

Socialist Challenge

Buzzing Buzby

DID YOU KNOW your telephone bills are too high? Well, in case you didn't, the

Daily Mail has been kind enough to remind you.

'In the light of British Telecommunications' huge profits', it thundered last Thursday, the planned increases are 'unjustified', 'unreasonable', and even 'obscene'. The problem, it seems, is that Busby has a monopoly.

It's not just the Mail which is worrying about the high cost of obscene calls: the Confederation of British Industry is also up in arms about these monstrous monopoly profits.

This rapid conversion to socialist principles may cause a few problems: why, only a few months ago Lord Denning gave us all a lesson on the importance of profit when he caught the GLC red-handed in the foul crime of trying to avoid making a profit. Strange to say, the Mail didn't find the cost of a bus journey 'obscene'.

But after all, a late convert is still a convert. Can we suggest that the Mail and the CBI take up some other excessive monopoly earnings? What about these cases?

● The Associated Newspaper group, which prints the Mail and whose director, Patrick Sergeant, awarded himself a seventy-eight percent rise last year to become Britain's third highest paid boss with a salary of a quarter of a million per year.

● That shining example of free competition, British Oxygen Company, which sells 97 per cent of all industrial gases in the UK and whose director R V Giordano gets a cool half million a year. His mastery of the principles of free enterprise clearly make him the highest paid man in Britain.

● The 122 unelected men who run Britain's 20 major nationalised industries and hold absolute power over 1.7 million employees. Their salaries average a miserly £60,000.

Strange to say, however, our solution to the problem of these high and immoral earnings is slightly different from the Mail and CBI's. We propose to save Busby an immediate £300,000 by sacking the directors and placing the industry under the control of those who work in it.

British industry wants to sell Busby off to the likes of Mr R V Giordano. They can't be claiming this will reduce Busby's profits — or that nice Mr Denning might have something to say; and so we can only assume your phone bills will be as high as ever.

But then, isn't it worth that little extra to know you will be helping private enterprise put the economy back on its feet?

Start the fight-back with a ONE DAY GENERAL STRIKE



WHEN THE Trades Union Congress starts, the unemployed figures will have passed 3.2 million. The Tebbit Bill will be on the statute book. Cruise missiles will be arriving within a few months. The NHS dispute will still have to be won.

The lives of millions of people are affected. Jobs are disappearing like snow in a heat wave. The threat of a nuclear holocaust gets nearer each day. The right to strike is under the hammer of Tebbit. The underpaid, overworked, health workers have been given the thumbs down sign

by the government.

A fight back is not just a good idea, it is both possible and practical. Millions of people are against unemployment. The anti-nuclear movement reaches out to ever-growing sections of the population. The health dispute has the support of the overwhelming majority of health workers and the vast majority of other trade unionists.

Unemployment, the threat of war, and the defence of the NHS, are causes which have enormous support. They could if the TUC and the Labour Party takes them up,

lead to the defeat of the Tory government. A mass movement of demonstrations, rallies and strikes on these issues could turn the tide. This is the way to fight for the return of a Labour government and the way to defend the interests of working people.

Let the TUC start the fight back by calling out the entire trade union movement on 22 September. This would lead to a victory for the health workers and show to every worker that Thatcherism can be defeated.

22 SEPTEMBER

INSIDE

The case against privatisation

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A Shadow Conspiracy

Socialist Challenge can reveal that a secret group of people, with their own internal discipline, their own international links with shadowy, undemocratic organisations are organising to destroy the Labour Party.

Members of this secret organisation constantly attack the policy of the Labour Party, want to hold on to precious links with the IMF and the EEC and are accountable to no-one. This organisation — the 'shadow cabinet' — has a huge apparatus to defend its operations, which it is now using to drive socialists out of the Labour Party. Part of this apparatus the aptly initialed CAC, (Conference Arrangements Committee) has decided that amendments sponsored by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, aimed at delaying the implementation of any register and the recommendations of the NEC on Militant, must be ruled off conference agenda.

The National Executive Committee and CAC have determined on war in the Party for the next year at least. The NEC are convinced that the new Basnett/Jenkins alliance blocking with Weighall, Boyd and Chapple to isolate the left will get the register through.

On the other side of the equation the news is reasonably good. All pointers indicate that the Militant sponsored 'Labour Movement Conference' at Wembley on 11 September will be a serious show of strength. As indeed it must be. Militant are certainly in the van of the witch hunt. But there is an argument to be won there.

Another conference, called by the Hackney North Constituency on 30 October will help to win that argument. The witch hunt is an attack on the mass movement. It is directed against the policies and some of the best fighters for those policies, which have the potential to win Labour a victory in the next election.

If the leadership of the Labour Party applied those policies then they would be standing at the heart of the tremendous trade union solidarity being shown in the Healthworkers battle against the Tories, rather than preparing a bloodletting.

Militant are the starters, the main course is the Bennite left in the Party and the unions. Failure to understand this basic point can cut you off from your friends. When it is understood that the witch hunt is an attack on the mass movement — it follows that you have to harness the support of the mass movement to defeat it.

Which brings us back to the Hackney Conference. Called by an organisation of the Party itself, and on a basis which includes non-implementation of any discipline following on the register, the Hackney conference is an ideal opportunity to build an alliance which unites the fight against the witch hunt in the Party.

The first thing the Conference should do is bring together from every area represented, all those affiliated organisations, fighting for this policy. This applies most particularly in the unions. If the NEC moves to expel they must face the resistance of the whole of the local labour movement.

While the Labour Party remains controlled by the right-wing leaders operating in alliance with a few trade union barons, there will always be witch hunts. Because their power and authority in the Party was threatened this leadership will attempt to fight to the last drop of our blood more virulently than they ever fought the Tories. Put 11 September and 30 October in your diaries now!

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

If you would like to be put in touch with Socialist Challenge supporters in your area or would like more information fill in the form below

Name.....

Address.....

Age.....

Union/CLP (if any).....

Send to: Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Time to change course



PLO leave Beirut

The British labour movement has an official position on the struggle of the Palestinians.

The TUC supports UN resolution 242 which tries to recognise the right of all mid-east nationalities to peaceful statehood. It welcomed the Camp David Accords.

This position, adopted because of the pressure in part of imperialist interests and in part from the much abused moral and political capital of the Jewish people's suffering in Hitler's death camps, cannot in all conscience be held for one second longer.

Naturally the timidity of Congress House as exhibited in the health dispute allows little confidence that such a change will be made.

But that should not stop every class conscious militant from asking what should be the line of the official leadership of the British labour movement after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

In the first place it should be made crystal clear that Zionism and its military machine, headed by butcher Sharon, cannot and is not capable of 'peaceful co-existence' with the dispossessed Palestinian people.

It has put ten thousand Palestinian fighters in camps in the south of Lebanon.

It has maintained a barbarous bombardment

of Beirut for six weeks, holding back water, food and medical supplies to the shell shocked population.

It has opened the door to direct imperialist intervention in the region.

It has installed a right wing leader of the Christian Falange as Lebanon's President. Wahington has connived in every foot of the Israeli advance.

Washington's formula for Middle East peace is to crush the Palestinian resistance. The Zionist war machine is the instrument. That is why the US stepped up its military supplies to Israel for the months before the invasion.

The mightiest imperialist power in the world has made its choice.

Hatred

Meanwhile, carefully calculated numbers of Palestinians are being welcomed by the reactionary leaders of the Arab world.

Hussein and his cohorts harbour a bitter hatred of the PLO. Twelve years ago he ordered his army to destroy the Palestinian camps in Jordan. But concessions have to be made as the Palestinian fighters have immense popularity amongst the Arab masses.

Over the course of the bitter battle for Beirut the Arab leaders made their choice too. These leaders and the Zionist war machine, with imperialist connivance, have combined to deliver a bitter blow to the Palestinian cause.

Naturally the weakness of the political line of the PLO leadership has come

under the searchlight in the Lebanese war. After the 1967 war PLO leaders agreed a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of Arab countries. This reflected the political dependence of the PLO on the Syrians and the Saudi Arabians as guardians of the Palestinian cause.

There has always been a tension between the continuous armed and mass struggle waged by the Palestinian organisations both inside and outside the occupied territories and Israel itself, and dependence on the Arab leaderships.

Under some conditions the PLO's pact can create isolation from other sections of the Arab masses — those forces on whose mobilisation ultimate victory depends.

Nevertheless the struggle of the PLO in Beirut is an inspiration across the Middle East and the world. As Israel pursues its advance it will continue in Northern Lebanon as well as in Israel and the occupied territories.

Now is the time for the British labour movement to change course. A Middle East policy must start from the defence of the poor and oppressed across the region based on the recognition of the legitimacy of the Palestinian claims for their own country. This course cannot co-exist with the existence of the Zionist state and its imperialist alliances.

We can start the struggle for a leadership with such a policy through a campaign of aid to and solidarity with the PLO.

Factory closure threatened in Bristol

By Martin Ahmet Bristol West LPYS

MANAGEMENT'S CARS WERE blocked in, and their offices occupied, after the 380 work-force at Langston Machine Company, of Easton, Bristol, were told that the works were to close with the axing of 320 jobs. Their actions have been followed up by them downing tools. Langston, part of the Mullings Multinational, was known as Masson Scott Thrissell last year when 330 jobs were lost as part of their so-called rationalisation process. A few years ago the plant employed a work force of just over 1,200.

Pat Keane, works convenor, told Socialist Challenge: 'we've not agreed to the redundancies and we've formally registered our failure to agreement. Our first move has been to contact other works of the company. The plant at Peterborough will boycott any transfer of our work. We're arranging factory visits within the group at this stage.' The unions involved in the action are the AUEW, TASS, APEX and EEPTU. Management's offer of transferring 60 of the 380

workforce has also been rejected by the joint stewards committee.

Langston makes machines for producing various types of cardboard. Bristol has a tradition of being a centre for the paper industry going back into the last century. Within the past few years massive job losses and works closures have been the pattern in this industry as the world recession has bitten deeper. Last year over 900 jobs were permanently lost with the closure of St. Anne's Broadmills, one of the

largest local employers in the paper industry. If these job losses go through it will be one more step in the destruction of one of the largest combined sources of employment in the area.

Particularly hard hit will be the youth, as more and more job opportunities disappear, taking with them the traditional forms of apprenticeships and job training. If the 320 jobs are lost without a fight then this will swell the local jobless total of 46,416 — that includes over 4,600 youth alone. These figures represent the biggest rise of unemployment experienced by the South West. Redundancies mean long term job losses and youth opportunities, coupled with the break up of working class communities.

Some of the workforce were encouraged by the fight of the mainly women



Langston convenor Pat Keane

workforce at Famous Names during their several week strike that ended in success, here in Bristol. Socialist Challenge and Revolution supporters will

be preparing a solidarity campaign for the defence of jobs at Langston and elsewhere in Bristol/Avon. Letters and messages of support to: Pat Keane, Langston Machine Company, Stapleton Road, Easton, Bristol.

An obituary for Robbie Stoddart

Robbie took his own life on Monday 19 July. Robbie was a supporter of Socialist Challenge, a committed socialist who worked closely with all those who supported the causes he fervently believed in. The fight to defend the health service and the cause of Irish Liberation were particularly dear to him. He was a dedicated nurse and shop steward.

He was loved and respected equally by his workmates and the mentally handicapped people he cared for. We cannot believe that his death and the forthcoming closure of his workplace — Essex Hall Hospital — are unconnected. Robbie was a dear friend and comrade. He will be missed by us all. Danny Miles for Colchester SWP

International 'Debating Socialism'

Weekend October 23/24 Central London venue

- * Bea Campbell & Val Coultas debate 'Sweet Freedom'
- * Ken Livingstone, Frances Morrell & Alan Freeman debate 'The New Labour Left'
- * Mike Davis on 'Exterminism & the Cold War'
- * Ernest Mandel on 'Socialist Democracy'
- * John Harrison on 'Economic Crisis'
- * John Ross on 'Break-Up of British Politics'
- * Bernadette McAlisley & Perry Anderson also invited

Tickets: Just £4 for whole weekend, £2.50 per day. Creche provided.

Write to: International 'Debating Socialism', PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Mark the date in your diary now — 23/24 October!

TUC - what a record!

By Brian Grogan

THE LAST Trades Union Congress decided on a whole series of radical policies to deal with the threats facing the working class from this Tory government and the bosses. Virtually none of these policies was advanced during the year. This is little wonder. Because every time that workers mobilised to defend themselves the TUC or its leading lights stabbed them in the back. The record of the last twelve months proves once again the need for a new leadership of the TUC which is accountable to the rank and file.

Congress 1981 decided:

* On 'the mobilisation of the movement to oppose vigorously any further legislation placing restrictions on trade unions'

* To support free collective bargaining and oppose 'any pay restraint which would interfere with the rights of unions to determine their own policies and resolve their own negotiating procedures and settlements'

* To fight for increased public expenditure, a substantial increase in public ownership and a campaign to defend the welfare state and public services and a massive injection into public capital projects

* To mobilise against unemployment, fight for a 35 hour week. Youth unemployment was to be placed at the centre of the TUC's campaign for full employment

* To unanimously condemn the increase in women's unemployment to call for the promotion of positive action and for the wider recruitment of women into the unions

* To overwhelmingly support the call for unilateral nuclear disarmament

Mandate

These key policy decisions gave a mandate to the General Council to respond to the major attacks on the working class. A real fight for these policies at the appropriate time would have sent Thatcher into a spin. They would already have created the conditions for the election of a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

It is difficult to say on which issue the General Council's failure was greatest. But there is no doubt that its record on fighting Tebbit is a disgrace. Despite adopting additional powers when the full extent of Tebbit's attacks on union rights was revealed, the best that the General Council has been able to do is to organise a leafletting campaign!

No-one is asking the TUC leaders to mobilise action out of the blue. But when Sean Gerachty of the Fleet St. electricians was indicted by the courts under Priors 1980 legislation a tremendous opportunity was presented not only to strike a blow for the nurses but also to

smash the Act. Instead the TUC tops allowed the electricians branch to face the courts alone and remained silent despite a massive tide of rank and file sentiment in favour of a big battle. The issue was ducked.

If the Tories had not backed off, however, the record on other questions gives no confidence that they would not have actively sabotaged the fight for TUC policy by the ranks.

This was certainly the story on the pay front. The Tories have not implemented a formal incomes policy, but their stand on pay restraint is even tougher than previous governments. They made it clear that the limit was 4 per cent and that they expected employers to use the effects of unemployment to follow that line.

Rejected

British Leyland supremo Michael Edwards duly weighed in with 3.8 per cent on the basic pay. BL workers clearly rejected this in a ballot and went out on strike action. This would, without doubt, have consigned Thatcher's wage cutting plans to the scrap heap. But in stepped Terry Duffy and Alex Kitson to get the strike movement called off — 'for England' opined dunderhead Duffy.

But this had not cowed the Leyland workers. Within weeks, they were back on strike attempting to block one of the provisions of the deal removing their right to tea breaks. Once again the leading lights of the TUC stepped in to stab them in the back.

After this saga was repeated at Fords over Christmas, it is little wonder that the miners voted against strike action — given their 9 per cent offer and the scabbing intervention of Lord Gormless. It is now in the hands of the health workers to implement TUC policy opposing any 'wage restraint'. The fantastic solidarity with the health workers shows that all the old arguments about rank and file apathy are total poppycock. The spotlight once again therefore moves onto the TUC and what they will do to make sure of a massive one day strike on 22 September.

The proposal to mobilise against



Traindrivers stabbed in the back



Sean Gerachty, abandoned.



Laurence Scott's, stabbed in the back.



Attack on GLC's cheap fares

ignored unemployment and to fight for a 35 hour week has turned into a sick joke. Already at the time of the last TUC, the valiant



Youth's hopes left high and dry

sparked off a wave of occupations for jobs in the engineering industry. The TUC refused to move. Duffy and Boyd of the

engineering union calmly and coldly put in the boot! The fight for jobs is, of course, totally intertwined with the 'productivity' of-

fensive of the bosses. When traindrivers boldly stood up to the Rail Board, it took the Finance and General Purposes Committee to threaten them with expulsion before the drivers had to throw in the towel. This record is tantamount to making the TUC complicit in the Tory job destruction. Even their one initiative — the youth Jobs express — turned into a simple publicity stunt. Subsequently, the 1-in-5 youth on the dole have been left floundering.

Fares

The attack on Labour GLC's fares fair policy presented the TUC with a god sent opportunity to implement their policy 'to defend public services'. The blatantly anti-democratic intervention of the law Lords would also have been a useful foil to explain the reality of Thatcher 'democracy'. The GLC policy was clearly immensely popular. Yet the TUC stood aside and let Thatcher and her courts get away with the doubling of fares — contributing further to the Tories aim of destroying public services.

Malvinas

The TUC's reaction to the Malvinas war was another indictment. Thatcher's war against Argentina as part of her support for Reagan's intervention into Central America clearly posed the threat of a nuclear war — as a consequence of the widening of the conflict. TUC decisions against the bomb suffered a blow in the face of Thatcher victory. Moreover this has allowed Thatcher much more latitude to strengthen her alliance with Reagan.

Women

What of the unanimous decision to fight for positive action for women? One year on, women still only receive two thirds of men's wages and are being made redundant at thrice the rate. Make no mistake about it. These attacks on women contribute to a weakening of the strength of the class as a whole. This is not only because women have shown in a series of militant actions — from Lee Jeans through Kigass to the present health workers fight — that they are a determined and powerful ally. But also because such second class citizens are used by the bosses to drive down the living standards of us all.

The last year has clearly shown that there is no lack of willingness to fight.

Where the big obstacle has arisen is in the actions of the leadership. In the face of the scourge of unemployment, unity of the working class is vital. Virtually no group of workers alone can defeat the government. What the general staff of the trade union movement does is indispensable to the outcome of any sectoral battle. This lesson needs to be drawn by all militants. We can't 'go around' the General Council or ignore it. The battle has to be joined not only for militant policies but also to make it accountable.

Stop the missiles

LPYS backs Youth March

YOUTH MARCH

jobs not bombs

Manchester sept 23
> Blackpool sept 26.



Even if you can't make the march, join the lobby of the Labour Party Conference called by Labour CND



By Brian Heron
OFFICIAL support from the National Committee of the LPYS gave a tremendous boost to the North West youth march for 'Jobs not Bombs'. Ten LPYS branches have already backed the march, offering to sponsor marchers in many cases. But now the march organisers expect a flood of enquiries and offers of support from all over the country.

From the march organisers office (the office is moving in the next few days to Manchester University Students Union where free facilities have been offered), Jim Coutts of old Socialist Challenge, this is a political breakthrough. The response that Young CND has already got for the march has in my view guaranteed its success in any case. But it has been a battle to get real and practical commitment by the LPYS leadership to the LPYS policy of full support to the campaign of CND.

cies have sponsored and offered support. If the Trade unions reaction has been even more positive with the North West TUC, the Lancashire Association of Trades Councils, the Stockport, Bolton and Manchester North District Committees of the AUEW and more than a dozen trade union branches so far signed up. And of course CND support involves virtually every part of the campaign in the North West, and at every level.

Mass

The four day march is designed to link up with the lobby of Labour Party Conference called by Labour CND. On its route through the North West marchers have receptions for them planned at British Leyland and at British Rail works at Horwich. Trades Councils Labour Parties and CND's have rallied round in Bolton and Preston to provide the welcome that will be gratefully recieved at the end of each days march. But, looking at the length of parts of the route speakers will have to work hard to get a standing ovation!

The march organisers have confronted a fair share of problems most of which stem from the short time available to get every detail ironed out. 'The problem is not the amount of support' says Jim 'it is turning that support into a well organised march with the back-up and facilities that each marcher will require.' But the organisers are confident that they can manage.

The office is full of discussion and argument. What did they do about

this in the Peoples March? What should people wear? Let's get the mattresses that were used in the Gardiner's occupation. Somebody walks in and announces that the bands are more or less fixed up. Everybody cheers. (These include Beet root 'Quite well known and talented' was the common view.)

Workers

There's a gig every night for the marchers and the local youth. Food is being organised on the route by reception committees and CND branches. Accomodation is mostly courtesy of local trade unions. The route has been timed and measured. 'See you on the 23 September' said Jim.

Why I'll be marching

By Alex Warner

As an activist within my regional branch of the Thameside Socialist workers Party can I outline why I will be one of the many marchers on the youth march for 'Jobs not Bombs'.

Judging from the experiences of the Reagan Reception Committee - which helped coordinate the mass CND demonstration of last June - its clear that this youth march to Blackpool Labour Party conference has potential to ignite gut reaction against Cruise missiles which could be on our doorsteps in thirteen months time.

Not only that, this issue is *jobs not bombs*, at a crucial time when we have a staggering

3.3 million unemployed even on official figures - and I'm one of them. Frankly, its time to spell out: enough is enough!

Every socialist worth his or her salt must back this march regardless of whether they can participate in the marching.

We don't want words or token gestures, we want action ... and we want money and we want it now. We may never get another chance like this again. That's why I'm marching.

Get your trade union branch to sponsor the march and a marcher. Forms from march office c/o Manchester University Students Union, Oxford Rd. Manchester. Or 48 Swindon Close, Gorton, Manchester.

Ignore

Jim is right about the amount of support the march has brought together. In a few short weeks over twenty Labour MP's including Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner and a dozen or more Labour Party consti-

Dutch anti-nuke soldiers face jail

IN MID JUNE, four Dutch soldiers active in the soldiers union and the peace movement were arrested and charged with stealing military secrets. The so called secrets were already public knowledge. They dealt with the role assigned to the Cannerberg base in a war between NATO and the Soviet bloc.

This case is the first major attack on the new West European peace movement. It is logical that it comes in the Netherlands where the movement developed great strength early on.

Oskar van Rijswijk was arrested on 17 June and charged with being the ringleader in the theft of military secrets. He is on the leadership of the Dutch soldiers union VVDM responsible for ac-

a vow of secrecy. peace movement would almost certainly oppose this.

It is clear that these are trumped up charges. By picking on van Rijswijk they are trying to strike at the soldiers movement and particularly those involved in anti-nuclear activities. This is no small question for the Dutch authorities.

It is known that the Netherlands plays a role in NATO with respect to the Rapid Deployment Force. Last year, in Belgium, it came to light that there are laws making it possible to put the country under military rule in such an emergency. This would obviously arise if the US sent the 100,000 soldiers of the RDF to the Middle East because the Dutch



For a one day general strike



They want nothing less than the 12 percent

By Bob Pennington

The government and the media watched the ballot of the Royal College of Nursing, with more than passing interest. Surely they reasoned, a conservative outfit like the RCN won't like all this militancy and will see reason in the government's claim that 'there is no more money available to pay the health workers.'

Well they were right, the RCN is conservative, and it does not like militancy. But its members turned out to be different than their officials. They are angry and frustrated at being exploited by a government that puts money before life and health. So by a thumping 2 to 1 majority they slung Fowler's offer out.

It is now plain to everyone that all the workers in the NHS, from the nurses in the professional RCN, to the lowest paid cleaners in NUPE, want that full 12 per cent. That is a message that even the most fainthearted of the TUC Health Committee would have got when they met a few hours after the announcement of the ballot.

In a response to the vote the TUC have called for another healthworkers' day of action and a London demonstration on 22 September. They have also asked other unions to organise one-hour stoppages in solidarity on that day.

Well that is alright as far as it goes, but it should and could go further. Fowler is Mrs Thatcher's

boy and that means he has to dig his heels in. He policy is to whip the unions into line and that means no giving in to the health workers.

When a government adopts such a tough attitude, very tough measures are needed to make it change its mind. That is why the TUC should do nationally what the Scottish shop steward are proposing to do in Scotland — call a one-day general strike.

This would show the Tory cabinet that the labour movement mean business. And the TUC should tell the cabinet that the one-day strike on 2 September is only for starters and that unless the health workers get their claim in full they will call a series of one-day general strikes.

We have said this before, and we say it again. The health dispute can be won. The only people who can lose the dispute are the leaders of the TUC, the movement must make sure that they do not do that.

**For the full claim
All out on 22
September**

Photo: Nick Lockhart

Aberdeen workers vote for general strike

By Marie Louise Irvine

This rally pledges its continued support in defence of the NHS and its staff. It agrees to send a telegram to the Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Scotland and the secretaries of the TUC and STUC to inform them that Aberdeen is ready and prepared to play its part in a general strike to restore justice and humanity to Britain.

The above resolution was passed unanimously by hundreds of trade unionists at a rally in the Aberdeen Music Hall in support of the health workers, 28 August.

The rally followed the biggest demonstration Aberdeen has seen for 30 years. Over three thousand marched in support of the health workers. There were ship yard workers, dockers, seamen, fishworkers, waterworkers, firefighters,

traindrivers and local government workers who had all gone on strike to show their solidarity.

Rally

The rally was addressed by Mr Walter Watt, a plater in Hall Russel shipyard and a member of the boilermakers union. He said 'we shipyard workers don't want the NHS to die, we need the NHS. We are all going deaf and blind because of

our work. I've been a shipbuilder for 39 years and I've seen some horrible accidents. In the old days before the NHS, we had to put coppers in a box for a hardship fund for workers who had suffered accidents. We don't want to go back to that'.

Bob Middleton, leader of the Labour group in the Grampian regional council said: 'Many of us here today remember standing on the picket lines with ASLEF a few weeks ago. That defeat was an indictment of the trade union leadership. I've come to realise that any attack on any section of the workforce is an attack on the whole labour move-

ment. That is why I feel we have to intensify the present action amongst those unions outwith the health service and if necessary call for a general strike. ... Those union leaders that are not prepared to defend the living conditions of the workers they represent should go'.

Old

A woman speaker said: 'One of the most important aspects of this struggle is that it is mainly women workers that are involved. This is important because the Tories have launched a specific attack on women's rights. Women still only earn two thirds of men's

wages and are being made redundant at twice the rate. Cuts in the NHS mean that it is women who will be expected to look after the old the sick and the handicapped when there are no hospital places for them.

Weak

'The government saw health workers as a weak section of the labour force, because women workers are traditionally supposed to be submissive, well behaved and not interested in union. You've proved them wrong on all counts. You have asserted that women have the right to work and should be well

paid for the important work that they do. You've shown that when it comes defending living standards, women workers can lead the whole trade union movement. Your struggle is an excellent example of the kind of unity need to get rid of Tories.'

Afterwards, Mr Jim Kiddie chairperson of Grampian Association of health service unions and organiser of the march told me, 'This is the way to win. Solidarity action is what we need. We built this day of action by going direct to the workplaces and asking them to strike to support us. Today's march has exceeded our

wildest expectations. This response is a warning to Thatcher that if she doesn't recognise our claim, the whole country will rise against her.

Day

'The leadership of this struggle has come from the rank and file workers. What we need now is leadership from the TUC'

On September shop stewards from all over Scotland will meet to plan intensified solidarity actions for the health workers on the 22 September. We support the call for a general strike on that day.

Emergency Service Only

says Dominic Johnson

The anger and frustration of rank and file health workers erupted last Thursday outside the TUC. The health service union leaders were meeting to discuss the next stages of the pay campaign. Delegations from London, Oxford, Coventry, Yorkshire and elsewhere came to lobby the meeting demanding a clear call for an all-out indefinite strike with emergency cover only.

More and more health workers are fed up with nearly five months of partial action, with a handful of one-day national strikes thrown in almost as an afterthought. The 100-strong lobby reflected this mood.

Action

The major target of our wrath was COHSE's Albert Spanswick who chairs the TUC health services committee. This was the person who asked the Fleet Street chapels to call off their magnificent promises of solidarity action in mid-

August. When the electricians courageously defied him, and were taken to court by the press barons, Spanswick then offered to help foot the bill. And yet Spanswick refuses to pay his own members strike pay!

When we asked Spanswick about an indefinite strike, he merely said that this would be considered as one of many options. The lobbyists were obviously having none of this. Since NUPE conference voted for an indefinite all-out strike back in May, nothing has been done about it. The disgust felt for Spanswick was

such that the TUC called the police to escort him in. When we then tried to get into Congress House to address the health service committee, bouncers locked the doors. Those who had managed to get in, put up a makeshift placard: 'TUC calls police — not all-out strike'.

Success

Later in the day, we heard that the proposal was a one-day strike. To make this a success the TUC Congress next week should call an official one-day general strike on 22 Sept. If that happens, the TUC health services committee should re-convene and not only bring the NHS workers out on 22 Sept — but keep us out until we win by simply maintaining an emergency service.



Health workers lobby Albert Spanswick

Pay the Health Workers

Pay the Health workers badges available at 25p each

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Photo: MORNING STAR

How does it work?

THERE ARE basically four ways in which the state sector will be carved up and cut to ribbons:

1. Direct sale of public assets.

Here the profitable side of a nationalised industry is sold off. This was done to 51 per cent of the assets of the British National Oil Corporation, a fate now awaiting British Telecom. Other examples are British Petroleum (BP); National Enterprise Board holdings in ICL and Feranti; British Aerospace; Cable and Wireless; Amersham International; British Rail hotels and Hoverspeed. The same treatment is planned for British Docks Board; British Airways; British Steel; National Coal Board open cast mines; National Bus Company; British Leyland. The selling of gas show-rooms was only stopped by threatened strike action.

2. Licensing private competitors.

Here the monopoly status of the nationalised industry is ended and a private firm is given a license to compete for the same customers. Examples where the state monopoly has been relaxed are found in British Telecom (licenses given to Project Mercury); Post Office (licenses for express mail); Central Electricity Generating Board; National Bus Company and British Gas.

3. Contracting Out.

Here, jobs like cleaning, catering and transport of materials are given to outside contractors. This has happened in local authority services, too, with contracts given to private firms, cleaning and building firms.

4. Alternatives for those who can pay.

Here an alternative and improved service is provided by private firms for those who can afford it. The most obvious example is private medicine.

PRIVATISATION - WHAT

A MAJOR ISSUE at this years TUC Congress concerns the privatisation of nationalised industries, and rightly so. Thatcher's Government is leading the most devastating and wide-ranging assault on public sector industry and services since the Second World War. Here CELIA PUGH looks at what privatisation means.

Thatcher's Falklands adventure and her backing for United States aggression throughout the world, confirms Britains determination to expand and maintain financial and industrial interests abroad. But its efforts are continually undermined by British industry's own poor standing

in a cut-throat competitive world.

Thatcher has set the task of dusting down domestic industry to smarten it up. Under the slogan 'leaner but fitter', British industry is to be restructured and rationalised. Less workers are to produce more profits through productivity deals, new working practices, new technology and redundancies. Firms that cannot stay the course are left to go to the wall.

Part of this hard stand is a rejection of the post-war attempts by all other governments to maintain state intervention in industry along with full employment and

social services. Instead, under Thatcher, state owned industry will be thoroughly transformed, parcelled up and sold off to the highest bidder. In this scheme, mass unemployment is used to force the Labour movement to submit to the consequences of a 'leaner and fitter' industry.

These Government and management decisions are not only influenced by economic considerations. For Thatcher's plan to work, the British trade unions will have to be broken. This is how the bosses paper the Economist explained things at the end of July's ASLEF strike:

'Britain's unions are cowed, but

not broken...The manner of the train drivers defeat should also temper any crowing...The train drivers stayed pretty solid. It was left to the TUC inner cabinet to bring ASLEF to heel. But TUC internal politics are always precarious. The TUC is not a reliable ally in the struggle against its own union power...The union grip is strongest in the public sector monopolies. The most effective way to reduce public sector union power is to end this state monopoly or near monopoly in the service they provide'.

So, privatisation and denationalisation are part and parcel of Thatcher's political and economic scheme to strengthen Britain's economic base on the backs of a defeated and smashed trade union movement.

Who benefits and who loses?

We Lose..... Job Losses.

BLOOD-LETTING is an essential part of Thatcher's prescription for a 'leaner and fitter' industry. Thousands of jobs have already been massacred in the major industries and public services — steel, coal, telecommunications and post, rail, hospitals, social services. Public sector industries have been starved of the necessary investment to create new jobs. Government funds have been forthcoming, not for job creation but to knock the industry into an inviting state for private buyers. This involves forking out Government funds for asset stripping, redundancy payments and eradicating overlap in production with that of the future buyer. All this means job losses.

Deteriorating Working Conditions.

DUSTING down the nationalised industries for privatisation has involved a push for increased productivity and a challenge to the manning agreements and working practices fought for by trade unionists to protect their health, safety and working conditions. As we've seen already in rail,

these gains are being thrown out of the window, with disastrous consequences of longer hours, more accidents and more stress at work.

Worse Services.

IN MOST of the nationalised industries and services, profits from the lucrative sections go to cover the costs and losses of services which are socially necessary but don't pay their own way. So, in the tele-communications industry, non-profit making services to domestic users are subsidised by the profits from long distance and international business services.

Privatisation would cream off these profitable sections, leaving no resources for investment or subsidies for services for working people and those at home. Prices will rocket. Unprofitable but socially needed services like rural transport and domestic communication will deteriorate. Sections of heavy industry will be left to flounder, like heavy steelmaking, while the profitable sectors are hived off.

It will become impossible to rationally plan and invest for comprehensive services based on social need by pooling societies resources. Profit will rule the day.

Attacks On The Unions

SHOP FLOOR organisation and unity are disrupted by new working practices. When outside contractors are introduced, workforces are split up. This smashing of union strength is a conscious product of Tory plans to end public sector monopoly. When Southend Council replaced their refuse collectors with a private hire firm, they admitted: 'Another important influence on the members (Tory Councillors) was the refuse collection strike of 1979 when the Southend manual workers stayed out until the wage settlement was agreed, contrary to the general union approach'.

The Economist echoes the views of its ruling class subscribers when it pushes for cuts in coal subsidies and for nuclear and other energy alternatives, not for financial reasons but so that 'the coal miners could be made less menacing'. It reminds us that 'there are now only three months to reverse that trend (of subsidised coal) before King Arthur's armies gather at the Iron Lady's gates'.

They Benefit

WHO ARE they? They are the flock of vultures hovering over the nationalised industries.

● The stock market speculators

who gain from the sale of nationalised assets:

● The industrial investors who pick up the 'leaner and fitter' companies below their value and without spending a penny on redundancy payments and repayments. These are all taken care of at Government expense. They are also compensated for the liquidation of out-moded plants.

● The big banks who rake in billions of pounds in interest on loans to the ailing nationalised industries.

● The private consultants who live off the backs of the health service.

● The contractors whose employees work for pittance wages so that they can line their pockets.

Sordid examples are endless. We print just two.

Last year the Government sold 50 per cent of Cable and Wireless shares to the City speculators for 168 pence each. When these reached the stock exchange, they sold for 203 pence, a profit of 21 per cent.

The radio-active materials producer Amersham International was valued at £94 million but the Government received only £71 million from its sale. A Tory gift to the investors of £23 million.

Some examples

British Telecom.

AT THE end of July, the Tories announced that 51 per cent of British Telecom would be sold to private buyers by 1984. With £5 billion of assets this is the biggest share issue ever offered to the worlds markets and the biggest denationalisation in British history.

The telecommunications industry and the micro-chip revolution compares with the nineteenth century railway links in the industrial revolution. They will transform commercial, economic and social life. Ripe pickings exist then for the private speculators and investors hovering in anticipation of Thatcher's denationalisation.

This privatisation was first hinted at when the telecommunications section of the Post Office was separated from postal services, complete with a new coat of yellow paint.

Then in October 1981, the British Tele-communications Act went through Parliament. This ended British Telecom's monopoly and allowed a rival network to compete. Project Mercury owned by Barclays

Merchant Bank, Cable and Wireless and British Petroleum (and newly chaired by British Leyland axeman Sir Michael Edwardes) was given a 25 year license to operate a private telecommunications system from April 1982.

Project Mercury will lay optical fibre cable, more versatile and long lasting than the copper cable in the British Telecom network, and will offer to business subscribers an electronic data transmission service more geared to their needs and at reduced prices. It will be allowed to use existing British Rail ducts for its cables to link the major business centres.

60 per cent of British Telecom's present income comes from business subscribers. Creaming off will severely cut into the resources the nationalised industry has to improve its own technology and subsidise its non-profit making market. The result will be reduced services and rising prices for domestic users. We got a taste of this in 1981 when bills for residential users went up by 13.4 per cent, compared to 6.8 per cent for business users.

Jobs too are on the line. British

Telecom employs 250,000 people and the industries that supply its materials a further 100,000. These workers are now to be thrown into the jungle of cut-throat competitors, losing their job security on the way. The Post Office Engineering Union (POEU) won a job security clause with British Telecom which will certainly disappear under hive-off.

Rail

A WARNING of what railworkers have in store came from the Economist magazine at the end of July. It congratulated the British Rail Board for driving the productivity screws into the drivers and guards. But is also called for 'something far more radical'.

It argued that British Rail should be divided into four separate businesses — the London and South East network; provincial services; inter-city services and freight. Each business would then be given the privatisation treatment.

British Rail London services would be hived off to a separate company and licenses issued to com-

petitors. The uneconomic provincial lines would be closed completely and replaced with bus services. A separate inter-city company would be established and freight would be leased out. Track maintenance would be contracted out, as would the building and maintenance of rolling stock presently done in British Rail engineering workshops.

The Government has already indicated its intention to adopt this 'radical' approach. The 1981 Transport Act enables British Rail to turn its subsidiaries into private companies and sell shares in them. Hotels and Hoverspeed have already been sold off and the Victoria to Gatwick Airport service is on the market. Ferries, freight and workshops are being prepared for the same treatment.

British Rail is carrying through ruthless productivity, job and wage attacks on workers in these areas in order to prepare a 'lean and profitable' package to sell on the open market.

The National Union of Seamen has resisted this with the Sealink Ferry strike and a national strike was threatened when British Rail an-

nounced the axing of 6,000 jobs with the closure of engineering workshops. BR has retreated for the time being on the closure of Shildon and Horwich workshops, but 4,500 jobs will still be lost through a slim-down agreement.

This creaming-off of profitable sections of BR means that passenger transport suffers, fares rocket, rural services disappear and cancellations are frequent. Replacement programmes for locomotives are constantly postponed. In 1978, there were too few locomotives to cope with planned timetables, resulting in widespread cancellations. The shortage of replacement rails means speed restrictions and 3,000 miles of track will have to close by 1990 for safety reasons. Electrification programmes will be shelved through lack of subsidy.

Steel

The British Steel Corporation has shed 130,000 jobs in the last ten years through plant closures and slim-down of manning and production. Speculation abounds that the present 98,000 workforce will be savaged again before 1984 by between 17 and 50

IT IS AND HOW TO FIGHT IT



The alternative

People Before Profits.

AT THE heart of privatisation is the drive for profits. Most of the services of the nationalised industries are essential to a better life — like cheap coal for the elderly and to run an efficient and safe electricity network; like steel for more hospitals and houses; like cheap and efficient railways; like advanced telecommunications to enhance our lives. But if these socially necessary provisions don't make a profit, then, tough — they don't get the Tories blessing.

Instead of balancing society's resources to subsidise some areas with the wealth created in others, the nationalised industries are to be parcelled up and cast into a competitive market where overlap, duplication and anarchy prevail in the quest for profit. So,

decisions about what type of technology will invade our homes and the quality and type of transport or energy system we will have, are made with profit in mind, not what best suits us. Unprofitable, but socially needed services are left to deteriorate and crumble.

The next Labour Government should pledge itself to overturn all recent legislation which allows privatisation of the nationalised industries. Plans should be drawn up with the unions for a rational use of resources and the production of goods and services for social need. Subsidies should be made available where these are needed.

Such a national plan is impossible if private firms are able to cream off resources from the nationalised industries or if cut-throat private competitors are allowed to waste resources

through duplication and overlap. So full nationalisation is essential.

There should be no draining of resources, either, through compensation to previous private owners of nationalised companies or through interest payments to the big banks and financiers. Last year alone, the National Coal Board paid £340 million in interest.

Defend Jobs and Conditions

MAKING nationalised industries lean, profitable and inviting to private buyers means speed up, productivity schemes, longer hours and job loss. ASLEF drivers went on strike because they weren't prepared to accept managements rules in this profits game. Train drivers were prepared to veto the introduction of working conditions at their expense.

This approach could be extended so that workers begin to control what goes on in the workplace by imposing shorter hours, a 35 hour week, no overtime and a speed of production that suits them and not the bosses. Combined with national planning for social need and not profit, this would be a step towards industry controlled by those who work in it.

United Industrial Action Now.

Defend Unions

Privatisation is aimed at smashing the collective unity of the trade union movement. The gas workers used this unity to threaten strike action against show room sales. NUR members threatened industrial action against the Horwich and Shildon workshop closures. The miners used their industrial muscle to stop pit closures. In each case the Government was forced to retreat.

Sadly the union leaders have not organised this united industrial action. Their concern has been to convince the Tories with 'the power of argument'. They have accepted slimdown agreements in the false hope that this will prevent hive-off and shut-down. Just one year ago, Bill

Sirs of the steelworkers union announced in the union journal 'There is one point upon which we and our comrades in the Triple Alliance are agreed, the Government is listening to us. We have noticed a distinct change in attitude'. Who is he kidding? Hiding behind a promise to fight back if 'a major plant closes' and a false hope of Tory goodwill, Sirs has sat back and watched thousands of jobs disappear through slimdown agreements and small plant closures.

Despite the fight put up by the Horwich and Shildon workers, the NUR national officials have now agreed a slimdown deal with British Rail. This involves 4,500 job losses instead of the original 6,000 and the Horwich and Shildon works are saved from total closure. But as British Steel slimdown shows, slimmers disease and final death isn't far round the corner once you take that road.

The Tory privatisation plans are systematic and devastating in every public sector industry and service. A union by union, or local response is not enough.

The tie of redundancies, closures and de-nationalisations must be turned before it engulfs us. That means fighting every job loss and slimdown. It's no good waiting like Bill Sirs for 'the big closure'. Jobs and services are being whittled away all around us.

TUC leaders total capitulation to the Tory offensive has to end. Resistance must be organised now through industrial action coordinated and led at a national level. The Triple Alliance should be transformed from talks with the Tories, to a real fighting alliance to oppose redundancies, closures and de-nationalisations.

A good start has been made in British Telecom. The POEU has launched a 'Hands Off Telephones' campaign to oppose the privatisation. In a recent union circular, all members employed in British Telecom have been instructed to 'demonstrate their opposition in a positive way. This will initially take the form of a total one day stoppage of work by all POEU members in British Telecom towards the end of October'. This is an example to be followed by all unions in the nationalised industries.

Labour Party Must Act

The last Labour Government tried to draw up plans with leading industrial firms for job expansion. They did this through the National Enterprise Board. The problem with this approach to planning was its faith that the employers would consider plans which, while protecting workers interests would eat into their own profits. The sad fate of many NEB planning agreements attests to this. Chrysler was given £115 million in exchange for an agreement which was supposed to give the Labour Government a say in jobs and investment. Chrysler took the money, ignored the agreement and shut the Linwood plant in Scotland. There are many more examples of the NEB's failures.

The Labour Party leadership has drawn few lessons from this, but presents the same weary policies with different labels. In July the TUC Labour Party Liaison Committee unveiled their plans for the next Labour government. This included a new Department of Industrial and Economic Planning. This will try again where the NEB failed last time. Indeed, with these plans, Len Murray hopes 'the unions would behave responsibly and avoid a repetition of the 1978-79 winter of discontent'.

This turns reality upside down. A Labour government can only put muscle behind its plans for industry by promoting and supporting industrial action like that in the winter of discontent. Nothing else will 'convince the employers' and force them to carry out plans for social need and job expansion.

If Labour includes planning and re-nationalisation in its manifesto, as it should, this has to be backed up with a commitment to support the extra-parliamentary actions of trade unionists against job loss, privatisation and productivity strings.

Useful reading:
Labour Research Department pamphlet *Public or Private: the Case against Privatisation*, 78 Blackfriars Road, London SE1

thousand. The slim-down activities have radically altered working practices in all the plants, with a deterioration of working conditions and safety.

Many areas of work traditionally under BSC contract have been, or are about to be given to private contractors — mobile plant handling, scrap handling, re-lining, catering, security. Craft jobs like electrical maintenance could go this way too. Unity inside the plants is affected as a result of this fragmentation and the wages and conditions of all these workers are no longer protected by BSC based unions.

This is all part of the BSC plan to make the steel corporation 'lean and fit' in preparation for selling off the most profitable sections. Through what they call 'Phoenix projects' the BSC and private companies merge their activities into new joint companies. The aim is to get rid of overlap in production of more specialised and profitable steel like engineering steel, wire, rods and tubes.

In this rationalisation exercise the Government foots the bill for scrapping old and excess plant, redundancy

handouts, repayment of debts and interest charges. Once this is done, at taxpayers expense, the private company walks off with the newly rationalised and profitable concern at below its value.

Private firms like GKN (which paid £15,000 to Tory funds last year) and Duport took fat cheques for the shares bought by BSC in these joint ventures — £40 million for GKN and £25 million for Duports. The BSC subsidiary Redpath Dorman Long, which produces structural steel, has assets estimated at £22 million. It is being sold to a private subsidiary of Trafalgar House for a mere £10 million. The workers in Redpath Dorman Long have already lost 65 per cent of their 9,000 workforce and more redundancies are feared. The Government is sinking £50 million into a merger between BSC River Don and Firth Brown in Sheffield, which will result in a loss of at least 1,100 jobs.

This is just the tip of an iceberg. In February 1981, the Tories printed a new Iron and Steel Bill. The Government is no longer obliged by statute to keep a nationalised steel industry.

The then industry minister Keith Joseph said this bill would 'ease the transfer of business to the private sector and permit an extensive rundown of the Corporation if that proves necessary'.

Coal

The Tories intend to try to smash the miners union through major pit closures. Whether the hit list of pit closures is 30 or 50 strong is still to be revealed. Between 1947 and 1980, the number of pits shrank from 958 to 219, with a decline in the workforce from 703,900 to 232,000.

The 1981 miners strike halted the Tories hit list, but 11,000 jobs have still been lost in the last year through the backdoor of closing allegedly unsafe pits and through early retirement, without a recruitment drive or investment in new pits. The conditions of miners are to be further attacked with Government privatisation plans.

Privately licensed pits will be allowed to operate with up to 100

workers, instead of the 37 under the 1947 Act. The National Coal Board already plans to hive-off its huge stocks of 24 million tonnes to private investors and there is speculation that it will sell off the open cast mines. The NUM conference in July heard that the Monopolies Commission Report this year will announce plans to hive-off valuable NCB assets.

Private contractors and investors already leach off the nationalised mining industry. The Laurence Scott Electromotors workers drew attention to the dispicable Mr Snipe. There are many more like him who supply equipment and materials for the mining industry and reap fat profits from it. They include private contractors and private coal merchants who hover around the pit heads to make juicy pickings off the backs of the miners.

Health

Public sector services too are hit by Thatcher's scheme to aid the speculators, investors and financiers at our expense. Private medicine has

leached off the National Health Service for years, adding problems to an already deteriorating service. July 14th this year saw a new twist. Geoffrey Finsburg, the Junior Health Minister, announced selective privatisation of ancillary workers jobs. Although total contracting out of cleaning, laundry and catering jobs is not yet planned, the door is now ajar.

Within a week of this announcement, another came from the Social Services Department. Health Minister, Geoffrey Fowler said that he was pleased to announce Government rejection of a proposal that we should pay compulsory private health insurance for our hospital treatment. Instead, he explained that a special working party on the financing of the health service proposed to 'cement private provision into the system in such an irreversible way that a future Labour Government would not be able to dismantle it'. Big deal! A health service geared to the rich and the consultants and not the poor, the nurses and the ancillary workers.

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KILBURN: SC sales every Sat, 10am in Kilburn Square, and Thursday 8.30am at Queens Park tube.
LAMBETH: SC sold Thur and Fri evenings and Thur mornings outside Brixton tube.
NEWHAM: SC sold Sat 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Mkt, Upton Park.
PADDINGTON: SC sold at Portobello Rd market Sat at noon.
WEMBLEY: SC sales Fri 6.45am at North Wembley BR Station.

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EAST LONDON Socialist Challenge October banquet. Saturday 2 October. Bring friends and sympathisers to the celebration of the year! All our friends from the black, women's, youth and trade union movements will be there. Enjoy splendid food, guest speakers, auction, disco and bar. Tickets from M Martin, PO Box 36, 136 Kingsland High Street, London E8 or ring 986 6439. Cheques payable to Hackney Book Group.
CHILE: nine years after the coup. Public meeting against Intervention in Central America organised by Central Islington Labour Party at Central Library, 2 Fieldway Crescent, Holloway Road on Friday 10 September 1982. Sponsored by Chile Solidarity Campaign, FDR/FMLN.
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What is Trotskyism?

Permanent revolution

In this instalment John Ross explains how the mid-eighteenth century revolutions showed that the revolutionary role of the bourgeoisie had reached its end. The era of proletarian — permanent revolution — had begun to open up.

by John Ross

NO POLITICAL POSITION is more associated with the name of Trotsky than that of permanent revolution. But while Trotsky developed the theory of permanent revolution in the light of the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917 it is important to understand that he did not originate or invent it. The theory of permanent revolution was first formulated by Marx and Engels out of the experience of the German revolutions of 1848.

These class struggles, as I have shown in previous articles, had made clear that the capitalist class was no longer a revolutionary force. On the most decisive questions it would no longer mobilise the great mass of the working class and peasantry. On the contrary it tried to control and repress the working class movement. Without such mobilisations however the counter-revolutionary forces could not be destroyed.

From this political situation flowed the tasks of the working class. The counter-revolutionary nature of the bourgeoisie made it even more urgent that the working class must organise itself as an independent political party. Any subordination to bourgeois forces must be totally rejected. The working class nationally had to integrate its struggle with that of the international working class.

Power

Marx and Engels explained this as follows for Germany, 'Although the German workers cannot come to power and achieve the realisation of their class interests without passing through a protracted revolutionary development... they themselves must contribute to their final victory, by informing themselves of their own class interests, by taking up their independent political position as soon as possible, by not allowing themselves to be misled by the hypocritical phrases of the democratic petty-bourgeoisie into doubting for one minute the necessity of an independently organised party of the proletariat. Their battle cry must be: the Permanent Revolution.'

But what did this last phrase 'the Permanent Revolution' mean? It summed the entire perspective of the working class in a situation where on the decisive issues the bourgeoisie would support the counter-revolution.

The working class must lead the struggle for the demands of the bourgeois democratic revolution even against the bourgeoisie. The working class must not accept capitalist limits to the revolution. Because the

proletarians has progressed sufficiently far — not only in one country but in all the leading countries of the world — that competition between the proletarians of these countries ceases and at least the decisive forces of production are concentrated in the hands of the workers.'

Theory

This process of 'making the revolution permanent' of course did not mean that all the tasks of the socialist revolution could be accomplished at once. In a country such as Germany of that time, in which capitalism was still weakly developed and massive feudal forces existed, the revolutionary process would develop initially around capitalist democratic demands. But the revolution would either develop in a 'permanent' way into a socialist one or it would be defeated. The capitalist class itself could no longer lead a revolution.

As Engels wrote 'Ever since the defeat of June 1848 the question for the civilised part of the European continent has stood

thus; either the rule of the revolutionary proletariat or the rule of the classes who rule before February (i.e. the feudal forces). A middle road is no longer possible.'

The only possible revolution even in feudal Germany was rule by the working class and socialist revolution. There was no 'middle way' of a revolution limiting itself in a capitalist framework. This was the fundamental basis of the theory of permanent revolution.

In one crucial respect of course Marx and Engels were shown to be wrong in their hopes for the 1848 revolutions. They had aimed for a victory. They pushed forward the perspective that the working class would be able to lead a 'permanent revolution' to overthrow not only feudalism but also capitalism in Germany. Instead the working class was crushed and the revolutions were defeated by the role of the capitalist class.

Defeat

The defeat of the revolutions of 1848 were a tremendous setback for the class struggle but they

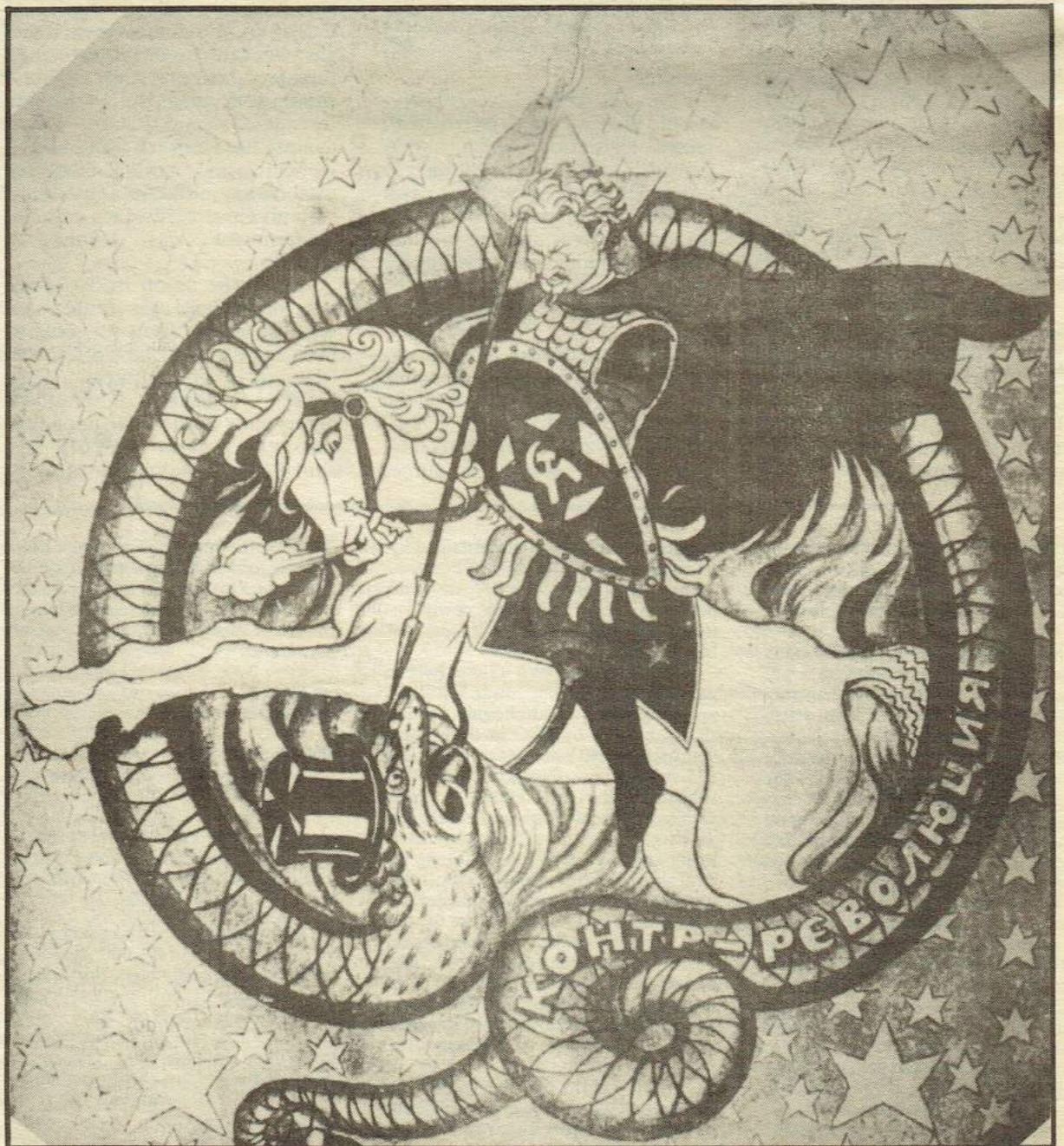
did not at all refute Marx and Engels ideas. Defeats still happen even when people have the correct political positions. In 1848 the working class was too weak to overthrow capitalism. But the events confirmed totally the theory of permanent revolution — unfortunately however from the experience of a defeat.

Basis

Trotsky put it clearly later in explaining and developing the theory of permanent revolution, 'Marx regarded the bourgeois revolution of 1848 as the direct prelude to the proletarian revolution. Marx "erred". Yet his error has a factual and not a methodological character. The revolution of 1848 did not turn into a socialist revolution. But that is just why it also did not achieve democracy.'

If 1848 confirmed the analysis of permanent revolution in a negative way the revolution of 1917 in Russia was to confirm it positively. The theory of permanent revolution put forward by Marx in analysing the revolutions of 1848 was to become the basis of Trotsky's own perspectives for Russia.

- (1) Marx and Engels: Address of the Central Committee of the Communist League, March 1850.
- (2) Marx and Engels: Address of the Central Committee of the Communist League, March 1850.
- (3) Engels: The Campaign for the German Imperial Constitution.
- (4) Trotsky: Permanent Revolution



Trotsky applied the theory of Permanent Revolution in Russia. A revolutionary poster depicts him defeating 'counterrevolutions'.

Women and the TUC

ONE THING will be a certainty at this year's TUC: there won't be many women delegates. Nor will the concerns of women trade unionists be to forefront of Congress.

But the TUC will be debating some key issues. Positive action for women both in the workplace and in the unions themselves are on the agenda with the engineering union opposing. The Banking Insurance and Finance Union have tabled a motion expressing alarm at the proposals made in the *Rayner Report* which discriminates against women and will further mask 'the true level of women's unemployment'.

When women are losing jobs at three times the rate of men these issues are vital ones to

put before the whole labour movement. So too is the way society portrays women as, in the National Union of Journalists motion 'sex objects or the victims of gratuitous violence'.

Women bear the brunt of Tory attacks, in the workplace and in the home. Lack of nurseries, poor housing and health facilities and so on all affect women more than men. Even when women surmount all the obstacles and do find a job it is usually low paid. And if that wasn't enough women have to contend with sexual harassment at work and male workers don't think they have the right to work.

On this page we look at two aspects of the problems women face: the implications of the *Rayner Report* and sexual harassment. Whatever the outcome of the TUC this year the issues women face will not go away. The TUC and the trade unions have to begin to take up these questions.

Sexual harassment a trade union issue

MORE than one in ten working women have suffered unwanted sexual advances from men they work with. This was the startling result of a survey conducted by Marplan in June this year. Other surveys conducted by NALGO and the Manchester Institute of Science and Technology have found this among 25 and even 52 percent of those in the survey.

What has for so long been a hidden issue is now being discussed openly in the labour movement. A recent pamphlet by the National Council for Civil Liberties on the subject and a conference held in June have helped this process. Judith Arkwright spoke to MELISSA BENN and ANN SEDLEY the authors of the pamphlet.

How common is sexual harassment as a form of discrimination against women?

AS: Well, the surveys speak for themselves and there will be others. A lot of women don't actually recognise what's happening — in fact we were surprised that with consciousness of the issue so low, so many women actually did identify it as a common problem. The more its talked about the more the figures will go up as the issue comes out into the open.

MB: It is difficult to define and its effects are difficult to measure. For instance in one survey 95 percent of women said they found dirty jokes offensive — but this wasn't seen as sexual harassment — but many dirty jokes are directed against women.

AS: Sexual blackmail is what some newspapers called it. That is obviously serious — if a boss uses his position to make sexual advances and then threatens to sack you if you refuse etc. But things like pinching your bottom is harassment. There have also been cases of rape. Basically it depends on how the woman feels about it, how serious it is.

MB: Sexism obviously exists in all aspects of our lives but sexual harassment is something different — its more than just discrimination — its when a man does something which positively degrades or puts down a woman rather than just negatively discriminates.

AS: People will say we're against fun, or against

harmless flirtation — that's not what its about. Sexual harassment has very little to do with fancying someone. There was a case on TV *Eye* documentary where a man was found guilty of unfair dismissal of a woman who had complained about his sexual advances — he tried to justify himself by saying he didn't 'fancy' her.

Its to do with men feeling they have the automatic right to make comments about women's clothes or bodies. The way we define it in the pamphlet is any leering, touching, looks or actions which create a bad working environment.

Why do you argue that it should be a trade union issue?

MB: Well, because it is a work issue. As more and more women are becoming active in the trade unions it is becoming a massive issue. NALGO, ACTTS, NUJ are now taking it up. The TUC women's advisory committee is writing guidelines which are going out for discussion in the unions.

AS: If the boss is harassing you then he can force you out of employment. Often a woman will get moved to another job rather than the man because he is too important to be moved. There is an example in the pamphlet of a woman who had a nervous breakdown because she couldn't stand the strain — its very much an issue of working conditions, equal opportunities and so on.

What about the recent case of the man who was awarded compensation for sexual harassment?



From the new pamphlet on Sexual Harassment

MB: That's a complete red herring. It's typical of the press to make an issue of it. They didn't report all the awards which have been made in the States. The media coverage of our book has been incredible — they asked us what make up we wore. There were headlines about how we were advising 'girls to grab back'. They wanted to trivialise the issue.

What do you think the remedies are?

AS: The main thing is that women should talk to each other about it. Sometimes this will be enough — as a lot of men simply don't realise they're being offensive — if you talk to other women and then go and tell the man concerned that can work. If not you should go to the shop steward or the manager.

MB: There is also the law — its not a solution on its own but it can help. We don't know how effective the law in this country is because its never actually been tested — its not clear whether sexual harassment is sex discrimination or not. Some cases have successfully gone to the tribunal for unfair dismissal but that is all.

AS: There should be established procedures through the unions and a grievance procedure with management. That makes it easier for the woman. We cite a case where a trade union official did actually agree to the sacking of another trade union

member because the harassment was so bad. What about expulsion from the union — which is proposed by NALGO?

AS: No, I don't think so. The point we're arguing is that it can be dealt with before it gets to that kind of stage. That is the point having procedures — obviously the trade union should decide what to do and what to recommend.

We hope that the issue will get talked about — so as to create an atmosphere against this kind of behaviour. We want unions to take bulk orders of the pamphlet and get the issues discussed and we're going to be organising seminars for trade unionists.

MB: Sexual harassment has been an invisible issue. Obviously there are other forms of harassment at work — racial or harassment for politics but sexual harassment is perhaps more difficult to fight. Sometimes its difficult to explain. Maybe you don't want to be rude to someone who thinks they're paying you a complement; its difficult to explain why it offends.

But it does affect your work — women have been going off sick or leaving their jobs when it gets really bad. We feel that if women can get together and recognise it as a common problem not an individual thing then that's the beginning.



Woman docker in Sweden

New attacks on a woman's right to work

By Judith Arkwright

THE RIGHT of women to a job is by no means a universal demand in the labour movement. Some male trade unionists still believe, especially in times of unemployment that a woman's place is in the home. Yet never has it been more urgent to defend the right of women to work as the Tories step up their attacks.

In October the little known proposals of the *Rayner Report* will be implemented. Under these proposals unemployed people will be compelled to answer questions on their availability for work when signing on. Pilot schemes have already been in operation in different areas of the country and there is evidence that claimants have been threatened with loss of benefit.

The questions on the form, UB 671, openly discriminate against women. The first question asks if the claimant is 'able and willing to take a full-time job'. Many women are in a position where they can only work part time. The next question asks if a job can be started immediately. Yet many women with children will not be able to make adequate child care arrangements until they know they have a job, and that takes time.

Question 14 on the form is quite blatant:

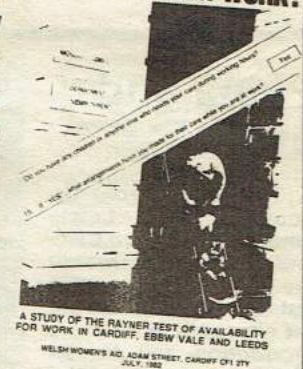
'Do you have any children or anyone else who needs your care during working hours?' followed by asking what arrangements have been made for their care during working hours.

At a time when the Tories have slashed state childcare in half it is unlikely that the 'arrangements' women will be able to make will be deemed acceptable.

Other questions which will directly affect women ask for a willingness to do shift and night work, travel distances to a job and even to move to another area. All these proposals is a flagrant attempt to discourage women, particularly those with dependants, from claiming benefit and to deny women the right to work.

All trade unionists, led by the TUC, have to organise now to oppose these new attacks on the unemployed and to fight for the right of all women to a job. Those unions which

AVAILABLE FOR WORK?



The Rayner report

organise members in unemployment benefit offices have a particular role to play. They should refuse to implement the use of these forms and the labour movement as a whole has to organise a boycott campaign.

The Hove district, one of the pilot schemes, did this and the scheme became unworkable when 41 percent of the unemployed refused to fill in the forms. The TUC is very good at passing resolutions. Now it has to take to action.

As one woman who was subjected to this process said, 'working is my decision and I don't want someone else saying we don't feel you can work'.

Lebanon debate

Letters letters LETTERS

MAJOR ARTICLES by Roz Kaplan and Phil Hearse on the current situation in Lebanon, in issue 257, took up the tactical debate within the Palestinian and Left resistance on the evacuation from Beirut

Accompanying material highlighted the position taken on these disputes by comrades of the Revolutionary Communist League (the Lebanese section of the Fourth International) who took part in the armed defence of West Beirut.

The LCR issued a statement calling for the unity of the Lebanese national liberation movement and the Palestinian resistance around a three point programme which included 'the rejection of all capitulationist solutions, especially the withdrawal of the Palestinian resistance from Beirut.' The articles by Phil Hearse and Roz Kaplan supported this position.

Socialist Challenge editorial board's position is not that expressed in the two signed articles and we refer readers to our editorial statement on page 2.

Below we publish the views of our readers and in subsequent weeks the authors of the original articles will have the right of reply.

'Romantic'

'Socialist Challenge' is grossly irresponsible in producing Ros Kaplan's and Phil Hearse's articles on Beirut.

By arguing that the PLO would be 'better to go down with a fight' Hearse expresses a poisonous, a-political and totally romanticised view of the class struggle. Are we involved in revolution to become heroes or to change the world? As martyred heroes, can members of the PLO fight Zionism and imperialism? And why the desire to announce the 'defeat' of the PLO and the Palestinian liberation movement? Didn't the Vietnamese incur several tactical retreats before finally defeating the US government and

driving out US troops? Can't Hearse tell the difference between a set back and a defeat?

Kaplan urges that 'The PLO fighters should not abandon Beirut'. Not bad advice from someone who isn't there. Her notion of solidarity with the Palestinian and Lebanese people is to criticise the PLO for not allowing itself to be wiped out. Hearse and Kaplan are doing imperialism's work by wanting a cornered PLO to face a total and final Israeli onslaught.

With 'Socialist Challenge' as a friend, who needs enemies?

D KELLY
J O'BRIEN
East London



Should PLO have stayed in Beirut? 'Nonsense'

I COULD hardly believe my eyes when reading your coverage of the war in Lebanon (Socialist Challenge, 19 August).

It is leftist nonsense to suggest that it is wrong, unprincipled, and a shameful capitulation for the PLO to withdraw from Beirut in the face of overwhelming odds.

The last few weeks have shown beyond doubt that Israel is prepared to make an all-out bloody assault on West Beirut if necessary (as writer Ros Kaplan admits). The Arab states and the Soviet bureaucrats, for all their rhetoric, have demonstrated that they are not prepared to give any real help to the Palestinian fighters which could stop this happening. The peace movement in Israel is

still a small if vocal minority.

Of course the PLO leadership shares responsibility for this situation, having tended to preach reliance on the leadership of the Arab states rather than pursuing a strategy of linking up with and encouraging the mobilisations of the oppressed masses within them.

But to insist that the Palestinian fighters pay with their lives and remaining strength is a criminal response to this situation.

Orderly retreats are sometimes necessary when the odds are stacked against you. Take the example of the recent ASLEF strike. Was it necessarily wrong to call off the action when the alternative was the likely destruction of the union by a British Rail-Tory-

TUC alliance?

That doesn't mean that you remain silent about the leadership failings which contributed to such a situation (e.g. ASLEF's previous instruction to their members to cross NUR picket lines). On the contrary, it is essential to draw out the full lessons for future political strategy and leadership. A retreat is only justified as a means of preparing a new offensive.

Today that is what is posed in the Middle East. The choice of whether or not to withdraw from West Beirut is essentially a tactical one. Those who imply otherwise do no service to the future of the revolution.

MARTIN METEYARD
Glasgow

Outrageous statement

The emphasis of both Ros Kaplan and Phil Hearse's articles on the Lebanon are wrong.

Phil Hearse re-iterates at length that the Palestinians have carried out a heroic resistance against the invasion, but then makes the outrageous statement that the PLO should have continued the struggle by staying in Beirut to the bitter end. This, we are told, would be their 'real victory', as against what Ros Kaplan describes as the PLO's 'capitulation to Israel and imperialism' in agreeing to withdraw.

First, does Socialist Challenge really believe that military victory of the Palestinians was possible? We are told that the guerrillas will give a good account of themselves in hand-to-hand fighting but they have given a good account of themselves for 11 weeks and this was not sufficient to make victory possible. For the past 11 weeks the PLO followed Ros Kaplan's belated advice and tried to bog the Israeli's down in 'endless indiscriminate and brutal attacks' to expose it before the world, but despite this and the growing anti-war sentiment in Israel, the imperialist alliances backing Israel (including the stony silence of the Arab regimes) have not cracked to the point of making a better deal possible. Do we really think that Israel would have baulked at further massive slaughter in Beirut, or that the USA would have withdrawn support because of it? The Palestinians, the people of the Middle East and of Africa know better, having seen the Israelis actively support and arm the most reactionary regimes.

Did Socialist Challenge think that the martyrdom

of the PLO and the people of West Beirut was needed? Phil Hearse argued that the lesson of all defeats is that 'it is better to go down with a fight' than capitulate without a fight. Yet the PLO did 'heroically' fight for 11 weeks. Unless military victory was possible for the PLO, what further advantage could have been gained by fighting to the bitter end that has not already been squeezed out of this bloody defeat?

The statement of the RCG of the Lebanon is very brave, although if it means that they will now attempt to fight, then there will soon be no Lebanese section of the Fourth International. Phil Hearse's pontifications from behind a desk in London have nothing to do with bravery, and his time would be better spent attacking the counter-revolution of Israel and the USA than attacking the PLO for 'capitulation'.

Bisi Williams and Rich Palsler

Plans and arms

The letters from GL Youldon and Lewis Emery, (SC 253) on CND and the Labour movement, correctly point out that plans drawn up for alternatives to arms production can be an important aspect of the overall anti-missiles campaign. Socialist Challenge in the past has been an ardent advocate of such alternative plans, as being concrete examples of workers control in a socialist economy.

The arguments they both put forward for supporting such projects, however, completely miss the point of what the Challenge is arguing for within CND.

The leadership of CND is currently at an impasse. Their multi-class, rationalist approach to the campaign, counterposing a morality of opposition of nuclear weapons to the actual political needs of the ruling class of this country, is getting them nowhere.

The only guarantee of victory for CND is to organise a political opposi-

tion to the government, which means mobilising the whole of the British labour movement from the trade unions through to the Labour Party. The failure to make such an approach central to their campaigning strategy — fighting Foot through support for Benn, calling upon the TUC to put their unilateralist positions from congress into deeds on the streets — opens the door to those pushing to take the campaign down the dead end of direct action/civil disobedience confrontations.

The Communist Party emphasis on alternatives to arms production as a line for the labour movement can only mobilise a section of the working class: those actually involved in such production. It is not a line for the movement as a whole, and is no alternative to the advocates of non-violent direct action which are the politics of despair.

The fight against the missiles and for unilateral nuclear disarmament will be won by the working class of Manchester, Birmingham, Tyneside and other urban centres, not just by the armament workers of West London — which is what the CP effectively is saying.

P Waterhouse

New book on Benn launched

AN EVENT unique for the Labour Party and this newspaper took place on Thursday 26 August when 150 journalists crammed into a County Hall, London committee room for a press conference given by Tony Benn and Socialist Challenge journalist Alan Freeman.

The conference, which launched Alan Freeman's new book *The Benn Heresy* and the paperback edition of Tony Benn's *Arguments for Democracy*, showed wide interest in these two books. All the daily papers reported the publication of Freeman's book prominently — the Daily Mail on its front page and most others as a second page lead — and speakers faced an array of questions on topics from the health strike to the role of the monarchy.

Start

Tony Benn explained that Freeman's book could start a much needed discussion between the advocates of reform and of revolutionary socialism, which he called an 'honourable tradition', but one he profoundly disagreed with.

Freeman agreed that this discussion should open: the

common ground, he said, was agreement on the importance of democracy and the need to confront unaccountable power such as Whitehall, the multinationals and the banks.

Why was it, he asked, that in a supposedly democratic country, a current of opinion which wanted more democracy should be met with hysteria and denunciation.

Target

In *The Benn Heresy* he concluded that the real target of the hysteria was the millions of people fighting for their rights to whom Benn gave a voice in parliament; and that the country was not democratic because real power lay in the hands of a tiny minority.

The problem to which socialists had to address themselves was this: would this power willingly be yielded if the attempt was made to create a genuinely democratic state? And was parliament itself, resting as it did on an undemocratic, class state, capable of challenging this unaccountable power?

Tony Benn is debating Alan Freeman on Thursday 2 September at 12.30 at the ICA in ; and both will be taking in a fringe meeting organised by *New Socialist* at the Labour Party conference.

Labour leader faces TUC conference snub and a challenge from Benn

UNIONS CUT OUT FOOT!

By ROBERT PORTER and GORDON BREDS

TUC bosses have left Michael Foot out in the cold by not inviting him to address their annual Congress.

This will deny the Labour leader a major opportunity to repeat his scathing political and public image.

Last night TUC and Labour Party officials met to discuss that only with was intended to Mr Foot.

They agreed that the party would not support Foot's proposal to speak at the annual conference in 1982.

Mr Foot's proposal was to speak at the annual conference in 1982.

Mr Foot's proposal was to speak at the annual conference in 1982.

Benn under fire from the Left

By John Heard

Mr Tony Benn is taken to task today by a left-wing author for 'lacking a strategy to win' because of his commitment to winning change by parliamentary democracy instead of revolution.

In an otherwise sympathetic portrait of the politician, the author Alan Freeman accuses Mr Benn of turning his back on the very movement he inspires, at the moment when they might fall to secure a parliamentary mandate yet succeed by other means.

'Here lies the true difference between Benn's position and the revolutionary Socialist tradition in Britain. He argues that we should wait, if there is a danger of creating a new government that doesn't have a mandate from Parliament.'

'But Parliament will not give a mandate to a government that threatens the state. And every democratic movement eventually threatens the state, which exists to defend the rich against the dispossessed. Our Parliament is based on an

When Benn could be leader..

By TERENCE LANCASTER

TONY BENN will stand for Labour leadership if Michael Foot does not lose the left-wing line.

That is the clear impression given by Ben in an interview printed in *The Benn Heresy* by Alan Freeman published today.

Mr Benn was asked about the belief held by many people that Mr Foot had broken with the traditions of the left. Was there a case for the left to support a candidate against him in the near future? He replied:

'If there was a pressure to wind up the electoral college to change its composition, to get away from restricted votes (which is one of the things which has caused greatest opposition from the right), and to reverse the policies on Europe, nuclear weapons and the alternative economic strategy, then there is some sense in the move of appointing a candidate, namely by a candidate.'

Answers

The very long sentence which says that Mr Foot will get very short lines to water down his policies.

Mr Freeman's book is written from the point of view of the left. It does not accept all Mr Benn's answers. It says that 'revolutionary socialism and revolutionary democracy' provide better answers.

But it is broadly sympathetic to Mr Benn. As Mr Benn is broadly sympathetic to the left.

The first sentence in Mr Freeman's book refers to low delegates to Labour's 1981 conference. It says that 'the left' is 'packed ranks in Birmingham's Corn Exchange'.

In fact they sat in Brighton's Sports Ground, a few miles from the Corn Exchange.

The book is more accurate later on.

The Benn Heresy, by Alan Freeman, Pluto Press, £3.50.

LABOUR'S IRISH POLICY

'Troublesome Business'

ALAN FREEMAN reviews Geoff Bell's new book.

Facts are socialist weapons: Geoff Bell's new book is an arsenal. It is a must for every socialist who wants to know what lies behind sixty years of labour's failure to advance the socialist cause.

Early in the book Geoff recounts Labour MP James O'Grady's visit to Soviet Russia, to persuade the new revolutionary government to support the allies in the war.

'When I was in Russia putting the case for the allies the best possible way I could,' he told the Commons on 23 October 1917, 'I frequently declared that Great Britain in entering the war had nothing to gain, that she did not want territory in Europe or any aggrandisement at all. I pointed out that at the beginning of the war 4,000,000 British citizens volunteered because they thought we were fighting a war of liberation.'

The Russians confronted O'Grady with one fact — which the Labour Party had ignored for its first twenty years. 'You say you are fighting a war of liberation,' they said, 'but what about Ireland?' Britain enslaved a nation which had fought for freedom for seven hundred years; this counted for more than a hundred grand declarations.

Geoff's book deals with such facts. It is researched in great detail and contains much material which will be new to most socialists.

Apart from its many other virtues it arranges its material with a dry humour with which Bell

aficionados will no doubt be familiar. It punctures two of the most persistent myths of Labourism: the myths of Labour's practicality, and that of the 'British compromise'. It shows how two generations of pretentious and pompous Labour leaders, under these two banners, have made themselves toys of Britain's establishment.

Motor

From its early days, Geoff explains, Labour found the Irish issue a 'troublesome' one. It was not discussed in Labour's first ten conferences, taking second place to such burning issues as 'cab trade legislation, postmen's hours, vaccination, shop registration, payment of juries and laws governing motor traffic.'

Bell also shows how Labour searched for a 'middle way', so that by the early twenties, with a Civil War raging around the demand for Irish separation, and with the ruling class preparing partition, it was blithely proposing a solution involving neither separation nor partition. The only problem was that no-one either listened to nor cared for this wonderfully 'practical' compromise.

Principles were involved which the Labour Party

never grasped, and which have a single common link: its refusal to challenge the unaccountable power of the state.

The first was self-determination. Labour thought economic class struggle took priority, for socialists, over political struggle: a crime that Marxists are often accused of.

But the border, with annoying and irksome regularity, would keep intruding on the 'class struggle.' These stupid Irish would keep rabbiting on about freedom when the Labour Party was just itching to give them socialist gas and water.

The problem was very simple: in order to make socialism you have to have a democratic state. If you don't allow people their national rights, you can't have a democratic state; so you can't have socialism.

Moreover the Labour Party never understood that self-determination is about one's right to form an independent state, and not about one's right to be part of another country. It could never distinguish between the genuine and practical Irish demand which was to form their own state, and the utterly false and impractical demand of the Northern Irish protestants, which was to be a part of a nation they did not live in. A 'right to be British' is no more socialist than a right to be hung.

This confusion meant that the party spent most of its history falling into a neat little trap which British imperialism has

dug for it by creating small communities of colonists, in various parts of the world, and using their 'right to be British' as an excuse to wage wars of foreign aggression.

Bell neatly illustrates the passage from imperialist needs to Labour Party cover-up in his coverage of the debate on the constitution of Northern Ireland during the 1945-51 government.

Southern Ireland renounced its links with the crown and the Commonwealth. Since partition was supposed to be a temporary arrangement until South and North would get together 'within the Commonwealth' (i.e. within the Empire), this was a problem. Labour changed the constitution — but why?

Secret

The cabinet began from a Civil Service paper prepared by its secretary, Norman Brook, which explained that 'Now that Eire will shortly cease to owe any allegiance to the Crown, it has become a matter of first class strategic importance to this country that the North should continue to form part of His Majesty's dominions... Indeed, it seems unlikely that Great Britain would even be able to agree to this (Northern Ireland leaving the U.K.) even if the people of Northern Ireland desired it.' (our italics)

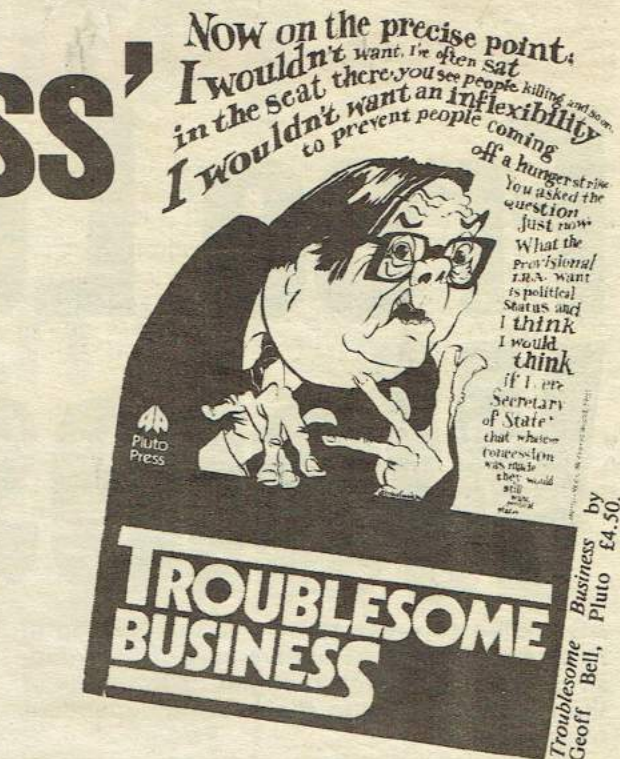
So much for the 'needs of the Northern Irish people'! This real, but secret reason, made public

only recently with the release of Cabinet papers, was translated by the Labour Party into an act which declared, in 1949, that 'in no event will Northern Ireland or any part thereof cease to be a part of His Majesty's Dominions and of the United Kingdom without the consent of the Parliament of Northern Ireland.'

Thus a despotic and degenerate clique was to be given custody of British military and strategic interests in return for the British turning a blind eye to its domestic practices: publicly Labour was 'defending self-determination': in reality handing veto powers to an unrepresentative and corrupt rump parliament in Belfast.

Labour also never understood that although it was allowed to implement many social reforms of the 'gas and water' type by renouncing extraparliamentary methods, it did so in return for its support to British imperialism — which had to include its Irish policy. In consequence it failed the historic democratic tasks of a socialist party. It failed to attack any of the gigantic constitutional obstacles to radical change in Britain which the Bennite left are now, after a sixty year lapse, forced to confront anew: the unaccountable power of the state.

When in 1913 the Liberal government was prevented from enacting Home Rule legislation by means of an open armed rebellion in the North of Ireland, Tory leader Bonar Law openly backed this, declaring that 'the issue



was above parliamentary majorities.'

Refusal to implement government instructions by army officers, encouraged by the Tories, stymied the reform. But Labour drew no conclusions.

It did not see that because the state had been used by the Tories to override parliament, the only recourse available to the Irish people was that of armed insurrection: least of all did it understand that the British working class must eventually face the same problem.

It was completely bewildered when the old, constitutionalist Irish Nationalists were swept aside by Sinn Feinners at the polls, nor did it comprehend the broad sympathy which the Easter Rising of 1916 aroused in the Irish people. How can people vote for armed revolution? They must be deluded, so let's ignore them, they said.

Most importantly Labour did not see why the Tory Party, reduced to almost a bourgeois sect in the elections of 1905, was able to rebuild itself as a coalition of all bourgeois forces around the defence of the Empire and the defence of the British imperial state, with all its trappings.

From this stronghold the Tories devastated the Labour Party in 1931; and this same stronghold, together with all the obscure 'feudal remnants' of our constitution against which Tony Benn now so forcefully argues, was allowed to fester, reconstruct, and emerge almost unscathed from sixty years of Labourism as the monstrosity which we must now destroy before British socialism can progress a single inch further: the British imperial state.

Why the Militant's plan for working class unity won't work

By Aileen O'Callaghan

The Marxist programme for the Irish Revolution starts from the premise that the house of Ireland belongs to the Irish. They have the right to say that whoever else wants to come in must be at their invitation only.

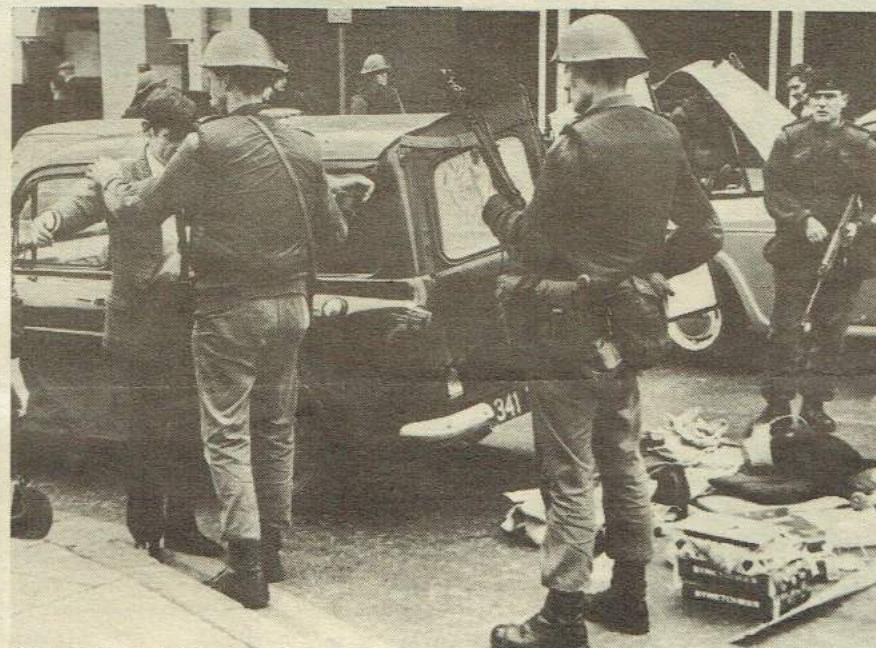
The chief enemy of the Irish people is British Imperialism. Its main instrument for keeping up the political, social and economic exploitation of the Irish is the partitionist border and the troops who prop it up. But we also say that Ireland's liberation depends upon the ability of the Irish working class to become master of the Irish house.

Besides insisting on the withdrawal of British troops, the Labour Movement has a duty to give material aid to the development in Ireland of a workers party which has a programme that can bring victory for the Irish Revolution. A debate on exactly how to do this has been going on in the British trade unions and Labour Party for some while now which has been dominated by plans proposed by the *Militant Tendency*.

Militant sees the formation of a 'mass party of labour' within the Six Counties as the answer and the formation of a Liaison Committee with the Irish Labour Party in the Republic as the way to unite the Irish workers. This solution could only guarantee the continuing divisions in Ireland.

It is politics not religion which divides the Belfast protestant workers from the catholic workers in Dublin. Loyalism is a reactionary political ideology which ties a key section of the Irish working class to the coat-tails of British finance capital.

The anti-imperialist sentiments of the rest of the workers movement are channelled through the fake 'nationalist' capitalist parties (SDLP, ILP in the North, Fianna Fail in the South) because there is no mass working class party prepared to fight for a united Ireland. The capitalist parties play on the political divisions inside the working class so as to be in a better position to betray the political, social and economic interests which Irish workers have in common.



Right: Unionist leader Carson, Left, British troops. only when partition ends will Protestant and Catholic workers be able to unite.

A consistent class policy in the Six Counties needs solidarity with the southern workers. A 'labour party' which ignores partition has no hope of becoming anything more than a plebeian unionist front.

It would be another rerun of the various past

Unionist Labour associations, none of which have survived a major test. It could hold no prospects for the Republican-minded workers in the North, let alone any prospect of unity with the southern workers.

When a unified trade union movement for all

Ireland was under discussion in the sixties it was the reactionary Unionist Party which vetoed all the unification proposals save one: the federal solution which is now being raised by the *Militant* as the way to create an all-Ireland Party of Labour.

The Unionists



understood that in the autonomous Northern Ireland Committee of the ICTU (Irish Congress of Trade Unions) there would be an in-built majority for Loyalists who would have a veto against all proposals which could lead to the unity of all Irish workers.

Despite its social strength, despite the growing militancy in economic struggles North and South the inability of the ICTU to take all-Ireland action is a crucial weakness. This weakness flows from the

inability of its leadership to take on Loyalism and champion the anti-imperialist interests of the Irish Labour Movement. Yet *Militant* still raises the federal solution and offers protestant workers a veto against genuine unity in the shape of a separate Labour Party for the Six Counties.

The *Militant* supporters must learn from history. A genuine working class party in Ireland must be all-Ireland in organisation and all-Ireland in programme. James Connolly was right when he wrote in *Labour in Irish History* '...the pressure of common exploitation can make enthusiastic rebels out of a protestant working class, earnest champions of civil and religious liberty out of catholics, and out of both a united social democracy.'

However he also taught that this would first mean breaking the Loyalist shackles which chain the protestant worker to British monopoly capital. War must be waged on Loyalism, not concessions made to it.

Let's go with Connolly — not *Militant*!

Socialist Challenge

Free Lech Walesa!

AS WE go to press tension is building up in Poland on the second anniversary of the Gdansk agreement, which recognised the right of the Polish workers to their own independent trade unions.

Recognising that the anniversary is a crucial test, Poland's bureaucratic rulers have taken draconian measures in order to try to prevent any effective demonstration of the mass support for Solidarnosc.

Party boss Jaruzelski was hastily summoned to the Soviet Union prior to the anniversary and told to clamp down on the 31 August demonstrations.

As a result vicious repressive measures were announced. First the police made clear that any demonstrations would be forcibly broken up. Second, the organisers of demonstrations were threatened with 15 years in jail. And third anyone taking part in a demonstration was threatened with five years inside.

At the same time that these measures were announced, Jaruzelski deputy Prime Minister Rakowski, in television broadcasts made last Sunday night, implied that if demonstrations did not occur some form of legislation of free trade unions might be made possible again.

But the leaders of Solidarnosc in the underground made the op-

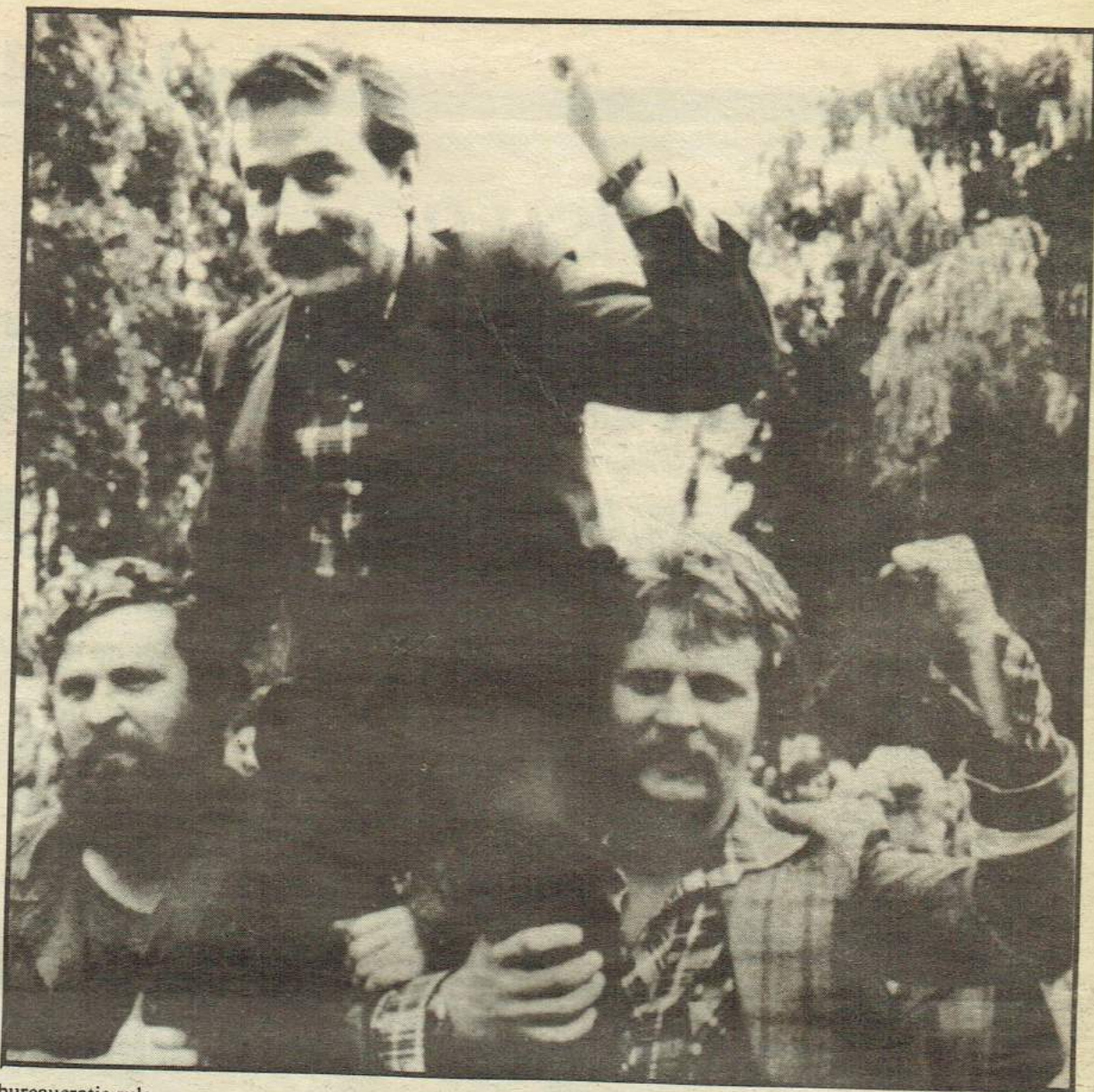
posite assessment — that repression of Solidarnosc would become worse if mass mobilisations were stopped.

In addition to crude threats and cynical lying promises, the bureaucrats once again were doubtless pleased to see the Church come rushing to its aid once again. Archbishop Glemp appealed to the Polish authorities to release Solidarnosc leader Lech Walesa — while at the same time urging the workers not to attend the Solidarity demonstrations! The Church leaders are trying to balance between the bureaucracy and the working class in order to maintain their own position and keep their own following.

Despite these measures to crush Solidarnosc and

stop the demonstrations the workers took to the streets to show that the bureaucracy could not intimidate the working class. The leaders of Solidarnosc had been proved right, the mass mobilisations showed that the fight for free and independent trade unions was still going on.

For months the Polish authorities have been promising that Lech Walesa will be released 'soon'. In effect Walesa is being held hostage. The fact that he has not been released is testimony to the fact that Jaruzelski and his friends in the Soviet Union know that Walesa has not capitulated, and could not be used as a compliant compromiser with



bureaucratic rule.

The release of Lech Walesa and the other imprisoned leaders of Solidarnosc should be a central objective of the movement of solidarity with Solidarnosc in the West. Len Murray has appealed to the Polish authorities to allow

Walesa to attend this year's TUC.

This excellent proposal will not of course be granted by the Polish bureaucrats. But it can be taken up throughout the labour movement.

Jaruzelski has had nine months to show what his

version of 'normalisation' amounts to. It means internment of union activists, harsh discipline in

the factories, brutality on the streets. The time has come to step up our solidarity.

FREE LECH WALESA AND ALL THE SOLIDARITY LEADERS!

FREEDOM FOR SOLIDARNOSC, THE ONLY ORGANISATION WHICH REPRESENTS THE POLISH WORKERS!

Trot for Socialism

THREE weeks left for you to rush your sponsorship forms for the Socialist Challenge entry in the Birmingham 'Peoples Marathon'. Our Red Trotter, Steve Faulkner, plans his herculean effort all in the aid of Socialist Challenge's Fund Drive. Every 10p sponsorship will raise £2.60 for the paper, perhaps making some hundreds of pounds in all.

You can sponsor Steve by writing to SC Marathon, c/o PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. And if you want to be even more ac-

tive in raising funds for Socialist Challenge, why not follow the lead of our North London supporters who organised a jumble sale at the height of summer? A quick collection of everyone's old clothes and belongings, some leafletting to advertise the time and place, and £67.80p winged its way into our coffers.

As the autumn round of labour movement conferences and events approached we need your help more than ever. Socialist Challenge is at the forefront of the fight against the witch hunt in the labour movement and the preparations for the Hackney North Labour Party conference in October. Our ideas and influence are growing inside the labour movement. Staff writer Alan Freeman's book on Tony Benn has already received considerable publicity in the mass and labour movement media. But it's all only possibly with your regular donations to the fund drive. Our thanks for the past few weeks' donors:

Southampton	10.00
N London Jumble sale	67.80
Harry Wicks	5.00
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Islington	200.00
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