

Socialist Challenge

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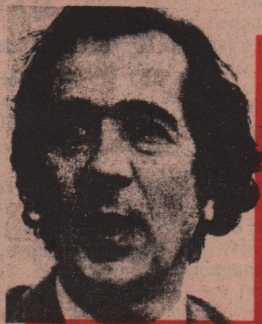
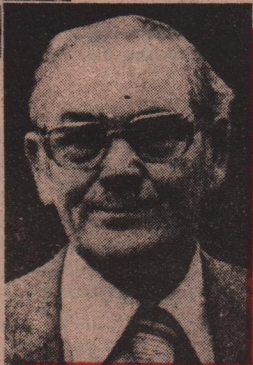
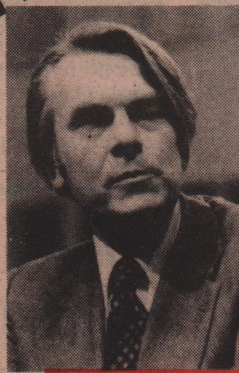
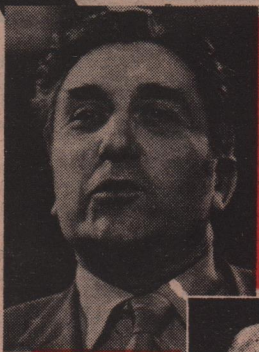
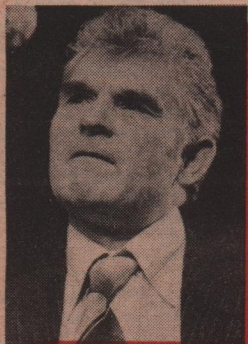
Interview with
Tony Benn
Labour Conference Special
Supplement

Labour Right:

Our organisation is
entirely funded by
the Information
Service of NATO,

Demonstrate Against the Missiles:
Blackpool, Sunday 28 September.
Assemble 10.45am, War Memorial
(nr. Butlins Hotel).

THE NATO CONNECTION



Labour & Trades Union Press Service

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TELEPHONE

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6th June, 1980

Dear Mr [redacted]

Your letter requesting information about the Labour and Trades Union Committee for Transatlantic Understanding has only just reached me from Mr Roy Mason.

The Committee was inaugurated in 1975 as a voluntary body, with a view to increasing Trade Union knowledge and support of the North Atlantic Treaty as the result of an international conference held in Amsterdam, sponsored jointly by the European Movement and the British Atlantic Committee in 1973. The Committee had from its inception the support of the leaders of a number of Trades Unions in the United Kingdom and elsewhere.

The objects of the Committee were to advance the education of the members of Trades Unions in the United Kingdom in the aims of the Atlantic Treaty, including problems associated with the promotion of the closer links between the Labour and Trades Union Movement and the members of the Atlantic Alliance.

In furtherance of these aims the Committee organises lectures, seminars, discussions, conferences, and meetings, lunches and dinners. We also publish the Labour and Trades Union Press Service, including pamphlets and other printed material dealing with the Atlantic Alliance. Our organisation is entirely funded by the Information Service of NATO, although we are free to receive donations from individuals and Trade Unions.

You will see from the attached reply to a question put by Lord Brockway on the fourth of March 1980, in the House of Lords, the amount of money that was received from the NATO Information Service from 1976-1979, as well as the amount of money earmarked, but not yet received for 1980.

Let me make it clear that we are in no way comparable with other groups within the Labour Movement who have members inside the Labour Party and the Trade Unions trying to exercise an influence on policy, or run candidates for various offices within the Labour Movement.

Yours faithfully,

Alan Lee Williams
Alan Lee Williams

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Monthly Service of the Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding

AS the battle over Cruise and Trident missiles heats up in the Labour Party, the letter we reproduce here sheds interesting light on how the right in the party is organising to fight against nuclear disarmament.

Signed by former Labour MP Alan Lee Williams (a leading figure in the pro-Common Market campaign in 1975) the letter reveals that the 'Labour and Trades Union Committee for Transatlantic Understanding' is supported by a

wide range of right-wingers inside the party — and is entirely funded by NATO!

Among the vice-chairmen of the committee are MPs William Rodgers, Roy Hattersley, David Owen, Roy Mason, Tom Bradley and James Wellbeloved. David Owen, it was revealed two weeks ago by the *Sunday Times*, was part of a secret committee under the last Labour government which took the first steps towards order-

ing Trident missiles.

Among the trade union leaders represented on the committee are: Frank Chapple (EETPU), Terry Duffy (AUEW), Bill Sirs (ISTC), Sidney Weighell (NUR), Hector Smith (Blastfurnacemen), and John Chalmers (Boilermakers).

It is no surprise that this motley crew stand for the British bomb, Cruise missiles and NATO. When they speak up against the 131 resolutions to the party conference on disarmament, we'll know who is

speaking — the NATO Information Service.

Owen and Rodgers are fond of denouncing 'outsiders' who are 'subverting' the party. This letter reveals who is attempting to 'subvert' the party — and who is paying for it.

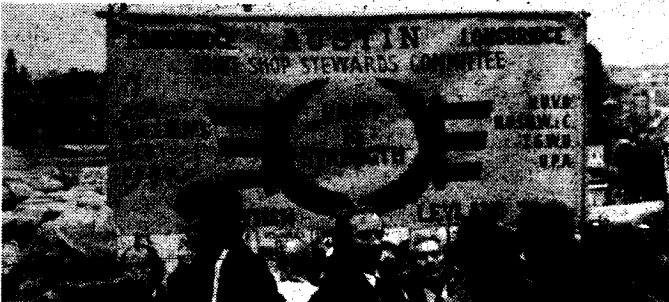
As Alan Lee Williams himself says, 'we are in no way comparable with other groups within the Labour Movement...' Never was a truer word written!

Moss Evans and the Tories

By Paul Smith

MOSS Evans and the executive of the Transport & General Workers Union have given their backing to the 10 October lobby at the Tory Party conference. At the same time, Evans announced a TGWU campaign to fight for the government to curb imports, with the launch of a union booklet, *Import Controls Now*.

While welcoming the support that Britain's largest union is giving the events outside the Tories' conference, it is worth having a closer look at the motives and policies of the leadership of Britain's largest union.



TGWU executive members such as Eddy McGarry who have lost their jobs are to lead the union's protest. Yet McGarry worked in Triumph, and Moss Evans is responsible

more than anyone else for destroying the fightback against Leyland management. McGarry's job, along with that of thousands of others in the car industry, might still exist if Evans had backed the strikes against the Edwardes plan. Redundancy is the bedrock of the Tories' attack on the workers' movement; the collaboration of the union leaders has proved an essential



part of the Tories' offensive. Evans calls on the government to adopt import quotas, tariffs and surcharges. By doing that he helps those who wish to split a united workers' attack on unemployment.

Britain's import controls would be matched by those of other capitalist countries, raising prices here. The call for these controls breaks the fighting unity of workers throughout the world, by pro-



posing to export unemployment. And on the shopfloor, import control arguments feed off racism.

When Longbridge or Rover management feels a surge of

patriotism, and decides to ban foreign cars in the workers' car-parks, the racists ask why not ban so-called foreign workers as well. Import controls mean foreign workers taking the blame for the capitalist crisis.

Demo

At the demonstration outside the Tory Party conference, working class people will have the chance to show their strength and defiance of the government. Every militant needs to give this action their full support.

We expect nothing and we want nothing from the Tories — except for them to get out. But to build such a movement we need to start by taking on Evans and his friends. Their



policies are bankrupt, and their leadership is spineless.

At the TUC there was little mention of the need for a fight-back now. Instead the rosy prospect of a future Labour government — together with a five-year incomes policy — was all that trade unionists were offered.

Elected

The 10 October demonstration is a good place to begin to build support for a fighting policy on unemployment, rejecting import controls and taking the TUC motion on the 35-hour week as the basis for a fight now. We should argue for action on the 35-hour week, without loss of pay, and full TUC support for any struggle against redundancy.

At the same time delegations should be elected to the Labour Co-ordinating Committee's trade union conference to take forward the battle for action against the right-wing leaders in the trade unions and Labour Party. Once again the need is shown for a united organisation of the left in the unions and in the Labour Party.

Banner

The Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions



Derek Robinson — stabbed in the back by Evans

Organising the Unions

Local government workers in the era of cuts

Next weekend the NALGO Action Group — a rank and file group in the local government workers' union — meets to plan its fight against the Tories.

We publish two contributions on the conference, from Dave Weiss of NAG, and from Barbara Leaver and Carolyn Sikorski, who are Socialist Challenge supporters active in the group.

Needed: a national fightback

By Barbara Leaver and Carolyn Sikorski

AFTER 15 months of vicious Tory attacks on the working class, the main focus of the Nalگو Action Group conference must be the unity of all active trade unionists and socialists to throw out Thatcher.

The NALGO executive has shown itself unwilling to lead and fight. Predictably it chose to go to arbitration over this year's pay claim instead of fighting for the full claim — capitulating to the employers' threats to reduce services if pay was increased beyond the cash limits.

This was despite the fact that the recent successful comparability

ing local government workers is the cuts. With his latest £200m cuts plus penalties for 'overspending' cash limits, Heseltine has made it clear that he intends to smash councils which are resisting cutting jobs or services.

He has eased off on labour councils such as Newham which have imposed large rate increases and plan to make services and workers 'cost-effective'.

Push

NAG members need to build the Local Government in Crisis

tionally co-ordinated active opposition to the cuts by Labour councils and the town hall unions.

Since the Tories came to power, 30,000 jobs have been lost in local government. While it is important that every job is fought for at a local level, it is essential that a national fightback of all trade unionists is launched. NAG should therefore make a last minute push for the picket of the Tory conference.

Charter

We should intervene around the regional TUC conferences on unemployment; build for the TUC and Labour party demonstration on 29 November against unemployment; support the charter of demands on unemployment which will be presented to the Labour Co-ordinating Committee conference on 1 November; and join in action with all trade unionists, locally and nationally, who are fighting job loss and redundancies.

Decision

These cuts are being made while the government is spending £5 billion on Trident missiles. The proposed launching of Council Workers Against Missiles is an excellent way to actively involve public sector workers in the wider campaign against Cruise, and to build for the CND demonstration on 26 October.

The fight for women's right to work is essential in NALGO. NAG should take up the TUC's decision to support positive action in

Unity in action

By Dave Weiss, NALGO Action Group

NO activist in NALGO can believe that our union is in any way ready to effectively fight the Tory attacks.

The union, which for most of its 75 years has played only a marginal role in class warfare, is now plunged into the front line.

The cuts, closures, frozen vacancies and redundancies will mean — according to the latest official figures — a loss of 120,000 jobs next year in local government alone.

The Tory laws on picketing are aimed at neutralising any resistance. The Employment Act allows striking nursery workers to harmlessly picket their nursery, but not the council life-lines, like the town hall or the council's fuel depots.

Despite these attacks and the 'cut waste' propaganda churned out daily by Fleet Street hacks, NALGO members are far from beaten.

To many NALGO members this year has been what 1974 was to the miners. Our power has been proved.

Here are a few examples: the pay comparability victory, which was the first-ever national action

by us in local government; residential workers winning in Camden and Brent; successful industrial action against cuts by members in Liverpool.

At this moment typists in Greenwich, Southwark, and Hackney are all taking action for the first time.

Ten years ago such militancy was thought to be only the dreams of members in the then newly-created Nalگو Action Group. Today collection sheets for members in struggle are given out as regularly as pay slips.

Much of the action is sectionalised around regrading claims, yet it reflects the feeling among NALGO members that with the support from other trade unionists they are prepared to confront the Tories head on.

Many factors explain this growth of membership activity. Women have now become over half the NALGO membership and are primarily on the 'ghetto' grades, doing boring work for low pay.

Like many public service workers, they have learned the hard way that their interests lie not with being loyal to their employers, but with their strength as union members. The development of shop stewards is one result.

All this is now threatened by the Tories. We cannot kid ourselves that a successful struggle against the government will be led by a union leadership that is hell bent on collaboration, or at best awaiting the return of a Labour government.

NALGO members cannot afford to wait. The struggle to defend our jobs and wages; to stop the

and the Right to Work campaign and Defend our Unions started the ball rolling for 10 October. The West Midlands automotive group, and a West Midlands regional shop-stewards meeting (attended by 250), put Evans on the spot by voting to support the protest at the Tories' conference.

If a national organisation, uniting all those prepared to build mass action against this Tory government, existed in the unions, Evans would face a far more difficult task. The 10 October demonstration is about raising the banner for such united organisation as well!

NAG ANNUAL CONFERENCE
27 and 28 September
Reynolds Building, University of Manchester Institute of Science and Tech.

Sessions on the cuts, pay policy for the next year, typists' charter, nuclear power, industrial action, fighting sexism at work, campaign Ireland, cuts and new technology and more.

Dance on Saturday night, crèche, pooled fare, accommodation provided.

Pooled fare. Those travelling from the London area should contact Stuart Boardman 01-936 2022 (eves) for details of the special train at cheap rates. Further details from Dave Weiss 01-267 4433 ext 234.

Tories driving women back into the home to carry the burden of a slashed welfare system; to support oppressed groups being made scapegoats — all this needs action now.

To make a success of that action we need an organisation that crosses the divides of workplace branches, services, and towns; that in every office, school or depot is answering the Tory lies; that is carrying on practical action to support any group of workers in struggle.

We need an organisation that will act regardless of what our leaders will do or approve.

At the present time the overwhelming need is for unity in action of all those — regardless of other views — who are committed to defending and fighting for the basics: opposition to cuts in services, to wage restraint, to attacks on our union organisation.

There are tens of thousands of NALGO members who do want to fight, but the lead for that fight will not come from our leaders. We have to organise it for ourselves. At the present time we cannot afford divisions among ourselves.

That is why we appeal to all NALGO members who are committed to fighting the Tories and their policies to join us at the NAG conference to discuss how we can best mount that fight; and to take the decisions made back into action among the rank and file.

H Block prisoner's story

'Without Gaelic the men would be insane'

JOSEPH MAGUIRE spent a total of three and a half years on the blanket at Crumlin Road Prison in Belfast and in the H Blocks at Long Kesh.

Released on 25 January 1980, he has talked to three members of the Toops Out Movement about those long years of degradation at the hands of Loyalist prison officers.

In this, the second instalment of Joseph Maguire's story, he describes the procedure of seeing a visitor, and how the prisoners in the H Blocks learned Gaelic from behind locked doors.

In the final instalment next week Joseph Maguire relates how he learned 200 books without having read them and the day a robin redbreast landed in the prison yard.

ONCE a month I took a visit because I'm married, with two children. One of the main reasons for the visits was to have contact with the outside world, so that people, through your own people, could hear what was going on in the H Blocks.

They opened your door. 'Visit! You went out. You put on a small cotton towel: it was well above your knees and below your belly button, just enough to cover you. And you went up to the end of the wing to a big cell — it's two cells knocked into one, and they call it Room 26. This is where the mirror is sitting waiting, the flash lamp, the metal detector, and this is where all the prison clothing is kept.

Degrade

The first thing they do is, 'Towel off! Over the mirror!' And they say to you, 'Squat!' You refuse to squat. Maybe they give you the odd slapping, but they don't want to do too much when you're going out on a visit. But they always remind you, 'We'll get you when you come back'. They always implant this in your mind, it's always a reality, it's a thing you can never forget about while you're on the blanket.

This search is being done to try and get you off the blanket. It's being used as a weapon to humiliate you and degrade you. And that's just what it does. You can never get used to it. You can get hardened to it, because you're there because you want to be there, because you're political and not a criminal.

After the search I get the prison clothing and put it on. It's usually all too big. The boots are about tens, there's big flaps on your trousers and your coat's massive. We called them monkey suits — something you'd see a monkey wear.

Blocked

Then the PO would come out, and he had your book with all your particulars. And he said straightaway to you, 'Name?' And you give him your name. 'Number?' And I said, 'I haven't got a number.' So after that he'd maybe just hit you on the nose with the book and says, 'Your number is 594, you'd better remember it when you come back.'

When you arrive at your visit, you sit at one side of the table and your wife, or whoever it might be, sits at the other side. It's a table that's blocked, sheeted down the middle.

Hit

At times I have been denied to have my children on my knee, even touch my children, or hold my wife's hand. At a visit one day I had no contact whatsoever with my wife. I couldn't even kiss her at the end of the visit. The screw just



before, after a visit.

And my wife's looking, and she says, 'What's wrong?' You're very jumpy. And you don't want to tell her. But at times I did tell my wife, because it was stupid hiding it from her. I just said, 'I can't put my mind on the visit. I'm think about going back.'



One particular day I was coming back with my mate. He went in front of me and I counted, they hit him I think it was 52 times. And I was hit 40 odd times.

When I got out of H Block, I knew I had lost weight, with the food I was getting. But you've never seen a mirror, except the mirror on the floor, and you never ever get looking at yourself. Not that you'd ever want to stand and look at yourself in the circumstances that you go over that mirror.

When they gave me my clothing, I couldn't believe it — my trousers were away out. And when I got home, I went up for a bath, and I stripped off. I'll never forget it, it

took it on himself, and I could do nothing about it. If I had objected, my visit would have been stopped immediately.

When you're sitting on your visit, you're trying to concentrate on what your wife's telling you. You're asking about things, she's maybe telling you news, and most of all you're concerned about your relationship with your wife. You're

worried about her. She's worried about you, naturally enough. You're worried about the kids. You want to know how they're doing, and how she's making out on her own, with the kids.

But I couldn't do this, I couldn't concentrate, because I couldn't stop thinking about Room 26, and the Circle. Because I've been through it

frightened me when I saw myself naked in front of the mirror. I was just bones. I was eight stone two when I got on the scales that morning. I had lost about three stone.

My legs now at the minute, there's no thigh there at all. It's just as if they've died. I would be ashamed to pull my trouser leg up and let you see my leg, because it's just white and it's just bone. When you're walking in the cell, you walk four paces, it's not really exercise. And you're just not getting any protein in your food, no vitamins.

Batons

It's hard for me to say to you that I think it's mentally affected me. I think it's left a mental scar. I can't stop thinking about the blanket men. I'm sitting now, I can feel my shoes tight onto me, and my clothing on me, and I feel strong, even though I'm weak. I feel good, with my clothes on.

And we're sitting here now, with a nice cold fire, and there's no problems. You can open that door when you want, and you can go out and have something to eat. You can have a drink of milk. You can lift a book — just the thought of lifting a book and watching the TV...

You see now at this minute.

it's twenty past eight, they're only after saying the rosary. That means every man gets to the door, stands at his cell door, and one man shouts it out, in Gaelic. And the rest answer. And even when they're saying that, they're harassed.

The prison officers will come up and bang the doors with their batons, playing drums with two batons. And they've a suction machine that sucks up the urine from the landings, and they would bring that in and turn it on, and just leave it on.

I think that without Gaelic the men would be insane. They talk in Gaelic, have debates in Gaelic, sing in Gaelic. They talk English too, but Gaelic is more widely spoken.

How you learn it is, there's men on the blanket now who served terms in the cages, and they learned their Gaelic there. Now they're on the blanket, they just pass their Gaelic on. They start a *rang*, which means class. The wing will be split up into three *rangs*. And when the screws lock up, they go for their dinner or whatever it is, there's just one prison officer left on the wing, and the teacher would get up and call the men to the door who are in his class.

Rosary

They have one piece of paper and, straight in, at the metal camera off the runway bench. I have no own money books now, and you can see where they have been used, from the writing. They paint the walls every now and again white, pure white ceramic, and anything metal write on it.

He stands and he would shout out the spellings of say 20 words, a couple of phrases, and you would write the spellings down. Then the pronunciation and what it means. And he would go over the pronunciations with you, just like a teacher. You go gradually just from the verb 'to be' right up, until you're at the stage for the gold *fainne*, when you can be fluent.

I became fluent in there. I'm taking part now in a class in Belfast where there are fluent Irish speakers, and when I went in they all understood me. They have books and blackboards: we had nothing. We never saw our teacher, we just heard him. You don't see him, he's shouting it out the door.

Charter 80 backs prisoners' demands

SUPPORT for the demands of the H Block men and the women prisoners in Armagh jail is growing in Britain. Next weekend will see the founding rally of the Charter 80 campaign in London.

Tony Benn is among the eight Labour MPs who have signed the Charter petition along with trade unionists and Gordon McClelland, general secretary of the Communist Party.

The petition calls for the British government to agree to the prisoners' demands for:

- * The right of prisoners to wear their own clothes.
- * The right to refrain from prison work.
- * The right to free association among other prisoners.
- * The right to organise their

own educational and recreational facilities and to receive one visit, one letter, and one parcel a week.

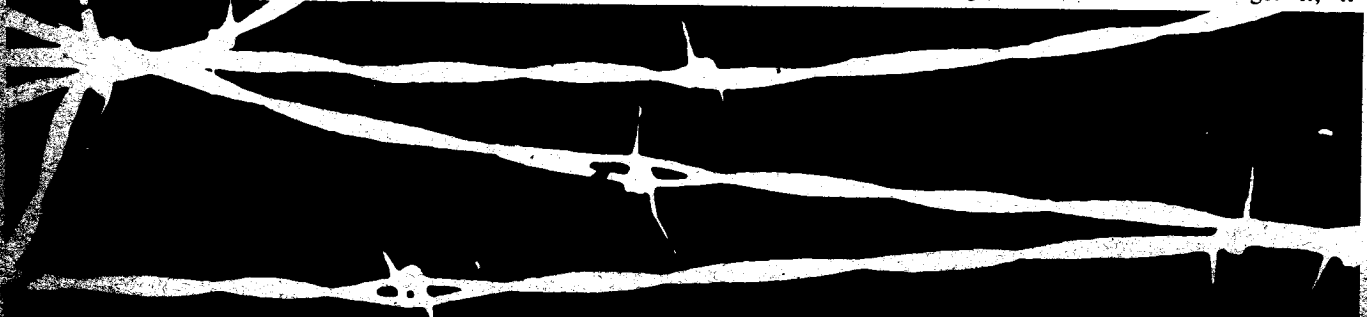
*The right to full remission of sentence.

The campaign is open to all those who support these demands irrespective of their position on other aspects of Britain's policy towards Ireland.

These are the same principles which inform the very successful National Smash H Block Campaign in Ireland in which the Irish Trotskyist organisation People's Democracy plays a leading role.

Britain's war in Ireland will be raised in the campaign and at a major demonstration on 15 November opposing Tory plans for a handover to the Loyalist reactionaries.

The Charter 80 rally takes place on Saturday 27 September at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. It begins at 1pm. Speakers include Kevin McConnell, from the Irish trade union movement, Bishop Winter of SWAPO, and Chris



Official harassment attacked

New Polish unions go national

By Martin Meteyard

THE free trade unions in Poland have set up a national structure. A steering committee was elected from an open conference in Gdansk last week, and a congress is to be organised as soon as possible.

The 300 delegates — representing 35 inter-factory committees and 150 single factory groups — were torn between two dangers.

On the one hand, they are acutely aware that the regime will try to cut them off from their base in the factories. Strike leader Lech Walesa told the conference how he had been offered the top post in the official union organisation, and the fear of bureaucratisation is ever present.

On the other hand, the

workers have to have a form of national organisation which can counter the divide-and-rule tactics of the authorities.

In Kielce, for instance, a series of strikes have continued over the past week as local party officials have tried to stop the formation of a free trade union. In Lodz, according to the new twice-weekly bulletin of the Social Self-Defence Committee (KOR), security police have been checking the papers of those who call in at the free trade union office.

Obstacles

The conference adopted a resolution accusing the government of creating 'obstacles' to the promised

that the limitations of the strike leadership and its demands stand most starkly exposed' (front page article, 3 September).

Of course it has limitations. What do they expect after thirty years of bureaucratic rule in which working class initiative has been stifled with the argument that 'the party knows best'? But the really striking feature of the workers' upsurge has been the way in which the rank and file leadership has built on the lessons of 1971 and 1976.

Their resolute stand has dealt a stunning blow to the bureaucracy. They have still to overcome their doubts about the possibility of projecting a new type of political power. But their class struggle approach means that we want to discuss with and convince them about the programme for political revolution — not denounce them. For all their weaknesses, they are 'our' people.

Activity

Yes, we think that a new political party committed to the overthrow of bureaucratic rule and founded on mass workers democracy has to be forged. But the last way to achieve it is an abstract proclamation that this is the only solution.

The fight for such a party can only come out of activity which aids the strengthening of the class struggle wing of the movement against the bureaucracy. Only through effective solidarity work can these crucial questions be debated out with the rank and file leadership.

The deepest links have to be forged between the new independent union movement in Poland and trade unionists in Britain. Direct contact is essential — exchange delegations, twinning arrangements between car plants there and car plants here, special collections to help the work of the new unions, and so on.

The more we mobilise solidarity here, the more confident will vanguard militants in Poland feel in organising the independent action of the working class against the Warsaw and Kremlin bureaucracies. And that's what it's all about.



implementation of the Gdansk agreement throughout Poland. Walesa told the press afterwards that 'we have been too conciliatory'.

In 1956 the workers councils that were set up were rapidly coopted back into the official structures. To-

day that lesson has been learnt. Says Walesa:

'They are beginning to erode the accords because we are not firm enough. Discussion weakens us. This is why we are now saying "No more", and we will be acting in consequence.'

No excuse for holding back on solidarity

By Brian Grogan

POLAND is off the front pages. Fleet Street has got what anti-communist mileage it could out of the Polish workers' struggle and has moved on to fresh pastures. But the need for solidarity remains crucial.

The actions of the Polish workers have been the best arguments for socialism we have had for a long time. They are the perfect answer to those who point to Eastern Europe and say 'socialism equals police dictatorship'.

We can point to the full and free debate, with no backroom deals, all negotiations broadcast, all decisions ratified (or rejected) by mass meetings. We can show that socialism means more democratic rights, not less; a rising standard of living as the wealth of society is put to proper, planned use under workers' control; greater rights for women.

Future

Any true socialist must say in response to the Polish workers' struggle: this is my cause, this is my kind of future.

The programme first developed by Trotsky in the late 1930s in response to the degeneration of the Russian workers state has sprung to life in Poland. Yet some on the far left seem most concerned to distance themselves from the movement.

Socialist Press, the paper of the Workers Socialist League, was typical in this respect: 'But even while Polish workers cheer and their leaders talk of "victory" in their fight it is at precisely this point



Round one to the workers

Socialist Challenge forums on Poland featuring Steve Griffiths and Richard Rozanski (just returned from Poland) and Oliver MacDonald (editor of *Labour Focus* on Eastern Europe)

Sun 28 Sept HOUNSLOW With Oliver MacDonald. Phone 570 4700 for details.

Thur 2 Oct EALING/SOUTHALL With Richard Rozanski and Oliver MacDonald. Phone 571 5019 for details.

Fri 3 Oct BRISTOL With Oliver MacDonald. Phone Harriet on 33567 for details.

LIVERPOOL With Steve Griffiths. The Bluecoat Chambers, School Lane, Liverpool 1 (behind Littlewoods), 7.30pm.

Tues 7 Oct BRENT. Phone Tessa on 359 8371 for details.

Weds 8 Oct HEMEL With Oliver MacDonald. Phone Mick on 41037 for details.

Thur 9 Oct BIRMINGHAM With Oliver MacDonald and Steve Griffiths. Committee Room 1, Digbeth Civic Hall, 7pm.

Weds 15 Oct COVENTRY With Steve Griffiths. Phone 461138 for details.

WOLVERHAMPTON (town) With Richard Rozanski and Oliver MacDonald.

Thur 16 Oct WOLVERHAMPTON With Richard Rozanski. Poly Students Union, 1pm. Organised by the Socialist Society.

Tories back Sri Lanka repression

By M Soori

A WAVE of repression is sweeping Sri Lanka. Hundreds of workers have been detained, scores of trade union offices closed down, and a series of anti-democratic laws invoked.

This is the response of the United National Party government, headed by J R Jayawardene, to a strike called by twelve major unions last month. It comes as no surprise to learn that Jayawardene takes as his model the regimes in South Korea, Singapore and Indonesia.

The confrontation began in March with the holding of a 4,000-strong delegate conference organised by the Joint Trade Union Action Committee (formed in 1977 to resist attacks on the unions). The conference drew up a list of 24 demands to be put to the government.

Thugs

A focus of the campaign around these demands was a national day of action on 5 June. But the government had not been idle. It could not as yet risk a frontal assault on the unions. Instead its thugs laid into a small group of pickets with knives, clubs and bombs. One worker, comrade

Somapala, died in this attack.

Jayawardene's next step was to victimise a number of public sector employees who had taken part in the protest. Among them were a group of workers from the Ratmalana Railway Workshop. But the government met with unexpected resistance.

On 8 July all the railworkers at Ratmalana went on strike for the immediate reinstatement of those victimised. They also asked for a pay rise of 300 rupees per month (about £8) and a five rupee rise for each point increase in the cost of living index.

This was a milestone in the struggle. Public sector workers have been a particular target of the government. Special laws have been passed limiting their right to strike, and the threat of mass sackings and confiscation of their property has been repeatedly used against them. This was the first significant fightback.

Support for the railworkers was widespread. This led to calls for an immediate general strike.

These were mainly advanced by unions led by the LSSP (an ex-Trotskyist party which took part in the bourgeois coalition that preceded the UNP government) and the NSSP (a left-wing breakaway



J.R. JAYAWARDENE

from the LSSP which identifies with the Militant group in Britain). They were backed up by unions led by the Communist Party and the SLFP (the party headed by former prime minister Mrs Bandaranaike).

However the Ceylon Mercantile Union, the Bank Workers Union, and the Estate Staff Union opposed an immediate strike on the grounds that it would lead to a disaster unless it was properly prepared.

These divisions within the working class movement only strengthened the hand of the government, and the strike movement ended in defeat. As a result, international solidarity

is urgently needed to roll back the repression.

The Tories, for all their talk about free trade unions in Poland, are right behind the UNP regime in Sri Lanka. That's not surprising, because the aim of Jayawardene's repression is to provide a cheap, docile workforce for imperialist capital. In recognition of this the Tories agreed last year to write off Sri Lanka's foreign debts.

Solidarity

International labour movement solidarity can help to weaken the worldwide network of imperialist repression in which the Sri Lankan workers are caught. Workers organisations are asked to support the following demands:

*Reinstatement of the thousands of workers sacked by the government for the crime of exercising their right to strike.

*Release of all workers and union leaders who have been jailed — including Gunasena Mahanama (general secretary of the Government Clerical Service Union), Alavi Maulana (general secretary of the Sri Lanka Independent Trade Union Federation), and comrades Vasudeva Nanayakkara and Wickremabahu (leading members of the NSSP).

*Repeal of all repressive legislation.

Socialist Challenge

Labour Party Supplement

A fighting programme against the Tories

OUR 'NEW-STYLE' ISSUE comes out as the Labour Party holds its annual conference in Blackpool. The outcome will be vital to the future of the labour movement. This eight-page special supplement is given over to discussion of the policies and issues at stake.

A torrent of press lies has surrounded the main issue: democracy. It is very simple. The Callaghan leadership paved the way for the Tories. It flouts the decisions of the party. It is accountable to no-one, a millstone round our necks.

Boot

No capitalist firm would tolerate a manager who flouted shareholders' decisions so openly and blatantly. The only reason they create such a fuss about us trying to boot out Callaghan is because he is their man and not ours.

But more is at stake. How can we bring about a movement that can also get rid of the Tories, and impose socialist policies on a future Labour government? Is it simply a question of internal reform?

Power

We think not. We fight for new policies, and new methods of organising. This supplement has been opened, therefore, for a discussion of *what* policies, and *what* methods, the labour movement needs — for a discussion of the alternative to Callaghan.

Our goal is a government that will release all the enormous untapped resources of the economy, both human and technological, by placing power in the hands of the working class. It must be a govern-



ment which breaks the grip of the tiny minority of rich parasites that run it in their private interest, replacing the profit motive by planned production for social use.



We stand for planning and workers' control; for an internationalist foreign policy that breaks with NATO and the EEC, supports workers and liberation movements abroad and stands up to nuclear madness; for support for all the oppressed — blacks, women, gays and national minorities.

To achieve this goal, we say a fight must begin now. The Labour Party and the unions should link up at rank and file level to fight the Tories — as they are doing over Cruise missiles, as will happen at the national conference against local authority cuts called by

Lambeth council and unions, in the LCC conference against unemployment, and a growing number of other campaigns.

They should develop a fighting programme of action against the Tories' immediate attacks: against Cruise missiles; for a 35-hour week and an overtime ban at no loss of pay; for the Rank and File Code of Practice against the Prior Bill; for immediate withdrawal from Ireland; for a woman's right to choose and a woman's right to work; to support national liberation movements and promote international solidarity; against racist laws and for black self-defence; against the strengthening of the repressive forces and for disbanding the SPG and rescinding the 'Sus' and conspiracy laws and the PTA.

The basis for much of this unity already exists. Conference is debating 131 motions on defence, overwhelmingly opposing Cruise missiles. Regardless of its outcome, let us follow the lead of Manchester Against Missiles and build up a huge campaign to stop the siting of a single Cruise missile.

Streets

Let us combine parliamentary and extra-parliamentary action, forcing our MPs to take a stand as we did with Corrie, taking the issue onto the streets, and organising trade union boycotting of all work on Cruise.

On all the other issues facing conference, the germs of such a movement can be seen: in these pages we try to show it as it is born. Let's remember September as the month the fightback took off.

Solidarity with Polish workers

By Oliver MacDonald (editor *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*) & Steve Griffiths (AEW convenor Rover Solihull)

DEBATE at the TUC was dominated by the Polish events, and they will cast their shadow on the Labour Party conference. The TUC General Council's embarrassing silence has allowed the right wing to shed some crocodile tears.

But a glance at the Polish workers' demands shows that their struggle deserves unqualified support, and that it has nothing in common with the practices of the Chapples and Duffys of this world.

The main issue is the demand for independent unions. But this has risen to the fore for a much more basic reason: the

workers are denied any control over their political and economic institutions.

It is rank hypocrisy to support the demand for free trade unions and oppose democratic control of the British Labour Party!

The existing Polish unions serve only as a transmission belt for the state and Communist Party bureaucracy. The creation of an alternative is neither anti-socialist nor a purely 'trade union' demand, but is ultimately bound up with the need for a democratically planned society, in a situation where the great mass of people are excluded from the decision-making process.

The Polish workers clearly understand this in their other demands. When they call for 'circulation of all the facts on the socio-economic situation in Poland, and the granting to all social layers and currents of opinion of the possibility to

take part in a programme of reform', they are demanding the basic means to bring the political institutions of Polish society under direct workers' control: the right to be informed, and the right to formulate and campaign for alternative plans and solutions.

A whole series of demands relating to the economy are linked to other demands which are clearly bound up with the sources of the bureaucracy's special privileges: for example the suppression of 'commercial' prices (hardly a pro-capitalist demand!) and an end to the special privileges of the police, security forces, management and party members.

The level of accountability they want is much greater than that granted by many British union leaders. Can anyone imagine Chapple or Duffy consenting to televised negotiations with Thatcher or the employers!

But just as important are the methods they used. How can leaders of our movement champion a general strike by Polish workers when they did everything in their power to stymie the steps towards one in Wales; when they refused to

organise proper solidarity with the steel workers throughout their strike; and when they have systematically campaigned against strike action to defeat the Tories?

Neither the hypocritical use made of the issue by the right

wing, nor the bureaucratic way the TUC is trying to resolve its dispute with Chapple, should blind us to the basic issue at stake: the Polish workers are fighting for workers' control and democratic planning, and deserve our full support.



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'Why we're marching against the missiles'

ANYONE hoping that this year's Labour Party conference would slip by without a real debate on disarmament is in for a rude shock. If nothing else, the demonstration and lobby organised by Manchester Against Missiles in Blackpool on the eve of conference will make sure that everyone knows it's an issue.

We talked to **DICK WITHECOMBE**, a member of Oldham West Constituency Labour Party and a prime organiser of the Manchester campaign, about the lobby and what he hopes to see out of this year's conference.

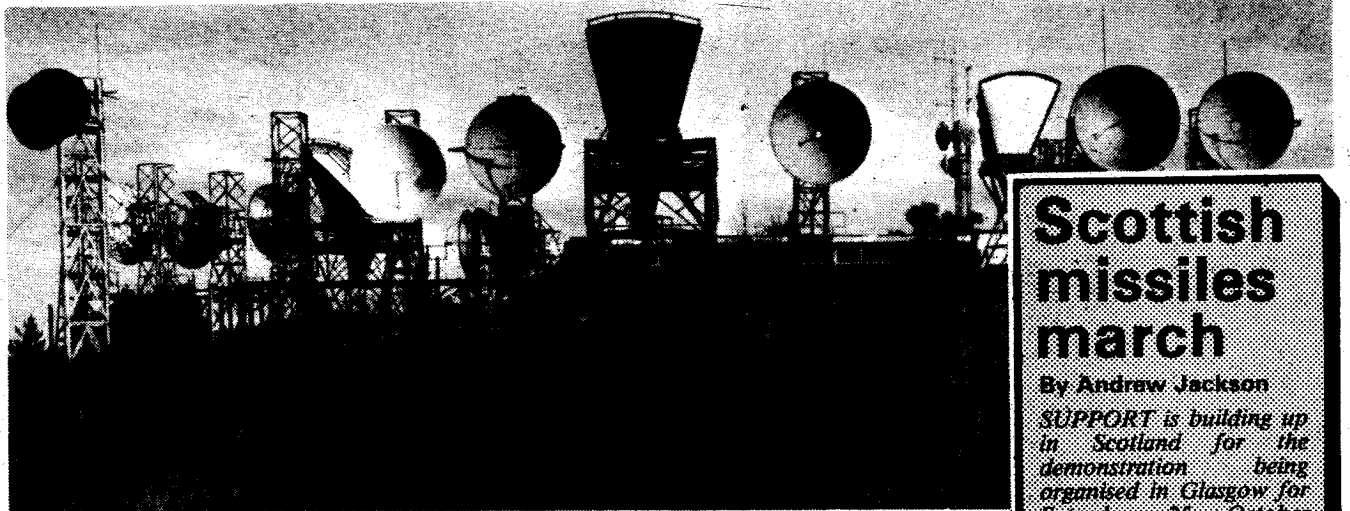
How did the lobby come to be organised?
MANCHESTER Against Missiles was set up at an EP

movement?

We need to look at what's happening internationally, with moves by Carter to step up the US's ability to intervene militarily against popular disruption of the regimes that they support, such as the Shah of Iran, Somoza in Nicaragua and so on. There are moves to create a war hysteria akin to the 'cold war' of the '50s.

Part and parcel of this is the Tories' agreement to site 142 American Cruise missiles in this country and to spend billions on Trident. Thatcher's foreign policy is clearly about tying Britain up economically and politically with the new aggressive American foreign policy.

There is a huge feeling of resentment in the working class



Scottish missiles march

By Andrew Jackson
SUPPORT is building up in Scotland for the demonstration being organised in Glasgow for Saturday 25 October against Cruise and Trident missiles. 'Welfare not Warfare — no to Cruise and no to Trident' is the main slogan of the march being jointly organised by the Glasgow Trades Council and the Glasgow and District Labour Party. Already a large number of labour movement bodies have given their support to the demonstration, the latest being the Scottish Council of the Labour Party. In the build up to the demonstration there will be a meeting showing The War Game and a social in the Star Club, Carlton Place, Glasgow on the night before the demonstration. The demonstration starts at Blythswood Square, 11.30am. For further information contact: Martin Hilland, Glasgow Labour Party, 48 Thornwood Terrace, Glasgow G11. Tel 041-339 8004.

on nuclear bases, and some dockers have refused to land the missiles. We'd also like to see Labour Party support for groups like Engineers Against the Missiles and for labour movement conferences of activists — all of which would give the campaign a massive boost.

clear focus lest the large range of resolutions — from END

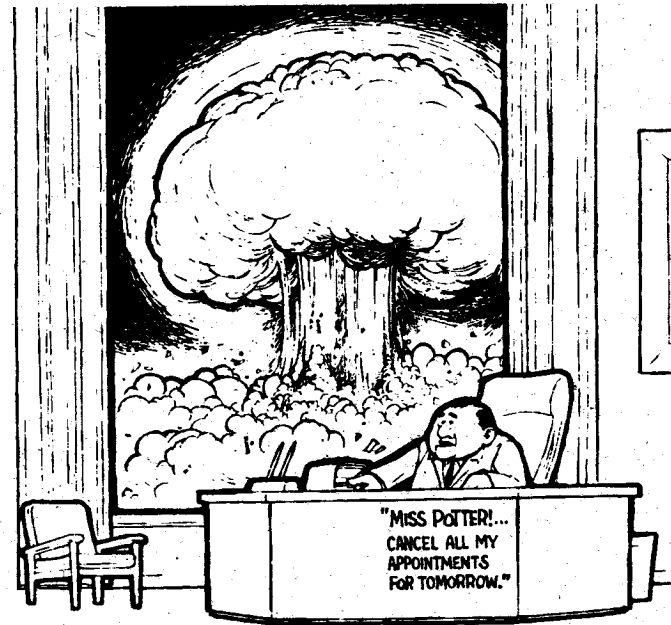
ing for 'peace', to those supporting unilateralism and Britain out of NATO — obscure the issue.

What would you like to see on the missiles in the next Labour Party manifesto?

We should draw some lessons from this year's TUC. Despite the huge opposition to the missiles the final motion that was passed — to call on the general council to alert the trade union movement and the publish of the need to abolish nuclear weapons and cut arms spending — did not give a clear lead for trade unionists to take action.

As John Boyd, the right-wing leader of the AUEW, said:

'While ambiguity might creep in when motions were composed, there was no ambiguity about supporting world peace.'



R.Cobb



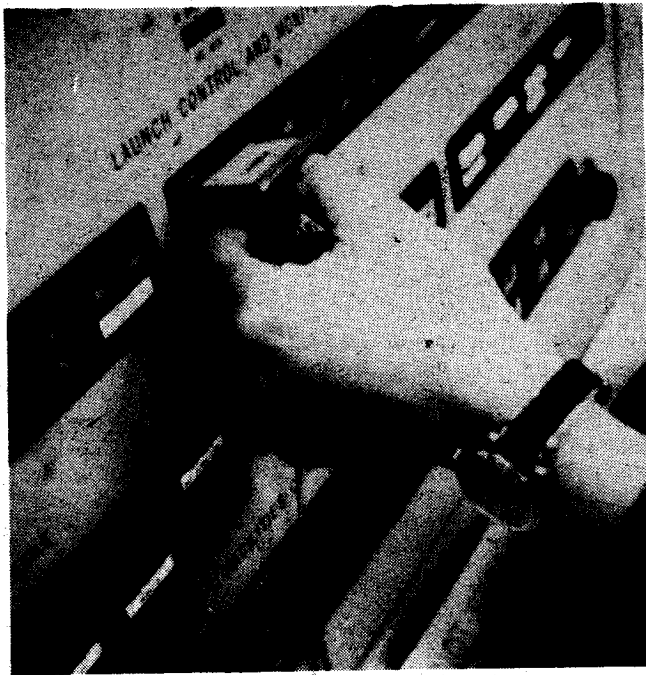
"We're trying to get the computer to mal-function so we can start the war".

Thompson meeting, attended by 800, all of whom voted for the setting up of the campaign with only four votes against. Since then the campaign has grown with more than 10 sub-groups in the surrounding area.

We decided to lobby the Labour Party conference in support of the vast number of resolutions against Cruise missiles and for disarmament because we see winning the Labour Party to a commitment to cancel Cruise as one of the crucial ways to defeat the Tory warmongers. The idea was quickly taken up by Labour Party members and trade unionists involved in the campaign. We approached CND, which has usually had a march on the Sunday at the beginning of the conference, and found they had no plans for this year, so the idea of a lobby rapidly turned into the reality of organising a march.

We produced a sponsorship leaflet and were immediately surprised by the floodtide of response. Almost overnight the march had been taken up by Labour Action for Peace, EP Thompson, the secretary of the North-west TUC, and many Labour Party and trade union officials and many others.

against these moves towards a World War Three situation. This is especially because of the experience of Suez, CND, Vietnam and our own role in Ireland. People realise that we have to build the strongest fight against Thatcher's warmongering.



Why do you think that the issue of disarmament is once more at the centre of discussion in the labour

What would you like to see coming out of the conference?

Winning the party to a commitment to cancel Cruise, along with mass protest and trade union action, is one of the main ways to stop the missiles. We're already demonstrating the breadth of support for this among party members and other supporters of the campaign.

We want no ambiguity at all at the Labour Party conference. Preserving world peace means stopping the missiles as a first step. So I'd like to see a clear resolution coming out of the conference focusing on stopping the missiles.

Other issues over which there will be big fights in the future — such as withdrawal from NATO — should therefore be put in the form of amendments or separate motions.

Winning support in the trade unions is particularly important. For example UCATT

The TUC should be very aware of the vast need for this

Cold Warriors

THE campaign against Cruise and the Trident missiles has smoked out the new 'cold warriors' in the Labour Party.

Bill Rodgers, shadow defence minister, is the champion of Cruise, but claims to be opposed to the modernisation of Britain's nuclear submarine weapons — the new Trident missiles.

But his opposition to Trident, and indeed the caution expressed by the whole of the present Labour Party leadership on this question, is put in doubt by the revelations in the *Sunday Times* on 14 September.

It disclosed that the initial decisions to purchase Trident were made under the last Labour government by a secret sub-committee consisting of Denis Healy, David Owen, James Callaghan and Fred Mulley. In other words, if we still had James Callaghan in office, we would still have had Cruise and we would still have Trident.

David Owen's partner in the Gang of Three, Bill Rodgers, is currently

engaged in constructing a new cold war organisation in the labour movement, the 'Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding'.

This committee has as its secretary and treasurer Terry Duffy and Frank Chapple. The organisation is an open recipient of money from NATO — so when Rodgers gets up at the Labour conference and defends Cruise, you know who is speaking!

When the debate over nuclear disarmament split the party in the early 1960s, the Gaitskellites organised the 'Campaign for Democratic Socialism' to fight to reverse the 1960 vote in favour of unilateral disarmament.

The CDS, like the present day 'Transatlantic Committee', was not without considerable funds.

The United States and the NATO countries are escalating their rearmament programmes at an alarming rate. Apart from Cruise and Trident, the US is constructing a mammoth underground missile complex in the western

American desert, which will cost over \$100,000m.

These moves will inevitably lead to a Soviet counter-response. Once again, the arms race is getting out of control.

By stopping Cruise and Trident we can begin to break out of the vicious spiral that the cold warriors have got us into.

In the Labour Party, since the right wing has chosen to make a stand on this question, we can simultaneously strike a blow at those who oppose democracy and any moves in the direction of socialist change.

A total of 131 resolutions has been put before conference on the arms race. We have to ensure that not only are good intentions on Cruise and Trident expressed, but that conference comes out against the nuclear war alliance — NATO.

Above all, the rank and file of the party has to do everything possible to ensure that its will is not flouted again by secret government committees. In other words, we must pledge the next Labour government to carry out what will undoubtedly be the overwhelming view of the party — no Cruise and no Trident!

The ruling class will prepare for all out struggle

By Tony Banks, Tooting CLP, member of LCC executive

FEW on the left outside the Labour Party dispute the importance of the struggle within the party to secure democratic accountability of the leadership to the rank-and-file.

The three issues of mandatory re-selection, election of the party leader on a wider franchise, and the NEC being responsible for the election manifesto are not arid constitutional wrangles. In essence they represent just part of an ideological struggle inside the Labour Party, the outcome of which will determine the entire future direction of the socialist movement in Britain.

Crutch

There is ample historical evidence and theoretical argument to demonstrate that British capitalism, in order to survive, needs a reformist parliamentary 'socialist' party. For most of its history the Parliamentary Labour Party, dominated by the right, has provided the necessary crutch for capitalism.

Using the rhetoric of socialism, it has diverted the energies of the labour movement and acted as a political safety valve when the demands for fundamental change in the system looked like gathering momentum.

Side

It was because activists were sickened by this continuous betrayal by the parliamentary leadership of the party's socialist demands that the campaign began to change the nature of the relationship between leadership and rank-and-file.

If the Labour left succeeds in establishing the necessary conditions and commitment to a genuinely socialist programme which effectively challenges capitalism, then a number of developments are likely.



Tony Banks speaks with Benn at Mobilising Cttee Meeting

First, significant elements of the parliamentary right will move out into a new social democratic party. Secondly, radical elements at present outside will move naturally towards the Labour Party. Thirdly, the ruling class will prepare itself for all-out struggle in the event of a socialist government being elected.

Peaceful

This last possibility is one which many comrades within the Labour Party have not really begun to consider. No capitalist system has yet been simply legislated out of existence, and although it is theoretically possible to talk of a parliamentary road to socialism there seems little chance of the ruling class permitting such a peaceful transition.

I believe it is only a socialist Labour Party that can prepare the working class for an open struggle. It does it through its historical ability to command working class support and through its ability to radicalise the policies of the trade union movement.

In either case a prerequisite is socialist policies and commitment within the Labour Party itself, which brings me back round to current events.

The proposals for workplace branches are highly significant given their likely impact on both the party and the unions.

And the demand for the Labour Party to be more closely identified in extra-parliamentary campaigning continues to grow rapidly, as it must if we are to mobilise the entire strength of the labour movement to overthrow capitalism.

The struggle to democratise the Labour Party and thus make it more socialist in outlook will have an important test in Blackpool this coming week. The campaign for accountability of leadership is not confined to the

party alone; it extends throughout the movement, perhaps explaining some of the hostility towards our demands from certain trade union leaders.

Cosmetic

Whatever the outcome of events at conference, the campaign will continue until it achieves all its objectives, since we are seeking a fundamental realignment within the labour movement and not simply a few cosmetic changes.

The case for a united class struggle left

By Alan Freeman

CALLAGHAN'S grip is strong. The media, most of the trade union block vote, and the majority of the parliamentary Labour Party are behind him. Tony Benn convincingly argues the case for an organised and united grass-roots left in the party.

But what kind of left should this be? Under the last government, the Tribune group shut up shop and became a sales rep for the Social Contract. Seeing the working class as an 'added extra', Tribune was reduced to an impotent parliamentary pressure group.

Link

Socialist Challenge argues for a class struggle left: one that will link up in action with the rank and file in the unions in a fight for socialist policies. There are three good reasons for this.

First, we can't afford to wait four years until the next elections, and five years until the Labour

Party is reformed. We have to fight the Tories now or there won't be a Labour government and there won't be any democracy either.

Secondly, the best chance of imposing socialist policies on a future Labour government comes from an organised mass movement. If Benn had resigned from the Cabinet in 1974 and led a mass movement to fight for socialist policies, we might be living in a different Britain.

Thirdly, it's the best way to win the democracy fight. The block vote works against democracy because the union leaders are not controlled by their

own members. Chapple has the cheek to pretend to support the Polish workers when half their demands would be ruled out in his own union.

Cosy

Chapple rules this way because he doesn't want to fight the Tories.

The best way to reach out to the union rank and file against the Duffys, Chapples and Callaghans of this world is to join the rank and file and support their struggle.

The prospects for building such a left are remarkably good. The Rank and File Mobilising Committee showed the

potential that exists. Mass campaigns and trade union struggles have been forging socialist policies.

More significant still, sections of the parliamentary left have been forced to take a stand, moving out of the cosy retreat offered by the alternative economic strategy.

The abortion campaign and the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign spelled out the principle that MPs have to follow the mass movement and not their whims.

Tony Benn has broken the PLP's deafening silence on Ireland. MPs Stuart Holland and Reg Race went down to Brixton to defend the right to

picket — and the Tories' fury showed they were hitting where it hurts.

Every chance for united Labour Party-trade union mass action should be explored and built. The umbrella left-wing organisations in the Labour Party have to be won to back these actions, and the demands that are raised, and they have to take their own policies to the union rank and file.

The unity created by the Rank and File Mobilising Committee should be extended to as many issues as possible, to lay the basis for a genuine class struggle left; a vital and radical new departure in British politics.



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INTERVIEW WITH TONY BENN

Interview by Pat Kane and Hugh Richards

WHAT do you think of the chances of success on the three issues on democracy at the Labour Party conference?

I'm not in the business of counting the votes. One thing that I'm pretty sure about is that if the delegates who come to the conference — the trade union and constituency delegates — had an absolutely free vote themselves on all these issues, there would be overwhelming support for the three changes. I've little doubt about that.

But, of course, it's not quite as simple as that. You're dealing with the way the trade union vote will be exercised. My own belief is that this argument has been won in the minds of active people, but that is not the same as saying that it will produce an immediate electoral victory for those who hold that view.

Whatever happens at conference we mustn't get hyped up on Blackpool 1980. The campaign for democratic reform will take a very long time.

Mandatory re-selection seems the most likely issue to succeed, since it has been going on now for nine or ten years. The other ones are in an earlier stage of development. They will all be won before the decade is out, and I would think before the next five years are out.

What effect do you think this will have on the party itself?

I don't believe institutions of themselves solve problems, because institutions without analysis, or without campaigning or all the rest of it, can become empty vessels.

But if you have, as you do have within the Labour Party, a genuine socialist party that has been trying to get out for a long time, then if the institutions are blocked this is never reflected on the parliamentary side, or indeed on local government. If you can clear the blockage out of the way the party would be what it is, a genuine socialist party.

I've never had any doubt that it does contain the genuine instrument for socialist transformation in Britain.

That is the way that clears the blockage, but what comes through the pipe depends on what there is at the active end of the party.



the Social Contract — the phrase has come to mean wage controls — but the original concept was of a joint programme for the transformation of our society by collaboration between the unions and the Labour Party.

There was never any reference to wages in it, and even in the October '74 manifesto there was a phrase which I drafted myself which said that the Social Contract is not solely nor primarily about wages, it is about a change in society.

As the manifesto was ditched and reversed by the Labour government so increasingly we got back to the old scenario, that it was all due to the trade unions, and the thing ended up with a rigid 5 per cent pay norm.

But there is no reason why that should be the case. As Bob Wright said, people would make all sorts of sacrifices for socialism but not for our present social structure. I think that's quite right.

It's a pity the term Social Contract has been

the line to workplace branches and all the rest of it. The relationship has become very centralised and that's one of the strange reasons why the trade union leaders are supporting the Parliamentary leaders against the rank and file.

There's a move to democracy within the Labour Party. Shouldn't that also apply to the trade unions?

I think the two go side by side. Frankly, unless you win the argument in every trade union as well as in the Labour Party you'll be frustrated when it comes to the exercise of the vote at the Labour Party conference.

I think that process is already underway, and it will intensify and become more urgent if at this year's conference it appears that the trade union vote is being used to frustrate democracy in the party.

The paradox is that the trade union block vote would be used to prevent the trade union influence from being exercised on the Labour Party. The trade union leaders who vote against the changes will be voting to neutralise and negative the influence of trades unionism on the Labour Party — the very opposite of what it would appear to be.

You have spoken at meetings on the role of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee in the Labour Party. Can you say what your position is on that.

The great weakness of the left has been its traditions. Both outside and even inside the party there has been a great splinter activity: the Women's Fightback, the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory, and so on. What to me was extremely pleasing was that so soon after that Central Hall debate in March on the future of the left, which wasn't particularly good, the left suddenly realised that you can't win if you're fighting in penny-packets. You've got to come together.

All of a sudden, and very much to my surprise, there was the development of the Mobilising Committee in May.

Two years earlier the Labour Co-ordinating Committee was intended to do a similar thing, and it did meet a great response. It's rooted in the grass roots and not in the Parliamentary faction, which is very important because the Parliamentary side, without roots outside, is weak and to some extent ineffective.

When the Militant tendency came in to the Mobilising Committee, which I think is important, all of a sudden it began to come alive. This is the process of building the general coalition of the left, with the women's movement, the black groups, the ecological groups, the peace movement and so on.

It will be needed first of all within the Labour Party and the labour movement, and it then becomes the launching pad for carrying this outside the Labour Party to win support. It would be a terrible pity if this process were to be brought to an end by the Blackpool conference. It's a process that has to be encouraged if it's going to continue. I think it will continue ...

What would be the ingredients of a new common programme between the unions and the party? These would be the policies which have emerged from the trade unions and the party,

'The union leaders who vote against the changes will be voting to neutralise the influence of trades unionism on the Labour Party'

Do you support the TUC-Labour Party Liaison Committee?

The Liaison Committee was set up in good faith, and it took us 2½ years to set it up.

In 1970 the unions didn't want to know the Labour Party, the parliamentary party, after all the things that had happened. Finally we got it set up in February '72, nearly two years after the election, and I think that the original concept of

lost because in its original formulation it was absolutely correct. It is an essential element for another Labour government in its work of transformation. Without it you are in difficulties, and I wouldn't like to see the Labour Party and the trade unions become separated.

By that I don't just mean contacts between Cabinet members and the TUC General Council. It has to be an integration of activities right down

which have been very radical from '72 onwards and are much more radical as a result of the experience of the past six years.

Perhaps we could take an example of that. The TUC General Council's composite which was adopted with the support of the Engineering Union and the Transport Union included the demand for a 35-hour week without loss of pay ...

That has been emerging for some time, and even the engineers' strike last summer, which the AUEW was drawn into, was about hours. It wasn't successful, but it was about the right issues.

I think this will emerge very strongly and I don't believe the formulation of another manifesto — particularly if it is drawn up the way we want, a rolling manifesto that goes before two conferences before it is put to the public — I don't think it could fail to demand that element in it.

Obviously, between now and 1984 the trade





I've never believed that change is triggered off at the top. Change always begins at the bottom and permeates through to the top.

The votes in the House of Commons indicate what is going on, but they don't actually determine the way issues develop. Insofar as the Labour Party has become an electoral organisation through revisionist leadership, to that extent it has failed in its historic purpose.

The combination of industrial and community activity and struggle with a process of persuasion that leads to a parliamentary majority is the historical method by which the labour movement has advanced in the past and the way in which it has to do so in the future.

You spoke about a regroupment and unification of the left in the party. What would be the basis of this?

A lot of people would be involved simply of the issue of democracy. I think this is why the Labour Co-ordinating Committee began to wane in terms of membership, although everyone in the constituencies supported it.

... The party isn't only interested in democracy, but it has reached the point — and I have myself, where I've lost interest in producing policy statements and getting them through conference and then finding that they're not done. Until there is some credibility restored to the policy-making process, policy as such becomes just a cluster of resolutions.

But I am very pleased that this year the conference should be dominated, as it is, by the whole question of Cold War, re-armament and all the rest.

'After 20 years of silence on socialism you can't short cut it by industrial muscle'

I think what's happened in Poland is relevant here. To take it at its lowest, if I were asked what was the best defence strategy for Britain, by comparing the siting of Cruise missiles here, targeted on Warsaw, with the development of the democratic movement and the trade unions in Poland, there is no doubt that the latter would be a better defence strategy. I think all these things are coming together.

I don't know what the conference will actually decide but I imagine that it would reinforce and deepen the basic arguments that were set out at the one-day conference at Wembley.

If that became real, and if that were ad-

vocated in the House of Commons by the parliamentary spokesmen, which it is not, and if that were in the manifesto, and if we won an election, and that were done that would be a tremendously significant change.

So the policy arguments plus democracy taken together, and campaigned for vigorously by the Mobilising Committee, represent the best hope we have at the moment for the Labour Party to revert to what it is all about and what it was meant to be about.

Apart from Cruise, what issues should be campaigned around?

A return to full employment and how to achieve it. It means dealing with the multi-nationals and a much stronger policy on the International Monetary Fund.

If you look back on the IMF episode, the idea that four years ago the pound might have been weakened when one of the factors that is wrecking our economy is the strong pound by returning to the gold standard, which is what we've really done; the weakness of that Cabinet in facing that pressure is inexplicable, except in that a majority of that Cabinet really agreed with the IMF.

When we look back on 1976, if we had told the IMF to go away, I don't think it would have had the will or the capacity to damage our economy. We would then not have had the winter of discontent and we might still be in power. We would have been in a position to mobilise an awful lot of public support.

My criticism of the last Labour government, and I was in it and I am responsible for what it did in that general sense; my criticism is not bas-

ed on the fact that it couldn't necessarily do more in parliament — it didn't have a majority — but we didn't even argue that case.

We never went to the public and said: 'We are under threat from the EEC here, on our food policy, on our industrial policy, we're under threat from Chrysler there, we've got the bankers round our neck, NATO is pushing us to bump up our defence expenditure, we want enough people to support us in the election to see that we have enough power to see that that doesn't happen.' The argument was absent.

To come back to the question about how you

get rid of the Thatcher government — after 20 years of silence on socialism you can't short cut it by industrial muscle. You've got to tackle the real argument, which is that these arguments have to be injected into the public consciousness and then you have to build support. That support is there.

The trouble is at the moment the media won't allow an alternative to be presented, because they're afraid it would be too popular. One of the greatest tributes that Fleet St pays to the Labour left is that it spends so much time trying to confuse, to divert ... Because they know in their hearts that if we could get this across there would be support for us. And there would be.



Next week: Tony Benn's views on the United States after a recent visit.

Labour Party democracy — Why bother?

Jon Lansman, Secretary, Rank and Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy

... of the Labour left ... the justification for the ... over the party's constitu- ... in ensure that the next ... government offers a

genuine socialist alternative to the Tories.

Labour's parliamentary leadership cannot be expected to provide such an alternative unless it is made accountable to the party's rank and file.

But the concern of the Labour left is not limited to the policies of the next Labour government. The vital task is to

restore confidence in the Labour Party as the political instrument of the working class.

Only then can the party campaign to mobilise support for its policies.

That mobilisation of support is necessary not only to defeat the Tories at the polls and elect a Labour govern-

ment, but also to mount effective resistance to the Tories now and to provide the next Labour government with the organised rank and file support it will need to put its policies into practice.

In concrete terms, we will probably not win an outright victory this year, although we will certainly have made signifi-

cant gains. It's been an uphill struggle for constitutional change all along, but we have persevered and are not going to give up until we do win outright.

That has been the message from the left political leadership on Labour's national executive and from left trade union leaders. Tony Benn, Eric

Heffer, and Bob Wright have all clearly stated this at rallies held by the Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy.

The Labour left is stronger and more united now than it has ever been. To build on this strength and unity should now be the main task of the left in Britain.

Local government conference aims to launch cuts fight

By Cllr Carol Turner (Southwark CLP) and Mike Tichelar (Lambeth NALGO and a member of the conference organising committee), both in a personal capacity.

The Tory government has just announced another £200m cut in local authority spending. Heseltine has drawn up a special 'hit list' of councils, mainly in the poor inner-city areas of London, Newcastle and Sheffield, which he is going to penalise for 'overspending' — unless they make immediate cuts in jobs and services. Such penalties would wreak havoc on the already overstretched social and housing services in these areas.

Camden, Islington and Lambeth are at the top of Heseltine's list. Two months ago, Lambeth Council and Lambeth Joint Shop Stewards Committee foresaw this situation and called a national conference in Camden Town Hall on 1 November to organise urgent joint action to save

local services and jobs from these savage attacks. It will be an action orientated, delegate-based conference and invitations have been sent to all Labour councils, local authority unions, shop stewards committees, trades councils and constituency Labour parties.

The conference has been called to organise a national campaign of action, including industrial action, against government policy of cutting local council spending.

So far the response has been excellent. Many local authorities and unions now recognise that it is time to stand up to the government. NUPE will be sending a national delegation including Alan Fisher. The NW Regional Council of the TUC has pledged full support. The Scottish and London

districts of NALGO will be sending delegations. Many local authorities and local authority trade union branches will also be taking part.

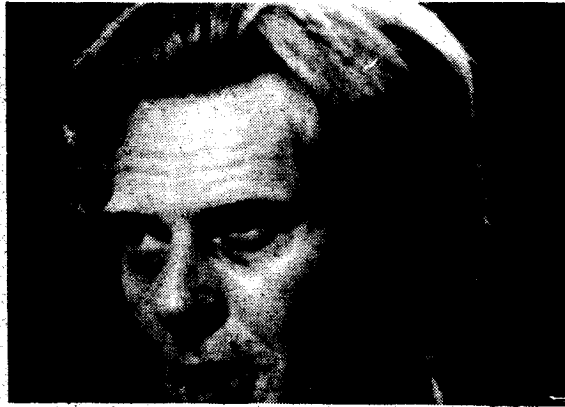
A fringe meeting has been organised at the Labour Party conference to mobilise for the 1 November conference — this is taking place at Tiffany's Ballroom on Tuesday 30 September, with Dennis Skinner and Alan Fisher as the main speakers.

The 1 November conference organising committee recognises that only a joint national campaign of action, with the maximum solidarity from other public and private sector trade unions, will be effective in reversing government policies. Local campaigns are no longer sufficient.

Suffer

Putting up the rates no longer seems a feasible option, as it did for many last year. To maintain services in big city areas at the present levels would mean enormous rate increases next April, which would not only be politically unacceptable but would be very difficult to collect.

In residential areas like



Michael Heseltine, Tory minister of cuts

Lambeth, for example, there is no difference in practice between increasing rates and making cuts

— either way working people suffer the consequences. Big rate rises will not save the thousands of

jobs threatened in direct labour departments, or in architects and engineers departments which are financed directly from central government grants. These grants are being cut to the bone. Reductions in the Housing Investment Programme have already meant big lay-offs among building workers, and there will be more cuts next year.

Finally, the government has carried out its threat to penalise local councils which put up rates drastically. Rate increases are no longer practical, let alone in the interests of working people.

What are the other options? In fact the options boil down to either carrying through the cuts — with huge redundancies and loss of services — or a massive national campaign to force a change in policy.

This year's Labour Party conference must actively support the 1 November conference and commit the next Labour government to a policy of full restoration of all cuts and the development of local services to meet local needs. Without such commitments it will be exceedingly difficult for joint national action to succeed.

The Labour movement and Nicaragua

By Richard Fatado (Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign)

IN A CONTINENT which has seen ever more violent repression, Nicaragua stands as a beacon of hope for the rest of Latin America. In the year since the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship, the mass organisations have become the real centre of power.

The Sandinista People's Army and the Sandinista militias are the only armed forces in the country; the land and industry previously owned by Somoza and his associates has been confiscated and forms the state sector of the economy — these included all the most strategic areas of the economy.

A six-month national Literacy Crusade which mobilised 200,000 students, schoolchildren and other young people as voluntary teachers has virtually eradicated illiteracy.

The Nicaraguan revolution must not be allowed to be isolated in the same way as Cuba once was. The Labour Party's continued and consistent support for the FSLN, in particular its principled stand within the Socialist International, is to be applauded. In this framework, however, we must build direct links with the Nicaraguan people at all levels.

We must work for a labour movement delegation to visit Nicaragua, preferably as part of an integrated visit to the whole of Latin America, in order to set to rights the TUC's sadly misinformed statement on Nicaragua.

Such a delegation

should cement the links with the trade union and popular movements throughout the whole region rather than treating Chile, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Bolivia as separate issues.

Alongside this, we must build up grass-roots links between union branches in Britain and Nicaragua, and with the prospect of 2.5 million unemployed, the call for a boycott of goods for Chile can be complemented with a campaign to work for Nicaragua instead.

Defending Nicaragua from the threat of foreign intervention is vital. US support for the military-civilian junta in El Salvador and its war of genocide against the people may well lead to direct intervention, either by the US Marines or through the provision of arms, finance and political support for an invasion by the

Guatemalan and Honduran armies.

This would inevitably lead to an expansion of the conflict throughout Central America and provide the United States with an opportunity to attempt to destroy the Nicaraguan revolution and return to the status quo.

If the USA is allowed to intervene in Central America and allowed to overturn the hard-won victories of the people of Nicaragua, it will feel able to do the same throughout the rest of the continent when the time comes. On the other hand a defeat for the United States in Central America would be a victory for the workers throughout Latin America.

BUILD LINKS WITH THE NICARAGUAN PEOPLE! STOP US INTERVENTION IN EL SALVADOR!

Pinochet isolated except from Britain

By Jerry Hughes (joint secretary Chile Solidarity Campaign)

GENERAL PINOCHET of Chile chose 11 September this year, the seventh anniversary of the military coup which overthrew Allende's Popular Unity government, to bring in his latest attempt to fool international opinion. Under threat of a sixty-day prison sentence, Chileans went to the military-controlled polling stations to vote for a new constitution.

This constitution has been met with the international derision it deserves. It secures Pinochet in power for at least the next eight years, and allows him a further period of office up to 1997. Even after the eight-year 'transition period to democracy', Pinochet can veto any decision of Congress, or dissolve Congress, or simply rule without it under a 'state of mobilisation', 'state of emergency' or 'state of catastrophe'.

constitution on 11 August, a new coordinating committee was formed of the left parties with the additional involvement of the Christian Democrats. Through this unity, major demonstrations of pro-

not believe Sheila Cassidy was tortured, and now excuses the torturing of Claire Wilson by saying she is only 'accidentally British' (she has an English father but was born in Chile).

The National Ex-



test at the constitution and Pinochet's rule took place, with the largest demonstration since the coup at the end of August when Christian Democrat leader Eduardo Frei addressed a rally of over 6,000 while a further 30,000 people filled the streets outside.

A major anomaly in Chile's situation is the position of Britain, now Pinochet's greatest Western friend.

Nicholas Ridley, Foreign Office Minister for Latin America, has repeatedly demonstrated the extent to which Britain will go in efforts to improve relations and trading opportunities with Chile.

Claims

Throughout this year he has contradicted the evidence and claimed that the human rights situation in Chile has improved. He stated that he did

Executive Committee of the Labour Party has declared that the next Labour government will reimpose all embargoes and sanctions against Chile until democracy is restored. This is not enough. We should not be prepared to spend the rest of the Tory government being labelled as supporters of Pinochet.

Arms

The Labour Party must make a positive move against arms sales to Chile by saying contracts signed now will not be honoured by the next Labour government, and as trade unionists we must state that we will not manufacture or handle arms for Chile. It comes as no surprise that there has been no condemnation of Pinochet's constitution from the mouth of Nicholas Ridley.

St Benedicts fights on

By Nick Williams Sec. Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Council.

Last Saturday the area health authority finished moving all the patients at St. Benedicts's in Wandsworth, in its bid to close down the hospital.

The authority had said that the Bolingbroke and other hospitals where the geriatric patients are being moved are adequately equipped, yet on Saturday it removed a large amount of equipment from St. Benedicts's. The hospital support committee picketed against this move.

In the fight to prevent the closure, the support committee picketed the hospital every day last week. On Wednesday 19 people were arrested outside the hospital, one charge with assault, the others with obstruction.

One of those arrested a worker at St George's Hospital, was suspended by the AHA but later reinstated after the intervention of COHSE.

The completion of the evacuation of the hospital evidently opens a new stage in the struggle. The St Benedict's Committee and the trades council are carrying out a campaign to draw out the lessons of the closure.

On London Weekend television on Friday evening AHA chairperson Alison Munro inadvertently referred to the closure of the 'Bol-

ingbroke', rather than St. Benedicts. This seems likely to have been a Freudian slip. It is widely suspected that St Benedicts is just the first on the health authority's 'hit list'.

A total of 23 people have been arrested during the picketing of St. Benedicts. Financial help for those arrested is urgently needed. Please send contributions to: St. Benedicts Defence, Trades Council, 19 Auckland Rd, London SW11. Cheques should be made out to Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Council.



Llanwern Steelworks We need a fight on unemployment

LLANWERN Steel Action Group are holding a fringe meeting at the Labour Party conference to discuss the fightback for jobs. We asked them what they hoped to get out of it.

Ray Davies (Sec. ISTC Llanwern): The basis of this meeting is the need for action now to defend jobs. We want the king of meeting that has not taken place at the Labour Party conference for 20 years.

How many millions will it take before the Labour Party stops cooperating with the Tories? We have to take the fight away from the Parliamentary Labour Party and into our own hands. Will it be 3, 4 or 5 million unemployed before the TUC declares war and calls national strike action?

Garry Finch (ISTC): We have a ridiculous situation in the finishing end at the moment: packing has been transferred from one section to another, so that while one group of workers sit around kicking their heels, others are doing overtime. This has to stop — we have to argue for an overtime ban to start with.

Wyndham Conniff: The action group was formed out of the chaos of the steel strike across union barriers to keep alive the militancy to organise a fightback.

Ray Hill (redundant steelworker and Sec. Monmouth CLP): Politics is the only answer we have, to bring politics to the fore. Politics is only effective in the class struggle. This is the crux of the socialist movement.

The Labour Party is too

respectable; there is not enough involvement between trade union branches and CLPs. I would like to see these links strengthened at local level. That's why factory branches might be a good idea.

What I would like to see is CLPs getting involved, like supporting the Llanwern Steel Action Group, and the Right to Work March.

Also, when we went picketing in Bristol South East, there were members of the constituency party on the picket line with us.

There should be joint action committees formed so that, in the event of the dock strike taking place, we could have organised Labour Party members, miners, railway workers and steelworkers with the dockers to wage the most effective struggle.

Why Labour must take a stand on Ireland

By Mick Sullivan (GMC, Islington North CLP, personal capacity)

AFTER 10 years of war, 2,000 deaths and the collapse of one British 'solution' after another, there are signs that the Labour Party is beginning to face up to its socialist responsibilities towards Ireland.

20 CLPs have submitted resolutions or amendments on Britain's role in Ireland — the vast majority of them call for British withdrawal and the right of the people of the whole of Ireland to work out their own future. And it seems that the conference arrangements committee has timetabled a full debate for Wednesday.

Step

This is a big step forward from last year when only after a week-long petition campaign was a brief debate forced on the last morning of conference, in a session originally set aside for 'animal welfare'.

The past year has seen an important development with the founding conference in March of the Labour Committee on Ireland. The conference had 44 CLPs represented from

all over Britain. And it is the LCI which must take the credit for the motions which have now been submitted on Ireland.

In June the NEC for the first time broke with the parliamentary leadership's 'bipartisan' approach to Ireland. They condemned the 'repression and torture' in the prisons of Northern Ireland, and a delegation led by Joan Maynard and Alex Kitson tried to visit the H-Blocks in Long Kesh.

Issue

Both the London and Scottish regional conferences, and the 'Northern Ireland Group' of Labour MPs, have called for an end to bipartisan support for the Tories on Ireland, and the NEC has set up a working party with the object of formulating policy on Ireland.

Now Tony Benn has agreed to be the main speaker at the Labour Committee on Ireland fringe meeting.

But the issue is far from won and there may still be at-

tempts to stifle debate at the conference by referring all motions to the NEC working party which is not due to report for another year.

Also it is known that supporters of the Campaign for Labour Representation in Northern Ireland — which wants the Loyalist dominated Northern Ireland trade unions to build a Northern Ireland Labour Party — have secured some influence among the NEC working party.

A policy based on that approach would be disastrous since it would commit the Labour Party organisationally to the artificial division of Ireland.

Major

The Tories now intend to complete the circle by restoring the Loyalist dominated assembly in Northern Ireland. The Labour Committee on Ireland will be fighting hard to build a big Labour presence on the major demonstration against the Tories' new plans called by the Committee for Withdrawal on 15 November.



Wyndham Conniff (ISTC): We demand action now; it may already be too late, look at what's happened in the last 12 months and since the steel strike.

Rodger Tovey (NUB): Since the strike, unemployment in Caldicot has risen from 800 to 1,800 — that's a rate of 14 per cent and the forecast is 18 per cent by the end of next year. Two-thirds of the population of Caldicot depend on Llanwern in one way or another.

Sixty people have been laid off at the Severn Tunnel railway yard as a result of cut-backs in steel. We have to discuss occupations and other forms of action to stop this.

Steelworkers back LCC Conference

WHILE interviewing the Llanwern Steel Action Group we took the opportunity to discuss with them the Labour Co-ordinating Committee Rank & File Trade Union Conference, and how it features in their plans to fight unemployment in South Wales. Ray Hill pointed out the ineffectiveness of the trade unions and the lack of cooperation between party members and trade unionists at local level.

Activists

Wyndham Conniff felt that this was the importance of the LCC, that it could bridge that gulf and coordinate the movement at grass roots level, bringing together the rank and file activists in the Labour Party and the unions.

During the steel strike, they had suffered from in-

competent leadership, which had defended the 'establishment' of the trade union and labour movement, with plant being set against plant. 'The trade union bureaucracy is a barrier to our aspirations'. The rank and file paper *Steel Sheet* sees the LCC trade union conference as a step towards challenging the 'cold hand of the leadership' and setting the foundation for united action.

Llanwern Steel Action Group is affiliated to the LCC, and two of their members are on the executive of the Welsh LCC, because they believe that 'it would be no good having a general strike tomorrow if it meant having Callaghan back.'

Foundation

For this reason they want to see the foundation of a national left in the Labour Party.

The fight for jobs cannot be won without taking up demands in a concrete way. The Steelworkers Charter was thrashed out by the Llanwern Steel Action Group during the aftermath of the steel strike and is being used as a focus for all steelworkers fighting back against job loss.

A similar set of demands is necessary for the whole of the class to fight back now. This could unite the whole of the labour movement in organising to kick out the Tories.

SCRAP THE IMMIGRATION LAWS NOW!

By Davy Jones, Treasurer, Campaign Against Immigration Laws

ANWAR DITTA was born in Birmingham and brought up in Rochdale. She married in Pakistan and had three children, aged now between six and nine.

She came back to Britain in 1975: but the Home Office won't let her kids in — in spite of the fact that she has birth certificates, medical records and photographs.

This is the inhuman and racist effect of the immigration laws which a Labour government brought in, and which the Tories are gleefully strengthening.

Labour must be committed to scrap all racist and immigration laws, and active solidarity is needed for cases like Anwar's to help the black community defend itself against the state's racist attacks.

The committee to defend Anwar Ditta is holding a demonstration in Rochdale on 15 November at 12 noon and asks the labour movement to give its support. Financial support is also needed to help pay for an investigator to go to Pakistan.

Anwar will be speaking

at a fringe meeting organised by the Campaign Against Racist Laws and trying to get MPs, CLPs and trade union delegations to take up the case.

Contact the defence committee at 127 Crawford Street, Rochdale, Lancs.

STOP PRESS: Anwar Ditta has been refused leave to appeal against the Home Office's decision. This makes the need for action even more urgent.



NO TO CLOSURE AND REDUNDANCY
Public meeting at the Labour Party conference

29 September, 7pm Cliffs Hotel, Blackpool
Speakers include: Emlyn Williams (NUM President, S. Wales), Dennis Skinner (MP), Bill Sirs (ISTC), Llanwern Steel Action Group, Alec Jones (Shadow Secretary of State for Wales)

TUC endorses vigorous campaign

Women demand positive action now

THREE WEEKS ago the TUC Congress resolved 'to pursue vigorously a campaign for real equality for women ... as an integral part of the trade unions' fight against the industrial and economic policies of the Tory government — in order to prevent women taking the brunt of the current recession'.

It endorsed moves 'to investigate forms of positive action in women's education, training and employment as a means of shifting entrenched patterns of discrimination', and called on the TUC General Council to present 'detailed proposals for positive action' to the 1981 congress.

In November the TUC will be holding a conference to draw up model agreements for use by trade unionists. It is clear that the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts trumpeted by the last Labour government as the solution are inadequate.

Since these laws came into effect, women's wages have actually declined by 2.1 per cent in relation to men's. Women are losing jobs at twice the rate of men. Positive action is needed now in the workplaces to make sure the TUC's position is implemented.

Here ANNA COOTE, who seconded the TUC resolution on behalf of the National Union of Journalists, explains its current thinking.

THE TUC has produced a very good paper on positive action which sets out the sort of things which are contained in positive action programmes in the United States.

Affirmative or positive action is legally enforced there. Companies or any other

employing organisations that contract with the government have to analyse their workforce at all levels in proportion to what is available in the local labour pool.

If the two are not in line then the company has to submit plans to remedy the situation. Its federal licence could be withdrawn if it does not



comply.

It is also written into the law that if you have a case of sex discrimination you can take class action — in other words, action for a whole group of women who have been discriminated against.

At the moment the TUC

and the National Council for Civil Liberties are going for voluntary agreements negotiated between trade unions and employers that would be within the scope of the Sex Discrimination Act.

This could include special

visits to schools to meet groups of girls on their own to tell them about jobs in an engineering factory or the like; advertisements in publications with a specifically female readership saying that female applicants are especially welcome; en-

to get their friends to apply; and so on.

You also have to ask if the qualifications required for a job are really necessary. The Greyhound Bus Company in the USA was taken to court because employees had to be 5 foot 7 inches tall. This qualification was clearly discriminatory and unnecessary, and as part of the settlement they had to agree to a positive action programme aiming to get 25 per cent of women drivers in their training schools within five years.

This is just one example — the progress towards the declared goal would then have to be monitored.

Most people campaigning on positive action have decided that there is not much point in changing the law at this stage. Right now it's better to get union agreements.

Principle

We also have to be aware that while the unions may agree to the principle of positive action, the men aren't going to bother unless there is pressure from the women. They have to apply the principle to themselves.

The Transport & General Workers Union and the General & Municipal Workers Union are setting up anti-discrimination committees, and the National Union of Public Employees now has seven women on its executive. These may be small changes, but they are a start.

Women's worldwide fight for industrial jobs

By Colleen Levis

ANNA Walentynowicz is a 50-year-old Polish woman, the mother of two children, a political activist, union militant, and a leader of the workers' uprising in her country. A crane operator, she has worked for 30 years at the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk.



Today more and more women in the advanced capitalist countries are also fighting for access to such jobs.

In Italy, in a little less than three years, some 10,000 women have been successful in getting jobs at the giant Fiat industrial complex, which employs 250,000 to 300,000 workers in Turin.

At the end of the 1940s, Italian workers fought for and won legislation stipulating that hiring in unskilled jobs would be done through lists set up by the municipal administration and under the control of the unions.

For a number of years this law was a dead letter. But around 1974, in the face of a wave of factory closures, unemployed youth began a series of occupations of unemployment offices and held demonstrations in the northern part of the country to force implementation of the law.

The victory that resulted not only established hiring lists controlled by the unions; it also prohibited sexual discrimination. But in order to make the victory real, the women had to lead a hard fight to convince their fellow male workers that

they were not out to steal their jobs.

The bosses tried to discourage the women by giving them the most difficult and dangerous work. The women workers then convinced their union to demand less dangerous work for both men and women.



When the Unidal food processing factory, which employed a large majority of women, closed down, the women won the collective right to be hired in car and steel plants.

In all the capitalist countries, the vast majority of women are channelled into industries like electronics, textiles, and sub-assembly in steel and other basic industries. Now they are beginning to win laws that recognise their right to all kinds of jobs.

A new Swedish law which went into effect on 1 July bans

sexual discrimination in hiring. Women's equality committees exist in several unions. Women working in the metal industry have led a struggle against pornography in the workplace.

With the current recession, the gains won in the United States and elsewhere are threatened. Women are being pushed completely out of certain industries by discriminatory 'temporary' layoffs, many of which become permanent.

Obstacles

But experience shows that the fight by women to get into heavy industry and to stay there is part and parcel of the fight by the working class as a whole against unemployment and arbitrary sackings.

In Canada, despite high unemployment, a big campaign led by the United Steelworkers in Hamilton forced Stelco to hire some 40 women in a plant of 10,000 workers. A number of railway and other unions and the New Democratic Party are supporting a campaign in Winnipeg for women to get into skilled 'non-traditional' jobs in the Canadian National Railway.

The fight for access to jobs in basic industry deepens the

fight for other feminist demands. In order to overcome the obstacles erected by the employers, women fighting for such jobs have to struggle for other demands like the right to

abortion, day-care, and paid maternity leave against attempts to keep women outside the unions by giving them part-time or temporary jobs.



Lack of facilities blocks abortions

By Anne Kingsbury, LARC

THE Labour Abortion Rights Campaign considers that the most serious problem facing women seeking abortion is the lack of NHS facilities.

The campaign is pressing for parliamentary initiatives to alter the law and make the provision of facilities mandatory on area health authorities.

LARC sees this as a first step towards laws to give women access to freely available legal abortion.

For the first time a Labour Party manifesto

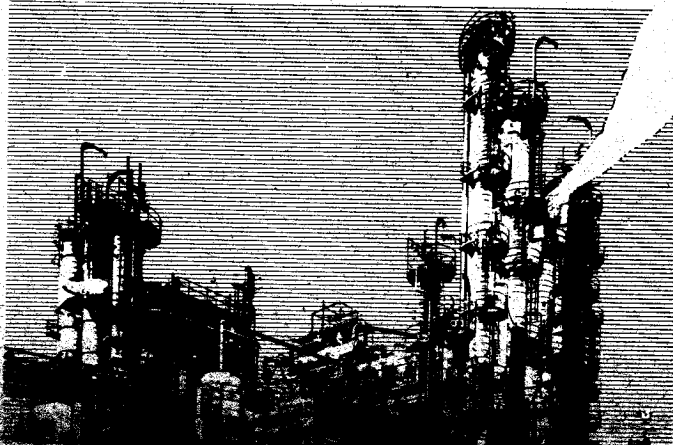
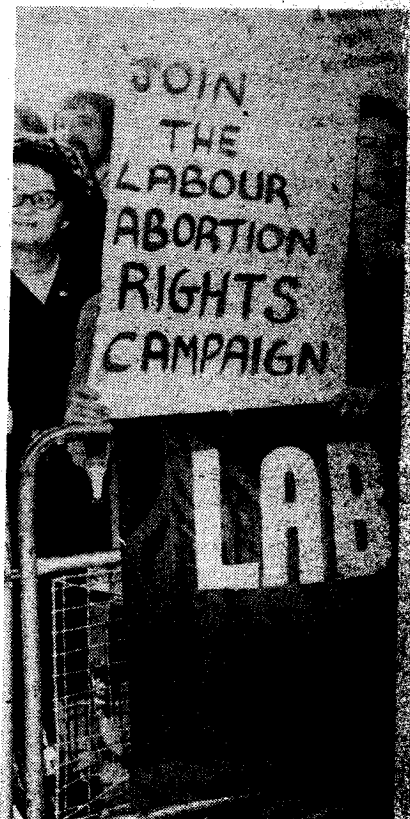
contains a reference to abortion. We are anxious for the fullest debate before a Labour government legislates to give women an 'effective right to choose'.

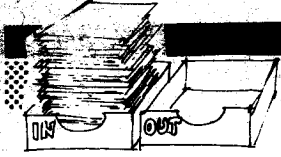
In collaboration with the National Abortion Campaign, LARC is organising a labour movement conference next March, to discuss positive legislation.

We hope that trades unionists will seek to change the policy on MPs' free vote, so that union support for this practice is withdrawn.

In the coming year we will be seeking initiatives in parliament, and promoting activity in the constituencies, towards Labour Party policy for better abortion facilities and for the repeal of the iniquitous laws which still make abortion a criminal offence in certain circumstances.

The LARC meeting at the Labour Party conference, to discuss positive legislation, is on Wednesday at 5.30pm.





Listen to The Beat

I HOPE the 'new look' of Socialist Challenge is going to extend to the Under Review page. We need more on the forms of cultural experience most common to working class people — TV, sport, rock music. These hardly get a look in at the moment.

If you carry on ignoring areas like rock music you're going to miss out on important political things that are happening there. For instance, one of the '2-Tone' bands called The Beat has a double A-side single out now with a track called 'Stand Down Margaret' — it's about kicking Thatcher out of office! All the proceeds from the record are going to the Anti-Nuclear Campaign.

This is what guitarist Dave Wakeling has to say about the group's stand: 'We believe we're in a good position to get people aware of the mess we're in. If Britain doesn't ruin itself through unemployment, it will get blown up by messing about with nuclear weapons.'

'I think the whole system is on its last legs. The working people of this country have to be given more responsibility, and the chance to make decisions themselves. It's time to get rid of a system that treats them like idiots.'

Then there's The Selecter. Their singer, Pauline Black, says: 'I feel there's no real solution to unemployment while there's a minority of people who have control over the majority and who are determined to squeeze profits out of them. We need to have a real democracy where the workers have power and profits, not the greedy businessmen.'

Where do these quotes come from? An article in the *Daily Star*. Why wasn't it Socialist Challenge?

TOM MARTIN, London E5

Much appreciated

I'VE appreciated very much having Socialist Challenge to read over the past several years, especially your international coverage, and your openness to discussion and debate. Your Irish coverage, I might add, has been an extremely important contribution.

I hope you will continue to build on the better qualities of the paper even as you try to reach new layers of worker militants and other readers in a more 'popular' way.

ROBBIE MAHOOD,
Regina, Canada

Socialist Feminist Conference

THIS year's Socialist Feminist National Conference has the theme 'Women's Oppression and Imperialism'.

In the recent history of the British women's liberation movement, it has become apparent that our campaigns and discussions have failed to include working class, Irish, black and immigrant women. Many of us have been asked why, for example, immigrant women and women in national liberation movements do not look to us for support.

After the last conference, growing numbers of socialist feminists have felt the need to look at our struggles in a broader context — by creating a framework which allows us to look at our situation on a world scale, and the implications for socialist feminists living and working in an imperialist country.

Women who have been engaged in campaigns making mainly reformist demands on the state, which are being undermined by the present imperialist crisis, are looking at the successes and limitations of such strategies. As these questions are being raised, we must recognise how changes in the international economic and political situation affect our lives and shape our consciousness.

The conference framework attempts to provide a number of ways of beginning to look

at these questions. There are three general discussion areas for the weekend's scheduled block workshop periods:

(1) differences and similarities between women in developed capitalist countries and underdeveloped countries; (2) imperialism and women's oppression worldwide; (3) political implications for socialist feminism. Interspersed with these will be films, and time for workshops and campaigns on specific topics.

The conference will be held at Sir William Collins School, Charrington St., London NW1, on Saturday/Sunday 25/26 October. There will be a plenary session. A full conference outline plus a resource list of useful films, books, etc., and registration forms are available from Socialist Feminist Conference 1980, c/o a Woman's Place, 48 William IV Street, London

WC2. We need workshop coordinators — if you are interested please phone Annie/Sylvia/Jude at (01) 388 0182.

CONFERENCE PLANNING GROUP



Workers' democracy

FRED Kingdom (11 September) raises an important point concerning the democratic rights of anti-socialist parties in a society run by workers. Can I refer him to the resolutions of the 1979 World Congress of the Fourth International — for once the FI is not only clear on this issue, but 110 per cent right as well.

The resolution makes a distinction between those ideologically opposed to workers power, and those actively sabotaging it. To quote:

'Without such freedom, unrestrained by ideological restrictions, there can be no genuine, democratically elected workers councils. Thus restrictions of that freedom are not restrictions of the political rights of the class enemy but restrictions of the political rights of the proletariat ...'

'Against terror, the workers state defends itself by repression. Against reactionary policies and ideas, it defends itself by political and

ideological struggles.' This answers his point about fascist parties. Genuine fascists, I would hope, will get themselves arrested or killed defending capitalism and their misguided followers swept aside by the flowering of ideas and political strength the emerging workers state will represent.

Any steps back from the positions of the FI on this issue reflect, in my view, a fear that the working class is unable to maintain a revolutionary consciousness — the best defence the socialist societies of the future will have.

What the FI has in theory the Polish workers have in fact. Only the views expressed by the FI resolution can stop this and other revolutions from embracing social-democratic or right-wing ideas under the illusion that their rhetoric on democracy means more than the (often well hidden) promises of revolutionary Marxism.

MIKE HOLBROOK, Durham

Socialist election campaigns

TO judge by the US presidential election, bourgeois politicians in America submerge their policies in cascades of razzamatazz and populist bull-shit to such an extent that you have to be a cipher expert to work out what they stand for. It's a welcome relief that there is at least one left-wing candidate who is

putting forward clear socialist policies.

But your coverage of the Socialist Workers Party candidate, Andrew Pulley (18 September), would suggest that there are differences between the SWP campaign and socialist election campaigns in Britain.

Pat Kane ends his article: 'Andrew Pulley won't be the next president of the United States. But it would be a better world to live in if he was.' The implication of this, that Pulley can solve the problems of the American working class, is reinforced by the election material you illustrate, which tends to project an 'image' of the candidate.

Since the electorate has to mark a name on the ballot paper, it's obviously necessary to get across the identity of the candidate. But the emphasis of the Socialist Unity campaigns in Britain was both to project policies and to argue for and help to initiate the actions needed to win them. Candidates were at pains to say: 'Don't rely on me. Rely on yourself.'

Most importantly, Socialist Unity was not a

traditional party-building exercise but an attempt to draw together all those seeking a socialist alternative in a united election campaign. Since one of the main planks of the SWP programme, quite correctly, is for the formation of a labour party, perhaps your future coverage of the presidential elections could include any practical moves the SWP is making in the campaign for a labour party; how the SWP is using the election to build struggles; and mention of other left-wing election campaigns.

HENRY FELIX, London N16

Hands off!

ON 28 August, two supporters of Hands Off Ireland! and Gerry MacLaughlin of Provisional Sinn Fein were found guilty at Cardiff magistrates court of distributing 'abusive and insulting' literature, and of obstruction of the police.

Their crime was to sell Hands Off Ireland! (published by the Revolutionary Communist Group) and Republican News at a street meeting in Cardiff in September 1979. If this harassment goes unchallenged, where will it end? Cardiff is not an isolated example. Twenty-two supporters of Hands Off Ireland! have been arrested in the past year.

An appeal will be lodged against the Cardiff magistrates' decisions. Donations for the defence fund should be sent to: 49 Railton Road, London SE24 0LN. ROBERT LAUNCESTON, Bristol

Our History

Thomas Münzer: 'The People Shall be Free'

By Paul Lawson

IN sixteenth century Europe, capitalism, in its early form of merchant capital, was beginning to struggle against all the old fetters of feudalism.

For the emerging new class of capitalists — the rising bourgeoisie — the power of the Catholic Church was suffocating. The Church owned huge areas of land, preventing the expansion of capitalism into the countryside and inhibiting the forced movement of peasants from the land to become workers in the towns.

Through taxes and the sales of indulgences — pieces of paper which officially forgave sins — the Church enriched itself at the expense of the people. It became hated and despised by both the impoverished and the pro-

gressive bourgeoisie.

This situation provoked a movement that challenged the power of Rome — the demand for 'reformation' arose within and outside the Church.

The rumblings of discontent with Rome were given dramatic focus by the actions of Martin Luther, a dissident Catholic monk. In 1517 he nailed his 'theses' against the sale of indulgences to the door of the church in Wittenburg. Luther particularly attacked the 'misuse' of indulgences by a 'star' seller, Tetzel, who was operating in the nearby town of Juterborg.

Luther's action detonated an explosion.

The ferment of the developing Reformation gave rise to currents of a much more democratic and revolutionary



character than Luther himself. A chief representative of these was Thomas Münzer.

Münzer argued that heaven should be sought on earth, and the task of the faithful was to create that heaven. By 'heaven on earth', Münzer meant a society without private property, class differences or a state — in other words, communism. All existing powers, insofar as they resisted, should be overthrown.

In 1525, the German peasants rebelled. They demanded the abolition of serfdom, the election and recall of the clergy, the limitation of excessive labour and taxes, the removal of arbitrary justice and administra-

tion, and the restitution of woods and pastures taken from communities and individuals.

All the forces of reaction in Germany united against the peasants — both Protestant princes and Catholic princes, defenders of the old order and proponents of the new capitalism. Martin Luther, despite his conflicts with the Emperor and the princes, rallied to the old order. He published a venomous pamphlet 'against the robbing and murdering peasants' urging that they be butchered.

By contrast, Thomas Münzer stood with the peasants. He established a commune at Mulhausen, which stood

at the centre of the rebellion. When the army of the princes approached, Münzer and his followers went to Frankenhansen, where the peasant army stood to fight.

Overwhelmed in numbers, and lacking the artillery of the princes' army, 8,000 peasants were butchered. Münzer himself was captured and tortured to death. One by one the peasant armies were isolated and defeated.

Over 100,000 peasants were killed and the war was followed by bitter persecution of the peasants and those who supported them. The Anabaptists religious sect, many of whom shared Münzer's communist views, also suffered severe persecution.

Münzer's views were cloaked in religious mysticism. His project was utopian. But he stands with the leaders of the English peasants, revolt in 1381 as one of the important forerunners of communist ideas. His overriding passion was summed up in his slogan: 'The people shall be free'



British Oxygen workers act on job loss

By Patrick Sikorski leading stewards, could threaten up to a half of the 3,600 workforce.

The meeting also voted for a fight for 35 hours with no loss of pay, early retirement for all at 60 with no loss of benefits, and full replacement of all vacancies created by introducing these measures.

Open

The delegates launched a fight to keep open the BOC depot in Corby by voting unanimously for a national boycott of all work to and from the Derby depot, where Corby work is expected to be transferred.

The Corby depot has been affected by the closure of the steelworks, but it is still viable as a distribution park and the disastrous effect of the steel closure on the town

means that every remaining job has to be fought for.

Date

To try to prevent a boycott, management had threatened workers in Derby with the closure of their depot. The boycott will only be called off when these threats and the closure date — 24 October — are withdrawn and all jobs guaranteed.

Ban

Both the national overtime ban and the fight to keep Corby open are now part of a fight by the combine to protect every job in BOC and for the introduction, without job loss, of the 35 hour week and early retirement.

Royton lends its support to March against Missiles

OVER 250 people from the small town of Royton, near Oldham marched against the Tories last Saturday.

The demonstration, called by Royton and Heywood Labour Party, was in protest at the government's cuts in social services and its intention to spend millions on nuclear weapons.

Speakers at the rally after the march included MPs Dennis Skinner and Stan Orme. But the most moving speech came from a disabled pensioner, Mrs Langley, who described how the Tories' cuts will lead to great personal suffering for her.

Stan Orme made an appeal for everyone present to join the March Against the Missiles on the eve of the Labour Party conference in Blackpool. All 50 tickets on a coach to take protesters from Royton to the march have now been sold.

Day-care workers on strike

DAY-care workers in the London borough of Ealing have been on indefinite strike since last Friday.

Approximately 100 workers are involved in the action, which has been made official by the National and Local Government Officers Association.

Nurseries and day-centres for old and handicapped people are among the services hit.

The strike follows a breakdown in negotiations between the management and the union for better conditions, improved staff/client ratios, regrading, and the

removal of agency staff.

When the demands of the workers, designed to improve a chronically under-staffed service, were turned down, a ballot produced a four-to-one majority in favour of limited industrial action.

Last week management took disciplinary action against three members of staff. An all-out strike is the result.

So far, two-thirds of the council's 17 day-care establishments have been closed by the strike, but with strike pay at only £4 a week support is urgently needed.

Contact: Ealing NALGO branch, Town Hall, London W5. Tel. 01-579 2293

IMG/RV Notices

REVOLUTION YOUTH aggregate for all London members, Sun 28 Sept, 2pm, UCL Students Union, 25 Gower St, WCI (near Euston stn). For more details phone Phil/Alix, 359 8371.

STUDENT FRACTION for all RY and

IMG students. To discuss perspectives for new term. Sun 5 Oct, 11am, UCL Students Union, Gower St, WCI. Contact Ann, 359 8371, for more information and bulletin.

CPSA FRACTION, Sat 27 Sept, 12-5pm, National Centre.

RAIL FRACTION, Sun 28 Sept, 12-5pm, National Centre.

POEU FRACTION, Sun 28 Sept, 12-5pm, National Centre.

ENGINEERING FRACTION, Sat 11 Oct, 11am-5pm, Manchester Centre. All cdes in CSEU unions urged to attend. Agenda: perspectives; organisation of fraction; women's liberation.

NALGO FRACTION, Sun 16 Nov, 12-5pm, National Centre.

NATIONAL CRUISE MISSILES FRACTION

EVERY branch should send a representative to this vital fraction. There will be discussion of CND, an assessment of the Labour Party demonstration, and future perspectives. If no one in your branch is presently responsible for this work a member of the branch committee should be asked to attend. A pooled fare will operate.

11am — 6pm, Sunday 12 October. Ring 01-359 8371 for venue or see special mailing with the papers.

Conference on Namibia launches international campaign

By Erica Flegg

THE LARGEST international conference for several years in solidarity with the liberation struggle in Namibia was held in Paris on 11-13 September.

Delegates from governments, agencies, other liberation movements and from solidarity groups came together to express their support for SWAPO (South West African People's Organisation) and the struggle of the Namibian people to end South Africa's illegal occupation of their territory, and the plundering of Namibia's vast mineral wealth by the Western governments and corporations.

The conference is to be followed by the mounting of an international campaign from October to December this year.

Increased international support for the Namibian

cause was reflected in the composition of the conference, which included representatives from right-wing African countries such as Senegal, as well as from Scandinavian governments. Such support is important to SWAPO in its attempt to force the so-called Contact Group (the 'gang of five' Western powers negotiating for a settlement in Namibia) to recognise Namibia's right to self-determination.

Venue

Attempts to settle the question of Namibia are now coming to the fore with the impending debate in the United Nations. Mugabe has offered Zimbabwe as a venue for settlement negotiations. At the same time, the threat of having two new ultra-reactionaries in power in the West alongside Thatcher — Reagan in the US

and Strauss in West Germany — shows that the solidarity campaign urgently needs to be stepped up.

In Britain, a campaign co-ordinating committee is being set up to implement a solidarity campaign during the next few months. Send a representative from your organisation to attend the campaign meetings, or contact the Namibia Support Committee for details of planned activities.

In the North West, the dayschool and demonstration to stop the import of Namibian uranium is an example of how effective solidarity can be built.

Preston demo against British robbery of Rossing uranium, 8 November, 12 noon, car park Preston Polytechnic. March to British Nuclear Fuels. For day-school details ring John Parkinson, Preston 73109. Campaign details from NSC, 388 5539.

SC Events

BRISTOL: SC on sale 11-1. 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. For more info contact Box 2, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpellier, Bristol 6.

CARDIFF: SC sales Newport Town Centre outside Woolworths 11-12.30; Cardiff British Home Stores 11-12.30. Also available from 108 Books, Salisbury Road, Cardiff.

COVENTRY: SC available from Wedge Bookshop. For more info about local activities phone 461138.

DUNDEE: SC available from Dundee City Square outside Boots, every Thursday 4-5.30pm, Friday 4-5.30pm, Saturday 11-4pm.

ENFIELD: SC available from Nelsons newsgens, London Rd, Enfield Town. HACKNEY supporters sell SC every Saturday morning at Ridley Road market 8.

HAMILTON: SC on sale 8-11 every Sat, outside County Bar Almada Street, every Sat outside Safeway 1.30-5. For more info contact Paul, 17 Clyde View or John at 54 Elliot St, Hamilton.

HUDDESFIELD: SC supporters sell papers every Saturday 11am-1pm. The Piazza SC also available at Peaceworks.

LAMBETH: SC now available at kiosk Brixton tube, Oval tube, Herne Hill British Rail and Tetric Books Clapham.

MANCHESTER SC supporters sell 11-1pm Sat at OLDHAM outside the Yorkshire Bank, High St; at BURY in the shopping precinct and at Metro Books; at STOCKPORT in the Merseyway precinct; at BOLTON in the town centre; and in MANCHESTER outside the central reference library in St Peter's Square and at Grassroots and Percivals Bookshop. Tel: 061-236 4905 for further info.

NEWHAM: SC sale every Saturday, 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Market, Upton Park.

OLDHAM: SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local activities. Tel: 061-682 5151.

OXFORD: SC supporters sell every Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.

STOCKPORT: SC sold every Saturday 1pm Mersey Square. Tel: 061-236 4905 for more information.

SWINDON: SC on sale 11-1 every Sat, Regent St (Brunel Centre).

TEESSIDE: SC on sale Sat luncheon in the Cleveland Centre, and in Newfane, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, and outside Woolworths on Stockton High Street.

TEESSIDE: SC supporters meeting: 'The economic crisis and the socialist alternative'. Speaker: Steve Potter (SC editorial board). Thur 2 Oct, 7.30pm, Borough Hotel, Corporation Rd, Middlesbrough.

What's Left

RATES for ads to appear in What's Left: 5p per word or £4 per col. incl. Deadline: noon Sat. prior to publication. Payment in advance.

ENFIELD NUSS pig and disco with Nasty Habbits, Sat 4 Oct, 8pm till late, SCOPE Community Centre, 232A High St, Ponders End. Adm £1, under 18, 50p.

INTERNATIONAL Contraception, Abortion and Sterilisation Campaign picket of Dutch Embassy over restrictive abortion Bill. Fri 26 Sep, noon to 2pm, Hyde Park Gate, London SW7.

International Women's Forum on abortion and contraception rights in the Irish Republic and Portugal. Irish speakers form the Right to Choose Group in Dublin, and Maria Antonia Palla, president of the NUJ in Portugal. Fri 3 Oct, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sp, London WCI.

HEALTH in Danger: David Widgery talks about his new book. Tues 30 Sep, 8pm at Brent Trades Hall, 375 High Rd, Willesden, London NW10. Organised by the Brent Bookshop Collective.

BURNLEY Anti-Nuclear Alliance is showing *The War Game* at the Burnley Central Library, Fri 26 Sept, 7.30pm.

REVOLUTIONARY Communist Tendency public meeting: Poland Erupts — What Next? Speaker: Frank Richards. Fri, 3 Oct, 7.30pm, Holborn Library, 32 Theobalds Road, London WCI. Nr Holborn tube.

Gardener's workers prepare for jobs fight

By Bob Murphy

FIFTY workers from the Hawker Siddeley firm of L Gardener & Son were the largest part of a demonstration against unemployment in Eccles, Manchester, on Saturday.

It had been called by the trades council to bring to the attention of the local community the threat posed by the announcement of 590 redundancies at Gardener's, the biggest and best-organised factory in the area.

With only four votes against, a mass meeting decided to resist the redundancies with industrial action if necessary. Gardener's workers lobbied the final stage of the negotiations over job cuts earlier this week.

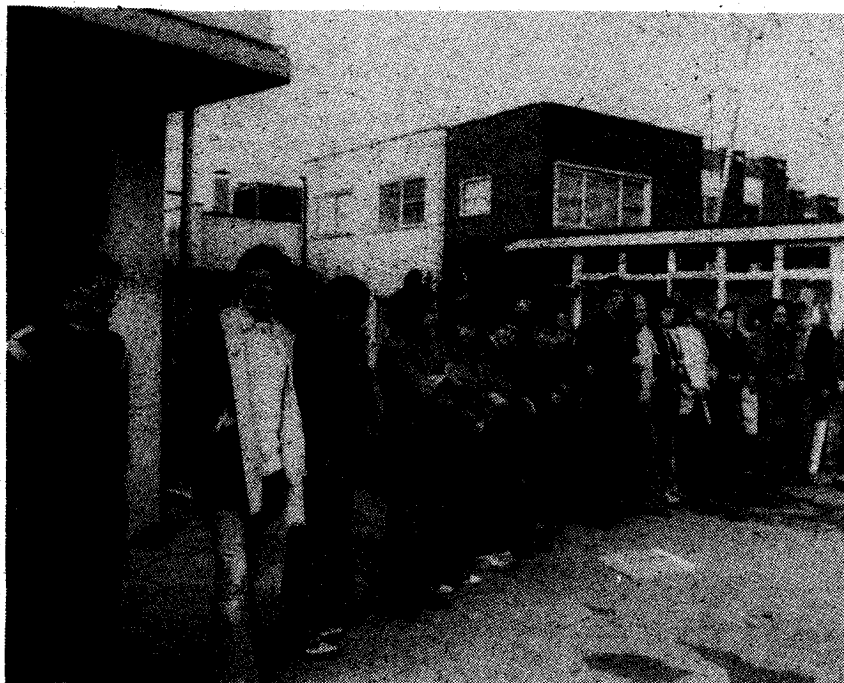
Increasingly attention is turning to the kind of industrial action that will be

required. 'We'll have to sit in' was the response of many workers on the demonstration.

Another factory in the Hawker Siddeley group, Mirlees Blackstone, has pledged full support for a fightback. Best of all, the local Fire Brigades Union has decided to donate £80 a week if the Gardener's workers take action.

The Gardener's workers have organised delegations to the Engineering Union head office and to the union's national conference.

Bob Wright, the left candidate in the AUEW presidential election, has made the demand for the 35-hour week a major plank of his election campaign. That pledge should now be transformed into an action campaign of support for the Gardener's workers.



Transport House occupied by Adwest strikers

There were 26 arrests at a mass picket of Adwest on 14 July, and a further two pickets were arrested outside the plant last Monday. The strikers are fighting to get their jobs back.

Contributions to: Adwest Defence Committee, 46 Berkeley Avenue, Reading, Berks.

DEMANDING that their three-month-old strike be made official, two Adwest workers and a supporter in the Transport and General Workers' Union went to Transport House, the union's headquarters, on Monday afternoon and remained overnight.

They said that they

would not leave until the decision of the union's regional committee, which has ruled that the Adwest strike is unofficial, was reversed. The committee said that TGWU members at the Reading plant were out of benefit, but £250 has since been paid into union funds.

No missiles here, thanks

GREENHAM Common, one of the proposed sites for Cruise missiles, was 'visited' by 2,500 people on Sunday. They had marched from Newbury in Berkshire.

Derek Shepherd, UCATT regional organiser, said it was the policy of the building workers' union not to work on missile sites. The speaker from Bewbury Against the Missiles spoke of the need to build a single issue campaign.

Joan Lestor MP called for more accountability from our public representatives. She said that the argument was not about peace but about power and political ascendancy. It was necessary to change the views of politicians like Callaghan and the Gang of Three at Blackpool, she added.



The Insane Society

Hardship Hotel

By Phil Hearse

'I CLEAN 11 rooms a day for which I get £36 gross, for a 30-hour week and a room which I have to share with another girl. Whether we like it or not, we are made to clean two extra rooms a day ... for just 40p for every extra room ...' (Chambermaid, 1980)

'We treat our people properly, are generous to them and recognise them as people.' (Sir Charles Forte, 1980)



1946. Savoy Hotel workers on strike

These two quotations indicate the reality behind the respectable facade of Britain's hotel and catering industry, exposed in the new CIS report *Hardship Hotel*.

It is a dreadful story of an increasingly monopolised industry, making huge profits on the basis of the misery of thousands of pitifully paid and shabbily treated workers — among whom immigrant workers and women represent a large proportion.

Wages and Conditions

In June 1978, London's Grosvenor Hotel summarily dismissed 30 chamber maids. Fifteen had been living in, one for 19 years and two for 15 years. They were all given 48 hours to leave their rooms.

This kind of behaviour is just one aspect of the tyranny which hotel owners often exert

ed by the large number of workers who live in (low wages are often justified on this basis) and by casual workers being taken on to fill the gaps.

Immigrant workers

Around 14 per cent of hotel workers and 25 per cent of restaurant workers are from overseas — the industry



Hotel chambermaids earn a pittance — at the beck and call of the employers



Many people realise that the hotel and catering industry is notoriously low-paid and hard to unionise. But the full extent of the misery and suffering in the industry, a scandal and affront to all working people, is graphically brought out in the CIS report.

While the findings of the report apply to the whole of the catering industry, the report centres on the hotels.

Who owns the hotels?

There are of course thousands of small hotels all over the country. But there is a growing trend of monopolisation.

At the top of the pyramid are two giants — Trusthouse Forte, with well over 20,000 hotel rooms, and Grand Metropolitan, with over 10,000. The number of small hotels is falling — urban redevelopment, growing costs and the more stringent fire regulations have put many out of business.

As the slump has developed, firms which have been hit have often sold hotels to help their general problems. The classic case is J Lyons, which sold off its hotels — including the prestigious Cumberland and the Regent Palace hotels in London — for a pittance. The buyer was Trusthouse Forte.

Despite the general economic climate, the profits are huge (see table). But the profits are born of one thing only — exploitation on a vast

over their workers. Apart from the pitifully low wages, the hotel owners try to secure maximum control over their workforce.

Most hotel workers have extremely unsocial working hours. Many have split shifts — working early morning and then in the evening. This effectively wrecks the whole day. Many are asked to do extra duties at short notice.

This system of unlimited labour flexibility is compound-



Planning; what it could achieve

By Alan Freeman

GIVEN the political will, we could have a government tomorrow that would: expand house building by 75 per cent; expand education and health by 25 per cent; boost pensions by 50 per cent; guarantee full-time earnings of £105 for women and men; and still have the resources to spare to increase productive investment by half.

This is the conclusion reached by economists John Harrison and Andrew Glyn, in their new book *The British Economic Disaster* (Pluto, £2.65).

These measures could be paid for simply by employing 2m unemployed workers on the machines left idle when they were flung on the dole.

To release these resources, the government would have to plan under workers' control, instead of relying on the profit motive. 'Once investment deci-

sions were taken out of capital's hands, the fact that production yielded only a small surplus for accumulation would no longer lead to economic disruption.'

Much of what they say will be controversial. Although they show that the present crisis is rooted in falling profits throughout the West and above all in Britain, they deny the classical Marxist thesis that there is an inbuilt tendency towards falling profits.

They assert that special conditions, arising from the nature of the postwar boom, have produced the crisis.

Whether or not the reader agrees with them, their case is backed with a wealth of facts that will be invaluable to convince others of the need for socialist planning.

The authors show that Thatcherism is a political choice that the ruling class has made: an attempt to use the recession to smash working

Who gets what — the pay league

Company	Top director's weekly pay	Unskilled worker's basic wage	Yearly profit per worker
	£	£	£
Trusthouse Forte	1,029	60	947
Grand Metropolitan	969	62.5	1,171
Coral Leisure	731	57	1,727
Rank Organisation	1,000	n.a.	1,206
EMI (now Thorn)	977	64	227
Comfort	398	51	2,109
Trafalgar House	1,346	57	1,093
British Transport Hotels	n.a.	n.a.	73
Rowton	290	35*	1,649
Savoy	290	63*	149

* Average weekly remuneration per employee. The unskilled worker's basic weekly wages given are examples; rates vary from job to job and between hotels.

London's top ten hotel companies

Company	Ranked by number of beds		Profits*		London (approx) beds
	Sales 1979 £m	Pre-tax profits 1979 £m	Profits from increase hotels 1978-9	Profits from London (approx) beds	
Trusthouse Forte	721.0	68.2	23%	73%	6,501
Grand Metropolitan	2,170.8	139.0	20%	8%	6,455
Coral Leisure	366.0	24.8	14%	12%	2,175
Rank Organisation	537.8	43.8*	12%	6%	
EMI (now Thorn)	869.5	10.8	-58%	n.a.	1,745
Comfort	18.5	2.5	92%	85%	1,545
Trafalgar House	946.1	43.7	-28%	4%	972
British Transport Hotels	38.7	0.3	-66%	100%	968
Rowton	5.3	1.4	22%	65%	899
Savoy	27.1	0.5	-53%	90%	895

* Source: Vickers da Costa
★ Trading profit

employs a higher proportion of immigrant workers than any other. The main nationalities are Filipinos, Spaniards, Portuguese and Italians.

A large proportion of them are working in jobs that involve no contact with the public —

the worst jobs, such as washing up, as chambermaids, etc.

Immigrants workers are often in the worst position vis-a-vis their employers. Many of them are 'illegal' immigrants or without proper work permits.

They are prey to every demand that the employer wants to make on them. Their condition is simply that of slave labour.

Organising

Because the hotels are dealing with the most oppressed and the most vulnerable sections of society, and with a large number of casual



workers, it is notoriously difficult to unionise them. Union membership in the industry is less than 6 per cent of the workforce. Both main general unions — the TGWU and the GMWU — have made sporadic attempts at unionisation with uneven results.

As the report points out, conditions for hotel and catering workers can only get harder as the recession starts to make things more difficult for the employers to sustain their 'luxury' profits. The need to push forward the unionisation of hotel and catering workers is urgent.

Struggles like those with the Garners Steak House chain, the Trusthouse Forte 'Night Out' nightspot in Birmingham, and Grand Metropolitan Hotels show that such unionisation battles will be long and difficult.

Since they will be undertaken by groups of workers who are the most vulnerable to state and employer harassment, the maximum solidarity from other trade unionists will be required.

FABLE

Once upon a time there was something some people had invented that could kill everyone and destroy the whole world.

And I decided I was someone who could decide on behalf of everyone else whether this should happen.

And I didn't know much about what this thing was; but I decided I wanted to be Leader and decide everything for everyone else.

So I saw to it that I got appointed. And in my name I allowed other people, who knew more about annihilating than I, to destroy the whole world and everyone living on it without consulting them.

Pat Arrowsmith
Written after watching *Panorama* re the US Presidential election — 7.7.80.

Socialist Challenge

HANDS OFF IRAN!

By Brian Grogan

AS WE go to press, Iraq has launched an invasion of Iran 'to occupy key strategic installations'. All socialists must condemn this attack, which is aimed at rolling back the gains of the Iranian revolution.

The Iraqi regime of President Saddam Hussein is in crisis. The Shi'ite Muslims, who make up 50 per cent of the population — and predominate in the poorer sections — have openly identified with the Iranian revolution.

In-fighting within the Ba'athist party has further narrowed the base of the regime. An average 100 political executions a year over the past five years are reported by Amnesty International. Twenty top members of the regime were executed last year for plotting to overthrow Hussein.

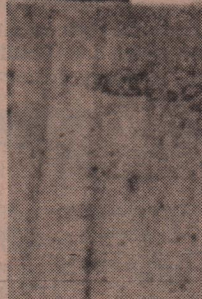
Finally, a shift in Iraq's international alliances has led to an attack on the Communist Party, which at one time was part of the ruling coalition. The CP has now linked up with the Kurdish resistance, which has been a constant threat to the regime over the past decade.

Iraq and Saudi Arabia have been moving steadily closer together, exchanging information and concluding an agreement to aid each other in combating any revolutionary activity in their respective countries.

Iraq has not yet taken the final step to align itself openly with imperialism. Nonetheless, only imperialism can gain from this invasion. US warships are patrolling in the region ready to take advantage of any opening to regain their previous positions.

Thus, while socialists cannot defend the 1975 agreement imposed by the Shah which defined the border in Iran's favour, this is not the essence of the conflict.

Iranian military strength has undoubtedly been weakened by the refusal of the USA to provide spare parts. But the biggest weakness is not lack of hardware, but the continued ex-



istence of a military hierarchy whose only interest is to plot coups and armed action to turn back the gains of the Iranian revolution.

The call for general mobilisation could lay the basis for an invincible fighting force if this meant a militia based on democratic forms of organisation, with the reactionary generals under the control of the ranks.

Equally, a call to defend the Iranian revolution would carry more weight if

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE FUND DRIVE

£200 for the new-look paper — that was the pleasant surprise we received through the post today. Our anonymous supporter was so impressed with the proposed changes with the paper that s/he sent in their recent back pay award.

And our fundraising

social in London raised a further £163 to add to the £100 raised by a group of supporters who recently toured the Soviet Union.

All in all our new-look paper received a tremendous boost this week from our supporters.

If you think Socialist Challenge is a vital weapon in the class struggle, if the coverage this week is an important contribution to the debate on perspectives inside the Labour party then rush us a donation straight away. Help make Socialist Challenge the best paper on

the left, the paper that every militant worker wants to read!

Our thanks this week to:—	
A. Tortorella	£3.0
Wolves IMG dry out	14.95
Swindon IMG	8.00
USSR tour group	100.00
Sheffield IMG	5.00
G. Beagley	5.00
Al Walker	5.00
P. Browne	5.00
Anon	200.00
SC social	63.14
MM + JB (Hackney)	12.01
TOTAL	£521.10



DOCKS

By Patrick Sikorski

IT was a straight fight. The dockers versus the Liverpool and national docks employers. The result: a knock-out victory for the dockers in the first round.

The docks employers were trying to push through Tory policies.

On any one day in ports around the country thousands of dockers have no work. Under the 1972 Jones-Aldington agreement they remain on the register with full fall-back pay of £78.50. Hardly Thatcher or Joseph's dream — of ruthlessly cutting their version of 'surplus and overpaid' workers.

In refusing to allow the agreement to be broken, the Liverpool dockers, with strong national backing, would not accept responsibility for the lack of work caused by the bosses' slump. The 178 dockers employed by two bankrupt companies will now be given jobs with other firms.

A national organisation, firmly under the control of the rank and file, was able to brush aside the dire warnings from the media of a 'national' disaster if there was a strike, and to reject the carrot of bigger redundancy payments that TGWU officials would have been happy to accept.

Oct 10 — support builds up

WE'LL SHOW the Tories we mean business! That's the growing mood in the build-up to the demonstration and picket at the Tory Party conference on 10 October.

The demonstration, jointly called by the Right to Work Campaign and the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, is now supported by the executive of the Transport and General Workers Union and a host of other labour movement organisations.

The decision of the TGWU executive to support the demonstration, coming hard on backing from the South Wales miners, the West Midlands automotive group of the

TGWU, and a mass meeting of West Midlands shop stewards, is an extremely welcome development.

The Tory conference will undoubtedly be an orgy of self-congratulation. The resolutions reveal that the only complaint of the Tory faithful is that the government is not ruthless enough in dealing with the trade unions and unemployed.

Thatcher and Joseph will use the adulation of the reactionary rabble to re-affirm their determination not to contemplate 'U-turns'. They will beat the drum of anti-union laws and monetarist

savagery. Once again they will demonstrate their complete and utter contempt for the unemployed.

The rantings of Thatcher and her neanderthal cohorts will doubtless be received with rapture by Fleet Street. The demonstration on 10 October is a chance to show how unrepresentative they are.

All socialists and trade unionists should make sure that the Tories' beanfeast is interrupted and that the fight against unemployment is not forgotten. Tickets for the special train from London on 10 October are available from 265a Seven Sisters Road, London N1, price £3 return.