

Socialist Challenge

↑ JOBS NOT BOMBS ↓

LONGBRIDGE STRIKE

'Stand up for our rights'

'They're trying to treat us like slaves — now we're going to stand up for our rights.' That was the reaction of one of Leyland's Longbridge workers to the attempts of BL management to chop workers' tea breaks.

The company claims that the cut in tea breaks is needed to pay for the 39-hour week. But in reality Edwardes and BL management are trying to use the recent defeat of BL workers over the annual wage claim to put the boot in.

They want to force up productivity through increasing the speed of the track to back-breaking proportions, and making tea breaks so short that there's not even time to have a pee!

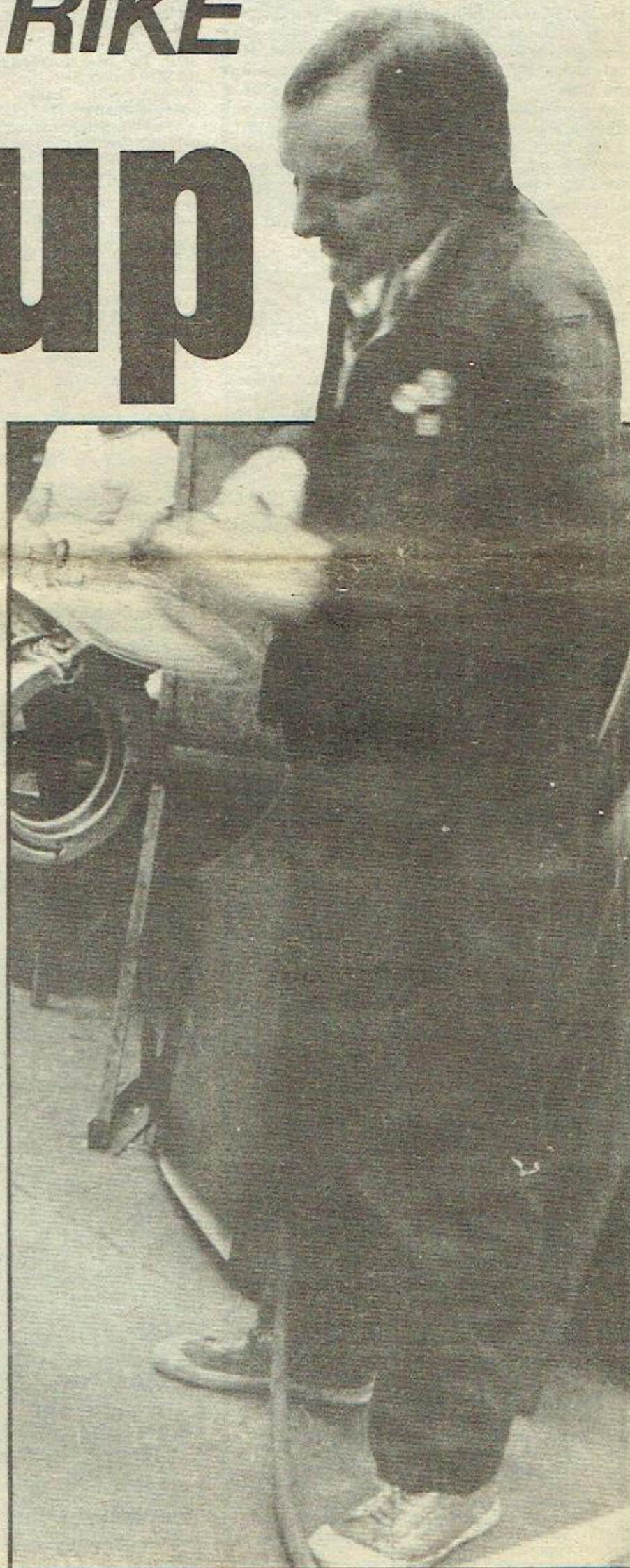
But Edwardes' attempts to ride rough-shod over the unions and the workforce has come a cropper. The attempt to get the workers back

to work failed miserably last Monday when an extra 2000 workers joined the strike.

The extraordinary solidarity and determination of the Longbridge workers shows that they've had enough of speed up, cuts in real wages and redundancy.

The hard line of BL management fits in nicely with the 'get tough' union-bashing policies of the Tories. Over the past few years, Edwardes has been in the forefront of the campaign to weaken union organisation. Derisory pay increases, plant closures with huge redundancies, and the sacking of militants — including former Longbridge convenor Derek Robinson — have been the order of the day for BL workers.

The battle for union rights means defeating the Employment Act and the new proposals by Employment Secretary Norman Tebbit. But it also means repelling direct assaults on workers' rights like the one at Longbridge. Tebbit, Edwardes — on 'yer bike.



SDP's high tide

By Phil Hearse

THE VICTORY of Shirley Williams in the Crosby by-election is the product of unique circumstances which will never be repeated. Her statement that the Labour Party is 'collapsing' and that we are seeing the emergence of a 'new two party (Tory-SDP) system' is the excusable product of election-night excitement. Nonetheless, a whole series of electoral trends show that the SDP-Liberal alliance is here to stay, and that we have definitely entered the era of a 'three party system'.

Why precisely were the SDP able to bring off such a spectacular coup in Crosby. Crosby, including the blue-rinse seaside town of Formby, has always been Tory.

Some of the figures give an indication why. It is one of the constituencies with the highest rate of home ownership in the land — around 70 per cent. More than sixty per cent of the electorate are in the 'professional and managerial' category and it has an age distribution to match.

Organised Christianity is particularly strong, with 30 per cent of the community being Catholics. Crosby is the kind of constituency that Labour could never win this side of the millenium; it is the sort of constituency that the Tories thought they could never lose.

Swing

The widespread unpopularity of the Tories' economic policies in the middle class found its expression in the swing to the middle class SDP. Labour found itself in a classic third party squeeze, as the minority of working class voters swung behind the SDP to unseat the Tories.

One voter told BBC television: 'I would vote Labour, but I don't think they have a chance.'

The SDP had the further advantage of their most popular and media-feted leader as their candidate; and to clinch it all, the one candidate with strong Christian credentials, a Catholic to boot!

Still, this admittedly unique set of circumstances were a product of massive trends at a national level which reveal that the politicisation of the British economic crisis is indeed establishing the SDP as the third party.

United

Since the SDP's creation eight months ago, the Social Democrats have won 50 per cent of all the council by-elections in which they have stood.

They have over the past few months consistently received around 40 per cent of the vote in these by-elections. And in that period their rating in the opinion polls has continually been over 40 per cent, as opposed to 25-30 per cent each for the

Labour Party and the Tories.

That there is massive disaffection with the Tories is easy to explain.

The most unpopular government in living memory is bound to produce electoral catastrophe.

Sections of ruling class opinion, particularly those associated with industrial capital, are toying with the idea of at least temporarily shifting their allegiance to the SDP.

But why has the Labour Party apparently got into electoral difficulty, with only a narrow victory in Warrington, and the near-collapse of the vote in Croydon and Crosby?

Labour obviously doesn't present a united and coherent political line. To that extent, there is some truth in the right wing accusations that 'internal bickering' is harming Labour's electoral chances.

But this so-called bickering is the product of the leadership's refusal to accept conference decisions, and their insistence on resisting democratic and socialist ideas. The effects of this cannot be resisted at a local level by Labour candidates, no matter how left wing. They are bound to reap the whirlwind of betrayal by the national leaders.

Beyond that, however, there is a striking process of differentiation going on among Labour supporters, and this was demonstrated at Crosby.

Truth

It is a process of the hardening out of a committed minority support for Labour, firmly supporting the left and Benism, together with a disorientation and scepticism among the mass of Labour voters.

In Crosby, the largest election meeting was that of Tony Benn, which 1800 people attended. The second largest was that of Heffer and Foot, which 1300 people attended. The SDP and Tories never managed more than 1100. But Labour got just over 5,000 votes!

The conclusion which Labour's right wing draw is that it is necessary to re-occupy the 'middle ground' of British politics.

The truth is the opposite. Without uniting around a coherent anti-

capitalist project, Labour will always go down to defeat at the hands of the SDP. The drive to defeat the SDP cannot be carried through with Labour policy in disarray.

The consensus among political observers is that the next parliament will see three major parliamentary blocs. Whether that is true or not, Labour's fate depends not only on putting forward a coherent electoral alternative, but crucially on the balance of class forces which is created between now and the fall of the Tory government, together with the balance of political forces inside the Labour Party and the trade unions.

Aid

The two cannot be separated. If the working class is continually defeated on the industrial front, if no fightback against unemployment takes place, the ensuing passivity will massively aid the SDP and Labour's right wing.

This situation poses a number of urgent tasks for the Labour left. The first is to refuse to shut up shop until the election is over.

That would be a gift to the right wing, and moreover virtually guarantee a big SDP success. The second, as Socialist Challenge has continually stressed, is to use the weight of the Labour left inside all the partial and embryonic struggles which are emerging against unemployment. These can be crucial levers to fight the trade union bureaucracy, which can itself start to transform the relationship of forces in the Labour Party.



For example, 800 AUEW branches have now signed the appeal for the union leadership to support Laurence Scott. This support is the most significant blow against

the Duffy-Boyd leadership for years.

The second task for the Labour left is to organise itself more coherently to impose an anti-capitalist

alternative on the parliamentary leadership. Without the masses feeling that Labour can start to solve their basic problems, the fight against the SDP is lost.

To carry through these tasks, the proposed new organisation of the Labour left, uniting the left in the constituencies, unions and parliament can play a vital role. But it must base itself on mass struggle and not manoeuvre; and it must open itself up to a debate about what precisely constitutes a programme of anti-capitalist policies to solve the crisis in this period.

Risks

The transformation taking place in British politics is a fundamental one. Such a political crisis inevitably opens up both massive opportunities and huge risks for the working class. Socialists must raise their horizons to meet the possibilities inherent in the present situation, and if necessary it means raising their horizons above victory or defeat in the next election.

The SDP will not survive its first period in of-

ice; its policies are those appropriate to capitalism in boom, not in crisis. In office, either alone or in coalition, it cannot but be forced to apply austerity policies.

Resolute

The SDP's attempt to find some 'new' policies which 'break the mould' by ransacking the last 30 years of British political history is singularly unconvincing.

Shirley Williams in her election-night speech quoted Dryden that 'nothing can stop an idea whose time has come'.

Dryden was of course talking about the return of Charles II to the throne! But the Restoration failed to alter the fact that the monarchy was an idea whose time had past!

The political polarisation between radical left and right-wing solutions to the crisis will continue. When the left's opportunity comes, as it will in the next decade, it must be taken with the kind of resolute socialist policies which can initiate the transition to socialism.



'It's the Conservatives — they'd like to form an alliance'

Jobs Express youth march for jobs

By Ann Henderson

AFTER travelling round Britain for a week, stopping at various major cities, the TUC Jobs Express transporting 400 young unemployed, arrived in London last weekend.

Despite a good response in some areas and an enthusiastic reception from railworkers at Paddington, the TUC failed to link up the activities of the Jobs Express and those fighting for jobs. Instead of building support for Laurence Scott and Staffa and visiting workplaces, the youth were subjected to a diet of discos and small 'non-political' demonstrations.

The demonstration and rally on Sunday summed up the week's events. Attended by fewer than 5,000 youth and trade unionists, it didn't reflect what would have been possible for the TUC to organise.

But the anger and frustration was clearly expressed — not only at the Tories, but also at the trade union leadership — Len Murray was greeted with heckling.

The issue of Laurence Scott became crucial. Two young workers from Laurence Scott were on the train, and collections organised daily in every town.

Soon all the youth came out in support of Laurence Scott, and in support of Staffa — saying clearly to the TUC that for them campaigning for Jobs for Youth meant fighting to defend the workers taking action to defend their jobs.

Supporters of the socialist paper *Revolution* led the debates on the train about how to fight unemployment and the role of the trade union leadership — particularly challenging the Labour Party Young Socialists to take up practical support for the Laurence Scott workers and join the picket lines in Doncaster.

Claire Short from Youthaid told us at the rally on Sunday that we should look beyond Laurence Scott; that the campaign was about jobs for all young people — which is exactly why Len Murray was heckled, why lots of money was collected for LSE, and why 15 of the young people from the train went up to Doncaster the following day to join the Laurence Scott workers on their picket line, rather than lobbying Parliament.

Mark, 19, Birmingham

CLIVE Jenkins told us to wait for three years until the next government can create a million jobs building a pipeline, channel link and electrifying the railways — hard lines on the other millions of unemployed! He didn't

mention socialism once. In Bristol, 1,000 marched. The rally in the TGWU office echoed with shouts of 'Laurence Scott is magic — Terry Duffy's tragic'.

Tony Benn received a tumultuous welcome from the crowd and expressed support for workers in struggle to defend jobs.

Phil Penning, 20, Laurence Scott striker, TASS steward

ON Tuesday we joined the train with the intention of showing the youth around the country the true story behind our dispute.

The youth on the train at a mass meeting overwhelmingly supported our right to distribute the LSE and Staffa bulletins against the wishes of the TUC.

On arrival in Brum we were asked to stop selling on the street, the reason given was that it was illegal without a licence. We agreed under protest.

The following day a shock went through the train, when stewards told us to stop selling on the

train.

This time the feeling was so strong that we had a meeting in the Manchester carriage attended by all the political groups on the train.

After a confrontation the TUC stewards backed down.

Clive Haining, 20, LSE striker, EETPU

WE at Scotts and Staffa are leading the way in the fight against unemployment.

If there are to be jobs for youth in the future, the TUC leaders must join together with those fighting for jobs today.

Kerry Wade, 17, Manchester

ON the Thursday night in Cardiff a small discussion on sexism took place with about five people. Many more came in. Although a few had funny ideas on women's rights the fact that so many people came to the discussion proves that this is an important topic that most people on the train wanted to discuss.

Anne McLeary, Leeds

I TOOK leaflets round to everybody on the train about the Women's Right to Work march. Despite the usual sexist comments from some young men, the initial response was very encouraging.

There was a great deal of anger at the sexism from some of the older male stewards, and we argued for the need for a women's only carriage on the train.

The final result was an extensive list of young



women and men who were interested in building the Demonstration for a Women's Right to Work.

Mick Rowe, Staffa striker

PEOPLE on the train have shown a very powerful will and have shown that you can have different beliefs and still work for a common goal and achieve it.

The fight for jobs for youth has been more important on the train than differences. An amazing political awareness has come through.

Fight for the future say Jobs Express youth

IF YOU were on the Jobs Express, the 250,000 strong CND march against the missiles, or the Laurence Scott picket line you'd have been sure to meet a member or supporter of Revolution Youth.

Wherever the fight against the Tories, against justice, against racism is the fiercest, Revolution Youth will be there.

On the weekend of 18, 19 and 20 December Revolution will be holding its first national conference since the organisation was set up in November 1980.

Revolution Youth aims to link up and lead forward all young people who are interested in fighting to change this system and to replace it with a socialist system in which working people can really take control of their lives.

The conference will start off on the evening of Friday 18 December with an international rally with speakers from revolutionary organisations in Central America, the Caribbean and from Ireland.

There will also be speakers from sister organisations in Europe and America.

Socialist Challenge supporters can play an important part in making sure that the Revolution rally and conference are a big success.

Although the rally is aimed mainly at young people, it'll be of interest and importance for socialist all ages. All Socialist Challenge supporters should make a point of getting to it.

Talk to young people in your union branch, Labour Party, or CND group. Try to persuade them to come along as well.

By building and strengthening 'Revolution', we are helping to strengthen the general fight for socialist policies in a direct and positive way.

Revolution International Solidarity Conference, Friday 18 December at 7.30, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Tickets £1.00/50p unwaged or YOPs.

If you are interested in coming to the conference please write to RY c/o PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.



Scarman - mere tinkering'

by Toni Gorton

THE YEARS of disappointment, frustration and racist abuse that drove Brixton's youth into battle with the police earlier this year will not be answered by the proposals of Lord Scarman.

They are too little and too late — 'mere tinkering' as Denis Howe, one of the better-known spokespersons of the black community puts it. More than this, some recommendations are threatening to vilify rights.

The significance of the April events cannot be lost on anyone. They were a historic break with British society by large sections of the oppressed of the inner cities.

Provoked beyond endurance by a massive police operation 'Swamp', black youth were joined by whites in street battles unprecedented in the British mainland this century.

Immediately the government called upon Baron Scarman of Quat to investigate and make recommendations.

In its eyes the task was fourfold; first to obscure the depth of the social crisis; second, to defuse belief that British society was racist and thereby allow the traditional leaders of the black community back into collaboration; third, to clean up the public image of the police, making changes in their practice and authorities so as to make them more effective; fourth, to strengthen the laws in regard to 'public disorder' which they foresee will be needed in the future.

Scarman has done a good job for the Tories, apportioning blame in an even-handed way.

He has met with an almost universally positive response from the media, police and parliament.

But this liberal minded Lord has rejected some of the fundamental demands thrown up in the course of public debate.

He has refused to acknowledge the deep-seated and institutionalised racism of British society; has refused to recommend that the Special Patrol Group be disbanded; has refused the greater London Council control over the Metropolitan Police Force; and refused to argue for a massive injection of public resources to provide homes, schools and jobs in the inner cities.

And further, some of his proposals threaten democratic rights. For example, his amendments to the Public Order Act would impose a necessity for organisers of demonstrations to inform police of their plans and would remove from the law any necessity of the police to prove that a serious risk exists to public order on a march.

Ted Knight, leader of Lambeth Council, most clearly exposed Scarman's 'solutions'. He pointed out that unemployment in the borough had increased by 62 per cent in the last year and teenage unemployment had increased by 40 per cent since April.

'What he fails to spell out is the economic realities under which the local authority is attempting to operate', Knight said.

'He ignores the pertinent fact that Lambeth is one of the inner city boroughs which has been savagely penalised by Mr Heseltine since the Conservative government came into power.'

Knight summed it up as a 'no hope report'.

Scarman documents many of the factors which led to the 'serious breakdown in relations between the police and the community'.

He believes that there are two well-known principles of policing a free society, consent and balance; and independence and accountability.

For him, the priority of the police must be to maintain public 'tranquillity' and law enforcement shouldn't put this at risk.

'Let justice be done, though the heavens collapse' may be apt for a judge, says Scarman 'but it can lead a policeman into tactics disruptive of the very fabric of society'.

In this context, Scarman seeks to ensure that the police are 'sensitive' and attuned to the prevalent moods of the community. He is not going to leave this to chance so he proposes that consultation is 'mandatory' by law.

But consultation will only be with 'acceptable' bodies and he calls for investigation into the local Community Relations Councils which he sees as 'too readily influenced by extreme political views'.

The police moved in advance of the Scarman report to propose that they would welcome an 'independent' presence on the police complaints board. This is one of the most sore points of public contact with police.

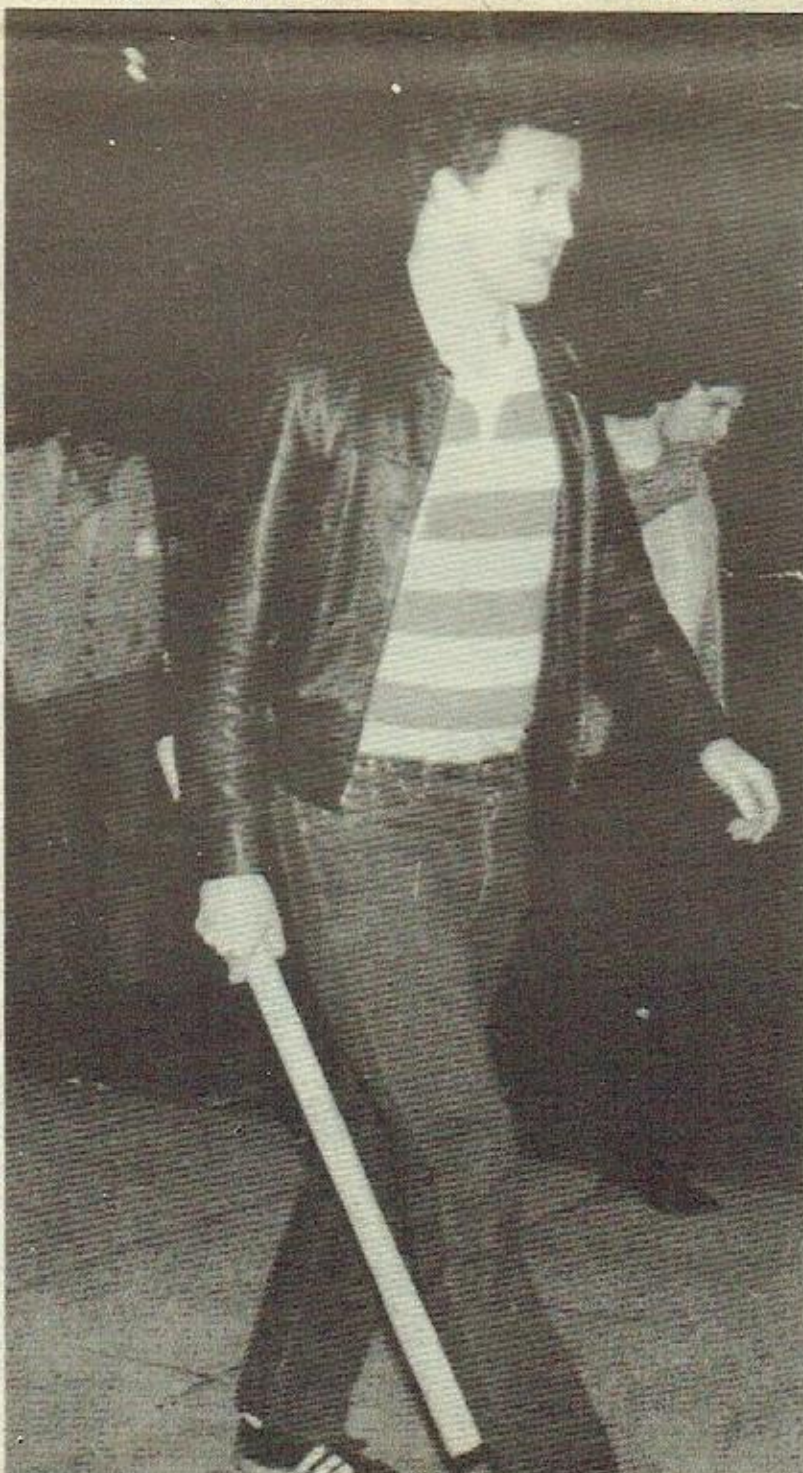
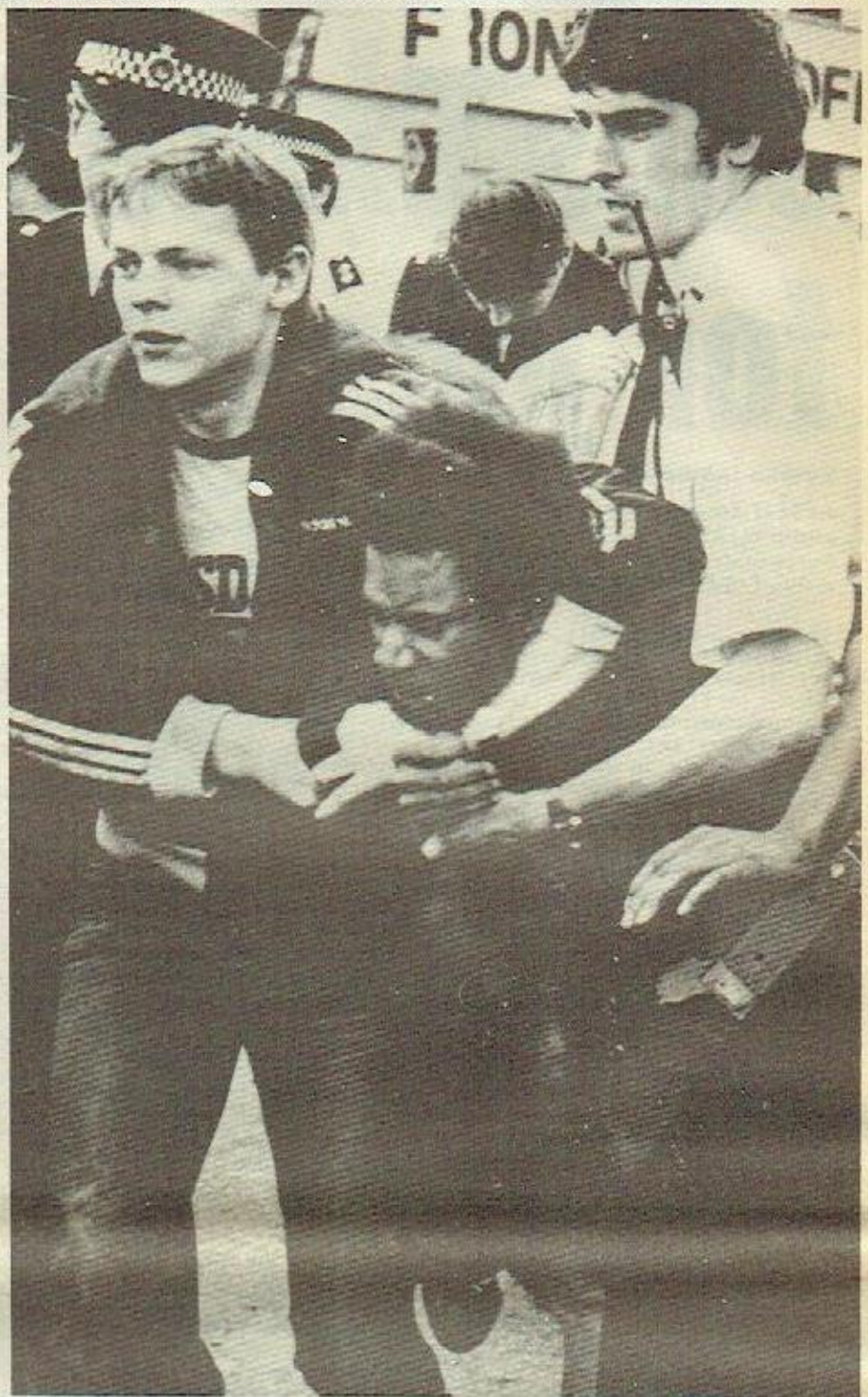
The real issue is of course accountability and who controls the police. Scarman is against the GLC having any responsibility for London's police on the amazing grounds that parliament wouldn't like it.

Russell Profitt, a black London councillor, raised his objection to the whole concept of community policing. He was concerned that when the police started running the youth clubs and recreation centres (as happens in Handsworth Birmingham) that this amounts to police control of the community and not community control of the police.

This is what we have to watch out for — the integration of the police into the schools, youth facilities and community organisations. The recommendations of the Scarman report, if acted upon could be the thin end of the wedge.

The report raises some other questions which could be the basis of ongoing debate and discussion especially around the idea of positive discrimination to enable black people to overcome their heritage of racial discrimination.

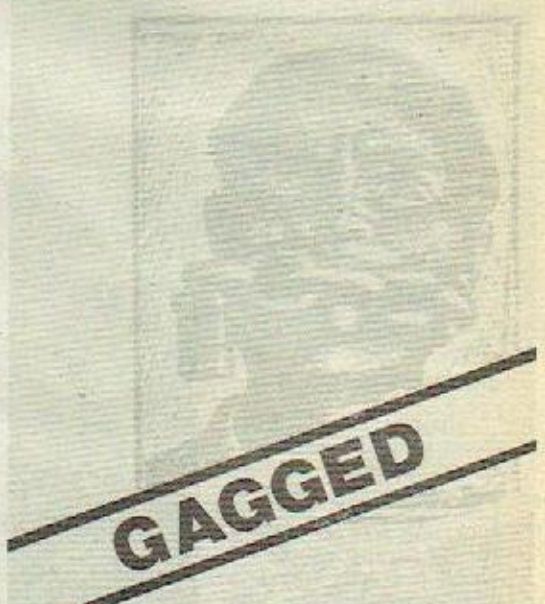
All in all Lord Scarman has constructed a skillful cosmetic job on the disease-ridden face of British society — but it won't cure the patient.



What Scarman proposes

- improved vetting of candidates for police to eliminate racial discrimination
- extending training period to six months
- racist behaviour to be grounds for dismissal
- continued use of Special Patrol Group and 'stop and search' powers
- statutory requirement of consultation between police and community
- London police to continue to be directly under control of Home Office
- supports use of water cannon, CS gas and plastic bullets
- compilation of statistics on ethnic minorities by census and local government
- press authorities to review coverage of disorders
- random checks by lay persons into interrogation and detention of suspects in the police stations
- reform police complaint procedure — introduce an independent element
- against a new Riot Act
- Public Order Act to be amended: — advance notice of a procession — deletion of 'serious' from the public order test — selective bans on marches

BRADFORD 12.



Support the national demonstration on 12 December in Bradford. Assemble: 130 Manningham Park. For further information phone 01-571 4920

Count down with Arthur

By Toni Gorton

VOTING has begun to decide who will be the next president of the National Union of Mineworkers.

Even the bosses and the Tory press are forced to concede that the likely victor will be Arthur Scargill.

This won't be due to any support that they have given him — far from it! Scargill has faced a barrage of hostile publicity, some of it traceable back to the National Coal Board itself.

At his final campaigning meeting in Sheffield on 28 November, he told 2000 miners that a NCB public relations officer had placed the print order for the *Lancashire Miner* — a one-off publication — which attacked him and supported another candidate.

Despite this sort of opposition, the meetings of Arthur Scargill have regularly attracted between 400 and 1000 people.

In Sheffield with Tony Benn on the platform, Scargill declared that in order to achieve his policies 'miners need leaders responsive to members' views and committed to democracy and accountability.'

'Above all leaders who are prepared to fight for those they are privileged to represent.'

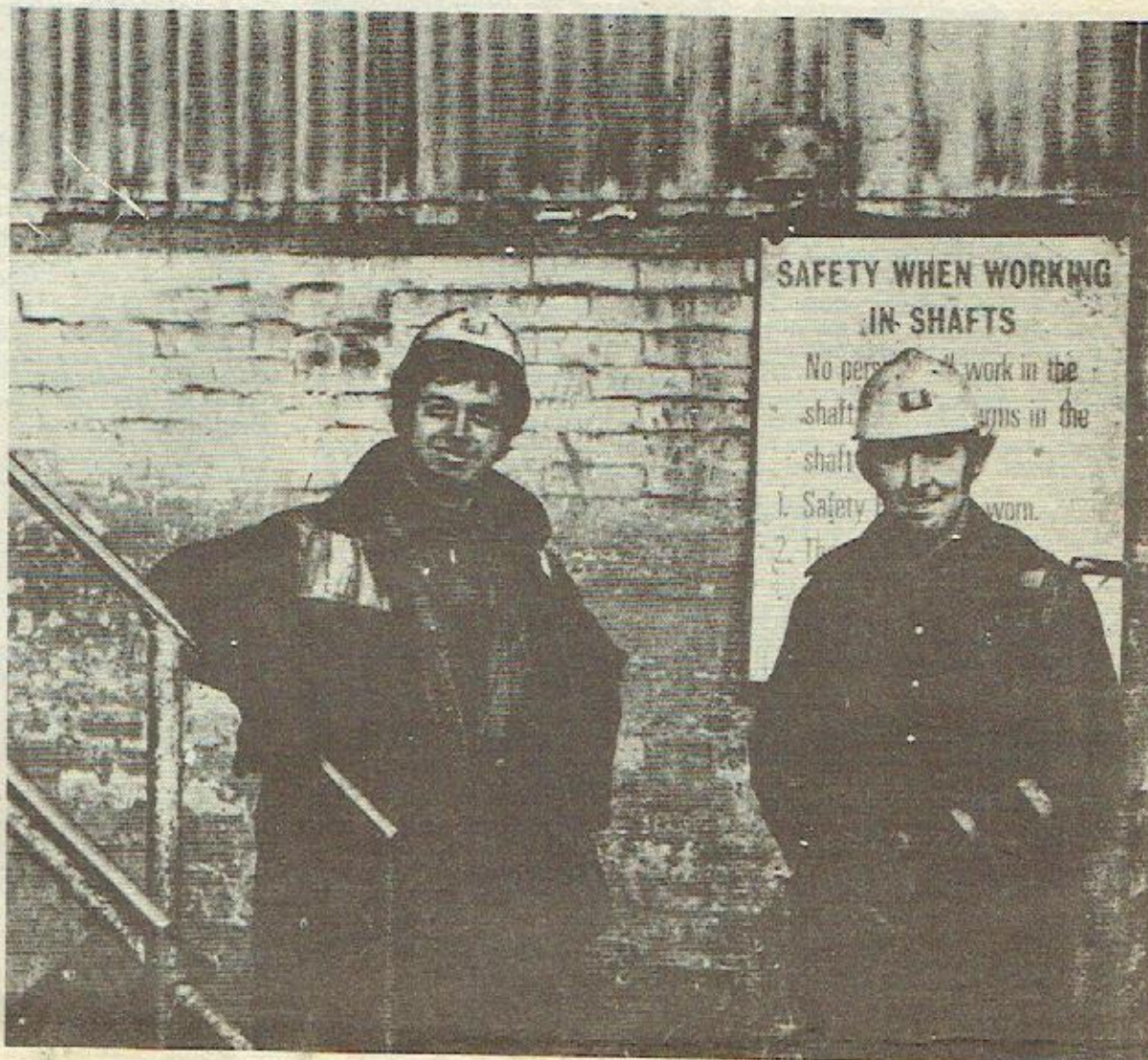
In a reference to retir-

ing president, Joe Gormley, he said: 'The union needs a leader who does not come out of pay talks and say on the doorstep he does not

believe there is any more cash available.'

Arthur Scargill, if elected may serve as president of the NUM for 22 years unless his own objections to life terms is translated into constitutional changes.

His election will be seen to be significant in the industrial and political battles to come — and not only the miners think that.



Staffa— workers accept offer

WORKERS at Staffa Products who have been fighting to keep their factory in Leyton decided this week to return to work on the basis of a much improved management offer.

Unfortunately the management has refused to move from its position to close the Leyton factory. Only the date has changed.

The outline of the deal is as follows. Workers will return to work with a guarantee of a minimum of six months' employment but a maximum of twelve months.

During the first six months people will be encouraged to take voluntary redundancy.

After twelve months, production will be transferred to Plymouth.

A second redundancy offer has been made. Workers will now have the choice of taking the original deal — double basic redundancy pay plus £1000, or basic redundancy plus one half of a year's wages.

In general the second offer will be worth an average of £1300 more.

Other aspects of the offer include:

- Full holiday entitlement will be granted for Christmas.

ment will be granted for Christmas.

- Full holiday entitlement will be given for next year whenever people leave.

- Management has offered a seven per cent wage rise.

- There is agreement for no recriminations on 'either side'.

- The unions in their turn have been asked to immediately remove both internal and external blacking. They must also cooperate with the move.

Having to increase its offer shows the problems that management is running into with the stopping of all work on its motors and the blacking of its products.

Management's discomfiture was increased when right wing Labour MP for Leyton Bryan

Magee did a complete about face.

He withdrew his unconditional support for management and raised a demand pressed on him by the Staffa workers that the government grant of £4m should be blocked.

It was on the basis of this grant that Staffa decided to move operations to Plymouth with a net loss of jobs and the destruction of one third of all manufacturing jobs in East London.

The problems that management might face were already anticipated in a report drawn up by consultants, Hay Communications, to prepare all the details of the closure. They were not to know that the workers would get their hands on the report.

Phase 1 report on 24 April revealed 'certain parts are critical to Staffa because they can't be subcontracted for production elsewhere. Where possible an excess production of these parts should be made and the stockpile moved off site.'

Unfortunately for management the over-time bans and one-day stoppages prior to the closure announcement meant that this stockpiling couldn't be properly fulfilled. The result was a potential disaster for the company.

The report continues: 'Cost is not the main consideration where maintaining a market presence during the switch to Plymouth is essential to company survival.'

It is this loss of market presence which stared the company in the face.

The about face by Bryan Magee on top of this is a stab in the back for the company.

Until last week, Magee has been putting a pro-management line. His advice to the workers had been: take the money and run. He put down a parliamentary motion to this effect.

But when a counterposed resolution was tabled by Ernie Roberts which gained over 30 signatories and a big campaign began

in his constituency, Magee began to look to his own future. He is soon coming up for re-selection.

Of course, Magee has left himself a whole number of escape hatches. He has written to Industry Secretary, Patrick Jenkin, asking him to 'review very critically' his department's decision to subsidise Staffa's move.

But in a letter simultaneously written to Staffa management he reveals the extent of his criticism which only goes so far as to demand higher redundancy pay, and help to find other jobs.

His magical solution is for the workforce to approach an outfit called 'Job Creation Ltd' to find Staffa workers jobs.

His 'St Pauls conversion' was only a face saving formula which wouldn't solve his re-selection problem.

Clearly a major psychological ace for management was the problems faced over Christmas. Unfortunately it is also true that the strike leadership never successfully solved the problem of involving the ma-

majority of the workforce in the fight.

Moreover, no political perspective was really hammered out which gave workers the confidence that the battle could be won. The demand on the

government to block the grant and a massive campaign to support the objective only developed in the last weeks. We will be carrying a balance sheet of the dispute in next week's paper.

Students occupy against the cuts

By Chris Bertram and Alison Harris

WHILE staff at the Polytechnic of Central London are threatening strike action in solidarity with students occupying against cuts in education, the Left Alliance leadership of the National Union of Students were preparing to knife any fight.

NUS president David Aaronovitch told students who were surrounding his national offices to demand support for their action, that they should be thankful for the 'luxury of student unions' and that they were 'lucky, the cuts are even worse elsewhere'.

On 20 November students at PCL went into occupation against plans by the college authorities to implement a 20 per cent cut in spending. This is to make up for a deficit of £658,000.

Polytechnics around the country face a 15 per cent cut to be imposed in one year and this is the first serious attempt to fight back against the Tory attacks on higher education.

On the Monday following the occupation, the Rector, Colin Adam-

son, called in the police.

This led to 19 arrests during the day and the level of police violence won the students much sympathy among the staff.

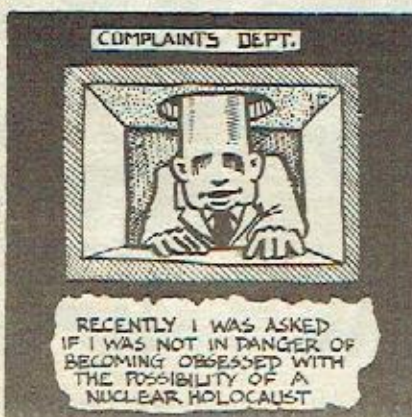
By occupying a second site in Wells St, students forced Adamson to call off the police.

At a mass meeting the following day, the students angrily condemned the NUS leadership for its refusal to organise support for the struggle.

An attempt to occupy NUS headquarters was frustrated but left David Aaronovitch in little doubt of what rank and file students think of him

A writ has been served on students occupying the Regent St site and barricades have been put up. The students at PCL have given a lead in showing how to fight Tory attacks.

Occupations should be generalised to other colleges up and down the country but the only way to defeat the Tories is for students to link up their campaigns with the battles of workers against unemployment.



Central America

Grenada - a month of struggle

By Pat Kane, St Georges, Grenada

NOVEMBER is an important month for the people of Grenada, as they continue to defend their revolution and push forward their mass organisations.

Wednesday 11 November was Angola Day, when 3,000 people rallied in the northern town of Sauteurs to celebrate the sixth anniversary of Angolan independence. Speakers from Angola, Namibia, and the Peoples' Revolutionary Government stressed the close contacts between the liberation struggles of Africa and the Grenadian revolution.

Angola has suffered from imperialist intervention, and the same threats now hang over the people of Grenada. Tension is mounting throughout the region, and the latest addition to the United States military presence here is the arrival of the aircraft carrier 'USS Eisenhower' in Barbados.

Cuba's support for the region's revolution, has resulted in the stepping up of US threats against Cuba. The latest attack on Cuba is the deci-

sion of the right-wing government of Jamaica to break all diplomatic links with Havana. The presence of Cuban construction workers and medical teams in Grenada is a further cause for alarm for the US at the growing links between the revolutions of this region.

The Grenadian people are ready and prepared to meet any military threats against their revolution. Every Wednesday is 'Militia Day', and thousands of youth and workers have already joined.

The PRG is sponsoring an International Solidarity Conference here in St Georges, and delegates are expected from around the world. The Grenadian people see their best defence being mass mobilisations and international solidarity.

Throughout Grenada you can see the work of the island's revolutionary youth. The National Youth Organisation is preparing for its first national congress on 12-13 December. They aim to have 7,000 NYO members by the congress, and

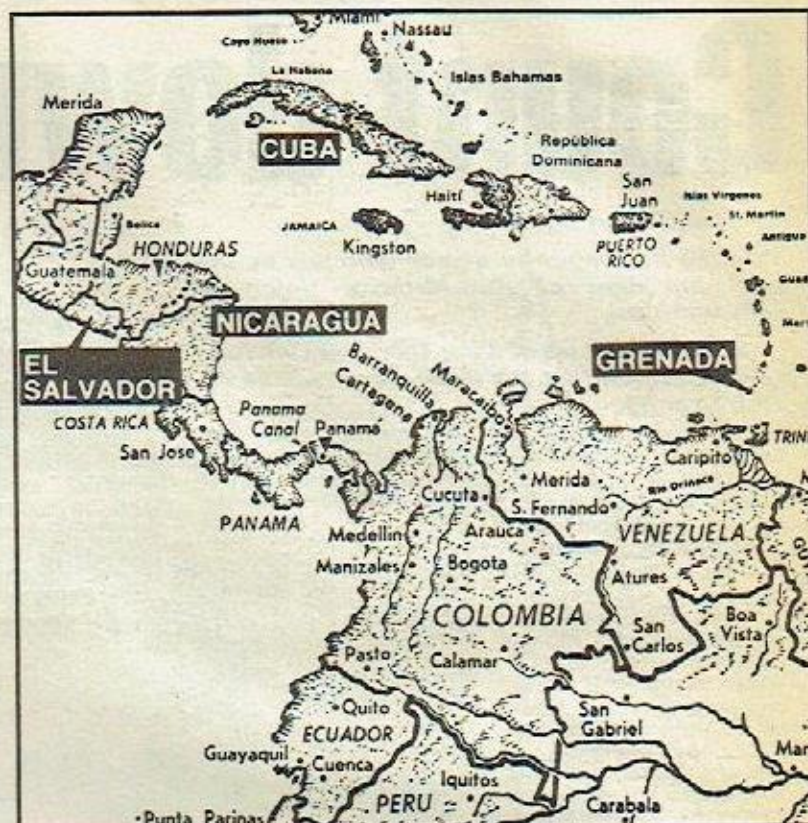
already they've recruited 5,200.

The National Women's Organisation has also set itself targets of 5,000 members by December, and they're well on the way to reaching this figure. All this in an island with a total population of just 110,000!

The work of the Grenadian people will be displayed on Sunday 22, when they have their third 'Bloody Sunday' demonstration. This marks the day in 1973 when thugs from the old regime attacked, and nearly killed, six members of the present government.

All the mass organisations are mobilising, and the demonstration will once again show the determination of the Grenadian people to defend their revolution.

Every day, Radio Free Grenada announces that 'November is a month to remember, a month of struggle'. The activity of the Grenadian people will ensure that their struggles are successful.



Central America Dogs of War are readied

By Phil Hearse

GENERAL ALEXANDER HAIG, veteran of Korea and Vietnam, five star general, Secretary of State and anti-communist fanatic started it. Answering questions from the congressional Foreign Affairs Committee, he affirmed that military action against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, and even military action against Cuba, was under consideration by the administration.

A few days later Reagan stated at his news conference that the US had no 'active plans' for immediate military intervention anywhere in the world. 'Active' or otherwise the United States has a number of contingency plans a series of projects to thwart the revolution, in

Central America.

Given that the United States is presently, through its 'zero option' proposals and other measures attempting to prevent itself being isolated from democratic public opinion internationally, actual military intervention on Vietnam or Santo Domingo lines is a last resort.

But there are plenty of other options between now and then.

For the United States the stakes in Central America are enormous. If the revolution in El Salvador is successful, given the continued deepening of revolution in Nicaragua, then Guatemala and Honduras will come under increasing pressure. Imperialist domination of the whole region will be threatened.

The southern and northern neighbours of Central America are among the countries which are the biggest and most important in Latin America:

Colombia and Mexico. Mexico is by far the richer and the less stable. Both of these countries risk being profoundly shaken by revolutionary victory.

Steps towards a Central American socialist federation would rock the whole of Latin America. For the United States the logic of this is implacable: Nicaragua must be isolated and the revolution in El Salvador must be defeated.

For the US the two things link together; they see Nicaragua as constituting the base for inspiration and practical aid to the revolution in Salvador.

The most likely interim step therefore is neither sending troops to El Salvador, over and above the advisors they already have there; nor is it a direct aggression against Cuba. The most likely interim step is an exile-led attempt to overthrow the Nicaraguan government from

Honduran territory, with perhaps the participation of elements of the Honduran army.

The problem with this particular enterprise is that the Honduran ruling clique is busy attempting to give itself some 'democratic' credentials by staging elections: a project certain to be undermined by using Honduras as the base to attack El Salvador.

Whatever the precise timescale and form of military intervention, the US through Haig has served notice that it will not accept the victory of the revolution in El Salvador.

In response to this both Cuba and Nicaragua are mobilising for a possible military confrontation. In Cuba, troops have been called up, troops confined to barracks and anti-aircraft guns have been set up on roof tops in Havana. Nicaragua is accelerating the preparations of the militia, and together with the army it is

estimated that 250,000 people are under arms.

There will be no easy victories for exile invasion forces or even a direct attack from the United States.

For the United States therefore military intervention poses many problems. In the US itself, military intervention abroad is still not a popular option. This would be redoubled by the kind of prolonged battle which would be required to defeat Nicaragua and Cuba.

Internationally, the Reagan regime would become more and more unpopular and isolated. But to be world cop for imperialism is not necessarily to take the most popular option. The task now is to make the United States pay the highest price for playing with military fire in the region. A barrage of international protest can start to stay imperialism's hand.



Polish workers prepare new crackdown

By Davy Jones

'THERE IS another option to that of compromise and understanding: namely confrontation', warned hard-line party leader Stefan Olszowski last week. He was addressing the latest emergency meeting of the Communist Party leaders in Warsaw.

The meeting discussed a parliamentary Bill to give the government sweeping new powers to deal with the independent union movement, Solidarity. The Special Powers Bill is expected to include: drastic curbs on strikes, prohibition of non-religious public gatherings, limitations on internal travel and access to telecommunications, and extension of military jurisdiction over civil affairs.

Fight

In all, these measures threaten to provoke a major confrontation with Solidarity. This would be reinforced if the government postpones the local elections scheduled for February next year.

The ruling party fears that independent candidates supported by Solidarity could unseat the Communist Party candidates. The Warsaw branch of Solidarity has

drawn up proposals on free elections which will be put to Solidarity's national leadership this week.

In the past weeks there has been a flowering of new independent political currents nationally and locally.

The most significant are the fast-growing nationalist Confederation of Independent Poland (KPN), and Jacek Kuron's Clubs for a Self-Governing Republic, a group with a more anarcho-syndicalist character.

Solidarity activists are increasingly discussing the need for their own political party to fight for the interests of the workers and small farmers.

Prize

Such a perspective combined with the development of the workers' self-management movement is a clear alternative to the project favoured by Lech Walesa



Jacek Kuron

and his supporters in the Solidarity leadership. They have spent the last month discussing the idea of a 'government of national accord' with the Catholic Church and the Communist Party.

For the authorities and the Church hierarchy such a project has the aim of drawing the independent union movement into co-responsibility for the

crisis. It wants Solidarity to discipline its members and force them to pay for the economic crisis.

Divisions within Solidarity have intensified over these talks with the government. Some 14 members of the Gdansk union leadership, including veteran strike leader Andrzej Gwiazda, resigned in protest at Walesa's 'conciliationism'.



Lech Walesa meets Edmund Maire, leader of the French socialist union, on his recent trip to France

There is no doubt that the government held out the prospect of power-sharing as the prize to be gained through moderation, while secretly preparing for a new crackdown.

On Monday the authorities shut down a firefighters' training school where 380 cadets had been on strike for a week. The cadets had demanded the

'demilitarisation' of the service, namely guarantees that they would not be used against striking workers and students as in the past.

Meanwhile 100,000 students at 71 of the country's 91 colleges are still on strike protesting over the appointment of a polytechnic rector in Radom and over educational reform. Bus and tram drivers in Krakow,

southern Poland, are threatening a 24 hour strike on 7 December in support of the students.

Another confrontation between the authorities and the Polish workers seems likely in the coming weeks. Each confrontation poses more sharply the need for working class political power as the only solution to the Polish crisis.

Strikes in Romania over food shortages

By Joe Singleton

POLAND is not the only Eastern European country undergoing serious popular unrest. In Rumania too the workers have launched a wave of struggles against food shortages.

On 9 October the Romanian government issued a decree signed by President Ceausescu which introduced harsh penalties for hoarding food. Persons holding more than one month's supply of food are liable to prison sentences of up to five years.

Food

The scope of the food shortages was further indicated on 17 October by a decree which introduced bread rationing. Local authorities are to ensure that customers receive no more than an 14oz loaf of bread daily and 5 lbs. of maize meal per month.

In some localities food is sold only to those whose names appear on a typewritten list of local residents. All purchases are recorded.

When bread rationing was announced, strikes broke out in the Jiu valley, site of Romania's biggest coalfield. The government sent Central Committee Secretary Emil Bobu to deal with the strikers but the workers arrested him in the town of Motrul and demanded that Ceausescu himself should come.

Ceausescu's helicopter was unable to land as it was stoned by local people and had to fly back to Bucharest. The police station in Motrul was set on fire and the party headquarters was occupied.

Strikes and demonstrations also occurred in other parts of Romania. In the town of Giurgiu, 30 miles south of Bucharest, the local party deputy secretary was killed by angry demonstrators. On 17 October there were also strikes in the towns of

Levrda, Lupoia and Horasti.

At the beginning of November the party secretary for the town of Orsova was found stabbed. Reports say that the police are out in large numbers in the capital Bucharest to prevent the outbreak of unrest while people queue for food.

Debt

The Romanian debt to the West stands at over \$10bn. If existing obligations are to be fulfilled Romania will have to borrow more and negotiate debt rescheduling.

It is estimated that the foreign debt could reach as high as \$16bn by the end of this year. Factories are working at 50 to 60 per cent of their capacity and trade with the West has declined.

In order to satisfy the need for hard currency the regime has resorted to the export of meat and other food products. The

popular view in Romania is that it is the state export of food which is responsible for the shortages and not hoarding.

But the official campaign against hoarding continues. Flats are raided and every night television viewers are shown scenes of homes with illegal stocks of food uncovered by the police.

A group of shoppers queuing for oil in front of the Leonida shop in Bucharest were all arrested and taken to the police station. After an identity check their homes were searched and anyone possessing more than a litre of oil was fined.

The parallels with Poland are too close for comfort for the Rumanian bureaucrats.

The Romanian media, while taking its diplomatic distance from the Russians, regularly denounces the 'anti-socialist activities' of Solidarity in Poland while failing to provide information on

sensitive issues like Solidarity's appeal to the workers of Eastern Europe.

The miners of the Jiu valley have a long tradition of struggle against the Ceausescu regime. In 1972 they launched a revolt against inadequate food supplies and poor housing. Ceausescu was forced to come to the valley and discuss with the workers in the town of Petrosani.

Cut

In August 1977 the miners went on strike against the introduction of a new Pension Law which would have cut their living standards. They demanded adequate food supplies, a 6-hour working day, abolition of unpaid labour and the re-introduction of rights that the miners had won in 1956 and 1957.

At that time the CP leadership sent two Central Committee members Ilie Verdet and Gheorge

Pana to negotiate with the workers. But the workers arrested the CC members and demanded that Ceausescu deal with them directly.

Ceausescu gave in after 3 days and came to meet a mass gathering of 35,000 miners. After 5 hours of discussion, reminiscent of Gierek's discussion with the Szczecin workers in Poland in 1976, Ceausescu gave in to their demands and promised that there would be no repressive measures taken against the strikers.

The food shortages are occurring against a background of increasing economic difficulties for the Romanian regime. Romania is a member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as well as the World Bank, and has special trade agreements with the USA and the EEC.

Hoping to use its stocks of oil, coal and uranium to acquire large amounts of hard currency

it embarked, like Poland, on a programme of rapid and large scale industrialisation.

Agriculture was neglected and living standards were sacrificed to nominal growth rates and industrial expansion.

Plans

But, like Poland again, these plans have gone seriously wrong. Oil self-sufficiency disappeared in the mid-'70s. Plans to use the country's large refining capacity to refine and re-export Middle East oil were demolished by the sharp rise in crude oil prices and the Iran-Iraq war.

Many long-term capital intensive programmes requiring substantial hard-currency expenditure are in mid-stream, like the plan to build its own nuclear power industry through co-operation with Canada using Candu nuclear technology.



APPLY
U.S. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE



I'm clocking-in - at home!

I've said good-bye to that war job, and now I'm going to enjoy the simple home life I've been so eagerly planning. Family health will be my first responsibility. I shall make sure that 'Milk of Magnesia', which has helped to keep me free of digestive upsets in the stress and strain of war, will never be missing from the medicine cabinet.

'MILK OF MAGNESIA'



Hire tom

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ROSIE THE RIVETER which could usefully for conferences and on women and unemployment. It's a new film being shown in Edinburgh for the first time. GEOFF RATT went to see it.

THIS is a lively film which makes a major contribution to the history of American women made to effort by working in munitions factories and shipyards.

And it tells how they were eased out, by being eased out,



Photo: GRAHAM COOKSON

'WE WANT' DEMO ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS EVE

The Labour Party has agreed to organise a national event on A Woman's Right to Work on June 5, 1982. The proposal to hold a national demonstration on the theme of a Woman's Right to Work came out of the Festival for Women's Rights Against Tory Attacks held in May this year. Women decided to call upon the Labour Party and the TUC to organise the demonstration and an Action Committee was formed to set the ball rolling.

YVONNE TAYLOR talked to two Socialist Challenge supporters JUDY WATSON and ELLY GORDON, who are members of the Action Committee, about the plans for the demonstration.

Why do you think the Labour Party has agreed to take a stand on the issue of women's unemployment by calling for an event focussing on this issue?

JUDY: I think their decision reflects the impact of women's struggles over the past few years on the labour movement as a whole. The demonstration against Corrie which was organised by the TUC in 1979 signalled that the labour movement was prepared to begin to take a stand on women's issues.

It's really opened up the door now so that we can begin to pressurise the working class movement as a whole to fight around all aspects of women's rights.

Is the type of national event the Labour Party is planning what you envisaged?

ELLY: The Labour Party is plan-

ning, at this stage, to hold a festival. They see the event as more of an enjoyable occasion. The Action Committee has always wanted a demonstration. We want the largest demonstration on women's rights ever. Obviously this could feed into a festival in one of the major parks in London and we hope we can change the Labour Party's mind on this.

What do you think is going to be the major political focus of the event?

JUDY: There's quite a big chance that the Labour Party will want to focus on the Alternative Economic Strategy (AES) at what there is in that for women's rights. Within the Action Committee, some of us are not very happy with this.

We think that any national activity on women's rights at the present time should highlight the way women are being attack-



Photo: GRAHAM COOKSON

THE DEMONSTRATION is a good idea — we've got to show what we feel. We can't just sit quiet. If women's jobs are going faster than men's, we've got to fight.

In this day and age, two people have to go out to work in the family. We don't go out to work for pin money — we need it to survive. Nobody should be losing their jobs — men or women.

In our struggle at Lee Jeans, we were women fighting for jobs for everyone.

At first we weren't taken seriously — people were surprised it was women. But in the end they were saying: 'It was you women who showed the men how to fight.'

ELLEN MONAGHAN, Chief Steward, NUTGWU, Lee Jeans, Greenock

I THINK THE DEMONSTRATION is really important. It's often left up to women to fight anyway — not just on women's rights but against unemployment as a whole.

It's about time the Labour Party got its finger out and started organising.

ELSIE BROAD FTAT and Manchester Royal Pride Strike Committee.



Photo: JUDE WOODWARD

THERE IS A NEED to focus attention on the accelerating rate at which women are losing their jobs — both part-time and fulltime. Women have a right to work if they wish and a very large proportion must work to supplement a family income.

And women are being forced to give up jobs to take over care of the elderly, the sick and the handicapped because this support is being cut by the Tories.

A national event next year, concentrating on this issue, would highlight the problem and bring support from all sections of the labour movement.

JO RICHARDSON MP



Photo: LABOUR WEEKLY

I PERSONALLY SUPPORT the demonstration and so does the Labour Group on the GLC.

I think women should take action against unemployment because it's hitting women harder. And there is still an attitude that women should go first.

I went down to the Hoover factory and some people there do think that women should go first. I think this is deplorable — women must organise — we can't allow men to say this.

The march is a way of doing this and of bringing attention to the issue.

VALERIE WISE, GLC Councillor.

I think women have as much right to a job as a man. It's no good saying women should stay at home and look after the kids — men have got kids as well — we don't go out and buy them in a super market!

I think the Woman's Right to Work march is important to point this out.

ELAINE CROSS Laurence Scott Strike Ctte

today fired rrow

pictures of happy children taken care of in day nurseries while their patriotic mothers work in the factories.

At the end of the war they emphasise 'eight-hour orphans' who are neglected because their irresponsible mothers are out working in the factories. The women have done what they were required to do and must now vacate their jobs to make way for returning servicemen.

One vivid incident is when a black woman tells how, enraged at the brutal treatment of a Filipino by a racist naval officer, she threatens the racist with her burner flame and escapes disciplinary action because of the solidarity of her workmates. *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* is at the ICA in London until 10 December and can be hired from the *Other Cinema*, 79 Wardour St, London W1.

home and babies, when the conquering male heroes returned to civilian life.

The film consists of extracts from *March Time* and other newsreels, alternating with the reminiscences of black and white women who tell what it was really like to work as a riveter or welder.

The women say how much they enjoyed the companionship and sense of achievement of working in industry compared with the low-paid, isolated and monotonous jobs they had earlier held in cafeterias or domestic service.

The manipulative role of the media is illustrated by the newsreels which, at the start of the war, show

THE LARGEST

FOR A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO WORK



DEMONSTRATE
5 JUNE

FOR A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO WORK

by the Tory government's policies. It should focus on the ways in which women are fighting back: like in Lee Jeans, Hoover, the women who were on the People's March, Staffa, and Laurence Scott.

Making the AES the central concern means directing attention to paper policies and away from the need for people to fight for

this opportunity to focus on positive action and to fight in the labour movement for positive action policies to be adopted.

We are facing a situation where women are often the first to be pushed out of jobs. When everybody is facing unemployment, it is extremely divisive for the labour movement to allow this to go unchallenged.

women to take up jobs in traditionally male preserves, opening up apprenticeships to women.

We should be arguing for the next Labour government to commit itself to enforce such policies through legislation.

How would you like to see the Labour Party organising to build support?

ELLY: We hope that the Labour Party will be prepared to set up an open working party where Labour Party, trade union and women's group representatives could work together.

Wide involvement from all those organisations fighting for women's rights would ensure that, while the focus was going to be on a Woman's Right to Work, all those issues which underpin this right were not forgotten. Issues such as woman's right to control her fertility, adequate nursery provision, no discrimination against lesbian women and so on.

Some women would argue that, at a time when all of women's rights are under attack, it is wrong to organise a national demonstration around a Woman's Right to Work. What do you think about this argument?

JUDY: In a situation where women's unemployment is rising at twice the rate of men's and

where women are being forced back into the home and out of the workforce, it's crucial that we focus on this question. If women can't be economically independent then there's no way they can gain any of their other rights. It's within this context that we have to look at what's happening to women within the family.

The Tory attacks on social services which increase women's workload at home, the ideological offensive they are mounting against working mothers and wives end up meaning that women will not be allowed to go out to work. They will be forced into a situation where they have no choice but to stay at home.

It's this attempt to reassert women's role as primarily mother and wife which will have a profound effect on every aspect of women's rights and women's lives.

What do you think are the next steps we should be taking to build the festival nationally and how can we ensure that the original proposal for a demonstration is also taken up?

JUDY: The Labour Party/TUC liaison committee will be meeting soon to discuss the TUC backing the call for a festival. We want as many resolutions as possible through Labour Party and trade union bodies calling for there to be a national demonstration as

well, leading to the festival.

Already, regional activity is being organised in support of the slogan of a Woman's Right to Work. In Wales, the women's sub-committee of the Welsh TUC has called a demonstration on International Women's Day. We hope that people will try to get the regional TUC's to organise similar events so that we can build up to a massive event next June. The Action Committee is organising a Public Meeting on 9 December to launch the build up for the demonstration and on 20 February there will be a national organising conference.

Have you any ideas about what people should be doing locally now?

ELLY: There are already a number of local conferences being organised around the issue. Hackney, Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester and Newcastle are all organising conferences around women and unemployment. This is one idea that could be taken up everywhere.

Local mobilising committees and planning groups with their own set of local activities to build up to 5 June will be important. We hope that the idea of focusing a national event around a Woman's Right to Work will help to strengthen the existing structures and groups in the labour and women's movements or perhaps will help to get them where they don't exist.

themselves. The only way to ensure a future Labour government, truly committed to women's rights, is by relying on mass action both to win our policies and to see that they are carried out.

And you can't isolate just one aspect of the AES from the rest. There are other parts of the AES which I would be unhappy with, like import controls.

Do you think there are any specific policies which should be highlighted by this event?

JUDY: I think women should use

As socialists, we want to fight for policies which ensure full employment, like work sharing with no loss of pay, a thirty five hour week and so on. Along with this we have to oppose any idea that women aren't really workers, that their primary role in society is that of wives and mothers, that women should leave the jobs for the men.

We need to argue for positive action policies which assert women's equal right to a job: against discriminatory lay-offs, greater access to retraining for women; positively encouraging

Revolutionaries and th

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YORK: Community Books, Walmgate.

Following the wave of media interest in Tariq Ali's application to join the Labour Party, Socialist Challenge asked Steve Potter, national secretary of the International Marxist Group, for his views on the controversy.

There are two major issues raised by comrade Tariq's actions. Let me say that his resignation is not, as the *Morning Star* report of 19 November implied, part of a sophisticated plot by the IMG to infiltrate the Labour Party. Tariq resigned from the IMG to join the Labour Party against our advice.

The first question is whether Marxists should have a place within the Labour Party. Constitutionally there is no basis whatsoever for the threats of the Labour leadership to exclude Tariq from the party. He is not a member of any proscribed organisation.

Nor is there any party rule specifying that former members of revolutionary organisations should recant their views, or stand in the corner for a year repeating 'I must believe in parliamentary democracy' (as Neil Kinnock MP suggested in a letter to the *Guardian*) before being allowed to join the party. Some Labour MPs have demanded Tariq's exclusion because of his views on parliamentary democracy. But never before have Labour members been obliged to believe that parliamentary activities alone could bring about socialism.

Utopian

In fact one wonders whether Tony Benn would need to be excluded from the Labour Party on this basis, as he has often stressed the need to 'combine' activity inside and outside parliament.

Ironically Tariq and the IMG, almost alone on the far left, have polemicised against the notion that parliamentary activity was in principle opportunist or diversionary.

We support the Labour Party being represented in parliament, though its representatives should be fully accountable to the party, unlike at present. But for us parliamentary activity is not and never can be a substitute for the struggles of working people, without which all talk of socialism is utopian.

We believe that through the struggle for socialism working people will increasingly see the inadequacy of parliament for fighting for their interests and defending democratic rights. In that situation more democratic institutions will emerge through which the mass of working people will reorganise society on a socialist basis.

Every Labour Party member knows that section of clause four of the constitution which is reprinted on their membership card: 'To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable

distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.'

The IMG, and we are certain, Tariq Ali, will fight for clause 4 to be implemented. This is more than can be said, I suspect, for most of the Labour leadership!

Exclude

The Labour leaders are trying to change the rules of the Labour Party in order to exclude Tariq Ali. If they succeed, Tariq won't be the only loser. Such restrictions will be used increasingly against all the left, and the Labour Party as a whole will suffer.

At the moment the IMG, along with other left organisations like the Communist Party and the SWP, (neither of whom have yet defended Tariq's right to join the Labour Party), is proscribed from joining the Labour Party. We think this reactionary rule should be repealed.

The reasons given for this rule include the standing of candidates against Labour, and the question of international affiliations. The first argument is a classic 'chicken and egg' problem for revolutionaries.

There are supporters of the newspaper Socialist Challenge in the Labour Party who would be members of the IMG if it were not for the bans and proscriptions.

The IMG would like to be able to organise as current within the Labour Party and to argue for our programme, including as the basis for Labour candidates. Such an open discussion on policies can only strengthen the Labour Party.

But we are excluded from the Labour Party and are therefore unable to influence its debates over election manifestoes and candidates. So we



Tariq Ali at the recent 'debate of the decade' in London

Photo: GM COOKSON

have no alternative but to consider standing our own candidates in elections to present our ideas to working people. This is then used as a basis to justify our continued exclusion from the party, even though on the few occasions where we have stood IMG candidates they have always called for the election of a Labour government or council, and will continue to do so as a class vote against the Tories while Labour remains the mass party of the working class.

Tony Benn — candidate for expulsion?

'I think there is a slightly artificial division between what's called parliamentary politics and grassroots industrial politics. We must have both. 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 indicates 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 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.'

Tony Benn, interview with Socialist Challenge, 25 September 1980.

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MITTERRAND'S FRANCE: WHO'S PULLING THE STRINGS?
 JACQUES KERGOAT

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tional affiliations — the early Communist Party with the Third International, and the IMG with the Fourth International.

None of these exclusionary arguments are applied to the right wing inside the party, who organise openly through NATO-financed organisations like the Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding, or who, like Frank Field MP, call for deselected MPs to stand against official Labour candidates.

Other right wingers, like George Cunningham MP for Islington South, are given important parliamentary responsibilities by the party leadership, while they openly admit their possible defection to the anti-working class Social Democratic Party.

The Labour Party claims to want to unite all those fighting for the interests of working people. If so, why does it not welcome the IMG, the CP and the SWP into its ranks to strengthen the united struggle for socialism? Why does it only let the right wing organise inside the party?

Michael Foot and the Labour leadership repeatedly appeal for party unity. The left should reply by demanding an end to witch hunts and exclusions, and insisting that the Labour Party should be opened up to all genuine currents of working class opinion, both Marxist and non-Marxist.

Party

That brings us on to the second major issue raised by Tariq's resignation, the relationship between a mass revolutionary party and the future of the Labour party.

For us, the broad character of the Labour Party including both Marxist and non-Marxist currents will increasingly come under strain as the economic and political crisis develops. In that sense the defections to the Social Democratic Party are just the beginning of a battle within the party bet-

Labour Party



Will Tony Benn defend the unity of the labour movement and oppose bans and proscriptions?

Photo: VOICE OF THE UNIONS

ween those fighting for the interests of the working class and the bureaucrats who will ally with opposing class forces and parties.

The current 'breaking of the mould' of British politics is nothing compared to the likely convulsions of society over the coming years on the road to socialism. The Labour Party will not be immune to these processes. Indeed it is likely to undergo massive splits and recompositions as it is torn by the class struggle.

IMG

It could become an instrument for the most bloody counter-revolution, as occurred with the German Social Democratic Party after the first world war, which murdered Rosa Luxemburg and drowned the German revolution in blood. Or, if it was to break with its present bureaucratic leadership, it could be transformed beyond recognition into a different type of party fighting consistently for the interests of the workers in this country and internationally.

The road to constructing the mass revolutionary party to lead the masses to socialism may take many paths. What is certain is that the Labour Party figures prominently in all of them. But this whole process will not occur spontaneously.

The British ruling class has 300 years of experience of parliamentary rule to utilise against the working class to keep Britain an imperialist power. Socialists will need to draw on all the accumulated historical experience of the workers' movement, both in this country and internationally, to elaborate a strategy for socialism.

That is why the IMG and the Fourth International insist on the need to build a revolutionary party and international now within the current struggles.

We have no illusions that our small forces will simply grow through individual recruitment into

the future mass revolutionary party and international. What we do claim is that our programme contains the basic historical lessons of the struggles of the international workers' movement to date. In that sense we do believe that we are a nucleus for the future mass party.

On this point we have a crucial difference with comrade Tariq and with other socialists who have either left or never joined revolutionary socialist organisations. We believe that all the experience of the workers' movement clearly shows the need to build a revolutionary organisation in order to fight for a revolutionary programme.

There is no evidence that working people will spontaneously be won to revolutionary socialist politics. Nor can 'talented' individuals substitute for the building of such a party. Countless historic opportunities for socialist advance have been lost because of the lack of a trained working class leadership capable of consistently fighting for the

interests of working people.

We will fight alongside Labour Party militants in the consistent defence of working people in this country and internationally.

In the course of this struggle two things will become clear: first, most of the present leaders of the labour movement will vigorously oppose taking this struggle through to its

end; second, that those who are serious about the battle for socialism need to organise now. This is a burning practical necessity.

The IMG believes that it should have the right, as a genuine current of opinion within the labour movement, to be a current within the Labour Party. We see no contradiction between this and building a revolutionary party and international.

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Far Left Ban Defeated

By Valerie Coultas and Graham Topley

BIRMINGHAM LABOUR LEFT, a grouping of rank and file militants in the Labour Party, threw out a move by Tribune supporters last Tuesday to exclude Socialist Challenge and Socialist Organiser supporters.

After a sharp debate — the first of its kind since BLL was set up a year ago — a resolution calling on membership of BLL to be based on 'support for democratic socialist policies, and the alternative economic strategy and the constitution and programme of the Labour Party' was rejected on the grounds that it was divisive.

Albert Bore, prospective parliamentary candidate for Ladywood, summed up the feelings of many in the meeting when he pointed out that the resolution was nothing but a crude attempt to try and exclude anyone from participating in BLL who had any criticisms of the AES.

He added that all comrades in the room would have no difficulty in defending participation in both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary activities. He thought a lot of people in the Labour Party at the present time were fighting to make sure that the Labour Party implemented socialist policies.

He was adamant that once BLL started banning socialists who were active in the Labour Party BLL would become a narrow grouping with little support.

Parliamentary activities not enough

MICHAEL FOOT has threatened to introduce a new loyalty clause as a criterion for membership of the Labour Party. Only those who confirm their adherence to 'parliamentary democracy' would be eligible to join.

Socialist Challenge has never attacked the Labour Party for standing for Parliament. We have always campaigned for a Labour government. But we have no illusions that socialism will come through parliamentary activity alone. JOHN ROSS looks at the primary importance of extra-parliamentary activity in defending the interests of the working class.

The ruling class has never hesitated to use means outside parliament to defend its interests. Its biggest weapon has been the courts and direct sabotage by employers. When mass trade unions developed in the 1890s, the courts changed the law by the infamous Taff Vale decision to fine unions for strike action.

Under the last Tory government the courts resurrected the ancient frame-up charge of conspiracy to attack Des Warren and the right to picket in the Shrewsbury case.

Under the last Labour government procedures on union recognition and picketing were thwarted by the combination of ultra-right wing employers such as George Ward, the Grunwick's boss, and totally arbitrary 'interpretation' of the law by judges.

When the courts have not been sufficient to oppose a government the capitalist class has always turned to more fundamental weapons. In 1914, when Home Rule was to be granted to Ireland, the Tory Party openly called for armed resistance. The army refused, in the Curragh mutiny, to implement the Act of Parliament.

Army

Direct disobedience to elected governments is still carried on by the armed forces. When in 1974, for example, the Protestant bigots went on strike in the North of Ireland, the Labour government ordered the army to break the strike. The army officers sabotaged the orders and allowed the Loyalist strike to win.

Even before it comes to such drastic steps the capitalist class has its own means of economic sabotage and resistance. In 1950-51 for example, a Labour government nationalised the steel industry.

The employers were determined it would not happen. They succeeded in effectively blocking the nationalisation by refusing to hand over production plans and preventing trained personnel cooperating with the government.

It is absurd to believe that the capitalist class will obey the law where its fundamental interests are threatened. No group in society has ever surrendered where it has the means to resist.

The way that every single basic right has been gained has been through action and opposition outside Parliament. Take for example the very issue of the rights of Parliament itself. How were these achieved?

It was certainly not through a debate in the House of Commons. It was settled through a Civil War between the armies of Parliament and those of the King. The rights of Parliament were gained through the armed defeat and execution of Charles I.

The reality is totally different. Parliament steadfastly refused to grant votes for women. The first major attempt to raise the issue in Parliament was in 1866. Fifty years later it was still not granted. It never would have been gained by a policy based on opposition in the House of Commons.

Votes for women were gained by the tremendous militant campaign outside Parliament waged by the Suffragette movement. Huge demonstrations, riots, attacks on property, imprisonment, mass breaking of the law.

These were the means by which the basic right of women to vote was achieved.

The 'welfare state' set up after 1945 is also presented as a triumph of 'Parliamentary socialism'. But once again the reality is totally different.

The Labour victory of 1945 was achieved through tremendous agitation and preparation.

The working class was already disgusted before the war by the mass unemployment and pro-fascist policies of politicians like Chamberlain. A strike wave began to develop. Huge sales of socialist pamphlets, and creation of political organisation, took place among workers, women, the troops, young people and every section of the population.

The real reason the welfare state was accepted was expressed by Quintin Hogg, now Tory Lord Chancellor, in 1943:

'If you do not give the people social reform they are going to give you social revolution' was his correct view.

It was fear of uncontrollable social struggles if there was any attempt to return to the conditions of the 1930s that forced the ruling class to accept the welfare state. Parliament granted what it was no longer in a position to resist.

Nor can parliament be relied upon to defend workers' interests when they come under attack from the government or the courts. In January and February 1972 the miners came out on strike against the Tory government. An immense wave of 'secondary pickets' closed down the power stations; 40,000 Birmingham engineering workers struck in solidarity; 11,000 joined the picket line to close down Saltley coke depot. In all this, innumerable acts against the law and the sovereignty of Parliament took place.

Law

How things really are decided was shown even more clearly later in that summer of 1972. The due process of Parliament gave the government the right to put a stop to pickets and trade union actions. The National Industrial Relations Courts set up under the Industrial Relations Act duly decided to put the law into effect.

It ordered the imprisonment in Pentonville jail of five dockers engaged in secondary picketing.

The result was a gigantic explosion. From the morning of the arrests workers began to move out on strike in dozens of industries. Fleet Street, car factories, the docks and construction sites were closing down. Scared of being overwhelmed by the tide the TUC ordered a 24 hour general strike.

Amid this opposition the sovereignty of Parliament and the law collapsed like a pricked balloon. Like a rabbit out of a hat a totally unknown flunkey called the Official Solicitor was produced by the government to order the release of the dockers.

Open defiance of the law, huge mass actions to defend those doing it, achieved what opposition in Parliament never could. From then on the backbone of the Industrial Relations Act had been broken.

NUKES

EP Thompson and Dan Smith, *Protest and Survive*

Published in 1980, this book is a series of long articles to counter the government's defence policy. It covers the questions of civil defence, Europe, arms expenditure. (£1.65)

Peter Laurie, *Beneath the City Streets*

A fascinating account of what lies in amongst the sewers, electricity cables and tube tunnels. Bunkers for bureaucrats in the event of a nuclear war. (£1.95)

Peter Kennard and Ric Sissons, *No Nuclear Weapons*

An inexpensive set of arguments against nuclear weapons. It explains the effects of dropping a nuclear bomb over London; contrasts the defence expenditure in the West with the plight of the third world; talks about Cruise missiles and who decided to base them here; the connection between nuclear energy and nuclear weapons; the effect of the nuclear power and defence programmes on our civil liberties. With vivid illustrations (photo-montages) by Peter Kennard. (£1.00)

Tatsuichiro Akizuki, *Nagasaki 1945*

The author was a doctor in a Nagasaki hospital when the bomb was dropped. It is a vivid account of what happened and of the problems faced by the survivors. Very easy to read. (£2.50)

Peggy Duff, *Left, Left, Left*

Sub-titled, 'a personal account of six protest campaigns 1945-65', the author says in the preface that the book is not an autobiography, but an account of political campaigns with which she was involved. She died early this year and was best known as the secretary of CND until 1965. Makes interesting reading. (£1.95)

Julian Atkinson and Tony Southall, *CND lessons of the First Wave*

This short pamphlet discusses the debates which went on in CND in the 1960s. The most important lesson it draws is CND's failure to turn to the labour movement in an organised way — a lesson which still has to be learnt. A must for all those presently involved in CND. (50p)

Other pamphlets available
West Newcastle Nuclear Disarmament Group, *Exploding the Nuclear Myth — how to fight the missiles* (30p) Eric Burhop, *The Neutron Bomb* (35p)
Philip Bolsover, *Civil Defence: the cruellest confidence trick* (40p)
Betty England, *Nuclear disarmament for Britain, why we need action not words* (50p)

NAGASAKI 1945

TATSUICHIRO AKIZUKI



The first full-length eyewitness account of the atomic bomb attack on Nagasaki. Edited and with an Introduction by GORDON HONEYCOMBE. Translated by KEICHI NAGATA.

BOOKS BRIEFING

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MARXISM

Trotsky, *Writings*, 14 volumes, A must for any revolutionary's bookshelf. Brings together many pamphlets, articles and letters, including several never before translated. A comprehensive survey of Trotsky's struggle from 1929 to 1940, first to bring the international communist movement back to a Leninist position; the fight against the growth of the Stalinist bureaucratic stranglehold on the Soviet Union; and laying the theoretical and organisational foundations of the Fourth International. (£3.95)

Trotsky *The Revolution Betrayed*
The classic analysis of Stalinism and the degeneration of the first workers' state. A brilliant appraisal of the achievements of the working class in power and the limitations placed on that achievement by Stalinist degeneration. When the book was published in 1936 Stalinism was being bolstered by the 'Friends of the Soviet Union', who brought back super-idealistic pictures of what was happening in the Soviet Union. Trotsky called this 'socialism for radical tourists'. (£4.45)

Trotsky *Permanent Revolution*
Perhaps Trotsky's most important contribution to Marxist theory. Of special relevance today with the emergence of new revolutionary regimes in Latin America and the Caribbean, the overthrow of the Shah in Iran and the post-colonial developments in Africa and Asia. Essential for an understanding of the nature of these new regimes and the problems which confront them nationally and internationally. (£2.50)

James P. Cannon *First Ten Years of American Communism* (£3.25), *History of American Trotskyism* (£2.95), *Letters from Prison* (£3.25), *Notebook for an Agitator* (£3.25), *Socialism on Trial* (£2.95)

Any of these books by Cannon, a founder member of the International Left Opposition and the Fourth International, is a text book of practical application of Marxist theory to international working class politics. Cannon's writings are models of proletarian journalism.

Isaac Deutscher *The Non-Jewish Jew*
Written in Deutscher's inimitable brilliant style this book is of interest to Jew and non-Jew alike. The new edition is enhanced by a biographical memoir by Tamara Deutscher. (£2.70)

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NOVELS

Yuan Tsung Chen, *The Dragons Village*
An autobiography based on Chen's own experiences during the Chinese revolution and her political work with peasants in a remote part of China. (£3.50)

Nadine Gordimer, *Burger's Daughter*
The story of a young woman struggling to find her own identity in present day South Africa. It is both a unique portrait of the woman and an excellent social and political account of South Africa. (£1.95)

Valerie Miner, *Blood Sisters*
Centred around two generations of women, the novel explores several themes on the divisions between them in their social and political lives between their involvement in the women's movement and the Irish struggle. (£3.50)

Julia O'Faolain, *No Country for Young Men*
The effects of the Irish civil war of the 1920's on four generations of O'Malleys and Clancys is graphically explored through the recurring visions and nightmares of Sister Judith Clancy. (£2.95)

Jan Claussen, *Mother, Sister, Daughter, Lover*
An enjoyable collection of short stories about women by American feminist poet. (£2.50)

JA Lane (ed), *The Charlotte Perkins Gilman Reader*
In *Yellow Wallpaper* a young woman is slowly driven to madness by her husband. Gilman's other stories in this collection explore utopian situations and choices we can make to change our lives. (£2.95)

Yuan-tsung Chen THE DRAGON'S VILLAGE

An autobiographical novel of Revolutionary China



LOVE OF WORKER BEES Alexandra Kollontai



Alexandra Kollontai, *Love of Worker Bees*
Around the lives and thoughts of the women in Kollontai's three stories is woven vivid descriptions of peoples' everyday lives before and after the Bolshevik revolution and the debates and conflicts between sexual relationships and political work. (£2.95)

Stephanie Markman, *The Rime of the Ancient Feminist*
The Ancient Feminist's tale about her marriage, depression, involvement with left-wing politics and the women's movement is a very moving and honest description of one woman's experiences and will be recognisable to many of us. (£1.25)

IRELAND

Eamonn McCann, *War and an Irish Town*
Written in 1973, the classic account of a nationalist working class youth in the North of Ireland during the current phase of the struggle. McCann was 26 when British troops marched into Derry after the people of the Bogside had driven the RUC out.

Things have come a long way since the meeting outside the high flats in Rossville Street when Bernadette Devlin warned the victorious if exhausted Bogsideers not to make the soldiers welcome because they were agents of British imperialism. Twelve years of war has convinced even the most dubious that no reliance can be placed on the British state, least of all to defend the beleaguered nationalist population of the six counties.

Coming from a different generation to the late Bobby Sands and his comrades, McCann had been involved in what passed for traditional Labour politics in the sectarian statelet for several years before the outbreak of the latest 'troubles'. Like Sands and his generation, bigotry, batons and then bullets in the hands of the RUC and the British Army showed him that no conventional labourist or trade union politics is possible in the sectarian state; the main problem is the existence of the state itself and the interests it defends — British imperialism.

But the book manages to put across these points in a highly amusing way. 'Jesus, Mary and Joseph' exclaims his aunt when an IRA rocket lands accidentally on the Creggan Community Centre, 'are they going to kill us all before they free us.' (£1.95)

WAR AND AN IRISH TOWN

Eamonn McCann



NEW UPDATED EDITION

Pluto Press

Michael Farrell, *Northern Ireland, the Orange State*

Michael Farrell was a student at Queens University Belfast when the 'troubles' broke out and was actively involved in the civil rights movement. Together with Bernadette Devlin, another from the nationalist community who managed to get to Queens, he formed People's Democracy, which organised the famous Belfast to Derry march, described by McCann as 'a horrific trek which dredged to the surface all the accumulated political filth of fifty Unionist years'. Despite a murderous ambush at Burntoller by a Paisleyite mob the marchers managed to reach Derry, where they were faced yet again with rampaging loyalist mobs. Farrell's book is by far the best history of the sectarian state from its foundation in 1921. (£5.95)

Ernie O'Malley, *On Another Man's Wound, the Singing Flame*

The 1916 Easter rising in Dublin, and the execution of its leaders was the trigger for a young medical student joining the Republican movement and the fight against the British.

Rising rapidly in the ranks he later played a leading role in the bitter war against those who agreed the partitioning of the country, under the threat by Lloyd George of 'immediate and terrible war'. Ernie O'Malley's books are at once personal and highly readable historical accounts of a leading figure in one of the first modern guerrilla armies. (both £2.95)

Ernie O'Malley ON ANOTHER MAN'S WOUND



Andrew Boyd, *The Rise of the Irish Trade Unions*

Describes the foundation of unions in Ireland, at the same time or even before similar developments in England, Scotland or Wales — an interesting antidote to those chauvinists in the British labour movement who claim superiority on the grounds of precedence. The most interesting part of the book is the account of how the workers in Belfast were, in the early 1930s, able to overcome sectarian differences in a united fight against the bosses. Unfortunately, like the efforts of Connolly and Larkin in 1913, these came to nought, mainly because the Unionists were able to use sectarian fears to divide the working class. (£1.50)

Peoples Democracy joins Fourth International

By Penny Duggan

THE IRISH revolutionary socialist organisation Peoples Democracy has joined the Fourth International. Belfast councillor John McAnulty told PD's Dublin conference on 22 November.

'Joining the Fourth International will put us in the best position to strengthen the forces of revolutionary Marxism in Ireland, and place us in the internationalist tradition of James Connolly.'

Peoples Democracy became a household name in 1969 during the civil rights struggles in the North of Ireland. In later years it evolved towards revolutionary Marxism and fused with the Movement for a Socialist Republic (Irish section of the Fourth International) in 1978.

In the last two years Peoples Democracy has played a leading role in building the anti H Block campaign. It raised the H Block issue in last May's local government elections in Belfast and two of its members were elected councillors.

Peoples Democracy's internationalist outlook was evident throughout its conference. The evening before conference it held a rally on Poland with international speakers. And its political perspectives were clearly drawn from an international context.

Growth

The reporter for the National Committee explained that the situation in Ireland was both an example of imperialism's offensive against working people throughout the world as well as its inability to inflict serious defeats.

Indeed, while the huge growth of the anti-imperialist movement in Ireland last year arose from a basically defensive struggle, elsewhere the working class had itself taken the offensive: as in the revolutions in Central America, the Polish events, and the election of left governments in France and Greece.

The conference took

place in the context not only of an international crisis but also a growing political instability throughout Ireland, following the H Block protests over the last year.

Unstable

This instability is reflected in the precarious nature of the Fine Gael/Labour coalition government in the South of Ireland, which survives on the support of the two anti-Republican socialist

MPs, Kemmy and Sherlock. The government could fall from office at any time.

The crisis in the North was highlighted by discussion on Ian Paisley's proposed general strike scheduled for the day after PD's conference.

The conference characterised the Anglo-Irish council initiative as 'Sunningdale without reforms' (Sunningdale was the 1974 so-called 'power-sharing' agreement). While dressed up as a move towards Irish unity its only real purpose is to co-ordinate repression against the nationalist community.

As the 1974 Unionist general strike and last week's events showed, Unionism still has the power to veto British plans. Whether Britain will confront head-on the

political and military forces of Unionism remains to be seen.

The Anglo-Irish talks indicate that Britain is looking to the Southern government as a new ally. As the South becomes increasingly integrated into European imperialism through its membership of the EEC, it seems a more reliable ally for Britain in defeating the anti-imperialist movement.

New

Undoubtedly Britain is becoming desperate to find a new solution in Ireland and to share the burden of defending imperialism's interests there.

The H Block campaign demonstrated that despite its small size Peoples Democracy has a major influence within the anti-imperialist movement.



Irish premier FitzGerald - could be ousted at any time.

From the broad-based Coalisland anti-repression conference in 1977 to the decision to contest the local elections last May its example has been rapidly followed by the anti-imperialist movement.

This conference show-

Decisions of PD conference

- 1 To become the Irish section of the Fourth International.
- 2 To fight for the unity of the anti-imperialist movement around:
 - *Brits out of Ireland, against London-Dublin collaboration
 - *Defence of democratic rights
 - *Against the 'Better Life for All' campaign and trade union collaboration with imperialism
 - *For a fightback against job loss and wage restraint
- 3 To argue for an anti-imperialist united front to fight the bourgeois parties in the elections.
- 4 To make a major orientation towards youth, to win youth to PD.
- 5 To step up activity in the trades unions to draw the links between the fight for national unity and against austerity.
- 6 To launch a major campaign to retain the sugar beet plant in Tuam. This was established in the 1950s to bring jobs to a depressed area. It is threatened with closure by the government who claim the plant is not 'economically viable'. The plant workers and local farmers who grow the beet have united to campaign to save their livelihood.

ed that PD is able to respond to the new political stage in Ireland and that it will continue to lead the

way in the national struggle. The Fourth International has won a valuable recruit.



Attack on Burntollet marchers in 1969 - the bloody birth of Peoples Democracy.



The Bobby Sands funeral procession - the masses return to the streets of Ireland.

Support gay rights in the 6 Counties

By John Inigo

ON 22 October the European Court of Human Rights, in a six year long case brought against the British government, found the law which bans all male homosexual activity in the North of Ireland to contravene the European Convention of Human Rights.

The court found that the law is an 'unjustified interference into private life', but would not go so far as to say that the law is discriminatory.

To conform with this ruling, the government will at least have to bring the law into line with that in Britain, where there is a (discriminatory) age of consent of 21 for gay men. However, to do this would antagonise both Paisley, who led a

campaign which stopped the Labour government from changing the law in 1978, and the Dublin government.

The law in the South of Ireland is the same as in the North, and the Republic is also a signatory of the Convention. Imperialism in Ireland has created for gay people, in James Connolly's words, 'a carnival of reaction, North and South'.

Socialists in Britain should support this campaign, particularly in the Labour Party which has an appalling record on this issue. To do so is not in any way to recognise the right of Britain to rule in the North of Ireland.

It is rather to support the demand of gays in the 6 Counties that the British state stops oppressing them with this law. To remove this law from the arsenal of the British state in Ireland would be a step forward.

POEU special conference For a communications industry union

By Colin Talbot (Westminster Branch delegate — personal capacity)

'THIS conference was a bloody shambles. The top table want their heads examining.' That was the reaction of one right-wing, pro-executive delegate as the Post Office Engineering Union Special Conference ended in Blackpool.

The conference had been called to discuss a proposal from the National Executive Council that the Post Office engineering union join in a federal union with the Society of Post Office Executives (SPOE) and the Civil and Public Servants Association Posts and Telecommunications (P&T) Group.

Unity

In the end the conference rejected both the NEC's proposed federation and a left supported proposal for an industrial, rank and file union embracing the POEU, CPSA P&T Group and the Union of Communication Workers (UCW). A clear majority of delegates were in favour of trade union unity, but were divided on the way to achieve it and who it should include.

The first defeat for the NEC's proposal came when conference threw out any idea of uniting with SPOE. Delegates rightly stressed that SPOE

is not a proper trade union but an association of managers. It would be a trojan horse for any united union as it currently stands.

Conference then carried amendments to the NEC's proposal saying that the UCW should be included instead of SPOE and that any federal union should be seen as the 'first step to an industrial union spanning the Post Office and British Telecom.'

This was undoubtedly a massive victory for the left. The NEC had argued all along for a union based mainly in British Telecom, one half of the new split Post Office. Their federation would have had only 10,000 members in the Post Office, out of over 210,000 in total. The left in the POEU has opposed the split in the Post Office and opposes carrying that split into the ranks of the trade unions. We want a communications industry union.

The left then went on to argue for rejection of the final package. A federal structure was far

too bureaucratic and top heavy.

The final, amended federal union proposal was defeated by 57,485 for to 71,526 against.

Conference then moved on to discuss the left's proposal, backed by 17 branches, for a single amalgamated union with the UCW and CPSA P&T Group. Phil Holt, secretary of Liverpool Internal Branch, moving the motion, pointed out that the UCW conference had already adopted the same policy earlier this year.

A single, rank and file industrial union would organise over 400,000 members in Posts and Telecoms, it would be a tremendous weapon in the fight against the effects of new technology and the Tories' Telecommunications Act.

Attack

General treasurer, David Norman launched a red-baiting attack on the proposal, saying it had as much support as the policies of the SWP and the IMG. It was 'revolutionary'. A more sober delegate pointed out that he wasn't aware that the UCW had been taken over by the IMG.

In the end, general secretary, Bryan Stanley, launched a massive attack

Coventry NUPE strike at critical stage

By Maureen Shevlin

THE Coventry public employees union, NUPE, which is in its fourth week of strike action against cuts, reached a critical stage as talks with the local Labour Council ended 27 November with very little agreement reached.

The council is determined to continue with its programme of cuts in wages and conditions which it claims was sanctioned by a referendum in August.

The proposal from the transport workers

union for a Day of Strike Action to be held on Thursday 2 December has been supported by the local branch of the National Union of Teachers but other teachers' unions and the local government workers' union, NALGO has rejected this course.

It is feared that union officials may use this lack of support as an excuse to backtrack on the Day of Action.

Support to NUPE strikers hardship fund c/o Jo Little, NUPE office, Southfields School, East Street, Coventry.

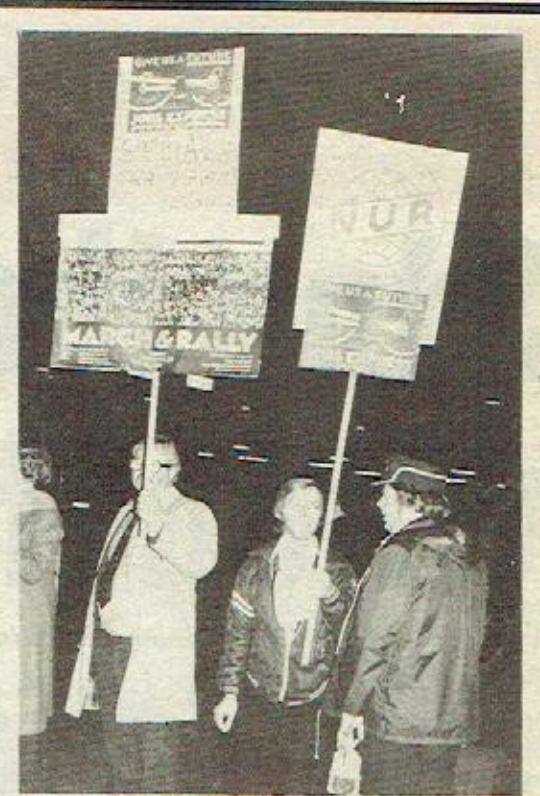
on the proposal and pleaded with conference to reject it so that the NEC could go away and think again. The resolution was defeated, gaining 41,964 votes for to 87,100 against.

Conference was split down the middle by the NEC's intransigent defence of their own bureaucratic scheme and their refusal to countenance any alternative. In the end, they called on the worst elitist prejudices of the delegates to defeat the proposal for

an industrial union and it must be said that they succeeded.

But there is a majority for change and the threat of modernisation and the Tories' attacks urgently press the need to turn that majority into action.

The POEU Broad Left is now planning to contact the broad lefts in both the CPSA P&T Group and UCW to look at ways to fight for real unity and for the fightback against the hiving-off proposals of the Tories' Telecom Act.



Railworkers at Paddington greet Jobs Express

Not the age of the train

By Hazel Macpherson

THE nationalised rail industry has always provided a cheap subsidised service for private industry. The hiving off of profitable sectors to private interest is therefore a logical next step.

British Transport Hotels, Sealink and freight services all are up for grabs. The 1981 Transport Act enables the British Rail Board to turn its subsidiaries into private companies and to sell shares in them subject to approval of the Ministry of Transport. It also allows the Ministry to instruct the BRB to transfer any assets to a named subsidiary and then sell it.

Finally it sets up a company called the 'Harbour Company' consisting of all harbour installations controlled by Sealink and BR Hovercraft. This is a definite statement of intent that Sealink and Hovercraft will be sold off and that plans to do this are already in an advanced stage.

The Tories have no interest in maintaining a public service, nor in protecting a source of revenue for the state. Long-term investment has been static for the last five years at £330m.

BR has a lower level of investment per train kilometre than in any country in Europe. 98 per cent of diesel and 60 per cent of electrics in BR's fleet of 10,000 are over 15 years old. Just to replace them means an increase in investment of 30 per cent in the next ten years. This is not happening.

The entire fleet of shunting locomotives was built between 1948-56, and nothing has been added since. Replacement programmes are constantly being postponed, and locos withdrawn for 'cannibalisation'.

In 1978-79 there were too few locos to cope with the programme numbers of trains resulting in widespread cancellations. The shortage of replacement rails means speed restrictions and 3,000 miles of track will have to be closed by 1990 for safety reasons unless there is a radical change of policy.

Only 16 locos were built in 1979, the year in which £10-15m of profitable freight traffic had to be turned away because of lack of rolling stock. In August 1980, BRB announced the closure of 54 freight yards by 1982.

The electrification programme has been slowed down, and passenger fares raised by 19 per cent since September 1980; 40 passenger lines are threatened with closure to save minute amounts, while investment in rolling stock and increased electrification, which would lead to a greater return on capital, remains at a standstill.

Both the Tories and the BRB have one aim in mind: the selling off of all the profit-making sections of the rail industry to their friends in private ownership, and the deliberate and cold-blooded running down of the 'service' that is left.

They will pursue this policy regardless of the effects it will have on railworkers' lives and indeed on the lives of the thousands of railway users. It is the destruction of a service in the name of profit.



Will communications unions unite in action against privatisation?

Socialist Challenge

Stop the witch-hunt

THE LAST words George Cunningham wrote as a Labour MP were:

'I want to pay tribute to Michael Foot, whose respect for the force of rational argument and whose toleration of dissent I have particular cause to appreciate, and whose deep personal commitment to true parliamentary democracy should be appreciated by us all.'

Having said this, Cunningham then left the Labour Party, and on Monday declared himself to be an 'independent Labour' MP.



George Cunningham

The departure of George Cunningham is instructive. It came a week after he had been re-elected as MP for South Islington; a couple of days after Neil Kinnock, one of

Foot's closest political allies, had said that Tariq Ali should be excluded from the Labour Party; and the day after Foot was reported to be backing a witch-hunt of left wingers in the party.

None of which persuaded Cunningham to stay in the Labour Party. The lesson of that is that no matter how many concessions are made to the Cunninghams of this world they will remain determined to wreck the Labour Party.

Even witch-hunts will not satisfy those who have turned their back on the labour movement. And that is one, very practical reason why witch-hunts should be opposed.

There is another practical reason. That was evident in the result of the Crosby by-election. The SDP victory made it abundantly obvious that the Labour Party should now direct its fire on the turncoats and careerists who make up the SDP.

Instead, the main discussion taking place in the leadership of the

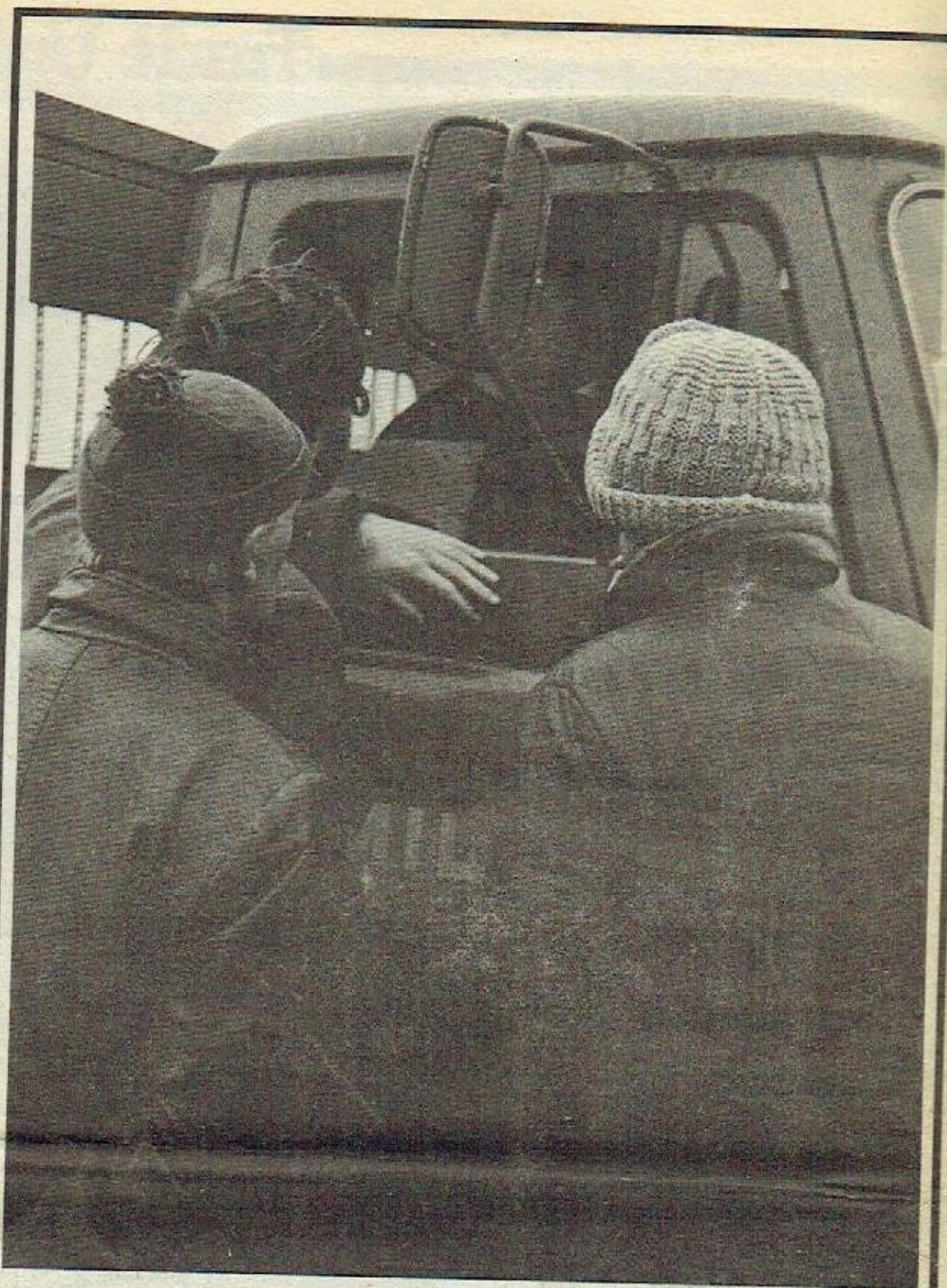
parliamentary party, in the media, and among some people on the national executive of the party, is how to witch-hunt the left.

But apart from these practical objections to witch-hunting there is a more fundamental and political reason to oppose such operations.

This concerns the right of all currents in the Labour Party to argue for and organise around their ideas. This democratic principle should apply alike to the right-wing Solidarity group, the left-wing Militant, the 'soft-left' Tribune, or those who supported the Benn campaign for deputy-leader.

If Michael Foot intends to attack this principle then it is not surprising that he is paid eloquent tributes from George Cunningham. But for those who prefer to stay in the Labour Party and fight for their ideas, then Foot's 'toleration of dissent' is becoming a sick joke. It is toleration of dissent from the right, but not from the left.

This is a recipe for disaster. For, if Foot is successful in his new role of witchfinder general then he will find himself leading an army which is so reduced in its ranks and so bitterly divided that the only future it would have would be the prospect of defeat.



Laurence Scott Save jobs, black Mining Supplies

By Tessa van Gelderen

LAURENCE SCOTT strikers have intensified the struggle over the last three weeks. They have picketed Mining Supplies, Laurence Scott's parent company in Doncaster, and have stepped up the campaign to get Mining Supplies blacked.

Some 36 pits and workshops in the Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire areas of the National Union of Mineworkers are refusing to handle Mining Supplies products. Such success flies in the face of the National Committee of the engineering union's refusal to renew official support and reinstate dispute benefit.

The strike committee's answer to that decision is to continue the picket at Doncaster and step up blacking. Laurence Scott boss himself has appealed to the miners that 5,000 jobs are in danger of being lost 'within days' if they black the company, such has been the impact of the blacking campaign so far.

Obviously the strikers are disappointed with the decision of the National Committee. They are particularly concerned because many members of that committee could soon find themselves in a Laurence Scott situation - fighting for their jobs.

It is the Laurence Scott workers who have been in the forefront of the fight for jobs for the last eight mon-

ths. They have had to contend with their boss, Arthur Snipe, the police and the AUEW leadership.

Last Monday's mass picket turned back lorries delivering vital supplies. Earlier, British Oxygen workers had scabbed on the strike by driving across the picket lines with essential gases. They had been persuaded to do so under threat of loss of contract on the part of Mining Supplies.

They and other workers have to be persuaded that the reverse is the case: the best way of keeping jobs is to support those in the front line of struggle.

As miners from nearby Rossington Colliery who joined the picket last Monday said to Socialist Challenge: 'We've come to picket because we're trade unionists. Your own conscience should tell you to come down. More pickets are needed. Yorkshire miners should be giving mass support.'

It will be the blacking of Mining Supplies that is the key to this dispute. Arthur Scargill, unfortunately, has had little to say on the matter until now. Yet, as the

Rossington miners pointed out 'there should have been a complete blacking by the NUM a month ago.'

At Scargill's last mass meeting in his presidential campaign in Sheffield last Saturday, Tony Benn called for the miners to give full backing to Laurence Scott and Staffa. Scargill seemed to be at a loss for words on the subject.

Laurence Scott may seem to be a small dispute but its outcome can have important consequences for all trade unionists. 'There is a great tradition in the NUM for supporting struggles like Hadfields in the steel strike and Grunwicks,' said one Rossington miner on the picket.

That tradition has to continue. The NUM and all trade unionists have to give full support to Laurence Scott. Black all Mining Supplies products! Come to the mass picket next Monday 7 December. Arthur Snipe is down on his knees. Let's finish him off once and for all.

Mass picket Monday 7 December, Mining Supplies, Carr Hill Industrial Estate, Doncaster. Off A630. Starts 6.30am. Donations and messages of support to Strike Headquarters, 20 Roundcroft, Romiley, Cheshire.

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