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Socialist Organiser

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Cheap fares in danger

WITH THE Lords hearing on the Labour Greater London Council's cheap fares dragging on longer than expected, the verdict will come not long before the London Labour Party conference on December 12.

It will be a challenge to that conference. The cheap fares policy came out of a long debate in the London labour movement. It was Labour's main plank in the May GLC elections. If it is to be overturned by a few Tory-minded judges, then what price the whole process? What price all the work of Labour activists for the May election?

If the Lords rule that the cheap fares are illegal, then a clear lead will be needed from the December 12 conference for a campaign to defy this political decision.



News of the World backs Powell

Press steps up racist abuse

"ENOCH is right", declares the News of the World. Under its banner headline on November 29 of "Please send us home", this stinking rag tells us the verdict of an "exclusive survey".

The verdict is, "A majority of Britain's black population of over one million would welcome the chance to leave for good." Beside the article is a picture and a quote from the witch-doctor of British racism, Enoch Powell. Below we are invited to turn to page two by the heading "Pay my fare plus the price of a few hens".

While that Sunday smut-rag was geeing up the repatriation lobby and blowing a breeze into the "Drive 'em out! Send 'em home!" banner of the fascists, the more sedate Sunday Telegraph drew the same conclusions. Racial strife was "inevitable", "Powell was right" and they should never have been brought here in the first place.

The Scarman report may be the occasion for some useless soul-searching by a few liberals, but the debate around it shows the increasingly bold racism in British society and how urgent it is that anti-racists and anti-fascists should begin to organise now.

Centre page: feature on the new wave of racist attacks — and how the labour movement can work with the black communities in fighting back

BL PLOY BACKFIRES



Longbridge 'no' to scabbing

THE BL bosses' attempt to break the Longbridge rest allowance strike has completely backfired. Their aim was to whip up a stampede back to work by "throwing open the gates" to all strikers and laid-off workers on Monday morning.

Letters to this effect were sent to workers' homes and full page advertisements placed in the local papers.

Cars Division boss Harold Musgrove offered a public assurance that any worker disciplined by the unions for scabbing would be guaranteed employment.

It was a well-financed, massively publicised strike-breaking operation.

And it failed miserably.

Shift

On the Monday day shift only 29 of the 2,200 strikers reported for work and no cars were produced. Meanwhile, about 1,000 more workers voted to join the dispute. No.2 and No.3 paintshops, the Mini body shop in the West Works, and the sewing room (mainly women workers). The company's

big gamble also paid off for the strikers in another way: it finally forced the Longbridge Works Committee to organise picketing.

As one striker from CAB1 Metro Trim told SO, "The company has done us a favour really. I doubt if we could have lasted much longer without picketing and spreading the action. The company's ploy has got us out of the rut and strengthened the dispute."

It was the same story on the Monday nightshift with virtually no strikers turning up for work and a strong official picket on the gates.

That night the Foundry Section also walked out to

join the strike and the next day (Tuesday) 5,000 day shift workers, who had been laid off simply stayed away.

So the prospects look good for the Longbridge strikers in their fight for adequate rest periods. The main task now is to organise strong picketing to prevent E and A series engines reaching Cowley.

As CAB1 Stewards' Committee chairman John Ryan told SO, "We've been beaten the company decisively now. The next step is to build on that victory, strengthen the picketing and close down the whole plant."

TGWU general secretary Moss Evans intervened in the Longbridge dispute on Tuesday 1st — with a proposed deal that would torpedo it.

The deal concedes only a delay in the reduction of relaxation allowance time — something that was on offer at the start of the dispute.

Meanwhile, the dispute was strengthened by a declaration from Midlands TGWU lorry drivers that they would not cross the picket lines.



Paisley talks with armband-wearing 'Third Force' terrorist

Orange reaction arms

THE RUC swooped last weekend in the Catholic areas of Belfast, taking some 30 people off to the notorious Castlereagh interrogation centre.

14 were brought into court on Monday 30th and charged with murder, attempted murder, conspiracy to murder, and membership of the Provisional IRA.

But these victims will not be enough to satisfy the Protestant bigots' clamour for 'increased security'.

Ivan Foster, leader of the Paisleyite 'third force', claims 20,000 men under arms. He says, and this there is no reason to doubt, that many policemen and part-time UDR soldiers are 'third force' men.

Strong Loyalist feeling

was shown at a recent meeting of the Northern Ireland Police Federation, which defeated a motion of no confidence in chief constable Jack Hermon by only one vote.

The Pan-Unionist Forum on Saturday 28th, attended by representatives of five Unionist Parties, the Independent Orange Order, and the Apprentice Boys, called for a restoration of the separate (Protestant-dominated) Northern Ireland Parliament. It was boycotted by the para-military UDA (which calls for an independent Northern Ireland) and the Orange Order.

But Labour front-bencher Don Concannon, speaking on Friday 27th, declared: 'Experience has demonstrated the inherent

instability of the Northern Ireland state... The inescapable lesson of the last 12 years is surely that force will not eradicate the problems of Northern Ireland. Only removal of the physical and psychological border will do that.'

"Mr Concannon also said", reports the Guardian, "that Unionists in the province should realise that no British government would ever countenance the return of Stormont".

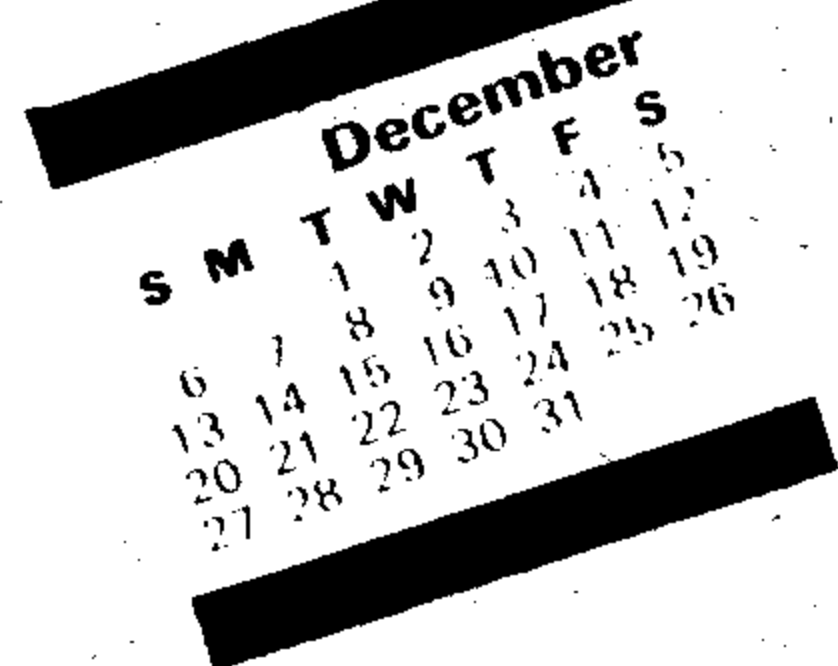
Class

Given Concannon's record — it was he who rushed to Bobby Sands' deathbed to tell him that Labour would never support his

cause — this declaration is more likely to reflect a new mood of firmness in the British ruling class than any concession by Concannon to opinion in the working-class movement.

And indeed the Tories are still pressing ahead with their plans for an Anglo-Irish Council and for a Northern Ireland economic forum. (The Unionist parties seem willing to participate in the forum, while opposing the links the Tories want to set up between it and the Anglo Irish Council).

The situation remains set for conflict — with the Catholic community in grave danger of bloody attacks from the Protestant bigots and/or the British Army.



WHAT'S ON

Ads for Socialist Organiser events and many campaigns are carried free. Paid ads: 5p per word, £4 per column inch. Send to: Socialist Organiser (What's On), 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

IRELAND

Oxfordshire Trades Councils conference on Ireland. Saturday December 12, 10 to 5 at West Oxford Community Centre, Binsey Lane, Oxford.

Delegates credentials £3, observers £1.50 (unwaged £1) from Marie Campbell, 167 Walton St, Oxford.

Labour Committee on Ireland: Labour Movement Conference. Saturday February 27, 11am to 6pm, at The Theatre, 309 Regent St. Open to delegates and observers. Details: 1 North End Rd, London W14.

UNIONS

EETPU 'Hands off our branches' committee: Lobby of union executive, Monday December 7. Meeting at Hayes Station, Bromley, Kent, at 10.30, to be at union HQ, Hayes Court, from 11am onwards.

CUTS

St Mary's Hospital, London W9. Day of Action against Closure. March from the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital, Euston Rd (near Euston station) to rally at St Mary's. Assemble 10.30.

WOMEN

Public meeting on Women's Right to Work demonstration to be called by the National Executive of the Labour Party. Wednesday, December 9, at 7.30, South Bank Poly Students Union, Rotary St, London SE1. Invited speakers: Joyce Gould (Labour party women's organiser), Jo Richardson MP, Frances O'Grady, Susan Shell, and a speaker from the trade union movement.

YOUTH

National Left Wing Youth Movement Steering Committee meeting. Sunday December 13, 12 to 4, in Birmingham. (For details phone 01-354 1050).

TURKEY

The Campaign for Democratic Rights in Turkey is organising a conference for Saturday December 12, from 10.30am to 5pm at NUFTO Hall, Jockeys Fields, London WC1. Labour movement organisations are invited to write to the CDDRT, 29 Parkgate St, London N1 for credentials. Delegate's fee is £3.

ANTI-FASCIST

Stop the fascists! Counter demonstration against planned fascist mobilisation, Saturday December 5, 10am at Kingsbury station (Jubilee Line, London Underground)

LABOUR LEFT

Campaign for Labour Party Democracy. Annual General Meeting: Saturday December 12, in London. Open to all CLPD supporters: to join send £3 (£3.50 couples) to V.Schonfield, Treasurer, 21 Wallingford Ave, London W10.

All London Labour Lefts meeting called by Lambeth Labour Left, to discuss how to organise against the Heseltine legislation and prepare for the London Labour Party conference on December 12. 7.30, Friday November 27, at County Hall, London SE1.

London Labour Briefing fringe meeting for London Labour Party conference: 12.30pm, Saturday 12th, at Camden Town Hall. 'The Battle for Power': speakers, Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone, Jo Richardson. Adm. 50p.

London Labour Briefing social: Saturday December 12, Caxton House, St Johns Way, London N19. Hot food, curries, disco, bar. Adm. £1.

MARXISM

London Workers' Socialist League classes on basic Marxism: a fortnightly series, alternate Fridays from January 8. For details of registration and venue, write to PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

Socialist Organiser meetings and forums

LAMBETH: Sundays at 7pm, for venue phone 609 3071.

Dec.20: The Russian revolution
Jan.31: Stalinism
Feb.28: The origins of the Labour Party

LEICESTER: Sundays at 7.30, at the Leicester Socialist Centre, High St (above Blackthorn Books).
Dec.6: The Fight Against Hospital Closures, with speaker from St Mary's.

LEIGH: Sundays at 7.30 at the White Lion, opposite the Market.
Dec.13: Ireland and the British Labour Movement.

OXFORD: Wednesdays at 8pm, at 44b Princes St.
Dec.16: The nuclear threat.

OXFORD Socialist Organiser Christmas bazaar, with cakes, tombola, bottle stall, darts, and Father Xmas. Saturday December 19, from 1.30pm, at Northgate Hall, St Michael's St. Entrance 10p.

ISLINGTON: Socialist Organiser meetings every other Tuesday at the 'Florence', Florence St, near the Town Hall. Next meeting December 8.

New scheme to screw the unemployed

By Alexis Carras

FROM THE people who gave you three years of misery, sore shoulders and bruised shins from all that jostling in the dole queue — another little surprise.

Documents in the possession of Socialist Organiser outline a new scheme the Tories are pilot-testing in 15 Unemployment Benefit Offices up and down the country.

UB671 forms will have to be filled out by claimants to assess the type of work they are willing to accept. This will replace the weekly signing on.

to travel? Do you have your own transport?

new form the Tories are evidently hoping that many more will be).

Fascists attack Islington conference

by Phil Cohen

A GANG of 30 or 40 NF fascists attacked an anti-fascist/anti-racist conference in Islington at the weekend (November 29), throwing smoke bombs and injuring an AUEW delegate who had arrived late.

Black people were alienated from many white organisations because of the racism they suffered, she said. It was necessary for them to organise separately, as with the new black trade unionists' movement, to gain confidence and strength.

But the gang — mainly white skinheads — were driven off by Anti Nazi League stewards, although the planned workshops were disrupted, the 60 people attending held a final session and agreed to set up a coordinating committee in the borough.

This should be seen as complementary to the existing trade unions, and not working against them.

The man injured was London North AUEW member Gerald Cotton, who needed four stitches in his head after being hit by broken glass. He had attended the jobs rally in the morning before coming to the afternoon session.

Anna Sullivan of the Anti Nazi League outlined a very real threat posed by the NF. She said it was wrong to dismiss them as a fringe group, and urged support for a continuous campaign at Chapel Market, where the ANL leaflets every Sunday morning, and throughout the borough.

It was sponsored by the three Islington Constituency Labour Parties, Islington Trades Council, and Islington Anti Nazi League, and brought together delegates from trade unions, community groups, and black organisations.

Martha Osanoor of the Finsbury Park Defence Committee spoke of police harassment against unemployed black youth, particularly during the April carnival, and of how they were criminalised as a result.

Brent councillor Merle Amory said it was vital for black people to involve themselves in the Labour Party and take part in selection conferences to choose candidates who would represent their

We hope to reconvene the workshops to discuss how specific racist and fascist activities can be tackled in schools, estates, trade unions, local councils, and over nationality and immigration policy.

Woolwich: cops swoop

MORE THAN 500 striking school students and trade unionists joined a march against unemployment called in Woolwich on November 30.

was diverted from its planned route and met by a huge police presence.

The march, sponsored by the local Trades Council, NALGO branch and Labour Party, was called to coincide with a one-day strike of school students organised by the NUSS.

And as the demonstrators dispersed, a carload of plain clothes police from Unit 4 of the SPG swooped upon two NUSS militants, Mark Rushton and Akey Kellman outside the Polytechnic.

During the previous strike on June 1, more than 2,000 school students took part: this time police were brought in to prevent such support.

In the ensuing scenes Tom Wareham, Vice President of the Poly union, was kicked in the groin by police. Two more were arrested. All four have been charged with 'threatening behaviour'.

Squads of police manned school gates to stop youth leaving and stopped buses headed towards the march. When it began, after a delay of 1 1/4 hours, the march

A Woolwich Four Defence Campaign has been launched, and can be contacted c/o Thames Polytechnic.

CHRIS MARSH



Youth on the receiving end again

Mail
PRESS GANG
Daily EXPRESS
FINANCIAL TIMES
The Daily Telegraph
THE Sun

SOME people in work just don't know when they're well off, or that there are three million unemployed who would jump at the chance to take their jobs — warts and all.

And what clearer example could you have than the tie-choosing, trouser-gliding Princess Diana? Apparently being given the blessing of a baby to look after in her womb is not enough! She has to go attacking the traditional sphere of the skilled man.

However much sympathy we may have for this gentleman's gentleman, this is no time for soft soap.

Many of the so-called workers in this country of ours don't realise they are a privileged sector of society. They should do a little more working — and a lot less shirking.

But surely, that is one of the trials and tribulations that Mr. Barry will just have to endure.

Competition from Japan — where one transistorised valet can service an entire Imperial household — will not permit it.

Take Prince Charles's valet. Just what is this 'spotted tie' strike all about?

Where would this country be if we all jacked in our jobs and opened bars in Florida? Where would Florida be?

His strike has brought nothing but misery as the Heir to the Throne breaks a nail trying to prise the lid off the shoe polish.

So, OK. The job has changed a bit. Stephen Barry claims it used to be his task to choose the Royal tie and to slip the Royal trousers over the Royal buttocks.

Now the Royal wife does all that. God knows, we on this newspaper realise how acquiring a little woman can ruin a chap's life.

We hope Barry accepts this advice. But if he does not there is only one answer.

We have long said that women who insist on working instead of staying home cooking the supper are doing men out of a job and should be stopped.

The Queen should open the back doors of the Palace first thing Monday morning. All those valets who turn up to work should be welcomed back.

But if Barry and his friends are so infected by pinko voices that they don't even realise the benefits of their inflation-proofed pension, then they should be chopped off.

If British valets can't or won't work without endless demarcation disputes then they should be given a good dressing down — and not be pressed to stay.

**Socialist
Organiser
EDITORIAL**

No ballot-box solution to rise of SDP

'AT last the don't knows have a party they can vote for', joked one cartoonist last week as the SDP swept to victory in the Crosby by-election.

Shirley Williams toppled a Thatcherite Tory front-runner and trounced a left wing Labour challenger in her runaway victory which confirmed the strong tide which has flowed toward the SDP/Liberal alliance since the Warrington and Croydon by-elections.

BBC computers flashed out improbable predictions of an overwhelming victory for the SDP in a general election, leaving Tories and Labour reduced to less than 100 seats between them.

True or not, an important change has taken place.

For Labour left wingers who really believe that socialism can be achieved through the ballot box, there is every reason to be despondent. It is now evident that the SDP/Liberal alliance stands a real chance of preventing the election of a Labour government in the next General Election. And Tory 'dissident' Edward Heath has talked of a possible future coalition with the SDP.

Meanwhile, the electoral successes of the SDP are being used by Labour's right wing as a sledgehammer to crush the struggle for socialist policies.

There is in fact little evidence that it is the nebulous policies of the SDP that have struck a chord with the electorate. MORI's repeated opinion polls suggest that SDP voters have little understanding of or support for the party's positions. And the SDP has since its inception been characterised by having more (second-hand) MPs than it has (second-hand) established policies.

The most recent and extensive survey of the views of SDP members shows an almost even split between



those favouring increased taxation to improve public services, as against those opposed to it. 32% of SDP members favour cutting tax relief on mortgages while 64% are against. 67% oppose the SDP proposal to set up regional assemblies. (Of course, none of this is characterised as the SDP tearing itself apart.)

It is only on their most savage anti-working class policies — their call for wage controls, their demand for more anti-union laws, their uncritical support for the EEC and their opposition to nuclear disarmament — that the SDP leaders have large majority support even among their own members.

But all of these policies are shared by section of the Tory and Labour leadership: none are distinctively SDP. It can scarcely be argued therefore that

voters have responded to the new party's programme. What they plainly have responded to is its pretensions to be 'new'.

Boosted by a huge and unflagging campaign of media publicity, a party which combines gift-wrapped Gaitskellite Labourism with the least liberal aspects of Liberal policy has succeeded in portraying itself as a novel element in British politics. Its mouldy message of 'moderation' has gripped the minds of the middle class.

It is only possible to understand the parasitic growth of the SDP, at the expense of both Tories and Labour, if we first understand the frustrations and confusion generated in the present stage of the class struggle.

Indeed the real force behind Shirley Williams has

been precisely the TUC and Labour leaders who now so vocally heap the blame on the Labour left.

These leaders have done everything in their power to prevent working class action to challenge the Tories. They have sat back and watched cuts rip public services; they have watched closures and redundancies take an unending toll of jobs, creating long-term mass unemployment; they have abandoned the struggle to defend living standards against inflation; many have joined — right and 'left' alike — in raising rents and rates in half-baked efforts to ward off more cuts at the cost of alienating many workers and the middle class.

Thanks to these leaders, two and a half years of Thatcherism has seen no active lead from the workers' movement capable of

winning the support of the millions of middle class voters who have turned in disgust from the government that many of them helped put into office in 1979.

Alienation from the Tories by no means brings such people to an understanding of the need for socialist solutions to the crisis — particularly when socialist solutions are explicitly and vocally rejected by Labour's own parliamentary leadership and by a majority of TUC leaders.

Indeed on many issues the SDP and Labour majority are agreed. Both oppose serious action to challenge and remove the Tories. Both offer empty anti-Tory rhetoric. Both flirt with the idea of wage control — and attack the Left of the Labour Party.

Neither offers a coherent policy to meet the crisis of

British capitalism. Both oppose nationalisation.

Under such conditions the media has succeeded in giving the SDP the edge — as some kind of radical 'new' answer. Confused and anxious middle class voters have joined the SDP bandwagon — and as it has gathered speed, so it has also drawn in confused and demoralised sections of workers.

The result has been that Labour has been firmly branded as the party of 'extremism' — while in reality its so-called 'extreme' policies are blocked at each stage by the right wing, and at best only lamely and passively pursued by most of the 'left'.

Labour's right wing is now clearly on the war-path. They will use the Crosby result as an argument for making the Labour Party even more like the

SDP — and eliminating any element of socialism from its platform.

Under such pressure, woolly sections of the Parliamentary Left and their supporters can already be heard with their knees knocking like castanets.

They accept the right wing claim that it is the 'divisions' in the Labour Party rather than its lack of any political answer to the SDP that have lost working class support. And from there they must go along with right wing demands for 'unity' around the same wretched policies of capitalist crisis management which were implemented by Wilson and Callaghan.

The fact is that there is no pure ballot-box solution either to the Thatcher government or to the SDP. The answer to both is one and the same: the fight to mobilise mass working class industrial action to defeat the Tory offensive and drive Thatcher from office, coupled with a patient political struggle within the workers' movement for a programme of socialist policies and a new leadership prepared to carry them out.

The scale of the swing to the SDP demonstrates the difficulty of this struggle after 2½ years of betrayals, with the dead weight of three million unemployed weighing on the minds of trade unionists on the shop floor.

But unless we are to believe that Williams, Steel and Heath can, with the help of the trade union leaders, between them bring a halt to the class struggle in 1984, we must recognise the need to press forward the fight for action to defend existing jobs, wages, and democratic rights and for socialist policies — which alone can offer hope of creating three million new jobs for the unemployed.



by John Lister

Self-exposure

'COMMUNISTS were among the first to recognise the danger to the labour movement from the emergence of the Social Democratic Party'.

So claimed Communist Party general secretary Gordon McLennan last week.

But he only told part of the story.

There was a good reason for the CP to be the first to know — because they began losing some of their members to the new party! Prominent CP member Sue Slipman — a former member of the CP's executive committee and leading light in the CP-dominated student Broad Left — was swift to join the new party, insisting that she saw a political

continuity between her views in the CP and the policies of the 'Gang of Four'.

Certainly the politics of the CP in NUS — forming a cynical bloc with the Tories against the left wing — have had more in common with the SDP than they have with socialism.

Right

And the resolute insistence upon Parliament-centred politics embodied in the CP's 'British Road to Socialism' is far to the right of many forces currently active in the Labour Party.

It was no surprise therefore that McLennan prudently avoided explaining last week how he would suggest the CP carry out

What goes up...

WITH Tory MPs still reeling from the Crosby by-election, one of them is moving purposefully ahead with a relentless campaign. His dream is to see a statue of former Tory leader Stanley Baldwin erected in Parliament Square.

And he has taken advantage of the current political realignment to broaden the

base of his support. Former Labour leaders Callaghan and Wilson have now joined the list of Tory MPs backing the scheme.

With such reverence being shown by Labour's right wing towards the Tory leader who provoked the 1926 General Strike and starved out the miners' strike which followed it,

we can presumably expect TUC leaders, too, to add their names to the petition.

In any event there could still be a bright side to the whole affair. With any luck Baldwin's statue will rise just in time to be toppled by workers in a new General Strike against the Thatcher government.

Stalinist Footmen?

THE LABOUR Party is reportedly 'investigating' its Scottish organiser George Galloway after he had the audacity to call openly for Labour to accept the affiliation of the Communist Party.

But in conditions where Michael Foot and his henchman are seeking new ways of crushing the Marxist Left, they should surely be welcoming and acting upon Galloway's proposal.

After all, the CP Stalinists have an impeccable record of fingering, framing and witch-hunting Trotskyists in the labour movement.

And only recently the Morning Star's lobby correspondent lent his two

pennyworth (soon to be 24p worth!) to the witch-hunt against Tariq Ali.

Rats

Ali has insisted that while no longer a member of the International Marxist Group, he still considers himself a Marxist.

Whether he has ever actually been a Marxist is no doubt a topic that can be debated on the left.

But whatever the verdict on Ali, Marxists should take note of the position of the CP. In seeking to flush out left wing 'moles', the Labour leaders may yet be persuaded to enlist the services of Stalinist rats.

the task of 'exposing the SDP-Liberal fraud'.

Perhaps McLennan should begin by a MORI poll of his surviving members, to check their voting intentions at the next elections?



McLennan

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World News

ZIONISTS SHIFT TACTICS AGAINST PLO

ON September 23 the new Zionist defence minister, Ariel Sharon, announced that the military government on the West Bank would be a civilian administration, although its responsibility would not extend to security matters. The new administration is headed by Menachem Milson, a former advisor to the military government and an officer with the rank of colonel.

This apparently fundamental shift in reality part and parcel of a drive to liquidate the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) both physically and politically.

There is nothing essentially new in the methods to be employed, all of which have long been used haphazardly.

Deterioration

Now, however, they have been drawn together into a coherent strategy with four distinct and complementary aspects.

Firstly, the repression of the elected nationalist Palestinian mayors, including arrests, dismissals and constant harassment. Linked to this is the August 3 military order forbidding the entry of Arab development funds into the West Bank, which were traditionally channelled through the Amman-based joint PLO-Jordanian committee and which last year disbursed \$70 million to West Bank municipalities (representing about 60% of their

operating budgets and 100% of their development budgets).

The Zionist hope is that a deterioration in urban services will drive a wedge between the Mayors and the PLO on the one hand and the townspeople on the other.

Suppress

The second strategic thread lies in the organising of an 'alternative leadership' in the rural areas, where Palestinian political organisation has been at its weakest. The Israelis are building 'village leagues' headed by collaborators, the best known of whom is Mustafa Dudin - the Interior Minister of the Jordanian government during Black September 1970, a period when the PLO was driven out of Jordan.

The occupation authorities systematically favour the village leagues in the sphere of economic development. Dudin's Hebron League has, to date, won

approval for projects worth \$16.5 million.

The military will aid Dudin but refuse help to Hebron mayor Mustafa Natshe, and the Israelis are also transferring the functions of the municipalities over to the village leagues, e.g. travel permits, community projects.

Thirdly, there has been a surface attempt to tone down the day-to-day harassment of the Palestinians in an effort to make the occupation more acceptable. On August 12 Sharon issued new guidelines for the troops, calling on them to treat Palestinians with more courtesy at roadblocks and refrain from bursting into schools to suppress demonstrations.

However, none of the oppressive military regulations have been revoked, and the new administration got off to an inauspicious start by using all the old repressive methods.

Yediot Aharnot, 3.11.81, reports the demolishing of

homes as collective punishment and two days later the closure of Bir Zeit university. Ha'aretz, 27.10.81 reported the death of a political detainee who had suffered a cerebral haemorrhage while being interrogated in Hebron jail.

The fourth arm of Zionist strategy is simply the assassination of the Palestinians' national leadership, centred in Lebanon. A series of major bombings have killed and wounded hundreds.

Wedge

Responsibility has been claimed by a group calling itself the Front for the Liberation of Lebanon from Foreigners (i.e. Palestinians). It is widely held that these outrages are the work of the Israeli Secret Service.

These specific assassination attempts go hand in hand with renewed bombing in southern Lebanon aimed at unsettling the local population to drive a

wedge between the Lebanese communities and the Palestinians and depopulate the region for possible Israeli occupation.

Annexation

Yediot Aharnot 12.11.81 reported that 150 Israelis had participated in a demonstration against the closure of Bir Zeit. Such developments are rare indeed, but point to the necessity for an anti-war movement against the Begin government.

West Bankers see the new Israeli 'approach' for what it is - an attempt to perpetuate the occupation and open the way to the outright annexation of the region, to which the Begin government is committed.

The World Zionist Organisation has unveiled a plan to settle an additional 100,000 colonists over the next four years, planning 12 to 18 new villages as well as substantial expansion of the existing settlements.



Victims of Zionist bombing

by Barry Turner, secretary, Bradford Labour Movement Campaign for Palestinian Solidarity



Begin

Mayor Bassam Shaka has described the Israeli move as 'a desperate and futile attempt to undermine Palestinian unity', adding 'In the final analysis they want to annex the West Bank'.

Socialists in Britain must expose Sharon's elaborate charade and restate the racist, colonialist nature of Zionism, through the building of a viable ongoing Palestinian solidarity movement.

University closed down

BIR ZEIT University is suffering yet another closure at the hands of the Israeli military authorities. Once again this national Palestinian university has been singled out for collective punishment as part of a political attack to deny the Palestinian population its right to self-determination.

The timing of the closure coincides with the assumption of duties by Professor Menachem Milson, the civilian side of the Israeli occupation coin, as an extension of the military side, whose contributions include the 'iron fist' policy and Military Order no.854 [which aimed at the political control and the stifling

of higher education in the West Bank].

On Monday November 2 1981, as an expression of their rejection of the 'autonomy' plan and Milson's assumption of duties, Bir Zeit University students joined Palestinians throughout the West Bank in protesting these developments. The Israeli army brutally confronted the students, using teargas, clubs and bullets, and subsequently arrested 13 students who were taking public transport on their way to their homes.

On Tuesday 3rd, at 10pm, 13 military vehicles invaded the village of Bir Zeit with a full show of force.

On Wednesday 4th, Bir Zeit University students organised a peaceful protest march. It was broken up by the army, using once again tear gas, bullets, and physical force.

The army then surrounded the university, set up road blocks, and informed the university vice-president of an order to close down the university until further notice.

A two hour deadline was given for the total evacuation of all university premises, including student dormitories and administrative offices.

As the university was then still in a state of siege, the evacuation order and the deadline were impos-

sible to meet. As a result of negotiations the deadline was extended several times, under the constant threat from the military governor to break in and evacuate the university by force.

At 6.15pm a Supreme Court injunction was obtained, preventing the military authorities from evacuating the university or using force on the premises. However, the military did break in, that up a Finnish radio reporter, physically evicted faculty and staff members, and forced the students to leave the premises.

We urge you to show solidarity by:

- Sending cables and or

letters to General Ariel Sharon, Minister of Defence, The Defence Ministry, Tel Aviv, Israel. [Please send copies to Bir Zeit University].

- Contacting your own government agencies urging them to exert pressure on the Israeli authorities to reopen the university.

- Contacting your local press.

- Organising various activities such as support rallies and meetings in your own area.

Bir Zeit University Administration, Faculty, Staff, and Students. 6.11.81.

Iran march against Arafat

ON FRIDAY November the streets of Tehran the shouts of 'Death to Arafat', as a government sponsored demonstration condemned Arafat's role for the Saudi Arabia for a 'Middle East settlement'.

On the surface, he was condemned for his willingness to support the plan that would recognise the legitimacy of the state of Israel.

Despite the PLO's support for this proposal, despite the economic of Saudi Arabia, for the first time at least the Arab summit at Fez week.

Other Arab regimes opposed the plan, but nowhere else was there a demonstration like that in Tehran. The Khomeini regime did the Khomenei regime organise the march.

Firstly, the Khomeini regime is trying to present the most intransigent front against Zionism and imperialism, and the most determined supporter of the Palestinian national cause. Support for the Palestinians is a not only of the revolutionary left, but also of the wing fundamentalist movements in many Eastern states.

Secondly, Khomeini is trying to cover up the fact that the regime does have friendly links with the Zionist state. Arms exist between Tel Aviv and Tehran, as a recently issued telex proves.

The Zionist state will be delighted at the regime's refusal to recognise the PLO as a legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. This would create an important counterweight to the position of the PLO over the past few years by European governments.

The degeneration of the 'Iranian revolution' toppled the Shah, shattering of the early phase of workers' council evolution of the regime into a brutal tyranny with dozens of executions every day and the demolition of every shred of bourgeois democracy - the loudest opposition.

In Britain, 'Iran Solidarity' has been set up to inform the workers' movement of what is going on and to mobilise supporters who are resisting the crushing of human rights in Iran. The campaign already has the support of several Iranian organisations - foremost being supporters of the Peasants' Mojahedeen - and British left-wing organisations.

One of the first actions of 'Iran Solidarity' will be to hold a picket on December 10th outside the Iranian Embassy in London to protest at the government's tactics and executions.



Arafat

CORRECTION: There was a glaring mistake in last week's article on 'The Six County Cockpit': 'The Protestant Falls Rd' should have read 'The Protestant Shankill Rd'.

The date given for the abolition of proportional representation in Stormont elections was also wrong. The last election on PR was in 1925, but the abolition of PR and the first election on the 'first past the post' system were not until 1929.

Australian strikers go back to work unbroken

World News

Reprinted from 'Socialist Fight'

Truce in Bolivia

DESPITE returning to work after six weeks out, Ford workers at Broadmeadows, in Australia, are adamant that they have not been defeated by the company.

Workers we spoke to stressed that they were still determined to win; they had not been broken by Ford. "We're going back now so that we can go back as a united group", one shop steward told us. "We'll continue the fight inside by other means".

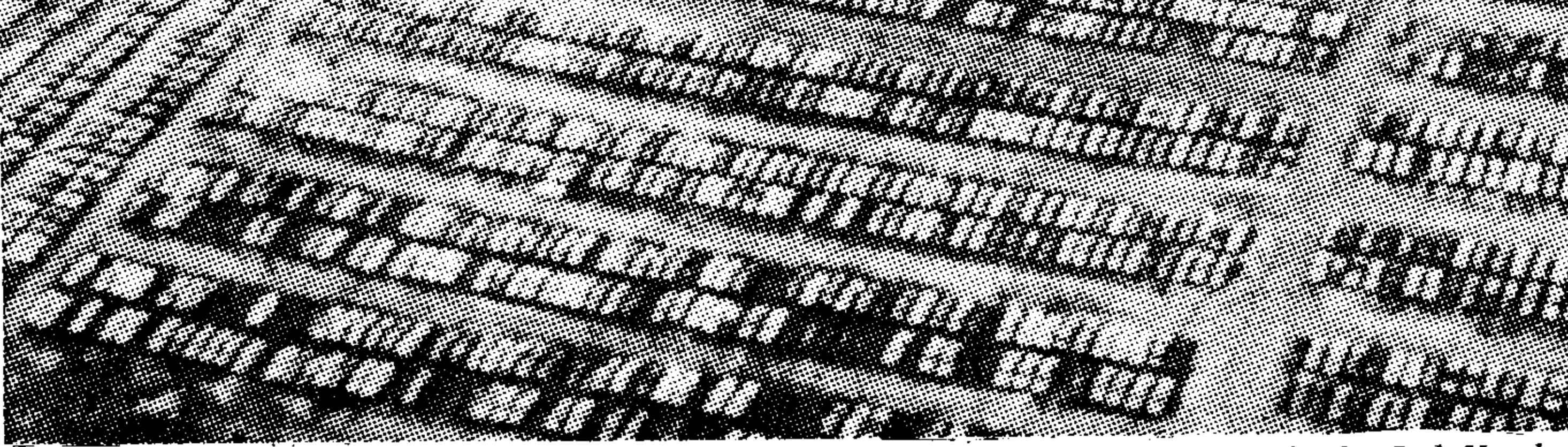
There's nothing surprising about the decision to resume work. What is surprising — and truly inspiring — is how the Broadmeadows workers remained so solid for so long against a virtual conspiracy by the company, the government, the mass media and the federal office of their union, the VBEF, to break them.

As senior shop steward Frank Argondizzo told one mass meeting, "Everyone is against us, including the federal and state union officers. They are no longer fellow workers. They are bureaucrats with big cigars in their mouths."

Interfere

During the strike, the Broadmeadows workers had to contend with a non-stop undermining operation from all sides. Both the VBEF federal office and the ACTU (the Australia TUC) tried to undermine them by openly opposing the strike, on the grounds that it jeopardised a "national industry-wide campaign."

Wage claims have been



The back paddock of the Broadmeadows car plant. Inset: Australian trade union leader Bob Hawke

lodged with car industry employers for up to six months, however, without any call for a united campaign by either VBEF leaders or the ACTU.

For once, the Australian Labour Party took an unequivocal stand on an industrial issue. State Conference voted unanimously to back the strike, and collections for the strikers were taken up in some branches.

Then the Arbitration Commission imposed a secret ballot, in which 850 strikers didn't get ballot papers, and some workers received more than one ballot paper. In the ballot,

each striker was asked, "whether or not you wish to resume work so that wage talks can resume".

VBEF federal officials correctly condemned this as a loaded question, and denounced the imposition of the ballot as interference in union affairs. But this didn't stop them, like Ford, mailing a letter to all strikers stating that the company would begin talks within days if the strike ended.

The state and federal officials' method of 'opposing' the court-imposed ballot did more harm than good. They didn't appeal to Ford to boycott it — or at least vote to maintain con-

trol of the strike in their own hands (by voting to stay out). Instead, state officials told workers to 'follow your conscience', and refused to take a stand themselves.

Lessons

Federal officials apparently took Ford to the Industrial Relations Bureau — a body described by even [ACTU president] Bob Hawke as an 'industrial relations police force'. Predictably, the IRB returned a verdict of 'no case to answer' against Ford.

The VBEF Victorian officials refused to build support

for the strike with other car workers. And when the results of the secret ballot were announced, it even ceased supporting the strike. Victorian officials publicly denounced the decision of a 1500 strong mass meeting (with only two opposing votes) to ignore the ballot's result, and stay out.

The return to work is obviously a setback to the Broadmeadows workers' struggle. But it now gives the VBEF less excuse to not begin a genuine industry-wide campaign of direct action.

Of course, VBEF officials will do their best to

use any excuse to avoid action. But they now face 4,000 workers who have learnt many valuable lessons the hard way.

Perhaps Frank Argondizzo summed it up best at the last mass meeting. "I myself learned more in the last six weeks about the powers against the workers than the previous years of my life... We learned how far companies like Ford will go to keep their power intact. We have learned who are their friends and how they will join together to strike against us workers... This struggle has taught us the necessary lessons!"

AFTER 15 days on strike, with the military occupation of the miners and no supplies of food, Bolivian miners have won a temporary victory.

Last week the dictatorship of Gen. Torrelio, fearful of a mass mobilisation of the type that ousted the Banzer dictatorship in 1978, made a tactical withdrawal and released 60 workers' leaders jailed during the strike.

In return the union [FSTMB] agreed to participate in a joint commission to discuss their demands: 100% wage increases and full democratic and trade union rights. Since the army has not been removed from the camps, and Torrelio himself has declared he will extend the dictatorship for a further three years, there is little chance that the regime will make more than the most cosmetic changes.

The Bolivian proletariat is well aware of this; it has long experience of 'discussions' with the military. But it was not possible to sustain the strike indefinitely after food supplies to the mines had been cut.

The time taken for the deliberations of the commission is being used to prepare for another strike, this time throughout the whole industry and with greater external support.

This means the call for solidarity issued in Socialist Organiser last week is still valid and of vital importance. There is no respite for the Bolivian proletariat and we, as requested by our comrades, must make a positive contribution to the struggle, in which truces are notoriously short.

SANTIAGO FORTIN

BREAKDOWN IN POLISH FOOD SUPPLIES

by Alexis Carras



could see very soon the legal prosecution of militants exercising their right to strike.

The success of such a project will ultimately depend on whether the coming winter, with its ravages and shortages, will be enough to whip the Polish working class into line.

The virtual breakdown of the country's supply and distribution system, and the continued export of much of Poland's agricultural produce to the West — to pay off the massive debts the bureaucracy accumulated over a decade of economic mismanagement — mean that millions of workers, pensioners, housewives, and children will be suffering acutely this winter.

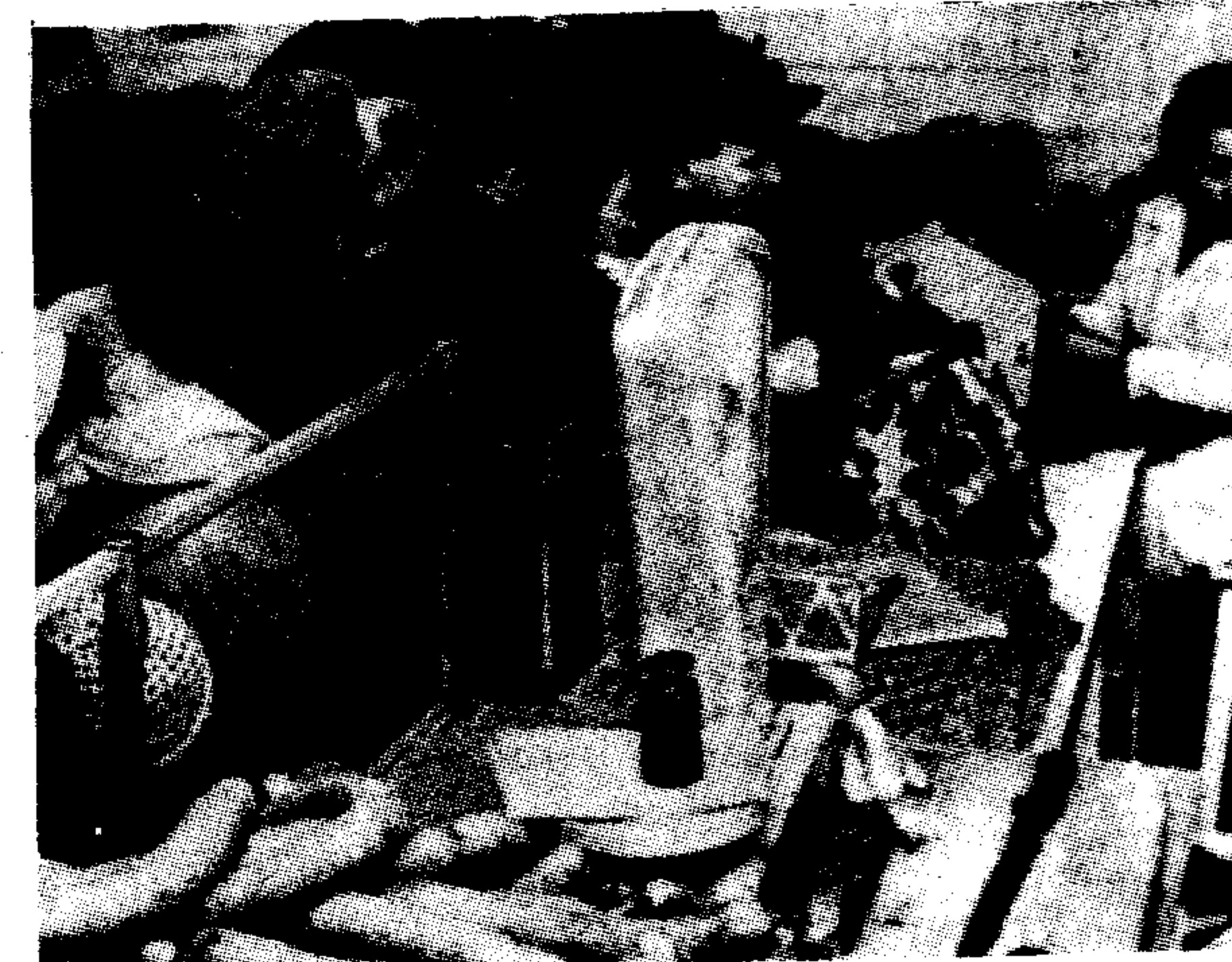
Thousands of old people are expected to die from lack of nutrition and hypo-

thermia. Millions of workers will be working at arduous jobs with only the minimum of necessary calorie intake — and then will have to queue for hours in the snow to buy food.

Outside of wartime, it is a fantastic sight to see the world's tenth most industrialised country in the throes of such social disintegration.

The Solidarnosc presidium must cease all collaboration with Poland's Stalinists. If sacrifices and hardships have to be born by Poland's workers — then let them be in the fight to construct a working class power, exercised through workers' councils, not for the sake of propping up a repressive bureaucratic system.

If the bureaucracy says there is no food available — then open the books!



Move this motion

This trade union/Labour Party branch expresses its full support for the demands of the Bolivian unions for the right to independent trade unions and full democratic liberties. It condemns the actions of General Torrelio's military regime in cutting off all supplies of basic necessities to the camps in the recent strike, and supports the call for the full withdrawal of troops from the mines.

In support of this struggle for the most basic democratic freedoms, this branch resolves to make a contribution of £200 to the Bolivian Workers' Solidarity Fund, to be sent immediately to Bolivia to support the campaign of the unions and aid the miners and their families.

★ Bolivian Workers' Solidarity Fund, 54 Studley Rd, London E7 9LX.

NEW! Advertisement

Magazine of the Workers Socialist League

Workers Socialist Review 1

50p

'Capitalist Crisis and Socialist Alternative', a detailed study of the breakdown of the boom, by Bob Sutcliffe. 50p plus postage from PO Box 135, London N10DD.

GENERAL Jaruzelski has tried it before.

At the end of October, after the fourth plenum of the Central Committee of the PUWP, the General floated the idea of a ban on strikes in Poland.

Within days, this plan was blocked by the prospect of a Parliamentary revolt.

Such a ban would have meant a head-on confrontation with Solidarnosc — which rightly would have seen any such law as a frontal attack on its most important victory since August 1980, the right to strike.

It would have exacerbated the deep rifts in the PUWP, and pushed the normally compliant small parties in the Parliament (Neo-Znak, Catholics, etc.) to an open rupture with the PUWP.

In the end Jaruzelski had to settle for a rather lame motion — passed unanimously in Parliament — deploring strikes.

Lots of bark, but no bite. This motion was easily passed — no doubt with the agreement of Solidarnosc's national leadership, or the wing of it round Walesa.

Walesa himself was touring the country, appealing,

threatening, and cajoling the membership of Solidarnosc to stop wildcat strike activity. Such an overtone was vital if the tripartite national negotiations of union/state-party/church — for a makeshift 'national salvation front' — were to get off the ground.

Muzzle

General Jaruzelski is now reportedly trying his luck again. However, what seems to be emerging this time round, rather than a headlong assault, is that the PUWP will attempt to formally guarantee in law the right to strike — but only as an ultimate resort. (At present the right to strike is codified only in the Gdansk agreements).

The party hopes to tie down the union activists in all sorts of bureaucratic time-consuming procedures and arbitration. Wildcat strikes would be illegal — and the PUWP thus hopes to muzzle and stifle any direct action by Solidarnosc rank and file militants.

If greater cooperation develops between the PUWP, the Church, and the Walesa wing of Solidarnosc, then we



BEWARE OF BURY CAREERISTS!

by Sue Arnall

THERE are a few individuals in Bury, Lancashire, who think they have the right to dictate who should be East Ward branch's Labour candidates for the Council elections in May. In their view democracy comes a poor second compared to their expert judgment as to what is good for the Labour Group.

They range from the editor of the Bury Times (who is in favour of a rubber-stamp selection conference for his chosen candidate, the sitting member Laurie Bullas) to Laurie Bullas himself (who is Labour Group leader and anxious to secure a safe seat), to the chair of East Ward.

The selection meeting on November 6th went according to the rules. The notices to members were distributed by hand well in advance. As usual, more members turned up for the meeting than normally attend the branch. But the surprise came when Laurie Bullas was defeated heavily on the first ballot by a local AUEW shop steward.

Straight away there were howls of disbelief. The Membership Secretary questioned two members' right to vote, and his mother queried the honesty of the tellers.

The District observer overruled these two objections, and the disgruntled losers adjourned to the local club. By morning they had their solution.

Losing

The membership secretary had 'discovered' that he himself had not delivered seven members' notices, and so the Chairperson (one of the losing candidates) wrote a complaint about this to the District Secretary.

The re-run selection meeting on November 24th was packed out with members rarely seen at normal meetings. Predictably, Laurie Bullas won the ballot (but by a small margin) and his supporters returned to St Bede's club to celebrate.

So the Bury Times, which had intervened to give editorial support for Bullas in the safest Labour seat in Bury, can be well satisfied. The rest of us might learn that if your candidate isn't selected first time round, you can always discover undelivered notices in your pocket and have another go.

Wait

What we did learn was to be wary of career politicians who think they have a divine right to automatic re-selection for life. From now on we will organise to recruit people who will work for working class policies here and now, and not wait for elections.



A united face for the Party

Defection of a 'strange man'

GEORGE Cunningham is a strange man. Not many Labour MPs stand for re-selection, tell their GMCs they 'couldn't give a fig' whether they're selected or not, still win, accept a front-bench job in the same week, and then quit the Party saying he's been 'stabbed in the back'.

But, as the papers last week never tired of saying, George Cunningham is a 'singular' MP.

Personally, the only thing I've ever found 'singular' about the man is his resemblance to those rather exotic creatures that have started to appear on fish-mongers' slabs recently: distinctly unapproachable, stone-cold, but still somehow fishy.

His chilling aloofness to

Labour Party members had to be seen to be believed. The very idea of having to 'submit himself' to the re-selection obviously filled him with profound disgust and loathing. He was as touchy as Pinocchio about the thought anyone might describe him as a puppet. The politics that lay behind this all too familiar

attitude were 'singular' enough though. George Cunningham is second only to Enoch Powell in his calculated wild-eyed enthusiasm for the 'British constitution' and 'an MPs right to independence'.

The tragedy of South Islington Labour Party which reselected him on Wednesday, is that so many party

NIK BARSTOW reports on Labour's latest defector

members seemed to agree with his views. Some have left too, but others like New Statesman editor Bruce Page, have stayed and been kicked in the teeth after publicly arguing for Cunningham's reselection.

Sympathy, however would be a little misplaced. As the Barnsbury ward's secretary Derek Hines told SO, "They knew full well he was likely to leave, they did this to us, they're to blame".

Cover

Derek spelt out how all the sophisticated-sounding theories on the constitution were a cover for rather less-pleasant sounding reasons. "George Cunningham has never lived in this constituency. He started out as a career civil servant, he's ended up as a career politician. The Labour Party is well-rid of people who are in it to follow their own personal ambitions."

The Labour Party, not just in the Islington 'defectors' paradise, but nationally, has to understand that MPs have to be representatives of the working class and the Party, not representatives of themselves.

Respect

The local activist who narrowly failed to unseat George Cunningham at the reselection conference, Charles Chapman, expressed best what lessons there were, "We might have lost an MP, but we've gained a chance of getting back some self-respect as a party. If we've got the self-respect we can get down to really campaigning for working people's interests, and be listened to".

Scots jobless fight

HUGH McCLUNG reports on the Scottish unemployed conference, called by Edinburgh and Stirling Unemployed Workers Associations in Stirling on November 28.

The 78 people attending the conference came from Trades Councils, unemployed associations, and claimants' groups all across Scotland, to discuss how the unemployed could organise for their own demands and force the labour movement to take them up.

Rowland Sheret of Stirling Trades Council introduced the conference, along with Dave Milliken of Edinburgh Unemployed Workers Association.

The conference then broke up into workshops to talk about the experiences of various associations, in particular the Edinburgh, Stirling, Dumfries, and Westerhailes groups.

General feeling was hostile to the funding of UWAs by the Manpower Services Commissions, especially after the experience of Dumfries UWA, which is now controlled by the MSC.

The role of women, youth, the trade union movement, and press and publicity in the organisation of the unemployed, were also discussed.

The conference agreed to campaign for free public transport for the unemployed. The recent decision of Aberdeen council to grant this will be a boost.

A steering committee was set up, with two representatives from each region in Scotland, and will plan a recall conference for early spring.

Thrown out for fighting cuts!

LAST week Ray Davies, a councillor on Mid-Glamorgan County Council, was expelled from the Labour Group for consistently voting against any cuts - and thus against the Group, who want to do the Tories' dirty work for them and make 1 per cent cuts across the board.

Ray Davies told us:

I thought carefully about this, as this isn't the first time I've been faced with this sort of decision.

I decided that I had to be consistent and fight for Labour Party policy, as carried at the last Party conference in Brighton.

Part of the resolution said: 'Conference resolves to mount a major campaign to defeat the proposed legislation (Heseltine's). Should this fail, conference believes that Labour councillors must refuse to make cuts that will be needed to balance the books'.

And let's make no mistake about it, Mid-Glamorgan councillors may think, 'Oh well, one per cent isn't very much', but they'll be back without a shadow of doubt asking for more cuts to balance the books.

After I spoke in council arguing against any cuts, and for a policy of non-cooperation with Government agencies, the Group executive suspended me. Then I was expelled from the Group on November 26.

The Group leader, Bill Squires, refused to read out my letter explaining why I had voted against cuts, and kept on interrupting me, saying that the only issue he wanted to discuss was the fact that I had voted against the Labour Group.

It didn't matter to him what Party policy was.

The letter was eventually read out, I was told to leave and the vote was carried to expel me.

Yet there's been little or no debate on a strategy to fight the cuts in the Group and the Group executive has not consulted any bodies in the Party, not even the local Mid-Glamorgan Party.

Collaboration

In the whole of Wales there has been no fightback the record has been one of full collaboration with the Tories. It's the bureaucrats in the Party who feel they are accountable to no-one.

There have been no Tory sanctions in Wales against Labour local authorities, because the Labour bureaucrats have been doing the Tories' job for them.

I felt that I could no longer support Labour Party policy, and I am 100% determined to campaign to draw support round a no cuts position, which I know the Party is support for in the Welsh labour movement.

I'll be speaking at the Cardiff Socialist Organiser meeting next week, and the forthcoming Labour Coordinating Committee conference on fighting the cuts.

CORRECTION: The CL column last week was written by Rachel Lewis not Mandy Moore.

Foot 'fights the cuts'

'CONFERENCE resolves to mount a major campaign to defeat [Heseltine's] proposed legislation. Should this fail, conference believes that Labour councillors must refuse to make cuts that will be needed to balance the books'.

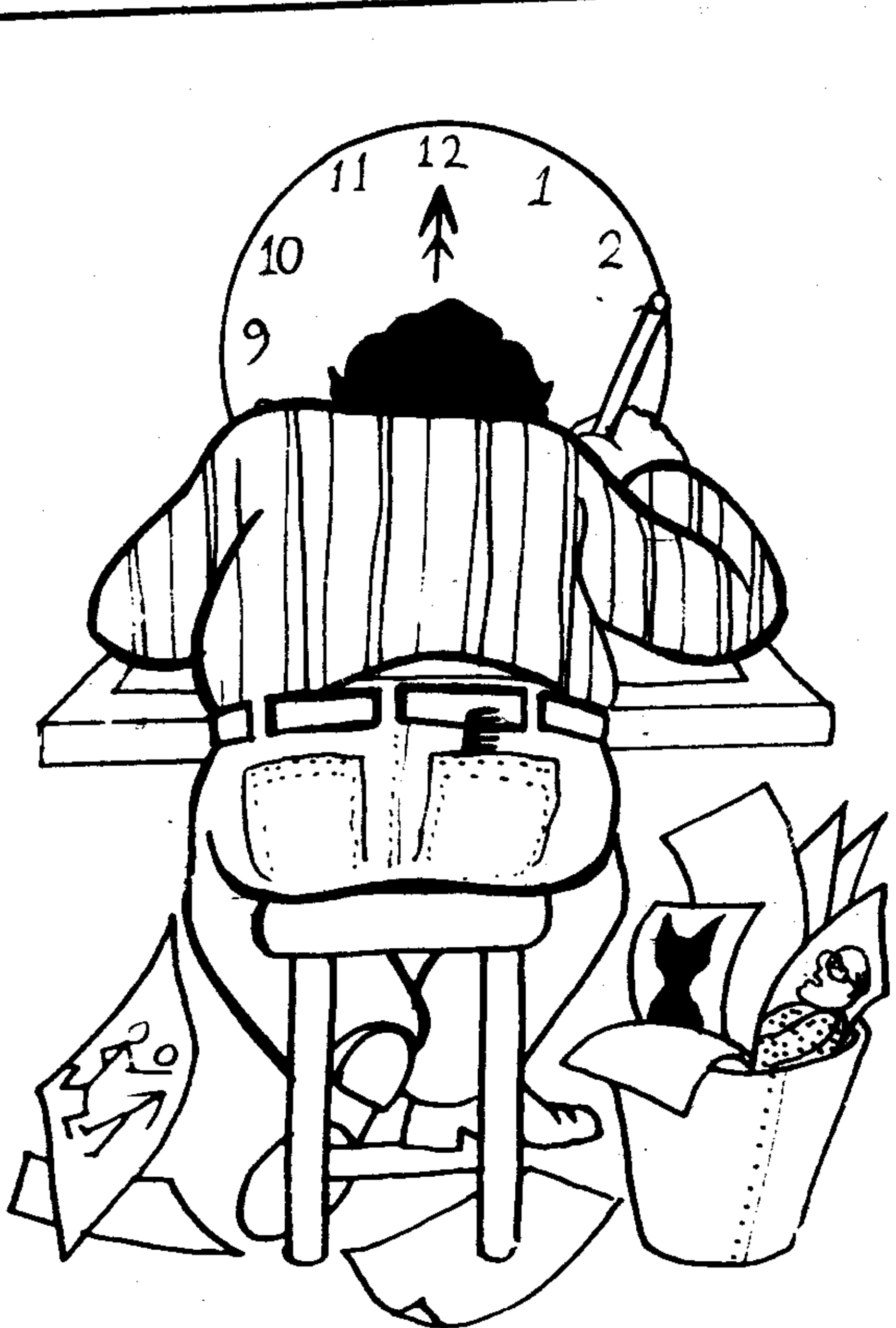
That's the resolution passed at the Labour Party conference this year - a call for a sharp change of policy by the NEC, which up to then had done nothing but tell Labour councillors they could do what they

liked as long as it was within the law.

What better way to help the change in policy than a change in the make-up of the NEC Local Government sub-committee? And indeed there has been a change - only in the wrong direction!

Left-winger Joan Maynard has been replaced as committee chairperson by right-winger Gwyneth Dunwoody.

What price accountability?



Ever had a go at doing cartoons? Our cartoonist wants other comrades to share the load and provide more variety. Send your sketches to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Women in struggle



March for women's jobs!

by Rachel Lever

THE LABOUR Party NEC has now approved the date for a major women's rights event — June 5, 1982.

The idea came from Labour women's sections, via the Festival for Women's Rights Against the Tories.

So far, the plan is to have an open-air rally, together with music, entertainments, and kids' events. In addition, there is very strong backing for a demonstration march to the rally, so as to attract more people and to make it a stronger protest.

The demonstration is being backed by the Action Committee for a Woman's Right to Work, which has amassed hundreds of sponsors including a clutch of trade union leaders and members of the Labour Party NEC.

Campaign

As important as the event itself will be the campaign leading up to it. Already, the Labour Party and TUC have together published an excellent pamphlet which deserves very wide circulation. The Action Committee is planning

ing a barrage of leaflets and information kits, and a big organising conference in London on February 20.

At local levels, several Action Committees have been set up with the idea of holding local conferences to highlight women's unemployment.

Meeting

One thing the Action Committee hopes to see is a much closer working relationship between the women's movement and the Labour Party and TUC.

To kick off the new stage of the campaign, now that we all have a date to work for, there will be a public meeting in London. Labour Party women's organiser Joyce Gould will be speaking, together with Judith Hunt (TASS), Frances O'Grady (Islington Action Group on Unemployment), and Susan Shell, who was sacked by Barking Borough Council because she is gay.

The meeting is on December 9 at 7.30, at South Bank Poly Students' Union, Rotary St, SE1.

Trades councils : a fruitful area for

by Wendy Frankland

new ideas

ABOUT sixty women from Trades Councils as far apart as Brighton and Newcastle attended the first conference for women active in trades councils and in trade union equal opportunities and women's committees, which was held in Sheffield on November 21st.

That such a conference should have taken place at all was remarkable. As Ann Gibson, secretary to the TUC Women's Advisory Committee, said in her opening presentation, it is not strictly constitutional under the structure of the TUC for one Trades Council to communicate with another!

Explain

Ann Gibson explained the role that women play in the TUC. Only ten of the 24 members of the Women's Advisory are elected directly by the women's conference. All communication from the General Council is directly to the General Secretaries of the affiliated unions — which may explain why questions affecting women's rights are not always given the prominence they deserve.

Many women wanted to know how you got delegated to the Women's TUC conference, as it never came through their branches. Ann Gibson gave an example of a woman in IPCS who had contacted her to ask for a supply of leaflets produced by the Women's Advisory on positive action for women in the unions — although this issue has been supported by IPCS at the Women's TUC, it had not yet percolated down to the membership.

A number of women from various trades councils told



the conference what they had been doing.

Jo de Groot from York described their Women's Newsletter: between 1974 and 1977 it was covered many important topics — unemployment, taxation, benefits and so on — but eventually folded when the numbers involved dwindled.

It had proved difficult to broaden the base of participation in the newsletter, especially from women in jobs other than white collar, and persuading people to have the confidence to put their ideas on paper.

Newcastle

A delegate from the women's committee of Newcastle TC reported on a conference of 150 women from the North East region,

which they hoped would be followed by a series of others running in parallel to the North East region TUC.

Education

Jenny Tizard from Bradford said they had opted against producing a newsletter and had concentrated on education and discussion groups, and Emma Morgan from Sheffield reported their use of interviews to get women's views into their newsletter, overcoming the reluctance of women to write for it.

A delegate from Coventry reported on how they had raised support among women for the strike called by NUPE against the cuts.

In the afternoon, four separate workshops were held on unemployment, training and positive action, health, and violence against women.

In the reports back, the following points were made.

Women and Health — several TCs where health and safety committee had been set up had liaised with women's committees over questions of women's health, use of tetragenic substances at work, ante- and perinatal care, etc.

Training

Positive Action and Training — Equal Opportunity classes on local authority and company practice are not enough on their own

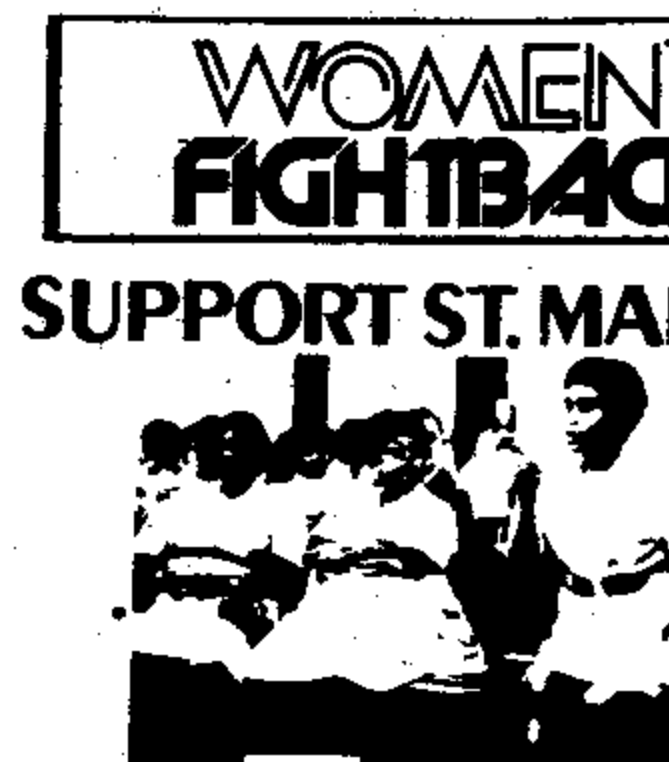
A report from the Sheffield conference on women in Trades Councils (November 21st)

— greater initiatives needed over training, such as the East Leeds women's workshop for training women in microelectronics
— Violence against Women — the workshop had welcomed the Nalگو initiative in making sexual harassment at work a trade union issue, and the useful definition of sexual harassment as unwelcome sexual advances.

Unemployment — even one was urged to raise support for the national Women's Right to Work demonstration planned for June 5th and make sure that unions and trades councils sponsored and mobilised for it.

Many sisters also expressed concern at the restriction of unemployment centres to non-campaign work.

The women at the conference all shared a high degree of commitment, the conference was a useful exchange of views and experience. Several delegates felt that their trades councils were more sympathetic to women's rights than their union branch. So trades councils are obviously a fruitful area for women to pioneer new ideas and approaches.



New issue of Women's Fightback — 10p plus postage from 41 Ellington London N7

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK started in 1980 to work for a national response to the Tory attacks on women; and to help women to organise in the Labour and trade union movement.

We helped to plan and organise the National Festival for Women's Rights on May 9th this year, and have been campaigning for the Labour Party and TUC to hold a national demonstration for a woman's right to work: this now looks like happening, provisionally set for June 5th.

In the Labour Party and trade unions we have organised around demands for positive discrimination, greater policy-making powers for women, and for women's committees and sections at rank and file level to act as a base for women to organise from.

We publish a monthly paper with lots of labour news and comment as well as features on health and fertility control, fighting sexism, international news etc.

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK also organises local groups fighting the cuts and supporting women's struggles at work and in the community.

Women's groups and labour movement branches can affiliate to the Campaign, and many also take a regular order for the newspaper. Affiliation is £5 per year.

CONFERENCE FOR RANK AND FILE WOMEN TRADE UNIONISTS

Women's Fightback is planning a major conference of rank and file women trade unionists, for March 27th 1982.

The aim will be to strengthen the position of women in the unions. In addition to discussing overall strategies, there will be time for women to meet and talk to others from their own union to discuss the particular problems they have and how to tackle them.

Women's Fightback will be planning the conference together with other groups with direct experience. 'Women in the NUT' (which is affiliated to Women's Fightback) will be involved. Civil Service Women's Rights Group and Women in Manual Trades will be invited.

We hope that many women will come to this conference both to extend the experience they have gained to other trade union women, and to extend and consolidate their own work from other women's ideas.

Send in the form below for more details, registration forms, leaflets etc, to 41 Ellington Street, London N7.

Name

Address

Branch Phone

Please send details of the TU conference on March 27

DAY SCHOOL ON WOMEN AND NEW TECHNOLOGY

* What are the problems, and the possibilities, for women?

* Have the unions given any thought to women when negotiating on new technology?

* How can women organise to control new technical developments rather than be pushed around as victims?

The day-school will be on SATURDAY FEB. 6th at Lambeth Town Hall (one minute from Brixton tube on the Victoria Line), London.

The January edition of Women's Fightback will contain full details of the day-school and a special section with background material.

Send s.a.e. for more details and registration form to: New Tech Day-School, WF, 41 Ellington Street, London N7. (Phone 607-9052)

Textile lockout

THE Kirkby clothing manufacturers L.McGaws Ltd have locked out their entire workforce following a dispute over a timing for a job.

For the past week, the 21 members of the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers who work at this small sweat shop have braved the elements while on picket duty.

The lock-out followed management's refusal to re-time a job on which some workers were losing up to £10 a day. McGaws management called in ACAS, but then would not accept their recommendations.

The disputed work was sent out to a non-union workshop, and on its return to McGaws for finishing it was blocked by the workers. Dismissal notices were issued to all the workers, and when they attempted to clock in on the next working day, the police were there to enforce the lock-out.

McGaws' style of management indicates a return to the attitude of the sweat shop employers of the Victorian age, which has always given the clothing industry a 'rag trade' image.

McGaws are a supplier of children's clothes to stores such as Ethel A and John Lewis. Picketing outside some of these stores is calling for a boycott of goods. Socialist Organiser readers are asked to the lookout for goods bearing the Lord M Jonelle labels. These should be boycotted.

The determination of women at McGaws is the growing militancy of workers belonging to NUTGW — the union with a higher proportion of women in membership than other.

Picket

Such militancy shown in the Lee Jeapartion, whose attempt by the Communist members on the national executive was sively reported by Organiser.

Support on the is urgently needed croft Road, Kirkby rial Estate. Donations messages of support Susan Murray, 11 Rd, Southdene, Kirk V.C

WHO NEEDS THE SCARMAN REPORT?

by Andrew Hornung and Piyushi Kotecha

ACCORDING to Peregrine Worsthorpe of the Sunday Telegraph there is a simple explanation for the Brixton riots:

'Brixton is the iceberg tip of a crisis of ethnic criminality which is not Britain's fault — except in the sense that her rulers unnecessarily imported it — but the fault of the ethnic community itself, from whom the cure must come, as has the disease.'

Unfit

'If there are families living in Railton Road in houses unfit for human habitation, should not this be seen as an indictment of the local youths who prefer

WHO NEEDS the Scarman report? Not the working class people of Brixton. Only a few months before, the Working Party on Police/Community Relations produced a report which document scores of cases of police harassment, racism, indifference and lawlessness.

Scarman refers to it scornfully as not helpful to establishing confidence in the police...

Did anyone need a High Court judge to tell them that poor housing conditions, racial discrimination, joblessness and lack of recreational facilities lead people to believing that the system is not on their side? Did anyone need Lord Scarman to learn that Lambeth, the borough that Brixton is in, has got all those problems?

So what was the Scarman report for?

Revolt

The spontaneous, militant, violent revolt of working class youth — mainly, but by no means exclusively, black — that hit Brixton last April and Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool and other places in the summer has been evaluated by the Establishment as a foretaste of revolutionary class revolt.

They see in the 'breakdown of confidence in the police' a forerunner of a class conscious rejection of the myth of state neutrality and a conviction on the part of workers that their only power lies in their own strength.

Scarman is an urgent operation by the ruling class to seek to reassure conservative blacks that things will get better. It buys time for a rethinking of the different strategies for repression.

Prejudice

Of course, Scarman points to 'bad judgments' by the police. Even a little overzealousness and racism. Nothing systematic, of course.

The direction and policies of the Metropolitan Police are not racist. I totally and unequivocally reject the attack made on the integrity and impartiality of the senior direction of the force.

The criticisms lie elsewhere — in errors of judgment, in lack of imagination and flexibility, but not in deliberate bias or prejudice. The allegation that the police are the oppressor, the arm of a racist state only displays a complete ignorance of constitutional arrangements for controlling the police; it is an injustice to the senior officers of the force.

So there! The answer to hundreds of allegations and over a decade's experience is to refer to 'constitutional arrangements'. We really



needed an on-the-spot inquiry for that!

It is admitted that 'ill-considered, immature and racially prejudiced actions of some police officers in dealing on the street with young black people' is a matter of concern. Even that 'racial prejudice does manifest itself occasionally in the behaviour of a few officers'. But all that is by way of exception, it has nothing to do with state policies and it all happens 'below the level of the senior direction of the forces'.

Scarman is true to form. His reports on the Red Lion

Square events, Grunwicks and Northern Ireland all accepted what no-one could deny — that there are 'excesses' — and refused to confirm the truth that these events newly exposed: that the state is an oppressor operating not in the interests of all, but in the interests of the capitalist class.

His reports indicated some of the strategic options the ruling class would have to sort out but concentrated its recommendations on trivia. While we debate trivia, it is hoped, the ruling class will have

time to re-group, re-think, re-plan and counter-attack.

Scarman criticises the use of CS gas, water cannon and plastic bullets, but he does not rule them out. He criticises the timing and lack of consultation associated with SPG actions and the similar 'Operation Swamp 81' stop-and-search action, but does not rule out their future use. He calls for a review of the Public Order Act and of systems of police accountability, but recommends nothing definite.

One of the few firm recommendations Scarman

makes is to make Police Liaison Committees statutory. Here he follows the time-honoured tradition of 'if you can't beat them, ask some of them to join you'. He hopes that by co-opting 'official' black community leaders and incorporating them in a statutory system, it will be possible to buy them off.

Many such leaders (like James Hunt in Birmingham and Courtney Laws in Brixton) have long ago established themselves as collaborators, and the statutory nature of such bodies will help seal them off from

ONE OF the indicators of the present social and political crisis is the way in which different policing strategies are being hotly debated by senior officers and others out in the open. Scarman's report contributes to one of the central debates, the dispute over 'fire brigade policing' or 'home-beat policing'. Fire-brigade policing relies on a strong show of force and is less concerned with the question of public consent or confidence. Home-beat policing is designed to build up close relations with the community, the

better to control it. Scarman favours the second.

Of the Special Patrol Group operations launched under Commander Adams Scarman is critical, claiming that they only moved street crime to other areas. What concerns him most is that the operations, in his view, led to both old and young black people losing confidence in the police.

[The operations weren't helped, says the good Judge, by being secret, something which the 'insensitive' Adams justified in a TV interview by

declaring, 'A good general never declares his forces in the prelude to any kind of attack'.

Changing the Commander [Adams] was moved to traffic control, and changing the name [the SPG were withdrawn in favour of 'Operation Swamp 81'] didn't help. According to the Brixton Defence Committee, over 2,000 blacks were stopped in the week before the revolt.

Of course, Scarman's criticism is mild. He wonders whether the term 'swamp' wasn't insensit-

ive: was Brixton a jungle and its inhabitants jungle dwellers, or was 'swamp' simply a reference to Thatcher's remark about British culture being swamped by immigrants.

But while there is a sharp dispute in police ranks about different strategies, all sides in the debate are trying to achieve the same thing: to crush any signs of rebellion and contain any moves towards self-assertion and self-organisation by the working class and by the overwhelmingly working-class black communities.

GRO OF

ON October 6, Mrs Savita Amin, her two young children, and three relatives were sleeping above their off-licence in Walthamstow, North East London, when a fire-bomber struck.

Five litres of petrol were poured under the door of the shop and six petrol-filled milk bottles placed next to the entrance of the

LEED

A PUBLIC meeting on November 25, and a picket of the courts on November 30, called for the dropping of charges against eight youths arrested during the July riots in Chapeltown, Leeds.

Seven of these youths have been held since July without bail.

Over 71 youths were arrested in Leeds as a result of the riots — and most convicted soon afterwards, on the basis of statements given to the police before their solicitors were allowed to see them.

But these last eight



to loiter around on street corners smoking pot, for the price of which they could buy a lot of paint and plaster?

Hack

Worsthorne is of course no impartial observer. He is a hired hack for the British capitalist class — a minority social group whose wealth is extracted from workers' sweat; and whose criminality and lust for profit have brought repeated bloody wars abroad and oppression at home. These people and their children can be seen loitering around at racecourses, top West End stores, nightspots and Riviera resorts, often squandering more in a day

than a Brixton youth can possess in a year.

It is their vice-like grip on the ownership of the banks and means of production, and their preoccupation with profit, which stands as the obstacle to the necessary expansion of industrial production, social services and housing.

But what of the youth of Brixton and similar areas — whom Worsthorne would have us dismiss as lazy criminals? They are the victims of the system. But the summer's riots proved that they are by no means content to remain passive victims.

As one Moss Side youth said, 'We are like caged animals. But as you know you can keep kicking caged animals and one day

they are going to fight'

It is precisely the rebellion of the youth against the oppression and degradation imposed on them by capitalism that points the way forward for the working class. Mass action, not pious platitudes of 'liberal' judges and Royal Commissions, is the key to defeating the Tory government and creating conditions to snatch the control and ownership of the economy from the hands of the capitalists.

United

The struggles of youth in the summer cut across racial divisions: black youth united with white in common struggle against the police.

It is likewise by action against the Tory government that the divisions in the working class as a whole — between black and white, employed and unemployed, men and women — can be broken down.

The starting point must be the struggle now against every aspect of the capitalist attacks on the working class. In particular we must fight for the labour movement to take up the necessary task of defending black communities and households against racist attacks.

This means that workers' defence squads, drawing forces from the trade unions, Labour Party, political groups and organisations of the black communities, must be built. Such squads can build links between the

most militant black youth and the labour movement, while striking vital blows against the fascists on the streets.

Racists

And it means that the labour movement must put its own house in order: racists in the labour movement must be exposed and removed from leading positions. A new leadership must be built, committed to the struggle for mass action to achieve a socialist society.

It is the youth of Brixton, Moss Side and Toxteth who must be our allies in this fight: it is Worsthorne and the capitalists and the racist state machinery who are the enemy.



LOWING PLAGUE RACIST VIOLENCE

flat. An incendiary device was then thrown into the middle of the bottles.

Luckily firemen were immediately called by local mini-cab drivers who heard the explosion, and arrived in time to prevent the petrol in the off-licence from being ignited. The police had to admit that it was a determined attempt to burn

S 8

youths face serious charges, some of which carry sentences of life imprisonment.

The intent is clearly to prove some kind of organisation behind the spontaneous events of July and to hand out exemplary sentences.

But many of the charges relate to the night of Monday July 13 — a night on which no riot took place!

More details from: Leeds 8 Defence Committee, Box L8, LAP, 59 Cookridge St, Leeds 2.

out the Amin family.

They had to admit, too, that the attempt was remarkably similar to the one that led to the massacre of the Khan family only two miles away earlier this year.

But they discounted any racial motive, just as they had insisted that there was no suggestion of a racial motive in the Khan case. Neither case will appear in the statistics of racist attacks monitored by the Home Office.

The Home Office's recent report, 'Racial Attacks', is not therefore an accurate assessment of the extent or the growth of racist attacks. Its significance is only that now it's official.

The facts recorded by the Home Office vastly underestimate the situation, but they are stark enough: people of 'Asian ethnic origin' are fifty times as likely to be victims of 'racially motivated attacks' as whites, and people of West Indian ethnic origin are 36 times as likely to be attacked.

Although the Home Office claims there is evidence to prove that the police are not generally insensitive to racial motives, community leaders are unanimous in branding the police as trying to cover up racist motives. There are other sources of underestimation: the police are hardly likely to include their own attacks on blacks — one of the major sources of racist attacks — in their reports to the Home Office.

Violent

The underestimation is not minor. After all, the 'Racial Attacks' report records only '152 reports of racial attacks in 1980 and 224 in the first seven months of this year', while a recent answer to an MP in Parliamentary question time gave the figure for violent attacks on Asians in 1980 at 2,426. A big proportion of these must have been racist attacks. (In 1979 the figure was 2,075, and in 1977 it was 1,865).

The Home Office report also includes handbag snatching by blacks on whites as 'racially motivated'.

Some cases of racist



attacks by whites on blacks get reported as attacks by blacks on whites. Take the case of one Asian family in Newham, East London.

Mr and Mrs A and their family were being repeatedly attacked and abused, mainly by white kids on the estate where they lived. They were refused police assistance on the grounds that the family had no evidence as to the perpetrators.

One day, Mr A managed to catch one of the boys red-handed, just as the police suggested he should do. His wife phoned the local station. In the meantime, the boy's father had heard that Mr A was holding his son. He armed him-

self with a knife, and, kicking the As' front door in, abused and threatened the family. At that point the police arrived... and arrested Mr A for assaulting a minor.

A week later Mr A was badly beaten up on his own doorstep by white neighbours. Although he recognised one of his attackers, the police again refused to prosecute and again recommended that he take out a private summons.

The Report of the Working Party on Police/Community Relations in Lambeth — a report which gives a thousand times more accurate picture of policing in Brixton than

does the Scarman white-wash — documents scores of such cases where police refuse to prosecute or protect. They just say: 'Take out a private summons, if you can find out who did it'.

Scores more of such incidents are cited in the evidence submitted to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure by the Institute of Race Relations.

If the Home Office 'Racial Attacks' report enormously underestimates the extent of such attacks, the parliamentary answer also underestimates them — though to a lesser degree — compared with the Asian organisations themselves.

For instance, Dr Zaka Khan of the Union of Pakistani Organisations has given the following figures: between 50 and 60 Asians are victims of racist attacks every week now, making a likely total of 3,000 for 1981.

Both the Home Office report and the locally monitored reports show that Asians are particularly the victims of arson attacks.

The Home Office has the gall in its report to accuse right wing and left wing groups equally of 'raising the racial temperature'.

The report also quite emphatically rejects the idea that racist attacks are

organised. The National Front, the New National Front, the British Movement, Column 88 — none of which are even mentioned by name in the report — are treated as no more than bad influences.

Purpose

The purpose of the report is clear. It is an attempt to demonstrate seeming concern on the part of the usually hard-of-hearing Home Office.

The fear is that the working class as a whole will learn from the militant self-defence struggles of the black community — something that can be seen in embryo in the joint struggles of black and white youth in Toxteth, in St Pauls a year before, and, to a lesser extent, in Brixton this April.

* Meetings of the Brixton Defence Campaign take place at the Black Women's Centre, 41a Stockwell Green. These meetings are open to Black individuals and organisations.

* The Brixton Defence Campaign has set itself a target of collecting £10,000. Donations should be made payable to Brixton Defence Campaign, a/c no. 17411947, Nat West Brixton branch.

RACISTS - A MINORITY

AN overwhelming majority of white people (80%), according to a survey of racial attitudes by the Commission for Racial Equality, do not mind ethnic minorities being in Britain. And 61% recognise that blacks suffer worse from unemployment — which was seen as by far the most important problem in their area by all racial groups.

But the number of both black and white people who think race relations are getting worse has massively increased compared to six years ago: 47% of black people as compared to 13% then, and 33% of whites now, as against 20% then.

The figures would seem to show that blacks find themselves increasingly under threat from a minority — but a vicious and organised one — of white racists, and suffer much more pervasive economic discrimination. 80% of Asians and 88% of West Indians believed that blacks had the greatest problems finding work, and that's certainly borne out by the unemployment statistics.

This is also borne out by the bizarre call by a West Indian charity, Caribbean House, for funds for voluntary repatriation.

Ashton Gibson, its leader, claims that West

Indians are finding the situation in Britain so intolerable that they want to return 'home'.

He has been accused by other West Indian organisations of supporting Powellite/National Front policies. Darcus Howe, of Race Today, described him as a crank. The CRE says it is watching the scheme closely and expresses concern if those who want to leave feel that they're forced to by 'underlying feelings of prejudice' and that they're against any form of 'coercion'.

This seems a trifle disingenuous since their own findings show a nearly

four-fold increase in the number of blacks who think that race relations are worsening, and every official statistic points to blacks doing disproportionately badly on jobs, pay, housing, etc.

Clearly, the 'feelings' of being discriminated against reflect the actual reality. And the answer is not repatriation, however spuriously 'voluntary', but eradicating the systematic racism that leads to 'feelings' of being under threat.

NB: One of the sponsors of Caribbean House is that fine upstanding anti-racist, the aptly named William Whitelaw.



Whitelaw

DEBATE



Which way for the Left?

WHY I ARGUE FOR A 'LOW PROFILE'

Vladimir Derer, secretary of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (writing in a personal capacity) continues the debate on perspectives for the Labour Left with a reply to Gerry Byrne (Socialist Organiser no.61)

Gerry Byrne (SO 12.11.81) has produced a long list of crimes she claims I have committed. Many of her charges are fiction. Others have some basis in reality, though not in quite the same way as Comrade Byrne alleges.

Thus her allegation that I recommend that '...if we keep our heads down and don't antagonise the opposition (presumably the ideologically committed right-wing of the Party), then they'll accept that we're for unity too and will leave alone the democratic gains already achieved...' is pure invention. What I argued was that the democratic gains cannot be effectively defended unless we retain majority support for them.

My concern was that we shall lose this support if we gratuitously provide our opponents with grounds for their contention that democratic reforms are undermining Party unity and Labour's electoral credibility.

It is important, therefore, that the electoral college should not be seen as highlighting internal party dissensions and in the present context a 'high profile' electoral campaign for leadership or deputy leadership would inevitably have this effect.

Those who doubt that the recently conducted Deputy Leadership campaign struck most ordinary Labour Party members as divisive cannot be listening to what is being said — or they are in need of hearing aids. That is, unless they do not regard ordinary members as people whose support must be won.

By contrast, a demand that leadership elections should become part of the normal routine of party and trade union business so that they do not provide the media with a welcome opportunity for hostile publicity would minimise any divisive effect, and would reveal the real saboteurs of party unity to be those who oppose leadership accountability, albeit behind the smokescreen of concern for Labour's electoral prospects.

What they singled out for attack — and rightly so from their point of view, since this would effectively prevent accountability — is the principle of annual leadership elections. They

skillfully exploit the damage done to Labour's credibility by the 'high profile' campaign of 1981 and make out that this would be the consequence of any leadership election.



As I have argued, the only way in which the gain of annual election can be saved is to make the procedure part of the normal, routine business of CLPs and trade unions. In this way its divisive effects would be minimised and at the same time the involvement of ordinary trade union members in Labour Party politics would be maintained.

The real cause of party disunity would then be revealed as the MPs' opposition to sharing some of their present powers with the rank and file.

The purpose of a low profile tactic is precisely to achieve this result.

This was quite clearly stated in my first article where I said: 'The gains of the last few years ... can only be successfully defended in the name of party unity. This means that those who are setting out to destroy them (my emphasis) must be seen as those threatening party unity.'

This makes nonsense of Comrade Byrne's assertion that I credit '... the right with a gentlemanly Queensbury Rules view of politics'. A high profile tactic, however, would make the exposure of the right wing more difficult, for it is idle to pretend that it would not accentuate open divisions and reduce the party's electoral credibility.



Comrade Byrne and those who think like her seem to be interested in a Labour victory only on certain conditions — that is, only if the next Labour government is elected to carry out socialist policies as determined by the Annual Conference. What differentiates them from the



Shirley celebrates Crosby victory: and Labour supporters demand unity

great majority of Labour Party members is that the latter want to see a Labour government returned if some of those conditions are not yet present.

Hence Comrade Byrne and others who share her views seem clearly prepared to jeopardise Labour's electoral prospects as long as they cannot have Labour Party unity on their own terms.

That is why she makes light of the serious setbacks we suffered, disregards the adverse effects of the Benn campaign, and believes that these are more than offset by the alleged great gains she believes were achieved as the result of it. ('The short term effect of losing ground on some of the constitutional issues is less of a disadvantage when seen in the light of a real advance in politicising the Labour movement.')

Her gross over-estimation of these gains (and no-one denies that there were some) springs from her continued attachment to a conception based on irrational beliefs which she shares with the rest of the ultra-left.

Hence the second group of crimes she charges me with relate to the fact that I questioned the validity of these beliefs and dismissed the conception of 'political' activities based on them. Since it is for illusions that men and women are prepared to put up the hardest fight of all, it is not surprising that Comrade Byrne, in order that she may continue to deceive herself, is compelled grossly to distort what I have said.

The trouble with the ultras (and incidentally also some of the left Tribunes) is that they have never accepted the need to use all the opportunities available to them within the existing political framework.

Some ultras simply refuse to work within 'the system' — since this, they tell us, would inevitably corrupt anyone no matter how good their intentions were to begin with.

Instead they rely entirely or almost entirely for their

prospective political influence on their prospective involvement in the prospective 'extra-parliamentary' political structures which they expect will arise as the result of mass action, and in opposition to the present structures.

Other ultras accept the necessity of involvement in the existing bourgeois democratic political framework as the only way open to socialists at present under the two-party system, but such involvement on their part is strictly limited.

Like their ultra-left brethren (sic — feminist typesetter) outside the Labour Party, they rely for political influence mainly on propaganda and 'educational' activity. Hence for example their preference for the pursuit of 'issues' rather than constitutional reforms.



Even so, they are all the time looking over their shoulders for any signs of an extra-parliamentary mass movement which will deliver them from their present political impotence.

They never think of putting the latter down to their own political (or more accurately, their pseudo-political) practice. Instead they limit themselves to 'interpretative activity', ie they seek to explain that things happened as they did because of such adverse factors as the treachery or weakness of Labour leaders, the influence of the media, the insufficiently developed consciousness of the masses, the new lease of life of capitalism.

Political changes are expected to come about largely as the result of catastrophic economic developments, with the political agencies of change being created in the process more or less on an ad hoc basis, ie without the kind of deep roots among the working class and the masses struck as the result of

genuine political activity during the preceding period.

This conception ignores Lenin's observation that those incapable of taking full advantage of such political opportunities as exist during a period of reaction will be equally incapable of taking advantage of the opportunities offered during the period of revolution.

The ultra-left search for indications that would reassure them that a new mass movement is under way frequently assumes forms that verge on the pathetic. Thus Gerry Byrne sees in the Deputy Leadership campaign a sign of new extra-parliamentary movement, and a harbinger of 'a government based on active working class control' that would resolve the problems created by capitalism 'in the interests of the mass of the exploited and oppressed.'

What this fantasy reveals is the total lack of appreciation of the relative stability of the present political framework, and a gross underestimation of the tasks which socialists must face if they wish one day to see a government acting in the interests of the mass of the exploited and oppressed. It also reveals the shallowness of the commitment of Comrade Byrne to work for socialism under the existing conditions.

The main opportunities for genuine political activity today are circumscribed by the constraints imposed by the existing political channels. For these Comrade Byrne has only undisguised contempt. When she talks of the 'previously cosy undisturbed world of committees and professional constitutional whizz-kids', she merely reveals her own ignorance.

This, by itself, is hardly surprising: the Ultra-Left have joined battle on the constitutional issues rather late in the day. It took in fact seven years of continuous effort and conflicts to secure the reforms which made the Benn campaign possible.

Without this effort and

conflicts there would not have been what Socialist Organiser described last year as a 'half-a-revolution' and we would still be living under the conditions which enabled the Ultra-Left happily to vegetate for decades.



Their nostalgia for that blissful conditions is revealed in the eagerness with which the Labour Ultra-Left now welcome the slightest sign that they may once again be able to return to the ghetto and its rich fantasy life, a world in which circuses and jamborees can be happily mistaken for mass movements and conference fringe meetings for the intrusions of extra-parliamentary 'raucous working class politics' into established political processes; a world in which defeats are miraculously transformed into victories and retreats into advances.

Comrade Byrne takes exception to my saying that trade unions called a halt to democratic reforms already last year when there was overwhelming support for the reimposition of the three year rule.

The fact, of course, is that CLPD's attempts to get the 'three year rule' on the agenda of trade union conferences failed for lack of interest by the membership in this issue. Silence and disinterest means in practice connivance and a free hand for General Secretaries (as well as the union delegations, most of which actually voted for the three year rule).

All this merely demonstrates the present limits of trade union involvement in Labour Party politics.

This is the reality of the present situation, a reality which leaves further patient work through the existing channels — viz. the frequently badly attended branch meetings and union conferences — as the only alternative. This situation will not be changed by Comrade Byrne lecturing us that General Secretaries are not really identical with the unions.



Of course the conventional Left, and the Ultra-Left in particular, were never keen on constitutional reform. They failed to recognise the central political importance of democratic issues for the political class struggle until events forced them to do so. And even now, after the introduction of mandatory reselection and the electoral college have transformed the Labour Party political scene, they are only looking for an excuse to get out of the fight.

Gerry Byrne is no exception. She finds that 'linking of the democracy and policy questions for the first time (!) in the minds of a whole mass of Labour Party members' was one of the important advantages of the Benn campaign (there was, of course, never any question about this link since the media have seen to it that it was well publicised; this particular advantage is therefore a wholly imaginary one); she repeats the right-wing line that CLPs find the constitution 'baffling and tedious' (if this is the case, why should at least 80 per cent of them support democratic reform at conference?)

If there is a weakening, however, of the CLPs' resolve to pursue further the democratic issues, this is not because the struggle is reaching a higher level, but because, at this stage, the forces pressing for change have spent themselves.

The switch to 'policy issues' signifies a retreat, and not a tactical one — for this would be quite legitimate — but one that is being justified by obscuring the relative importance of constitutional issues.

Gerry Byrne, however, is quite wrong when she claims that it is the CLPD who is drawing back from the fight. CLPD has not switched from constitutional issues to the much 'safer' area of 'policy issues'. It is the LCC, Clause Four, NOLS and... SCLV who have done so.



Why else should Gerry Byrne applaud the LCC's switch-over from 'constitutional issues' to 'building a (phony) extra-parliamentary base' and why should she shower praise on Audrey Wise for saying that 'We can't let ourselves be seen as fixated on one issue' (i.e. constitutional reform), as though there was ever any question of that.

What counts is the relative importance attached to these issues.

Gerry Byrne does therefore advocate retreat, even though this is done under the cover of advocacy of advance — needless to say an imaginary one. We are told 'either you go forward and press home victories or the ground already gained is taken'. Even dialectic is brought out of the mothballs in support of her claim that 'Nothing stands still'.

In fact it is only in the one-dimensional, black and white world of sects that movement forward takes the form of a straight line. But perhaps Lenin — the master-strategist of defeat — got it all wrong after all when he wrote: 'Victory is impossible unless one has learned how to attack and retreat properly' (Collected Works, Volume 31, p.28).

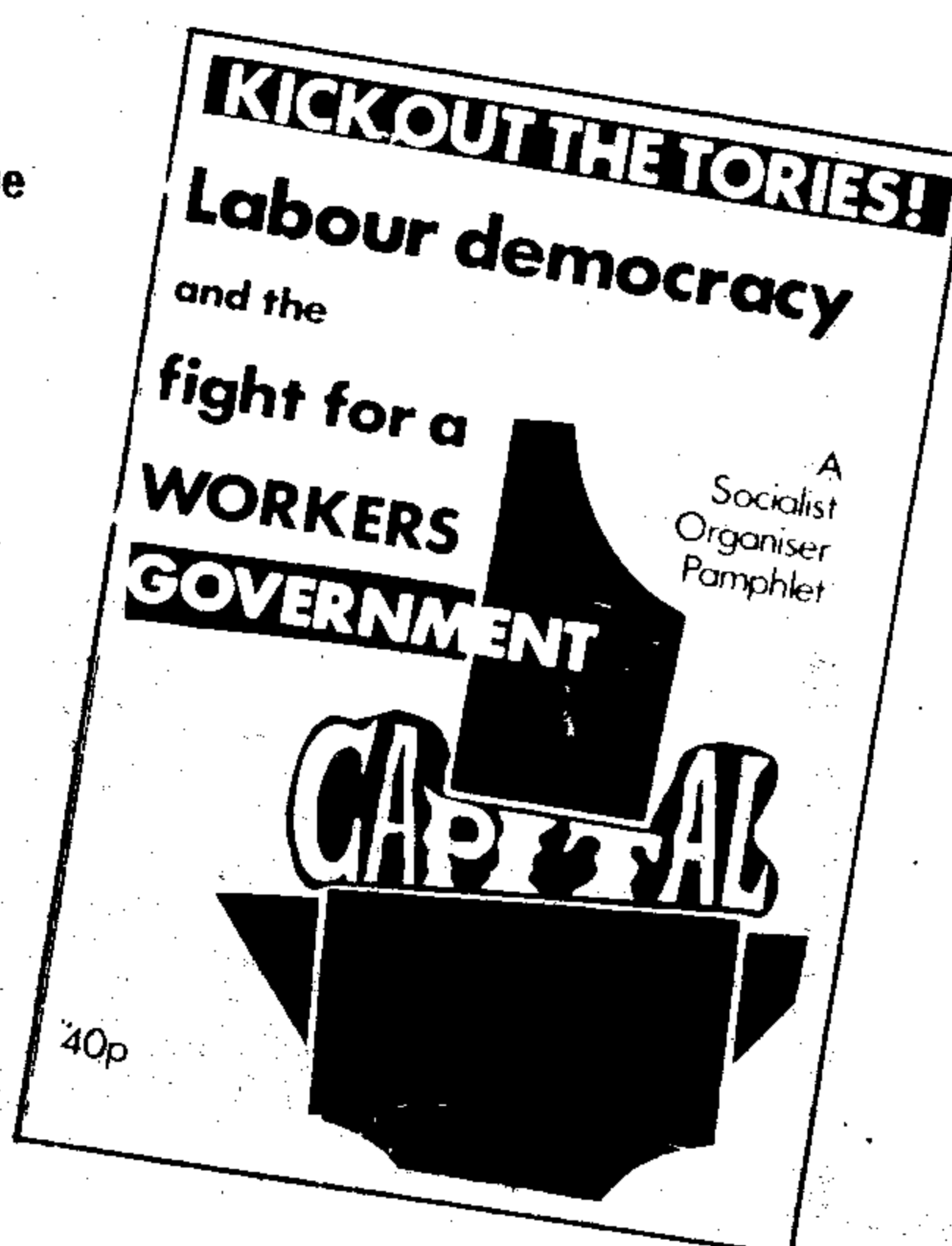
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THATCHER'S SWERVE

by John Lister

DON'T GET too excited about it, but Thatcher has defeated last week. The evidence of this defeat however is rather unpleasant.

Next spring council tenants will see a bill for an extra £2.50 per week pop through their letter boxes; rates will go up yet again; national insurance contributions will go up; TV licences will go up by £10; prescription and dental charges are to go even higher; and unemployment benefit will fall in value by 1½%; scarcely signs of a change of heart by the Thatcher government!

Opposition

But the wets' will argue that it could have been worse: Chancellor Howe wanted a £4.50 rise in rents and a 5 per cent cut in the value of benefits.

In fact Howe was forced to backtrack on his initial draconian package of cuts, and to agree to spend £5 billion more than his target figure. Rigid monetarism has come to the end of

the line. If not a U-turn, Thatcher has at least been forced into a sharp swerve to avoid a growing wall of opposition within the Tory Party itself — opposition which despite her autumn purge of wets remains a vocal force in her own Cabinet.

That opposition must be further strengthened by the wipe-out of Tory sup-



Heath

port in the Crosby by-election.

While the rise of the SDP increases rightward pressures in the Labour Party, it is creating similar pressures from the 'centre' politicians in the Tory Party for a softening of Thatcher's confrontationist policies.

Such criticisms emerged into the open at the time of the Tory Party conference: and despite the failure of her opponents to mount any serious challenge for the leadership of the parliamentary party, they remain a headache for Thatcher.

Alienated

She knows that many Tory MPs must share the views of Edward Heath in the wake of the Crosby by-election. Pointing out that the government had alienated many people — as many as ten million in the families of the unemployed — he warned that: "If you go on with



Thatcher: waving or drowning?

Crosby after Crosby general election you will have another sort of government".

And to indicate that he is in favour of a sort of government very different from Thatcher's, Heath went on to spell out his willingness to contemplate a coalition involving himself and like-thinking Tories together with the SDP.

His reservations were restricted to the fact that he still considers it to be a 'socialist' party.

"I don't believe in socialism. If the SDP is going to remain literally a Socialist

party, then I am not in sympathy with it".

But the main content of Heath's message is the extent to which he is out of sympathy with the Tory leadership and openly contemplating moves to split the Party.

So the Tories, behind a discrete veil of Fleet Street silence, are 'tearing themselves apart'. But for workers to wait for Heath or the SDP to bring down Thatcher would be a disaster.

A fight for action against Howe's latest attacks, on the other hand, could drive the vital nail into Thatcher's political coffin.

Socialist Bookshelf

First of a new series

Mick Liggins introduces the 'History of American Trotskyism' by James P Cannon

ALL TOO often when new comrades into the movement, their educational problems are 'solved' by asking them to read 'classic' Marxist texts — like the Communist Manifesto — which they often don't understand.

While I agree these must be read and explained, I would say that in terms of inspiring them, the 'History of American Trotskyism' by James P Cannon is just as important.

The book is a series of lectures by Cannon, one of the founders of the Trotskyist movement. It gives an account of American Trotskyism right from the founding of the Communist Party in 1919, up to the founding of the American Socialist Workers' Party in 1938.

It's certainly one of the most inspiring books that I've read.

It shows the tremendous problems that the early Trotskyists suffered in their split from the Communist Party. They faced attacks from Stalin's gangs; they were labelled 'splitters' and 'wreckers'; and they went through profound internal struggles in the formation of their movement, as well as big financial difficulties.

The book also has an educational value, and doesn't require much background reading.

It gives an account of the break in 1933-4 from the Third International, by then totally dominated by Stalin.

And it tells of the founding of the Fourth International, led by Leon Trotsky.

The main message of the book, I think, is showing that a Trotskyist movement can be built in the working class — a movement that shows workers that 'Trotskyism means business'.

They certainly did that in the great lorry drivers' strikes in Minneapolis, which Cannon describes in the book.

The Trotskyists had turned from propaganda (trying to win people from other groups, and in parti-

cular to win the best forces from the American CP), to mass work, directing and fighting for strike action and bringing workers into their organisation.

By making sure the strikes in Minneapolis were well organised, they were able to lead them to victory and 'put Trotskyism on the map'.

They organised a daily bulletin — the Daily Organiser — to combat the lies of the bosses. They also organised 'educational' committees. (The difference between education and 'education', Cannon says, is that 'The one arranges lectures for the education of the membership, and the other provides for the "education" of scabs who won't listen to lectures'.)

They also challenged the 'labour fakers' who wanted to sell the struggles out. They did this despite having the whole of the police in the town continually harassing them. (Cannon himself was on one occasion lifted).

And they managed to mobilise the whole labour movement in supporting the strike.

The end of the book shows how following Trotsky's advice they joined the American Socialist Party and attempted to win the leftward forces that were turning to it, particularly the youth.

It explains the political struggle against sectarians among the Trotskyists who made it a matter of principle to have an 'independent party' and wouldn't join the Socialist Party.

'After two years they had not won a single socialist youth or worker', while the Trotskyists, despite eventually being expelled from the SP, had doubled their forces.

The whole of the book is very valuable to read. It certainly makes you want to go out and show both the workers in Britain and Michael Foot and his cronies that 'the Trotskyists mean business', and they won't be shoved around. Read it!



James P Cannon

by Les Hearn

Research on Down's Syndrome

Only a matter of time!

FOLLOWING an 'incident' at Holy Loch when a Poseidon nuclear missile was dropped, information about the chemical explosive (CE) used to detonate the Poseidon warhead has come to light.

First, why is CE necessary to explode a nuclear warhead?

Plutonium and uranium will spontaneously break down slowly, releasing heat and radiation, but if you have more than a certain amount of it in a lump (i.e. more than the critical mass) the radiation released by one atom will hit other atoms nearby, causing them to break down.

Those will set off more and more — a chain reaction is started, which rapidly becomes a nuclear explosion.

You can't have the plutonium in a lump or it will go off, so you have in two pieces, and to detonate it you set off a charge of CE. This hurls one piece of plutonium into the other, and it goes off.

Unfortunately, the CE in Poseidon missiles (LX-09) is a bit over-sensitive. Dropping a piece of it 15 inches will set it off. Dropping a Poseidon on its nose from one inch would be sufficient to explode the LX-09.

The authorities say this would not cause a nuclear explosion, but it would scatter plutonium over a wide area.

With a total of 448 Poseidons in the world, it seems only a matter of time before another one gets dropped and goes off.

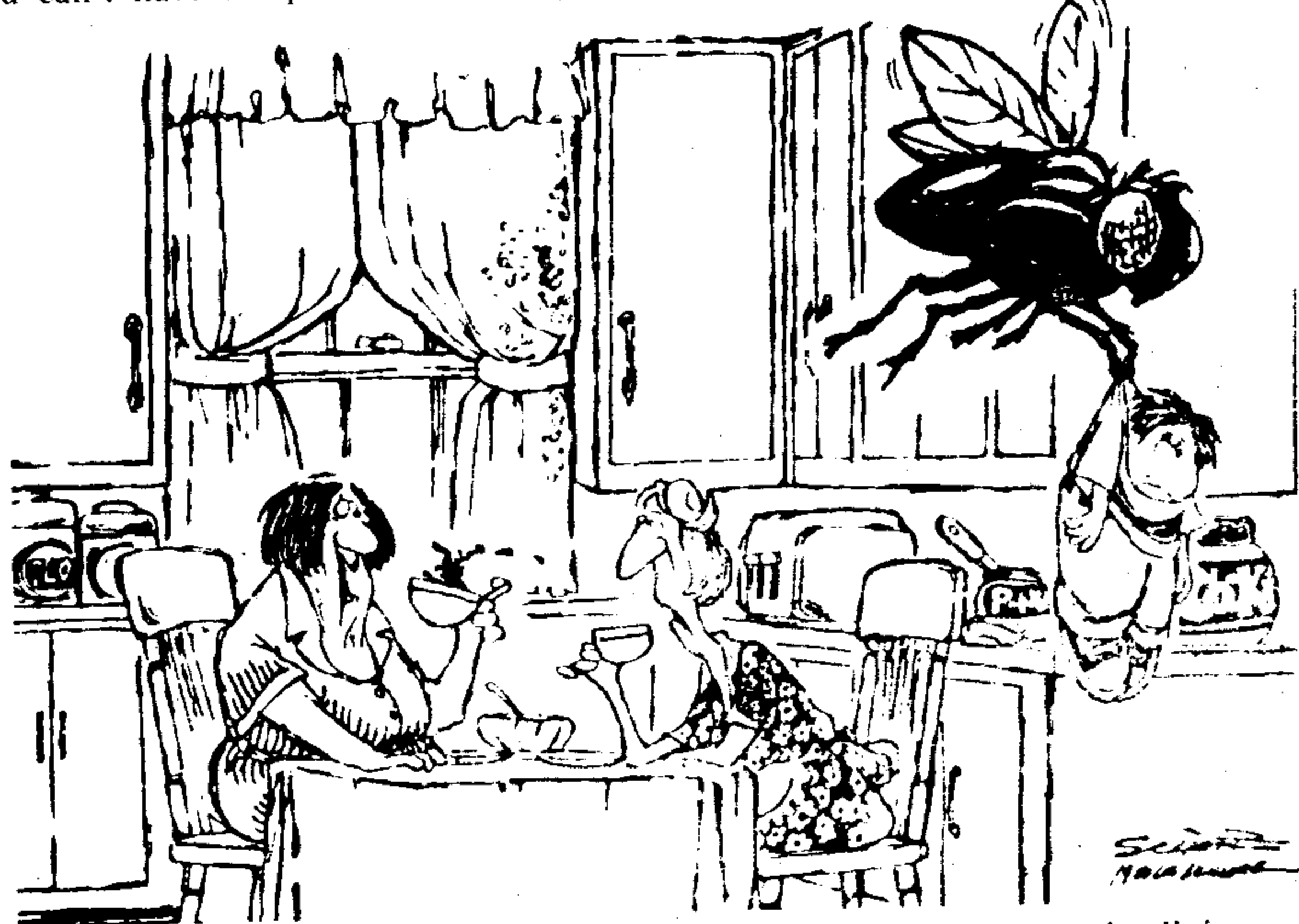
Incidentally, these properties have been known for four years, since three US explosives workers were killed after one of them had struck some LX-09 with a rubber mallet in the approved manner.

But never fear! The US government is coming to the rescue. LX-09 will be replaced in Poseidon over the next three to five years!

SCIENCE



Wide area. With a total of 448 Poseidons in the world, it seems only a matter of time before another one gets dropped and goes off. Incidentally, these properties have been known for four years, since three US explosives workers were killed after one of them had struck some LX-09 with a rubber mallet in the approved manner. But never fear! The US government is coming to the rescue. LX-09 will be replaced in Poseidon over the next three to five years!



'Frankly, Lois... I don't know how much longer I can take living next to a chemical waste dump...'

AMONG the acres of newsprint dealing with the Dr Leonard Arthur case, I came across a little piece in the Guardian dealing with research into how people with Down's Syndrome (DS) are disabled and how the disability may be reduced.

DS sufferers have an extra chromosome, due to a mistake in the sharing out of chromosomes when eggs or sperm are made.

Chromosomes carry the code for making proteins, the chemical compounds that provide structure for the body, carry oxygen around, break things down and build things up, etc. If you've got an extra chromosome, then the body will produce too much of those proteins coded for by that chromosome. Since the body is a finely balanced system, too much of a particular protein can cause all sorts of upsets.

A French paediatrician and geneticist, Prof. Jerome Lejeune (he discovered the extra chromosome in DS) has discovered some of the functions of the extra chromosome, and one of them has a direct effect on the brain's working. Lejeune thinks a cure for DS may be possible within ten years. One treatment suggested is extra doses of vitamins to

counteract premature ageing of cells.

I can think of no reason why this research should have been done years ago — except that disability comes pretty low down on capitalism's list of priorities.

Meanwhile, others have found that 'massive sensory input' for DS children from birth can raise their ability considerably, bringing them into the category of 'mild to moderate handicap' or even into the 'normal' ability range.

Time

'Massive sensory input' means giving the children lots of love and attention, and taking more time to teach them to talk etc. It takes up a lot of someone's time — in our society, that means the parents, who already have their hands full caring for a child who may be physically handicapped to some degree (as well as working to support their families.)

A socialist society would care enough about all its members to give sufficient support to parents of children with handicaps, as well as providing the necessary education and medical care.

It would also see research into the nature of those handicaps as a priority.

Letters

I stand by my report!



Writeback to
Socialist Organiser
28, Middle Lane
London N8

MY, my, what an overreaction to my report on the typists' strike. Let me add a few points to put Pete Cresswell's mind at ease.

1. The article did not criticise the Branch officials. It merely registered surprise at their recommendation to accept arbitration, after playing such a healthy role in fighting the union for more strike pay earlier in the dispute.

I did however strongly criticise the National Officers who forced acceptance of arbitration by threats to withdraw financial support. I would of course still stand by that criticism.

2. Pete Cresswell seems to think that I personally concocted the report. On the contrary, I reported almost word for word what had been said to me by striking typists on the picket line and at a Women's Fightback meeting to which we invited a speaker.

Perhaps every time you say 'Sue Erswell said' in your letter, you should substitute 'A Liverpool typist said'. Perhaps then you would not write such a letter.

being bound to accept the offer made at the end whether it is reasonable or not. You could spend 12 months at arbitration and gain nothing, and the chances of getting a demoralised workforce back out on strike months later are virtually zero.

It is the duty of socialists in leadership not to tail-end the confusion and inexperience of the working class, but clarify and present a perspective for victory, if necessary against the trade union leaders (whether 'official' or lay).

3. You seem upset that I did not contact you. Are you, and not the typists themselves, the only ones allowed to comment?

You were interviewed the previous week, I believe, by one of our supporters, and a report was sent in. As you see, Socialist Organiser, unlike the Echo, allows you a reply even longer than the original report if you wish.

Lastly, you say you have been subjected to a sectarian attack. Oh come on now!

Your name was not even mentioned. After all, why should it be? I was talking on this occasion to the strikers themselves, not you. And if you think the word 'sectarian' applies, then I'm afraid I must suggest you don't actually know what the word means.

Please accept this reply in the spirit it is intended. I don't feel a need to attack you personally as you feel the need to attack me.

I don't retract any of the original report. How could I when it is mostly not me speaking? But I am grateful for you expanding how you see the 'rationale' for going to arbitration.

That is obviously a useful contribution to our understanding of one point of view on the dispute, but it does not mean we have to agree.

SUE ERSWELL, Liverpool.



Against Jenkin

THE FIGHT in Manchester against the Tories' proposals to charge certain groups of people for NHS treatment continues with a day conference on the implications this racist legislation has and the next step in organising opposition to it.

Under the system introduced by Patrick Jenkin and recently supported by new Health Secretary Fowler, everyone will have to prove their eligibility for free treatment by answering a long series of questions which seek to establish nationality.

Obviously the prime targets for questioning will be patients with foreign names, strange accents... and dark skins.

As large numbers of migrant workers (and their families) will also be excluded from free care, the Jenkin Plan can be seen as another attack on the working class. All this on top of the boost that will be given to the private health sector.

Since their recent trial run in hospitals specially selected for their proximity to international airports or immigrant communities, it looks as if the Tories will now force their racist, anti working class measures through Parliament some time in the spring of 1982.

For this reason a day conference has been held relating the Jenkin/Fowler plan to the rest of this government's nationality legislation, to consider the response of the NHS trade unions to the Plan, and to determine the best grounds for our opposition — and a coherent and informed strategy for future action.

GEORGE MACLEAN, Education Officer, Manchester NHS branch, ASTMS.

Fight fear of the disabled

It is they whom you are criticising, not me. This report may have 'disappointed' you, but all the women I spoke to are extremely disappointed at going to arbitration after sacrificing so much for five months.

In justification of the National Officers' acceptance of arbitration, you quote from a motion passed by the typists themselves, saying, "Let him prove his case by coming to negotiation or arbitration".

The fact that the motion gives a choice between negotiation and arbitration implies a lack of understanding of the great difference between the two. You have the experience, however, to know the differences.

Negotiations means that you continue to argue your case from a position of strength by striking, picketing, blacking, etc., and remain free to reject any unacceptable offer made to you.

Arbitration means losing all your strength by returning to normal working and

I WANT to take issue with Kath Munby's letter in Socialist Organiser 62 on the 'Downs Syndrome Case'. It is simplistic and dangerous to imply that it is a 'woman's right to choose' whether her baby lives or dies.

LIFE and SPUC clearly have the most reactionary motives in pressing prosecutions of this sort. They have no more real concern for the welfare of handicapped babies than they have for women who become pregnant unwillingly.

Their purpose in trying to prosecute doctors like Dr Arthur is to draw the link between 'babykilling' and abortion. They have lost the anti-abortion argument in parliamentary terms and in 'public opinion'. To win it again requires mobilising a reactionary backlash against abortion — and what better way to do it than through emotive publicity about the way abortion leads to the

'killing' of defenceless, lovable infants.

Obviously, socialists want no truck with this kind of movement. However, I don't think we can reply by drawing a link between abortion and allowing severely handicapped babies to die — and arguing that in both cases it is a woman's right to choose.

On the contrary, we must argue that the two most certainly are not the same.

A woman's right to choose on abortion is argued on the basis that the woman is the bearer of the foetus. She alone can carry it for the requisite nine months. Her body is necessary to nurture it.

No-one else can take over that role, and therefore no-one else has the right to say that the foetus must be nurtured and brought into the world. It's the woman's body and she alone should decide to what uses it is put.

The case of a newborn

handicapped baby is a different one altogether. After birth, the baby has social relationships with people other than its mother, or at least the possibility of them. It's quite feasible for the baby to be brought up without the mother ever seeing it again.

As socialists and advocates of women's liberation we argue that the raising of children should be a social question, and not simply a problem for individual parents. It's completely inconsistent to argue this on the one hand, and then argue that mothers should have the right to choose whether their babies live or die.

After all, we do not say that parents should have the right to choose whether their children should go to school, or even what school they should go to. We support the principle that if parents abuse their children, social services have the right to

step in and take appropriate action, including, if necessary, taking the child away, whatever the parents' wishes.

In short children have rights that foetuses don't have, and they have these rights (or should have) whatever their age and whatever their handicaps.

Similarly, socialists should be fighting for the rights of the disabled. We want a massive increase in the facilities, homes, and other social provisions. We also want far more money and resources going into medical research into cures for disabling diseases, and into technical research and production of machines etc that cater for the needs of the physically handicapped.

Les Hearn has recently taken up some of these issues in the Science column, when he mentioned the uses that computers have for the disabled.

We should counteract the

prejudice, ignorance and fear of the disabled that is endemic in society. We want disabled people to be able to play the greatest role in society that they can.

No-one would underestimate the trauma facing a mother or couple whose eagerly awaited baby turns out to be severely handicapped. But the generalised prejudice about handicaps undoubtedly plays a part in their reaction. In fact, this is probably particularly true in the case of Down's Syndrome, where its popular name 'mongolism' is associated with racist attitudes.

If we are to defend the disabled, who remain one of the most heavily oppressed sections of society and include many who are highly talented and intelligent, it's hard to also imply that it's all right to allow them to die at birth.

ANN EVANS, S. London.

Where we stand

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

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

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

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

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

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

* Freeze rents and rates.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Solidarnosc on show

READERS who saw the item concerning the Solidarnosc exhibit in the British Library (on page 13 of issue 62) may be interested to learn the following.

The article was taken from the latest newsletter of the CPSA branch, which though it is distributed to members only is nevertheless read avidly by management whenever they can get their hands on it. It can thus be no coincidence that shortly after the newsletter was circulated, CPSA heard of a sudden 'U-turn' by the library management: they were now going to publicise the exhibition after all!

Doubtless the threat by CPSA to advertise in spite of Sir Harry Hookway's ruling put the wind up a management eager to avoid embarrassment.

As to the display itself, though it consists of only two cases of material, it is still well worth more than a casual glance... even from those of us who can't speak Polish.

Among the exhibits is a

copy of the first issue (April 3, 1981) of 'Tygodnik Solidarnosc' — 'Solidarity Weekly', the chief newspaper of the movement — as well as examples of regional newspapers and workplace bulletins.

Perhaps the most interesting of the latter is the bulletin of the Institute of Nuclear Research at Swierk: it's printed on the back of computer print-outs! (Many of these unofficial publications suffer from a chronic shortage of paper, and often

carry appeals to their readers for suitable material.)

Any socialists passing through Bloomsbury in the near future should certainly make their way to the King's Library of the British Museum. Ignore the illuminated manuscripts, Magna Carta, and other keepsakes of the Ruling Class: come and have a gander at a genuine piece of modern Working Class history.

MIKE GRAYSON, CPSA, British Library.

THE
TRANSITIONAL
PROGRAM FOR
SOCIALIST
REVOLUTION
LEON TROTSKY

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





SCARGILL VERSUS

'3 JUST MEN'

John Cunningham (Dinnington NUM) reports on the candidates in the miners' presidential election

JOE Gormley, the right wing President of the National Union of Mineworkers, is retiring on April 4, 1982. On December 2, 3 and 4 the NUM membership are voting in a pithead ballot to decide his successor.

The next ten years are going to be vital ones for the miners — with new technology, pit closures, the new super pits, de-manning, and nuclear energy. The grovelling and conciliation of Gormley will have to go.

What the miners achieved in 1972, 1974 and in early 1981, was, more often than not, achieved against Gormley as well as the Tories and the NCB.

Exclude

This election campaign is probably one of the longest in trade union history. Mr Gormless has been saying on and off for the past few years that he will be retiring soon. At one point he deliberately extended his stay in office to exclude Mick McGahey, the Scots miners' leader and a member of the Communist Party, from becoming his successor. (NUM rules stipulate that no-one over the age of 55 can stand for National Official).

He has also hung on for so long in order to try to find a right wing candidate to oppose Arthur Scargill, who announced his intention to stand for the president's job some time ago. It has been in vain — instead of one unified candidate of the Right, there are three.

Scargill has so far made all the running, and continues to do so. The campaigns of the other three seem to consist mainly of sniping at Scargill's record and attempts to personalise the issue.

Darlings

Let's have a look at these 'three just men' who are suddenly the darlings of Fleet Street.

The first candidate of the right wing was Trevor Bell. The reaction of most miners was 'Trevor who...?'



Will Scargill (left) replace Gormley?

Bell is the head of the white collar section of the NUM, the Colliery Office Staffs Association (COSA), and the appointed head of the NUM's industrial relations department at headquarters in Euston Rd, London. He is a consistent right-winger on the NEC.

Rare

Bell, like Scargill, hails from Barnsley. He worked underground as a fitter before getting out via the academic circuit. A few diplomas and certificates later, he ended up in his present position at Euston Rd in 1967. As a 'backroom boy', Bell has had a large role in preparing NUM submissions to such bodies as the Wilberforce Committee in 1972 and the Pay Board investigation in 1974.

He wants to scrap the NUM's present policy of annual wage reviews and instead adopt the American system of three-year contracts. He is critical of the NUM's fight this February to keep the threatened pits open, and in one of his rare political statements earlier in the year he declared himself a supporter of Dennis

Healey. The Sheffield Morning Telegraph described him as 'an amiable man'.

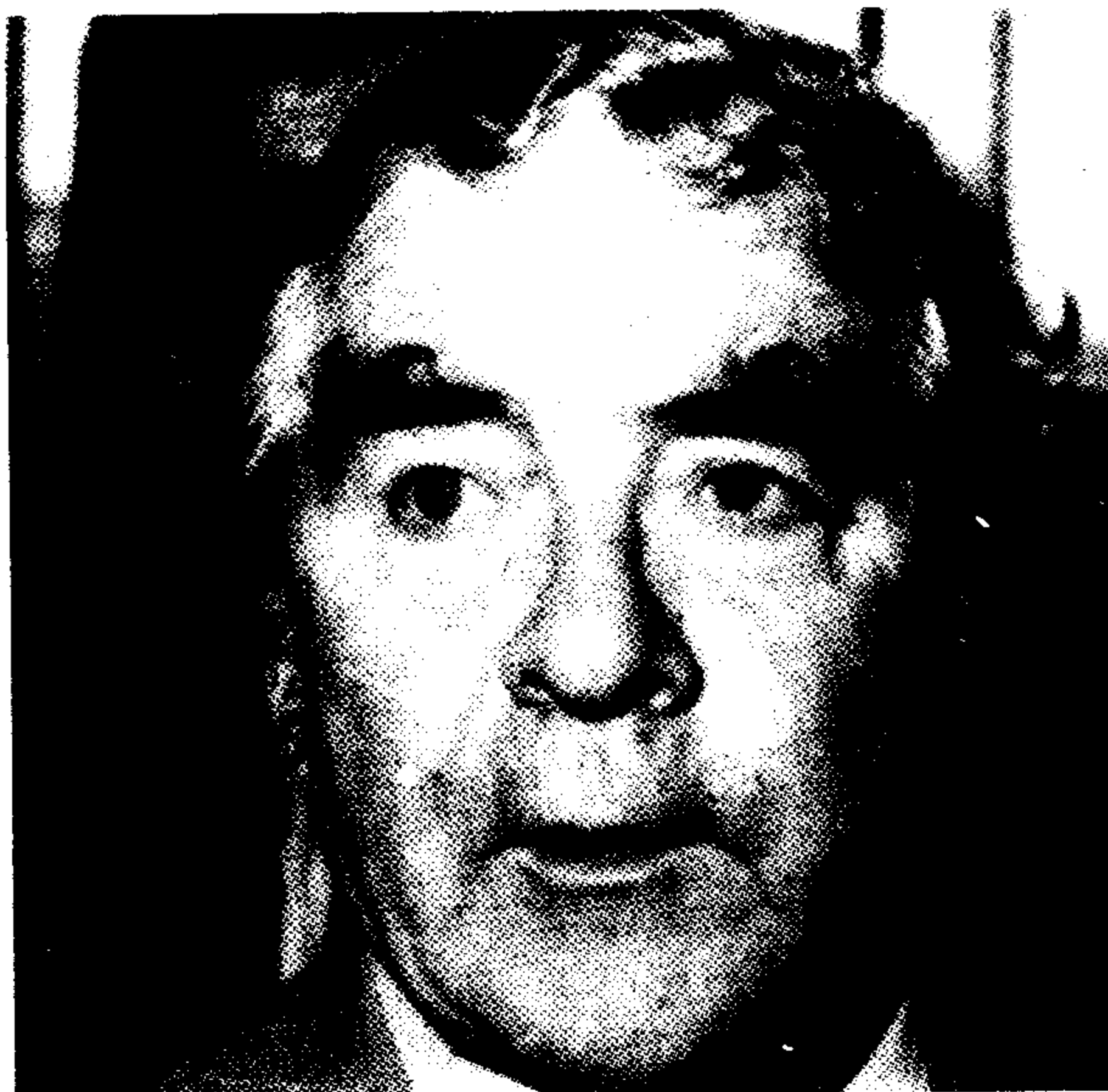
According to Fleet Street publicity handouts (Sun, Daily Star, Daily Express, etc.), Ray Chadburn, the second candidate, went down the pit at the age of 17. He then studied economics and industrial relations at Nottingham university.

He worked underground as an electrician at Welbeck Colliery and became full-time agent in 1977. Chadburn wants (bet you've never heard this before!) 'meaningful negotiations rather than confrontation'. He is not anxious to extend nationalisation, and he supported the introduction of incentives despite conference policy.

'Amiable'

Described by the Times as 'talented but unduly self-effacing' (the words of Lady Astor may be more appropriate — 'a modest man, with much to be modest about'), Raymond is also an 'amiable' man according to the Sheffield Morning Telegraph.

He has been nominated



by the Cumberland Area, which consists of one pit of 914 members.

The third candidate of the Right, and here we progress from pantomime to farce, is Bernard Donaghy. Once again cries of 'Who...?' were heard in the coalfields, for Donaghy is hardly known outside his area.

He is the Area Agent for Lancashire, a position he took up in 1972. He is being portrayed as the middle of the road candidate by the media. Most miners know little about him or his record. He too is an 'amiable man'.

It seems highly unlikely that any of the three right

wing candidates will beat Scargill. Their only hope is that under the single transferable vote system employed by the NUM, the election will go to a second round and the Right will gather enough votes to pip Scargill.

Scargill has prepared his campaign very well, and has secured nominations not just from the militant areas but also from areas usually regarded as moderate, such as Durham, Leicestershire, and of course Chadburn's Nottinghamshire.

In all, Scargill has the nominations of 12 areas, representing 200,000 min-

Support from NCB

THERE WERE red faces at the National Coal Board last weekend. The Board's Stoke on Trent publicity officer Stuart Oliver had been discovered delivering copy from a one-off issue of the 'Lancashire Miner' to the printers.

Hurriedly, Oliver issued denials that he had been placing the print order for the sheet — which is a publicity blurb for the area's leader Bernard Donaghy in the NUM election.

Oliver claimed that he only took the copy as a 'favour' while he was on 'official NCB business' to the printers.

But who can deny that the NCB have made it their business to try to squeeze out Scargill?

ers out of a total of about 240,000. (Of course, an area nomination does not commit the individual members).

Scargill has been on an extensive tour of the coalfields, speaking to large and enthusiastic audiences in most places. His pamphlet 'Miners in the Eighties' has had a very wide circulation in nearly all pits.

Of the four candidates, Scargill is the only one that any serious miner can vote for.

Failure

Scargill doesn't walk on water, and his record has some question marks on it — the rescuemen's strike, the luke-warm response to the February closure struggle (in which Yorkshire lagged behind Wales, Kent and Scotland), and the present failure to support blacking of Laurence Scotts.

The programme on which he is standing, basically contained in the pamphlet 'Miners in the Eighties', argues the reactionary demand for import controls, says little about internal reform in the union (except reform of the NEC), nothing about recall of officials, and nothing about workers' control (which Scargill has in the past totally dismissed). It is vague, to say the least, about what a future Labour government should do.

(For a more detailed criticism of 'Miners in the Eighties', see Socialist Organiser 61).

Policy

Even so, Scargill stands by conference policy and says he will fight for it. For this he should get the support of all miners.

But we shouldn't just sit back and let him get on with it. At all times he must be reminded that he was put there by us to fight for

the £100 minimum, the day week, retirement 55, earnings protection, etc.

As President of the NUM Scargill will not have vote on the NEC, only casting vote in case of a tie. He will become a prisoner of the right wing majority on the NEC.

Sway

One of the first things must be to reform the NEC so that the number of candidates on the NEC is proportional to the membership in each area. At the moment, small areas outvote the big ones. The Right holds sway with 15 to 10 majority.

Equally urgent is need for reform at pit level. The branches need to be changed. The present system of union representation is outdated — a system akin to the steward set up found in manufacturing industry is needed, for at the moment it is virtually impossible to be represented in a dispute at the point of production (i.e. underground).

Determination

This is a tricky subject but needs to be tackled and discussed in the industry.

A defeat for Scargill would be a big defeat for the miners and file miners, and could see all the gains of the ten years rolled back.

A vote for Scargill, however, must be coupled with a determination to put him to the test — where he fails, and let's be realistic when he does, the rank and file must go beyond this means the building a rank and file movement in mining, and transferring the NUM branches to fighting bodies where they aren't already.

In this way we can be ready if Scargill follows he probably will, the of other 'lefts' such as Hugh Scanlon and Jones.



Industrial News

SUPPORT CRUCIAL AT ST MARY'S

by Andrea Campbell

Admin retreat at the London

4 WEEKS after they locked out the 90 porters, the management at the London Hospital seem to be backing down.

The lock-out started when management refused to let the porters (all members of NUPE) clock back on after a lightening three-hour stoppage until they had all signed a statement that they would continue to work normally.

The management are trying to force through recommendations from a DHSS Management Services Review Team, which would cut 24 porters' jobs and reduce take-home pay by up to £30 a week.

In June this year the management withdrew an agreement not to make any compulsory redundancies, which was signed 1½ years ago. 2 weeks' action forced the management to backtrack.

They then attacked the 'protection of earnings' agreement. Already staff in the CSSD department at Whitechapel have lost between £17-30 a week.

Since the lock out on November 5, management

have attempted to intimidate NUPE members attending mass meetings in the Hospital to give support to the strikers and have threatened ancillaries with dismissal. When over 150 turned up the threat was forgotten.

After 4 weeks, manage-

ment are now backing down, but the pickets and stewards will not return to work until the deal is signed and sealed.

Solidarity from other workers, especially the London Ambulance Service, has been crucial. STEPHEN CORBISHLEY

P&O wait for support

P&O seafarers in Liverpool are angry about lack of support from their union.

They have not received a penny of strike pay since they began their action against closure of the Liverpool-Belfast ferry service. (They also have had no money from the DHSS).

And the big talk of solidarity from the NUS leaders has come down to very little. The shutdown of all services between Britain

and Ireland lasted all of half a day. The blocking of all P&O ships in British ports was stopped because the union was supposedly being told the identity of a new buyer for the service.

But the pickets and the workers sitting in are still solid, and need support — both through direct rank and file action and through demands on the NUS leaders to meet their promises. PETER CASHMAN

TC backing for Evans Lifts

by Steve Akers

Leicester Trades Council has given a welcome boost to the locked out TASS members at Evans Lifts. It has called for a day of action in support of the sacked workers, calling on the local labour movement to join the picket.

The Secretary of the Trades Council has urged that the demonstration be peaceful, saying "There's no way we are going to fall foul of Tebbit's proposals."

The major problem facing the Evans pickets now on 24 hour duty has been prior's Employment Act, not proposals which have

yet to become law. The Day of Action should be turned into a massive show of strength against a rabid anti-union employer.

An effective picket, with scab drivers turned away, will be the best encouragement the workers have yet received.

If the scab office staff are blocked from getting in so much the better.

TGWU drivers are still crossing the picket. This has to be taken up. An official letter from the T&G is available spelling out from the TASS office in Leicester spelling out their support.

A BOC steward from the Derby Depot, who stopped

to give his support, suggested that TASS should contact those BOC depots that supply other Otis companies in order to get all oxygen supplies to Otis blocked.

Workers throughout the Midlands should also block all deliveries by Smiths Haulage of Abbeygate, Leicester, who have consistently broken the picket.

Leicester UWW and Leicester Right to Work Campaign have supported the regular Monday and Wednesday mass pickets and have called on the unemployed to support the Evans workers.

With the dispute now in its 13th week, effective and supportive secondary picketing in defiance of Prior's law and blacking at source are now needed more than ever.

Messages of support to: Mr. B. Hickson, 42 Elmfield Avenue, Birstall, Leicester.

Advertisement
SOCIALISM and the ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC STRATEGY

A revolutionary Marxist critique

Workers' Action 5p

5p plus postage from PO Box 135, London N1 0DD

Drivers say 'no'

by Dave Spencer

MASS meetings by 4,000 West Midlands bus drivers have rejected the five per cent wage offer made by the West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive. Their wage demand is for 23 per cent.

They agreed on lightning strikes in selected areas without warning from Monday November 29.

On the first day they struck in West Bromwich, affecting 60,000 passengers.

The wage offer of five per cent is quite ridiculous in view of the well-publicised fares policy of the council, i.e. cuts of 25 per cent and a 2p flat rate for children, with the promise of free travel for the unemployed in the New Year. It looks as

through this fares policy is being implemented at the expense of the bus drivers. It is also ridiculous in view of the 13.8 per cent increase given nationally and paid locally to the police.

For the past three years the bus drivers have been given a lower percentage rise than other WMPTE staff. Also, drivers employed by other authorities are averaging pay increases of between 12 and 14 per cent.

Attempts to get the issue discussed in the West Midlands council Labour Group have so far been blocked, so that once again we are faced with major decisions being taken by small inner groups of councillors, with little reference to anybody else.

AT ST. MARY'S, London W9, management are already two and a half weeks behind in their closure plans. This in itself is an indication of the strength and determination of the NHS staff to defend jobs and services.

After the commando raid tactics used to close down Ward 2 and the resultant outcry from the Community Health Council and the local press, management have been forced to issue a consultation document in full warning to both staff and patients.

Ward

The next ward closure is due to take place on Thursday December 3.

Hospital staff intend to prevent it. This time they have had plenty of notice, and management feel under pressure to do things the right way.

They will be approaching staff to cooperate. It is essential that this is met by

the mass resistance of the ancillary workers and nursing staff.

The timing of the closure is obviously aimed to pre-empt the demonstration and march planned for the next day.

Twenty

This day of action, which has been getting encouraging support from trade unions and student unions, is planned to rally support against the closure and for the reinstatement of Mick Woods, a TGWU steward sacked for refusing to cooperate with the closure of Ward 2 by administration and police. Some twenty stewards have been sacked this year alone throughout the NHS, as the management have stepped up their attacks.

T&G stewards in the hospital intend to call on their members to come out on Friday to join the demonstration.

In Horton Hospital in

Surrey, CoHSE members have indicated their willingness to strike if CoHSE makes it official. CoHSE general secretary Albert Spanswick wrote back telling them that the dispute would be political and hence illegal, and that he would not support it.

Spanswick has since left for the Socialist Paradise, and Horton Hospital might still come out.

The weak link in this dispute has continuously been the full-time leadership of the trade union movement, tending to isolate, demoralise, and belittle the dispute.

It is essential therefore that the day of action on the 4th is a success.

Local

There will be a mass picket from 7am onwards on Tuesday 3rd to show the opposition of the local community to the destruction of their hospital.



Albert Spanswick

On Thursday whatever happens on Thursday, the dispute still needs support, both financial and practical. There are mass pickets every Monday from 7am to 10am. Messages/money to Mick Woods, c/o TGWU office, St Mary's, Harrow Rd, W9.

St Mary's Hospital, London W9. Day of Action against Closure. March from the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital, Euston Rd (near Euston station) to rally at St Mary's. Assemble 10.30.

Suspicion of POEU leaders

by Ricky Houston

THE Post Office Engineering Union (POEU) Special Conference on November 18-20 reflected a distrust of the present union leadership, and a growing feeling that different policies are needed to protect the jobs and living standards of POEU members.

The conference was nominally set up to discuss the split of the Post Office in the postal business and British Telecom, and the break-up of the telecoms monopoly through the Telecoms Bill.

There was, however, no mention of fighting the Telecoms Bill in the National Executive Council's (NEC) report for the conference. Instead, to go along with the split of into BT and the PO, the leadership (well-heeled full timers and the annually elected NEC, who meet behind well-closed doors), proposed a Federal Union to include the POEU (the largest union in BT, with approximately 129,000 members), the CPSA Postal and Telecommunications (P&T) group, and SPOE, a bosses' union.

Discipline

The federal union structure was to have an elected body, the Federal Council, with delegates from each of these unions (elected not from conferences but from each union's NEC), which would control all common matters. The unions would each retain some degree of autonomy, although none outside of the NEC knew to what exact degree.

SPOE members discipline POEU members, and SPOE has withdrawn from joint negotiations alongside the POEU on pay, on the few occasions the unions' full-timers have worked together, because the POEU annual conferences had called for industrial action if no satisfactory pay offer was forthcoming.

Counterposed to this was the proposal pushed by the

POEU Broad Left and supported by a number of branches, which called for a rank and file based union amalgamation spanning both businesses, to include the POEU, the UCW, and the CPSA P&T group, but excluding SPOE.

Both resolutions fell, although significant changes were made to the NEC's proposal before it was defeated.

Exclude

The delegates at the conference supported a resolution from London North Central External branch to delete SPOE from the Federal Council, thereby excluding the bosses' union from the Federation. A resolution from Leamington Spa and London Factories to exclude SPOE and instead include UCW in the Federation was passed, despite previous union policy (which stretches back for years) in favour of splitting the businesses — a policy which, if carried into the workforce, would block links with the UCW.

This was a major step forward, the delegates seeing the common link in the fight for better conditions and against the Tories' Telecoms Bill. The influence of the democracy campaign in the Labour Party and the logic of carrying it into the unions was shown by the overwhelming support from the floor for a resolution from Edinburgh External which was carried, calling for all Federal Council meetings to be minutes, with the minutes showing the voting of each Council member, and the minutes to be made available to all branches.

Pathetic

At a rules revision conference of the POEU three years ago, before the democracy campaign had taken such a high profile in the Labour Party, a similar



Bryan Stanley, leader of the POEU

resolution in relation to the POEU was heavily defeated.

Up to this point, the union leadership's policy on 'fighting' the break-up of the monopoly has been pathetic, relying on sponsored MPs such as John Goding (a man so dedicated to free speech in the labour movement that he attempted unsuccessfully, with POEU money, to sue the Militant newspaper for criticising him), to compete in Platonic dialogue with Keith Joseph, monetarism's main man in the good ship Parliament.

The oft-quoted phrases in the POEU journal about 'the split of the businesses' and 'the break-up of the monopoly' have meant very little to the rank and file telephone engineer, and full-timers have merely echoed management's newly-developed mating call of the 'engineer-eating buzby'... 'we are in competition now with private industry, you will all have to work a lot harder, no slacking in the ranks'.

So instead of being prepared and working out policies of action to fight back, the rank and file are now finding out through management's new, harder attitudes what these phrases mean — in face of a leadership who back up management all the way.

A document leaked in London stated that 11,000 redundancies could be

expected in the few years. Recruitment been cut. Sackings of individuals, previously unheard of, are increasing. Discipline has been enforced.

The secret police of PO and BT, the ID, been making dawn on engineers' homes searching them, queuing, calling in the police and claiming the engineers have stolen property! A work to

was recently carried in a London branch to the ID out of the area.

The task now facing activists in the POEU is forward from the mere rejection of the policy and actions of the leadership, to build an alternative. The Broad is emerging as such is still very small in numbers and does not have support of the vast majority of the rank and file.

More campaigning to be done by Socialist organiser supporters and activists in the 'through the Broad' union branches campaigning, bodies:

- to disband the ID
- to fight for jobs,
- to turn the union policy for a working week into a
- and to link up with UCW, the CPSA and public sector union fight the four per cent

Glencroft: Tribunal used to kill off picketing

Time to cripple cheap jobs plan

Industrial News



THE GLENCROFT Knitwear dispute in Glasgow, where 15 women are fighting for union recognition and reinstatement, has now disappeared into the jungle of industrial tribunals, from which it is unlikely to emerge intact, if at all.

On November 26, the Industrial Tribunal in Glasgow held a preliminary hearing to establish whether or not there was a case to be heard.

You might think that 15 weeks on a picket line is in itself proof that there is a 'case' worthy of consideration.

But not so in the Byzantine world of 'trades disputes' law. The question the preliminary hearing had to answer was whether the strike began before the sackings or vice versa.

If the strike began before Newman, the firm's owner, sacked the 15 women, then, according to the law, the union has no grounds for complaint at all.

The tribunal rapidly got bogged down in a welter of trivial detail - but the women's evidence clearly showed the rabidly anti-union attitude of Newman and his manager at Glencroft, Friedman.

"You'll come back on my terms or not at all. You'll never come back with a union - there'll be no union coming in here", Friedman was quoted as saying.

Evidence presented at the tribunal also showed up the role played by National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers (NUHKW) officials.

The worst thing about the tribunal is that it has transformed the basis on which the dispute is being fought. The outcome of the tribunal does not depend on labour movement mobilisation in support of the women. It depends on whether the NUHKW or Newman can find the slicker lawyer.

The tribunal has also been used as an excuse to kill off the picketing. At a meeting held on November 20, the women were pressured into abandoning the picket lines by a national full-timer of the NUHKW and by John Henery, deputy general secretary of the Scottish TUC.

But the drawn-out procedure of the tribunal will isolate the women from each other and defuse the whole dispute. Despite lasting six hours, last Thursday's hearing had to be adjourned for lack of time until January 19. And how many months after that before the industrial tribunal proper, assuming that the preliminary hearing decides that there is a case to answer?

Stan Crooke

Oxfordshire Trades Councils conference on Ireland

Saturday, December 12, 10 to 5 at West Oxford Community Centre, Binsey Lane, Oxford.

Delegates credentials £3, observers £1.50 (unwaged £1), from Marie Campbell, 167 Walton St, Oxford.

MANY workers are absolutely disgusted at the way the trade union leaders have sold out struggles for higher pay - BL settling at 3.8 per cent and the Confed at 5.1% - but how many of us would like to go three years without a pay rise, at a 'wage' of £23.50 a week, with travel and food taken off, and no bonus paid at all?

That's the prospect that faces youth who leave school today.

More than 400,000 youth are on the government 'Youth Opportunities Scheme'. And it's not only poor wages that they suffer. Out of 2,065 reported accidents on YOPs last year, including five deaths and 23 lost limbs, only ten of them were liable for compensation under the 1973 Industrial

Injuries Act.

If you are injured on a YOP scheme and have to take more than three weeks off work, you're automatically sacked. Most accidents are caused by lack of safety provision by employers who actually get paid by the government to take on YOP workers and then force them to do normal jobs with hardly any training.

We would expect the trade union movement to fight tooth and nail against this scheme. But the trade union leaders actually helped set it up, and it depends on the backing they give.

They are now being forced to warn of the 'danger' of YOPs being used as cheap labour. But all they offer to youth is talk of 'knowing your rights' and vague improvements, no campaign

to get them in the union, and no stand by them against this government.

It is the job of all trade union and Labour Party activists to make sure that the question of YOPs is taken up both at local and national level. Trades Councils can expose the YOP schemes for what they are by conducting inquiries independent of the Government and the Manpower Services Commission.

National unions and the TUC can cripple the Tories' plan to make this cheap labour compulsory by withdrawing all support. All unions and Labour Parties can go out to the YOP workers to get them organised into trade unions, demanding full union rates of pay and full union rights.

MICK LIGGINS

Strike over 'no smoking' rule

by Stan Crooke

HADDOW, Aird and Crerar (in Newmilns, Ayrshire) is one of those firms which really cares about the health of its employees. So much so that they suspend them for 3½ days if they're caught smoking.

At the end of October, Andrew Black was given a 3½ day suspension for smoking outside of the smoking area. In fact he lit the cigarette on the way to the area and had only stopped to ask a workmate a question when spotted by Mr Allan, the firm's manager.

As soon as word got round the factory about the suspension, the weavers went on strike in protest at the severity of the 'punishment'. After the Executive Council of their union, the Scottish Lace and Textile Workers' Union (SLTWU), had met to consider the dispute, the strike was declared official.

Management at Haddow, Aird and Crerar responded by locking out the rest of the workforce at the factory, and also the entire workforce at an associated company, Carlton Candlewick Ltd, on the grounds that the strike meant there was no work for them.

In an attempt to enforce a 3½ day suspension on someone caught smoking in an area where for the last sixty years smoking had unofficially been allowed, management was prepared to confront a strike by the weavers, and lock out nearly 100 workers.

But the union has adopted a very conciliatory approach to the dispute. Solidarity strike action was explicitly rejected: 'We ask for your support, but not for industrial action', wrote SLTWU general secretary James McChristie in a letter to Scottish TUC general secretary Jimmy Milne.

Notification

Moreover, the union did not challenge management's 'right' to discipline a worker ('we agree that our colleague... should be punished, but not in the way he

has', wrote McChristie in the same letter), and was angered only by the fact that the workforce had not been forewarned of the 3½ day suspension penalty: 'if a course of prior notification had been adopted, the union would have been fully behind it' (McChristie again, in a letter to management).

After a fortnight of the strike and lock-out, management backed down - but under pressure from the employers' federation in the lace industry rather than the union.

The suspension was reduced to half a day.

The withdrawal of support for the Lee Jeans women by the Tailor and Garment Workers' Union, the betrayal of the Glencroft dispute by the Hosiery and Knitwear Union, and the super-wet approach of the SLTWU in this dispute, underline the need for a single union for the whole of the clothing and textiles industry, on a class struggle basis and under the democratic control of its membership.

CPSA go for £12

by Mike Grayson

THE NATIONAL Executive Committee of the Civil and Public Services Association has called for a £12 per week increase as the claim for 1982.

Though the evidence from the CPSA Research Department strongly argued in favour of a £15 claim, most union activists will welcome this flat-rate claim, which if won would clearly benefit the lowest-paid workers.

CPSA has always gone in the past for a percentage increase (though sometimes with an underpinning minimum), which serves only to widen the pay gap between the various Civil Service grades.

However, there are still many worrying aspects about this claim, which cannot be overlooked. The first of these is the way in which the claim was formulated.

In the 1981 pay struggle, a special one day conference was called at which branch delegates were able to argue and vote on the recommendations. No such conference has been called to discuss the 1982

claim, and the union has reverted to the traditional method of having the Executive Committee determine it.

Even more disturbing is the fact that, at the time of writing, there has been no circular issued to CPSA members informing them of the NEC's decision - even though that decision was reached one and a half weeks ago. In fact, the first the members heard of it was when the Guardian announced it!

The reason for the delay is that the President and General Secretary are presently on the other side of the world, at a Public Services International congress in Singapore, and that an information bulletin will not be put out until these worthies return to put their signatures to it.

Also, the exact wording of the recommendation is a '£12 per week increase for all adult CPSA members' (my emphasis). This presumably means that workers not yet on the main pay scale (e.g. Clerical Officers aged 20 and below) are not covered by the £12 claim.



Police try to swamp Scotts picket

Police crash Scotts picket

by Karen Reissman

LAURENCE Scotts workers have been picketing Mining Supplies in Doncaster for two weeks now. But last Thursday two police vans crashed the line with three vital British Oxygen wagons.

In the 30th week of the fight for jobs, the workers hit back where it hurts most, and are picketing Mining Supplies (the main firm of Scotts boss Arthur Snipe) in order to stop the movement of all Snipe's goods and so force him back to the negotiating table.

The pickets have been pretty effective. About 100 Laurence Scotts and unemployed workers turned back many lorries and crucial supplies. The major scab firm is Armitage; they must be blacked nationwide.

By Thursday 26th, things were obviously getting difficult for Snipe. The night shift had not worked for two days and were under threat of lay-off. No oxygen had been delivered for over a week.

At 8pm on Thursday, at

a time when the picket line was not strong, three lorry loads of oxygen from the British Oxygen Company turned up, accompanied by two vanloads of police.

The drivers, all T&G members (one even claimed to be a steward) refused to listen to the pickets and, with the help of the police, crashed the picket line.

Immediately afterwards, the police attempted unsuccessfully to implement the six pickets per gate rule, and became irate when one of the pickets swore - because 'I don't like ladies swearing!' Later, one of the pickets was arrested for swearing and charged with breach of the peace.

Injunction

This police strike-breaking follows close on the heels of a court injunction being served on six of the strike leaders. The injunction instructs them (under the Employment Act) not to picket any of Snipe's premises.

The issues at stake are now much bigger than just the immediate dispute. It is a test case for the new Tory laws against effective picketing. The workers are prepared to ignore the injunction against secondary picketing, but there are less than 300 of them picketing two large plants.

Mining Supplies in Doncaster has seven entrances for 24 hours a day.

Picket

And they can pick off pickets one by one, with arrests.

Laurence Scotts have appealed to all trade unionists to support the picket line at Doncaster. Accommodation has been provided by the local miners' lodges. For details, ring the strike headquarters, 061 231 4434.

Money is also desperately needed to maintain the picket at Doncaster. Send all donations to Laurence Scotts shop stewards committee, c/o G.Fryer, 20 Roundcroft, Romiley, Cheshire.

Ford's pay vote

MASS meetings of Ford workers on Thursday and Friday, December 3 and 4 will decide on the final offer from Ford management.

The offer, to be presented after a meeting on December 2 between T&G negotiator Ron Todd and Ford bosses, looks like being 7.5 per cent, tied to the introduction of productivity and efficiency schemes that will tighten discipline on the shop floor.

The package would commit T&G full-timers, in alliance with local joint works committees, to 'police' the shopfloor - to break up and isolate the rank and file opposition if the scheme gets going.

Already disputes at Ford Dagenham have stopped production several times over the very issues of flexibility, manning, etc, contained in the new 'offer'.

The 7.5 per cent is new money on the basic, and this fact plus the demobilisation created by Todd's secret talks and the closeness of Christmas, will create a pressure for acceptance.

TANKER STEWARDS DECIDE

AS SOCIALIST Organiser goes to press, Shell, Esso and Texaco shop stewards are due to collate the results of depot votes and decide on industrial action for their pay claim.

The tanker drivers have been offered 8.1%, but are demanding parity with the 11 per cent already conceded to Mobil drivers.

The companies negotiate separately. BP drivers have accepted the 8.1 per cent; the 80 drivers of the small Chev-

on company are already on strike; Shell and Texaco stewards have recommended one-day strikes; and Esso stewards have recommended an all-out strike.

The Government has detailed plans ready to use thousands of troops to break a drivers' strike — so if the action goes ahead, the picket lines will be crucial. The whole labour movement must be ready to support the tanker men.

Socialist Organiser

COVENTRY STRIKERS STAND FIRM

by Dave Spencer



MASS MEETINGS of the 4,000 NUPE strikers in Coventry have voted overwhelmingly to continue their three week old strike against the Labour council's proposed ten per cent in their living standards, which breaks all local agreements.

The strike involves caretakers, cleaners and dinner ladies in all Coventry's schools and colleges.

The Labour council have clearly been reading about BL, and trying to come the Michael Edwardes. Firstly they sent out letters to all workers.

Last weekend they booked two separate rooms on two separate floors of the Post House Hotel of BL fame for negotiations with the NUPE union officials. The strike committee, meanwhile, were left to play 30 games of pool until 5.30am, when they were brought in to be told the latest offer — a four per cent cut — and to reject it in three minutes flat.

Rag

The Labour council then bought an advert for £500 in the local Tory rag, the Coventry Evening Telegraph, explaining their latest offer.

At the mass meetings, Coventry Labour councillor Joan Ward, wife of the education committee chairperson Charlie Ward, gave out leaflets to the strikers explaining the offer. The strike committee provided a wire waste paper basket into which strikers deposited the leaflets as they went in to the

meeting.

It is clear that the Labour council wants to break NUPE as an example to other unions in the local authority. Before the strike started, acting council leader Peter Lister said to a meeting of representatives of all the council unions, 'If you went on strike for two weeks, that would suit us fine. Our problems would be solved'.

Saved

Already the council has saved £360,000 in wages, not counting heating, lighting, meals, etc: in other words, they have saved a 10 per cent cut already. But Robert Aitken, Coventry director of education, said that what NUPE were demanding was 'not financially or politically acceptable'. In other words, they cannot be seen to back down, or otherwise they will not be able to implement the Heseltine cuts after Christmas.

So far, support from other unions has been appalling at official level, but building up at rank and file level through an active support committee. A Coventry NUT (National Union of Teachers) meeting backed a call for a day of action in support of NUPE, and a £1,000 donation. This was moved by Socialist Organiser supporter Ann Duggan.

Local NUT officials backed out of the day of action, and Coventry NALGO at a mass meeting voted against the day of action.

The TGWU, the original

callers of the day of action, also backed out, no doubt under the influence of Bill Lapworth, senior TGWU full time official and chairperson of Coventry District Labour Party.

Crack

Now NUPE has called for a rally outside the council house on Thursday December 3 at 12 o'clock, and invited support from other unions. This is something the support committee can mobilise for.

A recent by-election in the NUT for vice-president has shown a crack in the right wing domination of that union. John Hayward, a member of the Socialist Teachers' Group, defeated the right wing candidate by 69 votes. This is clearly a vote of no confidence in the local NUT officials.

The STG have put up a slate of 25 for the EC elections and are confident of gaining some places.

Edwardes

Clearly more pressure has to be built up in the unions to fight the cuts. Most workers can now see that NUPE is fighting a first battle which is part of their own struggle. The NUPE strike must be won, and this means decisive support in the next week.

The Coventry Labour Council first gave us a miserable precedent of the referendum giving their policies some justification. Now they are tearing up locally negotiated agreements.

They may try a Michael Edwardes, but they don't get £100,000 each, and they're also accountable to a labour movement and electorate.



Secret of SO sales

PETE KEENLYSIDE from Manchester outlines some ideas on how to increase your local sales of Socialist Organiser.

Socialist Organiser isn't a difficult paper to sell, and if Socialist Organiser supporters follow a few obvious points it should be possible for almost everyone to boost their present sales.

The first point is so obvious it shouldn't really need stating, but it's surpris-

ing how many people don't follow it — always keep your papers handy.

Without

No-one should turn up to their trade union or Labour Party branch meeting, or demonstrations and picket lines, without papers. But it's also worth taking some to the pub with you, because you can usually sell some to the people you know there.

And if some comrades find it difficult to sell in meetings because somebody else always gets in first, then

organise extra street, estate, or pub sales for them.

Workers won't usually buy a paper from someone who looks as if they don't really want to sell it. Don't wait for people to come up and buy one from you at meetings or demonstrations, but go up and ask them if they want one.

Street

On street or factory sales, make sure that there are at least three or four of you. It looks more impressive, and you'll find that you sell more than if there is just one

solitary seller.

Don't stand around looking glum, even if it is ten degrees below freezing point. Shout slogans, be confident and aggressive without descending into the harassment that some of the more bizarre sects of the movement practise.

Always be on the lookout for ways to increase your sales. Too many comrades think they've done their bit when they've sold their minimum quota.

One good way to build up your sale is to get your regular buyers to take extra copies to sell. It's surprising how many are prepared to do this, if only someone would ask them.

Paper sales don't just happen. They have to be organised. The papers have to be collected from the station and distributed to supporters as quickly as possible — any time after Saturday is too late.

Someone has to make sure that there are enough sellers to cover any big events in your area, that any new areas for sales are followed through, and, most important of all, that the money for sales is collected and sent in every week.

The paper organiser's job is probably the most important in any Socialist Organiser group. So the person who does it has to be both competent and, above all, enthusiastic.

If your paper organiser is just the mug who didn't say no, then your group's sales are probably suffering as a result.

Our paper is our public face. It's everyone's job to make sure that it is seen as often as possible.

PUT US ON YOUR GIFT LIST!

ONCE MORE it's the social season — in which presents and alcohol figure larger than usual in the thinking of normally level-headed militants.

As tankards, glasses and cigars are raised, and shopping lists are drawn up, there is a temptation to see political tasks as less important. But at St Mary's, in Coventry, at Longbridge and elsewhere, the class struggle goes on — as does the Tory attack and the treachery of our present leaders. The need for Marxist leadership at home and abroad is as great as ever.

So don't leave Socialist Organiser off your Christmas gift list. There's no need to comb the High Street shops for a present

to satisfy us: all that's needed is a cheque, postal order, or a few crisp notes to give us the resources to wage the struggle for socialism.

And when it comes to your turn to buy a round in the season's parties, why not include Socialist Organiser and ask your friends to do the same?

Indeed, while you're about it, why not use the social gatherings to run a fund-raising raffle?

Send all donations (gift wrapped or in plain envelopes) to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Help us make our circulation JUMP!

Take a bundle of SO to sell!

Many readers tell us they think Socialist Organiser has improved greatly since we went weekly. And our circulation has improved, too.

But it could improve a lot more if some of the many readers who like the paper, but only take one copy for themselves began taking bundles.

We're offering bundles of 5 each week for 80p post free, and bundles of 10 for £1.50

post free. That's £9.60 for three months for bundles of 5, and £18 for bundles of 10.

Regular subscription rates are £4 for three months, £7 for six months, and £12 for a year.

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