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Socialist Organiser

No.59 OCTOBER 29, 1981 (Claimants and strikers, 10p) 20p

HELP US TO GIVE A LEAD!

Our special appeal for more on our monthly fund, to give us extra to cover our activities in support of the BL strike and to help the Leyland Action Committee, has so far brought in £327 from London, £100 from Coventry — and zero from everywhere else.

So we still need a lot more money, very quickly. All the figures show that London and Coventry are just as hard hit by the slump as elsewhere: they're no longer boom cities. So other local groups should be able to match what these areas have done.

Send money to Socialist Organiser [fund appeal], 28 Middle Lane, London N8, with cheques payable to Socialist Organiser.

JOIN WITH BL STRIKERS



JOHN HARRIS

BRING DOWN THE TORIES

INSIDE, PAGES 7-10: FOUR PAGES ON THE B.L. STRIKE

Pickets block Snipe's ploy

by Paul Muddle

"THE only way these people managed to get in was by the police's use of brute force. Make no mistake about that".

So commented Dennis Barry, convenor at Laurence Scotts in Manchester, addressing a mass picket outside the factory on Monday 26th to prevent management from getting in.

The stewards at LSE called for the picket after Arthur Snipe, owner of the factory, had circulated a letter among all 630 former employees inviting them to a meeting at the factory on the 26th. Snipe's intention was to handpick 150 from the original 630 in order to reopen the factory.

His plans were obvious. No militants or stewards would be among the 150 taken back.

In the event, only one former employee turned up, to be greeted by a picket of 300-400. As management tried to enter the building, the pickets surged forward. The police waded in, and there were some scuffles.

One picket was arrested.

The success of the picket was a victory for the Scotts workers, but no doubt management will try new tactics to end the dispute in the near future. Physical, moral and financial support is still crucial.

There is pressure on Snipe from the Admiralty, to whom he has a five-year commitment.

More important, perhaps, AUEW leaders John Boyd and Terry Duffy are well aware that the AUEW Final Appeals Court is likely to rule that the dispute should be made official again. They may well have put pressure on Snipe in order to save their skins: that's what a lot of people at Scotts think.

And what about the Final Appeal Court? The case originally came up on Monday 12th, but when the vote went against the Executive Boyd adjourned the FAC to Thursday 15th.

The decision of the 11-person FAC was taken in closed session, and since that time no-one at Scotts has heard anything. They can't reach any of the FAC members, and Duffy appears to have suppressed any literature concerning the case.

AUEW members have shown admirable support for LSE in the past. It's vital they continue to do so now that the strikers seem to have not only Boyd and Duffy on the run, but Arthur Snipe as well.

Support conference, November 14th: see page 2

Industrial News

ROBB CALEDON

A silent sell-out?

by Ian McLeish

CONVENORS from every subsidiary of British Shipbuilders reaffirmed shipyard workers' determination to support the occupation of Robb Caledon shipyards at a Combine meeting on 24th October.

The CSEU leadership made no such statement. The Shop Stewards committee at Robb Caledon are disgusted by their "silent treatment", they are receiving both from British Shipbuilders and the CSEU.

All they know about the yard being hived off to Kestrel Marine is what they have read in the papers and union officials didn't bother to tell them why solidarity action elsewhere was being called off. They have guessed that it's because the unions wanted "all things to be equal" before approaching ACAS.

They expect to be manoeuvred into this position of accepting the move to Kestrel. The only way they will accept it though, is if

the whole workforce is guaranteed jobs.

That guarantee does not seem likely since painters and joiners are involved in the occupation and Kestrel doesn't employ those trades.

The workers should know who their prospective employers are soon, with or without a decision from ACAS. The Port Authority will announce on 30th October who the lease for the yard is going to.

For the moment the stewards see no option but to sit and wait for a decision from ACAS. If they do not agree with that decision, they want to see action stepped up to secure their jobs.

Stepping up must surely mean, not a return to ineffective one-day strikes, but an all-out strike linking up with the fight against job losses and closures elsewhere.

Messages of support and donations to: Robert Jones, c/o Finance Committee, Robb Caledon Shipbuilding, Caledon Shipyards, Dundee. Cheques payable to the Finance Committee.

NCB's insult-Gormley's delay

"INSULTING", was how Yorkshire miners' president Arthur Scargill described the National Coal Board's offer of 7 per cent.

This meagre offer was the NCB's answer to the National Union of Mineworkers' claim for a 25% increase in basic pay to give surface workers (the lowest-paid) a basic minimum of £100 per week.

Further discussions between the NUM Executive and the NCB were adjourned until November 11. NUM President, Joe Gormley, shortly to retire to the House of Lords, said he was confident that the offer would be improved.

Scargill was certainly right. The offer is an insult. A face worker would get an increase of just over £6 a week. A surface worker would get a mere £4.25.

Gormley is probably also right. It would be surprising, to say the least, if the NCB did not come back with more.

Whether or not there will be a national miners' strike remains to be seen. The picture today is more complicated than 1972 or

1974. The recession has hit the mining industry badly and there is as yet little sign of recovery. Sales of coal in the UK fell from 123 million tons in 1979-80 to 113 in '80-81, and are expected to fall to 111 million tons in '81-82.

Coal stocks on the surface are 42.5 million tons - roughly one third of the annual production - and it costs the NCB £6 per ton per year to keep it on the ground.

The NCB would probably like to cut back production, but it can't - because it does not want to disrupt the momentum of increased production at pits where it has made heavy investments, and because industrial action by miners blocked its attempt to close 23 pits earlier this year.

The Tories' original plan, thrown out of the window by the February strike, was for the industry to be self-financing by 1983-4. In a few months, a new Coal Industry Bill, to replace the one scrapped after February, will be revealed.

It will almost certainly be

a mixture. Certain types of disease like emphysema will be classed as industrial diseases and there will no doubt be other sweeteners as well, but there will also be an effort to tighten the financial screws.

In this wage round, the NCB and the government may try to buy the miners off again by offering something over the odds, say 12 to 15%. But that depends entirely on the relation of forces.

The amount of coal on the surface is a great obstacle. There is now nearly twice as much as there was in 1972. Nevertheless, given the support of other sections of the working class, there is no reason why these stocks cannot be tied up fairly quickly - and then the economy is still dependent on coal for about 40 per cent of its energy requirements.

There is an urgent need for miners to throw their weight in with other sections of the working class. In 1972 and 1974 the whole working class stood behind the miners, and it is time for us to repay the debt.

GLENCROFT

AFTER 14 weeks, the strike by 15 women at the Glencroft Knitwear factory in Glasgow, for reinstatement and union recognition, finally seems to be making an impact.

The 45 scabs still working are becoming increasingly irritated by the picketing, especially the weekly Tuesday morning pickets, when trade unionists and Labour Party members have been turning up to boost the numbers.

Determined

But the women's fight is still far from being won. In fact, as the dispute continues, the scabs and Newman (the firm's owner) are clearly becoming increasingly determined not to be beaten.

It would also be wrong to assume that blacking is in operation at the airport because the TGWU says so. Many of the depots at the airports are not unionised.

And when Socialist Organiser supporters from Paisley, near Glasgow airport, spoke to local T&G members, they had not heard anything about the Glencroft dispute from their union.

Last week the women's union, the NUHKW, was finally able to tell them the date (in November) of the industrial tribunal that will discuss their sackings.

Intimidated

The union's lawyers have been extremely active in preparing the cases. But the record shows that even on the rare occasions when an industrial tribunal has judged a sacking to be 'unfair', the workers are never taken back on.

Will the dispute continue after the tribunal? It would be a tragedy if it did not. Having picketed six days a week for 14 weeks, surviving on only strike pay and donations, and facing daily intimidation by the scabs and the police, it would be ridiculous if the women were to regard the tribunal as decisive.

The labour movement must step up its support for the women now so that they have the backing they need to carry on.

Messages/money: Glencroft Knitwear Dispute, c/o NUHKW, 44 Kelvingrove St, Glasgow G3 7RZ.

STAFFA PLANS MASS PICKETS

by Amanda Barnes

MASS PICKETS are being organised outside Staffa Products in East London every Monday morning since workers were evicted - by over 300 police - from a three week old occupation to save jobs, on Saturday October 17.

Almost 400 jobs will be lost if the factory closes - and that's one third of all engineering jobs in Waltham Forest.

On Monday 26th the mass picket was around 100 strong, and the mood was optimistic. The police kept a fairly low profile, in contrast to the previous week's tactics, when the six-picket rule was forcefully imposed.

The campaign is now developing into the wider labour movement. Last Saturday the National Ports Shop Stewards' Committee agreed to black all Bowden International and Staffa

products. Support is also encouraging from the NUM, particularly in South Wales, where three pits are already blacking Staffa machines before the NUM have given any official instructions.

The target now is blacking of all Staffa products in the mines and the docks.

The Greater London Council has given official support and is holding a meeting next week to discuss solidarity.

Last Wednesday, 21st, over 400 people attended a solidarity rally at Bethnal Green Town Hall.

The mass pickets are every Monday morning between 7 and 8 at Argall Avenue, Leyton, London E10. Messages money to Staffa AUEW strike committee, 39 Somers Rd, Walthamstow, London E17. For details of speakers and delegations, ring 01-986 8352.

LONDON BOMBINGS

by Martin Thomas

TURN ANGER AGAINST TORIES

MOST British people will be alarmed and angered by the bombs in Oxford St on Monday 26th.

Warnings were given for the bombs.

But the planning of the attacks has been such that any mistake - or any lapse of goodwill or competence by the police! - could lead to a terrible massacre of civilians. The Chelsea bombing, predictably and presumably consciously, did kill civilians.

The Republicans, exasperated at British callousness towards Ireland, apparently do not care too much about this.

Socialists committed to changing society through the action of the working class, British and Irish, share the general horror felt by British workers at the danger of a massacre of ordinary people on British streets.

Yet the reason why working class youths from Belfast and Derry plant bombs in London streets is because successive British governments have planted sectarian paramilitary police, regular army searches, special air-force units, interrogation centres and internment camps in their home areas - and because the British labour movement has allowed this to happen.

Expressing their exasperation, the Provisional IRA statement on the bombing said, "Let the British people take note that Irish children, the victims of plastic bullets fired by their soldiers, do not have the luxury of receiving warnings. In future when we give warnings, respect them".

So far this year seven people have been killed by plastic bullets in Northern Ireland, and others seriously injured. These were not 'terrorists' - several were children.

A new wave of Protestant sectarian murders has recently started in Northern Ireland. The main Protestant paramilitary gang, the UDA, is legal.

But the daily violence meted out by or condoned by British soldiers and the RUC seldom reaches the headlines of the popular press in Britain. Nearly all political leaders - Labour and Tory alike - maintain a bipartisan silence on the repression of the Catholic minority.

Everything is carefully managed to ensure that we know as little as possible of the facts on the Irish situation, and thus to prevent any development of international solidarity between British workers and our

class brothers and sisters in Ireland.

And the British labour movement has been terribly slow to act on what we do know.

The 35% Catholic minority has endured decades of repression in the reactionary, sectarian Orange statelet of Northern Ireland.

Their struggles for democratic rights in the late 1960s were met by Protestant sectarian violence and then the dispatch of British troops, who have occupied Northern Ireland for the last twelve years, trying to beat down the rebellion.

After peaceful civil rights marches - demonstrations - the blanket protest and then the hunger strike in H-Block - even parliamentary elections, giving majorities to Bobby Sands and Owen Carron - the leaders of the British labour movement still maintain a united front with the hard-faced Thatcher government. And the rank and file in the labour movement has not mobilised sufficiently to shift or replace those leaders.

All efforts by Irish Republicans to convince British peacefully persuade British opinion have met mostly deaf ears. So the leaders of the Republican movement are now turning Brit-

ain's tactics against the Catholic minority back on Britain. Thatcher aims to bludgeon the Catholics into submission by persistent military force - so the Republicans now set out to numb Britain sufficiently to numb it into letting go its grip on Ireland.

As socialists we look to the leading role of the working class in the struggle to liberate Ireland from partition and British rule.

We believe that the building of a socialist leadership based on the Irish working class - North and South - is vital to achieve this objective. And we believe it is essential to fight in the British working class for active solidarity with the Irish struggle.

The Oxford St bombings underline the fact that the Republican movement has a very different view of the struggle: its leadership sees the war in purely nationalistic terms and not as a class issue.

But the only way out is to show an alternative path in practice for the justified struggle for Irish freedom - by making international working class solidarity not just words, but action.

That means campaigning to get British troops out of Ireland.

LIVERPOOL LIBERALS BEGIN TO BACK DOWN

Liverpool's Liberal-led City Council has finally - on Wednesday 21st - agreed to begin talks with its 400 striking typists, and to go to a form of arbitration with representatives from the employers and unions nationally.

Everything is still in the melting pot, however, and it is important that the momentum of the strike is kept up.

Messages of support and donations to: Liverpool Typists strike committee, c/o NALGO Branch Office, Duchy Chambers, 24 Sir Thomas St, Liverpool 1.

6 MONTHS FIGHTING FOR JOBS LAURENCE SCOTT NATIONAL SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE

Speakers invited: TONY BENN
CHARLES MORRIS (MP for Openshaw)
RON HALVERSON (National Committee, AUEW)
ERIC CLARKE (Gen Sec Scottish NUM)
LEE JEANS

SATURDAY 14 NOVEMBER

Main Hall, University of Manchester
Institute of Science & Technology
(5 minutes from Piccadilly Station, central Manchester)

Starts 10am. Credentials (four delegates per Joint Shop Stewards Committee, two per other labour movement body), £2 per delegate from W.J. Partlan, 15 Lines Road, Droylsden, Manchester. Donations to the Laurence Scott strike fund: to G. Fryer, 20 Roundcroft, Romilly, Cheshire.

**Socialist
Organiser
EDITOR**

FEEDING THE 800 MILLION

"YOU came here to listen and learn?", a US news reporter asked President Reagan at the Cancun summit, discussing the problems of world poverty. "Yes".

"Have any of the delegates, Mr President, said anything to cause you to change your thinking about foreign aid or how you could help the poor people of the world?"

"No". Reagan relies on the 'free market' to deal with poverty — about the same answer that the British ruling class gave to the Irish potato famine nearly 150 years ago, but on a much larger scale.

800 million people in the world are undernourished. In India and in most of Africa the average life expectancy is in the 30s or 40s. The 36 poorest countries in the world, containing over half its population, spend about \$5 billion a year on health, while military spending in the 16 major rich capitalist countries is about \$200 billion per year.

National income per person in the US is 40 times as high as in the 36 poorest countries in the world. West Germany's national income per head is 100 times as high as Bangladesh's.

Why? When the European powers first seized colonies in Asia and Africa, the areas they seized were often not much less advanced than the colonising countries. But as the European capitalist powers advanced, they pushed the colonies back.

The Indian cotton industry, for example, was practically destroyed in the interests of the British cotton industry.

In some ways and to some extent, the colonial powers did develop the economies of the colonies.

But many of them were transformed into economic backyards of the rich capitalist countries — with economies geared to a single crop or mineral, not to the needs of the people.

Those industries that did develop in them were owned by — and their profits were drained off to — the wealthy classes of the colonising powers.

Especially since World War 2, most of the former colonies have won political independence — often after long, terrible struggles — and sometimes seized ownership of their major industries.

But they still depend on the rich capitalist countries — dependent on their markets, their technology, and their finance. In recent years, debt payments to the bankers of the rich capitalist countries have become a more and more crushing burden on the poor countries.

The few fragments of aid doled out by the rich countries usually just increase the dependence. The basic economic mechanism of capitalism works so that the rich become richer and more powerful, and the poor — even the relatively poor capitalists — fall further behind.

A real workers' government in a country like Britain would undertake a massive programme of aid in collaboration with the governments of the poor countries, helping them in joint economic projects.

Revolutionary change in the poor countries themselves is also necessary to end the poverty and starvation. Many of them have super-rich elites and mass unemployment amid their poverty.

The great popular revolutions in China and Cuba — despite the bureaucratic form of the regimes resulting from them — have already

managed to seriously develop their economies and deal with the poverty in those countries.

A real workers' revolution in the poor countries could mobilise their resources, redistribute their wealth, and begin to deal with poverty.

Lessons of Croydon

LABOUR'S VOTE in Croydon North West was barely half of the 1979 General Election figure. The Tories', the same.

On a somewhat lower total turnout, those shifts gave Liberal-SDP candidate William Pitt a sizeable win.

All this is a long way off proving that the Liberal-SDP alliance is the new dominating force of British politics, or even that it is solid and durable.

Middle-class Croydon is just the sort of area where it should do well, and especially in a by-election. Internationally, SDP-style new parties have often done well for a few months or a few years, and then faded.

But certainly the Liberal-SDP team could do well enough at the next general election to lose it for Labour — perhaps even to win a place in a new

coalition government. It is a serious problem not only for the Tories but also for the Labour Party.

What to do about it? The right wing has an answer. The left wing is to blame. Labour should perhaps not dump its policies, they say, but it should dump the leaders who speak out for those policies and any mechanisms to make sure the policies are carried out!

But the whole purpose of a working class party is to challenge the established opinions and values in a capitalist society. That does not mean it must be in a minority — it means having to work to win a majority.

If Labour's leaders constantly proclaim that Labour's own policies are extremist, and that the people fighting for the policies are dangerous and disruptive, then the work to win a majority faces huge difficulties.

Winning support for radical policies also depends on people learning through struggle that the existing order of things is not unchangeable, and that working people can change it. When trade union leaders are doing all they can to fend off struggle and proclaim it hopeless, then parties of the wishy-washy centre like the Liberals and SDP are bound to be boosted.

The lesson of Croydon is: we must change our leaders and transform our movement so that it can really campaign for its own policies.

Prosser case goes to court

THREE prison warders are to go on trial for murdering a prisoner, despite two magistrates' judgments that there was insufficient evidence.

Barry Prosser was found dead in Winson Green jail, Birmingham, on August 19th, 1980. His injuries could not have been self-inflicted. He had received a blow (probably from someone's knee) so hard that it had burst his stomach; his gullet had been perforated; there was severe bruising around his genitals, on his back and on his feet; and his toes were broken.

Suspicion immediately fell on senior prison officer Melvyn Jackson. He was the only person on the premises who had a key to Prosser's cell.

The prison officers' story was the same from the start — Prosser, they claimed,

had had to be restrained in order to give him a sedative injection. No more than reasonable force was used to administer the sedative.

This story is 'supported' by a prison hospital notebook bearing an entry which reads 'This man has gone completely berserk, shouting, screaming and banging in the most extreme way. Very, very disturbed and hallucinating. Thinks he is being beaten to death.' (!)

Lawyers for the victim's family have persistently argued that this notebook entry was made after Prosser had been beaten in order to provide a cover.

Exertion

The police failed to see any signs of external injury on the dead body and allowed the cell to be

cleaned out, so removing any possibility of forensic tests identifying Barry Prosser's assailants.

At a hearing in September, the magistrate chose to give no credence to the testimony of Patrick Galvin who had been a fellow prisoner at the time of Barry Prosser's death. He was the only person offering evidence that the three accused officers had gone into Prosser's cell before 7.15 that evening (the time of the notebook entry).

Galvin had told an inquest last April that he had heard a noise that sounded like 'leave me alone' coming from the cell, that he then saw the three officers outside the cell showing signs of exertion, and that one of them had told him the next morning to keep his mouth shut.

Prison officer Melvyn Jackson now faces trial for the third time for the murder of prisoner Barry Prosser, after what the DPP called a 'very unusual' move. Andrew Hornung explains.

Last February a local full-time magistrate decided there wasn't enough evidence. Then Galvin came forward and the prison officers were brought to court again in September, when once again the magistrate ruled that there was not enough evidence for a trial. Now the DPP, under mounting pressure, has gone over the heads of the magistrates and sent the three for trial on a murder charge.

Magistrates' courts used to be known officially as 'Police courts', openly the instruments of the local police. According to the Observer, in the past eight months Birmingham magistrates have refused to commit two policemen charged with corruption, and two others charged with assault and unlawful detention. And in Wolverhampton, magistrates have refused to commit five policemen charged with assault, though there are several independent witnesses.

The Prosser case shows once again that 'the law' — cops and prison officers — are virtually above the law, presenting a wall of silence and having all the means for a cover-up in their hands.

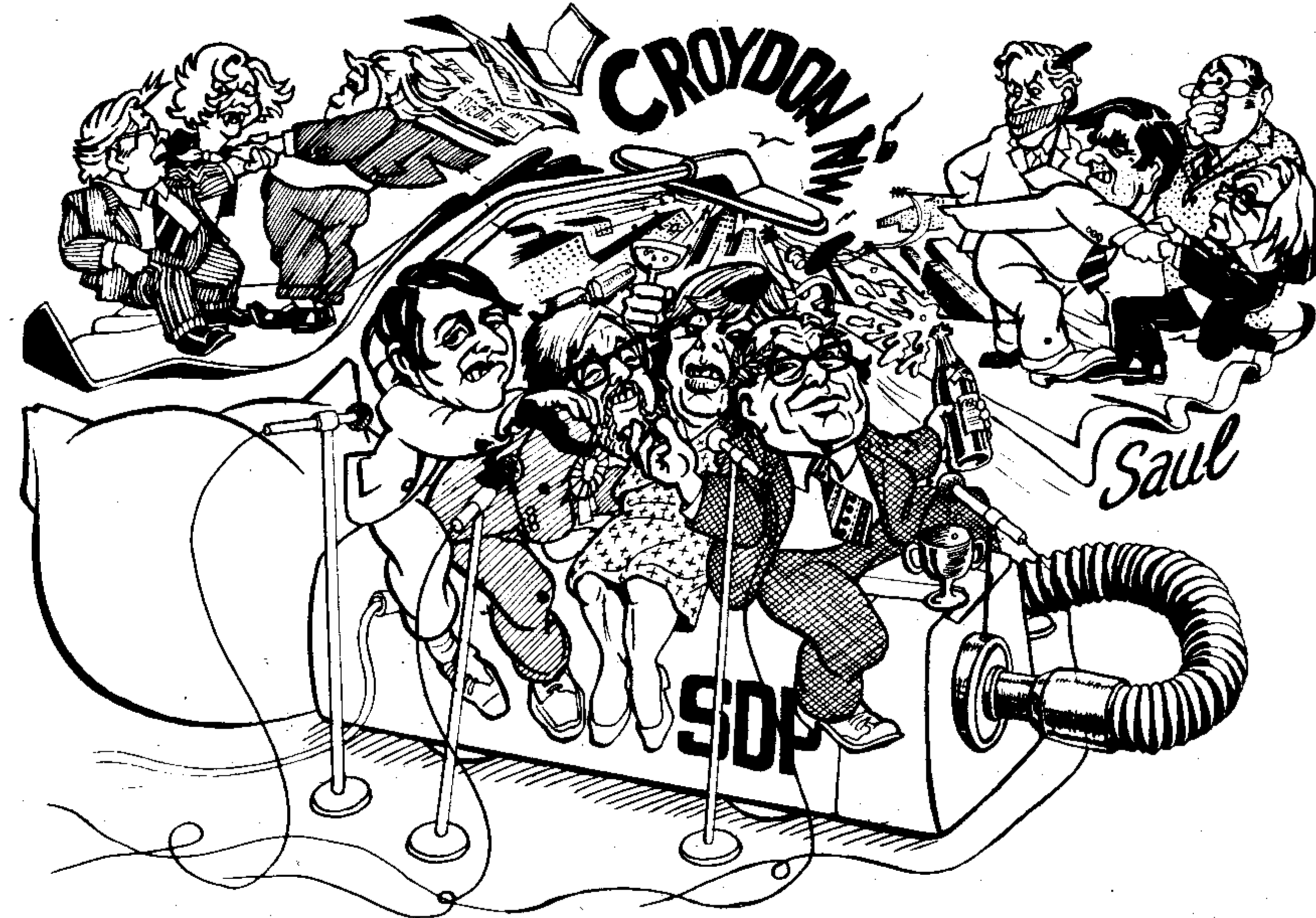
Barry Prosser was in need of psychiatric care. A few days before he was murdered, the prison med-

An inquest jury decided last week that Winston Rose, who died in police 'care' this summer, was unlawfully killed.

ical officer recommended that he be moved to an NHS unit.

Barry Prosser was in Winson Green after being charged with damaging a door handle worth about £1.50. He had not been convicted; he was only in prison because a magistrate refused him bail and remanded him for reports.

But convicted or not, once in jail he slipped into a world where the victims have no legal rights at all.



Left-wing Youth get organised

THE FOUNDING conference of the National Left Wing Youth Movement of the LPYS will be held in London on November 21st-22nd.

This conference will thrash out our policy document, expanding on our basic 'Where We Stand' debated and voted on at the June conference where the nucleus of the NLWYM first met.

Since June we have held meetings up and down the country and produced two issues of our paper Class Fighter, as well as a special issue on the riots.

We had a contingent of 50 youth at the YS summer camp, where we made a big impact.

We ran a workshop at the Workers' Socialist League rally at the beginning of October, where a discussion was started on organising black self-defence and the links between youth culture and music. That's a discussion which will be continued at the November conference.

We'll be having sessions on unemployment, YOPs, fighting racism and fascism, youth culture, women's and gay liberation, and lots more. There will be films and exhibitions, and we'll be electing a new Steering Committee.

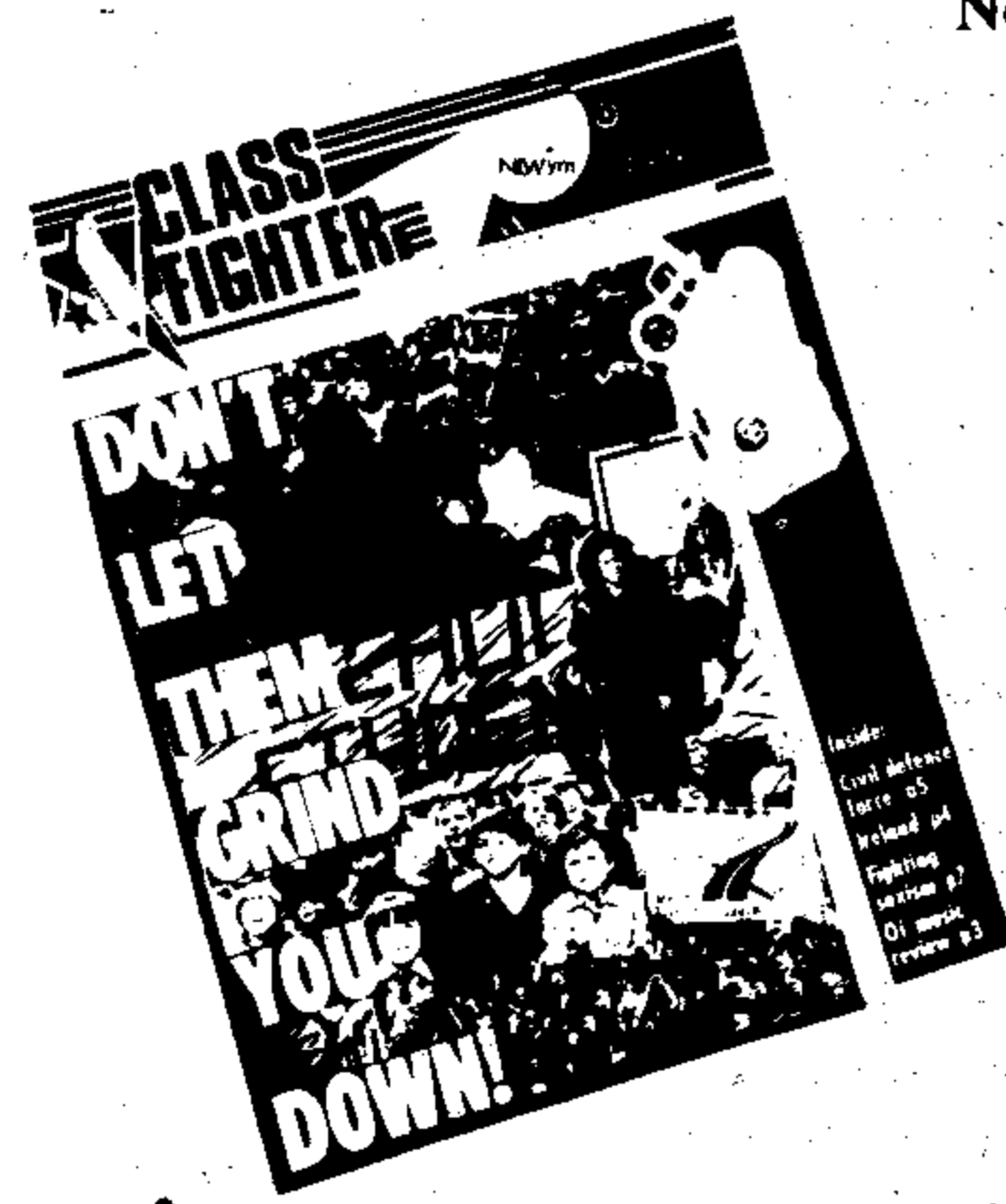
There'll be a gig on Saturday night. Food and accommodation will be

available both days.

All this for only £2, you have a job, and 50p you haven't or are on YOPs. You can't afford to miss it.

Write in now for conference documents, registration, and details of transport from your area. NLWYM, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX.

New issue of Class Fighter, paper of the National Left Wing Youth Movement.



10p, plus postage, from BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX

No shame?

We've always said these people we send to Parliament have no shame. Well, it seems there's one exception. Ron Brown, the much-named [by the Speaker] MP for Leith, says he's too embarrassed to tell people what he does, so he tells them he's an engineer — his previous job before entering the House.

Would it be too much to hope that one day Labour MPs and Labour governments had nothing to be ashamed of in the first place?

FOR a small sum, you too can have access to confidential personal details held on the Police National Computer. New Statesman investigator Duncan Campbell has established proof that ex-police officers working for private detective agencies can use their links with working policemen to gain access to the computer which holds over



IF you're black you stand a far greater chance of being allocated poor quality council housing, and you're more likely to have a long wait. And now it seems that you can't win either, if you try to buy your own house.

A report on Asian house

forty million records, including four million names and 20 million vehicle records.

All this for a mere £4 per computer check.

It seem that those in the police force supplying the information are selling themselves short. Surely they could make a bigger killing than that!

purchasers in Leeds by Linda Stevens and Malcolm Harrison of Leeds University has found that they have special difficulties in getting mortgages.

Building societies, it seems, are unwilling to lend money to buy houses in parts of the city where ethnic minorities form a large section of the population.

The study focused on an area covered by the Support Lending Scheme, brought in specifically to encourage building society funds into inner city areas, and found even here that the refusal rate was higher and loan percentages lower in areas where Asians have settled.

World news

POLISH STALINISTS SEND IN THE TROOPS

Alexis Carras looks at Jaruzelski's latest moves



ON FRIDAY evening, 23rd, Polish radio and television beamed the news that from now on army detachments will be deployed throughout the country - 'to keep [the government] informed of all negative events, to oppose such developments, and to give the necessary aid to the population and the local centres of government'.

The role of these army detachments, about 900 in all, each consisting of about four soldiers with a commissioned officer at their head, will be to prepare the country for the gruelling winter ahead, to fight all forms of speculation, black marketeering and waste, and to ensure the proper distribution of goods and foodstuffs.

They shall be 'at the service of all citizens, receive their complaints and sufferings, deal with unjust phenomena, help the poorest' etc... A veritable Knights of St. John service?

But the hope of General Jaruzelski, the new Polish government leader, is that slowly, without too many ruptures and explosions, he can ease the army into major administrative positions in the localities and regions, to take over the running of economic and social affairs from a discredited and corrupt civilian bureaucracy.

The Polish army, as supposed guarantor (or symbol) of national sovereignty, untainted by direct clashes with the working class (Jaruzelski has vowed never to use troops against the workers), is the only possible alternative left for the bureaucracy.

This move comes in the aftermath of violent clashes in two major provincial cities, Katowice and Wroclaw, between protesting workers and the local militia.

Symbolic

In Wroclaw four Solidarnosc militants have been arrested for distributing material 'slandering the socialist fatherland'.

The deployment of some 900 small army units throughout the country will hardly alter the balance of forces substantially by physical might. Jaruzelski's measures are more symbolic.

Following on from his election as both Party and Government head, he is trying to balance between different wings of the ruling PUPW and at the same time regain control over the working class.

Alternatives

More than ever, a workers' plan of production, a fight for workers' control, and increased efforts by workers to convince the Polish troops not to fire on their civilian brothers and sisters, are a crying urgency.

Either all out for power, whatever the attendant risks - or the working class will be called on by the Stalinists to foot the bill and will find itself stripped of any remnant of veto and social control.

These are the alternatives staring the Polish workers in the face.

Step up fight on Ireland!

BRUCE ROBINSON contributes the Labour Committee on Ireland column this week.

The results of the Labour Party conference debate on Ireland showed that the Labour Committee on Ireland still has a lot to do to

get the Labour Party to adopt a clear policy against British domination in Ireland.

Although the LCI's own resolution was heavily defeated, Composite 26 - with a less clear position but nonetheless calling for a commitment to withdrawal - was clearly carried on a show of hands and only defeated by the unions' strength after a call for a card vote.

As on many other issues, the CLPs were prepared to take a left-wing stand, but were thwarted by the power of the union leaders. The LCI recognises the need to take its campaign into the unions, and in the coming months will be putting its efforts into a Labour Movement Conference on Ireland.

on Irish unity". Where possible, regional conferences should also be called to pave the way for the national conference.

For daring to say that the people who set off the bomb in Chelsea had political motives, Ken Livingstone has been hounded by the press and the Tories, who last week unsuccessfully tried to censure him in the Greater London Council.

Labour MPs and others in the Labour Party have added their voices to the baying pack, telling him to 'shut up'.

The issue is not just whether you think Ken Livingstone's remarks were correct or you don't (we do).

For years and years there has been a conspiracy of silence on Ireland in the labour movement. It has only recently begun to break down.

Those attacking Ken Livingstone are doing so because a prominent Labour Party member has spoken out and they would prefer Ireland to remain a subject for 'consensus'.

The LCI strongly supports the right of Labour Party members to free speech on the issue of Ireland, and has issued a petition to the NEC defending Ken Livingstone's right to speak out and calling on the NEC to do likewise.

We will be presenting the petition to the next NEC, and hope to hold a meeting in London in the same week. Further details from me, c/o 15 St Helena House, Margery St, London WC1.

Practical

The LCI is calling on all its supporters to get their CLPs to pass the following resolution and send it to the NEC:

"While welcoming the policy of Irish unity as decided at this year's conference, we recognise that no practical provision is made to realise this policy.

"We call on the NEC to move on Resolution 164, which calls for the holding of a one-day special conference to discuss the question of Ireland and formulate positive policy to go in the manifesto.

"We further suggest that the conference formulates ways of campaigning to achieve Labour Party policy



Jaruzelski - a political balancing act

Chinese Stalinists play the American card

by Chin Yang

China has proposed a 9-point peace plan to reunify with Taiwan.

The offer to the Nationalist KMT (Kuomintang) includes 'joint leadership' of a unified China and complete autonomy for the KMT over Taiwan as a special region, allowing retention of its capitalist economy, its armed forces, and trade and cultural links with other countries.

Peking insists on only three conditions: the KMT must abandon calling Taiwan the Republic of China and agree to be part of the People's Republic of China; they must adopt the 5-star flag as the national emblem; and they must agree that foreign policy be run from Peking.

the Chinese workers, Chiang Kai-shek, has had his birthplace restored; Peking has offered to allow his ashes to be transferred back to the mainland, and has set study groups to re-write history by re-casting Chiang as a flawed hero and patriot.

Flight

These announcements were made on the eve of October 1st, anniversary of the 1949 revolution which drove the KMT into refuge in Taiwan. And Peking then made a great fanfare of October 10th, anniversary of the 1911 revolution, which is normally only celebrated by the KMT.

The response from Taiwan was swift and as expected. The only way to achieve re-unification is to abandon the communist system, they declared. By re-unifying, the KMT would not only lose face but undermine their legitimacy to rule Taiwan - bringing about a flight of capital, and a revolt from Taiwanese opposition groups and parties favouring independence for the island.

Why did Peking make the offer?

One Taiwanese wryly countered the Newsweek headline 'Playing the American Card' by remarking

that Peking is 'playing the American card'. Peking aims to influence US imperialism and the large overseas Chinese community, so they in turn will put pressure on Taiwan.

At present the Reagan administration is unable to make up its mind on whether to sell its latest F16 jet fighters to Taiwan.

On the one hand, there is a strong Taiwan lobby, an arms industry seeking lucrative contracts, elements in Reagan's camp who are deeply 'anti-communist' as opposed to simply 'anti-Soviet', and those like Cyrus Vance who oppose upgrading of relations between the USA and Peking for fear of annoying the Soviet Union.

Submarines

On the other hand, there are interests seeking economic penetration of China: those who want to sell arms to Peking in order to further the down at least a quarter of the Soviet Union's submarines, ground forces and aviation, and those who are embarrassed by the high-handed manner with which the KMT deals with its opposition.

Peking is trying to add its weight among the contradictory pressures which

shape US imperialism's foreign policy by undercutting hardliners with its peace offensives.

Despite the wishes of those in the KMT who favour secret negotiations, and its own wish to expand the already very extensive indirect trading between the island and the People's Republic (via Hong Kong), there is little prospect of success. China's post-capitalist social-economic system, and Taiwan's neo-colonial economy dominated by imperialist investment, are basically incompatible.

China's own assessment of its inability to retake Taiwan by force means stalemate.

Only two factors loom on

the horizon - the continued rise of the Taiwan working class and opposition groups who threaten the KMT's rule; and the contradictions within China itself, with the re-emergence of a sector of rich peasants, and an urban working class fighting against inflation, unemployment, and productivity drives imposed by the regime's economic modernisation policies.

Our task is to publicise and support the struggles of the workers in both Taiwan and China, until they overthrow both the KMT and the CCP and replace them with a regime genuinely based on democratic workers' and peasants' councils.

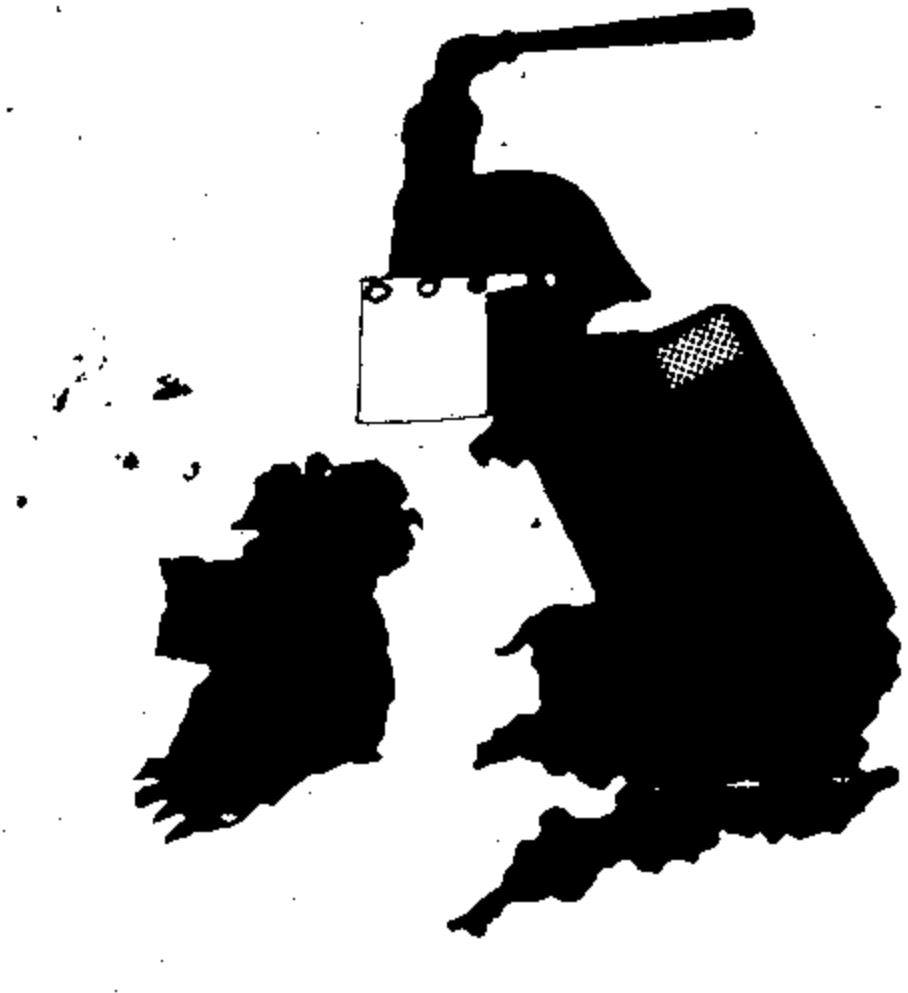


Ashes

These are the most far-reaching proposals Peking has ever made to its rivals and which a whole series of other moves.

Recently the memory of Sun Yat Sen, leader of China's republican revolution in 1911, has been specially honoured with the former placed opposite Mao's in Peking's Tiananmen Square.

Even the KMT butcher of



World news

FRENCH UNION REVOLT

RENAULT'S main factory at Billancourt, near Paris, has been closed for the last four weeks.

At first several sections of unskilled workers went on strike for a major regrading claim and against speed-up.

On October 9th the management responded by locking out the rest of the plant.

The local union leaders have given little lead in fighting the lockout, though they did not at first oppose the strikers. They have called two one-day protest strikes of all Renault workers, which have met with a varied response.

Although the management brought forward overall negotiations and made a number of concessions, the negotiations broke down over the way the management discriminated against the workers in the section that had been on strike.

Appointed

Much has been made of how the management of the nationalised Renault company, appointed under right wing governments, provoked the dispute to embarrass the Mitterrand government. More importantly, the

strikes are the first indication of the frustration of workers who expected real change after the Left came to power but are beginning to recognise that they still need to fight for their independent interests.

The honeymoon period of the government is coming to an end.

Scrutiny

Mitterrand's plans for nationalisation are running into trouble in the face of filibustering by the Right in Parliament and economic sabotage. This week one of the major firms to be nationalised transferred ten per cent of its assets to a Swiss subsidiary - Mitterrand is, of course, unwilling to call on the workers to take control of these companies and open their books to public scrutiny.

At the same time, the government is facing increasing economic problems. Finance minister Delors has opened negotiations with the unions to try to get them to accept a 12 per cent ceiling on wage rises (inflation is running at 14 per cent), in return for concessions over the unions' legal position.

by Bruce Robinson

Edmond Maire, leader of the Socialist-oriented CFDT, recently made a strong attack on the government, which in turn prompted a strong defence of Mitterrand by the other federations, including the CP-led CGT.

The parties which form the government also face problems. The Socialist Party, which held its congress this week, faces renewed conflict between the Right, led by Michel Rocard, who argued against 'maximalism', and SP members who are frustrated by the slowness and ineffectiveness of the government's measures.

The CP, which is holding its congress early next year, is torn by debate about the party's disastrous showing at this year's elections. A number of oppositionists in the Paris region have been expelled.

The Mitterrand government, and the CP and SP, will not be able to satisfy the demands and aspirations of workers like at Renault. As the government tries to pass on the costs of the capitalist crisis, those aspirations will come increasingly into conflict with the government.

Turn anti-apartheid struggle towards direct links!

by Jim Farnham

FIVE years ago, the bosses' apartheid state tried to drown the awakening movement of black workers and youth in blood. But the hundreds, possibly thousands of murders by the state, did nothing to destroy the underlying militancy and determination of the working class.

There have been lulls in the struggle, and specific setbacks and defeats. But none of this has been able to reverse the forward drive of the working class.

Today, black workers stand more militant, better organised, more mobilised and confident in their own strength than ever before.

Strikes have spread from one part of the country to the next, from one group of workers to another.

Workers in the motor industry, textiles, mines, transport, media, power, food and canning, paper, chemicals, engineering and metals, construction - all of these and others have taken strike action, despite the fact that every strike has been illegal and accompanied by non-stop police brutality, victimisation by bosses, and bans on almost every mass meeting.

Strike after strike has forced wage increases from the bosses, who rely on massive repression and unemployment to keep wages at terrible poverty levels. Again and again, the government's plan to use the Wiehahn laws to strangle the unions has been forced back.

The bosses and their government have been forced by the growing strength of the workers' organisations to recognise the living reality of those organisations - whether or not they give formal recognition.

Through collective action,



workers have forced concessions even on the issue of the Pass Laws, which are absolutely essential to state control.

Widespread action in the schools, and united action by students and workers, have forced changes, concessions and backdowns in the government's education system. The threat and reality of mass action has forced government, bosses and their stooges to hold back bus fare and rent increases in many areas.

Guardian

This growing class movement has at every stage thrown the ruling class and its apartheid regime into deeper division and political crisis. And now the weakening gold price is revealing the extent of the deepening economic crisis.

The last few months have seen a significant rise in the level of repression - more arrests and attacks by the official forces of the state; terrorist attacks by the unofficial forces of the ultraright, who each day become more organised and strident in their racism and hatred of the workers' movement.

In the developing struggle which they face, the black workers of South Africa must not be left to stand against the enemy alone.

There are many who are eager to pose as allies of the oppressed black people of S. Africa. Big capitalists who grow richer each day from the exploitation and oppression of working people allow their liberal mouthpieces to criticise the way in which exploitation and oppression are organised in S. Africa.

Imperialist governments are quick to condemn apartheid, in public - which in practice they support and rely on the apartheid state as a crucial guardian of bosses' control and profits in Southern Africa.

Neo-colonial stooges like Kaunda and Gandhi declare their support for the

in Britain. The international capitalist class and imperialist governments connive with their ally South Africa against needs and demands of workers. But exactly same international links the basis for effective powerful working class action.

Despite imperialist calculations for a halt to supplies to S. Africa, a continue to flow in. Only working class action black supplies of arms related materials that stop the flow.

Only through the struggle to open the books, the struggle against secret diplomacy, can realities of imperialist complicity with their SA be uncovered by the working class, and effective arms blacking be implemented.

In addition, the struggle for solidarity demands fight to open the books, investigate the links every company with S. Africa - and thereby to the basis for immediate supportive class action whenever struggles develop at linked companies in S. Africa.

This requires the building of direct workplace links, so that demands and needs of workers can be conveyed to their class brothers and sisters.

The AAM leaders with the apparent support of ANC and SACTU leaders, has recently rejected motion calling for the building of such direct links. This, they have the support of the British trade union bureaucrats, who see independent working class mobilisation as a challenge to their control.

Too often have requests for solidarity action workers in S. Africa swallowed up in bureaucratic manoeuvres - shop stewards and workers on the shopfloor not being informed by union officials. This has happened in both Leyland strike and strike at Wilson-Rowlatt (subsidiary of Rowntree Mackintosh).

Reformist and Statist bureaucrats fear that workers are mobilised to take blacking and strike action in support of workers, then they soon be taking the action in support of workers at home.

We must use these to build international solidarity action and united struggle to end poverty and oppression

Setback to Iran's President

THE Majlis, the Iranian parliament, has voted to reject the nomination of Ali Akbar Velayati to replace the previous Prime Minister, who unexpectedly resigned on October 15th after three weeks in office.

Velayati, an Islamic fundamentalist trained in the US as a doctor, had been the choice of President Khomeini.

The Islamic Republican Party, which totally dominates the Majlis, would normally be expected to support the President's nomination,

and his rejection indicates divisions within the IRP. But there is no sharp clash - Ayatollah Khomeini praised the 'spirit of independence' of the Majlis.

The silence of the western press on the matter of executions and torture in Iran - a silence so starkly in contrast with the outcry when American hostages were held in Iran - is likely to be broken somewhat now that the Khomeini regime has begun a wide scale purge of intellectuals and writers, many of whom are well known in the West.

Some of those arrested have no record of left-wing activity, but among those seized last week was Reza Baraheni, a long-term opponent of the Shah, founder in the US of the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran.

Baraheni is well-known as the author of 'The Crowned Cannibals', an account of torture in the Shah's jails including his own 102 days' detention.

BACKING FOR TURKISH FIGHT

THE RECENT decision by the mid-Cheshire Trades Council to affiliate to the Turkey Solidarity Campaign marks an important break from its routinist, bureaucratic, non-political past.

The unanimous decision came after a strong intervention by members of the local Council of Action, who described the effects of General Evren's coup on the Turkish trade unions in the past twelve months.

The decision was swiftly followed by the drafting of two letters of protest, one to General Evren in Ankara and the other to the Turkish Embassy in London.

Several delegates also signed the petition to the British Home Office supporting Turkish socialist Dogan Tarkan's appeal for political asylum.

Winsford Council of Action has also agreed to affiliate.

IN an effort to impress 'world opinion' with his democratic intentions, General Kenan Evren last week opened the first session of Turkey's Consultative Assembly.

This hand-picked rabble replaces the elected Parliament that Evren's coup abolished over a year ago.

The EEC certainly wasn't impressed - though it doesn't take much to impress them. All political parties were banned in the same week, and former

Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit is to be brought to trial for violating a military decree which barred him from making political statements.

As a result, the Common Market from £360 million-worth of financial aid to Turkey. No doubt, however, with the victory of the Left in the Greek elections, the US will rush aid to Turkey in any case.

Turkey is already the world's biggest recipient of foreign aid.

Korean tortures

RECENT reports and letters reaching Japan give an idea of the reign of terror that has been unleashed in South Korea since the military dictatorship of General Chun Doo Hwan took over a year ago.

A victim of the 'purification' camps for militant workers and other opponents of the dictatorship speaks of the 'agony and misery beyond description' and of injuries and death at the hands of Chun's army officers.

Even the official figures admit that 58,000 people were 're-educated' between August last year and the beginning of 1981.

Despite the formal lifting of martial law in January, the daily reality of martial law style terror continues. Arrests, torture and executions continue, and the purification camps still carry out their work.

Chun's regime is the weapon of the bosses -

first and foremost the imperialist bosses of the US and Japan with their massive stake in the exploitation of Korean workers. (The US imperialists also have 40,000 of their own troops occupying South Korea).

The regime's power was consolidated through the crushing of the courageous uprising led by the workers' movement that toppled the previous military dictatorship in late 1980.

The spontaneous militancy and combativity of the working class was unable to produce in the heat of struggle a revolutionary leadership and programme that could lead the uprising to victory. But, despite the defeat of the 1980 uprising, the resistance to poverty and terror continues, and the workers' movement is recovering from the blow, regrouping its forces.

THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM FOR SOCIALIST REVOLUTION
LEON TROTSKY

30p from Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8





WHAT'S ON

Liverpool: Turkey Solidarity Campaign public meeting
 Tuesday November 3, 7.30 at the Swan Hotel, London Rd. Speaker: Dogan Tarkan

Oxfordshire County Association of Trades Councils conference: Ireland - where does the labour movement stand?
 Saturday December 12, 10-5 at West Oxford Community Centre, Binsey Lane, Oxford. Delegate's credentials £3, observers £1.50 (unwaged £1) from Marie Campbell, 167 Walton St, Oxford.

'We ourselves speak': the latest film about the struggle in Ireland. Showing, plus speaker and discussion, on
 Thursday October 29, from 7.45 at Leeds Trades Club, Savile Mt., Leeds 7. (Leeds Troops Out Mov't).

Rochdale Labour Party Dayschool: Democracy in trade unions.
 Speakers: Winnie Murphy (NUTGW), Alan Thornett (TGWU).
 From 10.30am, Sunday 1st November, at Wardleworth Community Centre, South St, Rochdale.

El Salvador Solidarity Campaign: seminar from 2pm and concert from 7pm
 Saturday October 31, at the main building, North London Polytechnic, Holloway Road, London N1.

Camden Socialist Organiser meeting: 'Smash the 4% wage limit', with speaker Alan Thornett (TGWU Cowley Assembly Plant, in personal capacity).
 Wednesday November 11, from 7.30 at Camden Labour Club, Carol St.

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament Conference
 November 13-15, at Queen Mary College, London. Details: CND, 11 Goodwin St, London N4.

St Mary's Hospital, London W9: support conference for the struggle against closure.
 Saturday November 21, from 11am at Porchester Hall, Porchester Rd, London W2.

South West London Labour Committee on Ireland meeting: Tuesday November 3, from 8pm at Starr House, 57 Church Rd, Richmond.
 Speaker: Pat Byrne.

South West London Socialist Organiser meeting with John O'Mahony (Socialist Organiser EB) plus a BL shop steward: Tuesday November 17, from 8pm at the Fox and Hounds, Upper Richmond Rd (near Putney BR station).

The Campaign for Democratic Rights in Turkey is organising a conference for Saturday December 12, from 10.30 to 5pm at NUFOT Hall, Jockeys Fields, London WC1.

Labour movement organisations are invited to write to the CDDRT, 29 Parkfield St, London N1, for credentials. Delegate's fee is £3.
 This could provide an important opportunity to discuss and develop more united solidarity with the struggle in Turkey, and readers are urged to seek delegacies.

Women in struggle

Sexual harassment-now

a trade union issue

One union, NALGO, has started to declare sexual harassment 'a trade union issue'. Jo Thwaites reports.

SEXUAL harassment is a trade union issue.

Every woman who works with men at some point comes up against sexual harassment - anything from a sexist joke (so-called) to physical assault.

Usually the woman either tries to laugh it off, stays quiet, or leaves her job. She doesn't complain. The shop steward is very seldom asked to do anything.

NALGO (the Town Hall workers' union) and Thames Television have recently done a survey. 504 NALGO members were circulated in Liverpool City Treasurers' department, and 160 returned questionnaires.

(Presumably it was done before the present typists' strike started. And unfortunately it can't tell us anything about how the self-confidence and awareness gained by women through the strike will have affected sexual harassment).

The women took the survey more seriously than the men, and 52% said that

they had experienced unwanted sexual attention which caused them discomfort in the workplace. 67% of them said they had felt embarrassed or angry, though only 17% reported actual sexual propositions.

Most of the sexual harassment complained about was staring or leering.

Angry

Despite the anger and embarrassment, only nine women made any complaint, seven to a supervisor and two to a union shop steward.

Why? Many women feel they won't be taken seriously. It's just part of 'fun' of office life. You could be ridiculed as a prude, a hysteric, or a killjoy, or condemned for inviting the advances you complain about. It's just part of the 'fun' of office life.

Sometimes the offender is the boss, and a complaint could mean losing your job.

Then there's the publicity - it doesn't take much

thought to work out the lurid, titillating headlines that would appear in the Sun or the Mail.

All these reasons for the lack of official complaints of sexual harassment are pointed out in a new pamphlet produced by NALGO, which insists that sexual harassment at work is a trade union issue, not a personal problem.

It gives guidelines for union branches to take up the issue.

A woman shop steward should be allocated to help with cases of sexual harassment, since male shop stewards are not necessarily aware or sympathetic to the problems. Meetings and questionnaires can be used to get the subject aired in the workplace.

Action

The pamphlet recognises that women NALGO members may be sexually harassed by male NALGO mem-

bers (the supervisors and chief officers are in NALGO, too), but doesn't offer much guidance - except to say that there needs to be "systematic and thorough preparation, and the evidence must be accurate and reliable".

Union disciplinary action against members guilty of harassment is not mentioned - though in some cases this may be the only action appropriate.

NALGO has done the whole labour movement a service by taking sexual harassment at work seriously, and by being the first union to do so - though the fact is that the guidelines still leave everything up to the branches with little help from the national leadership.

You can get the pamphlet from NALGO, 1 Mableton Place, London WC1 (free - send s.a.e.). NALGO also suggests hiring the film 'It's not your imagination', which you can get from Cinema of Women, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1 (cost £15).



Unemployed women hold conference

by Jo Thwaites

THE Tories not only deny the right of women to work and drive them back into the home - they actually deny the existence of women's unemployment. The official figure of three million excludes more than half a million married women who don't register as they are not eligible for benefits, and also thousands of part-timers who aren't counted as unemployed because they aren't seeking full time work.

The right of women to work is a fundamental right that the whole of the labour movement should take up. It is something that get verbal acceptance, but when it comes to the crunch men's jobs are still seen as the top priority.

Tackle

Two important initiatives are taking place to tackle this.

The Action Committee for a Woman's Right to Work is campaigning and mobilising for a major labour movement demonstration. The Labour Party is committed to some sort of event and June 5th has been suggested. The Action Committee is planning a conference to discuss mobilising for the demonstration, on February 20th.

Charter

Much sooner, (Friday October 30th) there is to be a working conference called by the South East Federation of the unemployed,

specifically to deal with the problems unemployed and unwaged women face.

A draft charter for unemployed and unwaged women has been drawn up by women from Southwark and Islington unemployed groups. This will be discussed and then put to the Unemployed Workers' Conference the next day.

Discussion on the Friday will include: how to organise as women, problems of isolation, problems as

claimants such as co-habitation rules, and catering for women's needs in unemployed centres.

A video film made at the National Festival for Women's Rights will be shown.

The aim of the day is to establish a women's organisation as part of the national Unemployed Workers' Movement.

It is open to all women - but only unwaged and unemployed can vote.

Friday 30th October, North London Poly, Holloway Road, N7. Creche available. For information, contact Frances O'Grady at 1 Tollington Place, N4. 272-4973.



New issue of Women's Fightback - 15p plus postage from 41 Ellington Street, London N7

What price maternity rights?

by Ann Evans

THE last Labour government's Employment Protection Act contained provisions for maternity rights which many saw as a small step forward for sexual equality.

Women who stop work to have a baby now have a statutory right to return to their old job provided that they have worked in that job for two years and that they inform their employer in writing that they intend to return to work after taking maternity leave.

The Tories have curtailed these rights, mainly by exempting small firms. They claimed the reason was that it was too expensive for small firms to operate, but it is clear that the Tories' real objection was that the law now sanctioned the idea that women with young children can and should keep their jobs.

The Patrick Jenkins of

this world would rather see women tied to hearth and home for as long as their children are growing up, or preferably for ever.

A study published by New Society examines the working of the maternity leave provisions, and concludes that the law has more symbolic than practical value: it does indeed sanction the idea that mothers should be able to keep their jobs; but it doesn't make it much easier for them to do so.

Problems

The study found that the problem of just getting your old job back was overshadowed by a host of other problems. Many women will not want to be employed under the same conditions as before - in particular, they will prefer to work part time. But the

biggest problem of course is childcare, and especially the restricted hours that don't fit in with doing a full-time job.

New Society found that four out of five women who return to work do so on different terms, mostly shorter hours.

In response to being asked what measures would help them and others like them, very few mentioned formal maternity rights and most concentrated on the need for better childcare facilities and flexible working hours.

It's very clear that this measure of the Labour government was women's rights on the cheap. Like the Sex Discrimination Act it cost them nothing and didn't even annoy the CBI. And for women, neither measure has been a lot of practical use.

Socialist Organiser

INDUSTRIAL SPECIAL

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BL IN THE FRONT LINE

"THE feeling in the plants is absolutely solid. Quiet determination in the best way to sum it up. There's no sign of weakness and no second thoughts after the mass meeting vote.

"Barring a complete sell out from the officials, the strike is 100% certain to take place", a leading BL shop steward told Socialist Organiser this week.

After years of betrayal and defeat, the day of reckoning seems to have arrived. BL workers find themselves at the forefront of the fight against the Tories and their four per cent limit.

The confrontation over the annual wage claim (the workers demanding £20, the company offering 3.8%), has been turned by Edwardes himself into a battle for the right to strike and for the survival of trade unionism in BL.

Edwardes, emboldened by four years of beating down grovelling union officials with his arrogant bluster, announced that any plant striking or 'prevented from working' by a strike will be 'liquidated', and all those on



strike will be sacked.

In the face of this blackmail, BL workers voted overwhelmingly for an all-out strike from November 1st. Indeed, it seems that the sacking threat strengthened the reaction of the workforce in many plants.

"If we can't strike over our annual wage review, then when can we strike?", was the question the 58,000 BL Cars workers asked themselves when they received the threatening letter from Edwardes' henchman Ray Horrocks.

BL workers are ready to fight. And their eyes are open - they know that they could be sacked and they know that taking on Edwardes means taking on the Thatcher government.

They know this, and they are ready to face the consequences.

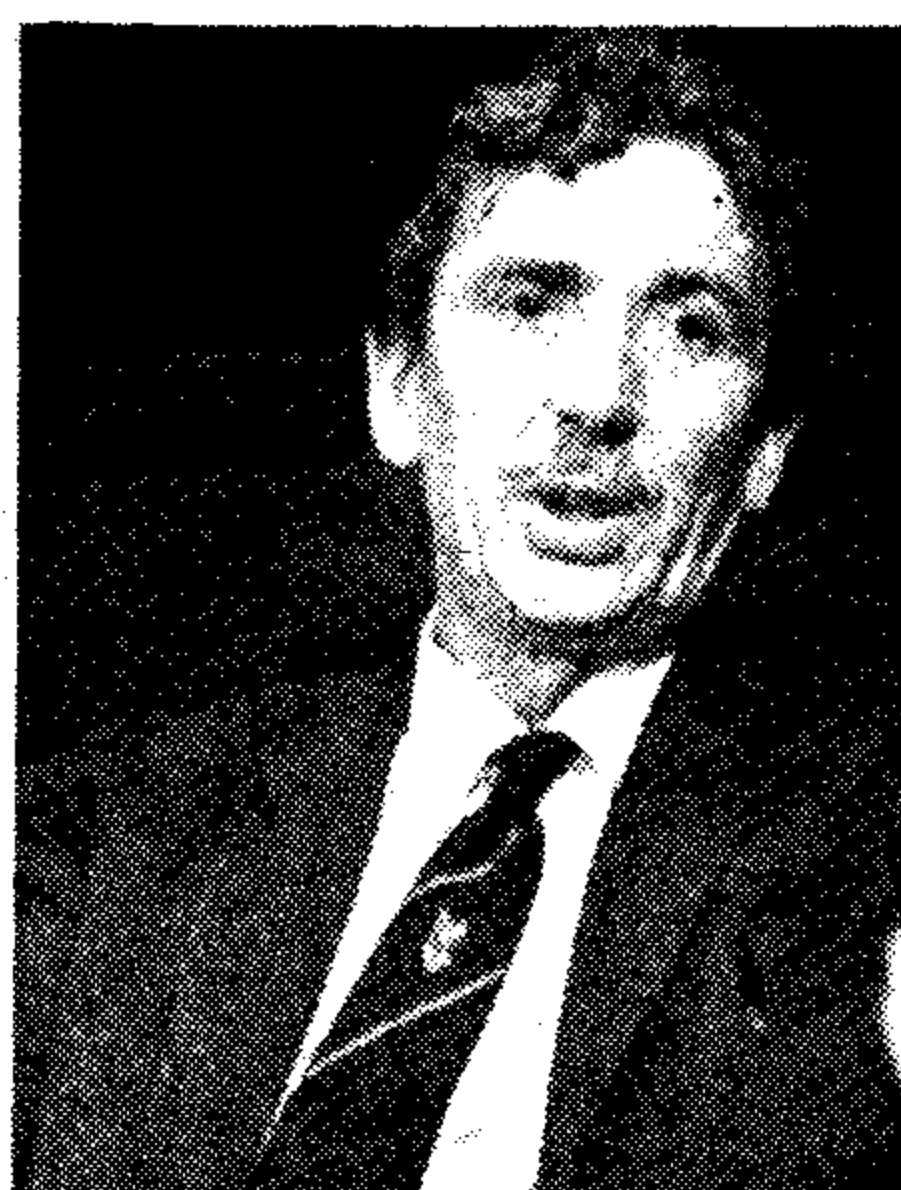
The union officials involved - especially the right wing leaders of the AUEW - also understand what is at stake at BL. But the vision of a militant confrontation with Edwardes and the Tories terrifies them. They know that a victory for the BL workforce would threaten them almost as much as it would the BL bosses and the government.

That's why AUEW chief negotiator Ken Cure has been desperately scratching around for any 'compromise' going over the last few days.

The same motives lie behind similar moves by Roy Hattersley and nine other Midlands Labour MPs, who went to see Edwardes in the hope of avoiding the 'catastrophe' of an all-out strike.

Cosmetic

But the room for manoeuvre is very limited - in fact, virtually non-existent. Edwardes won't put any more money on the table.



All he has suggested is taking £3.75 off the bonus payments and sticking it onto the basic rate. Cure knows he can't sell this cosmetic con-trick to the workforce.

So it looks as though, despite the best efforts of Roy Hattersley, Ken Cure, et al, the BL strike will go ahead on November 1st.

If Edwardes wins, then the very right to strike will be put at risk in Britain. Employers everywhere will be encouraged to sack strikers at will, just as a spate of victimisations followed the

Derek Robinson sacking in 1979.

But if the BL workers win, then the Government's four per cent limit will be in ruins, and the very survival of the government will be in question.

That is why the struggle must not be left to the Ken Cures, Grenville Hawleys, and their Labour Party co-thinkers. Strike committees must be elected from the shopfloor in every plant, and linked together into a national coordinating body to take control out of the hands of the existing JNC.

Links must be actively sought with other workers facing similar confrontations: the council manual workers (whose claim comes up on November 1st), the miners (whose November 1st deadline has been put back to November 16th by Joe Gormley), Vauxhall (whose review is already overdue), Ford (November 23rd), and the tanker drivers (November 16th).

Action should be brought forward to bring other groups out alongside BL. If

Edwardes goes ahead with his sacking threat, then the T&GWU and AUEW should call on all their members to take strike action, and demands must go to the TUC for a general strike.

Labour Parties and trades councils must place their facilities at the disposal of the strikers, hold public meetings or conferences to build support, and form support committees, which can develop into councils of action as the strike spreads.

Throughout the struggle, socialists must point out the central fact about BL - a fact that all the mainstream Labour and trade union leaders desperately want to avoid: BL is not 'viable' - there is no future for it under capitalism.

It has only survived as long as it has - at the cost of a massive increase in the rate of exploitation of the workforce - because closing it down would mean hundreds of firms that supply BL going bust, and maybe another million on the dole.

Steel workers, BL work-

ers, and workers in the components industries, a face harsh attacks as capitalism spirals into slump.

The only secure future for them lies in seizing control of these industries from the capitalists and the capitalist State, and introducing

AS WE go to press, the mood in the BL factories is angry and tense.

At Longbridge, on Tuesday 27th, the management called in all the foremen and told them to go round everyone telling them again that if they didn't report on Monday, they would be considered to have 'terminated their contracts'.

All over the plant workers were angry. In the CAB area they walked out as soon as they were told.

workers' plan of production for need. And that presupposes establishing a government under the control of the labour movement, based on the organisations of the labour movement, and answerable to the working class.

REJECT CURE'S SELL-OUT BID!

AUEW National Officer Ken Cure has circulated a leaflet calling for the consolidation of the lower end of the bonus scale into the basic rate as an acceptable settlement of the claim.

Any move along these lines would be a complete sell out.

He does not put a figure on it, but he proposes taking a sum of money off the bottom of the bonus and putting it on the basic rate.

It could be, for ex-

ample, 10 points or £3.75. That money would then go on the basic rate, and the bonus would start paying out after ten points.

Since the vast majority get bonus at that level, it would mean paying us an increase out of our own money.

Any sell-out of that sort must be stopped. The mass meetings voted to pursue our £20 claim across the board on the basic rate, not for the first shabby sell out that

springs to mind.

Let's leave the bonus scheme right out of it. We want new money on the basic rate.

We have no control over the bonus scheme at all, and what we do get out of it we have paid for heavily, in manning levels and speed-up.

Dictatorship

Grenville Hawley has described the bonus as "snow in the midday sun", and he is right. It

does not rely on productivity, but on company tactics.

If we don't put the basic rate right now, along the lines of the full claim, stop Edwardes' dictatorship, and put some strength back behind the unions - if we don't do it now, when will we do it? We have a massive vote, new models in the major plants, and the official support of the unions.

It is crucial that shabby sell-outs of this

sort are thrown out now. It simply strengthens Edwardes and weakens our claim.

Shop stewards' meetings and strike committees should make the views known now before the sell-out takes place.





Organising to win!

THE WALKOUT of the BL manual workforce at Cowley and Longbridge will halt car production throughout the corporation. But this should not blind strikers to the necessity to organise their forces to give the stoppage maximum impact.

Each plant should take steps to elect its own strike committee, drawing in the most determined fighters against the management offensive. And the call should go out for a national coordinating committee, composed of delegates from the strike committees, to direct the strike.

Support committees should be set up, drawing in representatives from local labour movement bodies.

Allies

Immediate approaches should be made to other sections of workers in each



area who are engaged in their own pay review or facing the government's four per cent pay limit.

BL strikers should attempt in particular to address meetings of local authority manual workers, urging them to take action on their pay claim due for settlement in November, and strike alongside the BL workers against the Thatcher government.

Miners, too, whose pay review date is November 1, should be urged to join

the fight against the four per cent limit.

Other sections of carworkers can also be important allies in the fight. Vauxhall workers have also been offered a miserable four per cent, while Ford management have yet to reply to the unions' claim. BL strikers must campaign hard for united action of carworkers against the four per cent — pointing out that a defeat for any one section will herald new attacks throughout the

industry.

In the same way BL pickets and delegations should fan out to cover BL's huge network of component suppliers and contractors, spelling out to the workforce there the need to defeat Edwardes and Thatcher if jobs in the engineering industry are not to be further butchered.

Meanwhile, at a more routine level, the strike will

place great financial strain on the strikers and their families. Money must be collected far and wide in the labour movement to run the dispute, finance the necessary publicity, and sustain the struggle as long as necessary.

Trades Councils and Labour Parties must be called on to organise fund-raising activities, support meetings, and publicity for the strike.

ON Wednesday 21st, Islington South Labour Party passed this resolution:

"This GC congratulates the workers at British Leyland for their stand against the government-inspired cutting of their real wages.

"1. We call upon the TUC to prepare for a full-scale confrontation with the government — a general strike against the deliberate, doctrinaire policy of repression of workers' rights;

"2. We will organise, with other labour movement bodies in Islington, a public meeting in support of the strike.

"3. We call on members, wards and affiliated organisations to provide financial assistance to the Leyland Action Committee for their work in organising the strike"

And on Sunday 25th, £61.70 was collected at a meeting of the three Islington Labour Parties, to be split between the Leyland Action Committee and the Laurence Scott strikers.

If other Labour Parties take this as a model, then Labour can become a real factor on the workers' side in this fight against the Tories.



BL: OUR PROGRAMME

British Leyland is publicly owned. For years it even had workers' participation as a cosmetic to cover the real face of speed-up and tight-fistedness on wages.

Participation was kicked aside by the bosses when it no longer suited them. Now, several insulting pay offers and several ultimatums and closure threats later, BL is still setting the pace for managerial gangsterism.

Faced with a serious crisis, the BL bosses react no differently from private capitalists. Their answer has been to take it out on the workers.

BL was nationalised in order to bail out the private shareholders. Throughout the 1950s and '60s the shareholders had pocketed fat dividends. If you invested £3000 in the British Motor Company in 1952, then by the time of the merger with Leyland in 1967 you would have received £33,000 in dividends.

Meanwhile there was very little investment. In 1969 BL had fixed assets of £969 per employee, compared to Ford UK's £2709. So when the world competition in the car industry became sharper, in the late '60s, BL went onto the rocks.

BL workers came under attack, but the shareholders were safe. The government paid them 10p for every share, although the shares had only been fetching 6¼p the day before nationalisation was announced.

BL still has to pay millions every month in interest charges.

Nationalisation was not a way out of the mad international capitalist rat race in the motor industry. It was just another way for the bosses to organise themselves for that rat race.

For workers, the only answer is to fight for workers' control. The first essential is full information about management's plans — open the books and end commercial secrecy!

Having opened the company's books, the BL workers should work out their own work schedules, based on work sharing with no loss of jobs or pay. With combine-wide solidarity and the willingness to seize the factories if necessary, the BL workers can enforce this workers' control.

They can establish links with workers in the car components firms and in the other giant car firms in Britain and internationally.

LESSONS OF THE STEEL STRIKE

LAST YEAR'S 13-week national steel strike ended with a 16 per cent wage rise tied to further widespread redundancies and productivity deals. It was a sell-out by the leadership of the steel unions, but not a defeat for the steelworkers.

The sell-out formula hurriedly cobbled together by a 'committee of inquiry' at the beginning of April consisted of 11% on the existing rates and a further 4½% available in local productivity settlements — guaranteed for the first four months.

From the first day — the day after the New Year holiday — it was a completely political strike against the Thatcher government, the direct employer of the steel workers.

It was a confrontation deliberately provoked by Thatcher, and in fact planned before the Tories returned to power in May 1979.

The Tory plan was drafted by Nicholas Ridley — a right winger even by Thatcher's standards.

Targeted

He proposed picking off and defeating several significant sections of the working class as an example to the rest. Two sections he named were steel and BL.

They fitted the bill because they were both large, basic, organised sections of the working class. They were both also chronically affected by the general economic decline of British capitalism and the particular policies of Thatcher in driving large sections of basic industry to the wall.

But having targeted the steel workers for special treatment, the Tories were shocked by the response to

STRIKE



by Alan Thornett



Steel workers join BL workers lobbying for strike action on their pay demands

management's initial 2 per cent offer.

The National Executive of the ISTC ordered a strike — without preparation or even mass meetings — and the response was massive. Within a couple of days the whole of the BSC was out, and thousands of flying pickets were covering ports and steel stockholders throughout the country.

What frightened the trade union leaders, from Sirs to Murray, was that the strike could well bring down the government, something which was unthinkable for these defenders of Parliament and the right of the Tories to run their full constitutional term of office.

It was such politics which presented the steelworkers with their biggest problem —

isolation. It was not an enforced isolation, but an imposed one.

The overwhelming majority position in the TUC was to make the steel workers fight alone, and so avoid a generalised strike movement against Thatcher which would make the next logical step a general strike.

And this policy was ruth-

lessly put into practice. When the Wales TUC called for an all-Wales general strike in defence of jobs and against government policy, it was stamped on by the TUC in London, ending up as a one-day protest.

When BL workers voted two-to-one for strike action in week 5 of the steel strike, having been offered 5 per cent and 92 pages of strings,

the national negotiating committee, heavily influenced by national officers, refused to name a strike date or implement the decision.

Even a joint lobby by large contingents of BL workers and steelworkers failed to shift them.

Six weeks later the BL Joint Negotiating Committee eventually called for an all out strike from April 8th.

Within days the 'court of inquiry' was set up to 'mediate' in the steel dispute and made its recommendations, which were conditional on acceptance by April 8th.

But things had not stood still in BL, either. As soon as the strike call was made, the AUEW, who had been party to the original ballot which had produced a strike vote, decided to do a 'consultation' of its own members.

Contained

The result, said AUEW official Ken Cure, who had 'assessed' the result of the 'consultation', was a majority against a strike. The AUEW then ordered its members to accept the 5%.

Faced with such a split, Edwardes sent out a letter saying that anyone who clocked in on April 8th would be deemed to have accepted the 5%, and anyone who failed to clock in would be sacked.

T&G members who struck in the Midlands were



Bill Sirs

quickly manoeuvred back to work by Moss Evans.

The steel workers had been successfully isolated and contained. They improved the money offer, but the Tory government remained in office and closures and redundancies accelerated in BSC.

Now, a year and a half later, BL workers are in the front line. They face the same political problems of leadership as the steel workers.

Fightback

The union leaders are no more keen to bring down Thatcher by strike action now than they were then.

But a further 18 months of Toryism has had its effects on the working class. Now, with three million on the dole, hundreds more factories closed, and further cuts in the standard of living a fightback is more urgent than ever.

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What happened last

time round?

by
John Lister



BL: THE UNION COMMITTEES

WITH THE chips down once again for an all-out strike over wages, BL workers can be excused for feeling that they have been through this same movie before.

Last year and the year before that they voted by heavy majorities to reject BL management's derisory 6.8 per cent and 5 per cent pay offers.

On both occasions the manipulation of union officials and the collapse of cringing convenors brought a last-minute sell-out.

In the autumn of 1979 the first ever corporation-wide pay review (after the end of plant-by-plant bargaining) saw Edwardes pressing a package of measures including the closure of 13 plants, the loss of 25,000 jobs, and the imposition of a 92-page document effectively abolishing a long list of hard-won trade union agreements.

Linked to this 'plan' came the offer of a 5 per cent wage increase.

Edwardes put his closures plan to the leaders of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (Confed), offering them what Confed secretary Alex Ferry described as "a look over the precipice".

The Confed bureaucrats were scared witless. It never occurred to them to defy Edwardes' threats of closure, or question his claims that the firm was 'losing' money hand over fist. For them it was quite natural to preserve the 'viability' of BL and if necessary to sacrifice their own members' jobs and living standards to do so.

With the exception of the T&GWU, they all accepted



Longbridge convenor Jack Adams

the 'Edwardes plan', and the Confed campaigned actively in support of Edwardes' call for a 'yes' vote in a postal ballot of the workforce.

Betrayal

TGWU leaflets calling for a 'no' vote were not distributed until after the ballot — which produced an

unsurprising seven-to-one vote to back the plan. The pay review meantime remained unresolved.

The BL Combine Committee, taking its cue from the TGWU's stand, met shortly after the ballot — and produced a pamphlet opposing the plan.

Combine chairman Derek Robinson — Stalinist convenor of the giant Longbridge plant, and the man who had led a standing ovation for Edwardes in 1977 — was sacked for putting his name to the pamphlet.

32,000 workers in the Midlands walked out in his defence — only to have the strike halted by the intervention of Duffy and the AUEW bureaucracy.

Even with the Edwardes plan rammed through and the shop stewards' movement still reeling from a major betrayal, BL workers were still in with a chance. The steel strike, which had begun in January, was holding firm and winning wide support: together they could fight and hope to rally action to defeat the Tory government.

Defied

Nothing was further from the thoughts of the union negotiators. In February they met — and decided to ballot BL workers on whether or not to strike against the five per cent offer. To their surprise, the answer was a resounding two-to-one strike vote.

But still the officials on the JNC refused to call a strike. Their destruction and vacillation encouraged Edwardes to put the boot in. He issued an ultimatum: anyone who clocked in on April 8 would be deemed to have accepted the five per cent and the 92 page document. Anyone who did not would be deemed to be sacked.

JNC leaders belatedly met and called for a strike from April 8. Duffy reacted by denouncing their decision and calling for a separ-

ate vote by AUEW members — which he privately 'assessed', and declared against strike action.

TGWU leaders sat on their hands — only offering to support workers who on their own initiative came out on April 8.

In the event some 19,000 Midlands workers, mainly in Rover and Jaguar, defied Edwardes' ultimatum — until the rug was pulled from under them by the TGWU.

Clamour

Moss Evans was invited by Edwardes for his own personal "look over the precipice". He emerged hours later to announce total surrender.

The strike was knifed — and Edwardes was handed a major victory on a plate.

But BL workers were not deterred from resistance. In November of last year mass meetings throughout the remaining plants were called on to vote on Edwardes' 6.8 per cent offer for the 1980-1 review.

By 40,000 to 20,000, they threw it out, and demanded action. So great was the clamour for action that it even penetrated into a meeting of 300 convenors who met the following Monday, and — after eight hours — grudgingly took the vote for strike action.

Five days' strike notice was given.

Challenge

But in, once again, came the General Secretaries. Disregarding the votes on the shopfloor they went straight into private session with Edwardes. They came out recommending workers to accept the offer.

The proposal to accept the 6.8% was then referred to mass meeting. There was strong resistance in many plants — but in some factories right-wing convenors secured a vote for acceptance.

All finally hinged on the Longbridge vote. Convenor Jack Adams, a Communist Party member, had opposed a strike. He was voted down on this by his own stewards' committee — but still got up to argue against action.

A close vote on a show of hands was hastily declared by Adams 'carried' for acceptance of the 6.8%. Once again the BL workforce had been sold down the river by its leaders.

Many of these same leaders are busily at work in the final few days before this year's strike deadline — seeking to duck out of a fight that represents a frontal challenge to both Edwardes and the Thatcher government.

The costs of past betrayals for BL workers have been huge in lost jobs, living standards and working conditions. The political lesson of these betrayals must now be learned with urgency by BL workers in the coming struggles: and that lesson is that a new leadership must be built in every plant, ready and able to press the fight for the interests of the working class.



JNC: The Leyland Cars Joint Negotiating Committee is [in theory, at least] the highest negotiating body in BL. It is made up of seven full-time union officials, plus 31 convenors from the plants.

There has long been much dissatisfaction with its make-up. It is remote from the shop floor and highly bureaucratic, and also seriously under-represents the majority manual union, the T&G, which has often been outvoted by craft unions representing much smaller numbers of workers.

CONVENORS' CONFERENCE: The convenors and senior stewards from the plants. They usually meet after the JNC, to ratify its decisions. As there is a considerable overlap between the two bodies, they usually agree.

The structure is completely undemocratic. Every union from each plant is entitled to send only one

representative — regardless of the size of their membership.

Thus a craft convenor representing a tiny handful of workers has the same say as a TGWU convenor representing thousands. And because there are more craft unions, they are in a position to dominate votes at the convenors' conference.

TGWU militants have long been pressing for their union to fight for a new democratic structure based on proportional representation.

[In practice, both the JNC and the convenors' conference have frequently been by-passed in negotiations, as Edwardes has gone straight to General Secretaries and TUC representatives to stitch up deals in recent years.]

COMBINE COMMITTEE: This is an unofficial body, made up of convenors and delegated stewards from most major plants.

Neither the company nor any of the unions recognise it, although the T&G 'looks favourably' on its existence. For the last three years the JNC has adopted the Combine Committee's recommendations for the pay claim, but after that never refers to it during negotiations.

Its existence is somewhat sporadic [although recently it has been meeting monthly] and the method for electing 'delegates' varies considerably from plant to plant.

GRENVILLE HAWLEY: National officer of the T&G automotive trade group. He is also chairperson of the JNC. An unelected right-winger, who was installed as a result of the amalgamation of the National Union of Vehicle Builders with the T&G in the early '70s.

KEN CURE: Hawley's opposite number at the AUEW — their 'chief negotiator' at BL. Very right wing.

JACK ADAMS: Convenor of Longbridge, the biggest plant. Also chairperson of the Combine Committee, and leading figure at the Convenors Conference. Communist Party member.



There was a huge majority at Longbridge to reject the 3.8 per cent

Gormley moves to isolate strikers

by John Lister

IN THE winter of 1973-4 the miners had the Tory government by the throat.

Heath's three-day week had failed to crack their fighting spirit; the whole working class was rallying to their support; the government stood, on the brink of defeat.

Who was to be found inside No.10 Downing St, anxiously discussing how to save the government. None other than NUM President Joe Gormley.

Preservation

He has lost none of his concern for the preservation of Tory governments. Last week as BL workers

prepared for all-out strike action from November 1, in a confrontation with Thatcher, Gormley once again felt obliged to help out.

In talks with the National Coal Board on the miners' pay review — also due for settlement on November 1 — Gormley allowed the whole proceedings to be adjourned until November 14.

Gormley left workers in no doubt that this was a deliberate move to leave the BL strike isolated. The forthcoming struggle was 'definitely one factor' in his decision, he admitted. Such are the TUC leaders against whom the BL strikers must contend.

JOHN HARRIS

JOHN HARRIS

BL WOMEN MUST PLAY LEADING ROLE

MOST B.L. workers are men — though hundreds of women work in the sewing rooms and as drivers, and increasingly women are coming onto the track, especially at Rover Solihull.

The involvement of women who are wives, mothers, or sisters of male BL workers will also be important if the strike is to win.

During the steel strike, women steelworkers and steelworkers' wives were an important part of the running of the strike locally and were present on many of the flying pickets — most notably at the huge picket at the private steelworks in Sheerness.

Demanded

It was in the most militant areas, like South Yorkshire, that the women organised right from the beginning.

As soon as the strike started, the women in Stocksbridge (Sheffield) signed up for picket duty, only to be told that they could make sandwiches and tea for the pickets. The women weren't having that — and they turned up for pickets of small private



steel firms in Stocksbridge. They demanded to be taken seriously by the strike committee, and elect-

ed two of themselves to go to the strike HQ and coordinate the women pickets' activities.

They produced a newsletter for women strikers and wives, sisters and mothers of steelworkers, to keep them informed of what was going on.

Important

The women's organisation in the steel strike was

important in preventing the isolation and alienation which could have affected women left out of the activities of the strikers.

Equals

Similar organisation will be important in the BL strike.

We need to organise local committees to bring the wives and sisters and mothers together with

women BL workers.

Women's Fightback is producing a leaflet to explain why women must be involved in the strike, actively, as equals.

As a steelworker's wife said during the steel strike, 'I'm in this to win the strike, not just making tea and giving womanly support'.

Jo Thwaites



No answer in import controls

Last Wednesday, 21st, Vauxhall's Luton and Dunstable factories struck, and about 1,000 car workers rallied in London to call for import controls. At the rally, addressed by Michael Foot, Terry Duffy, Ken Gill, and Clive Jenkins, Socialist Organiser supporters distributed a leaflet — 'Support BL workers, not import controls'. Gerry Byrne explains the issues.

IMPORT CONTROLS form a centrepiece of the 'Left's' alternative to monetarism, the Alternative Economic Strategy.

A recent article by Tony Benn, 'Britain as a colony' [discussed in several recent issues of SO] gives the demand a new populist twist: import controls have a very different significance for colonial countries trying to break imperialism's stranglehold of the world market than they do for advanced, if decaying, imperialist countries.

Serious socialists argue against the import controls line as both economically and politically nonsensical. And support for our view has come from recent developments in world trade.

Far from being an oppressed colony trying to break into world markets, Britain, even among advanced capitalist countries, exports a greater percentage of its GDP, nearly a third, than almost any



other. So, economically, it is more sensitive to retaliatory controls than most of the countries whose imports it wants to control. And they are retaliating.

Malaysia has just ordered all public sector deals with Britain to be vetted and public ministries and agencies to obtain tenders from alternative non-British sources. This is in res-

ponse to several British moves: the change in Stock Exchange regulations which Malaysia feels is tantamount to Britain changing the rules of the game once developing countries have learnt to play; the increase in overseas student fees; and pressure to renegotiate the Multi-Fibre Arrangement to limit Malaysian textile imports

into the UK.

The boycott will hit defence contracts, hydro-electric and power plants and telecommunications. The estimated cost is £230 million in lost exports.

Indonesia responded to unilateral controls on their textile imports to Britain with a moratorium on new orders to British firms. This puts £500 million worth of British exports in peril.

Hong Kong, angry at the Nationality Bill, which will affect 3 million of its Chinese citizens, is also considering similar action. That's another £500 million in the balance.

If economically the import controls argument is disastrous, the political effect is even worse. A Labour government committed to implementing even a half-way radical programme of industrial reconstruction would be asking workers in declining industries to identify their interests with those of their British bosses at a time when it would have to be moving against those same bosses to obtain the resources to implement its programme. And not only in Britain.

Break

Internationally, it would mean lining up with other imperialist powers to maintain their grip on the market, while at the same time calling for a break with its military wing, NATO, set up precisely to safeguard those imperialist interests.

With such a contradictory policy, something will have to give and the unfortunate conclusion one can draw from their public utterance is that most of the 'Left' supporters of import controls will opt for workers' interests to go out the window.

Leyland ACTION

What you can do:



our Parties, and unemployed workers' groups. Unemployed workers can be organised to help with picketing and collecting money.

* If there's no BL plant in the area, pickets of BL showrooms can help show support for the strike.

* TGWU and AUEW members should put resolutions calling for a national strike of those unions in the event of Edwardes carrying out the sackings.

* Collect money for the Leyland Action Committee 194 Dawlish Road, Birmingham 29.

* In Labour Parties and Trades Councils: start organising now for public meetings, so as soon as the strike starts the issues can be explained by BL workers right from the start.

* Labour Parties and Trades Councils should approach other public sector workers with a view to making these meetings labour movement conferences on smashing the four per cent limit.

* From such meetings and conferences, BL strike support committees can be set up, with representatives from local trade unions, Lab-



JOIN THE LAC!

If you are a BL worker, why not join the Leyland Action Committee, which is actively campaigning for many of the policies set out here?

Contact: LAC, 194 Dawlish Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham 29.

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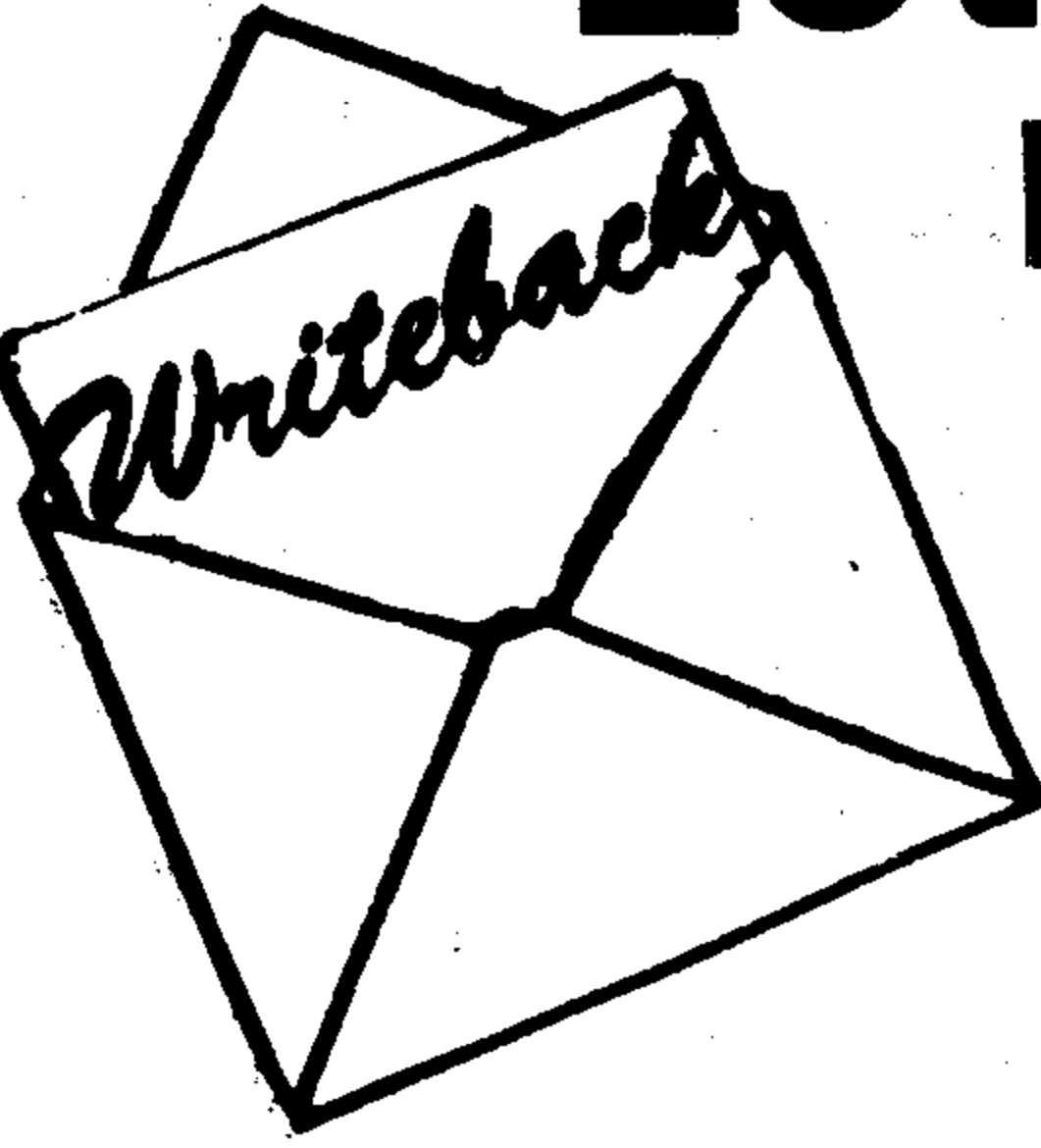
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Letters



Writeback to
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What about democracy?



IN THE light of recent defections of Labour (I won't call them 'socialist' because they probably don't even know the meaning of the word) MPs and councillors to the SDP, I would like to say something.

Now I'm only a simple minded person with an unclouded belief in true socialism, and far be it from me to question the established methods and rulers of this wonderful democracy we live with, but what the bloody hell is going on?

One of our simple beliefs is that come the day of a local or general election we vote for the party we believe in.

But this is not so. No, suddenly it's all changed.

The truth of the matter has been vividly exposed to us, the poor underserving voters, by the ship-rat antics of defecting councillors and MPs who have been waltzing off to the ranks of the fairy tale SDP with positions and seats that they were elected to as Labour representatives.

The other day I had it all explained to me about how you, in fact, can't vote for a party, but vote for individuals who hold party views,

and if that individual buggers off to another party you can't do a thing about it.

I think that's wrong, I know a lot of people who think it's wrong, and I believe that everyone — save the SDP — thinks it's wrong.

I think that when someone, i.e. an MP, defects from the party that they were elected as a representative from, then that person should be forced to stand down and the seat should be re-contested. If that happened you would soon see how many people are elected because of their winning smiles.

The campaign letters you get through your doors say, 'Vote Labour', or 'Vote Tory', not 'Vote Joe Bloggs'. If you vote for a party member, then you vote for a party, not for an individual.

I don't know what has to be done to change it, but I know it must be changed. There are hundreds of thousands of Labour voters who have been sold out by yellow, dream-chasing defectors to the Silly Dreams Party.

MATTHEW McCall,
Basingstoke YS.

DEPORTATION THREAT

AS AN avid reader of Socialist Organiser, I have been very perturbed about the growing number of reports of racist deportation cases.

However, these incidents seemed far removed from me personally, until I came across the case of Shirley Graham.

I have been given permission by the Shirley Graham Defence Campaign Committee to quote from their broadsheet:

"Shirley Graham is convalescing at her home in Forest Gate, East London, after a minor abdominal operation. She lives in fear of being deported at any time.

"Shirley, a Jamaican by birth, has lived in Britain since 1974. She has left and entered the UK on several occasions with no trouble and had been given 'indefinite leave to enter'.

"In August this year, after a short trip abroad, Shirley was, without warning, detained at the airport and held for five days. She was only released after the intervention of a Law Centre.

"Representations were made to allow her to remain in Britain, but these were turned down without any reasons being given.

It appears that the Home Office cannot decide whether Shirley is here 'legally' or not, but they have held her on 'SUS'picion alone.

"While in detention, Shirley's diabetes and blood pressure deteriorated due to the interrogation by immigration officers and delay in giving her proper medical attention. Shirley has done nothing wrong, but is being treated like a criminal.

"But she has made her home here and worked as a nurse here for many years. She has the right to stay.

"In the seven years that Shirley has lived here, she has maintained contact with the Home Office, informing them of any

changes in her circumstances, and now for no apparent reason her whole life has been disrupted.

"Could it be that she is no longer married? In June this year Shirley divorced Mr Graham, but surely black people are allowed to get divorced?

"Could it be because of her first marriage, before she came to England?

"Shirley's first husband was already married, and he hadn't told her. When Shirley came to England, she employed solicitors to legally annul her marriage. Surely it is not her fault if her first husband was a liar.

"It would seem that Shirley's only crime is that she is black. She is just one of the growing number of black and Asian women who are being threatened with deportation over the smallest of technicalities.

"Shirley's case now rests with the Home Secretary, who alone has the power to overrule the immigration officers' decision".

I asked one of the Defence Committee if the local Labour MP — Arthur Lewis — had been of help. I was informed that the Committee were 'afraid' of Lewis's past performances in other such East End cases because of his "quoting the immigration laws".

However, a letter outlining Shirley's case was sent to him. One quote sums up his reply: "I can find no trace of Shirley Graham, or her address".

The Committee picketed the Home Office on October 15, and a public meeting in Forest Gate on the 18th decided to step up the campaign, by petitions and by asking people to invite speakers from the Defence Committee to local trade union and Labour Party branches.

The working class of East London will unite to kick out the racist immigration laws of the capitalist class.

TOMMY MOSSOP,
East London.

SUPPORT BLACK UNIONS

SIRS' and Duffy's trip to South Africa has now been cancelled.

My information is that the FOSATU unions belonging to the International Metal Workers' Federation (IMF) had no knowledge of the visit and that no visits to BL or to Smiths Industries had been planned on the trade union side.

Either the white-dominated Boilermakers' Union invited them, or the IMF executive, or they invited themselves.

This makes a mockery of Sirs' and Duffy's statement that they would only go if black unions wanted them.

This being said, we should also be wary of SACTU's condemnation of the visit. Their policy, along with the African National Congress (ANC) and the Anti-Apartheid Movement, is that South Africa should be boycotted, that no direct contacts between independent black unions in South Africa and unions over here should be made, and that unions over here should instead focus their attention on the disinvestment campaign.

However, black unions which actually organise workers in South Africa, like FOSATU, are very keen on forging direct links with British unions at all levels and particularly on visits by British shop stewards and other union officials.

They rightly oppose the strategy of boycott if that means the boycott of black workers in struggle; they are not happy about calls for 'disinvestment when black workers are struggling to keep their jobs as well as improve their conditions; and most of them do not recognise the right of SACTU (which has little or no union organisation inside the country) — any more than that of the TUC International Committee — to veto who they invite over or to put blocks on their much-needed fight to develop international trade union contacts.

Simply because Sirs' and Duffy's proposed visit had no legitimacy and was based on misleading or false assertions, we should not go along with SACTU's attempt to prevent those

visits which independent black unions do want.

Our principle is clear in my view: to support the right of independent, non-racial unions in South Africa to invite whom they will and to do all in our power to build up effective and practical solidarity at all levels of trade union organisation; and to oppose any visits organised by the reactionary, white-dominated unions in South Africa which do not have the support of black unions.

The dividing line between 'yellow' and black unions in South Africa is in general a fairly clear one; in any case we cannot afford to neglect the differences.

At the forthcoming AGM of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in November, we will be supporting a resolution in favour of direct contacts between South African and British trade unions, a policy at present explicitly opposed by AAM. Support is much needed.

BOB FINE,
London.

Link up with the workers!

SO No.55 carried an article by Bruce Robinson on the planned visit to South Africa by Bill Sirs and Terry Duffy (since called off). The article effectively and strongly pointed to the real role played by these bureaucrats in relation to solidarity with S.African workers — for example their refusal to lift a finger to call action in support of strikers at Leyland and other plants in S.Africa.

However, Robinson was wrong to oppose the visit on the grounds that it would break the policy of 'total isolation' of S.Africa.

S.Africa is a nation divided into classes. Our task is not to 'isolate S.Africa', but to build links with our class allies in S.Africa, and to fight for solidarity action from the labour movement that can give real aid to the black workers — particularly blacking and strike action in support of struggles.

Direct contacts with the workers' movement in S.A. — through factory-to-factory links and also through visits by trade union delegations where possible — are clearly an important part of the fight for effective solidarity action.

The problem with Robinson's position is that he ends up opposing any and all trade union visits — and by implication, any contacts between the workers' movements here and in SA.

Rather, we had to oppose the visit in the context of a fight for genuine fighting links between rank and file trade unionists, for links that serve the needs and requests of S.African workers and that are under the control of workers in Britain.

Requests from SA workers and their unions must be made known to the rank and file; the question of how to respond to these requests must be openly discussed; decisions must be carried through at each stage with the active participation of workers.

On all these counts, the Sirs/Duffy visit had to be fought. But to oppose the visit on the basis of the policy of 'isolation' fails to take forward the struggle for fighting links of working class solidarity — in fact, it takes the issue out of the hands of ISTC and AUEW workers.

This is precisely why many bureaucrats are quite happy to endorse the 'total isolation of S.Africa' platform.

The leadership of the SA Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) hit at Sirs for his racism and contempt for the real S.African workers' movement. But it is important to see part of what lies behind their attack.

They are not attacking Bill Sirs' reformist politics or bureaucratic methods. Many of them are reformists themselves. For some of them, the attack on Bill Sirs is based on their opposition to any direct contact between workers in South Africa and abroad.

Behind their attack on Bill Sirs lies the opposition of SACTU, and with them the Stalinist-influenced ANC and AAM leaderships, to any links which are not channelled through these organisations.

They are quite willing to obstruct direct links with S.Africa when they cannot

be sure that those links are under their control. They are willing to take action to promote their control at the expense of the needs of workers in struggle.

Socialist Organiser has recently put forward the basis for a genuine position of solidarity in the labour movement, based on supportive strikes and blacking action.

A motion along these lines will be put to the AAM conference next month. The leaders of SACTU and all those others who have attacked Bill Sirs will be given the chance to show whether they support such a programme.

L.HUNT
London

RED ROCK



COVENTRY was a monument to the post-war capitalist boom, apparently the most affluent city in Britain. Today it stands devastated by factory closure after factory closure. Well over 15% of the workforce is unemployed, more than the average in either England or Scotland.

In 1979, a new sound burst out from Coventry — two-tone — and for a brief few months it caught the fancy and imagination of millions of young people. Pork pie hats, Harringtons, and anything with black-and-white checks, blossomed.

A year and a half later, and with another million and a half out of work, the

ska epidemic has come to an end, with the news that the Specials have split up.

The Specials were the best and most popular two-tone group. Their music is a congenial, bewitching mixture of black and white rhythms. It was a decisive break from the worn-out punk delirium from two years before, and yet another jolt to the crass commercialism of the official industry.

The group made two albums, both massive successes, and about ten singles, the best selling being 'Too much too young' and Ghosttown.

Too Much, Too Young was an acid attack on getting caught in the marriage

trap, and was nearly banned by the BBC because they mistook the word contraception for copulation, which they think is too risky.

And during the week when the rioting against the police was at its height in the middle of July this year Ghosttown, a biting comment on youth unemployment, was No.1 in the charts.

The Specials, alongside a number of other famous groups, have also spoken out and sung against the Tory government's attacks on youth.

In an interview for Rock Against Racism, vocalist Terry Hall replied to the question 'Do you think Mrs

Thatcher can take all the blame? Has the government really left youth on the shelf?', saying 'She is responsible. It is her government who are making the decisions so they must take the blame for what is happening'.

The group, being a mixed one, is inherently anti-racist. On numerous occasions they played for anti-racist organisations and at anti-racist carnivals, including one they co-sponsored this summer in Coventry after growing racist attacks on Asians in the city.

For this, British Movement skins gave them the name 'the Specials minus two', referring to the two

black members of the group.

Despite rumours that the three Specials who are left in the group now will continue under the same name they will never be the same. The other three are already launched as the Funboy Three, with a single out on Chrysalis called The Lunatics (have taken over the asylum).

But I'm sure I'll remember the Specials as they were, even years after my teen-age is over, simply by playing A Message To You Rudy.

Yeah, and I know it was done by Prince Buster originally!

STRESS CALL ON BENN

THE RECENT article 'Brighton — a Balance Sheet', serves as a useful framework within which local Socialist Organiser groups can plan their Party work after Conference. In particular, the question of which way Benn will jump — back in again to compete with the Kinnocks on their own ground, or continue to mobilise the rank and file — is central.

It seems likely that he will take the latter course, but it is up to us to push him that way and hold him to it. That is why you demand for Benn to call for a conference to set up Broad Left in the Labour Party needs following up and expanding in the pages of Socialist Organiser.

We in Bristol are currently working on how best to fight for these ideas in our Party and union branches but we would feel strengthened as part of an ongoing campaign in the pages of the paper.

IAN HOLLINGWORTH

Labour Party Time to seek support from the wider movement

Setback in Pollok

Should a new activist alliance of the Labour Left be developed after the Brighton conference? Or should the Left, recognising that it has had setbacks, take a defensive stance?

Ann Pettifor continues the debate in the columns of Socialist Organiser, with a reply to Vladimir Derer.

VLADIMIR Derer's article in *Socialist Organiser* (No.57) provided a realistic and necessary assessment of the extent to which the Left, and the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy in particular, was defeated at this year's Annual Conference.

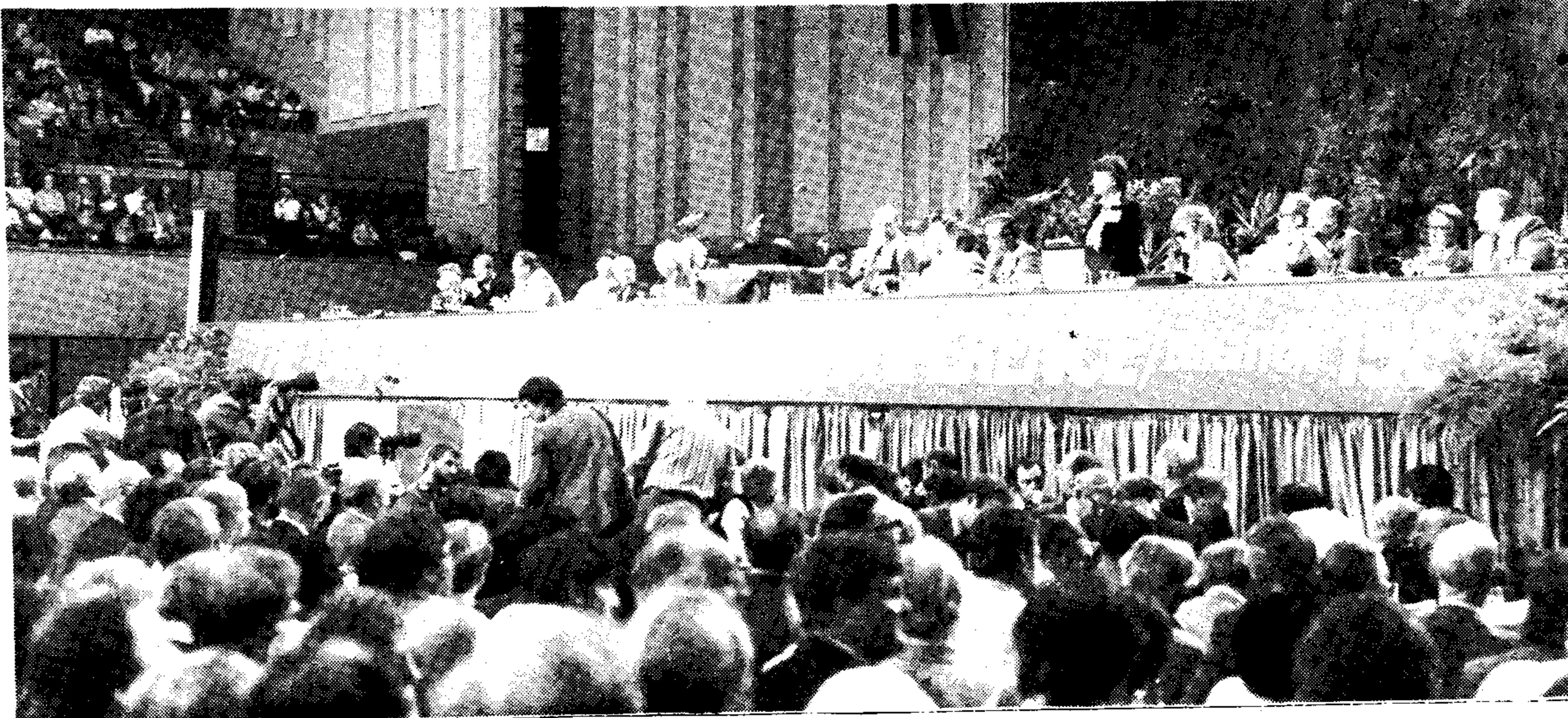
He is absolutely right to dispel any political illusions or 'emotional comfort' that may have been drawn from Denis Healey's narrow win; and to draw attention to the way in which right wing trade unionists and parliamentarians exploited fears of divisions in the party to extend their control over its constitution and executive committee.

However, Vladimir's assessment is based on two assumptions which I believe weaken his analysis of the current state or mood of the party and therefore of the tasks facing the left in the aftermath of Conference.

Which brings me to the second assumption behind Vladimir's article. Namely, that 'a campaign outside of the normal Parliamentary and trade union procedures' has been seen to be divisive and therefore is divisive.

He urges us to combat this by 'fully integrating the (leadership) election process into the normal annual routines of the Party and the unions'. In my view this is a strategy which will further entrench the Left's permanent minority status in the party, at a time when our influence over policy is seen to be, and indeed is, decisive.

It reflects an attitude widespread throughout the Left (and indeed the right) in the Party: namely that we should stick to the framework we know and understand well — the party, its constitution and procedures — and refrain from actively mobilising outside of this narrow base,



After the Brighton conference, the Left needs to reach out beyond the committee rooms

either in the unions or, as Tony Benn did, in the wider political arena.

That the party is a narrow base from which to work for reforms which will make our parliamentary representatives more responsive and accountable, is indisputable. In many constituencies it is experienced as a closed, insular and often exclusive group. Its failure to develop links with trade unionists both locally and nationally is evidence of its very narrow base.

For the Left to restrict itself to playing the game within this limited field is,

in my view, to court defeat both for our policies and for our 'internal' constitutional reforms.

Storage

The most striking outcome of the deputy leadership contest was the emergence from cold storage of the Left's values, policies and goals. If Denis Healey had not been challenged; if the Tribune Group's fear of a contest had been allowed to halt the challenge; if Frank Chapple's disaffiliation threats had inhibited

the campaign — then these values and policies would still be frozen on Conference agendas. Instead they are being debated and discussed and indeed even advocated in some quarters of the PLP!

For the Left to achieve similar support for its cons-

titutional reforms requires that more out-going initiatives be taken; that it abandon its traditional objective of altering the power balance between itself and other groups within the Party — and that it begins now to actively seek support in the wider labour movement for its reforms.

Acceptance

The first is the assumption that the widespread support given to mandatory re-selection of MPs (after seven years of campaigning) indicated 'an acceptance of the argument that without increased accountability (and hence further constitutional reforms) the policies of the PLP and future Labour Governments will not be significantly affected.'

In my view this argument was not widely accepted — indeed in many quarters it had not even been made!

For in the Party, as well as in the wider labour movement, there is widespread ignorance of the role of the PLP during a Labour Government — and this ignorance is coupled with a distinct lack of interest in the rules and standing orders of the parliamentary party.

(On the Women's Action Committee we face similar difficulties with our campaign to reform the Parliamentary day. Not surprisingly, women just cannot see the relevance to them of reforming the rules of a small parliamentary elite — when their own direct experience is of high unemployment, child care problems, low pay etc.)

Directly

Without disputing the fundamental importance of these reforms, it is possible to argue that CLPD can and must do a lot more work in broadening support for constitutional issues by linking them more directly to the immediate political preoccupations of our supporters — nuclear disarmament, withdrawal from Europe and an alternative economic strategy which is not based on wage restraint and cuts in the social wage.

Campaign for LABOUR PARTY Democracy

Join the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy: send £3 (couple £3.50) to: Victor Schonfield, 21 Wallingford Ave, London W10 6QA.

Fight for these resolutions

PLP DEMOCRACY

'This annual meeting welcomes the full debate on reforming the procedures of the Parliamentary Labour Party which took place at the last Party Conference, and calls on the NEC to bring forward proposals to integrate the virtually autonomous PLP into the Party's overall structure by:

(a) formally incorporating the PLP standing orders into the Party Constitution; (b) obliging the PLP to use its weekly meetings to discuss and take decisions on all major policy issues. The proceedings at these meetings to be fully recorded and such records made available to affiliated organisations.

This annual meeting considers that such steps are essential to closer cooperation between different sections of the Party, to a Labour victory at the next general election, and to the implementation of Party policy by the next Labour government.'

SHORTLISTS OF ONE

This annual meeting is gravely concerned that the constitutional requirement for mandatory reselection is being circumvented by the 'short list of one' subterfuge.

It notes with regret that the NEC has failed to enforce its own guidelines. It also notes that a constitutional amendment from Paddington CLP will be coming before the 1982 annual conference which will ensure that the NEC will not endorse a prospective candidate selected or reselected from a shortlist of one unless only one member was validly nominated.

This annual meeting calls upon the NEC to recommend to the 1982 annual conference that the Paddington constitutional amendment be adopted.'

POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION

'This annual meeting welcomes the successful challenge at the last annual conference which resulted in the inclusion on the agenda of a debate on Labour women's rights. It is disturbed by the NEC's lack of concern about the underrepresentation of women and other disadvantaged groups at all levels of the party.

Accordingly, this annual general meeting urges the NEC to submit constitutional proposals to the 1982 annual conference which will:

(a) enable the Labour Party women's conference to submit five resolutions to the Party's annual conference as of right, and will provide for representatives from the women's conference to be ex-officio delegates at the annual conference with the right to move the resolutions;

(b) provide for the mandatory inclusion of at least one woman on all Parliamentary shortlists provided, of course, that a woman member has applied;

(c) provide for the election of the women's section of the NEC to be by the women's conference.'

LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEMOCRACY

'This annual meeting considers that the present artificial separation of Labour Parties from Labour Groups on local authorities is detrimental to party unity, and reduces the effectiveness of Party policy at local level.

It notes that a constitutional amendment from Hammersmith North CLP will be coming before the 1982 annual conference. This amendment proposes a reform of the standing orders for Labour Groups which will bring the Party and Lab-

our Groups closer together. This annual meeting, therefore, calls on the NEC to recommend to the annual conference that this constitutional amendment be adopted.'

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

'This annual meeting is concerned that the Party's latest economic statements do not contain a commitment to a significant extension of public ownership, which is vital to the implementation of the pledge in recent manifestos to bring about 'a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of wealth and power in favour of working people and their families'.

This annual meeting notes that recent Labour governments have achieved all too little in this respect, and calls on the Party's leadership to include in the next manifesto the commitment proposed in Labour's Programme 1973 to take into common ownership at least 25 of the 100 largest privately owned manufacturing companies.'

LEADERSHIP ELECTIONS

'This annual meeting notes with satisfaction that the

The campaign to oust right wing Labour MPs in Scotland received a setback last week with the decision of the selection conference in Pollock, on the south side of Glasgow, to re-adopt the disgusting anti-abortion misogynist James White.

Between them the left candidates, Davie Dick (CLP Secretary and Militant supporter) and Mike Connarty (Secretary of the Labour Coordinating Cttee in Scotland) polled 28 votes to 33 for White.

There was a virulent anti-left press campaign, the pack being led by William Clark of the *Glasgow Herald* and Ruth Wishart of the *Sunday Mail*. Horror stories of left wing machinations abounded, luridly exaggerated with the sole intention of discrediting any opposition to White.

Lessons

But the result has not totally depressed the left, and useful lessons have been learned which we feel can help towards victories elsewhere. Leading activist Bob Wylie thought it was 'only a matter of time before we have candidates selected. We would be confident of two or three in the West of Scotland and one or two in the East if the boundaries are re-drawn'.

There will be plenty of forums to discuss recent developments and map out the next steps for socialists. On November 21st/22nd the Labour Party is organising a conference to assess the struggle in local government, and an LCC-organised gathering of trade unionists in Glasgow on 7th November followed by the national LCC AGM the next day and the Scottish LCC AGM on December 5th.

IAN McCALMAN



Dennis Healey



SCOTS WOMEN CALL FOR DEMO

The Scottish Labour Party Women's Conference, meeting on 17th October, called on the Scottish Labour Party and the Scottish TUC to organise a demonstration for a woman's right to work.

The resolution came from Edinburgh Central CLP women's section.

On many other issues, too, the conference showed a lot more vitality than the last such conference — held in 1974, with only half a dozen resolutions submitted, and the regional women's organiser [now a member of the SDP] not even bothering to turn up.

Despite appeals from the platform to remit, the conference passed [with only one vote against] a motion from Hillhead CLP calling for an annual conference, a committee elected at such conferences, and 'urgent consideration' of the appointment of a full-time women's organiser.

Withdrawal

A motion on Northern Ireland condemning bi-partisanship [but calling

only for a 'non-sectarian police force', withdrawal of troops 'to barracks', and transfer of control to the UN] came within two votes of a majority.

Practice

The follow-up to the conference will be more important than the event itself — which passed many good resolutions without indic-

ating how they would be put into practice.

Never

As chairperson Agnes McLean put it, 'We're never going to achieve socialism — never — without the full participation of women. After the conference we have to get out onto the streets and into the factories and get women off their knees.'

THE Labour Campaign for Gay Rights (LCGR) has arranged two conferences for the labour movement on the Labour Party's discussion paper 'The Rights of Gay Men and Women'.

The first of these will take place on Saturday October 31st at the Queen Margaret Union, Glasgow University, starting at 10.30am.

The Scottish LCGR com-

rades have been able to use this conference as a lever to approach the labour movement for support. The responses have been quite encouraging, though somewhat muted.

LCC Scotland has sponsored the conference 'in the same way as we support any other minority group'. Socialist Organiser's support is unequivocal.

Victimised

The LP Scottish Council has agreed to send a speaker and, in a letter dated 15th September addressed

PRESS GANG

by Patrick Spilling



Scene: a TV studio once a week, any channel.

'Welcome to by-election special. Here in the studio we have Lord Day. Being allowed to talk to him are four politicians who will comment on the Crosby by-election result.'

'For the Social Democrats, Roy Jenkins, for the Liberals, David Steel. For the Labour Party, former Labour Minister David Owen and for the Conservatives, the man most often accused of being one, Bill Rodgers.'

'First we'll go over to the count where Vincent Hanna is watching the most important by-election since last week.'

Hanna: 'You can see below me the votes being put into piles. Of course electoral law prevents me from telling you how the count is going, but I can tell you I know a lot more than I'm allowed to say

and that the Social Democrats are looking pretty pleased with themselves. The Tories are a bit glum and the Labour Party looks pig sick as well it might do.'

'There's a bomb scare on here at the moment and the Labour Party has claimed responsibility. But the count will probably be completed anyway. We'll take the chance to look back at some of the crucial factors in this campaign.'

'First we spoke to a typical cross-section of this busy suburban constituency. As she came out of the polling booth.'

'Mrs. Williams, I understand you voted Labour last time.'

Random voter: 'We hoped Vincent we still had a chance of retaining the traditional values: arrogance; wealth; a cosy seat for life. I haven't actually got a vote here but if I did I would certainly vote for

the SDP. We're so wholesome, reasonable and down to earth. Incidentally Vincent I hope I'm going to see a copy of this bloody interview before it goes out.'

Hanna: 'Too late, Shirley, I'm afraid. But now back to the studio.'

Lord Day: 'And now the main story of the day: Ken Livingstone denied today sending a supplementary rate demand to every household in Crosby this week. The SDP claim that the GLC crypto-Marxist terrorist leader is demanding £500 per household in return for not being sent a letter bomb.'

'Before we ask you Dr. Owen to comment on Mr. Livingstone's sanity, there is news that Mr. Roy Hattersley has blamed the Crosby result firmly on Mr. Benn.'

'Now back to the count. Hanna: 'Another delay here Robin. The poll counters have just joined the strike in support of BL workers. But SDP volunteers have offered to count the votes so we should have a result in an hour or two.'

'Now back to the studio and Mr. Jenkins.' Jenkins: 'This is undoubtedly the second most important result this century, whatever the outcome. Although nothing can overshadow the sensational result of Warrington, Mrs. Williams looks like becoming the first MP ever to count her own majority.'

Day: 'We must leave you there now, Roy. In fact, we must leave everybody as studio technicians have just informed us that they will be on strike from midnight in support of the General Strike.'

Daily Mail
DAILY EXPRESS
FINANCIAL TIMES
The Daily Telegraph
THE Sun

Conferences on gay rights

dusty reply.

In the light of this the STUC General Council has decided it can do little else until a Labour Government is elected, when there is a possibility of employment protection for gay workers — but only if the Labour Party adopts the principles contained in its discussion paper.

Response

The LCGR does not, of course, accept that things have to be left alone in such a spirit of defeatism.

Registrations for the con-

ference have been encouraging. Glasgow Trades Council will be represented as well as CLPs in Glasgow and Edinburgh. A number of Labour Party branches have affiliated to the Campaign (only £2) and are sending delegates or have asked for speakers to their meetings.

We are hoping for the same level of response that greeted the recent fringe meeting at Brighton when, with very little notice, 50 turned up. (For more information or to book a speaker, contact Ian Dunn,

52 Broughton Street, Edinburgh 1, 031-557-3493.)

Meanwhile, it is clear that a crisis is challenging the major gay organisation in Scotland, SHRG. Activist support has virtually collapsed in the past 18 months, with a 50% fall in membership.

Reformation

However, there has been a spectacular rise in social (club) membership following the opening of SHRG's first licensed gay club in Glasgow last summer.

SHRG's National Executive has called a national forum in Edinburgh on Saturday 28th November in the Caltan Film Studios Edinburgh, starting at 2pm, to present what amounts to a complete reformation of the organisation.

The present constitution is unnecessarily bureaucratic and gets in the way of direct access to campaigning work; and the NEC has become isolated and just a talking shop.

Ideal

More seriously, the local organisation or branches have failed to open up the situation in Edinburgh is bad — the Gay Centre at 60 Broughton Street is only half used and faces complete shutdown, crushed by a mountain of debts.

Bad attitudes have grown unchallenged and the hopes of the founders of the Gay Centres in Scotland have not been realised.

Nevertheless, a crisis situation is an ideal time to make fundamental change to patterns of working and relationships: this is what is happening to the Scottish movement today. There will be a further report in the New Year.

IAN DUNN

GET ORGANISED!

Socialist Organiser Alliance

To make Socialist Organiser a real campaigning paper that can organise the left in the movement, it needs its own organised activist support — and money.

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Name

Address

Phone

CLP TU

Where we stand

* Organise the left to beat back the Tories' attacks! No to attacks on union rights; defend the picket-line; no state interference in our unions! No to any wage curbs. Labour must support all struggles for better living standards and conditions.

* Wage rises should at the very least keep up with price increases. For a price index calculated by working class organisations, as the basis for clauses in all wage agreements to provide automatic monthly rises in line with the true cost of living for the working class. The same inflation-proofing should apply to state benefits, grants and pensions.

* Fight for improvements in the social services, and against cuts. Protection for those services against inflation by automatic inflation-proofing of expenditure. For occupations and supporting strike action to defend jobs and services.

* End unemployment. Cut hours, not jobs. Fight for a 35 hour week and an end to overtime. Demand work-sharing without loss of pay. Organise the unemployed — campaign for a programme of useful public works to create new jobs for the unemployed.

* Defend all jobs! Open the books of those firms that threaten closure or redundancies, along with those of their suppliers and bankers, to elected trade union committees. For occupational and blacking action to halt the closures. For nationalisation without compensation under workers' management.

* Make the bosses pay, not the working class. Millions for hospitals, not a penny for 'defence'. Nationalise the banks and financial institutions, without compensation. End the interest burden on council housing and other public services.

* Freeze rents and rates.

* Scrap all immigration controls. Race is not a problem; racism is. The labour movement must mobilise to drive the fascists off the streets. Purge racists from positions in the

labour movement. Organise full support for black self-defence. Build workers' defence squads.

* The capitalist police are an enemy for the working class. Support all demands to weaken them as a bosses' striking force: dissolution of special squads (SPG, Special Branch, MI5, etc.), public accountability, etc.

* Free abortion on demand. Women's equal right to work and full equality for women. Defend and extend free state nursery and childcare provision.

* Against attacks on gays by the state: abolish all laws which discriminate against lesbians and gay men; for the right of the gay community to organise and affirm their stand publicly.

* The Irish people — as a whole — should have the right to determine their own future. Get the British troops out now! Repeat the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Political status for Irish Republican prisoners as a matter of urgency.

* The black working people of South Africa should get full support from the British labour movement for their strikes, struggles and armed combat against the white supremacist regime. South African goods and services should be blacked.

* It is essential to achieve the fullest democracy in the labour movement. Automatic reselection of MPs during each parliament and the election by annual conference of party leaders. Annual election of all trade union officials, who should be paid the average for the trade.

* The chaos, waste, human suffering and misery of capitalism now — in Britain and throughout the world — show the urgent need to establish rational, democratic, human control over the economy, to make the decisive sectors of industry social property, under workers' control. The strength of the labour movement lies in the rank and file. Our perspective must be working class action to raze the capitalist system down to its foundations, and to put a working class socialist alternative in its place — rather than having our representatives run the system and waiting for crumbs from the tables of the bankers and the bosses.

Organising the unemployed

TUC 'REGARDS UNEMPLOYED AS AN EMBARRASSMENT'

An unemployed conference on Merseyside on October 19 brought together some diverse experiences. Chris Erswell reports.

GROUPS represented at the conference were the TGWU 6/612 unemployed branch; Wirral, Kirkby, Tuebrook, and Huyton TUC unemployed centres; Halewood and Cantrill Farm unemployed groups; and the ex-Shotton ISTC steelworkers' group.

In addition, many community and adult education workers were present. About 100 people attended the conference in all, including local Labour MP Eric Heffer.

The conference was a follow-up to a smaller one in Halewood about two months ago.

Bobby Owens - an unemployed ex Triumph Speke worker and chairperson of TGWU Region 6 - introduced the morning session with a brief summary of the TUC unemployed centres in Liverpool.

Kirkby UC has produced



a community newspaper, the 'Kirkby Snorter', to break down the lack of communication between the activists and the mass of unemployed in Kirkby. The unemployed centres meet together on a delegate basis once a month.

Owens stressed that it is necessary for unemployed workers to join the T&G and campaign in the union for the rights and needs of the unemployed - not accepting the status quo of official indifference. From the Tuebrook UC,

I reported that the group had discussed the TUC guidelines. We felt the TUC had no mandate from anyone unilaterally to impose the guidelines, and there had been no consultation whatsoever with the unemployed. The TUC lays down three

aims: * to put on trade union education courses, * to provide a counselling and welfare rights service, * and to make representations on behalf of the unemployed for free bus travel, etc.

The TUC also lays down that management committees must be 50% local authority representatives, 50% TUC representatives, plus a token unemployed worker.

The Tuebrook group has decided there must be a

majority of unemployed on the management committee. Funds will be accepted from the government Manpower Services Commission (on which the TUC relies) on those terms or not at all.

Tuebrook supports the call for a national conference of TUC centres to adopt democratically agreed guidelines.

Talents

A glaring omission from the TUC guidelines is any perspective for a fightback for jobs. The Tuebrook group has produced a guide for unemployed groups to draw up schemes of useful public works out of local inquiries into the needs of their district.

Tommy Ewing from the Kirkby centre said that some centres have been lacking in confidence in regard to welfare rights advice. But a bold effort on welfare rights can help integrate the unemployed into the centres and develop their untapped talents.

An expert silk-screen printer has been found in this way at the Kirkby centre.

Labour councillor Gerry Fyrrill reported on the youth unemployed group in Halewood, who are not interested in bus passes or free use of facilities, but want action on jobs.

They want 'the dignity of a wage packet'.

He stressed the need for a vigorous campaign for the unionisation of the YOP schemes, and attacked the local Labour council for their attitude - at first they refused to put up the People's Marchers.

From Shotton, a member of the ISTC unemployed group recounted their attempts to enlist the support of the NUR leader Sid Weighell for their campaign for concessionary travel on trains. Weighell had given an

Evasive

From Shotton, a member of the ISTC unemployed group recounted their attempts to enlist the support of the NUR leader Sid Weighell for their campaign for concessionary travel on trains. Weighell had given an evasive and off-hand reply. The TUC, he concluded, regards the unemployed as an embarrassment, and hopes we will go away and leave them alone.

In the afternoon, John Nettleton, ex-convenor of the closed Courtaulds, Aintree, plant, introduced a discussion on education courses for the unemployed.

Struggles

In the established education system, he said, he had only ever learnt about Kings and Queens. The discussion that followed stressed that what the unemployed need is education linked to the practical tasks of fighting for jobs - like the history of unemployed struggles worldwide, and practical skills like duplicating, typing, video-making, etc.

The conference set up a number of work-groups on areas like education, jobs fightback, communications, MSC schemes and their unionisation, etc, and planned another conference, to be held in Kirkby in December.

THE BIRTH OF THE QUEUES

IN 'COMMUNIST' Poland, the government is again showing itself determined to crush the newly-aroused workers' movement.

Just as Thatcher and Tebbit have laid down plans to defeat the unions in Britain, Jaruzelski and his fellow bureaucrats hope through police action to tame Solidarnosc and enforce cuts in living standards on the Polish working class.

But while Thatcher and Tebbit are acting in defence of the private property and profits of the British capitalist class, in Poland capitalist ownership of industry and the banks was swept away long ago.

The Stalinist state bureaucracy in Poland is forced to act against the working class in order to defend the interests of its power and privileges - its ability to retain in its own hands the means of production over the nationalised economy.

To do this the Polish bureaucrats have in the post-war period evolved a system of repression modelled on that of Stalin and the Kremlin bureaucracy. The objective is to atomise the Polish working class through wholesale police terror, rigid censorship and the manipulation of state-run 'unions' - thus denying the working class the right or the facilities to organise as a class.

Thus the bureaucrats have struggled to forestall and weaken resistance to their political monopoly of power and their reactionary and incompetent handling

of the economy. In many respects therefore this system, though based not on capitalist but on nationalised property relations, bears similarities to fascism.

Threaten

Trotsky points out in the Transitional Programme that the political apparatus of Stalin's dictatorship differed from that of fascism only in its 'more unbridled savagery'.

It is against such conditions that the movement has emerged and gathered strength: it is to restore them that the Polish bureaucrats - goaded on by their masters in Moscow - now threaten an increase in police violence.

But the Polish system is not identical to that of the Soviet Union. In Poland nationalised property was nationalised under Soviet rule. In the post-war period - in a time when the USSR was already 30 years old

West, the Polish economy grew rapidly between 1950 and 1970.

Industrial production rose by 700% - with engineering output increased by 2,600% in the same period. This expansion strengthened and enlarged the Polish working class.

But this growth was not linked to the necessary development of consumer goods industries and the agricultural system. As demand increased for these goods, supplies fell far short, and the queues began to grow.

Fiercer

In the early 1970s, first the Soviet bureaucracy and then their junior colleagues in Eastern Europe began to seek an escape from these difficulties through greater involvement in the capitalist world market. The idea was to sell 'socialist' goods abroad to finance imports of Western-made technologies and technology.

The plan was approved in the mid-1970s as growing inflation in the capitalist countries raised the price of consumer imports into Eastern Europe, while the recession in world trade and fiercer competition cut back the sale of Stalinist exports.

The effect on Poland and East Europe was a decline in economic growth, imported Western inflation, and a growing deficit on balance of payments. These problems were compounded in Poland by

Marxism and the Polish revolution

John Lister continues his series on Poland



Stalin - gravedigger of the revolution

an actual decline in production in the (largely private) agricultural sector.

An attempt to escape from the economic squeeze by pushing up exports faster than production only increased the shortages. A powerful working class in Poland was demanding improvements in living standards and opposing moves to raise prices, while the bureaucracy was unable to tap the potential of the nationalised economy.

A desperate bureaucracy resorted to seeking huge loans on the capitalist money-markets - to the extent that by 1980 over two thirds of Poland's hard currency income was needed just to service its debts.

The capitalists however continue to be ready to lend to Poland - seeing loans to Eastern Europe as offering secure returns on payment and a profitable outlet for capital otherwise underutilised in the recession.

Destabilise

They correctly see that the Polish leaders and the Stalinist bureaucracies as a whole are a conservative force in international politics. The Stalinists wish to preserve their own privileges against the working class at home - and see their task not as

throwing but coexisting with the capitalist class internationally.

Far from fomenting or even favouring revolutionary struggles, the Stalinists brutally crush them at home and seek to divert and contain them abroad.

For bankers and industrialists therefore the Polish bureaucracy has been a viable and valuable customer. Nor has this position changed: indeed the possibility of Poland defaulting on loans is one which bankers are unanimous in wishing to avoid - since it would destabilise large areas of Western banking.

On the other hand, more loans extended now can be expected to yield further large interest payments -

effectively drawing profit from the labour of the Polish working class.

In other words, the warped development of Poland's nationalised economy in conjunction with the bureaucratized economy in the Soviet Union has left the working class in want of basic consumer goods and exposed to indirect capitalist exploitation.

To resolve this situation, it is necessary to map out a programme for action to wrest the control of the economy and of the state from the hands of the bureaucrats and place it in the hands of the working class.

Next week's article will begin to look at some of the elements necessary for such a programme.



The bureaucrats give no priority to mass-consumer goods

Organising the unemployed

CONFERENCE OFFERS NATIONAL

FOCUS

The national unemployed conference meets next weekend — October 31/November 1 — at Goldsmiths College, New Cross, London. JOHN LISTER discusses the movement's perspectives.

THE rapid rise in unemployment and the contemptuous disregard for the problems of the unemployed from the leaders of the labour movement have brought an uneven and patchy development of unemployed organisations.

In some areas union branches have taken on the task of retaining and even recruiting unemployed members; elsewhere new, autonomous 'unemployed workers' unions' or claimants unions have sprung up — often appealing most directly to youth with little history of trade union organisation.

In other areas nothing has yet been done to give direction, organisation or hope to the army of unemployed — leaving workers and youth prey to the propaganda of the racists and fascists.

There is a great need to provide a national focus for

the unemployed, and to provide real means to unite employed and unemployed in struggle against the



common enemy — the Tory government.

This weekend's Unemployed Workers' Conference in London offers precisely such a lead. Following on from a successful conference in Leicester this summer, it is intended as the launching platform for an unemployed workers' movement to which local groups — union branches, unemployed workers' unions and other labour movement bodies — can affiliate and which will step up the fight to organise the unemployed right across the country.

For the unemployed, young and old alike, it is

important to offer a serious perspective for a fight to resolve their problems.

In other words it is necessary to spell out a commitment to fighting for the creation of three million new jobs to offer every man and woman the right to work.

Jobs

Experience under both Labour and Tory governments and the present economic plight of British industry have proved that it is impossible to create these jobs under capitalism. As long as the system remains intact, workers

face an indefinite future of mass unemployment.

Works

Only action to take the ownership and control of industry and the banks out of the hands of the capitalists and speculators can create conditions for the necessary crash programme of useful public works to confront the crisis in housing, social services and education at the same time as providing jobs for the unemployed.

The Tories plainly will do no such thing. To tackle

unemployment means to tackle the removal of the Thatcher government; and this can be accomplished not by the unemployed alone but only by the mobilisation of the whole labour movement.

The British Leyland strike offers a focus for such action. Unemployed workers can play an important role in strengthening this struggle, and in the struggle throughout the labour movement for a new leadership able and willing to fight for the interests of the working class.

TURN TO YOUTH

HALF a million of the unemployed are under 25.

Those who have never had a job have, of course, no job security at all. And those who have never had a job have neither trade union protection nor work experience. They are easy meat for cheap labour schemes and the general shoving around that happens to young people even the best of times.

Unemployed workers' unions have had some success in organising youth but not yet on the scale that is needed if we are to persuade not just individuals but whole groups to identify themselves with the labour movement.

We must have something tangible to offer them. As long as the official labour movement, which should be giving youth a lead, backs, the National Front and British Movement will cash in on youth unemployment, blaming it all on the blacks.

We have to build a movement that can show youth that the crisis is not caused by black people but by the bosses and their system.

But youth on their own can't win the fight or even on their own, win the struggle to unionise the Y schemes.

They need support and guidance — not sloppily composites from the Times lamenting that the scheme might possibly be used for cheap labour.

Socialists must also fight to commit the Labour Party — which set up the YOS in the first place — to abandon these fraudulent schemes and provide youth with real jobs and real wages.

Immediately, the UWM must take up the fight with the unions and at the Y factories themselves.

Make unions fight!

Chris Erswell reports on a trade union branch which is campaigning to organise the unemployed — the TGWU 6/612 branch in Liverpool.

WHEN the BL Speke factory closed down in 1978, the TGWU branch covering the plants stayed open. Far from dwindling to a few people, the branch has grown and merged with other branches in the same position: Dunlops, Massey Ferguson, and now Courtaulds.

This has not been an easy business, with the regional and national bureaucracy trying to close the branch at every stage; after all, the TGWU rules do not make organising the unemployed easy.

Refusing to be elbowed aside, the activists in the branch decided to fight for the regional leadership, challenge the existing complacence

on organising the unemployed, and tell the union bureaucracy that the lay members were the policy-makers!

They have achieved quite a lot: Bobby Owens from the 6/612 branch was elected regional chairperson, and the regional policy was modified to allow recruitment of the unemployed into functioning branches. A policy of funding education courses for the unemployed has been adopted.

Pressure

When TGWU national chairperson Stan Pemberton came to the local trade group coordinating committee to give his monthly report, he was confronted with the question, "When are you going to set up unemployed branches in every town?" He replied with stony silence.

In other unions, like the ISTC, there have been similar developments. For example, the branch covering the closed Shotton steelworks

has stayed in existence as a unemployed branch.

There must be other branches throughout the country which have remained in existence, like the Ansell's branch in Birmingham. They face tremendous pressure from the bureaucracy to close down: the 6/612's fight for the regional leadership was not an optional matter, but a life or death struggle.

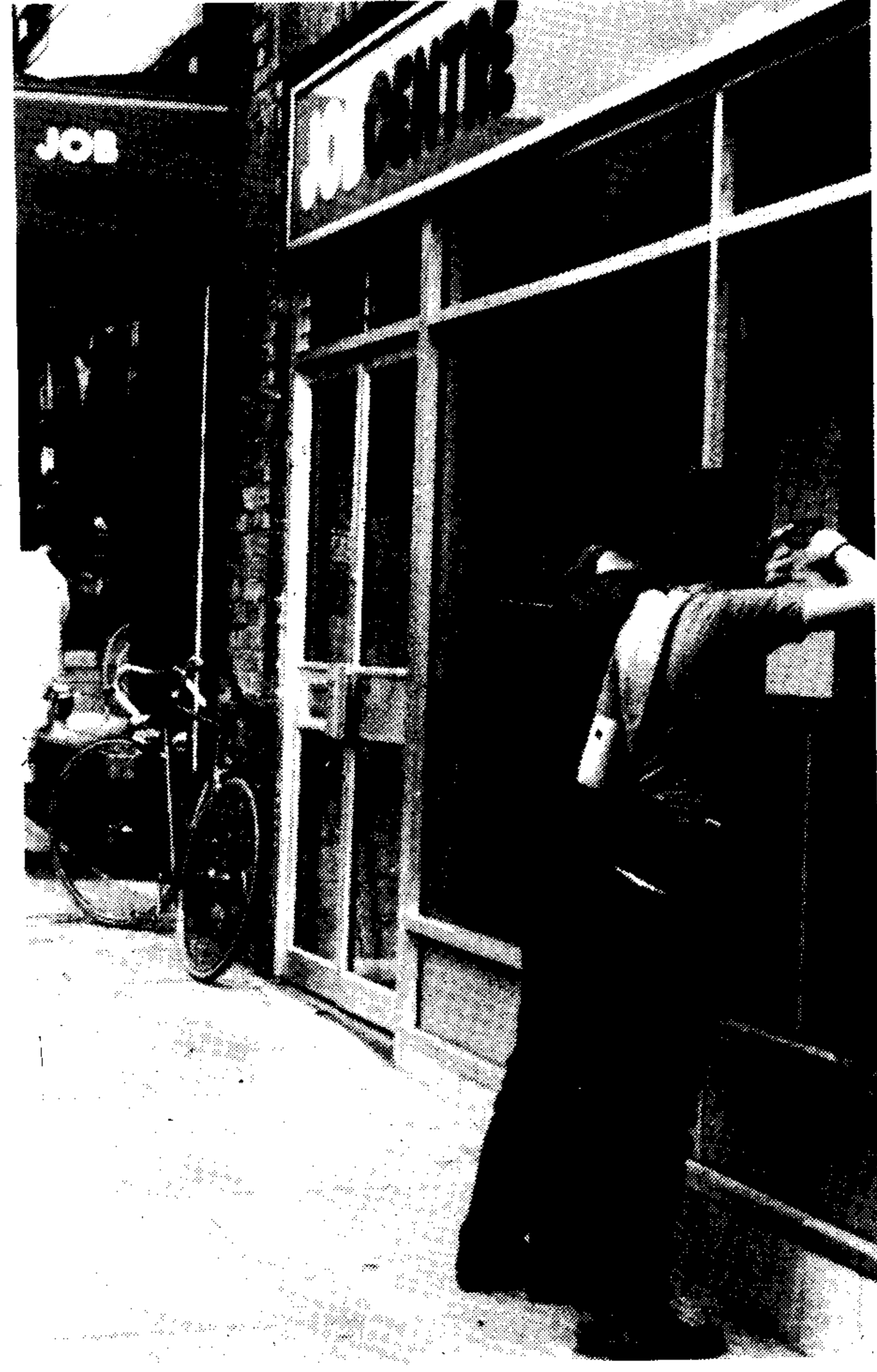
To some extent the activists are isolated in these branches: but the 6/612 have broken through this by fighting for leadership in the region, rather than by dispersing themselves into different branches and having dual membership with an unemployed workers' union.

To these people (rightly or wrongly) an unemployed workers' union seems superfluous and wrong-headed, cutting across the loyalty they have to their 'own' union. It would also leave them needlessly vulnerable to witch hunts by the bureaucracy, who can then

claim that they are linked to 'another union'. Anyone who knows the 'union chauvinism' associated with demarcation disputes will understand this danger.

Although the 6/612 activists are hostile to an unemployed workers' union, a recent conference in Merseyside (see report, on these pages) demonstrated that they are very keen to ally with other union branches organising the unemployed, such as the ISTC Shotton branch, and with community groups of unemployed people who may not yet be trade unionists.

Perhaps a similar, federal, alliance nationally might be a more appropriate solution to the problem of organising the unemployed than an unemployed union. It is clear, however, that the unemployed are going to have to build this movement themselves, and not wait for others to do it for us.



Reagan's cuts halt vital space research

by Les Hearn

AMONG the cuts in public expenditure being pushed by President Reagan is a small item few Socialist Organiser readers will have noticed.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) must cut its budget by \$367 million this year and \$1 billion cuts are threatened for each of the next two years.

What will this mean?

Firstly, Voyager 2, which has just sent us some of the most amazing photographs from the Sun's sixth planet, Saturn, could be switched off and left to drift through the solar system, passing Uranus and Neptune in 1986 and 1989 without sending back any views of these unknown planets.

So what? There will be other chances to view these

planets and their moons, won't there?

Unfortunately not. Because the planets all go round the Sun at different rates it is very unusual to find the four great planets, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune, virtually in a straight line. This arrangement will certainly never happen again in our lifetime and indeed probably not for hundreds of years.

Resources

Because they are so close to each other, it has been possible for the Voyager spacecraft 1 and 2 to visit them on a single run. But the run is only half-finished and won't be complete for eight years — and to save a paltry \$222 million it is proposed to abandon the

mission.

Some socialists will say that with millions of people starving here on earth, we shouldn't spend money on exploring the universe. However, I believe that there are enough resources in the world now to be able to satisfy the wants of everyone and to fund the sort of research carried out by NASA into our surroundings.

A socialist society will not clamp down on research just because there is no immediate goal in sight. Before we can find useful things in our environment, we need to do some basic exploration. After all, when electricity was discovered, Faraday couldn't think of a single use for it!

Other projects which may be dropped include the

Space Telescope (one of the peaceful projects proposed for the Space Shuttle) and Galileo, a mission to Jupiter.

Squandering

Galileo would analyse Jupiter's atmosphere and survey its moons, while the Space Telescope could give us a far better view of the solar system and the stars than is at present possible from the ground, due to clouds, dust and air pollution.

And ready dropped is the Solar Polar Expedition, which would have added to our understanding of the Sun's behaviour, which in turn affects our climate.

There are other reasons why I believe a socialist

society will need to carry on with space research and exploration. One is the scarcity of energy resources and raw materials on Earth (mainly due to the criminal squandering of our natural



Reagan

heritage by our rulers).

While we send forests of trees and oceans of oil up in smoke, the energy of the Sun radiates uselessly past us in space. But while we spend vast fortunes on nuclear power plants and research into nuclear fusion, virtually nothing is spent on research into solar power satellites (SPSs) which could beam down energy to special receivers floating on the seas.

One recent plan suggests 100 SPSs, each the size of Manhattan, covered with silicon solar power cells. To build these would require a phenomenal number of flights of a jumbo-sized space shuttle and cost rather a lot. This is where another plan comes in — automated factories on the

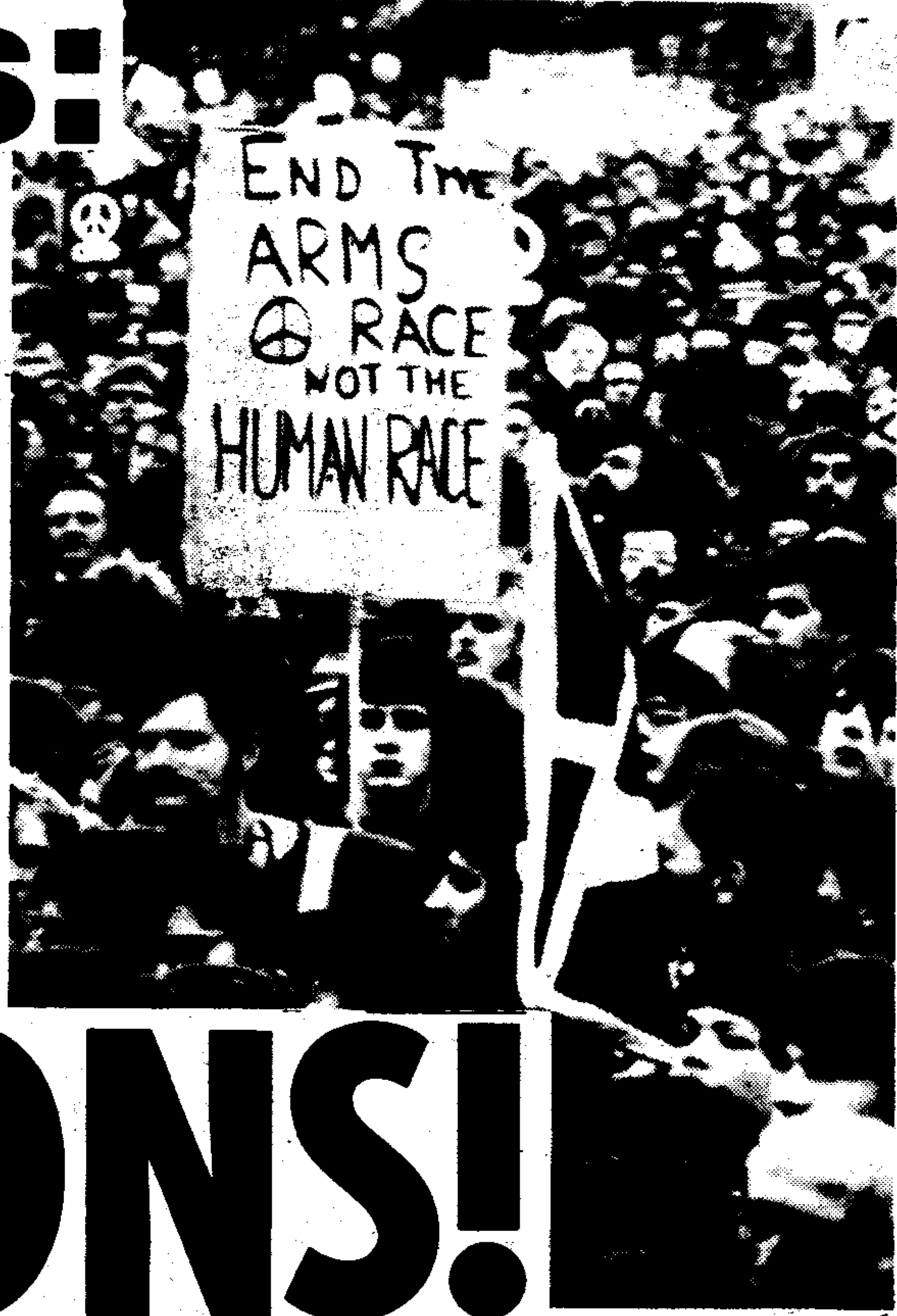
Moon, mining for the silicon and useful metals found there and sending these materials to the orbiting factories making SPSs.

This would be much more economical, as the Moon's gravity is much less than the Earth's, and there is no atmosphere to cause friction, so only about a hundredth of the fuel to launch a rocket from Earth would be needed.

Space research is a particular target among socialists, and now among certain capitalists. But if the ignorant monetarists succeed in destroying scientific research like this, we will be the poorer in knowledge when we finally throw the vandals.

Europe's youth demands:

SCRAP THESE WEAPONS!



CHRISTINE CADIN

MICHAEL Foot was greeted enthusiastically, but there was bigger applause for trade union militant Mike Cooley, who rightly denounced Labour's pro-NATO official defence spokesperson, Brynmor John.

The Labour Party conference was overwhelmingly for unilateral disarmament, but still our shadow cabinet representatives campaign against this line.

Target

Few issues bring home so clearly the need to fight for accountability in the Labour Party and trade unions.

Over a quarter of a million people marched through London on October 24 to demand that Britain junk its nuclear weapons. As in the late '50s, CND has managed to mobilise many thousands of people new to politics.

The London march was paralleled by several giant marches elsewhere in Europe. About a quarter of a million marched in Rome, the principal target of their protest, being the US bases in Italy.

In Brussels 200,000 took to the streets. It was Belgium's biggest demonstration ever, with four per cent of the country's population participating. In Paris 50,000 demonstrated, and there were several smaller marches in the suburbs.



government's plans to contribute to the US-sponsored Sinai force.

That sort of trade union involvement must be developed to win the fight against the Bomb — by disarming and overthrowing the capitalist warmongers.

against the Bomb — by disarming and overthrowing the capitalist warmongers.

Hoovers must occupy!

by Ian McLeish

DESPITE shop stewards' attempts to prevent one factory being played off against the other, that is exactly what Hoover management have achieved with the announcement of the Perivale closure.

The Cambuslang workforce now seem to be suffering from an attack of tunnel vision. Eddie McAvoys, convener of the Cambuslang factory said, "Cambuslang workers now feel there is light at the end of the tunnel, that there is a future for the Cambuslang factory."

Support

I think if they would come out on strike for Perivale I'm surprised that Perivale workers are not

out on the streets already.

"They have to be seen to be leading the fightback. There is no doubt that the union would endorse that. Exactly how we will fight the closure and redundancies will be decided at a union delegate conference in London on 2nd November."

The only decision that can be taken at that meeting is for the Perivale workers to occupy their factory and for the other two factories to strike in their support.

This will not be the sensible action the AUEW members will endorse but it is the only action which will save the jobs.

If, as Cambuslang workers believe, Hoover want to move the bulk of their work to factories abroad due to cheaper labour, then how soon will it be before they go the whole way and pull out of Britain altogether?

This is already seen as a possibility by the stewards. But their answer is to close Hoover factories abroad and increase the dole queues there.

A short time ago Eddie McAvoys said he saw "the need for some sort of international shop stewards' organisation". Surely that's how to organise the fightback now!

Socialist Organiser



ST MARY'S W9 Wards under threat

DEFEATED by the ambulance drivers' action in their plans to close down Casualty, management at St Mary's Hospital, London W9, are using dirty tricks to try to empty Wards 2, 3 and 5.

Large sections of the hospital are scheduled for closure, and these wards are due to be the first to go.

No new patients are being booked in, and the management plan to put patients now in Ward 2 into Ward 1 after they have been to the operating theatre.

The nurses and sister on Ward 2 are very upset about this 'hijacking' of patients. Staff are faced with the choice of turning patients from operating theatre back to Ward 2, or letting it be run down.

To cover up this ploy, the administrators have offered more nursery staff, including agency nurses, to Ward 1.

The workers have the

By Dettie Clinton

good of the patients as their uppermost consideration and are reluctant to play management at their own game. However, they know that only action against every cut has maintained this hospital.

Doctors must speak out and not follow the dictates of the cutters. Nurses and porters working in unison will have to defy these directives.

The ambulance drivers decided they would bring patients to St Mary's casualty whatever the administrators said, and forced them to back down on their instructions not to bring in ambulances. This sort of determined action is the only language these toadies understand.

The domestics, too, have refused to be intimidated and are supporting shop steward Rita Maxim, who has again had a disciplinary hearing for refusing to

do work of another grade. The fight to save St Mary's — a big general hospital — is quite different to the occupations in relatively small specialist hospitals such as St Benedict's and Longworth. Difficult medical questions which are a matter of life and death have to be taken every day.

It is vital that this struggle is not isolated, but becomes a focus for the overall fight against cuts, particularly in London.

Steps to spread action in support of St Mary's W9 will be discussed at a conference on Saturday November 21 in Porchester Hall, starting 11am. All supporters are welcome.

Regular commitments to picket are also urgently required from all labour movement organisations. Any organisation or individual wishing to commit themselves should ring the Defence Committee at 01-286 4884 x 544/372.