

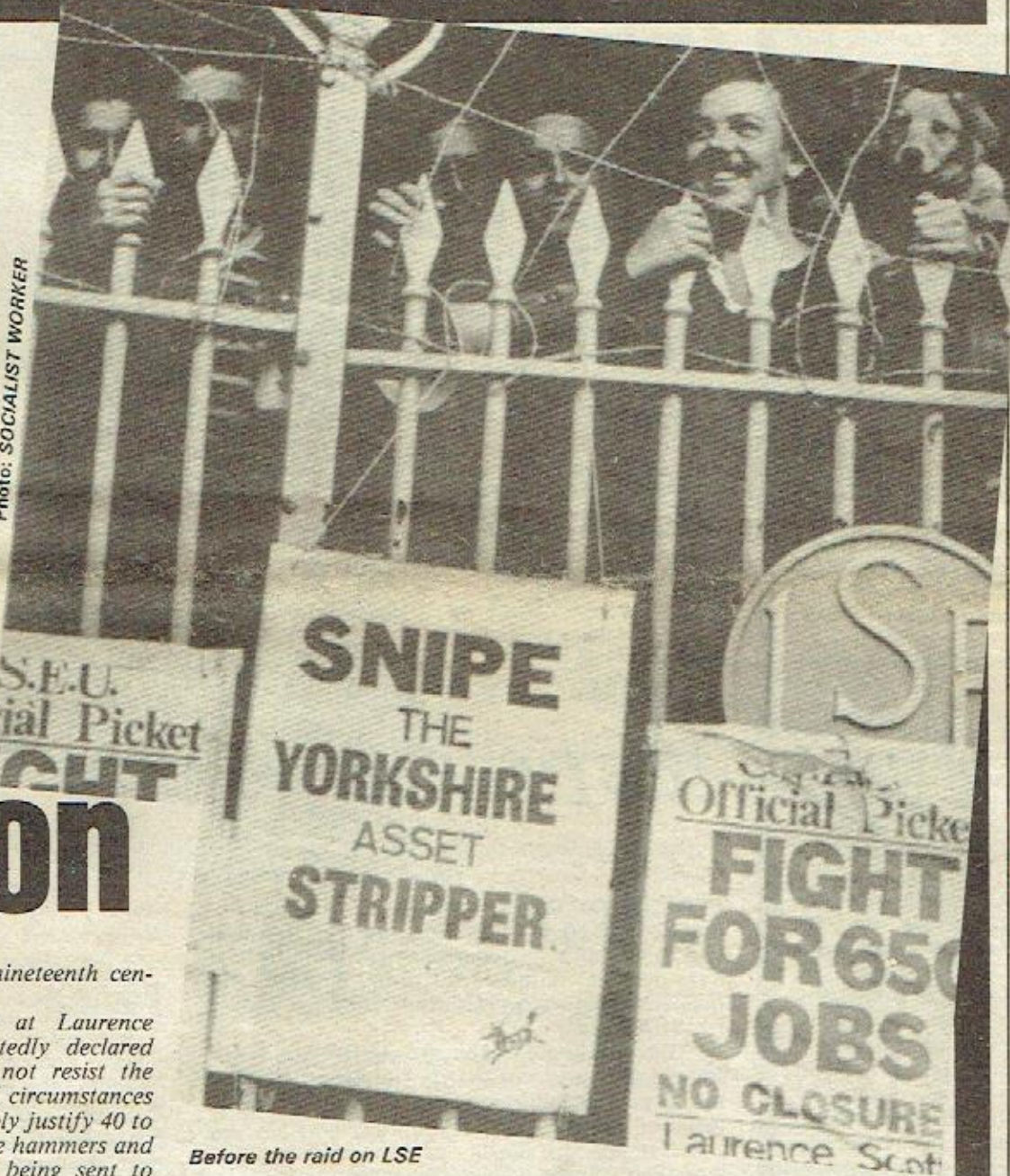
Socialist Challenge

↑ JOBS NOT BOMBS ↓

JOB WRECKERS

Bosses' thugs smash workers' occupation

Photo: SOCIALIST WORKER



Before the raid on LSE

At 2.45 last Tuesday morning 45 bailiffs armed with sledge hammers and pick axe handles threw out the workers occupying the Laurence Scott factory in Manchester. They broke windows, knocked a wall down and told everyone to get off site.

Shop steward Phil Penning told Socialist Challenge that while he was making some phone calls two bailiffs broke down the door of the office he was in, although it wasn't locked, and told him to get out. 'They were both big, heavy men, one must have been at least 20 stone and as I walked past them, they stank of beer.'

The strikers immediately issued a press statement. They are determined to fight on.

'What we have witnessed today is a disgrace to British industrial relations. From the outset the workers at Laurence Scott have sought nothing other than the right to work. When consultation takes the form of sledge hammers and pick axe handles then we are

returning to the nineteenth century.

'The workers at Laurence Scott have repeatedly declared that they would not resist the bailiffs. In such circumstances how can we possibly justify 40 to 50 men with sledge hammers and pick axe handles being sent to take over the factory.

'We would hope that every trade unionist in the North west will join our demonstration outside the factory on Sunday, 23 August, at 11am to show the Arthur Snipes of this world that they cannot treat workers in this way.

'The manner in which the factory was repossessed today will make the workers ever more determined to pursue their fight from the streets outside the factory.'

Sellout

This latest development in the struggle of Laurence Scott workers for the right to work comes in the wake of a complete sell out by the union leaderships. Laurence Scott workers have overwhelmingly voted to continue the fight and not accept the agreement cooked up by boss Arthur Snipe and union officials.

But despite withdrawal of official

backing from the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering unions support is still pouring in. Tony Benn MP says the strike has 'given hope to millions. I hope the entire British labour and trade union movement will support your campaign.'

Peter Hain, executive member of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, deplores the actions of the Confed executive 'against the clearly expressed and democratic wishes of the membership at Laurence Scott. I would urge every trade unionist to ignore that decision and to give as much practical support as possible to this struggle.'

Support

That practical support is needed now more than ever. As Bernard Connolly, craft convenor from British Steel, South Yorkshire told Socialist

Phil Penning, Laurence Scott steward gives the story of the dispute on page 5.

Challenge: 'We're prepared to support them financially, physically, morally, any way they want. We're asking the stewards to vote half our funds to Laurence Scott. We're appalled at the AUEW and other unions' attitude to their fight for jobs. Having been involved in the fight for jobs, we feel very close to the workers of Laurence Scott.'

The workers at Laurence Scott have shown they are not prepared to be ground down by any one: bosses, bureaucrats or bailiffs. Now they need the full strength of the labour movement if they are to be victorious in their fight for jobs. Such a victory will mean much more than 650 jobs saved; it will be a clarion call to the entire labour movement that the Tories and their friends can be defeated once and for all.

Messages of support and donations to G Fryer, 20 Roundcroft, Romiley, Cheshire.

INSIDE: Ireland: Tories in crisis

This week the number of Irish political prisoners to die while on hunger strike will probably reach double figures.

Michael Devine was on his 60th day of hunger strike as Socialist Challenge went to press, and his condition was reported to be rapidly deteriorating. Already, Thatcher has driven nine hunger strikers to their death.

But the Tories policies on Ireland are increasingly under attack. The Sunday Times has now called for British withdrawal from Ireland, and the Cabinet itself is



reported to be split over the hunger strike. On page 9, H Block candidate in the Fermanagh by-election, Owen Carron talks to Socialist Challenge

SOLIDARNOSĆ

Poland: New strike threat

Printers in Poland have threatened to go on strike in protest against government media attacks on the independent union Solidarity. The printers complain of the strict control the Communist Party exercises over the media.

Solidarity has just published its ideas on how the union should be organised. It is one of the most democratic plans for rank and file control union members have published anywhere. On pages 6 and 7 Socialist Challenge reprints Solidarity's proposals.

Lothian: Is it the end?

Labour-controlled Lothian council in Scotland has gone back on earlier decisions to defy the demands made by the Tory Government for cuts in council spending.

Is this the end of the Lothian struggle? Or is a new fight possible? Socialist Challenge talks to Lothian councillors, who voted to continue the resistance to the Tories demands. See page 4.

Tories shuffle for coming confrontation

THE next few weeks will see Margaret Thatcher redrawing the ranks of her Cabinet for battle. The fundamental strategic question for Thatcher is what to do when industrial production starts to increase in the next period.

The objective of the Tory government so far has been clear. John Biffen spelled it out in his now infamous statement last week. What did Biffen say?

* That 'overmanning' in industry has been replaced by unemployment.

* That the high level of unemployment is intended as a brake on industrial stoppages.

* That the fact that wage increases are in single figures is attributable at least partially to the length of the dole queue.

* That inflation has fallen; a goal worth the social and economic costs of unemployment.

The main aim of Thatcher is to stay on course with these policies — and that means a collision with the unions this winter. Thatcher's government has shown remarkable agility in weaving and ducking away from confrontations with powerful groups of industrial workers. She took on the British Steel and British Leyland workers earlier on, in the full flush of her election victory.

She was quite happy to have a long drawn out dispute with the Civil Servants, even when it cost the government about five times the cost of conceding their wage demands to defeat them. But she wisely ran like hell when the miners started to strike against pit closures, preferring to bide her time.

But her ability to 'float like a Cruise missile and sting like a neutron bomb' will be put to a severe test this autumn.

A national rail strike is due to start at the beginning of September and there are possible confrontations with the miners, the gas workers and Post Office engineers all within two months of that date.

The miners have only postponed the battle over pit closures. The National Coal Board has already given notice of a possible round of pit closures. Within the next couple of months Sir Derek Ezra will announce the plans for closing 20 more pits. At the same time the miners wage claim, due to be settled in October, is heading towards another possible confrontation.

So Thatcher is making the necessary preliminary moves to shore up the government against such a confrontation.

The object once again is to politically split the trade unions as a preliminary step to confronting a major section.

This year the first target is the rail workers, who are both in the front line of the struggle against the wave of redundancies sweeping through the nationalised industries heralded by the decision of the European Court on the closed shop.

So far the attacks on union organisation introduced by James Prior have received no militant rebuff from the trade union movement.

The TUC Conference meeting in Blackpool on 7 September has to not only reject the new 'consultative' paper, whether it is issued by Prior or Norman Tebbit, it then has to go on to plan the type of united action that can stop the Biffen strategy dead.

This means building on the Triple Alliance between the steel workers the miners and the railway workers to build fighting alliances of all those coming into conflict with the Tories this winter.

A call for such committees based on delegates from workplaces from the TUC Congress would prepare the labour movement for the sort of action that needs to be taken to stop Thatcher dead in her tracks. The absence of such call means that such tactics will have to be pursued through individual unions and in localities.

Thatcher nukes nationalised industries

By Colin Talbot Westminster POEU

MAGGIE THATCHER has gone one up on her friend and rival, Ronnie Reagan. The President may have a bomb that kills off workers but leaves property intact, but the Prime Minister has an even more selective device. It destroys only nationalised property, leaving private riches unscathed. It doesn't kill off workers, it stores them on the dole queue until they are needed again.

It's called 'Sir Geoffrey Howe'. His latest proposals revealed this week amount to the biggest denationalisation package yet attempted by a western government.

Sir Geoffrey launched the blitzkrieg against publicly owned enterprises with a savage policy of cash-limits which stopped them borrowing money when they need it. British Leyland and British Steel have been the most obvious victims.

public auction. So far Sir Geoffrey has started out selling 49 per cent shares in each concern.

His third tack has been to force nationalised industries to hand over to the private sector some of the most lucrative parts of their business without even an auction.

British Gas is being forced to abandon its gas showrooms and British Telecoms much of its customer apparatus renting to allow 'privatisation' of the work.

Friends

His second tack was to sell off chunks of nationalised industries to the Tories' friends in the public sector. British Aerospace, British Airways, British Transport Docks Board, Cable and Wireless, the National Freight Corporation and parts of British Rail like Sealink and the hotels all found themselves up for

Mix

The latest phase in the assault is the plan to start selling off half shares in the British National Oil Corporation (BNOC) and

In British Telecom (BT). A half-share of BNOC's assets is reckoned to be worth around £1 billion while a half share of BT £7.5 billion share could raise even more.

These attacks represent a radical attempt by Thatcher and Howe to alter the 'mix' of the British economy, putting into private hands some of the most profitable public industries and utilities.

Crisis-torn British bosses need this boost for their profits, while the working class needs the mixture of rationalisation, cash limits and hiving-off like a hole in the head.

Gas

Already those workers most directly threatened are moving into action. The gas workers are planning to launch national strike action in October or November (as gas consumption reaches its peak) to oppose the selling-off of the gas showrooms.

With profits last year of £839m the Gas Corporation has been used as an additional tax mechanism by Howe, much to the annoyance of gasworkers and consumers alike.

The hatchet job on the showrooms looks like being the last straw as far as the gasworkers are concerned.

The British Telecommunications Bill became



Howe to alter the 'mix'

an Act of Parliament on 27 July and on 1 October it will be implemented. From that date, Sir Keith Joseph will start issuing licences allowing private companies to take over British Telecoms work.

Already, the powerful London City branch of the Post Office Engineering Union has decided at a mass meeting to take industrial action to stop the carve-up in the City of London, where the effects of the Act are likely to be sharpest and earliest.

Action

While the National Executive Council are not backing the London City, a special POEU conference scheduled for November will give militants the opportunity to overturn the NEC's policy and go for action to stop the implementation of the Act.

If ever there was a clear case where the TUC should be co-ordinating action, surely this is it. The railworkers, miners, gas

workers and telecoms workers face the same threats in their industries: cash-limits and hiving-off.

We are all going to be trying to repulse these attacks at the same time. An alliance between us would be invincible.

TUC

The TUC Conference in September is one focus where the rank and file of our respective unions could put pressure now following up the example of the rail unions and the Triple Alliance, by organising joint meetings in our localities to begin to create the unity we need from the rank and file upwards.

The memberships of the NUR, ASLEF, NUM, GMWU, NALGO and the POEU in our respective industries have to be brought together and welded into an army that can defeat Thatcher's war of extermination against the nationalised industries and pave the way for kicking her out altogether.

'It's now or never' say rail workers

By Hazel McPherson, Paddington No.1 NUR.

STRIKE committees and picket rotas are being organised by branches of the National Union of Railwaymen and the Association of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen in preparation for the national stoppage called for 31 August.

The response to the strike call has been favourable and for NUR members, reeling from 'productivity' exercises, the attitude is 'now or never'.

However the mood is cautious since the strike date has been set so far ahead. The possibility of a twelfth hour deal between the union leaders and the British Rail Board cannot be excluded.

Added to this was the NUR's response to the BRB's recent letter threatening a further 20,000 compulsory redundancies on top of the 38,000 already planned. Russell Tuck, assistant general secretary of the union, replied to this threat by saying: 'The NUR's door is always open.'

April and three per cent payment from August be honoured by the BRB.

Bosses

The BR bosses demand that the extra 3 per cent should be linked to productivity exercises including one person operation of trains, the abolition of the 8 hour day and the introduction of continental shifts that would result in mass redundancies and working conditions prevalent in the late nineteenth century.

It is this question of both productivity and pay

that will mobilise rail workers at the end of August, despite the actions of their leadership so far.

Twice

Nonetheless the fact remains that the NUR NEC has twice called for strike action unanimously in the last month — an unprecedented occurrence. This, combined with increasing collaboration between NUR and ASLEF at a rank and file level through the Rail Union Federation and with miners and steel workers through the Triple Alliance, has given rail workers increased belief in their ability to win.

In the build up to the strike date this collaboration is essential. Even if the strike is called off continued collaboration of this sort will add immensely to rank and file organisation of rail workers.



Scabs on the platform

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

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

Name.....

Address.....

Age.....

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

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

Talks

General secretary, Sid Weighell, returns this week to Britain from Sweden and formal talks will resume over the unions' demand that the findings of arbitration for an eight per cent pay increase back dated from

Our summer schedule

WE have reduced the number of pages of Socialist Challenge from its usual 16 to 12 for the three issues during August, in order to all our staff to take their holidays.

We'll be back in full form and force with issue number 211 on 3 September in time for the Trade Union Congress.

Liverpool 8 youths lead thousands against police

By Redmond O'Neill

15,000 MARCHED in Liverpool last Saturday. Led by thousands of black and white youth from Liverpool 8, the mass demonstration demanded the sacking of Merseyside Chief Constable, Kenneth Oxford and 'police out of Toxteth — prisoners out of jail'.

The march united the youth of Toxteth with Liverpool dockers, Labour Parties and trades councils.

Its significance was not that a couple of police were injured — hardly surprising after the murder of Jimmy Moore, and the maiming and the near castration carried out by Oxford's thugs in recent weeks.

No — the significance of this demonstration was its discipline and militancy. The remarkable ability of the young local stewards to lead thousands of young rebels in united action with the workers organisations.

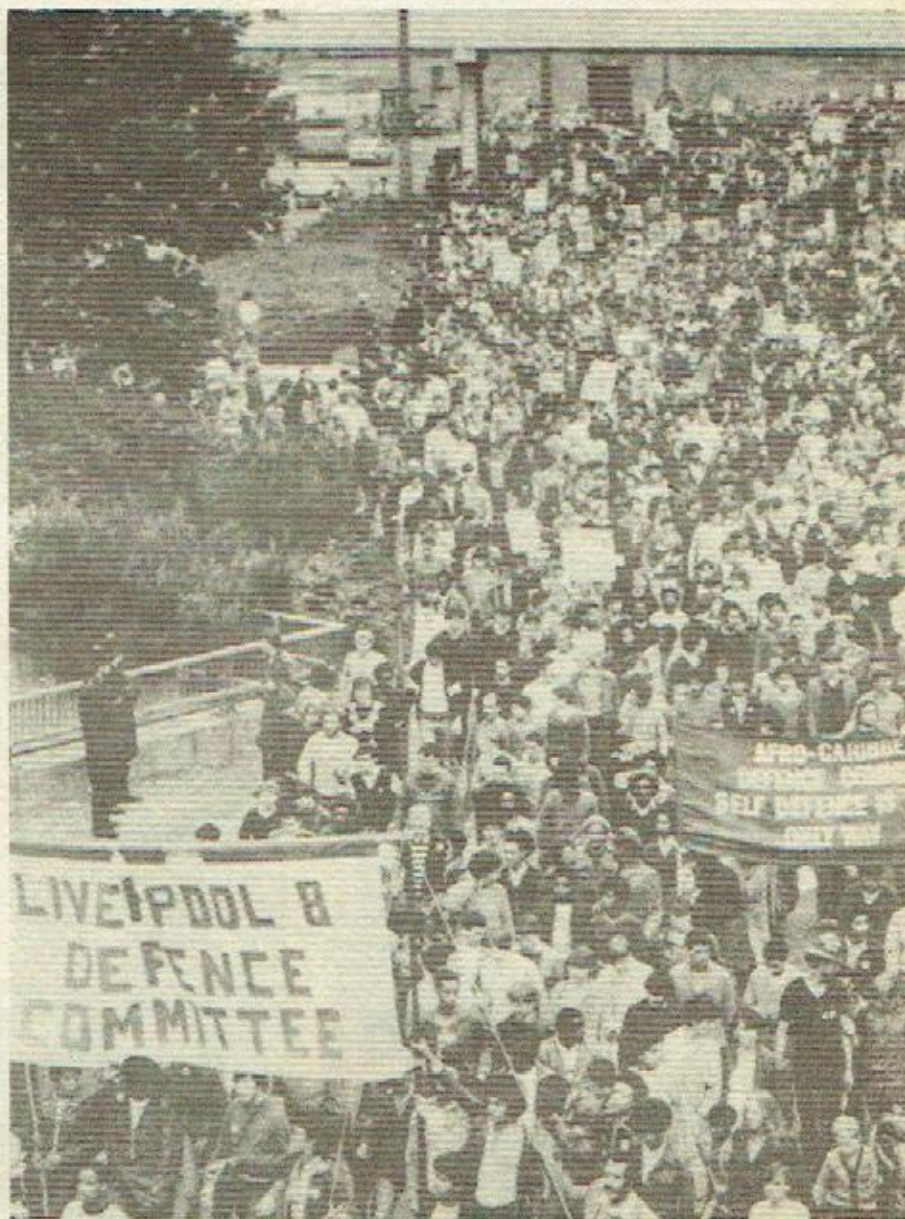
Saturday marked the first step from the spontaneous youth rebellion against police repression to organised political action involving the mass of youth.

Saturday showed that when the workers' movement stands in alliance with the youth against the police, the Tories and the hysteria of the bosses' press, then nothing will hold back this movement.

Everything was done to sabotage this march. Coaches from all over the north were cancelled, including three from Manchester's Moss Side by operators warned off by the police.

Nonetheless at Liverpool's Pier Head the most enthusiastic response was reserved for speakers bringing solidarity from Brixton and Moss Side.

The capitalist press will spend the next few days at the bedside of the two coppers who were injured. But for the labour movement this march was an urgent call to defend the youth now facing frame up and militarised police and for leadership to build from the anger of the youth rebellion into a powerful and disciplined movement to remove Thatcher and her new apparatus of police repression.



Unity of youth and labour

Celebrate Pakistan's Independence Day in Birmingham

By Val Coultas

AUGUST 16 is independence day in Pakistan. Thirty four years ago — on 14 August 1947 — the British were thrown out of Pakistan, or India as it was then.

In Birmingham on Saturday 30 August the Pakistani Workers Association will be holding a mass rally in Digbeth Civic Hall to celebrate this event.

'There will not be many celebrations in Pakistan today', explains Kahn, the General Secretary of the PWA, 'because all the official parties are banned. Only the right-wing, religious groupings will be allowed to celebrate.'

Kahn describes Birmingham as the 'head-office' of the PWA with more Pakistani workers living in Birmingham than any other town in Britain.

Banned

The rally will give 'an opportunity to hear about what's happening in Pakistan under General Zia and hear speakers from parties that have been banned like the People's Party.'

Tony Benn MP, Reg Race MP, and Albert Bore a prospective Labour MP in the Birmingham area have been invited.

Benn

Some Pakistani workers are active members of the Labour Party in Birmingham and Kahn thought they should be backing Tony Benn.

mission hoping to discredit the PWA and disorganise Pakistanis living in Britain.

'The High Commission is frightened of socialists like Tariq Ali and myself who are involved with the PWA. They know about the success of the meetings with Tariq in Birmingham in the past and they want to try and frighten the Pakistani community from supporting socialist ideas', says Kahn.

Controls

The PWA is the only organisation that can unite all Pakistanis, Kahn believes, 'whichever caste, whichever religion, whichever tribe — the only way we can build the PWA is on a broad base, taking up issues like no immigration controls, no community policing, no interference with the Pakistani community from any outside body.'

'We believe these are the issues that will rally Pakistani workers to the PWA and we hope to see a big turnout at Digbeth on 30 August.'

Police aim to smash Bradford Asian Youth Movement

By Maggie Shoulder

ON 13 August a 300-strong picket was held in Bradford, West Yorkshire, in front of the magistrates' court to protest against the arrest and detention without bail of eleven young Asians after a series of police raids on the Asian community.

Among family and friends in court was Anwar Ditta.

Custody

The eleven are being charged with conspiracy to endanger property and life, and conspiracy to cause grievous bodily harm during the recent uprisings against racism and unemployment.

The lesser charge can carry a penalty of life imprisonment.

The police claim that the charges are based on voluntary statements yet all the eleven are pleading not guilty.

They were denied the most elementary legal rights. Relatives and friends were not allowed to visit them in custody and they were refused access to a solicitor until half an hour before their first court appearance.

Assault

During the picket, 17-year-old Anna Singh, who was leafletting passers-by, was struck in the face by a 16 stone racist who dragged her

to the ground by her hair.

When the picket ran to her aid, the man jumped on a bus and tried to escape. The picketers surrounded the bus and took him off.

The police took him into the police station where he was charged with common assault. Despite 300 witnesses the police aren't sure whether they will prosecute.

At a packed public meeting of 500 on 12 August the implications of these charges were spelled out. Speaker after speaker told of police failure to defend the black community from increasing racial attacks including physical assault and arson.

Arrest

As the defendants have been actively involved in defence of black people in Britain such as the Anwar Ditta campaign, and the Asian Youth Movement their arrest must be seen as a political attack on all black people. A twelfth person associated with the Black United Youth Party has since been arrested.

The July 11 Action Committee has been set up to demand that the charges be dropped and the defendants released.

A national demonstration is being planned.

Messages of support and contributions to July 11 Action Committee c/o 2nd floor Textile hall, Westgate, Bradford 1.

Black workers' conference

Saturday 12 September
Digbeth Civic Hall
Birmingham

Bringing black trade unionists together

By Toni Gorton

THE Birmingham conference planned for 12 September will be a big step forward in uniting black workers to use their power in the trade unions in the interests of black people.

The provisional agenda includes Bill Morris, national secretary of the TGWU Passenger Transport Group who has been invited to speak on racism and the trade unions in the '80s.

Women

Bernie Grant, an area officer for the National Union of Public Employees will be speaking on positive discrimination.

Rudy Naryan, a black radical lawyer will deal with the effect of the Nationality Act on the trade unions.

Several workshops will discuss black organisation in the unions, redundancies and black workers, and the issues around black women workers.

The steering committee that is organising the conference is comprised of Asian and Afro-Caribbean unionists.

Of the three women, one is a senior shop steward in a hospital NAJGO branch.

One person is a transport union shop steward at Longbridge and a member of the People's National Party; one of the engineering union members was secretary of the strike committee during last year's lockout at Birmetal's; among the others are a secretary of the Afro-Caribbean Teachers Association and a member of the construction union UCATT.

Debate

This conference is designed to provide a platform for black workers to exchange experiences and to debate the way forward in their unions. Entry will be by credential only, with a few places open to non-black observers.

If you are a black worker please send your name, address, occupation and trade union to Steering Committee for the Black Workers' Conference, 177 Antrobus Road, Handsworth, Birmingham 21. Donations to the same address.

National demonstration

To show unity with black youth against racism unemployment and police violence

Southall
20 September

Assemble 1pm at the Dominion Cinema car park near Southall British Rail station.

For further information contact the Southall Anti-fascist Committee, c/o 9 Pluckington Place, Southall Middlesex.

New programme for fighting the cuts

'MANY Labour Councils have joined the campaign against the missiles by declaring their borough 'nuclear free zones'. They will oppose anything to do with missiles affecting their areas. They should take the same attitude to the Tory cuts and declare their area 'no cuts zones'.'

The new pamphlet produced by **Socialist Challenge** makes no bones about what will be necessary in the fight against the Tory cuts and is a must for all activists involved in that fight. The pamphlet points out what the Lothian councillors have realised too late: that in order to fight the cuts we have to build a movement actually to get rid of the Tories.

'While the Tories remain in government and they control the amount of money which local authorities can spend, there is virtually no hope of maintaining our services. This is far from saying that we must sit back and wait for the return of a Labour government.'

On the contrary, it means local authority trade unionists and Labour Party members playing their part in building a movement to bring down the Tories. Only this kind of action can create the conditions which will prevent new Callaghans and Healeys doing the Tories' cutting for them'.

The Tories will pull no punches and their action in penalising the Lothian councillors should come as no surprise. That is why, as the pamphlet points out,

'resistance to cuts will largely depend on the intransigence and determination of the unions'.

It is only by organising in the unions, in the community and at a national level that any Labour council can begin a successful resistance.

And that resistance should not just stop there:

'A future Labour government has to be committed to the restoration of all the cuts made since 1974; the cancellation of

all debt charges; the nationalisation of the banks and finance houses without compensation and under workers' control, and the launching of a massive programme of new public service building. However, this programme can only become a reality with a fightback starting now against the cuts and their effects.'

What is needed is the widest possible discussion inside the whole of the labour movement on how best to defeat the policies of this Tory government. The pamphlet provides a comprehensive programme for fighting the cuts.

'No cuts, no rate rises and a fightback.'

This is what we say should be fought for. It is possible to wage a fightback against the Tory cuts and go ahead and put up the rates in the meantime so as not to endanger services and jobs. Many supporters of this approach genuinely want to protect services and jobs and also get rid of the Tories at the earliest opportunity.

'They also recognise

that one authority on its own cannot defeat the Tories on this central plank of their strategy, any more than one pit could have effectively defeated the Tory proposals to close the mines.'

In 1980, the ruling Labour group in Lambeth, led by Ted Knight, decided that it must build a national response and a conference was held on 1 November. This was attended by over 600 organisations, representing trade union branches in the local authorities, constituency Labour Parties, and Labour groups. A fighting programme to combat the cuts was agreed. The main points were:

'They agreed that local authorities should take an uncompromising stand against government policies, and commit themselves now to:

- No cuts in jobs and services; no running down of direct labour.

- No rent or supplementary rate rises this financial year, and no rent or rate rises to compensate for government cuts.

- Reversal of decisions to sell council houses or housing land.

- To work with local anti-cuts committees and community groups to build local support among residents.

This should be carried out in conjunction with trade unionists taking action to:

- Defend jobs and services by opposing redundancies, redeployment, natural wastage etc. by any action necessary.

- Hold strikes and occupations as soon as any Labour council faces receivers or commissioners, or is surcharged for making a stand on cuts.

- Refuse to cooperate with government legislation such as council house sales, and with management whenever cuts are involved.

The conference also resolved to call on the Labour Party national executive and the TUC for support for this campaign.

no cuts, no rates or rent rises!

Phyllis Dunnipace
Rob Jones

25p

Socialist Challenge
PAMPHLET

A new Socialist Challenge pamphlet about fighting the cuts. Available from Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1. Price 25p plus p&p.

Split in Labour group leads to Lothian cuts



By Alex Baillie

ON 11 August the Labour group on Lothian council voted NOT to cut their budget by £26m and to defy the Tory government. By the reconvened council meeting two days later, the councillors had lost their resolve and the Labour group split.

Faced with a cut of £1.4m per week in their rate support grant and the prospect of 'slipping into illegality' the Labour group's singular defiance of the Tory government came to an ignominious end.

Tory councillors having walked out of the council chambers, the Labour group split 18 to 7 in favour of cutting the '81-82 budget by £15.2m.

Teachers

Already, hundreds of Lothian teachers employed on short term contracts have been told not to turn up for work next week.

Centres already built for the elderly, pre-school children and the handicapped will not now open due to social work cut-backs.

Other cut-backs in maintenance and repairs, supplies and services will lead to private sector redundancies and increased future expenditure.

George Younger the Secretary of State for Scotland is still out for blood. He will not settle for less than £30m in cuts!

Defied

Seven councillors with the backing of the regional Labour Party have defied the group whip and voted consistently for no cuts. Jimmy Burnett, one of the seven believes that the Labour group have set the

and for them on Thursday.

Confuse

'This is bound to confuse and disillusion workers who put their faith in the Labour group' he told Socialist Challenge.

John Mulvey, another councillor added 'Some of us have always said that eventually the unions

would have to take the Tories on themselves!'

He feels that one of the main problems is Lothian's isolation. The Tories realise this and are using Lothian as a test case for their future policy of massive cuts in the rest of Britain.

The seven who have stood out against cuts will continue to fight for local government freedom.

But it's now obvious a



John Mulvey

fight is developing in Lothian region which is bound to surface during the re-selection process this autumn when right-wingers in the group are likely to come under attack.

The next few weeks should see whether the unions will lie down in the face of huge cuts in services and massive job loss. NALGO has decided to ballot its members on strike action.

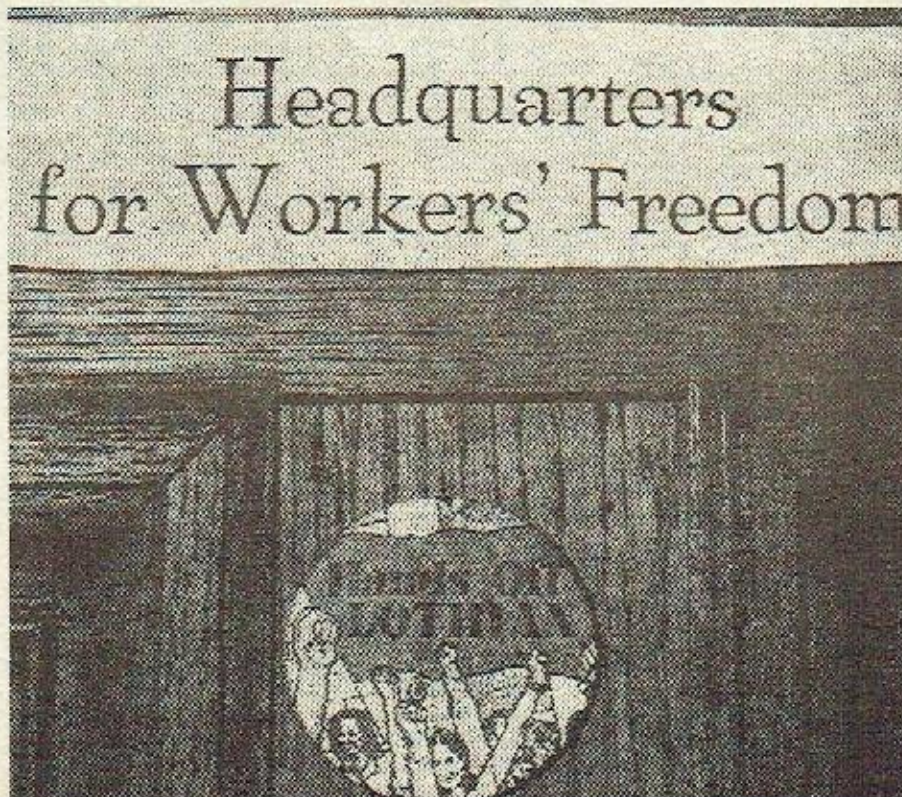
The teachers union — the EIS — has suffered the most severe cuts in jobs and has shown itself in the past to take a militant stand when jobs are threatened.

Tom Fenton, President of the Edinburgh EIS said that his members would 'almost definitely' take industrial action if the education service was cut.

Clear

The message is clear for local authority workers throughout Britain. Even one of the most militant authorities in Britain cannot beat the Tories on their own.

At the end of the day workers themselves by their own actions are the only people who can defend their jobs and their services.



In the Lothian Region's headquarters

The story of Scotts

ON 24 April this year workers at the Laurence Scott engineering factory in Openshaw, Manchester occupied against closure. Today despite the attacks of the employers, courts and bailiffs they are still fighting.

Although money and support have poured in from hundreds of thousands of workers throughout Britain, they fight without backing of the national leaderships of their unions.

The Laurence Scott workers are in the front line of the fight for jobs for the whole labour movement.

PHIL PENNING, a TASS shop steward in the plant, gives the story of the dispute and appeals to the labour movement for their full support in the crucial weeks ahead.

9 Oct 1980 Arthur Snipe of Doncaster Mining Supplies takes over the Laurence Scott group.

16 Oct Louisa Street works in Manchester placed on short-time working.

17 Oct Our shop stewards committee requests an immediate meeting with Snipe but is refused.

10 Feb 1981 Local directors are notified of forthcoming closure.

13 March Second period of short-time working applied for and obtained from the government.

8 April The union is told that the works are to shut 10 July. Local management admits that the decision was taken two months earlier but kept secret under threat of dismissal. Unions are asked not to cause trouble but to 'co-operate' with clearance of £2.75m order book.

Contract

16 April At an informal conference local management stated that the closure decision was irrevocable and they had no mandate to negotiate. Failure to agree was registered and the presence of Snipe or a director empowered to negotiate is insisted upon at next conference.

24 April External conference takes place. Again Snipe and MS directors absent. Mass meeting votes to occupy. Occupation begins at 3.30pm.

1 May Workforce threatened that unless they return to work they were in breach of contract and would receive no redundancy pay.

3 May Mass meeting to discuss this threat votes to continue occupation.

19 May First meeting with members of Mining Supplies board, represented by R Lane Smith, S Lamb and the company solicitor and Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions officials at Manchester Engineering Employers Federation HQ. Company stated that they had no mandate to negotiate, asked for an adjournment for coffee and promptly left.

Reject

27 May Company submits written proposals to re-open factory with 10 people on condition that the workforce leave the factory immediately and stay away for week. We reject it out of hand.

1 June First and (so far) last meeting between Snipe and local union officials. He repeats the written proposals, complained of massive cash crisis in the group and claimed that LS Manchester had made ten times the loss that it actually had. We reject the proposals.

2 June Redundancy payments received through post. Workforce told to retain receipts and lawyers recommend that the unions bank the cheques.

Picket

29 June Picket placed on parent company Mining Supplies in Doncaster. After shaky first two days full T&G backing for picket gained and picket enforced successfully.

30 June Snipe offers to extend closure deadline for three months. Offer rejected.

5 July Picket withdrawn as Snipe agrees to negotiations with national officials.

10 July Snipe meets national officials and offers to keep the factory open on a two day week, the position to be reviewed in three months, but only on condition that all redundancy money is returned. National officials agree although a 'no redundancy' clause is completely absent.

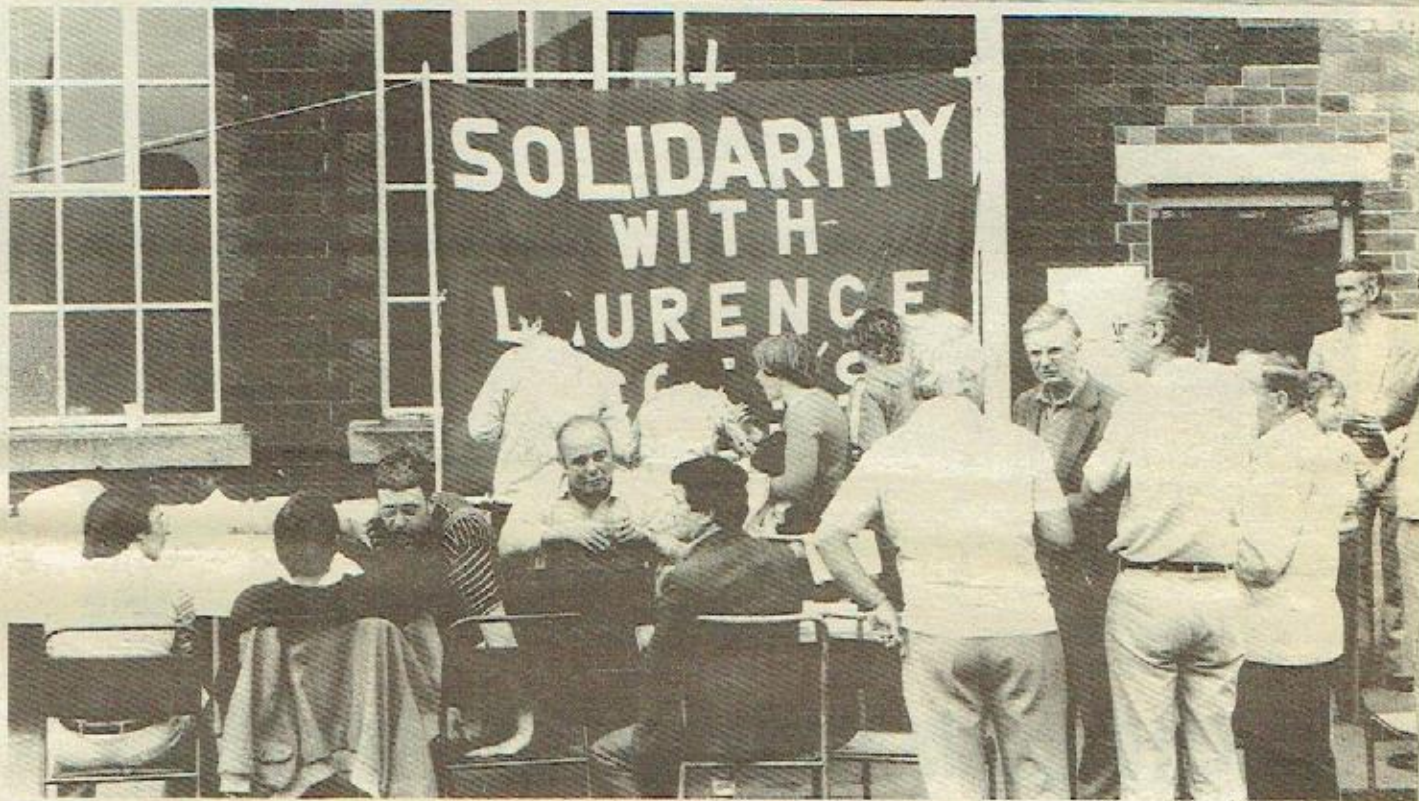
11 July Full time officials put deal in front of full shop stewards meeting. Agreement laughed out of the room. Conventor resigns and Dennis Barry voted in.

Hostage

14 July Proposals put to mass meeting of over 600 workers by local officials. Only 21 votes in favour. From this mass meeting 150 workers picket hearing of summons for repossession of factory. Court hearing scheduled for Thursday 23 July.

21 July Three coach loads picket AUEW HQ in Peckham Road, London to maintain official support. On hearing of Executive Committee decision to terminate the dispute pickets occupy the Council Chamber for over an hour, hold Boyd and Duffy hostage and harangue the Executive. Police called but not used.

23 July Mass meeting called by EC at Lesser Free Trades Hall Manchester. Executive member Ken Cure and rest of national officials put forward same proposals which are again rejected. This time only 15 in favour.



The following resolution has been sent by the LSE workers to every AUEW branch in the country.

In view of the unanimous support for the Laurence Scott dispute from the 28 July 1981 Manchester North District Committee of the AUEW and the rules of the union with regard to procedure for deciding on the official status of disputes (Rule 14, Paragraph 16), this branch deplores any attempt by the executive to terminate this dispute against the clear wishes of the workforce expressed at two mass meetings (14 July and 23 July) and calls on the National Executive to maintain official backing for this fight for jobs. (For forwarding with your branch stamp and signature to the AUEW National Executive).

Court grants injunction to Snipe for repossession of factory.

28 July North Manchester District Committee lobbied and votes unanimously for support of LS workers against the EC. 120 LS workers and local Labour Party Club members attend Socialist Challenge public meeting at Gorton Trades and Labour Club.

Bailiffs

29 July Over 150 LS workers and their families attend street party outside the factory in support of the occupation.

4/5 August Bailiffs attempt to serve injunction. Prevented from forcing an entry and successfully defied by crowd made up of LS workers, delegations from a dozen factories and local people.

4 Aug AUEW EC withdraws all strike pay in contravention of union rule book.

6 Aug National CSEU Executive meeting supports AUEW sell out and all unions withdraw strike pay.

7 Aug Local MP for Openshaw, Charles Morris, appears at factory offering to mediate between occupation and bailiffs. Morris successfully negotiates a stay of execution till after the mass meeting on Monday. So the pressure is off till after the weekend.

8 Aug We hold a three hour shop stewards meeting to discuss how to deal with the bailiffs and how to carry on without the official support of the national unions. If the bailiffs come on Monday, picketing will immediately start. The bailiffs will have to smash their way in though.

Grim

10 Aug The mass meeting is attended by over 350 workers who arrive in a grim and determined mood. As the meeting goes on a mood of optimism develops. We defied the worse efforts of the AUEW executive, and other Confed unions and the courts and bailiffs. If we stick it out we can succeed.

Charles Morris pledges support to mass meeting and makes a press statement. Bailiffs are informed of our decision to stay in the factory and indicate that they will come in sufficient numbers to take the factory.

12 Aug A phone round of MPs starts in Manchester for backing for Morris's statement. We also phone around the 200 workplaces that have given us the money in the previous weeks to tell them we are fighting on and asking for more funds. More delegations are planned.

Morale

13 Aug 48 MPs have supported Morris's statement. The response from the workplaces is also very good. Press conference planned for Monday.

An open invitation is sent to Tony Benn to visit the occupation when he is in the north west for the TUC Congress and when he addresses a mass rally in the city on 16 September.

Our campaign to politically isolate Boyd and Duffy on the issue of their attempted sell-out of our struggle is gathering steam. The sell-out merchants of the Confed are splitting.

ASTMS and T&GWU are paying hardship money to their members at Scotts which is actually more than strike pay! The AUEW and EPTU branches locally have paid out strike pay this week.

Morale is high. Attendance on shifts in the occupation is

100 per cent. The bailiffs still have not arrived. The fight is very much still on. PLEASE SEND MESSAGES OF SUPPORT AND DONATIONS TO LSE: c/o G Fryer, 20 Roundcroft, Romiley, Cheshire.

WHAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR

- The factory should reopen
- No enforced redundancies
- Compensation for the workforce in the form of an *ex-gratia* payment for loss of wages during a dispute unnecessarily prolonged through management's refusal to negotiate

WHAT SNIPE IS OFFERING

- The factory should reopen for a 3 month trial period on a 2 day week
- No guarantee on enforced redundancies
- Any return to work is conditional on total repayment of redundancy money paid by management during dispute



Lenin Shipyard workers



Polish workers on the streets two weeks ago - protesting at food shops

Czech dissidents feel Polish backlash

By Tom Marlowe

ONE of Czechoslovakia's best known dissidents has just been sentenced to seven-and-a-half years in jail for 'subversive activity' and 'assault on a public official'.

He is 55-year-old Rudolf Battěk, a former spokesperson for Charter 77, and a one-time member of the Czech National Council. His conviction for assault arises out of an incident in June 1980 when he went to a police station to report the theft of his car.

Knowing he was a human rights activist, the police refused to allow Battěk to leave the station. When he tried to do so and knocked off a policeman's cap he was charged with assault.

Battěk's conviction is the latest in a new series of crack-downs on Czechoslovakia's dissidents.

Dossier

It is aimed at human rights activists, especially those who have been circulating and producing underground magazines and books. In July, Jiri Guntirad, a building worker, was given a four year sentence for compiling a dossier on police persecution of a pop group.

Another dissident who recently spent some time in prison is Jaroslav Suk.

In April, Suk fled to the West where he told the French language socialist magazine *In-*

**We're with you...
are you with us ?**



**Petr Uhl and
the jailed Chartists
in Czechoslovakia**

40p

precor what lies behind the new wave of repression.

'Step by step', said Suk, 'they are trying to put the most active Charter 77 people in prison. It is connected with the Polish events.'

'For example, Josef Budarak, who was writing a book about Poland, has been taken to prison and expects a sentence of up to five years.'

'Active political people in Czechoslovakia are very interested in what is happening in Poland, with supporters of Charter 77 circulating letters and statements on the situation there.'

The Czech Government is pulling out all the stops to prevent what it dubs the 'Polish disease' spreading across the border.

Infiltrate

Suk explained that government propaganda 'depicts the Polish population in such a way as to suggest that the Czech people have to subsidise them. This finds an echo among the more backward sectors of the population.'

'On the other hand, the official propaganda lies and nobody believes it, even when it tells the truth.'

The latest anti-Polish propaganda exercise of the government has been to produce one Jan Hodic, who, it is claimed, infiltrated a group of Czech exiles in Austria for three years.

Hodic maintains that weapons, disguised as food, have been transported from the West to Poland by 'Western intelligence services'.

At a press conference Hodic further claimed 'members of the Polish union Solidarity knew of this activity'.

Despite such ludicrous propaganda Jaroslav Suk believes that many in Czechoslovakia are enthusiastic about the Polish events. There are numerous contacts between Solidarity and Charter 77 and, said Suk, 'the idea of free trade unions now has a place in the thinking of the Czech people'.

POLAND'S independent trade union, Solidarity, is now discussing its draft programme.

The draft, (reprinted here in an edited form) stresses union democracy and rank and file control. They have a significance beyond Poland, and could well serve as an example for all trade unionists.

It would be interesting to see how some right wing trade union leaders in Britain would react if their members copied the demands of Solidarity. For example, Frank Chapple, of the Electricians Union, who has given his support to Solidarity in the past, would be unlikely to be pleased with what the Polish workers are saying.

The draft programme will be voted on at a Solidarity congress later this year. Meanwhile the proposals reprinted here contain lessons we could all learn.

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A POLISH LESSON WE CAN ALL LEARN

our union to be independent we know what that means. It is to be self-governing and democratic, and to be a source for extending democracy into the public life of the entire country. The rules and principles of the union should be the principles that define the life of our union democracy.

Every member of the union has the same rights and the same voice. Each one has the same right to freely express an opinion on any matter. No member is better than another, regardless of the positions they carry out that may give them powers to act in the name of the rest of the members.

First, the purpose of the union is to serve and to represent the members. Each full-time official of the union is no more than a representative authorised by his or her constituents to serve them and the union as a whole. They must provide complete and accurate information to the members about what decisions are being made and why. They may also be elected to positions if that is what their constituents want.

For the effective functioning of the union, it is impossible without provision of necessary full-time staff, office, and technical equipment. In the difficult material situation of the country and the union and the experience with the former (the old party-controlled

union, now defunct) requires us to maintain a certain modesty and restraint in fulfilling these needs. It is necessary to economise in managing the union's finances. The wages of full-time officials should not be higher than other wages in the national economy.

Third, the life of the union is based on openness. The equal and representative character of official functions in the union acquires real meaning only under conditions of open activity at all levels of the union. In particular, all negotiations with the government and with the representatives of the (state) employer must be conducted openly.

Every union member must have a chance to look over the documents of the union leadership and its bodies. They in turn must use all possible means to inform as many members as possible about the real problems and the measures taken.

Inform

The union organisation and the factory circle have a special role to play here. Their task is not only to provide information about the positions of the union leaders, but also about the positions of individual organisations and the activities they are carrying out for the sake of the fullest possible information about the life of the union.

Fourth, the union acts in concert, on the principle of solidarity. This is the basis for the commitment of each self-governing workplace organisation to the idea of general solidarity in action by all working people. This was seen most clearly in the strikes, in which each factory or region was ready to provide mutual assistance.

These universal ties of solidarity left a special imprint on our union. In our own interests, we decide to act in response to the interests of others. Maintaining this solidarity requires regular collaboration and the exchange of information among factory organisations representing different industries and different regions, regardless of which territorial leadership body of the union they belong to.

Fifth, members of the union are bound by its common agreements. The statutes of the union or resolutions of factory meetings are binding on all members of the organisation, even if they voted against them.

It is essential to adhere to decisions democratically arrived at, even when departures from them can bring some immediate benefit. Within the union, the rule of law — through our statutes and various resolutions that are establishing our precise internal legal structure — is indispensable both for effective action and for democracy.

This does not exclude criticism and debate. To the contrary, criticism and debate are signs of a healthy union. This regular criticism is vital in

order to control the activities of the union and its individual bodies, but the changes resulting from such criticism should also be carried out in accordance with democratic principles.

Compliance in our union with the above principles is not a simple matter. The need for collective action in a situation of constant threats and uncertainty may sometimes tend toward the need to place efficiency above democratic principles. But in reality, the union's democracy is its strength. There is no better discipline in action than the unity of those who have participated in a comprehensive way in the making of decisions. We therefore cannot allow a siege mentality to be imposed on us. On the contrary, it is just this defect in public life that we are struggling against.

Sixth, and finally, the union utilises different forms of struggle to realise the interests of the workers. These include intervening in the case of disputes between workers and employers, raising demands before the employers and government, organising and leading mass protest actions, etc. Strikes, however, play a special role.

We must not forget that the strike is not only a method of last resort, but also a test of the union's prudence and solidarity. Therefore, we must have good reasons for calling a strike, and they must be seen as such by society. Moreover, there should be

enough justification for calling a strike in relation to the social costs that it may entail.

We must safeguard union democracy through various institutions and forms of activity. When dealing with union matters, the union press and publishing operations cannot be subject to censorship on the part of the union leadership. It has to be the source of regular information and criticism of shortcomings, which are certainly unavoidable.

We must also see to it that the flow of information within the union goes in many directions, providing constant, rapid, and detailed information to the lower bodies and ranks about the decisions and actions of the higher bodies, and also regular information to the higher levels about the needs and opinions of the members. It is likewise essential to disseminate information among individual union organisations in factories and in different regions.

The bedrock of union life is the self-governing factory organisation. Union organisations at higher levels represent the factory organisations and make democratic decisions in regular consultation with each factory labour union. Regional or national leadership bodies make decisions only on matters that are of interest to all union members.

Therefore, each factory organisation must work out its own programme of action. Four main types of issues are contained in such a programme:

Bedrock

1. Actions to safeguard the rights, dignity, and interests of workers on the job. This is connected to control over the management of the workplace and its particular agencies. This requires continual control over working conditions and supervision of decisions regarding wages, promotions, transfers, compensation, benefits, and vacations.

The factory organisations act in defence of their members and in the interests of all workers, regardless of whether or not they belong to the union. They also attempt to encourage amicable relations among workers and try to involve them in organising their work in an efficient manner.

Social

2. Providing for the social and spiritual needs of union members and their families.

Factory organisations should plan different social activities with the aim of consolidating solidarity among the union branches and developing the individuality of union members. It is necessary, through collaboration with other factory organisations or specialised union agencies, to organise sport, recreational, educational, and cultural activities.

Such common experiences can bring people closer together and prepare them for joint action in threatening situations, when the time comes for energetic struggle in defence of their rights.

Pay

3. It is necessary to have an all-round discussion on how employees of the union factory organisations should be paid. All (or some of them) may be paid by the enterprise, which is legally obliged to release from their duties employees who are carrying out union functions. This solution can involve considerable financial savings for the union, and may be legally enforced on the enterprise.

Another solution is to cover the expenses of the individual factory organisations through the union budget, a solution that would emphasise the total independence of the union. Factory workers employed by the union factory organisation would take leaves of absence from the factory without pay.

Criticise

4. Control over the broader activities of union bodies and collaboration with other factory organisations. It is the duty of every union member to see to it that his or her representatives are acting in accordance with the interests of the members and with the democratic principles of the union. In cases of improper conduct, criticism is essential. It may even be necessary to relieve union officials of their functions for improper behaviour.

Engineers slam Buzby porn

By Ian Grant

AT THE Post Office Engineering Union's (POEU) conference this year, a petition against pornography was circulated and received wide support from delegates.

The petition was protesting about the British Telecom's poster campaign aimed at preventing contractors damaging underground plant and cable.

The offending poster was reproduced in British Telecom's house magazine, together with an article entitled 'Cutie Will Crush Cable Crunchers', which explained: Brighton model Jeannie pares all in an excavator cab to remind contractors here is more under the surface than meets the eye.'

Petition

The protest petition has also been circulated to Telecom union branches. The accompanying letter argues: 'This poster is probably the worst example, although not an isolated case, of a rather contempt-

uous attitude to women demonstrated by BT advertising.'

The group behind the anti-pornography campaign is 'Women in Telecom'. The group was formed recently by women in British Telecom unions to push for action in their unions on women's issues and to encourage women's involvement in their union branches. And they have already had some effect in the largest, and probably the most male dominated, of these unions, the POEU.

About four per cent of the POEU's members are women, mostly working in Post Office factories or drawing offices. But the National Executive Council has no women represen-



tatives; the union has no special committees or advisory bodies for women and only two women delegates attended the last national conference.

Book

The POEU's first recognition of women in the union was a review of Anna Coote's book 'Hear This Brother' in the union journal. A flood of letters appeared in the following issues, from men and women members alike, congratulating the journal on its coverage.

Subsequently, two proposals concerning women in the union appeared in the 1981 Conference Agenda, although there was insufficient time to discuss them.

But the questions these motions raised — one proposed a Womens Advisory Committee in the union and the other that the union implement positive action for women — are going to continue to be debated over the next year.

Fight

'Women in Telecom' see their campaign against sexist abuse as a very important part of their fight for better opportunities for women in the industry.

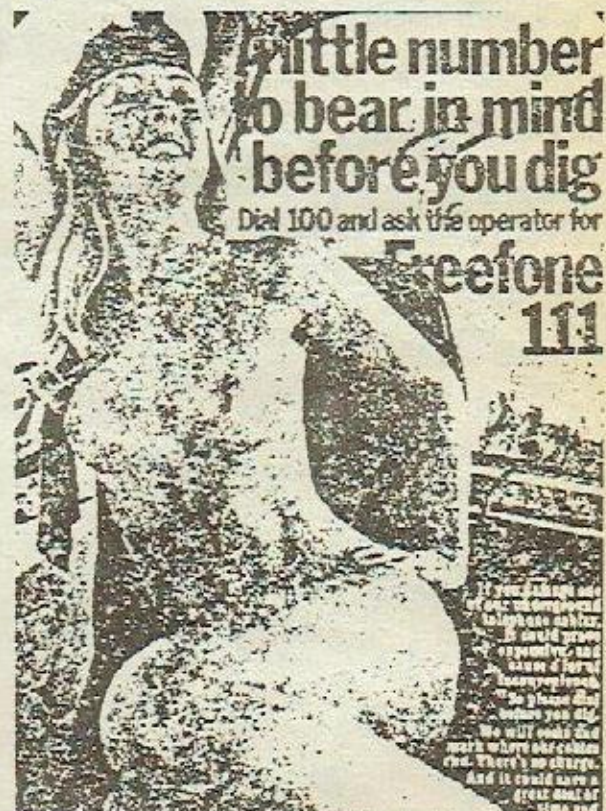
The sexism displayed by management in this sort of advertising simply reinforces the traditional view which most male engineers have of their female workmates and militates against the possibility of

issues concerning women in the union being taken seriously.

Benn

At the POEU Conference, Tony Benn was one of the early signatories to the 'Women in Telecom' petition. Speaking at the Broad Left fringe meeting, he argued that the fight against the oppression of women through pornography, as taken up by socialists, was far removed from the sexually repressive attitudes of the clean-up campaigners like Mary Whitehouse.

'Women in Telecom' will be continuing the fight for women's rights in the unions and the industry. For further information contact: 'Women in Telecom' c/o Chris Butterworth Room 601 Moorgate TE Fore St London EC2



Problems of Spanish Women's Movement

THE International Campaign for Abortion, Contraception and Sterilisation held a special meeting in Spain in June to discuss the forthcoming trials of women and men taking part in illegal abortions.

LEONORA LLOYD took the opportunity to speak to women members attending on behalf of the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (LCR) — the Spanish section of the Fourth International — about the problems confronting the women's movement in Spain.

Could you tell me about the development of the women's movement in Spain?

The women's movement in Spain began in 1975. At first it was very united but it now reflects the difficult current political situation and big problems have arisen.

There are debates around what perspectives and demands we should be fighting for. The organisation of the movement has deteriorated also. Issues are emerging in the unions but these are fraught with problems, as are the unions as a whole. What are the main issues concerning the

women's movement at the moment?

Abortion and divorce have been the overriding concerns of the movement. Abortion is the most important. We are calling for no trials and for all the women in jail already to be released. We are also planning a large meeting of all the groups in October when the trials are expected to start.

Is the new divorce law in Spain what the women's movement wanted?

The women's movement produced a model bill on divorce. We wanted divorce proceedings to involve only one stage.

However, the new law requires one year of separation where both partners agree to a divorce and four years of separation where this is not the case, before divorce proceedings can be started.

Our model bill did not require that causes had to be cited for the courts to consider divorce. The new law does reject the notion of attributing guilt, but divorce can only be sought on the grounds of specific causes. There is no legal aid in the new law, unlike the women's movement's model bill.

Also in the new law, the father has the first right to the children, although this can depend on what causes have been cited for the divorce. The women's movement wanted the mother to have priority. Above all, we wanted the Church to stop interfering in the whole process, with only civil marriage recognised as legal.

What other issues is the women's movement concerned with?



Bilbao — protestor confronts the riot squad

Violence against women is another important issue though there has been no campaign as yet. There is no law on

rape except in common law which recognises family honour as important.

Married women have the same right to work as

anyone else in theory but in practice this means very little. Children start school at six. Before that there are only a few kindergartens

and a small now decreasing number of factory crèches. School holidays may be up to three months long.

NALGO typists strike — spread the action

By John Strauther

OVER 400 Liverpool typists, machine operators and secretaries begin their eighth week of strike action this week.

They are employed by Liverpool City Council and are fighting for a local regrading claim to end their notoriously low pay and undervalued skills.

All are stuck on the lowest grades in local government, few earn more than £50 a week, being unable to advance to better grades, even after years of service in important and supervisory jobs.

negotiate responded to a work to rule by promptly suspending over fifty typists.

Weekly

The typists run their action through an elected strike committee and weekly mass meetings. After a selective strike by over eighty key workers failed to shift the council, they voted overwhelmingly for an all-out strike.

June

The Liverpool action began in June on a claim submitted in November. The Liberal council which had steadfastly refused to

subsequently confirmed in a secret ballot by three to one.

The City Council, whose committee and functioning have been effectively blocked by the action — despite attempts to use outside agencies — is now being run by an eight person Emergency Committee. Labour Councillors are refusing to co-operate with it and NALGO members are boycotting all its decisions.

Cuts

Liberal leader Trevor Jones clearly sees this struggle as a way to defeat local authority unions and

impose cuts. But despite help from the *Liverpool Echo*, which blames the typists for everything from unemployment to the Toxteth uprisings, he has so far failed to crack the typists' determination.

Official

Jones has also failed to split the council manual workers whose pay has been stopped by the action.

Last week, members of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee occupied council premises demanding a meeting with Jones.

A meeting of over a hundred stewards voted to

take action unless Jones agreed to ensure their pay and start serious negotiations over the typists' claim.

The Liverpool strike, which is official, is receiving lukewarm support from the NALGO leadership. They are doing little to publicise or spread the action to other areas.

Nationally, the Typists Charter Group is trying to spread the action. A meeting in Liverpool on 1 August heard reports from Manchester and Birmingham, where action has also started, and about claims being made as far apart as Northumbria, South Yorkshire, Kent and Southend.



Messages of support, donations and collections can be sent to: Liverpool Typists, c/o NALGO, Duchy Chambers, 24 Sir Thomas St, Liverpool 1 (Tel

051-236 1944 or 051-227 1521) Details of Typists Charter from, 48 Forburg Road, London N16 (Telephone Pauline on 01-985 3086 or 01-986 3266 x 438).

Owen Carron: 'I think we will do it'

By Stuart Richardson in Enniskillen, Ireland

OWEN CARRON, the anti-H Block/Armagh candidate in the Fermanagh/South Tyrone by-election on 20 August is optimistic about his chances of success.

He told Socialist Challenge last week, 'It will be very tight, but I think we will do it. Our aim is to get 32,500 votes — that's what we need to be sure of winning.'

Owen was the election agent in the H Block campaign when Bobby Sands won his historic election victory, and the issue this time is exactly the same as it was during that election.

As Owen's election address puts it, 'I stand before you acting on behalf of the disenfranchised political prisoners. I stand on exactly the same platform as Bobby Sands. I reaffirm the justice of the prisoners' struggle and I reaffirm that their's is a political struggle.'

There is one difference with this by-election compared to the one which saw the Bobby Sands victory

— the number of candidates standing.

As well as Owen Carron and the Unionist candidate, a member of the sectarian British Army-controlled Ulster Defence Regiment, there are four other candidates. The most prominent are the candidates of the 'moderate' Unionist Alliance Party and Tom Moore of the Workers Party Republican Clubs — formerly known as Official Sinn Fein.

Moore is standing on a platform which includes a call for 'devolved government' in the north of Ireland, a demand also



Owen Carron

made by the Unionist. Moore, says Owen Carron,

is 'standing deliberately to try and rob us of victory.'

As well as the attempted sabotage by the 'Officials', the H Block/Armagh candidate has faced constant intimidation from the forces of 'law and order'.

'Our workers have been continuously harassed by the RUC,' explained Owen. 'I was stopped on six occasions in one night. I was stopped for nearly an hour on 13 August by an RUC patrol. Its members refused to identify themselves so that no official complaint could be made.'

No one doubts the importance of the by-election on 20 August. That is why

a wide range of forces are backing Owen Carron.

Local pressure forced the Social Democratic and Labour Party not to stand, and Carron is backed by some members of the SDLP as well as the Irish Independence Party, Provisional Sinn Fein and Peoples Democracy.

As Bernadette McAliskey has put it, 'At this critical stage those who are not part of the campaign to help break Britain's policy towards the prisoners are part of the campaign to break the prisoners. All other differences are secondary. In this election Owen Carron is the rallying point for the prisoners.'

Thatcher faces world isolation over H Blocks

By Geoff Bell

THE *Irish Times* recently revealed that France's President Mitterrand seriously considered turning down the invitation to the royal wedding because of Britain's handling of the H Block hunger strikers.

The French government decided that Mitterrand should go to the wedding only after consultation with the Irish government, whose President Hillery did decline the invitation.

This is just one indication of the growing isolation Margaret Thatcher is facing internationally over the H Block crisis. At the weekend, the new Irish Premier Garret FitzGerald made his strongest criticism so far when, in a television interview he accused Thatcher of 'inflexibility' over the hunger strike.

FitzGerald was backed up by Catholic Cardinal Tomas O'Fiaich who, commented on a secret meeting he had with Thatcher in July, said, 'I wasn't so terribly impressed either by her knowledge of Irish history or by her interpretation of events that occurred in the past, nor by her understanding of the present hunger strike crisis.'

Another international rebuff for Thatcher's refusal to acknowledge the special, political status of the H Block and Armagh prisoners was delivered last Thursday in New York, where a Federal judge ruled that IRA volunteer Desmond Macken could not be extradited to Britain. Macken is wanted for the attempted killing of a British soldier in Belfast in 1978.

The judge, Naomi Reice Buchwald stated that Macken would not be returned to Britain because his offence was 'political'. The attack on the soldier, added the judge, 'was undoubtedly free from personal motive and substantially linked to the traditional goal of and strategy of the IRA: an independent Ireland free from British rule.'

Sadly, the international criticism of Thatcher now being voiced, either publicly or, as in the French case, through 'diplomatic channels', has still to find an echo in the leadership of the British Labour Party. When even the bosses' weekly magazine *The Economist* can call for Thatcher to make concessions to the hunger strike (14 Aug), the silence of Michael Foot and his friends in the Labour leadership is all the more disgraceful.

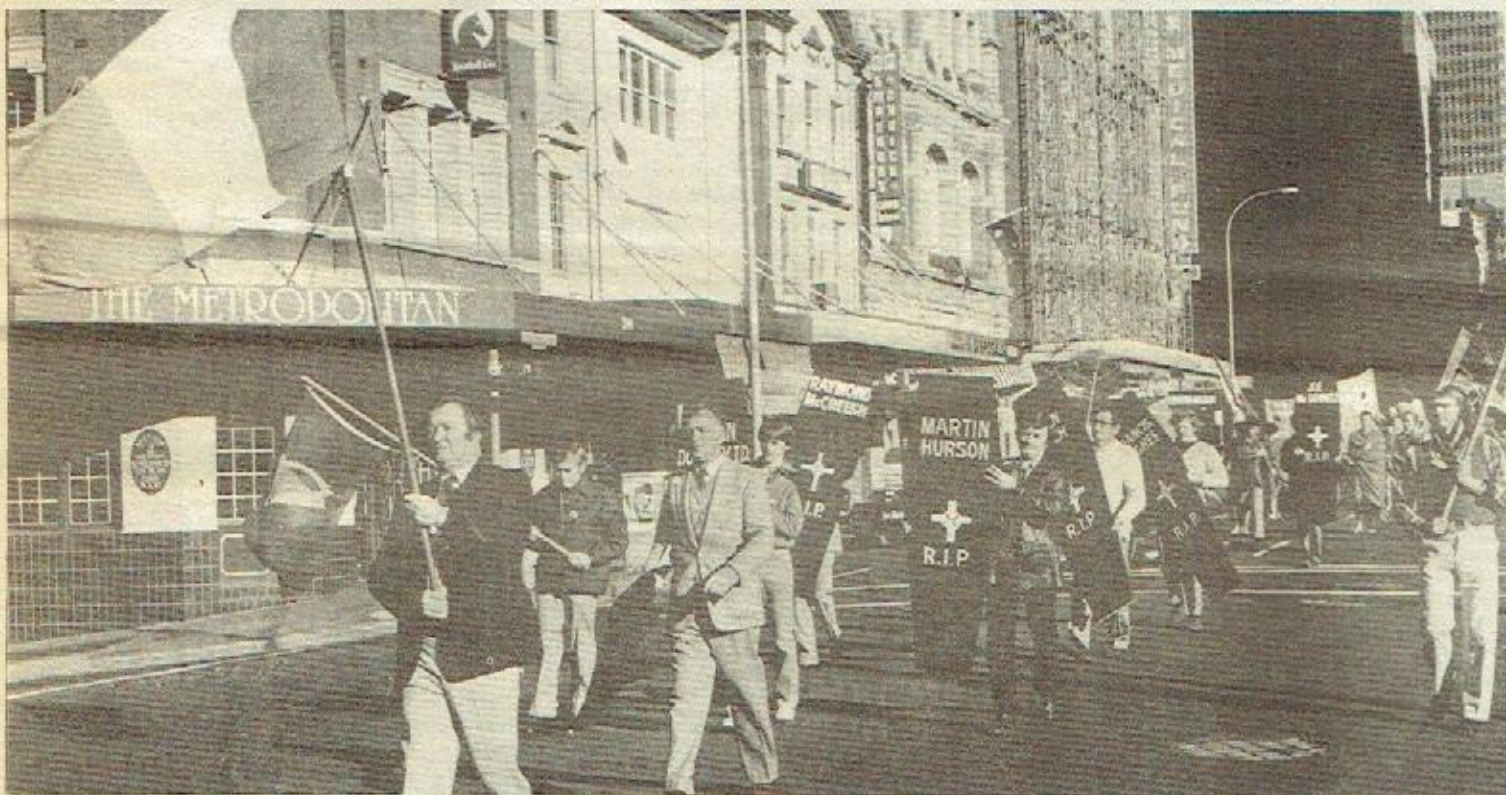


Photo: Martin Mulligan (Direct Action)

A march in Sidney, Australia protesting against Thatcher's Irish policy. One of many such protests throughout the world.

White terror sweeps Iran

By Paul Lawson

IRAN today is in the grip of a savage anti-left wing terror, organised by the ruling Islamic Republican Party and carried out by its armed thugs — the 'revolutionary guards'.

The main targets for the attacks are the 'Islamic Marxist' Mojahadin, the largest left-wing organisation in the country. The regime is going all out to liquidate the Mojahadin, the main political opposition to its rule.

The intensity of the conflict between the IRP and the Mojahadin reflects the deepening crisis in Iran. Since the overthrow of the Shah, the economy has been savagely dislocated as the Iranian revolution has come into conflict with the major imperialist powers. Trade and domestic production have been disrupted.

Lack

But the IRP lack any social programme for the re-organisation of the economy

and society to replace the Shah's capitalist dictatorship. Unable to meet the most elementary needs of the masses, the regime is increasingly isolated, and support for the Mojahadin, according to local observers, is dramatically increasing.

Such is the disorganisation of the government and its forces that the repression is frequently indiscriminate. Left wingers are arrested and shot at random. Hand-in-hand with this 'political' repression, the Islamic zealots are increasing their repression against those who break the Islamic social code.

In Shiaz last Saturday two people were stoned to death after being 'charged' with homosexuality and adultery. During the same weekend, 25 people were shot as drug dealers in Teheran, and six

more were shot in Kerman.

The number of executions in Iran since 20 June is at least 660, the majority supporters of the Mojahadin. During this same period some 2,000 people have been arrested, including 200 last weekend. The fate of many of them is unknown.

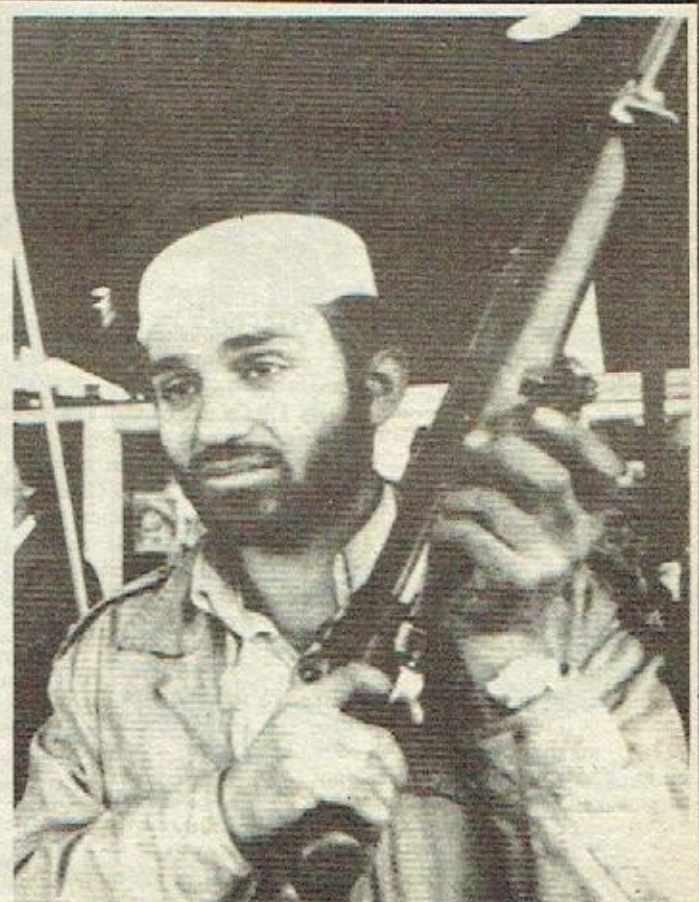
Women

Among them are two women members of the Trotskyist HKE (Revolutionary Workers Party), Faranak Zahraie and Monavar Shir Ali. These two comrades worked at the Ray-O-Vac battery factory in Teheran and were falsely accused of calling a strike and being members of a Maoist political group.

In retaliation for the government's repression, the Mojahadin have launched a campaign of assassination against leading mullahs and government officials. Already several provincial governors and hojatoleslams (senior mullahs) have been killed. Such is the crisis of the regime and its

state apparatus, that all the political forces which oppose it are preparing to participate in its downfall.

By no means are all these forces progressive. Former generals of the Shah were behind the successful hijacking of a French built missile-firing gunboat before delivery to the Iranians. Supporters of General Bahram Aryana — another of the Shah's generals — last week hijacked two Fokker military aircraft in Iran and flew them to Oman. It is by no means certain that the outcome of the present conflict will be a left-wing victory. The tactics and policies of the Mojahadin, including its continued political alliance with former president Bani-Sadr, do not promote such an outcome. Nonetheless, the decisive task of the hour is to defend democratic rights in Iran. In particular, we would ask our readers to send messages of protest at the arrest of the HKE members to: Prime Minister Rajai at the Majlis Building, Teheran, Iran.





This is the news from Turkey...

NEWS from Turkey did not make big headlines in the papers last week. That's been the case for the past eleven months. But an estimated 100,000 political oppositionists are in detention. The torture in the overcrowded military prisons is routine and brutal, such as cases of broken glass fragments being injected into male detainees's urinary passages.

Save the life of Dogan Tarkan

DOGAN Tarkan's crime is that he is a socialist militant. He was the editor of the weekly newspaper *Kurtulus* (Liberation) before the military coup in Turkey. He was lucky: he escaped to England three months ago and applied for political asylum. But this is 1981 Tory Britain.

Last week the Home Office refused his application. Dogan's deportation would mean that he would almost certainly be sentenced to death by the Turkish authorities.

It is still possible to reverse the Home Office decision but it depends on quick action by the labour movement.

Rush resolutions, messages of support for Dogan, protest letters, addressed to the Home Office to TSC, BM Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX.

Some member parties, like the British Labour Party, have done nothing at all, while others, in particular the West German

SPD, have actively collaborated with the dictatorship's hunting down of oppositionists by refusing to defend political

refugees escaping the junta's terror.

In his first statement to the court, Abdullah Basturk concluded by declaring: 'History is the highest judge. History, our working and labouring class will acquit DISK and find it not guilty'.

On whose side is the Socialist International? With NATO or with the working and labouring class? The TUC and Labour Party should act immediately to save the lives of the DISK leaders.

Campaign

The Turkey Solidarity Campaign is circulating a model resolution calling for the unconditional release of the DISK defendants and urging that the labour movement organise a delegation to observe the trial at first hand. Copies can be obtained from BM Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX.

The Turkey Solidarity Campaign is campaigning in the labour movement for an end to all relations with the Turkish junta and fighting for action to boycott the movement of goods to and from Turkey both here and throughout Europe. It can be contacted at the address above. Why not affiliate to the campaign?

Eight youths have been executed and hundreds more have been sentenced to death. Nearly all basic rights and freedoms have been stripped away.

stands at over \$16 billion. In their efforts to defray these debts, the junta has arrested thousands of working class militants including the entire leadership of the radical trade union federation DISK which had around one million members prior to the coup.

The aim is to eliminate independent working class organisation in order to drive down living standards.

The DISK leaders are currently facing trial in Ankara. The military prosecutor has asked for the death sentence for 52 of them, including DISK President Abdullah Basturk — a former MP for the Republican People's Party, a party affiliated to the Socialist International.

Yet the Socialist International have a shameful record in supporting their sisters and brothers in Turkey.

Where you can buy Socialist Challenge

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ABERDEEN: SC available at Boomtown books, King St. For more info ring Bill 896 284.
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IMG notices
ABORTION fraction Sat 5 Sept at national centre 10.30am. At least one member of each branch to attend to discuss national perspective for next year.

Bookshops

BANGOR: Rainbows, Hollyhead Road, Upper Bangor, Gwynedd.
BRADFORD: Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Sandgate.
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YORK: Community Books, Walmgate.

Letters letters Letters

A radical mirror?

I'D just like to say that I was pretty pissed off with your coverage of the royal wedding in the 23 July issue of Socialist Challenge. Are your pages so numerous that you can devote

five of them to this event? I don't think so.

Most of my fellow workers are really annoyed by the day in, day out media coverage. This mood is definitely on the right lines. Socialist Challenge looked like a radical version of the *Sun* or *Mirror* — full up with stuff on the wedding.

Normally, I like Socialist Challenge. Keep it up!

MIKE SULLIVAN
 Southall, Middlesex

Insult
 YOUR article 'Behind the Wedding' contains the following sentence, 'She must of course be aristocracy — so her family tree discovers a common ancestor in the homosexual Henry VI.'

As I read it, the implication here is that it is ironic to claim a homosexual king as an ancestor since the stigma of being

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The art of improvisers: contemporary jazz in Britain

Interviews and research
by Skip Laszlo and
Fred Gwent

Getting a Feel for the Music

TO appreciate the wide range of music offered by improvised music, it is often easier to accustom your ear by starting with recordings where improvisation is an element added to more familiar structures or sounds. Below are some of the many records from the history of Jazz to do just that.

Historical Jazz Classics

Louis Armstrong and his Hot Five and Hot Seven.
It all started in many ways with Louis Armstrong and Baby Dodds, his drummer. To see just how cheated you can be by imitators of what is now labelled 'trad jazz' go back and listen to the real thing. Many recordings available.

The Greatest Jazz concert Ever put the leading musicians of the 1940's 'Be-Bop' revolution together for a concert in Toronto's Massey Hall in 1953. Featuring Charlie Parker, Dizzie Gillespie, Max Roach, Bud Powell and Charles Mingus the over-zealous record title is not far off. Available on Prestige PR24024

A Love Supreme — John Coltrane. This record, a transition to Coltrane's last free phase. His music has become the door to free music for many a listener and it is a rare free musician without some tribute to Coltrane. Just reissued on Impulse IMPL 5000. John Coltrane records after 1960 recommended.

Charles Mingus Presents Charles Mingus On this album the conversation between Mingus' Bass and Eric Dolphy's Bass Clarinet on 'What Love' is an early, clear example of collective improvisation. Available on Barnaby Candid Jazz Br 5012

Improvisation in a Familiar Context

Records which contain a good deal of free music but have a European folk base and, incidentally, improvisers who are also frequent players of other types of music.

Liberation Music Orchestra is melodic Bassist *Charlie Haden's* big band tribute to the Spanish Civil War with four of the war ballads on the first side and containing Haden's 'Song for Che'. Carla Bley did the arrangements and the line up is a who's who of New York Avant-Garde jazz players. Impulse 5008

Rags — Lindsay Cooper Based on her score for the film 'Song of the Shirt', about the London needlewomen, this album incorporates 19th century lyrics, Coopers own music and talented improvisation. Multi-instrumentalist, multi-talented Cooper is one of the finest jazz musicians anywhere. (16 page booklet by Cooper enclosed) Arc Records.

Free jazz classics

Free Jazz — Ornette Coleman This record, made in 1960 is a 36 minute collective improvisation. Two reeds, two basses, two drum kits, and two trumpets in many ways legitimised total improvisation. Not as 'free' as players today, it is still a classic. Available on Atlantic.

Unit Structures — Cecil Taylor To Cecil Taylor the piano is '88 turned drums'. He was playing free music in the 1950's. This record is a fine middle period piece. Available in Libraries (order it) or second hand, on Blue Note.

People in Sorrow — Art Ensemble of Chicago Recorded in France, in 1969, where the group enjoyed a far greater following than at home, this is one of many classic recordings by a group which draws on all Great Black Music. Available on Nessa. Nessa 3

Spiritual Unity — Albert Ayler Trio Available on ESP. ESP100L

EVAN Parker has played to a crowd of 17,000 people. It wasn't in Britain. Here his totally improvised, often solo, saxophone playing is usually enjoyed in small rooms. Now, however, the isolation of improvised music and jazz, from which it sprang, is showing signs of crumbling, despite the tight hold highly commercial music has over our listening habits and chances.

When Max Roach spoke to Socialist Challenge last year, he stressed the freedom jazz music gives its performers. That freedom, based on the centrality of improvisation to the music, has steadily increased as the music evolved.

Response

This week sees a festival devoted to musicians playing *only* improvised music. The Actual '81 music festival runs from Wednesday 19 August to Sunday 23 August at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts, and presents artists from all over the world. A special section of the festival features the 'Parker Project,' where British improviser Evan Parker will perform with various combinations of a six person international group of musicians.

In an interview granted last month at the Bracknell Jazz Festival, Parker explained the music and the efforts to have it heard in Britain.

Improvised music involves the players drawing on their own influences and from each other as they go along. But how do you get started? Parker explains that the performer can begin with something



John Surman

familiar and 'the inspiration comes from the work.' The response from the audience also inspires performers, especially the solo artist, which is how he usually performs.

'I think an audience is more sympathetic to a soloist because it is clear

that you are talking to them, not just to the other musicians.'

At Bracknell, Parker was playing for the first time to the main tent, rather than in a small recital room. 'I stopped early to see the response. When it was so warm I

kept playing what I wanted.' 6,000 people came to the festival over the weekend, albeit not at the same time.

JOHN SURMAN, was also interviewed at Bracknell where he played in two separate groups.

Currently in the Mitous Virouslav Group, he has long enjoyed a reputation as one of Britain's great free musicians. A virtuoso on the baritone sax, he has also expanded to the soprano sax and bass clarinet.

Inspire

Surman explained that, while the group began just playing Mitous' music, 'we developed into a cooperative venture really. Our recent LP (on ECM) is a four way improvisation. Mitous is a very good bass player but there is a great comradery and if some guy wants to go there the others say 'you've got it!'

Jazz music has always contained the elements now used all on their own in improvised music, and it is not surprising that it provides a rich source of inspiration for many improvisers.

Parker trained himself 'when I became more serious about the music' on John Coltrane solos. 'Then I decided Coltrane was Coltrane so I had to make my own music. You must somehow internalise what came before, before you can decide what you can add to the music.'

Parker says 'now I am a free player,' and separates those influences he likes as a player from those he likes as a listener. 'I like all sorts of music as a listener, as a player I am more austere.' Among the jazz influences Parker the player treasures most are, 'the work of Pharoah Sanders with the Coltrane group and Albert Ayler's Trio.' He also paid tribute to the intensity of Eric Dolphy.

Influence

'The idiom of free music,' says Parker, 'is Cecil Taylor's. But Europeans can contribute too.' Indeed this is one thing

Organising a hearing

LIKE the jazz from which it springs, and usually cohabits with today, improvised music is inherently revolutionary, if not always conveniently found in radical wrappings. It often is, though.

A major event launching free jazz in New York was called *The October Revolution in Jazz*. *The Revolutionary Ensemble* is one of the most challenging free music combos. Britain has the *Feminist Improvising Group* (FIG). And a legendary British group was the trio, *Iskra 1903*, two of whose members — Barry Guy and Paul Rutherford are featured this summer in the prestigious South Bank Summer Music programme with the London Jazz Composers Orchestra.

But gaining a hearing has been an uphill battle for British improvising musician.

Various groups have organised in Britain to promote free music. Evan Parker told us, 'In the late sixties, *Musicians Cooperative* — it wasn't cool to say 'the' — organised concerts at Ronnie Scott's on Sundays when it was closed.' But it is hard to organise and concentrate on performing too, and Parker says 'the *London Musicians Collective* took up the ideological side and musicians carried on with their music.'

Parker is now active in building a 'pressure group for the improvising aesthetic,' the *Association of Improvising Musicians* (AIM). This group sees its role not as a promoter but as a body to encourage the

Musicians Union — an MU card is a condition of AIM membership — and special promoters like the Jazz Centre Society (JCS) to give more exposure to improvised music.

'I don't believe free improvised music should be hived off from traditional music', Parker says. 'The musicians are not at each others throats and some free musicians like Barry Guy can play in any medium.'

John Surman said the media often tries to segregate the music but when it is integrated with other forms, the audience is bigger. 'In Germany, France and Holland, they have been exposed to free music for a long time, and there are more opportunities to play there. They can hear it on the radio for example.'



Lindsay Cooper

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Socialist Challenge

Right wing seeks union support on nuclear arms

By Toni Gorton

THE only answer is multilateral disarmament. On that there is no disagreement among rational men.

If ever there was an argument for women to rule the world, Denis Healey's speech to the Labour Party policy school last week would help convince a lot of people.

Fortunately many thousands, if not millions of 'rational' men — and women — are very sure that one of the best ways to stop the drive to nuclear war is by fighting for Britain to unilaterally disarm.

Healey's speech followed a development earlier in the week when five Labour spokespeople on defence denounced the LP national executive's policy statement on defence.

In a letter to trade union leaders, they raised the spectre of 500,000 jobs lost through an anti-nuclear defence policy.

Brynmor John, shadow Defence Secretary threatened them with accountability to their membership.

Decisive

Labour's right wing have taken the fight around the defence policy of a future Labour Government right into the heart of the trade unions.

They know that it is the big trade unions that will be decisive in this fight.

But the transport union, the TGWU, is demanding an unequivocal

unilateralist stand to be taken at this year's TUC and calls upon the LP to include it in its manifesto.

TGWU

Its resolution calls for 'total opposition to any British Defence Policy based on the use of or threatened use of nuclear weapons; total opposition to the siting of Cruise and Trident Missiles in the United Kingdom and the siting of the neutron bomb in Europe; and closure of all nuclear bases, both British and American in Britain.'

The TGWU resolution answers the job loss argument by calling for government aid for alternative employment strategies; and stating that their policy would 'allow resources to be allocated to the necessary expenditure on health, housing, social services and investment in industry which will create employment.'

EETPU

Frank Chapple's electrician's union will be the spearhead of the multi-

lateralist approach, tying any British disarmament to 'matching the steps taken by the two super powers in reducing arms levels.'

Last year's LP conference adopted two positions on nuclear policy.

In an assertion of the parliamentary LP authority Michael Foot appointed the multilateralist, Brynmor John as chief spokesman on defence.

Such has been the movement within the LP and the trade unions that this sort of manoeuvre just won't work any more.

Manifesto

If the NEC position wins a two thirds majority within the LP conference which it can only do with the vote of the major trade unions, there can be no pretence or ambiguity about Labour's position.

It is with this in mind that Healey and John attempt to mobilise their counterparts within the trade union leaderships.

A massive turnout at the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament national demonstration on 24 October and at its lobby of LP conference on 26 September in Brighton will vastly increase the possibility of a decision favourable to the anti-war forces and against the Tories and their shadows in the trade unions and Labour Party.

LET them eat cake! That was the message from our supporters over the summer break! We know that summer is a bad time to find extra money, but spare a thought (and a dime) for your Socialist Challenge staff sweating over the horrors of the neutron bomb, the treachery of the AUEW leadership, the crisis in the Labour Party and last month's electricity bill. Yes, comrades, progress towards our £16,500 quarterly fund drive target has been slow. £4829.53 is what we have received so far, and we are already half way into the quarter. By now we should be half way to our target. We need another £3,500 this week if we are to get on course. On course, that is, for the forthcoming struggles, the TUC, the Labour Party Conference and especially the rail strike. Our supporters in the rail unions will be providing first hand coverage. But this won't be possible without your support for our Fund Drive. You need us to bring you the facts. The facts are we need your money.



BR boss Peter Parker

PAY THE RAILWORKERS!

By Phil Hearse

CRUDE blackmail. That's the carefully calculated announcement from British Rail boss Peter Parker that BR will lose £100m this year. The timing of the announcement is designed to reinforce BR's claim that it cannot afford to pay the 11 per cent awarded to the railway workers.

BR want to stick at the government's public sector pay-guideline of 7 per cent. Part of the blackmail is the expected slight improvement in the offer, in return for massive changes in working practices under the guise of 'productivity'.

Behind BR's position is the threat that thousands of jobs will be lost if the threatened national rail strike goes ahead.

British Rail is an example of the absurdity of capitalism. While fares go up, railway workers' living standards fall, yet British Rail still makes huge losses. BR is now caught in a vicious circle of increasing fares to get finance, which only drives more and more passengers away from the railways.

One major reason for this situation is years and years of under-investment in British Rail, while huge sums have been paid out in compensation to the former owners and in interest charges.

At the same time the Tories

demand that the nationalised industries be profitable — the same kind of thinking that has made gas and electricity prices rocket. There is no railway system in the world which is not subsidised.

Railways are a fundamental communications network needed by industry and ordinary people. The large capital investment needed to keep the railways safe and efficient can never be internally financed — it must have huge government subsidy. And as the example of Sweden's recent experiment shows, lower fares can actually bring in more money through a big increase in the number of passengers.

Only a national transport plan, as part of an overall

socialist plan for the economy, can solve this problem. In the meantime the Tories make passengers and railway workers pay the cost of the system's insanity.

The same kind of blackmail is being used against British Leyland workers. Years of under-investment have led to the decline of the British motor industry. The expected £500m loss by BL this year is once again being blamed on the long-suffering BL workers — they are threatened with no pay increase.

But years of settling for less-than-inflation increases have failed to save jobs. And so it will continue — lower wages and less jobs — unless the BL unions start to give a lead.

Preparations for a national rail strike are going ahead, with plans to picket stations and depots, and solidarity promised from right across the union movement.

Sidney Weighell of the NUR must be told loud and clear: either the full award or a national strike. A low pay increase and productivity strings will not save jobs. As BL shows, the lack of a fight will only increase the job loss.

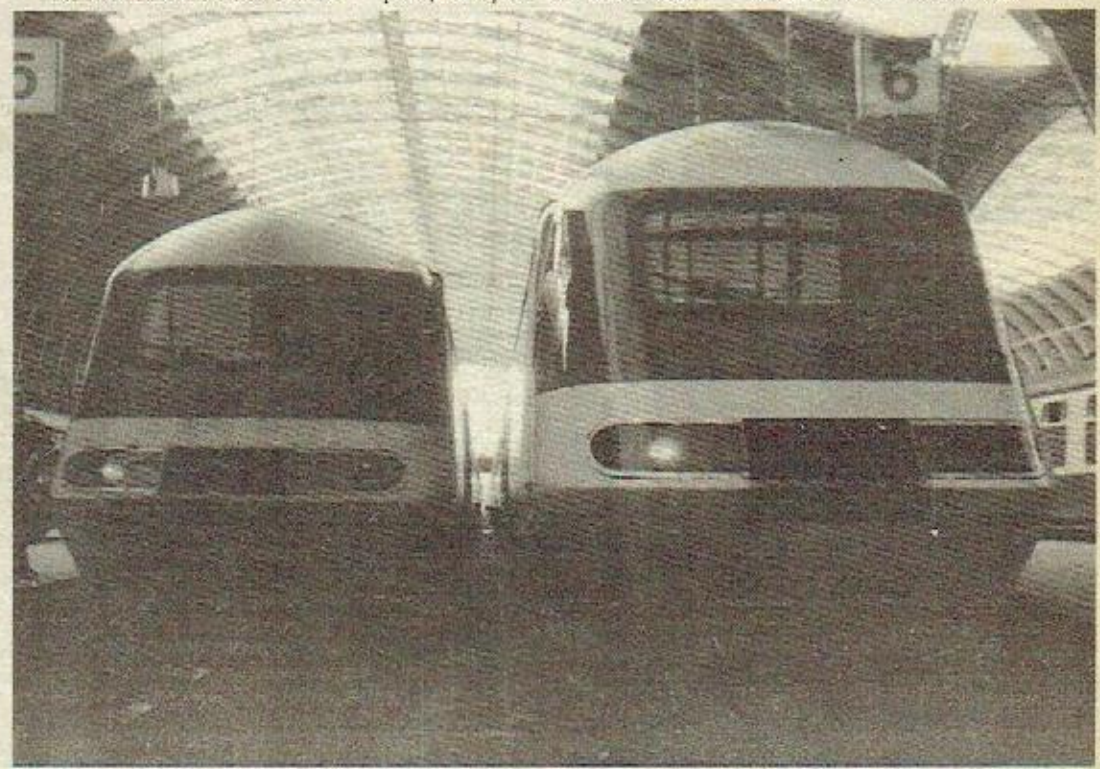


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