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Polish workers in danger



ANDREW WIARD (REPORT)

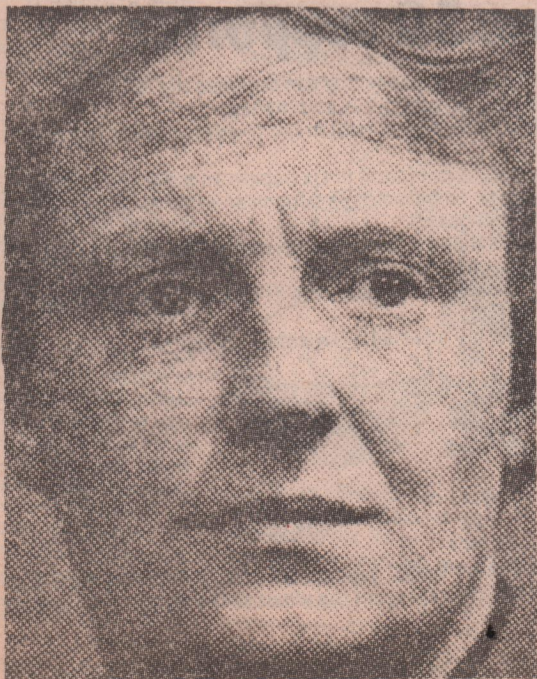
Foot



Healey

BENN IS RIGHT: WE CAN'T TRUST THEM

by Rachel Lever



Kinnock — represents NEC 'soft left'

IAN Mikardo summed up Michael Foot's 'challenge' to Tony Benn: 'Denis is a big burly lad and doesn't need your help'. And the TGWU Executive responded the day after the Shadow Cabinet meeting by resoundingly endorsing Benn's right to stand for the Deputy Leadership.

Despite the glee of the demoralised parliamentarians, and the exaggerated applause and congratulations of the press, Foot's squalid little move is already backfiring.

Intended to 'put Benn on the spot', it has simply confirmed Foot as the puppet of the Right. The man who never had the stuffing to fight for his policies, has come out fighting for the

politics of fakery and compromise.

Foot's tirade against Tony Benn accused him of the heinous crime of saying out loud what everyone knows: that, as the *Observer* leader put it, Labour politicians have a 'tendency to say one thing in opposition and do something quite different in government'

Appeal

It didn't help Foot's case that he tried to have it both ways. First, he denied that Labour's parliamentary leadership ever ignored conference policies. Then he claimed that those policies are unclear and ambiguous anyway.

And who on earth can the hoo-ha about Shadow Cabinet responsibility appeal to? Should Benn keep faith with Healey and Hatt-

ersley, or with the collective decisions of the Party conference representing seven million members? (And it was a red herring anyway: as Dennis Skinner points out, no-one pounces on Healey when he speaks out of line.)

Simon Hoggart of the *Observer* put it like this: 'Benn's loyalty is devoted to a huge monolithic structure known as the Labour Party. Foot's loyalty... is owed and given to friends, comrades, those he has worked with. It's a loyalty which enabled him to love Beaverbrook and to like Callaghan...'

The establishment must be seriously worried. Not only does Tony Benn look increasingly like winning. But as his campaign progresses, it is accelerating and galvanising, popularising and focusing, the

changes that were implied in the Blackpool and Wembley conference decisions but which have yet to come alive, take root and become consolidated as part of a new way of life and political functioning.

Tony Benn insists that his campaign is about policies, not personalities. Yet many in Foot's camp claim allegiance to the same policies. (And we in *Socialist Organiser* support Benn, but disagree with many of his policies.)

Fears

If policies or personalities were the whole of the story, who would have troubled to elevate Tony Benn to the lofty and honourable position of Enemy of the People? The fact is that Benn, like the hero of Ibsen's play, has revealed the

The Kremlin has declared that the leadership of the 'Polish Workers Party' has a passive attitude to 'anti-Sovietism' and counter-revolution in Poland — and to nationalism, Trotskyism, bourgeois liberalism, agrarianism and Zionism, which are allegedly rampant in the Polish 'party'.

And the flag of true 'communism' and puppet-loyal 'pro-Sovietism' in Poland has been raised by the Katowice Forum group.

The Conference of the 'Polish Workers Party' is set for July, and looks like being something like a real conference, which may decide for radical changes in Poland. Certainly it is likely to endorse the changes that have already taken place in Poland since last August; and in any case it won't be able to do anything to reverse them.

More than once since last August, it has seemed that invasion was imminent. It didn't come at those crisis-points because the Kremlin believed that 'their' party in Poland would hold together, and could therefore be relied on to roll back and ultimately to undo what the workers have achieved since Gdansk.

Now they have lost faith in the Party and have no reliable instrument in Poland. What is there left for them?

The Stalinist quislings of the Katowice

Forum are keen to serve, but they are mere aspirants to be put into power by Russian tanks, as Kadar was in Hungary after the 1956 invasion and Husak in Czechoslovakia in 1968. They do not have the independent strength even to challenge Kania. For how much longer is the Kremlin going to stand idly by?

The liberalisation in Poland has been allowed by the Russians to go further and deeper without an invasion than anyone would have expected last August. But now their publicly expressed view of the Polish Politbureau's capitulation to 'counter-revolution' marks a decisive new stage.

Its implication is that the Kremlin will have to rely on itself, if there is not some dramatic change as a result of its pronouncement.

But change that would satisfy the Kremlin is impossible. Solidarnosc may call off particular strikes: it will not dissolve itself to satisfy the Russians. There is no force in Polish society that could dissolve it now.

Therefore the danger that the tanks and troops of the Russian Stalinist bureaucracy will soon invade Poland and to crush the labour movement there is very great. The labour movement must mobilise to denounce this danger and to support the Polish workers.

poison at the root of the movement, while others who claim to be on the left join with the right in concealing it. And for that he has earned the hatred, persecution and character-assassination the Establishment reserves for those it fears.

It fears and hates Tony Benn, but even more so does it fear and hate those on whom he bases his campaign — which has leaned less and less on well-disposed holders of block votes, and more and more on the members who are now insisting on having their own say, whatever the likes of Clive Jenkins or Alex Kitson think.

Accountability in the abstract is worrying enough; but accountability to the working class is a horrifying prospect indeed.

THE People's March is just the latest proof that thousands of youth are ready and eager to fight back against the Tories. But there is no socialist youth movement able to lead the fight.

Labour's official youth movement, the LPYS, is kept in a half-dead condition by the sterile preachers' socialism of the dominant Militant tendency.

160 young people, from as far away as Glasgow in the north and Weymouth in the south, met in Coventry last weekend [6th and 7th] to begin organising to fill this gap.

At a conference called by Barricade and Red Youth, they laid the groundwork for a National Left Wing Youth Movement. They debated and decided a wide-ranging platform of socialist policies.

An editorial board/steering committee was elected, which will produce a new revolutionary youth paper and plan for a bigger conference in the autumn.

Over the summer, the new movement will be campaigning hard. It will be out on the hunger strikers' demonstration on June 13th, and the Labour Party jobs march in Cardiff on July 4th. It will be present in force, arguing its point of view, at the LPYS summer camp in August.

Transforming the YS into a real fighting youth movement is a major aim of the NLWYM, as part of the work of revolutionising the whole labour movement.

Campaigns on jobs, racism, sexism, Ireland and other issues will also continue over the summer, and be coordinated by the new youth paper.

JO THWAITES reports on the conference.

"WE WERE just leaving the pub on Saturday night ready to go home when we were harassed by some white skinheads.

by Les Hearn

The profitability of modern industry has often been considerably enhanced (or even created!) by leaving out the cost of disposing of the dangerous waste products of many industrial processes.

Originally, it was not seen as their (or anyone's) responsibility. Now some countries have laws on disposing of toxic or poisonous waste, but all too often these laws are ignored, broken or circumvented.

Capitalist companies or governments are strangely unwilling to use any part of 'their' profits to clean up the mess they make. The cost in health or money seems always to end up with us.



We in Britain are still waiting for a disaster like Minamata or Love Canal, but they're working on it. The latest candidate is a dioxin dump (or dumps) somewhere (!) near the villages of Morton, Stretton, Shirland and Higham in north Derbyshire.

The dioxin (one of the most poisonous chemicals known) was produced in an explosion in a Coalite chemical factory in 1968, when one worker was killed and 70 others got chloracne (a disfiguring skin disease caused by dioxin).

The factory was then dismantled and the contaminated rubble buried somewhere.

Where? Coalite and Derby County Council are not saying, but local people think it is in a former open-cast mine near Morton. Grass growing on the site is regularly collected up in bales and dumped at a toxic waste tip over the road.

Is this the only dioxin dump in the area? A secret council report implies that it is, but one council official has said that the dioxin is buried in "at least two places".

How deep is it buried? Estimates range from 40 to 150 feet. Coalite says 150

feet, but the open cast mine thought to be one of the sites was no more than 60 feet deep. At either depth, breakdown of the dioxin by soil bacteria would be virtually nil so it will still be there.

Coalite claimed the waste was sealed in drums — the council says it is in plastic bags. Can the dioxin get into the water supply? Coalite says the site is impermeable to water and the Severn-Trent Water Authority says any contamination would be detected — but they don't test for dioxin!

Just over the road from "dioxin field" is potentially the largest toxic waste-tip in Britain licen-

sed (by Derbyshire County Council officers, without reference to elected councillors) to receive 1300 tonnes of toxic wastes each day! It is owned by a subsidiary of Coalite.

There is considerable evidence of atmospheric and water pollution around the site as well as allegations of mis-recording of prohibited wastes as allowed wastes, dumping of liquids (which is completely banned) and failure to cover wastes each day.

Five dogs and three horses are said to have died as a result of pollution of nearby streams, while the smell experienced by staff

and patients of a nearby hospital was said to be sometimes "unbearable, really sickening". Council inspectors referred only to a "slight but pleasant odour of TCP!"

The latest worry for local residents is the opening of a drift mine near dioxin field with the danger of uncovering of toxic wastes.

Meanwhile, at Carr Vale there is a council-owned tip, which is said to be another dioxin dump. Parts of the demolished Coalite factory are said to have lain around uncovered for years to be used by children as an 'adventure playground'. Last year children swimming in a pool on the tip got red blotches all over their bodies.

A new revolutionary youth movement

"One of them drew a knife and attacked my friend. I ran back to the pub and banged on the door to get other people out. They did come out, and we scared the racists away, but my friend was lying in the gutter. He had been stabbed and there was blood all over his head.

"This is what we are up against and the police are no use. We are forced to defend ourselves and we need your support."

Raj, an Asian from Coventry, was talking to the National Left Wing Youth Conference last Sunday — and reporting what had happened the evening before. Just two days previously, too, another Asian youth had been stabbed by racists.

Defence

On the Saturday, the conference had already made a strong commitment to building anti-racist defence squads. After the film 'Southall on trial', a discussion was introduced by a comrade from the Coventry Anti-Racist Defence Squad, set up from a meeting organised by Coventry NE LPYS after the murder of Satnam Gill Singh at Easter.

We'd discussed in workshops the work of the defence squads and the vital need to get real support from the labour movement, not just resolutions but offers of physical defence of prime targets for the fascists.

Many of the Asian youth at the conference expressed frustration with the official committees of the labour movement and how they were being left to do everything themselves. We passed an amendment to the conference resolution putting more emphasis on the responsibility of the labour movement to get involved in the defence of the black community.

As well as anti-racist

activity, the conference discussed other main areas of struggle where a socialist youth movement is needed.

The fight for jobs session was particularly urgent, as more than ¾ of

causing problems of organisation. Despite this, YOP workers in Glasgow have organised a strike over wages and over wages and conditions.

Mick Liggins, Chair-



Asian youth demonstrate

the youth at the conference were unemployed, still at school or on slave-labour YOP schemes.

The session was introduced by a People's Marcher and a shop steward from Jaguar in Coventry where jobs are threatened.

In the workshops the particular problems that youth faced in the unions were discussed. Carole Hollier, an AUEW steward from Hatfield, talked of the discouraging attitudes that youth have to face from the union bureaucracy. The AUEW is unusual in having Youth Committees, but often they are just a sop to youth, with no decision-making powers.

Andrew McDonald, a boilermaker apprentice, described how apprentices are treated at work as the lowest of the low.

The YOPs workshop discussed the problems of non-unionisation, isolation and slave wages of £23.50. A youth from Glasgow explained how YOP workshops were often very small and scattered around the city.

person of the National Council of Young Workers said that YOPs do nothing to solve unemployment — it increases it, simply taking the jobs of workers that have been sacked or doing jobs that would have been done by a fully-paid worker.

The workshop on Organising on the Dole Queues concentrated on the Unemployed Workers Union conference on

Party's Cardiff demo on July 4th.

Saturday's workshops were drawn together with a discussion on the role of the last Labour government in sabotaging workers' struggles against redundancies and for better wages, led off by Andy Dixon from Huyton YS. We need a real alternative — a government that based itself on the working class and

was accountable to us.

The attendance on Sunday morning was amazing, considering the wild time had by all at the social on Saturday night.

The H-Block Story film put everyone into the picture as to what was happening in the North of Ireland and we decided to organise for the demonstration in support of the hunger strikers on June 13th.

The women's workshops discussed how we could fight sexism and recruit young women into the YS, when the present leadership of the YS is complacently ignoring the issue. We backed the call for a National YS Women's conference and discussed methods of positive discrimination.

The gay workshop tackled the knotty question of raising gay liberation at work. Attitudes are gen-

be one that relates to what youth are doing, reports all our activities in the various YS branches and has a balance of political discussion. It should have coverage on music and sexuality as well as youth at work and YCND.

The point was also made that everyone at the conference was capable of writing for the paper. There should be no myths about journalistic expertise. The paper is for youth and must be written by youth.

There were problems (to put it mildly) about deciding on a name — there were scores of suggestions but little agreement, so we all decided to think about it seriously and to come up with suggestions for the first steering committee/Editorial Board meeting to vote on.

The conference was the first step in building the NLWYM. This summer looks like being a long, hot one and we have no time to lose. Youth are already fighting back as we've seen in Coventry, Brixton and at Lee Jeans.

We want to organise and give political direction to that fight, and aim to transform the LPYS into a force to do that. Build the National Left Wing Youth Movement!

A full report of all the decisions of the conference will be circulated to all those attending and to anyone writing to NLWYM, 214 Sickert Court, London N1.

The EB/SC elected is: Caroline Lees (Weymouth YS), Carole Hollier (Welwyn and Hatfield YS), Jo Thwaites (Barricade EB), Constantin (Barricade EB), Judith Bonner (Coventry NE YS), Alex Owalade (NUSS), Mick Liggins (National Council of Young Workers), Dale Ackroyd (Red Youth EB), Andrew McDonald (Aylesbury YS), Bas (Coventry Anti-Racist Defence), Ruth Davies (Wallasey YS).



Saturday 20th June: Coventry, The Butts Stadium. Starts 12 noon: £3.50 admission, all money goes to the black community to help defend themselves against attacks. with: THE SPECIALS, HAZEL O'CONNOR, THE PEOPLE, THE BUREAU, THE STEREOTYPES.



Should women be paid to look after their own kids? We discussed this question at the latest Women's Fightback forum in London. Zöe Fairbairns, author of the novel 'Benefits' and of a recent controversial article in Spare Rib on this topic, outlined her views.

We must have something to say, she argued, to all those women who do choose to stay at home and look after kids. It's patronising to suggest that they don't know what they want, have been conned by the motherhood myth, etc. They're doing the work for nothing, and they need money, need to break out of their dependence and poverty.

So whatever we call it they should have money, as this increases their choices.

'Whatever we call it' turned out in the discussion to be vital. We explored the seeming contradiction that on the one hand we were all wholeheartedly in favour of

The articles on this page are taken from the latest issue of Women's Fightback. There's lots more, including a big feature on the Women's Festival.

Copies 10p each, plus postage, from 41 Ellington Street, London N7.

The strings and the trap

massively increasing Child Benefit, and yet felt distinctly alarmed at 'home responsibility payments' or 'caretakers allowance' on the other hand. Generous maternity leave and payments were one thing, payment for staying home with your kids was quite another.

What was the substance behind this apparently fine line which divided open-armed welcome for the one, and horrified rejection of the other?

You could sum it up as 'strings' and 'traps'.

STRINGS: the idea of wages or 'payment' for something definitely implies an obligation. Fears were expressed that payment for child-

care, for example, carried the implication of whoever does the paying setting the standards and conditions, in a situation where women are powerless to bargain or negotiate. And it could so easily be used to restrict the choice for women who preferred to get a job: as an excuse, for example, to close down nurseries.

Whereas the same money given as maternity leave pay is something won and controlled by collective strength, and acknowledges that the woman IS still part of the workforce but on leave.

THE TRAP: It was remarked in the discussion that when we talked about people being paid to stay at home to look after the kids, we couldn't help

saying 'she' — assuming it must be the woman. And of course this is precisely the assumption that is prevalent in society as a whole. One woman related her own experience: when her baby was born, she and her husband had decided to take equal shares in work and childcare and both work part-time. But his earning power was so much greater that they'd been unable to keep it up, and now he works full time, and she has a part time job and does most of the parenting.

So, is paying a woman to stay at home falling into the trap of accepting that that's what women do or want to do — and isn't that what we're fighting against?

Shouldn't the nurseries and the jobs and the rights at work (including the rights of men to work shorter hours at the same pay rates) come first, so that women have a REAL choice, before we start assuming that everything women choose to do now is from any real, free choice?

It's a bit of a joke to say women 'choose' at the moment.

The title of the meeting was 'Benefits and a Woman's Right to Work'. Where Zöe tended to place the emphasis on giving women a real choice to stay home, the rest of us agreed that the drift should be the other way, in a situation where the choice to have a job (albeit a boring and low paid job) was being denied and women are being dragged into full-time motherhood in conditions of isolation and poverty — which would be only marginally alleviated by a state benefit doled out for our services in the home.

GERRY BYRNE

CAN LABOUR LEAD WOMEN AGAINST THE TORIES?
Women's Fightback rally at National Labour Women's Conference, Buxton, Sunday 14th June, 12.45, at the Sandringham Hotel, Broad Walk.
SPEAKERS:
■ Tony Benn
■ Barbara Switzer (TASS)
■ Elsie Broad (Royal Pride Strike and People's Marcher.)

Proud to be on strike

I WENT down to the Royal Pride picket line at two in the afternoon. It was pouring with rain. Jean, Helen and Marie, three of the strikers, were sitting on a milk crate huddled under an umbrella.

I asked the girls to start at the beginning.

'Well, in November we started negotiating for a rise of at least 10%, after two years of only getting 5%. The boss, Novak, said he would consider it if he got plenty of orders in at the Birmingham trade exhibition!

'After the exhibition he said he couldn't give us a rise at all — in fact he said we'd have to have a 20% cut.

'At the time, there were about 27 workers not counting office staff. About 10 of the production workers were blokes. Most of the girls were doing skilled production jobs, while the men did

mainly packing and lab-ouring.

'Well, the girls all refused to take a cut in wages, but Novak got the lads in his office one by one and told them that if they refused he'd bring in YOPS workers and they'd get the sack.

'At this point we all felt it was time we got the union in.

'It wasn't just the low wages that made us so angry, although this was the breaking point. We'd also had to put up with rubbish health and safety conditions — for years we'd had several bloody great holes in the floor that were about three feet deep! We'd no canteen facilities either, and only two toilets in the place.

'Everyone joined the union, FTAT. By this time it was mid-November.

'When Novak discovered we'd joined a union he

saw all the lads individually and told them that he'd put their wages up to full union rates if they left the union — so all but three of the lads dropped out. He then offered all the workers a 5% rise from April — if things picked up...

'We tried to negotiate for the nationally agreed rise, which was 9.7%, but he refused to negotiate with FTAT.

'On February 27th we came out on strike. Though the office staff and some of the men crossed the picket line, he couldn't carry on production because all his skilled workers (us!) were on strike. So all the scabs were sacked after two weeks, which shows where scabbing gets you!

'In March, after we all got letters saying we'd 'dismissed ourselves', we occupied the factory. We managed to get in by fol-



Out for 13 weeks — and not giving in!

owing the van driver in. But we were only in occupation two days because Novak got a Crown Court injunction, and the union said we had to leave.

So we've been out on the picket line day in, day out, for the last 13 weeks!

Last Wednesday he called us all in for a meeting. He offered us our jobs back, but no union. Of course we refused. Especially as he threatened that he make us pay for all the trouble we'd caused!

The last two fellas left

us after this meeting, so now there's only us girls left. We're still absolutely determined, though. Either we get back in with the union or we'll make sure that Novak never produces another head-board.

We've had quite a lot of support from other unions. Agecroft Colliery, Chlorides, Schreiber and Gardners workers have all been great. The Manchester and Salford Trades Councils have also helped us.

The workers from Gardners came down on the picket line one morning straight off the night shift, which gave us a great boost.

'Our union has organised a national appeal, although no levy has been raised, and there has been no strike action to support us by other furniture workers. But most local factories are on one-, two- or three-day weeks and that makes it difficult to argue for supporting action.

'That's the sort of effect unemployment has! Individual members of the Labour Party have joined our picket, but we have been disappointed that so few councillors and not one MP have been down to see us. We think it's time that the Labour Party took industrial disputes seriously. After all, these local councillors were after our votes the other week!

I asked them if they thought it made a difference being women on strike.

'Well, we think we've made as good a go of it as any men would have done, although none of us were involved in things like this before and we've had to learn the hard way. Of course most of us have got kids which makes

things harder — we've got the housework and kids to look after as well as the strike.

'Being in a strike means more than just being on the picket line in all sort of weather. We have a lot of correspondence to write, leaflets to produce and meetings to speak at nearly every night of the week. We divide all the work equally between us.

'Speaking at meetings was hard at first, although we get more confident as time goes on. We usually speak at meetings in pairs, so as to give each other support.'

What did they think of the idea of a demonstration for a woman's right to work?

'It would be a good idea if it got the message over about women's jobs. A lot of people still think women work for pin money. That's rubbish. Nearly all the women here were bringing in the main wage for their families. One of the girls has to bring up her kids on her own, and as for the rest of us, our husbands have either been made redundant or are on short time.'

And she added 'My husband's lost his job since I came out on strike, and our council house rent is £25 a week! I've got two kids and we only get £15 a week strike pay, so you can see we rely on every collection and donation we can get.'

I hope your readers will support our dispute by getting on the picket line if they can, or helping us financially.'

Send messages and money to: Royal Pride Strike Fund, FTAT, 37 Anson Road, Victoria Park, Manchester 14.

ANNA LUNTS

ROCK SOLID!

THE occupation of the Lee Jeans factory in Greenock near Glasgow is in its fifth month and still rock solid.

Though a few of the women who took over the factory in February snopfloor workers, cleaners and office staff) have taken temporary leave, not one worker has dropped out or taken the redundancy money the management keeps pressing on them.

'They've all had separate letters, telling them how to collect the money and enclosing P45s — and then further letters in case you have mislaid your P45 — we are enclosing a duplicate.

As convenor Eileen Monaghan said: 'Such cooperation over a P45 have never experienced before.'

But there are no queues at the bank for the money.

the money. Instead, the fight goes on with growing support from other workers.

Dockers, railway workers and transport drivers are now backing the movement of Lee Jeans Blacking has been organised as far away as Sweden.

The women now want the shopworkers' union USDAW to instruct its members not to handle the jeans at shops and depots.

Everyone can help — by collecting money (for heating, food, transport and campaign costs), inviting a speaker from the struggle, or watching out for the blacked jeans in the shops, and mounting a lobby.

Donations and messages to: Eileen Monaghan, 55 Cambridge Road, Greenock, Scotland.

EONA MENZIES
D ANNE BARRY



The Lee Jeans banner with the People's March

11 SSA HOWE AND (E 11)

by Alexis Carras

- The Soviet envoy in Poznan is shot with his own hunting rifle. Murder or suicide?
- Thousands of common law prisoners in jails from Wolow to the mines of Iwiny go on hunger strike.
- The Polish government is forced to release five political prisoners jailed several months ago for activities in the right wing organisation, 'Confederation of Independent Poland'.
- In Silesia the self-proclaimed 'Katowice Forum' calls for the regroupment of Communist Party forces to beat back the 'anti-socialist and anti-Soviet' initiatives of Solidarnosc. Moscow hails the Katowice Forum as the genuine voice of the Polish Communist Party.
- And Solidarnosc's National Coordinating Committee sets a general strike for June 11th to

protest against the procrastination and reluctance of the authorities to bring to book the secret policemen responsible for the savage beating of Solidarnosc officials in Bydgoszcz last April.

THE UNEASY calm that has reigned over Poland since Prime Minister Jaruzelski's declaration of a two-month moratorium on strikes and civil strife is cracking.

The Catholic hierarchy bitterly attacked Solidarnosc's decision to go ahead with a national stoppage. For them, it was quite clearly an affront to their appeal for a month's peace after the death last week of Cardinal Wyzinski. The Church has yet again joined an alliance with the Kremlin and the western governments and bankers who are fearful of the possible consequences of renewed strike action.

KREMLIN THREATENS INVASION

Yet the workers' movement has been pressing ahead.

The official recognition of Rural Solidarnosc has been followed by continued cooperation between the industrial working class and the farmers. Some factories are supplying machinery such as tractors direct to the farming regions. In

several factories workers are working an extra day, free, just to provide farmers with the necessary equipment.

Although private farmers make up 80 per cent of the agrarian population, the bulk of supplies and subsidies has traditionally gone to the state farms and cooperatives, which are terribly

inefficient. The result has been the general decline of Polish agriculture.

But this worker-farmer alliance has had another beneficial effect. It has begun to break down the Polish farmers' chronic suspicion of cooperative forms of farming. Much of the new equipment is now shared in common. The power of the Com-

munist Party is continually being fractured. The fighting between the 'liberal' wing of the bureaucracy and 'hard-liners' continues unabated.

With the run-up to the Polish United Workers Party (CP) congress in July, the battlelines have hardened further. While the so-called 'softs' like Tadeusz Fizbach in the Gdansk Voivode are making a greater bid for national prominence on the basis of continued reforms and 'integration' of Solidarnosc, others are digging their heels in even further. Undoubtedly prompted by the Russian government, some former close associates of Gierek have published a sort of Open Letter to the CP through the 'Katowice Forum'. Cutting away the ritualistic phrases so beloved of Stalinists, the Open Letter is an unambiguous call to stop the moves to democratisation and the

ferment in the party.

The Russian press has seized on this incident: Rushing to the defence of these true 'Polish Communists', it has thrown its weight behind the most corrupt, discredited functionaries, and ominously raised the temperature by quoting accusations of 'anti-Sovietism' against the Polish Politbureau.

Over a million of the CP's three million members are also members of Solidarnosc. Thousands have been purged and thrown out of the CP. Many more are seeking greater control over the national leadership. These powerful stirrings within previously assured bastions of bureaucratic control and privilege, along with the ferment in the army, police and security forces, will be revealed for all to see at the Special Congress next month.

The question is, will the Russians allow it to take place?

ISRAEL BRINGS MIDDLE EAST TO THE BRINK OF WAR

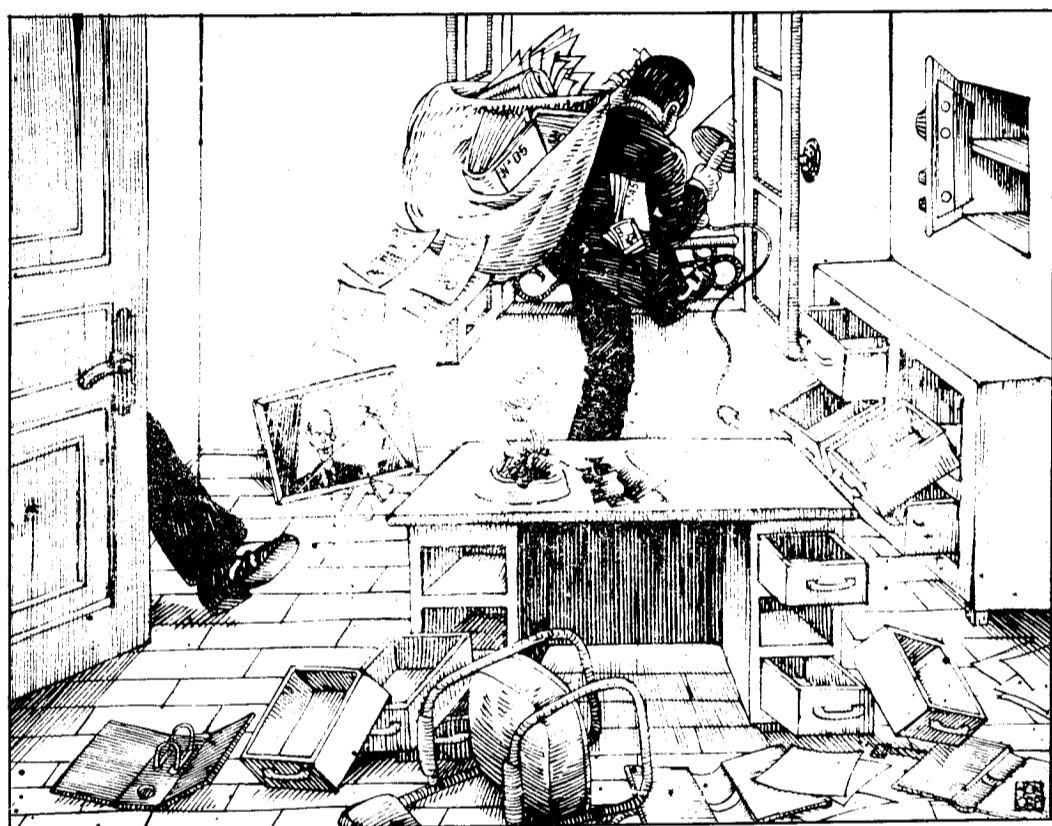
WITH ITS sudden bombing of Iraq's nuclear reactor, Israel has brought the Middle East yet another step nearer the brink of war.

The bombing — breathing-taking in its reckless aggression — can leave few in doubt as to Israel's credentials as a warmonger. If Iraq shies away from an open confrontation now, it is only because she is bogged down in a futile and criminal war with Iran.

According to the office of Israeli Prime Minister, Menachem Begin — his office is handling press statements no doubt to improve his chances of being re-elected Prime Minister later this month — the bombed installation would have made Iraq a nuclear military power. The same source also added the blatantly racist remark that the bombing had taken place on a Sunday so as to safeguard the lives of foreign technicians working at the plant, who, as Christians, would not be working on Sunday.

At the southern desert town of Dimona, Israel herself has exactly the capacity that Iraq was trying to acquire with the help of France. Further, Israel is hardly opposed to proliferation of nuclear weapons: she has been helping South Africa and, reportedly, Argentina, to develop a similar capacity.

Socialists will not regret the fact that Iraq is now without a nuclear capacity. But it would be wrong to adopt a position of neutrality over Israel's aggression. Stepping up direct and indirect intervention in Lebanon, threatening Syria with war, and now bombing Iraq, Zionism again has revealed itself not only as the enemy of Palestinian self-determination, but of Arab self-determination altogether.



Giscard's people clear up and clear out

Revolutionaries plan challenge in French elections

THE GAULLISTS and right wingers who had run the French state as their personal property since 1958 scramble to remove incriminating evidence. The new government, led by the Socialist Party, assures the French capitalists that their class will not suffer by the Left election victory, even if some individual politicians do. To

prove their point, they give a top ministry to Pompidou's former deputy, Michel Jobert.

The main union leaders gush with satisfaction over Mitterrand's first meagre measures — a 10 per cent rise in the minimum wage, and 20 per cent on benefits. A new 'era of negotiation' has opened, they say.

And, in France after

Mitterrand's victory, the revolutionary socialists insist: the workers will gain from a Mitterrand government only as much as they can force out of it.

In the latest issue of the French revolutionary weekly *Lutte Ouvriere*, Arlette Laguiller, who gained 670,000 votes in the first round of the Presidential election last month, writes: "So, certainly, we must send a Left majority to the Assembly. Yes, let us give Mitterrand what he asks for, so we can judge him in practice, and so that he cannot hide behind the lack of a Parliamentary majority to get out of what little he has promised."

"But the workers will be in a better position for the struggles to come if they have real allies in Parliament, workers like themselves, who will warn them, alert them, and boost their struggle". And so LO will be standing candidates in the National Assembly elections, which start on 14th June.

Meanwhile, after the presidential election, a 15-18 ton military lorry was seen parked in the yard of the Elysee, the president's palace. Questioned by a journalist, an official babbled: "They're just

useless files that have piled up, just rubbish", as papers were piled into the truck.

The Ministry of the Interior had to organise a whole convoy of lorries to dispose of the papers it wanted to keep from the new administration. The other government departments all proceeded in their own way, discreetly for the secret services, more brazenly for the Ministry of Agriculture, which called in a removal company.

But one section of the French state apparatus is not worried about the prospect of the first Left government for 23 years. At the conference last month of the union to which most of the notorious CRS riot police belong, there was no regret for Giscard's defeat.

But what if Mitterrand brings in CP ministers, maybe even a CP Minister of the Interior? One expansive CRS man told a journalist:

"Well, why not, if he is a good man? It's often forgotten that the CRS was set up in 1944 by a decree signed by Maurice Thorez [the then leader of the CP]. And who saved the CRS from being dissolved in 1948? The Left".



Militants demonstrate for a CP-SP government

DUBLIN'S DONATION

THE CURRENT lull on the legal front does not mean that we can slacken our political campaign against the libel case brought by Vanessa Redgrave of the 'Workers Revolutionary Party'. Recent signatures to our appeal, *A Labour Inquiry, Not the Courts*, include some 70 from the People's March, 47 from the Oxford labour movement, 38 from the CPISA conference, and several from Manchester, Leigh, and Coventry.

Rochdale and Edinburgh North CLPs, and GLC/ILEA NALGO, are among the latest organisations sending messages of support.

And, in a welcome act of international solidarity, Trinity College Dublin Socialist Society has sent a donation towards our Defence Fund.

Appeal for funds

LABOUR MOVEMENT PRESS DEFENCE FUND

Send donations to Jonathan Hammond [Hon. Treasurer], c/o 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY. Cheques payable to 'Labour Movement Press Defence Fund'.

Name:

Address:

Organisation:

Donation:

A LABOUR INQUIRY, NOT THE COURTS

We, the undersigned, condemn Vanessa Redgrave's and the WRP's use of the courts against the labour movement press. We support the proposal that a labour movement inquiry be set up to investigate the statements made in the Socialist Organiser article.

NAME ORGANISATION

.....

Return to Labour Movement Press Defence Fund, c/o 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

KICK OUT THE TORIES!

Labour democracy

and the
 fight for a
**WORKERS
 GOVERNMENT**

A Socialist Organiser Pamphlet



Now for some action!

JIM DENHAM
marched from Birmingham.

The march has shown the real possibility that exists for building a mass campaign against the Tories and their policies. London was magnificent, but in many ways the response in other towns we passed through was even more impressive.

In Coventry, for instance, we had workers from Talbot and SUs, who could be facing redundancy themselves soon, coming out to support us. We had people coming out of pubs giving us cans of beer, and pensioners coming up and hugging us with tears in their eyes.

I know that all sounds a bit schmaltzy, but it really was a very moving experience. And all these people were saying, 'Thank God someone's willing to stand up against the Tories and do something about unemployment'.

Many of the marchers were very young, and had probably had no contact with the labour movement before. The tragedy was that all too often what they saw of the labour movement, in terms of the March, was its most bureaucratic, conservative face.

Many of these kids are now looking for some action against unemployment. If nothing comes out of the march in terms of an organised, nationally coordinated campaign, they are going to feel badly let down, and



Arthur Scargill in
Trafalgar Square

maybe turned away from the labour movement for good.

We've got to make sure that doesn't happen; we've got to start organising now, while the momentum is still there from the march.

The other thing that really impressed me, especially in Coventry and again in Southall, was the response we got from the black communities, especially Asians. They gave us fantastic support, and that must have been a real education for some of the marchers — some of whom were the kind of kids whom the NF and other fascists recruit among.



NOW

ORGANISE

THE

JOBLESS

Assert right

IZZY COOKE was sponsored on the march by Sheffield Women's Liberation.

I wanted to go on the march because I see women bearing the brunt of Tory cuts. I wanted to assert a woman's right to work, against the Tory propaganda which tells women their place is in the home.

I'll be on the dole again in August, although I've got a STEP job at the moment. STEP and YOF schemes are nothing but a cosmetic exercise by the government, to fudge the true unemployment figures.

There were only a small number of women on the march, which reflects our position in society — invis-



Take on the Tories!

Dave Flanagan, who marched from Sheffield, told us: 'Now the Labour Party should take on the Government'.

The March will probably bring a lot of new recruits for different political organisations. In that sense it's done some good, as the more people who are active the more we can do.

It's also shown up certain political organisations for what they are and how they would act if they ran the country — which would be in a very authoritarian manner. I wouldn't want to say what organisations. But I think everyone will know who I mean. Besides, they might sue me for libel.

Given all this rank and file support built up from the March, the Labour Party should consolidate it so that it takes on the Government. As it did in the past, not like recent years.

The March will also help set up unemployed workers' union, but they should have the TUC supporting and guiding them, including financial assistance — though the unemployed should have overall control of policy in any centres or unions which are set up.



PHOTOS: BOB SUGDEN

It's made me more political

Nigel Reed marched from Leeds, but was asked to leave the March at Northampton because there were 'too many' marchers. Together with some friends, he carried on 'unofficially', joining with the Liverpool leg. But on arriving in London it took them three attempts to get past the marshals into County Hall,

where the marchers were staying.

Nigel reckons, "Not enough room was simply not a question. There was tremendous hospitality, and more than enough food and sleeping accommodation".

I wasn't really political before, but this has made me more political. It's funny that Bates [Brennan Bates, chief marshal on the Eastern Leg] is CP [Communist

Party] and the Morning Star was given away while other papers were pushed to the back. One of the Socialist Worker sellers who greeted the march was hit by a CPER.

It's hard that one person like Bates has been allowed to cause so much trouble, and there was no democratic meeting. We had no elected stewards like the Liverpool leg. But a lot of people have been very good to us, giving us money and moral support. A lot of people attempted to get us reinstated.

Socialist Organiser

EDITORIAL

150,000 in London to greet the marchers; tens of thousands showing their support on the streets along the route, there can be no doubt that the 'People's March for Jobs' was a huge success. It was a dramatic, emotional demonstration of anger at unemployment and hatred of the Tory government.

But after the March, the dole queues remain. The task now is to build a campaign out of the enthusiasm and hope generated by the March.

Unfortunately, little was done on the March itself to plan for continuing the fight. And it was clear that many of the organisers *didn't want* such questions discussed. As far as they were concerned, this was the TUC's token protest, and afterwards the rest of us would just have to sit back and wait for the next Labour Government.

But marchers from a number of areas did get together to discuss organising local activity after the march. West Midlands marchers, for instance, plan to link up with Birmingham Trades Council's unemployment sub-committee, and to push for the creation of an unemployed workers' centre under the control of the unemployed themselves, and for an unemployed workers' union.

They also discussed launching a campaign to recruit the unemployed into existing branches of the TGWU.

It was clear from the chants to be heard on the march ('Occupy, organise, kick the Tories out!') was one of the most popular) and from the discussions that went on long into the night, that most marchers were not content to limit themselves to the TUC's 'respectable' approach, and wanted to use the March to build links with workers on the picket lines and in occupation.

Instead of the TUC's empty platitudes, marchers were discussing demands like the 35 hour week, work-sharing on full pay, and 'jobs, not bombs'.

Some marchers had doubts about building an unemployed workers' union (on the grounds that it would detract from fighting for the existing unions to accept the unemployed with full membership rights), but generally the idea was well received.

Most of all, marchers wanted unity of employed and unemployed workers to bring down the Tories. The march itself had demonstrated that a major obstacle to building such a movement would be the conservatism and bureaucracy of the TUC, but the marchers insisted that the TUC must be forced to recognise and support the struggle — and, try as they did, the Brennan Bateses and the Jack Dromeys couldn't silence that chant — 'Occupy, organise, kick the Tories out!'

Link up and fight

LARRY CARTY has been unemployed for eight years because of blindness.

The march was a great success in terms of arousing support from ordinary people whose towns we marched through and bringing some of the unemployed together — but there were hundreds of missed opportunities.

We should have gone through factory estates, not shopping centres, to build links with the employed. Arriving in an industrial area like Luton on Sunday was just one example of the way the organisation was poor.

Buckets of money were collected for the March. But probably the TUC will claim they've not made anything. The marchers saw differently, and most of us want something to be done with that £10,000 or so to further the fight.

Strengthen occupations like Lee Jeans. Form a fund for aiding other strikers and sit-ins.

Give money to the unemployed to run their own centres in conjunction with people in work and with organisations such as abortion rights groups, nursery and tenants' associations — to form campaigning centres, not the present cup-of-tea-and-chat formula the TUC wants to see.

...ting a woman's to work

ible and unorganised. But we won several victories, like getting all marchers addressed as 'comrades' instead of 'lads', and establishing our right to wear 'Women's Right to Jobs' sashes.

There was a constant battle against sexism on the march, and by the end I think we'd begun to get through to most of the marchers.

I never met anyone else sponsored by a women's organisation, and I think this shows that the women's liberation movement still hasn't really committed itself to supporting the struggles of working class women.

I was part of a delegation to the Cricklewood Garage of London Transport. The workers there

said they felt strengthened and encouraged by the march. It made them feel more confident to see the beginnings of a real movement against unemployment.

What we've got to do now is to sustain the movement. We need to build unity between employed and unemployed, by fighting for full rights for unemployed workers in the unions. We need a national unemployed workers' movement with its own centres. We need to get YOP and STEP jobs unionised, which would destroy the whole nature of these schemes.

Finally, I know a lot of us on the march want to see this struggle as the first step towards a revolutionary change in society itself.



National conference

WE'VE HAD THE MARCH—NOW LET'S ORGANISE!

Organised by Leicester Unemployed Workers Union

SATURDAY 27 JUNE 10.30—5.00pm
Leicester Polytechnic Students Union
Sessions on Organising the Unemployed and The Fight for Jobs

Accommodation available on the Friday and Saturday night

Social events on both nights

Further details 52 Wyville Row, Leicester or phone 0533 857828

Shop floor, not vicars

Schreibers, in Trafford Park, Manchester, has been on short time for 12 months now. Their convenor, Phil Davies, joined the March.

We have got through to people where we have actually gone out to the shop floor. This is something we have learnt from the March, that next time we get down to the shop floor rather than

listening to vicars.

Also, what's good is that it has brought the black community and the white closer together. One of the pleasing things was the reaction we got from the black community in Southall.

Now we are attempting to organise a meeting of all the marchers to form an action committee to put pressure on the trade union movement to set up unemployed action centres.

SOUTHERN ELECTIONS HIGHLIGHT

LABOUR'S WEAKNESS, IRELAND'S ANGUISH

SOUTHERN IRISH politics is dominated by two bosses' parties, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, which originated sixty years ago as two factions of the old Sinn Féin party which led the struggle for Irish independence against Britain.

In the last Parliament, Fianna Fail had 82 seats to Fine Gael's 45. The Irish Labour Party had just 16 seats. Twenty or so is the most it has ever had.

In the '20s and '30s Fine Gael was the party of the then established bourgeoisie, who made a deal with the British Empire in 1921. Fianna Fail emerged from the Republican opposition to the 1921 'compromise' imposed by Britain. Led by Eamonn De Valera, it was a radical petty bourgeois nationalist party, based on a section of the bourgeoisie, small farmers, and a sections of the town workers, small shopkeepers, etc.

In 1932 it came to office, and has held power ever since, with three short breaks — for four out of the last five decades.

It has become the party of the Irish bourgeoisie which began to prosper in the 1930s, and has administered the system for the whole bourgeoisie.

Sharp divisions existed in the bourgeoisie in the '30s between those whose interests were hurt by Fianna Fail's nationalism and Britain's retaliation, and the pro-Fianna Fail rising section of the bourgeoisie — but that is now long past.

Fianna Fail still has a nationalist coloration and Fine Gael doesn't, but in everyday politics there are no fundamental differences now. They vie with each other in opportunist electoral promises.

Fianna Fail, however, has never lost its hold on a big section of the working class. Thus it has stood across the path of development of a mass Labour Party.

The Irish Labour Party was founded by the Irish TUC in 1912 and is roughly like the British Labour Party in structure: it is the party of the organised labour movement. Except that a big part of that

movement votes Fianna Fail.

There are two main reasons for this. In the struggle for Irish independence, the labour movement at first — guided by James Connolly — took the lead. About a quarter of the insurgents in the 1916 Rising were members of a trade union militia, the Citizen Army, which originated as a strike defence force in Dublin in 1913. James Connolly was both the Rising's military commander in Dublin and the acting general secretary of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union.

But Connolly was shot by the British Army in May 1916. And the subsequent leaders of the labour

movement decided to take a back seat to the bourgeois politicians like De Valera.

They organised a general strike in the struggle against British repression, but didn't stand in the decisive 1918 election. They decided instead to give De Valera's Sinn Féin a clear run. The labour movement thus lost the chance of leading the struggle for national independence and stamping it with a working class character. This had two main consequences.

It ruled out the possibility that the struggle in the South would deepen and develop into a coherent struggle for working-class objectives (though in 1919

and 1920 workers' soviets emerged briefly out of strikes in Cork and Limerick). The movement in the south thus had not even a remote possibility of drawing in the Orange workers in the North.

In the south, it meant that the less politically developed workers and the countryside poor were handed over to Sinn Féin's political leadership.

De Valera's section of the Sinn Féin party retained that allegiance through the period of its radicalism and for decades after, when its one-time radicalism was a distant memory.

The other reason for Labour's political feebleness is a direct result of the first and basic historical reason.

Since the '30s Fine Gael has been a minority party, stamped and branded as the party of the rich. So the only possibility of a government alternative to Fianna Fail has been a coalition.

Labour has joined Fine Gael (and others) in brief coalition ministries, in the late '40s, late '50s, and mid '70s. It became trapped as the perennial junior partner in a government see-

saw between Fianna Fail and coalitions led by Fine Gael.

Fianna Fail has lost its early radicalism, but to the 'natural Labour voters' in the Fianna Fail camp Labour has been just an auxiliary of the 'Blueshirt Party' (In the early '30s Fine Gael was part of a fascist-style movement which arose to oppose De Valera's early radicalism. Today Fine Gael is generally more liberal than Fianna Fail, or Labour).

In every election in the '70s, Labour and Fine Gael presented themselves to the electorate on a joint platform, as an aspirant coalition. The labour movement had no distinct electoral presence.

Such politics are criminally short-sighted. When for a brief period, from 1967 to '70, Labour was formally committed against coalition, its active membership grew and it reached its highest number of seats in the Parliament. In the '70s Labour lost seats and the membership scattered or were purged in the turn back to coalitionism.

Also, Irish society has changed dramatically in the '60s and '70s.

It has lost its heavily rural and conservative character. Cities like Dublin have grown enormously. The drain of emigration has ceased to take off the youth, the discontented and the enterprising. Half the population is now under 25. The urban population has grown to over half the total.

All of which indicates that there is potential for a Labour Party with independent politics. Hybrid organisations like the ex-Republican quasi-Stalinist 'Sinn Féin the Workers' Party' have grown seriously in the last period partly because of Labour's ineffective amalgamation with Fine Gael.

Hunger strike candidates

TWELVE candidates are standing to rally support for the Republican prisoners of war. Nine of them are prisoners, four of them hunger-strikers in Long Kesh.

Their platform is a series of demands on Haughey to expel the British Ambassador and break off diplomatic links with Britain.

It seems unlikely that any of these will win a seat. But the transferrable vote/proportional representation system will allow a pretty precise registration of what support there is in the South for the hunger strikers.

SUPPORT THE HUNGER STRIKERS! POLITICAL STATUS NOW!

Demonstrate on June 13th, leaving Finsbury Park at 1.30pm. Called by the London H-Block/Armagh Committee.

LABOUR: BREAK WITH THE TORIES ON IRELAND: SACK CONCANNON!

Meet 2pm July 4th at Mansfield BR station for a march through Don Concannon's constituency. Called by the Labour Committee on Ireland.

IRISH LABOUR'S PROGRAMME

IN THIS election, for the first time in a decade, Labour is not formally pledged to coalition with Fine Gael.

Labour leader Frank Cluskey, a former official of the Workers' Union of Ireland, has proclaimed that what Labour wants is 'the attainment of an equitable and just society. There simply must be a redistribution of wealth in the country'.

Labour advocates a capital gains tax and Fine Gael is loudly opposed to it. Still, the Labour leaders say that if Fianna Fail fails to get an overall majority they will negotiate with Fine Gael (and others) and bargain for their politics the basis of coalition. It calls for a comprehensive wealth tax to raise at least IR£100 million and a basic rate of capital gains tax of 65%. Labour wants a temporary (one-year) surcharge on imports from the EEC (with the agreement of the EEC). This, they say, will create jobs.

Labour advocates a sort of social contract — wage 'restraint' in return for subsidies on basic food, public transport, electricity, gas, and household coal.

Worker-director schem-

es, profit-sharing, and more information for employees about their companies are also proposed. Social welfare proposals include a phased introduction of a comprehensive free health service, free school books at primary level, and old age pensions at 65 instead of 70.

This is a mixture of Harold Wilson's bankrupt policies from the '60s and '70s with a small dose of De Valera's protectionism from the 1930s. Wilson's policies led to a real cut in working class living standards and then to the return of the present savage government. De Valera's led the Irish economy into many years of stagnation and decline, with over a thousand a week emigrating throughout the 1950s, the equivalent of 30,000 a week leaving Britain.

And the basic official Labour Party attitude to Northern Ireland is that it should go away — which means that the issue that concerns the most revolutionary youth will be left entirely to the single-issue Republicans.

Despite this, the election is the first in a decade in which there is a distinct labour movement presence.



When Labour was militant — Connolly's comrade Jim Earkin

London sparks fight for their branch

from the Campaign to Reopen London Central EETPU

LONDON Central EETPU branch has been suspended by the union executive for refusing to appoint one Joe Lees as its delegate to Bermondsey Labour Party, as instructed by the Executive Council.

The EETPU rules give branches the right to elect their own delegates to local Labour Parties. The Executive's extremely strong powers do not stretch to telling branches whom they have to 'elect'.

To cover up the fact that they are totally out of order

on London Central, the Executive have even descended to lies in the minutes of their meeting circulated to all branches.

Lie no.1: they state that London Central had refused to affiliate to Bermondsey Labour Party. In fact, the branch has three delegates, including the doorkeeper, Bro. Terrett, who has regularly reported on events in Bermondsey Labour Party for years.

Lie no.2: They state that the branch committee recommended Lees and the branch refused. In fact the nearest they came to this was when they said that they would delegate him

provided he attended London Central, reported back, and carried out the wishes of the branch. When he made it clear he would not do so, the offer was withdrawn.

The Executive refer to his long service to the union. He was once active, but has not attended the branch for at least 14 years.

Officials are saying the case is sub judice, due to an injunction having been served. London Central knows of no injunction, and branches are free to discuss the issue.

The issue has long gone beyond Joe Lees, to the struggle for a democratic

union. Nearly every branch member has supported the setting up of the Campaign to Re-open London Central, and we want you to raise our struggle on your job and in your union branch and Labour Party.

We need collections towards our activities, and EETPU signatures on our petition.

Above all, we want you to join us in a lobby of the General Council of the TUC (details below). This is the next step in our campaign. Please get delegated by your job or arrange to go to work late, so you can attend. If unemployed, you are doubly welcome.



EETPU members' lobby of TUC General Council
 9am, Wednesday 24 June
 Congress House, Great Russell St, London WC1.
 Contact: Campaign to Reopen London Central EETPU, c/o Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5.

Council workers strike against police tactics

POLICE burst into a meeting between Haringey council workers and management on Monday 8th June and arrested six dustmen.

The six had been accused, some three weeks before, of theft while at work — but no charges had been brought.

Discussions were taking place between the men, their union and management, to sort out the affair.

But on Friday 5th the council auditors asked the management at the Park View depot to arrange an unofficial meeting with the men involved.

The police knew all about the meeting. As it started, nine CID officers came in, pushing people aside, and arrested the six.

They were charged and held for most of the day. But the evidence was so flimsy that by seven in the evening the charges had been dropped.

NUPE and TGWU members at the Park View depot struck immediately and are demanding the sacking of whomever called in the police. The strike has been made official by both unions.

Pickets have been sent to other Haringey Council depots and almost all the council's vehicles are at a standstill.

If the police are allowed to act in this sort of way, and if councils harbour people prepared to set up their arrests for them, no council worker can feel safe.

A few months to bankruptcy?

by Joe Baxter and John Macdonald

LOTHIAN Regional Council faces bankruptcy. Under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill, the Government will be able to withhold grant from a council that refuses to cut 'excessive' rates.

In Scotland supplementary rates are prohibited — so Lothian council (which put in a 50% rate increase for 1981-2) faces having to default on its loan repayments, and probably having the commissioners brought in early next year — unless they chop a massive £53 million off their budget.

A cut of that size would decimate services, and lead to up to 10,000 more redundancies in an already hard-hit region.

Lothian regional Labour Party has reaffirmed

its no-cuts policy, and the regional Labour Group says it will tell George Younger (Secretary of State for Scotland) to 'get lost'.

Already, a one-day strike has been called by Lothian region NALGO, to coincide with the council's meeting on Tuesday 9th. The NALGO branch has also voted to publicise the threat of the Miscellaneous Provisions Bill among its members, and instructed the branch executive to prepare plans of action to be put before a special branch meeting in the near future.

The branch's policy is to support the council's stand: no cooperation with commissioners, and for industrial action against cuts.

However, in practice, the council's position has wavered on several occasions — notably when the education and social work departments

attempted to lay off workers with renewable contracts. Threats of strike action by NALGO and EIS, plus protests from local Labour Parties, prevented these lay-offs.

A major problem in organising an effective campaign is the narrow and exclusive nature of the 'Lothian Action Group' — the body set up last February to win support for the council's stand and to coordinate support action. At the moment it consists mainly of a few officials, and has not functioned at all effectively during the four months of its existence.

Unfortunately, both the NALGO branch and the Regional Labour Party have rejected calls to democratise the Action Group and to bring in rank and file delegates from union branches, Labour Parties, shop stewards' committees and tenants' groups.

At the NALGO branch, the argument was that the Action Group was useless and not worth bothering with! At the Regional Labour Party, the Executive argued that the Party should not try to bring in more rank and file trade union representatives, because it could not tell the unions how to run 'their own affairs'.

But we need a united, rank-and-file-based campaign that can win support throughout the labour movement and throughout Scotland. We will need to go outside Lothian, to areas like Strathclyde where Labour councillors are making cuts and union officials and local parties are going along with them, and mobilise the militants who are willing to fight back.



Mike Cooley

AT A WORKS conference at the Lucas Aerospace Willesden site on June 5, management refused to budge over the victimisation of TASS militant Mike Cooley.

The company insisted that Mike's job had disappeared and he was being made redundant, though they couldn't say why he

Lucas victimises Mike Cooley

was not being offered another technical job or other reasonable employment. The company's hard-line position was put by the spokesperson of the Engineering Employers' Federation, who claimed that Mike had taken off too much time on union business.

The TASS National Negotiating Committee for Lucas met in Birmingham on June 9 to decide on a date for a national conference of senior TASS representatives to plan a campaign to fight the case.

Mike Cooley's 'redundancy' comes only a matter of weeks after the retirement of Ernie Scarborough. Scarborough had been an

EVENTS

Afghanistan: which way towards socialism? Debate and discussion following the miners' gala with Ron Brown MP [Leith] and Sean Matgamna [Socialist Organiser]. 2pm, Saturday 13 June, at the Blue Banket, Royal Mile, Edinburgh.

LEICESTER Labour Committee on Ireland meeting: Support the hunger strikers. Speakers: Jim Marshall MP, Kevin Macnamara MP, Phil Elliott (secretary, Leicester South Labour Party), Mark Hall (AUEW). 8pm, Monday 29 June, Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate.

EDINBURGH Socialist Organiser day school: The Fight to Renovate the Labour Movement and to create a Workers' Government. 2.30pm, Sunday 14 June, at the Trades Council, Picardy Place.

NOTTINGHAM Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy: Ken Livingstone on 'How Labour Councils can fight the Tory attacks'. 10am to 5pm, Saturday 27 June, at the International Community Centre, Mansfield Rd, Nottingham.

GLASGOW Labour Committee on Ireland meeting: Support the hunger strikers. Speakers: Vincent Doherty (National H-Block Committee candidate against Haughey in the Irish general election), John O'Mahony (National Council, LCI). 7.30pm, Monday 15 June, Langside Hall, corner of Pollockshaws Rd and Langside Avenue.

LABOUR COORDINATING Committee trade union conference: Saturday 18 July, County Hall, Westminster. Details: Nigel Stanley, 9 Poland Street, London W1.

UNEMPLOYED SKIN-HEADS against police brutality and harassment of unemployed youth: demonstration, Saturday 20th June, Sheffield. Further details: Bow Centre, Sheffield 750187.

LABOUR PARTY national march and rally against UNEMPLOYMENT Assemblé 11am, Saturday 4 July, National Museum, CARDIFF.

The end is nigh?

"The end of local government as we know it", warned Tom King. And he should know; he's the Minister for Local Government.

Tom King [no relation to the highway robber's sidekick] was delivering a final 'repent now, before it's too late' sermon at the annual conference of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy: "I see a risk not from our actions but from the remorseless march of circumstance".

His boss, Michael Heseltine, has promised legislation in the next session of Parliament to prevent local councils passing on their 'overspending' penalties to their rate-payers. It is not clear what will be in his new Bill to add to his exist-

ing powers to fine 'overspenders' by cutting their grants.

He has already promised a ceiling on commercial rates, and probably new powers to limit councils' freedom to levy a supplementary rate. One option he is considering is making supplementary rates subject to a local referendum.

This idea, while superficially democratic, could be potentially disastrous, since the options in any such referendum are likely to be severely limited. They're not likely to ask 'Are you prepared for a huge part of your rates to go straight to the banks as interest repayment?' or 'Should we get rid of the government that put us in this position in the first place?'

TRENCH WARFARE

A HIGH Court injunction has forced the Time Out workers to stop occupying their offices and move to the premises of 'Action Space'.

Time Out owner Tony Elliot is trying to scrap the pay agreement under which all staff on the London investigative/entertainment-guide mag-

azine are paid the same rate.

The workers are picketing the Time Out offices and producing a strike broadsheet, Not Time Out. Elliot's appetite for court cases was not satisfied with the 88 summonses against the occupation, and he has threatened further action over the title of the broadsheet. The next issue will

now be called just NOT — and 25,000 copies will be printed.

A NUJ chapel officer told us, "We're in one trench; they're in another".

Messages/money to: Helen Mackintosh, NUJ Magazine Branch, Acorn House, 314 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1.

Picket Scarman

"IF YOU think that in Brixton we do not need a judge or any other member of the ruling class to 'inquire' into our behaviour, 'If you agree that the Scarman Inquiry was set up by the Tory government to whitewash the behaviour of the police.

"If you accept that anyone who gives genuine evidence about police repression to the Scarman Tribunal would be persecuted afterwards by the police.

"If you agree that the arrogant and oppressive behaviour of the police against the people of Brixton should be stopped,

"If you see that the main intention of the Scarman Inquiry is to pave the way for intensified state repression,

"If you want all charges against the 400 arrested on and after April 11 to be dropped,

"THEN come along and demonstrate against the Scarman Inquiry when it begins to take 'evidence' in Brixton".

So runs a leaflet currently being distributed in Lambeth.

Socialist Organiser and Socialist Press supporters in Lambeth took the initiative in calling for a mass picket to be sponsored by local labour movement bodies, left groups, and black and gay organisations. Sponsors so far include Lambeth Trades Council, the Anti-Nazi League, Gay Noise, the 'Revolutionary Communist Party' [ex-RCT], Socialist Workers' Party, International Marxist Group, and a local community group, People Against Police



Occupation.

Black organisations have been sympathetic to the call but have not had time to discuss the political basis for the picket. The Brixton Defence Campaign reaffirmed the opposition of the black community to the Scarman Inquiry at a mass meeting on 4th June, and discussed whether to hold a Black People's Inquiry.

As trials of those arrested during and after the Brixton uprising continue, the Brixton Defence Campaign has called for maximum support for the defendants in public galleries and in pickets of courts.

Picket Scarman
 9.30am, Monday 15 June
 Lambeth Town Hall.

Plansee needs support

by Oliver Maurer

THE PICKET lines are still solid at Plansee Tooling, Rotherham.

The dispute started last year when the new management tore up working agreements, offered an insulting wage rise and threatened 12 redundancies. After failed negotiations, workers were sacked and have since been in negotiation and picketing to save their jobs.

After 16 weeks, and after support has come from many local Labour Parties and unions, Rotherham's Labour MP Stan Crowther intends to put an emergency resolution in the Commons. This will condemn the intransigence of Plansee's Austrian management. He is hopeful of getting 100 MPs' signatures.

On Friday and Saturday 5th and 6th June Big Flame and the Plansee Defence Committee showed the excellent Wobblies film in Rotherham and Sheffield with a speaker from Plansee and raised much-needed support and finance.

Send donations and messages of support c/o Len Godbeheve, 138 Greenhow St, Sheffield 6.



AUGUST 8: CARWORKERS WILL MEET TO FIGHT CLOSURES

2000 Rover workers march: will the officials back their fight?

by Bill Peters

'EDWARDES out! Tories out!', were the main slogans of a militant 3,000 strong demonstration which marched through Solihull last Thursday, 4th. They were demonstrating about BL's plan to close the Rover SD1 plant in Solihull and transfer the work to Cowley with a loss of 2300 jobs. The entire manual and staff labour force from the SD1 joined the demonstration. With them were shop stewards and militants from the Land Rover and Range Rover plant and sections of workers from other workplaces in Solihull. The demonstration, which ended with a rally outside the offices of the Tory-controlled council, was a clear demonstration of the militant mood of the workforce. It is clear that the conditions are now developing for an all-out fight against BL management over the current round of

closures, which include not only the SD1 but the Wellingborough foundry and the parts depot in Cardiff. Mick Clarke, the TGWU convenor of the SD1, gave a full report to the BL combine committee which met last Saturday, 6th. He said the SD1 plant had been built only five years ago at a cost of £140 million (which at today's prices is an investment almost equal to the recent Mini Metro investment). He said that the first stage of the rundown will be when the TR7 ceases production in September of this year. This will mean compulsory redundancies in August. 'Many of us must admit that we supported Edwardes in the past', he said. The problem was that Edwardes had 'lulled most of us' in 1977, and had then won the ballot for his survival plan. (He was referring to the joint meeting of plant directors and con-

venors held in January 1978 at which the newly appointed Edwardes introduced himself and his plans for BL, and received a standing ovation led by Derek Robinson. Bob Fryer from Cowley,

- BL workers lobby TGWU national automotive committee on July 18th.
- Full support for the Birmingham demonstration, August 1st.
- Mobilise for the motor industry conference on August 8th.
- Black all movement of work, machines, and raw materials from the affected plants.

who opposed the whole procedure, was then described as a 'lunatic' by Eddie McGarry, TGWU convenor at Canley, who has now taken voluntary redundancy. Clarke called for a public inquiry into the

Edwardes plan (in my view, it should be a labour movement inquiry) — and for a further ballot in BL, which, he assessed, Edwardes would now lose. Pat Hickey, deputy TGWU senior steward at the SD1, made a strong statement to the committee. He said that support was building up, but ultimately the only effective action would be an occupation of the plant. 'Then we will have to fight'. He said that the SD1 were calling for a Birmingham-wide mass demonstration on Saturday August 1st, and were inviting other factories to join in. Plans were being laid, he said, to try to press the national officers of the unions into support for the struggle, and to this end a lobby of the national automotive committee of the TGWU was being organised for July 18th at Smith Square in London. He went on to support the call for a public inquiry into the Edwardes plan. Stressing the problem of getting the support of the national officers, one

delegate from Leyland Vehicles reminded the meeting that when Edwardes balloted the workforce on his survival plan in 1979, the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions had taken full-page advertisements in the national press to advise BL workers to vote in

changed their position. Outside of the SD1, the problems of the struggle were obvious. No delegate from the Wellingborough foundry even attended the meeting (at the previous meeting they called for higher redundancy payments), and the senior steward for the 500 workers remaining at the Canley plant said they were 'lucky' because they would be getting the work from the Cardiff plant after it had closed down. In contrast, Bob Fryer from Cowley Assembly again assured the meeting that no Rover work would be touched in Cowley Assembly whilst workers at Solihull continued to resist the closure. A delegate from Jaguar Browns Lane reported on the all-out attack on the trade union movement in progress at the plant. There was a new plan for a further 150 redundancies, which he assumes will be compulsory. He described management methods as fear and intimidation. They are saying that if the redundancies are not accepted they will close the whole plant. Resistance is now developing on the tracks, where manage-

ment is imposing a track speed increase of 25% on the workforce. The combine committee then decided to call a motor industry conference for Saturday August 8th in Birmingham to generate support against the closures. This is an important initiative, and comes at the time when crucial decisions are going to have to be taken on direct action to defend jobs. The conference should receive the full support of the trade union movement in the car and components industry. A further important decision was taken by the committee. Delegates voted on a proposal from Cowley Assembly to organise a conference of BL workers and shop stewards on victimisations and the attack on the shop stewards' movement in the corporation. No date has yet been fixed, but the conference will provide an important opportunity to examine in detail victimisations such as the Leyland 8 at the end of last year and lay the basis for strengthening and revitalising the shop stewards' movement within BL.

The combine committee heard speakers from the South African Congress of Trade Unions and from the Anti-Apartheid Movement speaking on the mass sackings of BL workers in South Africa. A resolution was adopted pledging solidarity with the victimised workforce and urging BL convenors to check if material was going to South Africa from their plant and to organise blacking action where possible.

favour of the Edwardes proposals. Nothing had happened since to suggest that they had

Snipe's offer: Hobson's choice

Paul Muddle and Clive Bradley
ARTHUR Snipe, the owner of Laurence Scott Electromotors, has put an ultimatum to the workers in occupation at the Manchester factory. It must first be accepted by all concerned that the need to cease production at Manchester is unavoidable due to insufficient work available to operate the factory as a viable settlement. Sc opens the 'compromise' solution of Snipe's ten-point plan. It goes on to make such ridiculous suggestions as that the factory (which now employs over 100 workers) should remain open with a token workforce of ten people. It just so happens that there are ten non-union workers at LSE at the moment. Further, according to Snipe there should be 'no interference with good management practice'. This practice has been used to accept total closure of LSE which Snipe

himself has not been prepared to defend face to face with the workers. Snipe's 'good management' also proposes that the workers leave the LSE site for a week — giving, of course, ample opportunity to close it down while no-one is there. The workers are rejecting these proposals. And the fight to defend the jobs at LSE is gathering support throughout the country. Speakers have been sent to — among others — the Yorkshire miners, who have said they will discuss how to organise effective blacking. (Snipe's main firm, which owns LSE, is Mining Supplies). This strike and occupation is crucial — yet another of the ruling class's 'test cases' to see how far they can get away with mass redundancies. Active support must be given to the LSE workers by all sections of the labour movement. Donations and messages of support to George Fryer, 20 Round Croft, Romiley, Cheshire.

by Jim Denham

"IT'S a crushing defeat, that's what you have to say if you're going to be honest" — that was shop steward Dickie Murphy's comment on the outcome of the 21-week strike at Ansell's Brewery, Birmingham. "But don't blame the members", he continued, "they were solid from start to finish". Another Ansell's steward, Alan Harrison, added "We were sold out by the officials at Regional and Divisional level, but we're keeping our branch together and staying in the union, because the T&G is more than the officials — it's all of us." "Despite everything, the T&G is a working class organisation, and it's our job to make sure that it fights for the working class, and to stop the officials who want cosy deals with the gaffers instead of a fight for working class interests." The dispute, which began on January 14th, was initially to stop the company imposing a Michael Edwardes-style package of conditions at the Ansell's brewery. When Allied Breweries (the owners) announced

'Investigate the officials' say Ansell's workers

the closure of Ansell's, the battle became one to force the reopening of the brewery and to save all 1,000 jobs. TGWU Regional Secretary Brian Mathers, Divisional Officer Doug Fairburn and other full-time officials very soon made it clear that they didn't think the fight could be won. Throughout the dispute, they tried to foist management's 'compromise' deals on the workforce and actively undermined attempts to spread the dispute to other Allied breweries. Finally, Mathers made use of company facilities to send out a secret ballot over the heads of the Ansell's stewards and their branch officers. The two 'choices' offered by Mathers were: 1. "I fully understand that the brewery will not reopen, but wish to continue the dispute with the company, and accept

that as a result the compensation which had been offered will be withdrawn". 2. "I have reconsidered my position and accept that negotiations should commence for the reopening of the Aldridge and Gravelly Park distribution depots, coupled with the acceptance of the offer of compensatory payment to those who are not re-employed." The choice of wording alone makes it clear what outcome Mathers wanted to see! Even then, a mass meeting of strikers voted to continue the dispute until a "satisfactory negotiated settlement" was reached, and pickets were mounted on the gates of the depots to stop workers who had been offered re-employment breaking ranks. But Mathers' sabotage finally broke down the determination of the

strikers. At a meeting on Thursday 4th June they reluctantly voted to call off the strike and allow 300 workers to take the depot jobs. But the workers are not going to allow the comradeship and solidarity built up over 21 weeks of struggle to go to waste. They voted to keep their branch — the 5/377 — together for the re-employed 300 and the unemployed 700, and to use this to ensure that all vacancies in Ansell's are filled by branch members on a fair basis. Shop steward Barry Blinco told SO how he saw the role of the branch in future: "We're keeping the branch together to protect the interests of all the members, and to ensure that the unemployed members can call on the re-employed ones if Ansell's start recruiting

from outside. But more important, we're going to use our resources and experience in the best interests of the rest of the movement — especially workers fighting similar struggles over closure and redundancy. "Rover is the immediate one now. We'll do all we can for them, and I hope they learn some lessons from our defeat. Strike fast, hit hard, and don't depend on officials, councillors or 'public opinion' — only on your own strength and the support of other rank and file workers." Barry Blinco added that he hoped the 5/377 would be in the forefront of a renewed campaign for the regular election of all T&G officials, "so that the rank and file control the 'leaders', and we can make sure that no group of workers ever get let down like we were, ever again." The mass meeting on Thursday 4th had already voted unanimously to demand an investigation into the conduct of Mathers and Fairburn, and branch chairman Ken Bradley will be raising the matter at the unions forthcoming Biennial Delegate Conference.

No faith to lose

IN THE DAYS when a poster of Che was part of the obligatory wallpaper of any half-way radical student, Regis Debray's book, 'Revolution in the Revolution', was part of the obligatory reading.

True, Che had commented with some scorn about Debray's character; but didn't Debray languish for three years in a Bolivian prison for his beliefs?

Now Regis Debray has been installed as a foreign policy adviser to Mitterand.

Are we to expect Mitterand to lead machine-gun waving guerrillas in a final assault on the Bourse?

No. Mitterand's foreign policy, despite his much-publicised sympathy for 'liberation movements' differs only tactically from that of US imperialism; he feels their transparent propping up of Central American dictators will only pave the way for a 'communist takeover'.

On the central question of nuclear arms, he has no differences — even to the extent of publicly backing the siting of new US missiles in West Germany, thus stabbing in the back the opposition inside the Social Democratic Party in West Germany.

Perhaps the best comment on the Mitterand government comes from his finance minister Delors:

"We want France to remain a country where foreign capital can be placed and invested in complete security."

So how does the 'Marxist' Debray end up in such company? It seems a far cry from the Bolivian jungles.

Or perhaps not.

For there is a common thread leading from the romantic guerrillaism of his Bolivian days to his close political support for Allende in Chile and now his participation in a 'Socialist' government, which explicitly disavows anti-capitalist aims: a failure or refusal to imagine that the working class can be the subject of history, can define their own aims and programme. They always require some other agency, whether tightly organised armed bands, or 'left' governments to make the revolution.

And after the Bolivian debacle and the fall of Allende even that sort of 'revolution' recedes.

Debray, the 'Marxist' without ties to the working class, lost his faith in the masses being able to make their own revolution. Or perhaps to quote another fallen prophet of that decade: "You had no faith to lose and you know it."

IT'S THE POOR WHAT GET THE BLAME

Social Services Secretary Patrick Jenkin is well pleased with his Social Security snoops. "In view of the success of the technique to date, we expect to make fuller use of the Specialist Claim Control Teams next year."



Mitterand and Debray: the end of the long march?



He claims they've saved the DHSS £40 million. But a 'Guardian' investigation in the Midlands shows another side to the story. In 13 cases taken up by Birmingham Tribunal Unit — an independent body that helps claimants appeal to tribunals against SS decisions — the DHSS won in only two. 8 were thrown out by the Tribunal; 2 were dropped by the DHSS as soon as they heard the women were being represented; and one has gone to further appeal.

The DHSS lost cases that were aimed at saving £15,000, they lost one claim to recover £1,000 in benefit; and they had to pay back £3,000 in withheld benefits. In the meantime single mothers were left without any money for up to 16 weeks.

The women who successfully appealed claimed they had been harassed, accused of having sexual relationships with visitors to their houses (in one case with the woman's brother-in-law), and interrogated about lovers who were alleged to be supporting them.

So Patrick Jenkin's figure of £40 million 'savings' needs to be taken with a pinch of salt. But even if it were accurate, could any 'saving' justify the humiliation, invasion of privacy, smears and insinuation, not to mention real poverty and anguish forced on the 'suspects'?

Do rich tax dodgers and the real major frauds get found guilty and punished before they even have a chance to defend themselves?

THE POOR GET POORER

The low-paid are worse off now than they were 100 years ago. The Low Pay Unit, using Department of Employment figures, calculate that the lowest paid male manual workers earned less last year, relative to average wages, than in 1886 when official figures were first collected.

And their numbers are growing. There were 1/2 million more low-paid workers in 1980 than in 1979. They estimate that 30% of the full-time adult workforce [2 million men and 2.7 million women] earn less than £75 for a 40 hour week, and another 2.75 million part-time workers earn less than £1.90 an hour.

And the rich...

THE FINEST AND FAIREST

"It is obvious that judges in this country are shrewd men and I still maintain that we have the fairest system of justice in the world", said PC Olds after the sentencing of the two Hells Angels who had shot him.

And well he might.

The jury had thrown out the Police's preferred charge of attempted murder for the lesser charges of wounding, attempted robbery and possession of firearms. Jim Jardine, Chairman of the Police Federation, called it a travesty of justice and attacked the jury:

"I cannot see how any jury reached those decisions. I thought it was an open and shut case of attempted murder."

The press echoed those sentiments and orchestrated it to a public outcry. The "finest fairest system" pulled off a happy ending.

If the police couldn't have their way with the jury, then the "shrewd" judge showed he shared their thirst for retribution.

And to prove the point, he handed out sentences of life and 17 years to two men both in their twenties.

P2: NOW THE PAPERS STRIKE

In Italy, the P2 saga rolls on. Now Italian workers are taking action over the scandal which has already led to the downfall of the government and one officer in the Finance Police Corps shooting himself.

The list of 953 alleged members of the secret Masonic lodge P2, implicated in a web of top-level fraud, espionage and mysterious deaths, included almost all the top people on Italy's leading newspaper 'Il Corriere della Sera': its editor, Franco di Bella; its publisher, Angelo Rizzoli; the Rizzoli newspaper chain's Managing Director, Tassan Din; jailed banker, Roberto Calvi, who owns 40% of the paper; plus leading columnists and contributors.

Now journalists and printers at 'Corriere della Sera' are on indefinite strike calling for the suspension of all alleged P2 members on the staff. They have been joined by other papers in the Rizzoli chain, who are pushing the same demands.

Being ruthless with the Ripper

ALTHOUGH I agree with most things that Jo Thwaites writes about the 'Ripper Trial' (SO 42), it is unfortunate that she limits herself to two main points — the differentiation made between 'respectable' women and prostitutes, and the incompetence of the police in tracking Sutcliffe.

Although these are issues raised by the bourgeois press in one form or another, and there is an obvious need to write a socialist analysis of them, it is a pity that Jo Thwaites overlooked other issues thrown up by the case.

Most of the time in court was spent 'debating' whether Sutcliffe was guilty of murder or whether 'diminished responsibility' was a mitigating circumstance.

In this context it does not help when Jo Thwaites uses the loose, meaningless term 'mad', although she is correct in saying that there is a direct line between what is seen as 'normal' sexist behaviour and Sutcliffe's murders. (Which is not to say that every sexist would carry out such acts).

However, Sutcliffe has been given a life sentence, and the judge wishes him to stay in jail until he dies. Meanwhile many people (Labour Party supporters among them) have been saying that Sutcliffe should be shot, hung, hung drawn and quartered, or executed whatever other way you care to think of.

A FEW issues ago you covered events in El Salvador, and in SO 40 you reported on International Gay Association work in Latin America. The US Embassy in London has responded in the terms of a letter dated 27 May.

It demonstrates supine support for the Duarte regime. The US is clearly buttressing the regime for its own capitalist profit.

The arguments used to justify military aid to El Salvador are similar to the UK Government's arguments for their continued military presence in the north of Ireland.

IAN DUNN,
Edinburgh.



Crowds at the Ripper trial: should socialists support a harsh sentence?

Socialists, I hope, will agree in rejecting the barbaric penalties. But what many fail to realise is that a life (until death) sentence can be even worse. For Sutcliffe life in prison will be specially hellish because he will probably spend most of his time in isolation, on account of fear of attack by other prisoners.

I would argue that such people as Sutcliffe should receive help ('treatment' or assistance 'tread almost sick words'). I do not mean

electrical treatment or drugs, but rather therapy through talking out his problems. This may sound over-liberal, but in my limited view it is the only real way of helping such people. And if the relevant officials were satisfied that people like Sutcliffe had overcome their problems, then they should be released.

This should apply under a socialist or capitalist system, although only a socialist system would be

likely to take this attitude. Socialists who greet the life sentence for Sutcliffe are only supporting a long drawn out or tortuous version of the death sentence.

In many revolutions prison gates have been broken down and all the prisoners released. Let us not forget that sexual prisoners, even murderers, are also victims of the way in which our society operates.

A London SO supporter.

The government of President Duarte is being buffeted from both left and right by those who would like to impose an extremist solution. Atrocities are being committed by extremists of both sides, and the authorities have yet to demonstrate their capacity to bring things under control. In the meantime, the violence itself threatens to impose its own grim solution.

In mid-January of this year a major military offensive was launched by anti-government forces which demonstrated that these forces constituted a military threat to the government. Documents and weapons captured by Salvadoran authorities confirmed that the guerillas had received substantial quantities of arms from abroad, transhipped through Cuba. The United States, it should be noted, was at this time providing no munitions to the Salvadoran Armed Forces. Although government forces contained the offensive, they expended considerable material. As a result, their need for military resupply became urgent. Against this background, the U.S. Government on January 14



Skinhead doesn't mean racist!

IN SOCIALIST Organiser 41 you pointed out that racist attacks had been carried out by skinheads.

By pointing out whenever skins happen to be racist you can create a prejudice against skinheads. In the same way the capitalist papers build up racism by pointing out whenever a criminal happens to be black.

You'll be helping the NF and British Movement if you make skins choose between growing their hair or being thought of as racists. The attacks of this Tory Government affect skinheads as well, so you should try to win them over to socialism, not lump them together with the nazis.

MICK ROWLINSON,
Bristol.

Nothing to say?

AT THE Brockwell Park carnival of the People's March on Saturday 30th, a group of SO supporters went to the WRP stall to challenge them about taking SO to court.

Two of us initially tried to argue with the people manning the stall. They refused to discuss the issue, but a photographer appeared on the sidelines, taking pictures of us.

We asked him to show us his trade union credentials, but he was escorted away by WRP members.

Returning to the stall after fruitless attempts to get an answer from the photographer, we again asked why a self-proclaimed socialist organisation was taking Socialist Organiser through the bourgeois courts. We met with silence, apart from one throwaway comment: "Go away, we'll have plenty of time to discuss this in the

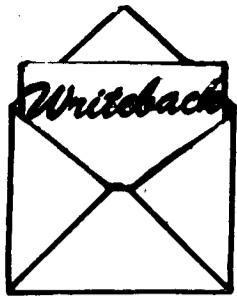
courts".

We persisted — and I found myself facing four burly 'TUC People's March' stewards — one with a bundle of Newslines under his arm — trying to stop me talking to the people on the WRP stall.

These stewards arrived much faster than they did when fascists heckled and attacked the 'Fight Racism. Fight Imperialism' meeting in the park (though the fascists were of course seen off by the people in the park).

At one time or another that afternoon I tried to ask some eight or ten WRP members about their writs, and not one was prepared to say a single word in explanation or defence of their actions — although one at least had the honesty to admit that the intention is to bankrupt us.

PETE FIRMIN



Write back to Socialist Organiser, c/o 214 Sicket Court, London N1 2SY.

Socialist Organiser

BL, Firestone, Rowntree: black workers strike in S Africa

by Bob Fine

THE STRIKE of 2000 black workers at Leyland in Cape Town is continuing and gaining strength. Originally over a demand for higher wages in a notoriously low-paying company, it now also includes a demand for reinstatement of all suspended workers.

The management appears to be floundering. They set a deadline of May 20 beyond which all strikers would be fired, but they have been forced to extend this to 9th June.

Claim

Their efforts to recruit a new labour force in the township have been frustrated. They claim to have 600 workers still working in the plant — 300 of the original workforce and 300 newly recruited. But the number needed is around 2000, and the plant is not functioning. Apparently most of the new recruits are unskilled women — but the jobs to be filled are semi-skilled.

The union (NUMAROSA, an affiliate of the Federation of South African Trade Unions) has countered Leyland's recruitment campaign in the community with an anti-scab campaign of their own. For example, they reproduced the company's recruitment leaflets, overprinted with their own slogans: 'Taking the strikers' jobs helps bosses keep wages low', 'workers have no wages while on strike

— don't let the workers starve', 'unity is strength — don't stab your fellow workers in the back'.

It is clear that the union's response has been effective and they have won widespread support.

Here in England, a telegram of support was sent by TASS after a mass meeting at BL's plant in Leyland, Lancashire. They have demanded a response by management this week.

It is vital to raise the issue in the unions and the Labour Party.

Meanwhile, the strike at Firestone has met with partial success. The workers did not win their original demand for full repayment of pension contributions on leaving or being dismissed by the company. But they have made an agreement for the phased reinstatement of most of the sacked workers.

Irish

500 black workers are still on strike at Rowntree (over the felling of three of their fellow workers). They have called for a boycott of all Rowntree products, and have a nationwide campaign around the slogan of Rowntrees the 'bittersweet'.

Finally, at South Africa's giant SASOL oil company plant, 17 Irish workers on contract with an Irish firm have been dismissed for 'trouble-making' and escorted out of the country by security officers. The 200 remaining Irish workers are threatening to return in solidarity.

Claimants Don't blame the strikers

Socialist Organiser believes that the civil service pay battle can be won through flying pickets and through hitting such vital areas as the docks and airports, not through the closure of the key benefit computer centres at Reading and Livingstone.

For socialists the unemployed and claimants are part of the working class — victims of the capitalist system and of the Tory Government's attacks on the working class. To attempt to make them the battering ram to defeat Thatcher is anti-socialist, and will fail.

DHSS

The present Council of Civil Service Unions tactic, proposing manual payment of claimants' giros instead, also puts the local DHSS and Department of Employment office workers in an almost impossible position, squeezed between management harassment and claimants' frustration.

Claimants should not blame these rank and file workers who are fighting to save jobs and decent living standards. They should blame the Tories — and, in the second place, the civil service union officials who have failed to organise speedy and decisive action against the Tories.

TUC

Claimants should demand the Tories pay the full 15 per cent now. And civil service workers should organise for an all-out strike, with active support from other unions, but keep the computer centres functioning. If necessary direct action should be taken to ensure that cover is given from the computer centres to any claimants currently receiving manually paid giros.

Workers in other unions should insist that the TUC actively supports the Civil Service workers, helping to shut down the docks and airports.

These tactics, coupled with the use of pickets, can most effectively build the unity of workers and trade unionists against the Tories

Tories out to cripple Civil Service trade unions



Soames



Kate Losinska

Yes! All out strike!

by Stephen Corbishley

A DECISION on an all-out strike in the Civil Service is due on 18th June.

After 13 weeks of selective action, on 4th June the alternatives became all-out strike or complete defeat. The Tory Cabinet instructed a reluctant Lord Soames to tell the union leaders that there was nothing extra on the 7 per cent offer made at the start of the strike action. The union leaders had been banking on the fact that the six per cent cash limit would allow for an increase of up to 8½%.

As the civil service union leaders walked out of their meeting with Soames on June 5th, they were followed by 50,000 civil service workers leaving their offices in protest against the Tories' insult.

The Executives of CPSA (the main white-collar union), SCPS (the middle-grade white collar workers' union), CSU (the manual workers' union), and IRSE (tax workers) have agreed to recommend a vote for an all out strike. Only the IPCS (higher-grade civil servants) still argues for selective action.

But the union leaders cannot be trusted. They

have had a naive belief all along that there is nothing political about the pay fight, and that selective strikes in Inland Revenue would bring Thatcher to her knees.

Their new tactic — the insistence by the Major Policy Committee of the Council of Civil Service Unions, headed by Kate Losinska of the CPSA, that there should be a total shutdown of the three remaining big Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) computers — is no better. This shutdown on the automatic payment of giros to the unemployed and claimants has been opposed by the rank and file of DHSS and the Department of Employment, who are expected to carry the virtually impossible burden of maintaining a full service to claimants and the unemployed through manual payments.

The action starts from 8th June. Many DE Unemployment Benefit Offices will refuse to work manually. In DHSS offices the maintenance of the manual system will depend very much on the way that management behave, and the pressure on staff from frustrated claimants. Violence against staff, or suspensions

of staff, will provoke walkouts and local office shutdowns.

But if anything goes wrong, the national union leaders will not hesitate to witch-hunt the rank and file members, and especially the left-wingers who have tried to defend these members from the consequences of a decision they did not favour.

The only way forward now is to build for the all-out action.

Thatcher believes that the civil service union leaders are on the run. She may be right. But the rank and file of the unions know what the consequences of defeat would be: not only a serious cut in living standards, but an assault on jobs, forcing through speed-ups, savaging union organisation and membership, and generally putting the clock back 30 years.

The best way to give members the confidence for an all-out strike is to spread unofficial action to the ports and airports. Flying and secondary pickets are going to be the key to spreading any militant action. Without such pickets, an all-out strike could be rapidly isolated to the most militant areas, and sold out by the union leaders.

Most civil servants are low-paid workers, often women, doing hard, tedious work. The Clerical Assistants are on £59 to £72.60 a week.

The civil service workers are also fighting for their jobs. 37,000 civil service jobs have gone since May 1979, and the Tories are already planning to cut 65,000 more. They'll cut them faster and more easily if they defeat this pay struggle.

The Tories also want to cripple trade unionism in the civil service. They have proposals on the table to ban anyone who has been disciplined by management from holding union office, and to forbid union committees to meet in work time.

And if they succeed in that, it will be just one more step in their drive to weaken the union organisation and cut the living standards of all workers.

Right
wing
fears
power
of
COCSUs

ON JUNE 6th, one hundred militants, mostly delegates, from 24 regional Councils of Civil Service Unions, met at the invitation of Manchester Council of Civil Service Unions to discuss the way forward.

The Executives of CPSA and SCPS had already called for all-out action. The Manchester meeting agreed the membership for a 'yes' vote on the all-out strike. It will also press the national Council of Civil Service Unions to call a national conference of lay delegates from all regional COCSUs. And it will meet again in two weeks' time.

The biggest fear of the leaders, and especially the right wingers like Kate Losinska of the CPSA, is the growing authority of the regional COCSUs in directing and leading the rank and file members. The Manchester conference was a step forward. But the fight should have been started much earlier to wrest control of the strike from the nerveless hands of the official leadership.

The deficit's still hurting

Reporting on a profit of £20 from their recent social, Stoke Socialist Organiser group write: "We intend to make it a regular way of fund-raising and making contacts".

Everywhere the experience is that regular readers are usually willing to make a contribution, if they are asked.

But this fund-raising activity still isn't regular enough. Our accumulated

deficit is now £313, making this month's target £813. And we only have £209.40 so far, including the bankers' orders at the start of the month.

Only a recent spurt in the inflow of paper sales money is saving us from outright financial disaster. Give generously, give quickly! Send money to 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY; cheques payable to Socialist Organiser.