balfe MEP. Speakers: Salvador Moncada, Ien van den Heuvel, Dick Caborn.

● **The Labour Party & Black People**, 5 October, venue & time to be announced.

● **Agenda for the Peace Movement** with Tony Benn, Fenner Brockway, Ken Coates, Tam Dalyell, Stuart Holland MP, Michael Meacher MP. Sat 1 October, 7.30pm, Queens Hotel, Kings Rd, Brighton. (Organised by Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation 0602-784504).

● **No socialism without gay liberation!** Labour Campaign for Gay Rights meeting with Jo Richardson MP, Reg Race, Jeremy Corbyn MP and other speakers. Weds 5 Oct, 5.30pm, Pavillion Theatre.

● **International social** — solidarity with the struggles for peace and freedom: Africa, Asia, Middle East, Latin America. Sun 2 Oct at end of conference session to a Sussex Rm, Bedford Hotel, Kings Rd. Music, dance, late bar. Special guests from Nicaragua, PLO, and ANC. Admission £1. (Organised by Co-op Political Ctee London Region and many other sponsoring solidarity campaigns).

● **Consultation of Constituency Labour Parties** including workshops on: Fighting the European Elections (convenor: Stuart Holland); Building Workplace Branches to Resist Tebbit (convenor: Ken Coates); Defending Local Democracy (convenor: David Blunkett). At Brighton Tech College, Pelham St, Sun 2 October, 9.30am-3.30pm. Details: Steering Ctee, 143 Haddon Cres, Chilwell, Nottingham 0602-708318.

● **Stop the witch hunt** Labour Against the Witch Hunt meeting Sat 1 Oct, 6pm, Apollo Hotel, 135 Kings Road, opposite Pier.

Speakers: Ken Livingstone, Anne Pettifor, Jane Stockton, Colin Talbot. Chair: Jeremy Corbyn.

● **Campaign for Labour Party Democracy** meeting. Sun 2 Oct, 1.45pm, Corn Exchange (Pavilion complex). Speakers: Margaret Beckett, Eric Clarke, Bill Deal, Eric Heffer, Patricia Hewitt, Joan Maynard, Michael Meacher. Chair: Alistair McRae.

● **Peace march organised by Labour CND**. Sun 2 October, assemble 1.30pm, The Level, Brighton (nr BR stn). Rally 2.30pm, Sea Front nr Metropole Hotel. Speakers include Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone, Helen John, Richard Balfe, Ken Cameron and others.

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LONDON'S HEALTH EMERGENCY
Public meeting

The closure of the Highgate Wing, Whittington Hospital

Tue 11 Oct, 7.30pm, Caxton House, St John's Way, Archway N19.

This closure will affect services for the elderly and children, as well as many other patients. The situation is serious. Please come along and give us your support.

Speakers: Jeremy Corbyn MP, Michael Meacher MP, Caroline Osborn (Islington CHC), Syed Boukhari (COHSE).

Sponsored by Socialist Health Association, London branch, 01-455 9621.

● **Women's Rights Rally** Tue 4 Oct, 7pm, Metropole Hotel. Chair: Glynys Thornton. Speakers: Frances Morrell, Jo Richardson MP, Barbara Taylor, Kathleen Kempton, Ann Pettifor.

● **Eastern Europe and Polish Solidarity Campaigns** meeting. Tue 4 Oct, 7pm, Metropole Hotel. Chair: Ron Keating. Speakers: Eric Heffer MP, Philip Whitehead, Oliver MacDonald, Wiktor Moszczyński, Zdena Tomin, Marek Garztecki.

● **Labour Herald Rally**, Mon 3 Oct, 7.30pm, the Dome Pavilion Estate. Speakers: Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone, Arthur Scargill, Joan Maynard MP, Matthew Warburton, Allan Roberts MP, Faisal Oweida (PLO rep), Kate Allen.

● **LPYS meeting 'Youth & the future'**, Thur 6 Oct, 7.30pm, Wagner Hall, Regency Rd. Speakers: Laurence Coates, Steve Morgan, Dave Nellist MP.

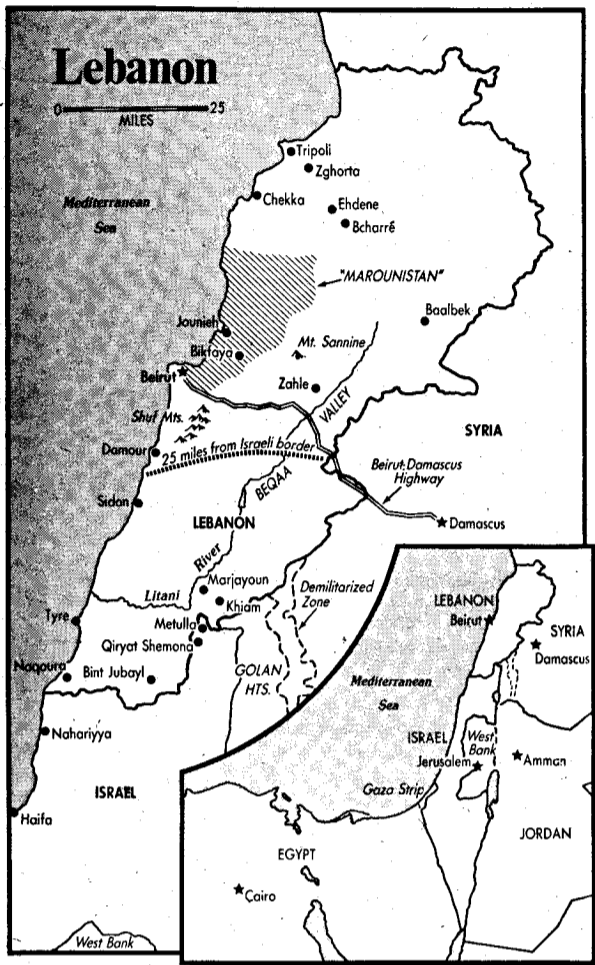
● **Women Against Rape** Thur 6 Oct, 7.30pm, Curzon Hotel, Cavendish Place. Chair: Ruth Hall. Speakers: John Tilley, Dawn Primarolo, Halimat Babamba, Dodie Seymour, Deborah Knight.

● **Building Labour Party Workplace Branches**, Tues 4 Oct, 5.30pm, Kings Hotel. Speakers: Alan Fraser (UCW), Rob Dawber (NUR) followed by discussion. Meeting organised by Socialist Organiser

● **The New Labour and Ireland**. Labour Ctee on Ireland meeting. Tues 4 Oct, 5.30pm, Sussex Sunday Football League room, Queen's Sq, (opp Churchill Sq). Speakers include: Ken Livingstone, Martin Collins, Sheila Healy.

● **Ireland rally** organised by Royal Arsenal Co-op & LCI. Wed 5 Oct. Speakers: Richard Balfe MEP, Jeremy Corbyn MP, Clare Short MP, Helena Kennedy, Angela Birtill.

Struggle for Lebanon



AMERICAN intervention in the Lebanon marks a new stage in the struggle between the forces of imperialist-backed reaction and the forces of Arab nationalism which has been under way in that country for 25 years. But without doubt it is one of the most complex struggles anywhere.

In Lebanon today there are five foreign armies, the PLO, the Lebanese army and dozens of different militias involved in the struggle. If the most dramatic aspect of the fight today is the escalating involvement of US imperialism, then the war is overlaid with numerous other conflicts. In order to disentangle these disputes we have to look at aspects of Lebanon's history.

A convenient starting point is the revolt by the Druze people in 1958, Lebanon had been dominated by Christian interests: the constant struggle between Muslims and the Christian communities derived from this basic fact of Christian dominance. Lebanon itself is an artificial creation of imperialism; the product of the French-British carve up of Syria in 1919.

By Phil Hearse

Since the Middle Ages the area has been a patchwork of conflicting religious communities. The Maronite Christians preserved their identity and exclusiveness by denying that they were Arabs. The Maronites weirdly claim to be descendants of the Phoenicians. Ever since the successive invasions of the Levant by the Crusaders, they looked to the West, and in the 19th and 20th centuries to Western imperialism, for protection and support.

For centuries the region around Mount Lebanon (the 'Mountain', the mythical homeland of the Maronites) was dominated by Druze landlords and chieftans. The Maronites, mainly peasant farmers and labourers, were liberated from Druze domination by the French intervention in 1863.

Three main communities co-exist in Lebanon today: Christians, Sunni Muslims and Shi'a Muslims. The Druze sect which dominates the Chouf mountains is an exclusive order of 'initiates' — itself a split from the Shi'a branch of Islam.

Since the foundation of independent Lebanon in 1943 the *confessional* character of the state has

been enshrined in the constitution. Each community with a certain number of seats in the parliament, the President a Christian, the vice-president a Sunni Muslim.

The Shi'ites, as relative late comers to the region, have shared power less despite their domination of the southern part of the country. At various times the Christians have attempted to exploit the divisions between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims today with less success, although there are still Shi'ite Muslims in the Christian militia of Saad Haddad.

However, the constitutional confessionalism of the state failed to prevent conflict between the Christian rulers and the dispossessed Druze and Muslim peoples.

The conflict between them was overlaid in the early 1970s by the arrival in Lebanon of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian fighters and refugees, evicted from Jordan after 'Black September' in 1970. Although the PLO headquarters were formally in Cairo, Lebanon was a 'front line' state, from which Israel could be attacked.

In 1973 the Israelis mounted commando attacks on the PLO offices in Beirut, in which three top leaders of the PLO were killed. Muslims and Palestinians mounted huge demonstrations against the Christian government of Sleiman Franjeh, accusing the government of complicity with the Israeli attacks. The scene was being set for civil war, which duly broke out in 1975.

In the mid-1970s the Phalange party of Pierre Gemayel with its ruthless militia, became the predominant Christian force. In the 1975-6 civil war the Christian militias



The massacre at Karatina, 1976. Muslim woman begs hooded Phalange militia man for mercy

Who's who in Lebanon

Progressive Socialist Party. Druze nationalist movement led by Walid Jumblatt, son of the assassinated Druze leader Kamal Jumblatt, murdered in 1977. Main force fighting the Lebanese army today. Lebanese affiliate of the Socialist International.

Amal. Shi'ite Muslim militia. A recent arrival on the Lebanese scene following Iranian revolution. Strong in the southern suburbs of Beirut. Before Israeli invasion engaged in clashes with Palestinian and Arab nationalist forces. Fought hard against Israeli invaders, fighting against Lebanese army today.

Palestine Liberation Organisation. Different wings have their own militias. Main forces: Fatah, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Democratic Popular Front. Biggest organisation Fatah split between pro- and anti-Arafat wings. Main forces in Bek'aa Valley and Tripoli (pro-Arafat).

Independent Nasserist Movement. Arab nationalist militia. Fought bitter battle with the Israelis in West Beirut earlier this year. Largest of several Nasserist movements.

Ba'ath Party of Syria — Lebanese branch. Lebanese front for the Syrian government, one of many front organisations maintained by Syria. Equivalent of *Saiqa* the Syrians' front in the PLO.

Lebanese Communist Party. Founded in 1940. Many of its leading members are of Christian origin, but has fought against the Christians with the Lebanese left.

Phalangists. Right wing Christian party founded in 1936 by Pierre Gemayel. Main force among Maronites. Centred on town of Bikfaya near the 'Mountain', ancestral home of Gemayel family. Bashir Gemayel, gangster leader of the Phalangist militias, was made President in 1982 and assassinated in the same year. His brother Amin is now president. Phalangist militia today called 'Lebanese Forces' and co-operated closely with Lebanese army.

Tiger militia. Christian militia of Emille Chamoun. Main militia responsible for the Tel Al-Zatar massacre of Palestinians in 1976.

Sleiman Franjeh. Former president at time of civil war. Allied with the Syrians against Lebanese Forces. His militia engaged in bitter feud with Gemayel following assassination of his son, Tony, by Bashir Gemayel's militia in 1975.

Saad Haddad. Cashiered major of the Lebanese army. His militia has control of large chunk of the extreme south of the country ('Haddad-land'). Puppet of the Israelis. His forces will be the 'barrier' protecting north Israel if the Israelis ever withdraw.



Kamal Jumblatt — assassinated in 1977



Pierre Gemayel — founder of the Phalange

fought the *Lebanese National Movement*, an alliance of the Druze, Progressive Socialist Party led by Kamal Jumblatt, the Palestinians, the Nasserist militias, the Lebanese Communist Party and numerous other left and nationalist forces.

In this struggle, despite terrible Christian massacres of Palestinians and Muslims, the National Movement and the left got

the upper hand. Without doubt, in 1976 the Christians were on the verge of an historic defeat. It was prevented by the intervention of the Syrian army, dressed up as the 'Arab peace keeping force'.

The Syrians above all wanted a government in Lebanon under its own patronage — the National Movement and the Palestinians represented a force too much outside its control. While in 1976 the

Christians saw the Syrians as allies (Franjeh has remained their ally to this day), this alliance proved temporary and fragile.

The Phalangist objective remained the establishment of a state dominated by themselves. Their opportunity came with the Israeli 1982 invasion, which propelled Bashir Gemayel, leader of the Phalangist militia, to the presidency.

US goes to war

THE United States is on the verge of war in the Lebanon, in alliance with the French, Italian and British forces. Since the withdrawal of the Israelis to the Alawi river, the vacuum left behind has been filled with battle.

The Druze militias have rushed to re-occupy their traditional territory in the Chouf mountains. In doing so, however, they are challenging the US project of creating a strong, centralised government controlled by the Maronite Christian Phalange.

In the weeks before their departure the Israelis seemed lukewarm about their erstwhile Christian allies. In effect they seem to prefer the carving up of Lebanon into warring enclaves, on the basis that a weak, divided Lebanon was better than a strong

Christian-dominated state.

President Amin Gemayel has made no secret of his belief that the best allies for the Christians are the Americans, not the Israelis.

Syria, the force that

stopped an imminent left-nationalist victory against the Christians in 1976, on this occasion is backing the Druze. The primary concern of the Baathist government in Syria has never been the religious or political beliefs of the Lebanese government, but solely whether it will be amenable to them. They calculate that a stridently pro-Western Gemayel government will be hostile to their interests. So for the moment, the Syrians back the Druze militias.

The new cold warriors in the United States government see the strug-

gle in Lebanon in an uncomplicated way. For them the Lebanese left and nationalists are tools of the Syrians, who are in turn Russian surrogates. Their intervention in Lebanon is only part of the crusade against communism and the colonial revolution.

Vietnam

In the United States there has been a long struggle by the right wing to overcome the mood of isolationism and opposition to foreign intervention which followed the Vietnam war. The ascendancy of the Reagan-

Kirkpatrick-Schultz-Weinberger foreign policy team has taken the anti-communist cold war hysteria to its most hysterical pitch since the 1950s.

The Lebanese war gives them the possibility to force the acceptance of something impossible five years ago — direct US military intervention in a third world country.

If the US planes and marines go in, it will be the preparation and rehearsal for similar activities around the world — starting in Central America.



Fight the three per cent

Reject incomes policy!

Conference '83

THE 1983-1984 PAY round has started with a Treasury announcement of a three per cent limit in the public sector. But as inflation starts to rise again there is evidence of discontent with low wage settlements. Shop stewards representing Vauxhall's 14,000 manual workers rejected the company's offer and miners are calling for a 24 per cent rise.

The Labour Party should not only place itself full square behind the fight of those like the public sector and Vauxhall's workers, but also reject the notion of incomes policy — whose results were so disastrous for the Labour Party in the 1979 election.

In the health service the establishment of the independent pay review body for the nurses, the abolition of the Whitley council system and the introduction of widespread privatisation of ancillary services all threaten to undermine union organisation.

In the water industry the winding up of the National Water Council as the chief negotiating body and its replacement by a new body has been accompanied by an attempt by the water authorities aim-

ing to end the closed shop covering the industry's 29,000 workers.

In the case of the health workers the employers and the government are carrying through the consequences of the defeat suffered by the health workers last year after the failure of the TUC to provide the support that was needed to win the dispute.

In the water industry the employers are preparing the ground for attacking the organisational strength that won the

workers a famous victory in last years pay round.

What is at stake in the 1983/84 pay round is therefore not only a fight to defend living standards, but also to confront the multi-faceted threat to trade union organisation posed by revision of bargaining procedures, privatisation and threat of the Employment Act.

Even very small disputes such as that recently settled at *Stockport Messenger* can pose a national confrontation between the government and the unions around Tebbit's law.

The outcome of successive wage rounds with the Tory government and the employers between now and the next general election will be of decisive importance to Labour's political aspects. The myth of Tory invincibility so assiduously cultivated by the Tories, thrived on the defeats suffered by the

trade union movement as a result of the defeats suffered by the health workers, the train drivers, the miners and BL workers.

Unequivocal support from the Labour Party both nationally and locally can contribute to the confidence of workers preparing to take on the employers and the Tories.

It was remarkable that the Tory government came to the side of the employers immediately in the five week washing up strike at Cowley before the general election while the Labour Party never took a national stand in support of the unions.

Prospect

Neither is the prospect of victory over the Tories in the coming pay rounds a forlorn hope. The results of last year's pay round show that despite a gradual decline of the level of pay settlements to 5.5 per cent in the last quarter, most workers received pay settlements consistently above the level of inflation.

According to the Labour Research Department's annual review of pay settlements this represents a dramatic reversal compared to the pay year for 1981-82 which with most pay settlements completed showed that only 8 out of 309 were above the rate of inflation.

But the employers have shown themselves extremely resistant to reductions in the working week. It is for this reason that the engineers claim, including



Nurses confront Murray during last year's NHS dispute

the demand for the 35 hour week, would be of great significance — if the AUEW leaders had the slightest intention of fighting for it.

But the shift to the right in the TUC, not only towards an accommodation with Tebbit and a new political understanding of the possibility of SDP/Labour coalitionism, but also towards American-type business trade unionism, means that the possibility of any serious campaign being waged by the right wing union leaders is negligible.

This particularly applies to the skilled workers — among whom Labour did so badly in the last election, suffering a 9 per cent drop in their proportion of the vote. Neither is

the reason for this fall in support difficult to pin down.

Among this group of workers (and indeed among employed workers as a whole) real wages have consistently risen since Thatcher arrived in office. Under the Labour government, particularly in the years 1976 and 1978, real wages dropped more rapidly (by 12.5 per cent) than at any other time in this century.

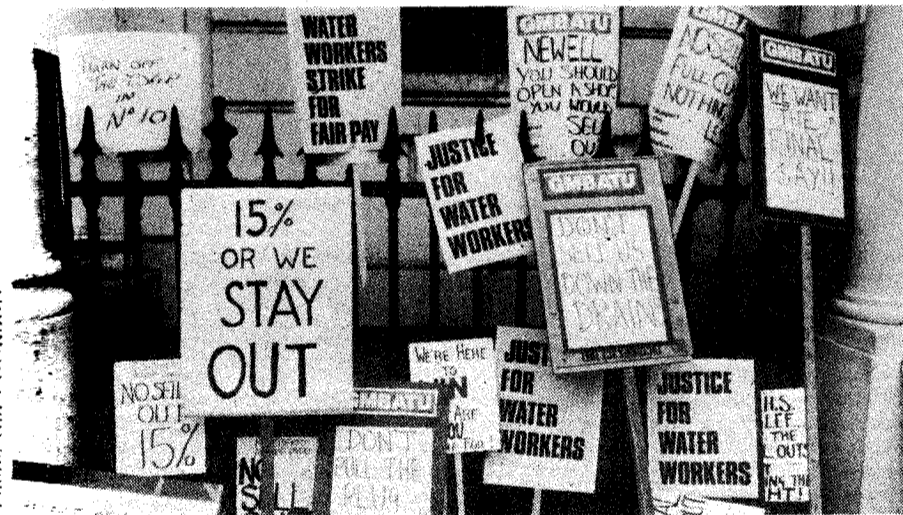
Result

This result of the Social Contract has not been lost on these workers. If Labour is to rebuild its base in the industrial working class the solution is not the shift to right advocated by the leaders of

such unions as the AUEW and EEUPTU, but a fight against the Tories' policies of mass unemployment and cuts Labour must also reject those policies of Labour's right wing which hold down working class living standards, particularly incomes policy.

In the coming wage round Labour will face a double test. Firstly, whether it will take the side of workers in struggle as promptly and energetically as the Tories take the side of the employers. Secondly, to reject incomes policy itself.

Whatever the result of the Labour Party conference the rank and file of the party must strengthen their links with the trade union movement on this basis:



Waterworkers took on Tories and won



Redundancies then the 84 hour week

SHORTLY after organising a branch of the National Society of Metal Mechanics at the GM Plastics factory in Redditch near Birmingham nine Asian workers were made redundant.

The factory, owned by Aberplace Ltd, had a workforce of 22 Asian workers, eight more on nights. The entire night shift and the day shift shop stewards were made redundant without notice or regard to service hours after the NSMM applied for negotiating rights.

Mohammed Younis, the sacked night-shift shop stewards says, 'Director Geoff Morris went to the rest of the work force and said that he 'wanted no more of this union nonsense'. 'He then put the remaining workers on an

84 hour week — seven 12 hour shifts. The remaining union members were too terrified to resist. The job crisis is so desperate in the West Midlands, you do not fool around.

'The management then went out and recruited 10 scabs to work for the same hours and conditions that we had formed the union to fight.'

Unfortunately the NSMM failed to turn up and speak to the remaining unionised workers to give them the confidence to fight. Instead they took the 'Redditch 9' to an industrial tribunal which accepted the company's argument that lack of work was the reason for the redundancies, not victimisation of trade unionists. The workers are awaiting an appeal.

Mohammad Younis went on to say,

'Mr. Morris paid us up on Friday afternoon. When we protested about lack of notice he pointed to two notices on the board dated two months before which he had just stuck there. But we had never seen them before.'

'Just before the redundancies Mr. Morris spent £396,000 on new equipment he had so much work.'

Holiday

'Our minimum week was 44 hours. Yet when it came to holiday pay it was 40 hours. Wages were £1.95 an hour for nights, and £1.75 for days, giving a take home pay of £95 for 60 hours of nights.'

With so much cheap labour about it is obvious that management were determined to increase profits by restricting wage rates and round the clock working.

The 'Redditch Nine' Defence Campaign calls on trade union branches to write to J. Langford, Branch Secretary NSMM, 70 Lionel Street, Birmingham B3 1JG demanding vigorous action against this company which preys on

workers' desperation for a living wage.

The campaign intends to press for boycotting of all Aberplace Ltd goods and deliveries. They have a sister company called Northfield Drug Stores Ltd, Grosvenor Centre, Bristol Road, South Birmingham.

Other plans include a mass demonstration and picket in Redditch. Birmingham Trades Council and the Trade Union Resource Centre are supporting the campaign in its demands for reinstatement and compensation.

• Contact the campaign with messages of support and donations through: M. Younis, 49 Colville Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham B12. (Bob Smith)

Massey workers taken to court

FOUR HUNDRED clerical workers have been on strike for over two weeks at the Massey Ferguson tractor plant in Coventry.

Having paid nothing into the company pension fund for two and a



half years, management came up with a derisory pay offer of £1 per week plus a freeze on workers contributions to the fund.

ACTSS and the APEX members are not prepared to swallow a cut in their real wages and pensions on retirement. As the Canadian multi-national erodes the capital base of the fund.

Sixty-five final assembly workers have also thrown down the gauntlet to management

by renewing strike action in pursuit of improved bonus payments.

Within a week both unions made the clerical workers' dispute official and round-the-clock picketing of the plant has been organised.

As the action began to bite Massey Ferguson responded last Thursday by serving them High Court injunctions to named pickets forcing them to take down barricades and picket outside the plant.

Massey Ferguson's use of the courts came as no surprise to the work force who are in no mood to back down now. They are actively campaigning for support from the local labour movement and workers in other Massey Ferguson plants.

• Collection sheets are available from Dave Davies, Convenor ACTTS/APEX Joint Committee, c/o Transport House, Coventry.

Photo: JOHN HARRIS

Photo: JOHN HARRIS

**MOLES
EYE
VIEW**



Let Sir Philip keep his job

LIKE NO other police force the West Midlands coppers have tried to get close to the locals. As usual their efforts have been decried by the professional knockers of the left.

When they called in on one house in Winston Green, Birmingham, one 'fuzz' was just showing the inhabitants his John Wayne tricks when his gun went off — accidentally of course — and lodged in the bed. Why people should grumble about this I'll never know. The cops bought another bed!

In June 1982 armed police smashed their way into a house in High Street, Peshett. This was very understandable as no-one answered the doorbell, so how do people expect the police to get in? It was just a little unfortunate that it was the wrong house.

In Kinghurst armed detectives held an innocent woman at gunpoint — how were they to know she was innocent? People complained that her four kids were also held at gunpoint. But you can hardly blame the coppers for that. You know what kids are like these days, even the under fives swear at their elders. Anyhow, the police later gave the woman £28 and a turkey.

Mr Roger Donaldson of Poplar Street, Kidderminster was handcuffed and detained for five hours, while his wife and children were held for three hours. Why Mr Donaldson should grumble about this I'll never know, the police never charged him with anything.

There are those people who complain that West Midlands' officers

extracted confessions out of them by tying plastic bags around their necks. They even produced medical evidence to substantiate their allegations. But surely that is fair enough. Everyone knows that being innocent they would never have confessed if they hadn't been tortured. All the police were doing was making sure that Britain's unsolved crime figures didn't rise to an alarmingly high rate.

Then there is the subversive Madeline Haigh who started writing letters to the Minister of Defence and her local papers about cruise missiles. Of course the police had to track down such a dangerous character so they used a number of bogus excuses to call on her, even claiming that someone from her address had been ordering items from a firm and then not paying for them.

Mrs Haigh complains 'the police invented a pack of lies about me ...' But how else can democracy be defended against her and all those millions of people who are just a bit worried about being incinerated in a nuclear war?

Because of these incidents, irresponsible elements have been demanding the resignation of the West Midlands police boss, Sir Philip Knights. I agree with the *Birmingham Evening Mail* when it defends him saying: 'Not a resigning matter.'

If he and his mob didn't exist Moles Eye View would have to invent them — but the real thing is so much better than fiction.

**NALGO
members meet
privatisation
threat**

OVER THE weekend of 17 and 18 September, 300 activists from the local government union NALGO packed a college in Leeds to map out a strategy against privatisation. This conference was organised by the Leeds branch following a call from a broad left meeting at the union's annual conference.

Roger Kline from the Birmingham Trade Union Resource Centre explained that not only does privatisation correspond to the monetarist demand to cut public spending, it also propagates the idea that essential services are not the collective responsibility of society as a whole.

**By Pauline Powell,
Islington NALGO**

This leads to these services being thrust on to women in the family.

In the drive for privatisation, the Tories stress the importance of efficiency. So in Dudley, schoolchildren who take sandwiches instead of school meals are refused access to fresh water by the council. Why wash cups for children who can't pay?

The conference applauded the call from Ian Stephenson, branch secretary of Bury NALGO, for cross union action against privatisation. He told how his own branch had successfully beaten plans to privatise refuse collection.

Bury branch went on the offensive and refuse collectors delivered leaflets to every household as they collected rubbish. Bury Labour Party was actively involved in the campaign.

Following a near total one day strike, the council was forced to back down rather than face piles of uncollected rubbish during an election campaign.

NALGO has a clear policy against privatisation, but the feeling was that paper resolutions are not enough. The na-

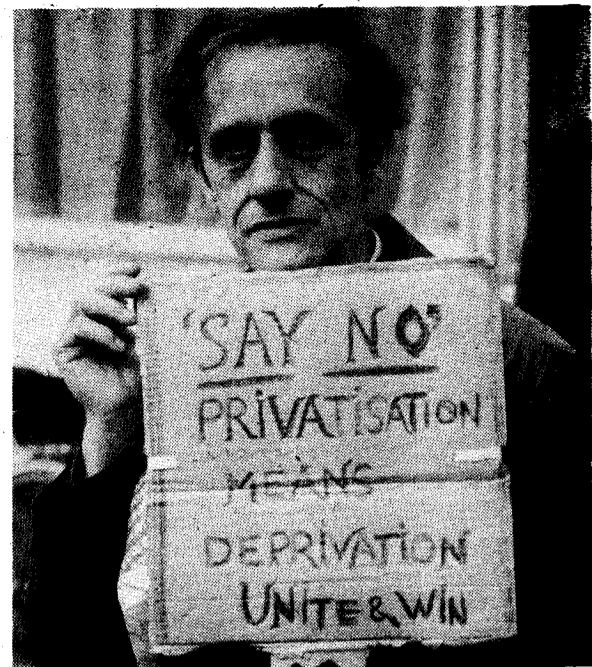
tional executive must be forced to translate these into a national plan of industrial action.

Tory victories over privatisation in boroughs such as Wandsworth are the price we pay for leaving branches to battle alone.

Campaign

Executive member Harry Crapper explained the need for a campaign aimed at the users of public services of at least the magnitude of the union's *Put People First* campaign. Other delegates successfully argued that the Labour Party has a vital role in such a campaign.

The most significant aspect of the conference was its recognition that steps have to be taken to organise a national broad left. The new



broad left is essential for organising effective opposition to the Tory attacks.

After the retreats of the TUC congress it is vital that a class struggle opposition is built to fight for joint union action against the Tory offensive.

In this spirit, the NALGO conference on privatisation sent a message of support to the Telecom engineers' union special conference taking place the same weekend.

The Leeds conference gained broad support from union members, including sup-

porters of Militant, Socialist Action, Socialist Organiser and other Labour Party members. The Communist Party was among those present. absence were members of the Socialist Workers Party. Hopefully they will not stand aside from the opportunities we now have to organise a national NALGO broad left.

NALGO Metropolitan district broad left is holding a conference on 30 October. For details contact Bill Hamilton c/o Newham NALGO, 7 Chapel St, E15. 519 7457.

**Action not words
to save rail**

BRITISH RAIL'S Corporate Plan for 1983 to 1988 is intended to answer the Serpell report on British Rail operations. It has done so by agreeing to Serpell's conclusions.

Serpell's aim, in line with the Tory plan to cut nationalised public services, was to reduce the government subsidy to BR by 25 per cent.

The Corporate Plan invites the Tories to do the same, by basing its financial forecasts on such a reduction. Savings will be made by lower internal costs, by 'spinning it out of our own guts' in the words of Peter Parker, retiring BR chairperson.

By an NUR member

The massive haemorrhage of jobs will continue. Between 1975 and 1983 55,000 jobs were lost. In five years time, this will have increased by 25,900.

BR refuses to give a breakdown of where these jobs will go, but workshop staff, train crews and administrative staff are high on the list.

The closure of three British Rail Engineering Ltd workshops — BREL — means the loss of 2000 jobs, while driver-only operation on profitable suburban routes and locomotives means a substantial reduction of guards and drivers. Office staff will be hit by computers and automation.

Privatisation and rationalisation, the twin stars of Tory monetarism, are at the centre of the

general drift towards privatisation of all BR subsidiaries.

Since the Plan's publication, the Board have announced that BREL will no longer automatically get orders for stock, which will be put out to tender. It will have to compete with other companies abroad, while at the same time its potential profits will fall into private pockets and not the public purse.

Response

The rail unions' response to the BR plan has been low key. They have yet to put forward a fighting strategy to save jobs.

In the latest NUR News, members are asked to send printed postcards to their MPs, urging support for the high investment rail strategy and opposition to cuts.

This is a far from adequate response to a crisis situation. The NUR and the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering unions have failed to call for united industrial action to stop the closure of the workshops.

The Tory onslaught on a public service requires a united fightback by the federation of rail unions, with the unions of the Triple Alliance. It needs demands to be placed on the Labour Party for an active commitment to support industrial action by railworkers.

Fighting words are not enough. Industrial action has to be on the agenda.



Thatcher vandalises public services. This postcard is from 'Wish you were here' — an exhibition of postcards and posters at the Labour Party Conference.

Maidstone and strikers lobbied the TUC at Blackpool for support.

Talks with the Arbitration Conciliation and Advisory Service — ACAS — ended in deadlock when KCC refused to discuss John's reinstatement. Lord McCarthy has been called in to arbitrate.

We do not see this as just another dispute but as a deliberate attempt by the County Council to smash our unions.

On 6 August, a NUPE

member, Kevin Pitfield returned from holiday to find a letter of dismissal which claimed 'you are no longer needed to fulfil your duties'. The next day his job was advertised at the local job centre. Perhaps it's no coincidence that Kevin had just signed up three new NUPE members the day before his holiday.

Messages of support to Ian Smith, Strike Committee, NALGO Office, County Hall, Maidstone.

**Reinstate
John
Kirkpatrick**

MEMBERS OF the local government union NALGO are on strike in Kent to defend a victimised worker. A striker explains the issues.

On 3 August, John Kirkpatrick, a senior NALGO shop steward was asked to transfer a child to a home hired by Kent County Council which employs non-union labour.

Since June, NALGO members have been in dispute with KCC who refuse to negotiate a pay claim for workers in similar family centres.

An official NALGO instruction was issued that members should not

undermine the claim by admitting children to these homes.

For refusing to scab on his union, John was sacked. Fellow workers in Canterbury and Gillingham promptly walked out and have been on strike ever since.

An emergency mass meeting of social workers the next day voted by 400 to come out in support of John.

Picketing of social services places of work has escalated and a 24-hour picket is set up at KCC supplies in West Malling. This is proving extremely effective.

Demonstrations of 300 to 400 people have marched through Chatham and

Socialist ACTION

'Nicaragua needs help not charity'

WITH REAGAN'S war games reaching new levels in Central America, the people of the region need increased solidarity to oppose US intervention and the backing for this aggression from the Thatcher government.

Islington MP Jeremy Corbyn joined other labour movement figures on a tour of Nicaragua during the summer.

His call for solidarity is publicised in the national supplement of Labour Briefing, produced for Labour Party Conference from which we have taken extracts.

'Since 1979 the changes in life in Nicaragua are quite incredible. With tears in their eyes very poor people told me that they had been to see a doctor and that their children visited the health centre regularly to be checked.

'Until 1979 — before the liberation from Somoza — the very idea of everybody being able to visit a doctor was hardly a pipe dream for most people...

'Four years ago fifty-five per cent of the people were illiterate. The current figure of twelve per cent is the second lowest — to Cuba — in the whole of Latin America. Yet all these achievements, and many more are under threat ...

Raids

'American ships are steaming along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of Nicaragua, 6500 US ground forces are on "exercises" in nearby Honduras, and American-equipped ex-Somoza guards make nightly raids into Nicaragua from the comfort of their bases in Honduras and Costa Rica...

'To follow up their

military threats the United States government is now mounting and directing an economic blockade of the country ...

'The real reason why the USA are trying to strangle Nicaragua is because the White House cannot allow the example of genuine liberation to become the inspiration and example that it is to millions in Latin America...

Years

'Any developing country has terrible problems. To change the domination of five generations of American bankers in a few years would be a remarkable achievement in itself, but to do this in the face of blockade and military invasion is to be saluted...

'Nicaragua needs our help, not our charity, and the poorest people we spoke to said "tell your friends what we are doing, tell the USA to leave us alone and let us liberate ourselves from their domination..."

The British delegation in which Jeremy Corbyn took part is just one of many from around the

world. In June a delegation from Canada, including a number of trade unionists, visited Nicaragua.

Their tour was sponsored by the Sandinista Workers Federation of Nicaragua — CST — and the Sandinista National Liberation Front — FSLN. During their visit they met with Tomás Borge, a founder of the FSLN and Nicaragua's minister of the interior.

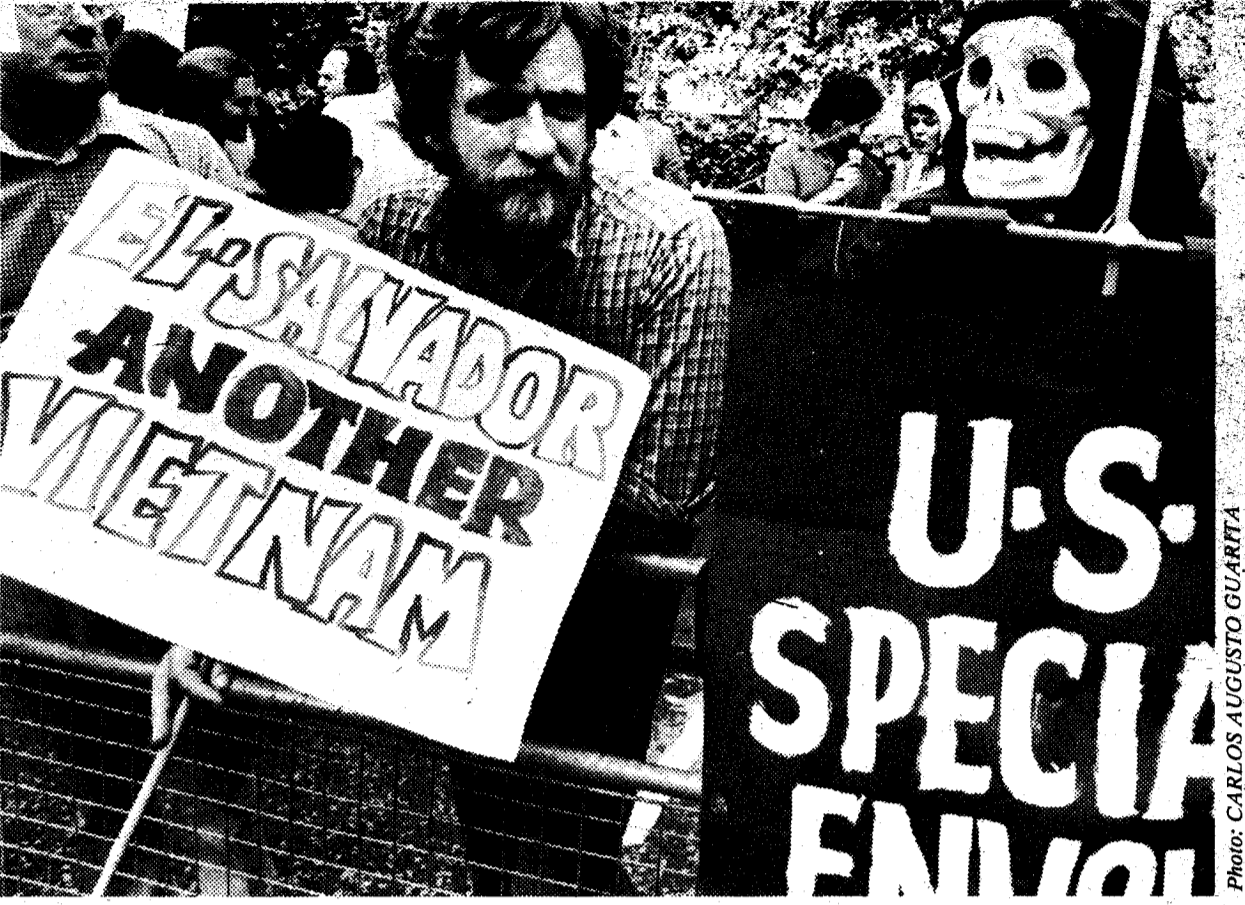
Tomás Borge hopes to be in Europe at the time of the Labour Party conference and may give greetings to delegates. His message will be the same as that to the Canadian opponents of US aggression.

'We have to say that the situation is becoming more serious every day. There is a lot of talk about the possibility of peace. And we have made substantial efforts to prevent war...

World

'We see that the people of the world, through their own organisations, trade unions, political parties and other associations, the populations of Latin America, North America and Europe can apply pressure to that demented mind of Reagan — to put certain limitations on his desire to inflame all Central America.

'It's obvious he doesn't want peace. He wants peace on the basis of us turning ourselves in. He wants peace as long as we don't carry out our revolution. He wants peace on the basis of turning



MP Jeremy Corbyn joins vigil outside the US Embassy to protest US intervention in Central America

Photo: CARLOS AUGUSTO GUARITA



Nicaraguan minister of the interior, Tomas Borge speaks at a May Day rally in Managua

'We are not going to go down on our knees. We will not allow imperialism to dominate us again'

Tomás Borge

Photo: MICHAEL BAUMANN-IP

Nicaraguan people into slaves.

'He wants peace as long as we go down on our knees. That is to say, he doesn't want peace. Because we are not going to go down on our knees.

'We are not going to stop the revolutionary process. And we are not going to stop being in solidarity with other peoples of the world. And we will not allow imperialism to dominate our countries again. So he doesn't want peace.

'There is absolutely no way the US government is

going to solve the problem in Central America — only international solidarity of the people.

'The position of certain open-minded governments that can pressure the US government may avoid war. We are not saying that prospects for peace are totally negative. But solidarity doesn't yet have the dimensions, the magnitude and force necessary to pressure the US government...

'I am not optimistic in regards to peace. But I am absolutely optimistic in terms of victory!'

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