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# Socialist Organiser

Against all bans and proscriptions.

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**DEMONSTRATE!** Sunday May 17, 2.30pm from Tower Hill down Fleet Street. Sunday May 23, from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square. Organised by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Falklands.

THE BRITISH gutter press roars its applause at every salvo fired by Thatcher's task force at 'enemy' trawlers and tankers. Tory backbenchers bay for more blood - demanding the bombing of 'enemy' airports and ports, or an 'over the top' assault on the Falklands themselves.

And as British imperialism threatens to blow out of the water any Argentine boat or plane found more than 12 miles off their own coastline, a witch hunt is opened up in Britain.

In the midst of a racist and chauvinist hysteria against Argentina, any critic of the British attack is accused by the Tories and their allies of treason.

But we don't need to look to the Argentina junta to find our enemy: *the Thatcher government and the bloated British ruling class are here at home.*

Thatcher, heaping attack after attack on British workers, is a worthy descendant of British imperialism, which looks back upon a bloody history of exploitation and repression that have left a trail of misery, poverty and violence across all five continents, and whose troops are even now meting out daily brutality to the Catholic population of the Six Counties of Northern Ireland.

## Arms

Hand in hand with Reagan, the Thatcher government is working to escalate the arms build-up by imperialism, aiming to assert and re-assert the power to exploit and oppress world-wide.

This government and its military machine are our enemy. It is those leaders of the labour movement who comfort the Tories who are the traitors... to the working class.

Thatcher's government represents the British mill-

ionaire class, which draws its privilege and power from exploiting British workers and millions of people all across the world.\* Britain's armed forces are the mailed fist of that class.

They have gone to the South Atlantic to deliver a smack of that mailed fist. All considerations about the Falklanders' rights are strictly secondary. *Even the Tories themselves now say that.* The issue, they say, is Britain's (read: the British ruling class's) authority in the world.

The mailed fist of the British ruling class is a fist directed against us at home and our allies - the working people - all across the world.

In this confrontation as in every other, its victories are defeats for us.

It is our *main enemy* - the enemy at home. We should fight to defeat it - to force the withdrawal of the fleet, to black military supplies, to campaign and demonstrate against the war, and to bring down the

Thatcher government.

Shore and Callaghan with their open support, foot with his whimpering acquiescence, and union leaders (such as the TGWU leaders who called off last week's dock strike) who collaborate with the war drive, are all sabotaging what should be the real war effort by the British working class - the class war against the bosses' government and its military machine.

A mere handful of leading Labour left-wingers - Tony Benn, Judith Hart, Reg Race - have stood out against the war - though it is clear that the war is opposed by many workers.

As we go to press, new proposals are reportedly being floated in talks in New York. What proposals, no-one knows outside the charmed circle of the embattled ruling classes. However bitter their warfare with each other, even more sharp is their hostility to their own working classes and their determination to keep the negotiations secret - to

ensure that any deal is made over the heads of the people who stand to suffer.

If the deal is to lead to the Falklands becoming a US military base, for example, then the people of the islands and of Argentina (and us) will be the last ones to be consulted.

## Slaughter

Despite what many Labour left-wingers say, seeking for a 'statesmanlike' alternative to war, the business of economic sanctions and negotiations is no less the business of our enemies - an exercise in imperialist power politics - than the military battles.

Moreover, the negotiations are very far from certain to stop the military battles escalating - and escalating, perhaps, in coming weeks, to much greater slaughter than has been seen so far.

*Our alternative must be: withdraw the fleet. Unconditionally, and at once.*

The enemy is at home.



JOHN HARRIS

## WITHDRAW THE TROOPS!

ABOUT 2,000 people marched through London last Sunday to commemorate the first anniversary of the death of H Block hunger striker Bobby Sands and calling for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from the north of Ireland and a self-determination for the Irish people as a whole.

Speakers included Owen Carron MP and GLC leader Ken Livingstone.

Islington councillor and Socialist Organiser supporter Alan Clinton, speaking to demonstrators before the march began, pointed out that he had called for 'Troops Out' in his election address for the local elections and had won comfortably, thus proving that it was possible to raise the question of Ireland within the working class.



## WITHDRAW THE FLEET



# Labour movement must answer fascist violence

Aly Mir and Piyushi Kotecha report on moves towards a national anti-racist/anti-fascist labour movement campaign

THE LABOUR movement conference on racism organised by Coventry Trades Council on May 8 gave a clear call for the building of an organised working-class fightback against racism and fascism.

The main speakers told of where the leadership of both the unions and the Labour Party had failed to answer the call of black workers in their struggle against racist bosses, state discrimination and harassment, racist legislation and fascist violence.

The failure during last year's wave of fascist violence of Coventry's massively powerful labour movement to offer any response beyond polite gestures or outright betrayals shows the necessity for trade union militants to take up the political struggle inside the organisations of the working class.



union movement, but emphasised that it has remained paper policy and that local trade unionists must force the leadership to implement it.

Gulam Mayet of the Black Trade Unionists' Solidarity Campaign spoke of the racism in the unions themselves, as well as the failure of the unions to take up a strong position on racism in society. This played into the hands of the racist bosses on the shop floor.

He posed to the audience the need for positive action in the whole of the trade union movement. He also spoke of the necessity for black officials, and this provoked some sharp discussion later on.

Another speaker outlined

the Labour Party's history of first bringing in immigrants as cheap labour in the '40s and the '50s, then joining in with the Tories in passing and enforcing racist immigration legislation.

She argued that the reformism and the betrayals of the labour movement leadership had allowed the bosses and the capitalist media to get away with blaming blacks for the failure of the economy to provide jobs and decent living conditions.

In the afternoon session, these questions were taken up by contributions and motions from the floor. The theme was soon established of the need for a labour movement programme and organisation against racism and fascism, in order to

make the unions and Labour Party the vanguard against racist attacks, whether by the state, bosses, or fascists.

Among the attempts to give a practical content to the Trades Council statement on racism was a motion from Leicester Trades Council which called for direct links to be established with black workers in struggle in South Africa, and for support in particular struggles like those at Dunlop and Wilson Rowntree.

Various other local trade unionists spoke of their practical experiences in the TGWU, in the AUEW, and at Massey Ferguson. A Socialist Organiser supporter said that in several wards in Coventry the local Labour Parties were in a position to

organise against racists and fascists, and that while this was not to be counterposed to the right of black workers to organise their own defence, it was a step towards building a labour movement organisation in Coventry that could confront the fascists and lead the political fight against racism.

An organisation of black youth and workers, the Coventry Asian Labour Alliance, made a powerful intervention into the conference with two motions that called upon the Trades Council (along with other labour movement organisations) to build a local and a national organisation in order to fight for an anti racist and an anti-fascist programme in the labour movement and coordinate anti-fascist and anti-racist mobilisation. (See inset).

Beside these motions, the Coventry Asian Labour Alliance proposed several amendments to the Trades Council document on racism. These added:

1. A ban on union positions being held by racists,
2. A ban on fascists in the unions,
3. No platform for fascists and racists,
4. Full material and practical support for anti fascist struggles,
5. Take up the struggle in the workplaces for the workers themselves to organise their own defence against racist violence, and to force the employers to foot the bill.

6. Total opposition to all immigration controls.

All the above motions were accepted in principle, and referred to the Trades Council, the platform arguing that the conference could not bind the Trades Council. However the resolution calling for a local coordinating committee was accepted there and then.

The task facing working class militants now is to fight for the practical implementation at every level in the local labour movement of these decisions. The fight is only beginning nationally to build an anti-racist camp-

aign in the labour movement.

While representatives of the last Labour Government like Roy Hattersley - co-responsible for laying down milestones in the betrayal of black workers - remain the unchallenged spokesmen on immigration for the Labour Party and unions, black workers have everything still to fear.

The conference has yet to be made into a first and decisive step towards putting the organisations of the working class in the vanguard of the struggle against racism and fascism.

This conference calls on the Coventry Trades Council to convene a conference with the co-sponsorship of other labour movement organisations, and delegates from labour movement organisations in England, Wales and Scotland, to discuss the founding of a national labour movement anti-racist and anti-fascist organisation. Such a body would have the aim of fighting for anti-racist and anti-fascist policies inside all the organisations of the Coventry labour movement, coordinating anti-racist/anti-fascist action locally, and building links with similar bodies that exist nationally.

This conference calls upon the Coventry Trades Council to initiate moves within the Coventry labour movement for a joint labour movement coordinating committee against fascism and racism. Such a body would have the aim of fighting for anti-racist/anti-fascist policies inside all the organisations of the Coventry labour movement, coordinating anti-racist/anti-fascist action locally, and building links with similar bodies that exist nationally.

# Socialist Organiser plans for Labour Conference

AT the May Socialist Organiser Alliance Delegate Meeting, held last Sunday 9th, and attended by delegates from 13 SO Groups, the following decisions were taken:

\*To support and argue for a united left slate in this year's elections to the Labour Party NEC, and to accept the proposed list that was reported from the Labour Liaison 82 meeting on Saturday, May 8 with one exception.

It was agreed that the delegate from SO should continue to argue against the inclusion of Judith Hart on a left slate, and instead that two of the places in the women's section slate should be chosen by those women's campaigns supporting Labour Liaison 82 - Women's Fightback; CLPD Women's Action Committee; and the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign.

\*To open discussion in the paper (through signed articles) and in the groups on the tactical advisability of the Alliance campaigning for a challenge against Foot (preferably by Tony Benn) in this year's leadership elections.

\*Manchester SO group felt there had been inadequate discussion in the delegate meetings of the paper and its emphasis. The delegate meeting agreed and called for more regular and

better prepared meetings, held in different parts of the country.

\*To circulate the following model resolutions for this year's Labour Party Conference:

## POLAND:

"This conference deplores the declaration of martial law in Poland and the attempt to crush the free trade union Solidarnosc. It calls upon the NEC to adopt the following demands:

1. The lifting of martial law in Poland,
2. The freeing of all internees and political prisoners,
3. The restoration of all trade union and democratic rights won since August 1980,
4. The return to Solidarnosc of all property confiscated by the military junta,
5. The reinstatement of

all those sacked for refusing to take the 'oath of loyalty' renouncing membership of Solidarnosc.

This conference also calls upon the NEC and all other sections of the British labour movement to break all links with the official 'trade unions' and the ruling Communist Parties of the Warsaw Pact countries, all of whom support the Polish military junta.

We believe that the British labour movement should instead give full support to Solidarnosc as the authentic movement of the Polish working class, struggling against the Stalinist bureaucracy for workers' power and socialist democracy.

Conference also calls on the NEC to campaign for direct action by the British working class movement, including blacking of trade with Poland, in pursuit of the above five demands."

## THE ECONOMY:

"This conference considers that the Party publications 'Labour's Plan for Jobs' and 'Britain on the Dole' were seriously inadequate.

It calls on the NEC to include in all future statements on the economy:

- \*Unequivocal opposition to all 'incomes policy' under capitalism.
- \*Commitment to the implementation by the next Labour government of Clause IV part 4 - without compensation for the big shareholders.
- \*Worksharing without loss of pay, linked to workers' alternative plans like the Lucas Aerospace

Plan, to provide useful jobs for all.

\*Commitment to women's equal right to a job, and to measures necessary to guarantee this right, like adequate nursery/child-care facilities and positive discrimination in employment.

\*Automatic monthly cost-of-living increases in all wage agreements linked to a working class price index.

This conference declares that a Labour Government seriously committed to the socialist reconstruction of society must cut through the vested interests of the British ruling class and, as necessary, defy and repudiate the rules, dictates and constraints of the IMF and EEC.

Yet the programme of import controls and an isolated 'independent' Britain is delusory. The Labour Party should appeal to the workers of Europe over the heads of their rulers for a common programme and common action against the capitalist class in the entire EEC.

Our alternative to the EEC must be not an 'independent' Britain, but the Socialist United States of Europe by way of building on the post-war integration of the West European economy, seizing control of it and extending it rather than seeking to unscramble it."



Benn



Socialist Organiser will be supporting the model resolution from the Labour Committee on Ireland

In addition, also to support the model resolutions circulated by Women's Fightback, Labour Committee on Ireland and the CLPD on the democratic issues. \*To pass the following addition to the statement 'Women and the Socialist Organiser Alliance', moved by the Edinburgh SO group: "When women members of SO become pregnant it is to be expected that at stages of their pregnancy they will not be expected to attend SO meetings. Therefore comrades should be appointed by the SO Organiser/Group

to visit women comrades so that they are still able to play a part in the decisions of the SO Group". \*The Socialist Organiser Annual General Meeting would be held over the weekend of June 26 and 27 in Coventry, with the following deadline for resolutions and amendments: resolutions, June 8; Amendments, June 22. \*A short delegate meeting would be held in London on the morning of Sunday June 6 before the CND demonstration.

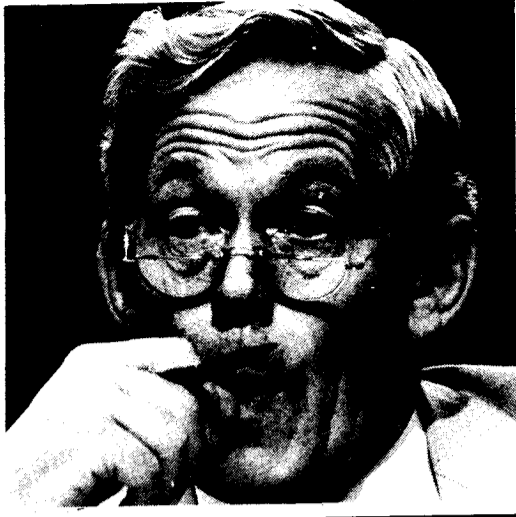
JOHN HARRIS

The Municipal Employees' Association, which was to become NUPE, was involved in the major strikes of 1911 and 1926.

General Secretary Jack Willis claimed "We were more successful than any other union in getting our members back to work."

In May 1974, as militant action erupted amongst nurses and forced COHSE bureaucrats to call overtime bans and selective strikes, NUPE leader Alan Fisher attacked the action as an "irresponsible act of amateur adventurers."

In the winter of 1978-9 NUPE leaders instructed nurses that they could take any action "short of strike action" in pursuit of their



claim and refused to support strikes by ambulance drivers.

Fisher described the NUPE NEC's rejection of the 9% sell-out offer as a "personal tragedy".

During the occupation against the closure of St. Benedicts Hospital in South London, Fisher eventually got off his backside to visit the picket line only when the raids by scabs and police were at their height. He firmly denounced the pickets, condemning what he called "the use of force to prevent patients being moved out of the hospital".

Now Fisher has come out with repeated statements that NUPE will not involve nurses in industrial action.



## Will management play it tough?

THE DHSS 1979 circular "If Industrial Relations Break Down" spells out a series of management tactics, such as non-payment of striking staff.

In a confidential document for Leicestershire AHA management these points have been expanded on:

"Employees who present themselves for work but refuse to work normally

(. . .) will be regarded as being in breach of contract.

He or she will be offered such a proportion of normal payments as considered appropriate by management in relation to the proportion of work done. This will take the form of an ex gratia payment and will not be the subject of negotiation.

OR  
The employees concerned

shall be advised that all pay shall be stopped whilst industrial action continues but the Authority is prepared to pay on a full-time basis that number of staff which the Authority considers necessary to maintain the level of service offered.

OR  
Where in the opinion of management the level of service offered is not acceptable (. . .), the appropriate manager will determine whether or not the refusal to work normally constitutes a serious and material breach of contract which justifies the sending home of the employee concerned without pay.

On any day when an employee works less than his contractual hours he is in breach of contract and loses his right to be paid for that day. Management may exercise their right to withhold pay for such time as management estimates that the employee was in breach of his contract or may offer an ex gratia payment, which will not be negotiable, based upon the proportion of the day which was worked."

The overall impression is that a very different and much harder management response is likely in this dispute than in the dispute in 1978/9.

It also means that if we are to win this dispute, then there can be no half measures.

Work to rules, lightning strikes, etc., are useful only insofar as they prepare the membership for all-out strike action as the only way to defeat management and the government.

Charlie Sarell

## Hit them with everything!

IN 1981, ambulance drivers were the only large group in the health service to take action against the six per cent wage limit. The action, spreading over June and July, was mainly confined to one day complete stoppages, and was especially strong in Scotland, London, and Liverpool. The total strikes were all unofficial.

The leadership of NUPE, CoHSE, TGWU and GMWU refused to back the withdrawal of the accident and emergency service despite the fact that stewards' committees in the militant areas, representing the majority of the membership, felt that this was the only effective form of action.

In NUPE, the fight to win official backing for total action reached a particularly high level. At the health section of the Annual Conference in Bournemouth in May, an emergency resolution calling for official support for all-out stoppages, passed unanimously, was subsequently overturned by the Executive Council. Throughout the dispute the militant areas continued to stage all-out, one-day wild-cat strikes, while the leadership persisted in calling for ineffective partial action.

The NUPE leadership also did their best to kill the unofficial action. At one

point they used management's telexing equipment to attempt to dissuade workers from following a one-day strike call in London.

The action was eventually defeated. For one small group of workers challenging a central plank of government economic policy, a defeat soon became inevitable - once the battle for official support had been lost.

### Crucial

The strikes posed many questions and problems which are crucial to this year's pay struggle: most notably on the attitudes and reactions to the question of emergency cover.

Perhaps most important, the strikes demonstrated aspects of this government's reaction to action by health workers. Following the example of the Callaghan government during the 1979 strikes, army ambulances and medical units were put on stand-by in the cities. But there the parallel ends, because this government *did*

not use them, even though there were several times when the police and voluntary services were hopelessly overstretched.

As the strikes progressed, there was a noticeable toning down of the reaction in the press, in stark contrast to the hysterical witch-hunting of the winter of discontent. Also, local management in London refused to take up the offer by London strikers to turn out during a major incident, despite the fact that there was such an incident - the Southall disturbances - during the July 3 strike.

These facts are in clear pointer to this government's strategy against striking health workers. During the ambulance dispute, they refused to authorise any act which would acknowledge the effectiveness of the strikes, no matter how many people suffered as a consequence. In my opinion, there is only one answer to this: hit them with the maximum strength. Appeals to their conscience are a waste of breath.

## RCN hits at the unions

HEALTH service workers who are preparing for a battle over pay are being attacked not only by the government, but also by the Royal College of Nursing.

The RCN long since passed the point of being a drag on the workforce. It is an open enemy.

Dame Catherine Hall, the outgoing general secretary, used a speech at the recent congress to solidarise with the government against health service workers.

She and the rest of the RCN leadership are determined to gain some agreement over pay with the government by two means. One is by distinguishing nurses in the RCN from all sections of NHS workers who recognise that industrial action has been forced on them.

The other is to distinguish nurses as a special case - which means backing the government in keeping down the wages of domestic, scientific, and other workers.

The RCN leadership has already abandoned the nurses' claim for this year. Hall focused hope for pay rises on the formula promised by the government to create a framework for long-term settlement in future years.

She said those talks had been blocked by the "other unions" (she means the unions) on the staff side.

"My view is that we should test the goodwill of the government. They want to do something towards a better deal but it is nurses they are concerned with."

"But nurses will lose out if they have to carry other health service workers on their backs. I would not want to detract in any way from the contribution made to the National Health Service by everyone who works within it. But those who perform duties other than nursing must press for their own agreements on the basis of their own work."

The RCN leadership has however been forced to accept a ballot on the question of permitting industrial action (at present it is enshrined in the RCN constitution that it is outlawed). The only purpose of the ballot rule 12, is to mark RCN members off from the trade unions.

One of the best ways that union members can break RCN members from their reactionary organisation is to show them the vicious arguments that their leadership uses.

The weekly RCN paper, Nursing Standard, if read by nurses would do much to help recruit many of them to the trade union.



## Miners vote to support

THE JOINT Lodges of the South Wales miners have voted to strike on May 19 in solidarity with NHS workers, and will be joining us on picket lines and on a demonstration which has been called in Cardiff on that day.

Intensive lobbying is still

### SOUTH WALES ACTION

OVER the last week there have been stoppages in most hospitals in South Wales along the guidelines issued by CoHSE, which have been supported by members of other unions.

In Mid Glamorgan, all routine admissions have been stopped due to a work to rule and ban on overtime by linen staff, nursing staff, and others. In the mental health divisions in Wales, only emergencies are being admitted.

HEALTH WORKERS FOR THE FULL CLAIM: first bulletin out now, articles urgently needed for the second bulletin!

Send articles to/order copies from Anna Lunts, 78 High St, Atherton, Lancashire (0942 877296). Please send money with orders to cover postage.

going on in the NUM in an effort to pull out the whole of the South Wales coalfield. The Joint Lodges have put an emergency resolution to the South Wales area conference calling for this.

Health workers are also seeking solidarity from workers in other industries. The UCW has informed the University Hospital (Cardiff) joint trade union committee that no post will cross the picket lines on the 19th.

We are also seeking support from dockers and seamen.

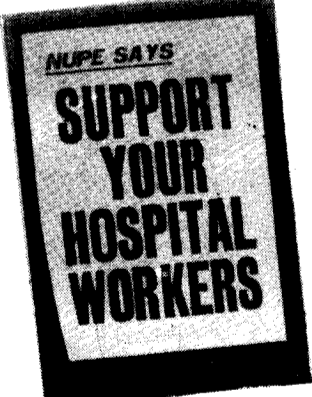
If the 12 per cent is to be won, such solidarity action will be vital. And it is possible. The example shown by the miners must be taken into other workplaces.

OVER 100 NUPE and COHSE members took action in Cardiff Royal Infirmary last Wednesday, followed by a 2 hour lightning strike on Monday 10 May.

The response was good, particularly from patients and patients' relatives, who although they crossed the picket line, expressed support for our claim.

The 2 hour strike was seen by everyone who took part as a run-up to a one-day strike, preferably organised on an area basis.

We had publicity from local radio and press and it was a great morale booster.



Oxford health workers demonstrated on April 17 (above) and now Oxford CoHSE pickets at the Royal Oxford Hospital.

## Scots walk-out

ON TUESDAY May 4, over 200 CoHSE members from Bangour hospital in Edinburgh staged a one hour walk-out, providing emergency cover only. This showed yet again that the militancy of health service workers is on the rise. But without a massive campaign for all-out action, with emergency cover under trade union control, this militancy will turn into disillusion.

On the same day, Tuesday 4th, a small group of workers from the Royal Edinburgh Hospital staged a picket and got around 400

signatures for a petition in support of the industrial action by NHS workers. On Saturday 8th a similar picket got about 800 signatures.

There will be a mass meeting of all shop stewards in the Lothian health service on May 12 to discuss the pay claim. But union officials are attempting to prevent speakers from the floor of this mass meeting.

A mass demonstration and rally is called for May 19, and we hope for a turnout of well over 2000.

FRED HESSLER



Oxford health workers demonstrated on April 17 (above) and now Oxford CoHSE pickets at the Royal Oxford Hospital.

# THE WAR COMES TO FLEET STREET

by Patrick Spilling

THIS was the week the war in the South Atlantic finally came to Fleet Street.

Tensions between the vying 'patrols' broke out into battle with a ferociousness unequalled in recent press history.

The Sun opened fire with an editorial which named the Guardian ("pygmy circulation") and the Mirror "Pretensions as a mass sale newspaper... a timorous winging publication" as well as the BBC and Peter Snow as traitors.

The Sun has outpaced the opposition in racism, jingoism, and callousness. When a British submarine sank the General Belgrano, killing 368 people, it reported the news under the exultant headline 'Gotcha'.

This column has already referred to the Sun reporter who signed a Sidewinder missile "Up Yours Galtieri" on behalf of Sun and News of the World readers and then boasted that 'his' missile had shot down an Argentine plane.

If the Sun thought it had hit an easy target it was soon back on the defensive. The Mirror devoted a full page the following day to a counter-attack under the headline 'The Harlot of Fleet Street'. It began by calling the Sun a "coarse and demented newspaper" and continued: "There have been lying newspapers before. But in the past month it has broken all records."

"It has long been a tawdry newspaper. But since the Falklands crisis began it has fallen from the gutter to the sewer..."

"From behind the safety of its typewriters it has called for battle to commence to satisfy its blood-lust. The Sun today is to journalism what Dr. Josef Goebbels was to truth. Even Pravda would blush to be bracketed with it."

So much on the defensive was the Murdoch group that the News of the World did not come to the Sun's defence - instead calling for

a cease fire in Fleet Street.

The Sun had a rather whining column of its own in which it complained that a political furor was being 'whipped up', by 'melodramatic posturing'.

The savagery of this disagreement takes some explanation. The Mirror follows the line of the Labour Party front bench - that it was right to send the fleet and right to indulge in a bit of mild skirmishing, but that this, that and the other would probably turn out to be unwise. In any event it's a bad business alright.

The Sun is slightly to the right of Winston Churchill. Churchill wants to bomb the Argentine mainland. The Sun doesn't much care who it bombs so long as they are foreign. (Its other contribution to the war effort is to send giant copies of its Page 3 girls out to the fleet where presumably the marines stay in training by masturbating over the 'forces favourites').

However the impetus for the Sun attack did not come from the Tory backbenchers but from Thatcher herself.

It was Thatcher who attacked the BBC for reporting both the British and Argentine claims - and thereby casting doubts over which was to be believed.

The Sun merely added the rhetoric.

It justified its attack through the simple proposition "A British citizen is either on his country's side or he is its enemy."

Does this mean then that it is only sections of the British press that are in the pocket of the government? Is the concept of 'press freedom' (within capitalism) being upheld by those branded as traitors?

The answer is yes and no.

# PRESS GANG



JOHN HARRIS



McDonald: the Tories' master of doublespeak

There is certainly more alarm in the newsrooms of the 'serious' press about the role which the government has mapped out for it.

The Sunday Times nearly two weeks ago complained that journalists with the British Fleet were finding out about British attacks by listening to the BBC World Service.

## Death

The Observer last Sunday described in more detail how their journalists were being muzzled. News of the 'loss' of two Harriers was withheld until the polls had closed (and then explained by saying that the multi-million pound aircraft had collided in fog!)

Ministry of Defence public relations officers (known by the journalists as 'thought police') vet copy from the Fleet and delete references to the weather, location, names of ships, names of crews.

According to the Observer, "stories which might sap morale are also discouraged".

Twice D notice 'requests' have been made to Fleet Street to delete material from stories. On both occasions the papers have complied.

Even the Daily Mail has complained of the paucity of information put out by the Ministry of Defence.

In an editorial headed "winning the propaganda war" it said:

"If the often lying propa-

ganda of the Argentines obtains extensive and undeserved coverage this is very largely because the Ministry has so little to say and that little is often late..."

"Distinguished British correspondents are little better treated than those from other countries like, for instance, those of the Soviet block."

## Harlot

Journalists are forbidden to mention weather conditions in the Falklands, information available through one phone call to New York. The Argentinians in any case don't even need to make a phone call.

Ian McDonald, the defence spokesman on television, will surely go down in history as a master of doublespeak. His carefully enunciated categorical statements have to be revised almost before they are out of his mouth.

(For three weeks all the media have been blithely assuring the world that the blockade has been maintained. Last weekend the television began referring to the ships and planes which have reached the island from Argentina as if they were already common knowledge.)

Those papers which criticise government press tactics object to the crudeness of the disinformation service. The BBC specifically defended its so-called 'balanced treatment' on the grounds that by reporting some Argentine claims it would gain greater respect around the world.

None of the press claim the right to attack British

policy head-on - despite deep reservations on the part of large sections of capital over escalation. The Times and the Spectator are just two publications which are strongly opposed to bombing the mainland of Argentina.

The 'responsible' press wants freedom to support the government on its own terms. The government and Ministry of Defence wants a press totally controlled and operating within military limitations. As the Daily Mail put it. "The Ministry... seems to be under the impression that the media will publish what it says and no more".

We should not be afraid to recognise that the difference of opinion is an important one. All the media is engaged in stoking up support for the war to one extent or another by declaring the views of those who want an immediate end to the war and the recall of the fleet to be beyond bounds.

But the Sun has put itself out on a limb and that limb should be hacked off. The NUJ General Secretary has issued a statement condemning the Sun. There should be some immediate action through the NUJ complaints committee to sling those responsible out of the union.

Nor should opponents of the war overestimate the power of the press. The poll published by commercial television at the weekend showed that despite all the propaganda blasts, one third of the population on no account wants any more fighting.

The basis for a mass anti-war movement exists. Press lies in the long run will add fuel to that movement.



# Fight the 'jingo left'

by Martin Thomas



As Foot's jingo leftism fades into straight jingoism, many Labour activists are asking: hasn't the time come to challenge him for Labour leader?

MICHAEL FOOT will surely never again be able to call himself an "inveterate peacemaker" without being drowned by jeers. But really he was not as wrong as all that. Only he should have been more precise. Foot is indeed an inveterate supporter of peace... with the Tories and the right wing.

His policy throughout on the Falkland crisis has been guided by the wish to keep his hands clean - short of political war against the Tories!

So when Galtieri invaded, Foot declared that the Tories were at fault for letting matters go so far, but by jingo something should now be done.

## Limb

Foot supported sending the fleet. Of course, he added, it would be best if the fleet could avoid any action once it arrived.

The British forces arrived and stormed South Georgia. Again Foot supported what the Tories had done. But - he whined - wouldn't it be nice if everything could proceed through polite negotiations from then on?

The Tories were contemptuous. They, after all,

had actually been negotiating, and they knew that in the business of big-power negotiations armed missionaries are the only ones with a chance of making conversions. Foot wanted the pleasant face of negotiations without the brute realities behind it.

So the fleet proceeded to sink the Belgrano. Did Foot condemn it? Not at all. He said the situation was very serious and there should be a parliamentary debate.

Now the option is being aired of a British invasion of the Falklands. Foot's opinion? Very tricky. "A monstrous gamble". Perhaps a long blockade would be better.

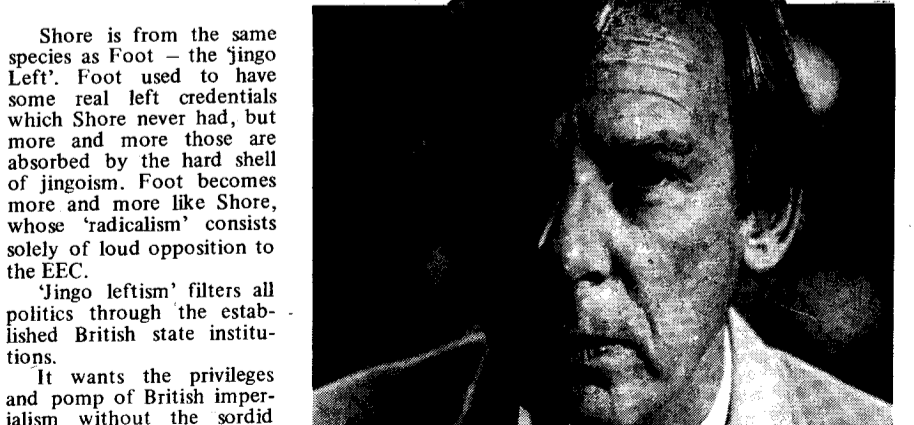
But invasion is not excluded on principle.

If the British forces actually do invade, we can guarantee Foot will support the accomplished fact - provided it is successful.

It is significant that on this issue Foot is being dragged along by Peter Shore. Shore - who came out for accepting Thatcher's private talks on the war, and who on TV has denied any significant differences between Labour and the Tories over the war - is not exactly the same as Healey or Hattersley.



# Thatcher's War



Shore: four-square behind Tories

Shore is from the same species as Foot - the jingo Left'. Foot used to have some real left credentials which Shore never had, but more and more those are absorbed by the hard shell of jingoism. Foot becomes more and more like Shore, whose 'radicalism' consists solely of loud opposition to the EEC.

'Jingo leftism' filters all politics through the established British state institutions.

It wants the privileges and pomp of British imperialism without the sordid brutality... but then settles for the sordid brutality after all. The only question it ever asks is 'what should Britain do?', not 'what should the working class do internationally?'

But it is that second question that the labour movement should ask. Point 1 of the answer is: force the withdrawal of the British

fleet. Labour Parties and trade unions should be campaigning for that answer, and for a leadership that will fight for it.

# BEHIND THE BRAVADO POLISH REGIME FEARS

## SOLIDARITY

ONE OF the consequences of the declaration last December of a 'state of war' in Poland by the Stalinist regime was the establishment of a system of military commissars - parallel to the government and Communist Party apparatus - to run the factories, farms and government offices.

One such commissar at the state radio and television networks recently conducted a meeting with Communist Party members under his supervision to explain the current situation.

A tape recording of the session was made and was circulated and copied in Warsaw. The French newspaper *Le Monde* obtained a copy of the tape and made a translation from Polish.

We publish here extracts of the transcript.

**Military Commissar:** Some comrades are saying Solidarity was a paper tiger that was liquidated overnight, December 12 and 13, that it is no longer dangerous and that it has ceased functioning. Given this conviction, we have had to deal with statements saying that we have won, that it is high time to celebrate our victory and lift the state of war; that everything is back in order.

This idea is being put forward by comrades who sit in their offices in armchairs under potted palms, people who not very long ago were threatened, but who no longer are because they are under the umbrella of the army.

Well, their evaluation of the situation is wrong; what's more, it is very harmful. Because, dear comrades, the situation is complex, complicated and it is fundamentally difficult to foresee how it will evolve in the months to come.

And if one of you asks: how much longer will the state of war last? It seems to



May Day in Warsaw: Solidarnosc demonstrates defiance

me the answer is simple but that the solution is extremely difficult.

The state of war in Poland will last until the Party revives. And I am thinking not of the bureaucracy of the Party, because it revives quickly, but of the situation of the rank and file in the large economic enterprises.

This reasoning is based

on the following fact. We have a state of war and the outcome of that state of war can either be dictatorship or democracy. There is no third possibility. If we speak of a passage to democracy - to democracy in the socialist system, and such is the hypothesis - there must be a certain force around which this democracy will form. In our situation, that

force can only be the Party. There is no question of political pluralism, of any form of more or less organised opposition. It is because of this that the premises for lifting the state of war will exist only when the party can resume its political supervision of the working places, and it flows from that fact that the state of war will last for a little while

longer in this country. It is not a question of months, but of years. (Noise in the hall).

Recently, we have observed a sharp rise in the activity of anti-socialist elements in this country. After the shock of the introduction of the state of war - I must note here parenthetically that its introduction was simpler than we had supposed - all this organisational system was introduced so smoothly with so few victims, many fewer than had been forecast when the concept of a state of war and the technique of its introduction were born.

### Shock

There was (momentarily) a great shock to the ideological adversary, but... we are observing that... the adversary is starting to organise... we see that Solidarity, shall we say in its clandestine version, is beginning to organise more and more.

And its organisations are starting to function. I must say that I don't attach too great an importance to tracts. On the other hand, sheets of all kinds which appear in the form of periodicals with numbers in a series are an indication of organisation.

For example, if in Warsaw they edit *Tygodnik Wojenny* (War Weekly) and if they have already published five editions of it, that means there exists a group involved in editing it and that a certain system has begun to function. Besides, there are lots more like it. I don't have the information that the Ministry of Internal Affairs has.

What stands out in the content of these illegal newspapers? Well, they are trying

to convince trade union members that Solidarity exists and that it is organising in the present situation.

Then, in the articles in these illegal editions there is an appeal against the use of terrorist acts. They clearly forbid terrorist-type acts.

In his interview (Zbigniew) Bujak (former leader of Solidarity's Warsaw chapter who is now in hiding)... said to organise small independent resistance groups. For passive, not active, resistance.

According to them (the underground papers), the resistance can take diverse forms. Most important is to slow down the pace of work, for if that is done in an imperceptible way it cannot provoke repression.

There are instructions about activities to show that Solidarity is functioning: extinguishing lights at a specified time, lighting candles. We know that often these actions are a success.

The situation is extremely complicated. We are still far from celebrating our victory. We can still find ourselves confronted by things, occurrences, events that we are not now in a position even to imagine. Anything is still possible comrades.

**Voice in the hall:** Comrade, what you are saying is frightening.

**Other voices:** Right, it's frightening!

**Military Commissar:** Comrades, I cannot tell you that everything is OK if it is not. The situation, overall, is bad. I am not going to repeat what you can read in the (official) press or hear in the speeches of the Prime Minister.

**Voice in the hall:** Why haven't you caught Bujak? What is the fucking MSW (Interior Ministry) doing?

**Military Commissar:** Where is Bujak? What is the MSW doing? I have no information from the comrades who are involved in that.

I don't know if the MSW knows where Bujak and the others are. Maybe so. Maybe not. But at this time it is difficult to get to them because they are in a monastery or even - which is more probable - in a convent. A raid on a convent would have to be organised - you'd have to send a company or a battalion and bust everything up. And I don't know whether Bujak is worth the domestic and international repercussions that would bring.

**Voice in the hall:** Then we must negotiate with the Church.

**Military Commissar:** My boy, who can come to an understanding with the clergy? I haven't the slightest proof of it, but I am ready to bet, that most of the underground papers are being edited in the Churches and the convents.

Besides, if we were certain, convinced, if we had a conception of what the unions would be, of what Solidarity would become, there would be some firm action in one direction or another.

### Police

If this conception doesn't exist, how can we know whether this fucker Bujak will not be of some use to us? Are you so certain that he won't? Because I am not sure at all. I personally don't know what game the SB (political police) are playing. Isn't Bujak being used as bait?

**Voice in the hall:** Comrade, why doesn't the militia arrest those people who turn out their lights and light candles?

**Military Commissar:** It's not so simple. First of all, the practice is rather widespread, and second, Jaruzelski has said clearly that in Poland a state of war is in force but that no rights have been suspended. By what right then do you want to go into apartments and ask people why they turned out their lights? They turn them out because they want to. They turn them out because it is their right to do so.

**Voice in the Hall:** What do you mean, they have the right?

**Military Commissar:** Oh yes, comrades, they do. What juridical principle do you have against it? There is none. So it would be an illegal act, an act of repression.

### Shut the trap

The same is true for the scientific community. Carry out investigations? And then what? Such investigations are going to upset the community enormously. And then I don't know whether this scientist who works at the university - even if he is not with us, he is under our supervision - will be less dangerous than the same man who is thrown out of the university and starts organising unbeknownst to us.

I don't know. And there are lots of questions of that sort. Unfortunately, there are no simple solutions. If there were, we wouldn't be in the situation we are. You can't shut the trap of the whole nation. There are no miracles. And not by force...

# THATCHER FOULS THE NEST

by Harry Sloan

"The Argentine people... will never forget that in one of the most critical hours of their history... the US sided with a power that is alien to our continent and cooperated with its aggression."

With these words the Argentine foreign ministry gave vent to the growing bitterness between one of the most savage and reactionary dictatorships in Latin America and its imperialist sponsors in Washington.

The Reagan administration had all along feared that this would be the immediate consequence as soon as the US declared itself unambiguously in support of the British military aggression in the South Atlantic.

This was a key reason why Reagan hedged while Haig shuttled for weeks on end to and from London and Buenos Aires posing as a well-intentioned mediator.

If Haig's pose of neutrality was artificial, his desire

to avoid an escalation into war was genuine. As one White House aide told *Newsweek* magazine in April:

"If an Argentine ship goes down forget it; then all Latin America will coalesce around Argentina."

By the first week in May, even before the sinking of the General Belgrano this coalescence had largely been completed.

A meeting of the Organisation of American States gave vigorous applause to Argentine Foreign Minister Costa Mendez and voted 17-0 to recognise Argentine sovereignty over the Falklands. The other four member states - the USA, Colombia, Chile and Trinidad and Tobago - abstained.

At present, of course, this "unity" against British imperialism is a largely cosmetic exercise by Latin American governments with an anxious eye both to their own working classes and to

their economic dependence upon the imperialist banks.

Peru, for example, continues both to denounce Britain - and to work with US imperialism for a compromise formula. The new right wing nationalist government in El Salvador is vehemently pro-Argentina - but still leans heavily upon US military and economic aid.

The OAS resolution itself was combined with support for a UN resolution calling for the withdrawal of both British and Argentine troops.

But as the situation lingers and deteriorates, the US imperialist leaders can see a growing threat to decades of careful cultivation of alliances with many dictatorial regimes in Latin America.

The USA had not only armed and aided the dictators: they posed as guarantors of the inviolability of the American continent

from outside aggressors - enshrined in the 1947 Rio Treaty.

This treaty was of course designed by US imperialism as part of its Cold War offensive against revolutionary movements and external "Communist aggression".

Yet the whole experience since 1947 has confirmed that for the people of Latin America the prime danger of external military intervention comes not from the Soviet Union - but from the USA itself as the self-appointed guardian of capitalist rule.

It is an ironic twist of the tables that the same treaty should now be invoked by Argentina to demand backing against an attack by British imperialism.

It is even more embarrassing that the US leaders, under pressure, should be forced to admit that its alliance with the imperialist nations of Europe through

NATO is more important than its relationships with second-string dictatorships in the semi-colonial countries.

And the longer and more intense the war becomes the more the token gestures made by governments will be pressed forward by anti-imperialist sentiment among the working masses of Latin

America - endangering not only relationships with dictatorial regimes but even also those regimes themselves.

The US and EEC imperialists can look gloomily forward to many years clearing up the mess made by Thatcher in a few weeks of action.



Haig and Galtieri: friends fall out?



# Time to rock the boat!

by John Bloxam and John O'Mahony

SINCE last year's Labour conference, and even more so since January's "Bishop's Stortford" talks, the message thrown again and again at Labour activists by the Parliamentary leadership has been: Rally behind the Labour status quo. Drop the fight for structural and political transformation of the Labour Party. Unite at all costs - because the general election is coming and the SDP will get you.

The Observer put it, "the only prominent senior Labour politician who publicly proclaims himself to be 'right wing' and has cut more ferociously than many Tory councils. In an election where ward boundaries were changed, the Tories won 11 seats more than before and gained control. Labour's best result was in Islington - where local left-wingers have pushed through the fight against the right wing so thoroughly that all three local Labour MPs and 25 councillors defected to the SDP. Recipe for disaster? No. Labour swept in with a 10% swing, an increased vote, and a 51-1 majority against the SDP in the new council."

The general picture - with many local variations - is that Labour did best in strongly working class areas and where the local Labour Party is more left wing. The reason is not mysterious: those are, usually, the areas where Labour Party workers are most numerous, most active, and most enthusiastic. "Slow but sure" and "don't rock the boat" are not the slogans which can rally activists. In Lambeth and Lothian Labour Parties with left wing reputations went down to defeat. But these were Labour councils which had proclaimed and promised an all-out fight against the Tories, raised rates supposedly to buy time, then crumpled and made cuts. No wonder that Labour voters were cynical, and Labour activists unconvinced, about repeats of the same manifesto promises made last time round.

From all accounts, there were two major reasons for Labour's generally bad performance. The Falklands factor counted - but there was not an overwhelming wave of jingoism. Labour candidates who openly opposed Thatcher's war - like the several Socialist Organiser supporters standing - got a good hearing and, usually, good results. But the Labour leadership's weak-kneed line of support for sending the fleet, then dithering about its use, offended chauvinist reflexes without giving a coherent alternative. More generally, potential Labour voters were demoralised and disillusioned because they had no confidence in the will or ability of the labour movement to do anything about the decay of crisis-ridden British capitalism. Where we go from here depends on what the new

Labour councils and the labour movement do now. The policy of sitting tight, appearing as "moderate" as possible, and waiting for things to turn Labour's way, is a policy for losing support. So the May 6 elections should be a signal for the Left in the labour movement to relaunch the offensive - the drive to transform the labour movement which was initiated after the 1979 election but has been stalled since last autumn. We need to fight on several fronts: \*The issue of the Labour Party leadership should be re-opened. The Falklands crisis has shown "inveterate peacemonger" Michael Foot as an inveterate ally of the warmongering right wing. The time has come for new discussion in the Labour Parties and trade unions about putting forward a candidate like Tony Benn,

committed to the movement's policies, against Foot. \*The issues of Labour Party democracy should be re-opened. The need for accountability of Labour councils, as of the Parliamentary Labour Party, will now be central. While the Left has demobilised since Bishop's Stortford, the right has been organising hard behind the scenes, particularly among the trade union barons. They are trying to ensure the NEC elections are tied up for the Right this year. The AUEW will be pushing for the expulsion of leading Militant supporters. If the Left does not re-mobilise, then we will not stop still - we will be driven back. \*The fight for trade union democracy is the inseparable counterpart of the fight for Labour Party democracy - and vital for immediate industrial action

against the Tories. Currently the TUC leaders are letting the Tebbit Bill go through with only a few routine threats about fighting it (maybe) sometime in the future. They justify themselves by saying that the rank and file won't fight. But in reality the major factor stifling a fight and creating disillusion is the leaders' refusal to lead. Only by starting to fight back can the labour movement rally the confidence to continue the fightback. \*The fightback can be started now by the labour movement breaking links with the Tories and the bosses - looking towards accountability to the rank and file, and a workers' government, rather than collaboration with the ruling class. \*We must fight for the newly elected Labour councils to defy Heseltine.



Lothian's "Duke of York" on the cuts lost Labour votes

## Bradford setback

LABOUR has lost overall control in Bradford. Labour and the Tories now each have 42 seats. The Tories won some of the inner city wards and snatched four other seats in Eccleshill, Thornton, Queensbury and Wibsey. One of Labour's old right wing stalwarts, Councillor John Ryalls, was quick to claim that militants in the Party were responsible for the lost seats. The reality is,

of course, quite the reverse. The elections follow closely the new Labour budget for 1982, complete with £2.30 rent increases and an 18% rate rise. These attacks on workers' living standards typify a year of Labour control marked only by the complete failure to lead any fight against the Tories. Two weeks prior to the election the Labour Group expelled three socialist coun-

cillors who had broken the whip to vote against rent and rate increases. The expulsion was an arrogant slap in the face for the District Party which had carefully considered the question and, following a three-hour debate, overwhelmingly rejected any disciplinary action. The question of accountability of Group to District Party is central to the fight to break the right wing control of the Bradford

Labour leadership. However the other important aspect of the election has been the strengthening of the left on the new Labour Group. Socialist Organiser supporter Barry Turner won the biggest Labour majority in all 30 seats contested when he captured the Bradford Moor seat back from the SDP (lost as a result of a Labour defection). The campaign was fought on a clear policy of opposition to recent rent and rate increases and the immediate need to remove the Tories. Three election bulletins argued for a socialist programme and perspective on cuts, unemployment and rent and rate rises, calling for the independent mobilisation of tenants and workers through the formation of tenants and community associations and the trade unions. The election campaign culminated on Thursday with over thirty activists working in the ward to achieve a majority of over 1,400 for Labour.

## Lothian lost LAMBETH IN THE BALANCE

by Cheung Siu Ming

AGAINST a trend which saw Labour increase its vote throughout Scotland, Labour lost control of Lothian Regional Council. Tory and Labour both have 22 seats, Alliance 3 and Independent and SNP 1 each. While it is only speculation why this happened, certain factors are obvious candidates for explanation. Some Labour supporters probably just didn't see the point. Despite the dismal surrender last year, Labour's manifesto this year proclaimed that only Labour could defend the level of services in Lothian. Yet it had nothing to say about how this would be done different from last year. The combination of large rate rises and the Falklands undoubtedly helped the Tories mobilise many more voters - the turnout in Tory seats was generally higher than in Labour seats. Rate rises would also have helped the Alliance attract dissatisfied Labour voters. On top of this the whole of the Tory TV broadcast on the Wednesday before the vote was devoted to slamming Lothian and the rates rises. But none of these can be taken in isolation. They all combined to produce an air of resignation, demoralisation and apathy amongst the voters who would normally have voted Labour.

set the price of cooperation at a Liberal in the Education Committee chair. The Regional Labour Party rejected any idea of trying to form an administration at its meeting on Sunday 9 May. This seemed to have the support of those councillors present. However the RLP made no attempt to work out a strategy to fight the cuts which the Tories will inevitably carry through. Tory Secretary for Scotland Younger has already said he will compromise over the proposed £45 million cutback in Rate Support Grant. The end result will probably be around £20 million in the form of a rates rebate meaning more non-filling of posts and some compulsory redundancies, the probable closing of the unemployed centre and of the Citizen's Rights Office, both of whose business has boomed since the Tories came to office.

LAMBETH did not escape from the national swing to the Tories. Labour failed to dislodge the Tories from marginal wards, and lost two wards in the south, Gipsy Hill and Clapham Park, to the Tories. In the north of the borough, a concentrated



Lambeth Labour leader Ted Knight

campaign by the SDP/Liberal Alliance enabled them to retain their 2 seats won in the Bishop's ward by-election (after Lambeth's disastrous supplementary rate in 1981), and also to take 3 Labour seats from Princes ward, traditionally the most marginal ward in Vauxhall. Now the Tories with 27 and the SDP/Liberal Alliance

with 5 exactly match Labour's 32. The four or five Labour councillors to the right of the new Labour Group leadership will be able to dictate terms at every stage of the Council's next four years. And maybe worse: the current Labour mayor has announced that he owes no allegiance to the Labour Party because he was not shortlisted by any ward to fight this election. If he refuses to nominate a Labour councillor as the next mayor, then con-

trol of the Council could go to the Tories. Lambeth is now in a weaker position than ever before to launch a fight against the Tory cuts. We are paying for the previous policies of delaying the day of confrontation by rate rises, cuts in services and staffing. All the left-wing councillors now elected need to study the record of Lambeth Council in 1978 to 1982 and to draw the key lesson - when you start a fight against the Tories, take it through to the end!

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## Mellish sinks Labour

IN Southwark, Labour gained 12 seats from the SDP but lost three seats in Riverside ward to "independent Labour" candidates led by Coral Newell and publicly supported by Bermondsey Labour MP Bob Mellish. Don Shiach, chair of Bermondsey Labour Party, told Socialist Organiser: "We took everything else in Southwark that we really could have taken, but we lost Riverside. We attribute that directly to Mellish's intervention, and we're more than a bit angry about it. "We've gathered together all the evidence, and it has gone to the NEC Organisation Sub-Committee. "The Newell fraction ran a very unpleasant campaign of smear and innuendo against Labour. And of course Newell's two running mates are not members of the Labour Party. Mellish was giving support to two people who are nothing to do with the Party."

## LEFT SAVES TOWER HAMLETS

by Susan Carlyle

THE victory for Labour in retaining control of Tower Hamlets can largely be attributed to the left wards and activists who organised and campaigned for left policies. Where the right have dominated in the party Labour seats were lost overwhelmingly to 'Focus' Liberals, or narrowly saved. But in two Bow and Bethnal wards the Liberal majorities were cut back by the campaigning left. Where no threat of opposition parties was posed the right wing were returned on average polls. The Leader of the Labour Group was not even challenged and was elected unopposed. The SDP showing was so poor that they were beaten into the lower end of the polls, except in Blackwall and Shadwell. In wards where Bengali candidates

were standing they probably took most of the racist anti-black vote. In St. Katherine's ward, where a total of 14 candidates stood, there was an overwhelming 1,000 plus vote for two Bengali Labour councillors, a vindication of the ward's policy to select them. In contrast, in Spitalfields, where there is an unfortunate history of Bengalis' and others' applications being stalled, the Bengali protest vote was strongly registered and a 'left' independent candidate returned. But many of the 'independent' supporters divided their vote, backing Labour candidates and many Bengalis applied to join the party over the election period, seeing this as part of the fight against the right wing council and against Tory policies.

## FIGHT FOR CONTROL

BASINGSTOKE last week went against the national trend, with the Tories losing four seats and control of the council. Labour, fighting on a more progressive manifesto than in previous years, took three seats from the Tories, and the other went to a Liberal. The SDP had to be content with one seat. Kings Furlong ward, where I stood, reverted to norm by going Tory. Labour won it in a by-election last year when a Tory councillor resigned during our rent strike against the Tories' 67% increase. Labour group standing orders have been changed to bring more control to the Party. But first indications are that it is going to take a few reselection conferences yet before some of the longer-standing councillors realise that the GC means to have a real say in Group affairs, and that policy is going to have to be carried out. MARTIN TIMMINS

## Coalition

It seems likely that the Tories will form the administration in an informal coalition with the Alliance. Tory group leader Brian Meek has expressed his group's willingness to "be reasonable" and noises from Liberal councillor Donald Corrie seem to

## Scots rebuff for Tories

by Ian McCalman

THE jingoism which favoured the Thatcher administration in last week's local elections, found no echo north of the border. Here the swing against the Tories which was marked in 1978 was further strengthened this time round. In Glasgow Region, which in terms of population is half of Scotland, the Tories were annihilated, being left with only 15 seats out of a total of over 100 on

the Regional Council compared with 24 last time. In Grampian they only just held overall control and seats were also lost in other regions. Overall, a traditional anti-imperialism characteristic of the Scottish labour movement, has helped deliver this rebuff to the Tory government. Given positive direction it could be the source of a powerful challenge to Thatcher and her warlords.

# Islington: left sweeps out SDP

by Alan Clinton

THE extraordinary result achieved in the 6 May council election in Islington was a direct result of enthusiasm, mass mobilisation and socialist policies.

The council now has 51 Labour members out of 52, with a strong and militant left wing. This was achieved despite a more than normally vitriolic local press witch-hunt and despite determined opposition from the SDP who had deserted from the Labour Party to seize control of the Council in recent months.

These old right wing hacks won consistent media coverage locally and nationally, but have now been swept into the oblivion they so richly deserved.

In defiance of all that right wing Labour leaders say, this was a victory achieved on commitments which include no cuts and a one year freeze on rents.

Although there is not a commitment to freeze rates as some of us wished, nevertheless they are to be kept

within the level of wage inflation.

Labour's manifesto also included commitments to women and to gays and policies to stop the harassment of ethnic minorities.

## Plans

Most important of all it includes plans for massive decentralisation of services and greater democratic control and accountability in all the council's activities.

It was on left wing policies that the election was won. Throughout the Borough large Labour majorities were returned.

In only a few cases did the SDP or their Liberal associates achieve second place. Only in Clerkenwell ward did they actually get a seat, unfortunately at the expense of Socialist Organiser supporter Nik Barstow. This was by a majority of only one vote after some of Nik's votes had been disallowed on a technicality.

As we go to press a legal case is being considered.

Four other Socialist Organiser supporters were successfully returned.

The new Labour council is far to the left of any of its predecessors. A red flag will fly above the town hall this week and 'The Red Flag' will be sung at the beginning of Council meetings; and more significantly, all evictions have been stopped, shared single tenants have been given security of tenure, and special committees are being established with their own budgets and staffs to cater for women and ethnic minorities.

## Heady

These are heady, busy days for the new councillors. A joint meeting of the Group and local government committee representing local parties held on Sunday took the main decisions about new committees and chairs.

Leader Margaret Hodge, Deputy Valerie Veness and

# SDP: no room for complacency

by Nigel Williamson

IT WOULD be hard to pretend that the local election results on May 6 were good for Labour. Not to win control of London boroughs like Wandsworth and Hammersmith was disappointing; to lose control in places like Lothian and Walsall was disastrous. However, a very large crumb of comfort is to be found in the almost total annihilation of the Alliance, and in particular, the SDP, who fared far far worse than even the poor showing of their Liberal colleagues.

While the Liberals gained 160 seats, the SDP had a net loss of 49 - quite some achievement for a party that did not even exist last time round, and so had few seats to lose.

The SDP/Liberal Alliance does not now control a single local authority anywhere in Britain. The Liberals were turfed out in Liverpool, could not win an overall majority in Richmond, and, most dramatically of all, of the 25 seats they held in Islington by defection, they could only retain one by election.

In other words, the realignment of the right has flopped. Undoubtedly the Malvinas had something to do with this: on that we can all agree with Bill Rodgers. But it is pathetic

and disingenuous of him and other SDP leaders to claim that these results were somehow good for the SDP.

Yes, they can look to increased percentages on previous Liberal votes, but the fact is that if the SDP cannot win now, at the height of their media coverage and novelty, they will never win anywhere.

Many of the "political virgins", as the SDP leadership refers to them somewhat patronisingly, will now drift out of politics and back to the obscurity from which they came.

They had genuinely convinced themselves that all they had to do was to be good and nice and all things to all people and they would sweep the board. Many of them will be dispirited and disillusioned to such an extent that they will be unable to cope with their catastrophic defeat and will quit the political stage completely.

However, it may be premature to bury the SDP completely, although they can certainly stop talking about forming "the next government."

But they may still remain a threat in that a small rump of SDP MPs could form a coalition with the Tories or forge an informal alliance with right wing Labour MPs to block legislation on, for

example, withdrawal from the EEC.

So there is no room for complacency. If the electorate rejected so-called "moderation" in the form of the SDP and right wing Labour control in Birmingham, it also rejected more progressively-minded Labour policies in places like Brent, Lambeth, Lothian and Walsall.

The most important factor in this must have been the Malvinas. While not look-

LONDON Labour Briefing is organising a 'down-to-earth working conference' on Saturday June 19 around a statement signed by a number of candidates, many of whom are now successful councillors.

The statement publicly commits them, on taking office, to:

1. Defend jobs, services and living standards of the people of London.
2. Refuse to cut council provisions, no matter what pressures and threats are exerted.
3. Defy District Auditor's directives, except where they concern investigation into corruption or related matters.
4. Not tolerate the present level of racial harassment and attacks on people from ethnic minorities, street assaults on women and other forms of crime in London.

The conference will be chaired by Arthur Latham, chairperson of the Greater London Labour Party. The speakers will be drawn from successful Labour Councillors.

The conference will seek to deal with a whole gamut of options and possibilities for newly elected councillors to enable them to break out of the straight-jacket of the municipal committee-itis and link up with the real muni-

Group chair Sally Gilbert are all women. This must be some kind of record. Left wingers were elected to a number of leading positions, including myself as Chief Whip.

Important changes in style and content have come in with the new council. The issue will soon become whether we are prepared to stick with our commitments and fight whatever comes at us from the Tory government as a result.

To ensure this we will need to sustain the kind of support, enthusiasm and mass involvement that characterised the election campaign. Then more than ever will there be a crying need to organise the left.

# Camden shift

Graham Shurety, elected in the Somers Town ward of Camden, reports on the defeat of the SDP there:

The voters of Camden returned a council almost identical in balance to the last election in 1978. But the Labour Group has moved significantly to the left.

Compared to the previous regime, there has been a vast improvement. But is it sufficient to face the tasks ahead? The councillors from the old Camden Labour Left, which fought against cuts and rent/rate rises, will have to meet, map out a political basis to unite with the unions and tenants in the borough and continue the fight started over the last two years.



JOHN HARRIS

Foot: imperialist stance

ing for one single scapegoat the weak, decrepit and clapped out leadership or lack of it from Michael Foot with its national unity appeal actually gave credence to those who perceived the election as an opportunity to cast their vote in support of the "national war effort".

The imperialist stance of Foot and the whole Labour front bench has had disastrous consequences for the labour movement. Many of those Labour candidates who were defeated on May 6 will now be asking is Foot the right person to be leading Labour into the next general election?

# STANDING FIRM AGAINST CUTS

ON many Labour councils the Left is now stronger than it was. But usually the left-wingers determined to fight to the end against the Tories' cuts are still a minority. And the fight against the cuts will depend heavily on those minorities standing up and being heard.

Ray Davies has been standing up for a 'no-cuts' policy in Mid-Glamorgan for two years now - and for his pains he has been suspended from the Labour Group. The National Executive Committee has now turned down his appeal and declared that he must remain suspended for another six months.

## Ray Davies replies:

During the last two years I've been fighting and campaigning on a firm no cuts platform, both in the valleys of South Wales and throughout the trade union movement.

The main thrust of my argument has been the policies of our party as determined by national conference.

How can I publicly campaign in the outside community on a firm 'no cuts'

position and then calmly go into the Council Chamber and vote in public expenditure cuts which cost jobs, services, etc.

In 1980 I voted against public expenditure cuts in the Council Chamber (contrary to the Group decision).

The whip was withdrawn from me and the NEC upheld my appeal.

In November 1981 I again voted against a large package of cuts. I moved reference back and related my resolution specifically to emergency resolution number 3 on Local Government cuts as passed by the 1981 Annual Conference.

I was again expelled from the group and had the whip withdrawn. My appeal was couched in exactly the same terms as in my 1980 appeal, and yet the NEC has seen fit to turn down my appeal.

Where is the consistency? To whom must we show loyalty, Group standing orders or Party Conference decisions?

I firmly believe I've been dealt with unjustly. I ask that a) the NEC reviews the case, b) reconsiders its decision, c) allows someone outside the Welsh Region to examine the whole case.

"The imminent legislation announced by Michael Heseltine on 24 September will remove the last vestige of independence from local government.

A decision to restrict the financial contribution of industry and commerce to the cost of local services will place an impossible burden of rates on working people and their families throughout the country.

This, together with further reductions of government grants and subsidies, will mean that Labour councils will be unable to maintain even the minimum housing, education and social services programmes.

Conference, therefore, resolves to mount a major campaign to defeat the proposed legislation. Should this fail, Conference believes that Labour councillors must refuse to make the cuts that will be needed to balance the books.

Conference, therefore, calls on the National Executive Committee to coordinate the struggle of Labour councillors making this stand, and calls on the trades unions, who face thousands of their members joining the dole queues, to use their strength to defend Labour councils in this fight."

# Conference for socialist councillors

by Vidya Anand (London Labour Party Executive, in personal capacity)



Rodgers claims good results. But the SDP lost 49 seats.

socialist action or a real commitment to the manifesto. Specially when the going gets rough!

We feel that the experiences of last year have by no means been all negative. The relentless pressure on the elected comrades - MPs and Councillors - has often yielded the required results, even if in some cases, for reasons other than accountability. Never has the power of CLPs and trade union branches been stronger than today!

Gone, I hope, are the days when the MPs, Councillors and trade union officials could evade the democratic process of being monitored by those who have put them there. The wind of accountability is blowing, and in its wake it will sweep away 'pocket' and 'rotten' boroughs - whether in the party or in the trade unions.

The conference will seek to debate, discuss and develop common socialist strategies on a whole range of issues, including: the fight against cuts, the problem of council bureaucracy, and equal opportunity in local

authorities. Most important of all, it will seek to deal with the ways and means of mobilising public opinion outside the town halls, in support of the socialist policies which councillors will be seeking to introduce through the mesh of council meetings and their endless committee structures.

Too many comrades appear to have managed to enter the party simply to advance their personal careers rather than to serve the party or its ideals. The municipal limelight - and dim it often is - is seen by them as a first hesitant step towards a career in the regional authority or parliament.

The task is to test the comrades on the basis not of wild promises at selection conferences but their actions and deeds.

Conference of Labour councillors and Labour Activists, called by London Labour Briefing  
June 19, 11am to 5pm.  
Credentials from:  
Jim Ring, 52 Stonard Rd., London N13. Price £1.  
Full agenda to follow  
SPONSORED BY  
The following members of the Executive Committee of the GLRC:  
Jeremy Corbyn, Vidya Anand, Paul Franklin, Mark Feeny, Andy Love, Nadine Finch, Neale Coleman, Conor McAuley, John Considine, Nick Bradley, Eddie McParland, Kevin Ramage, Bob Labi.  
A creche is available

# PRIVATISATION: TORY HANDS IN

## THE TILL

Birmingham's new Tory council is licking its lips and sharpening its knife to cut a profitable slice out of public services.

On their 'hit list' for hiving off are refuse collection, housing management, school meals, swimming baths, leisure services, and park maintenance.

This wholesale plan for looting the public services and handing profits to Tory businessmen is part of a generalised attack by the Thatcher government on nationalised industries and the public sector.

In Wandsworth and in Peterborough struggles are currently under way against such "hiving off" — with its implications of wholesale loss of jobs and attacks on the working conditions of public sector employees.

In this feature, JOHN McILROY surveys the present drive towards privatisation — and its implications for the working class.

they are better off".

The Saatchi and Saatchi syrup slithers over what really happened on 1 April 1981. Out of a sacked workforce of 232 only about 70 were given jobs. No shop steward or union activist was re-employed. Most are still part of the miserable 4 million.

"You don't need a union when you've got a boss like that" says the advert. When it took over the contract Exclusive Cleaning hired a gang of thugs armed with pickaxes, handles, cricket bats, etc. to stop the ex-council workers picketing.

Smith had to request police protection to clear out his desk, and the heavies accompanied dustmen on their rounds for nearly three months after the new contract was awarded.

### Wages

Having claimed that the men were overpaid, Exclusive Cleaning now claim the new workforce are earning more! Arthur Smith counters that the hours are longer and claims that earnings have in reality been cut under Exclusive.

One man who regularly took home £85 to £90 now gets only £67.60 and has had to apply for a rent rebate.

Sickness pay, holidays (cut from six to three weeks) and pensions have all deteriorated. The council itself admitted that privatisation means "a loss of some benefits such as good pension rights and sickness allowances."

Central to the campaign has been the argument that private companies provide

better service and save the ratepayers' money. Arthur Smith argues that the service is in no way superior. He also questions the half a million saving for ratepayers that Evans claims.

### Sacked

Redundancy payments to the sacked workers alone were £472,000. Exclusive has doubled charges for collecting trade refuse. Its contract with the council enables it to charge the full economic cost, and it expects to collect £230,000 in the coming year, compared to £115,000 collected by the council in 1980/81.

Moreover, Exclusive have got a new deal from the council workshops which means vehicle maintenance will cost £100,000 a year compared with the previous £250,000.

Refuse vehicles and other council assets were transferred to Exclusive Cleaning at knock-down prices.

Finally, Southend Council's Resources and Planning Manager, Richard Cresswell, has found himself a new job. You've guessed it... the reptile who was involved in handing the contract over to David Evans now works for Exclusive as a project engineer.

### Showpiece

Far from being as the advert states "a great example of private enterprise achieving so much more than public enterprise" Southend is a carefully managed showpiece. Under the gilt lies the grime: sackings, speed up, no



BL's Prestcold sold off assets worth nearly £20 million for £9 million.

trade unions, worse service at a greater cost.

Exclusive, however, are busy cashing in on their showpiece. As copies of their successful Southend tender change hands at £100 per copy they have signed a contract with Eastbourne Council and are talking to the Tories in Wirral.

Other exotic birds of prey have been quick to scent easy pickings. In Wandsworth, Exclusive were undercut by Pritchard Industrial Services in a fight for a five year 4½ million pound contract. Peter Pritchard runs a worldwide cleaning, private medicine and security guard service. Last year his 14,000 British

They are being backed by Job Ownership Ltd., financed by the Rowntree Trust. Two of their organisers Robert Oakeshott and J. Grimond have promised maximum support.

Put up to it or genuine these people are acting as a dangerous diversion. To get the contract they would have to act as a collective David Evans, driving down conditions to undercut private capital.

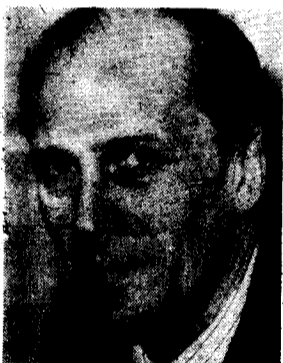
Confusion may be caused by the fact that it is a Labour council that is involved in contracting out. Labour Weekly on 19 February carried a report that Tower Hamlets Council in London was considering privatising some of its services.

Another danger is that councils who are only toying with privatisation will use it as a sprat to catch mackerel. Barnet, who rejected it, used its threat as a potent bargaining weapon. NUPE official Jeremy Corbyn said when the workers accepted the loss of 66 jobs: "They felt that they had a shotgun at their head and had to accept".

### Action

In the short term the answer is to fight for industrial action right at the start with a determined campaign to black every other operation of the companies putting in tenders. Barnet gave as one reason for staying public the fact that there would be a delay before the contractors could take over and in the meantime a strike could have a devastating impact.

"I hope workers from all over the country will learn from our mistakes. The only way to fight is through all-out strike action from the moment a council discusses the possibility of privatisation."



Norman Tebbit wants to sell off the Job Centres.

The speaker is Arthur Smith, former TGWU convenor of the dustmen in Southend-on-Sea, Essex. Arthur was addressing a recent meeting in Liverpool about the privatisation of municipal cleaning which came into effect on 1 April 1981. He is going round the country talking about his experiences as he feels that it is very much a question of Southend yesterday, other dustmen tomorrow.

You have probably seen the quarter of a million pound advertising campaign that Exclusive Cleaning (the company which won the Southend contract has mounted in the papers, urging other councils to follow suit.

Exclusive's Chairman, David Evans, a councillor and Chairman of St. Albans Highways Committee (he describes himself as "a born capitalist and a fierce right winger") was the hit of last year's Tory conference. Evans's declared salary for 1980/81 was £36,000 and he owns two Rolls Royces. He claims that his company has been approached by 40 councils and expects at least a dozen to go private in 1982.

### Cut

The immediate reason for privatisation is the Tories' pressure on local councils to cut spending. Companies like Exclusive Cleaning (part of the Brengreen Group with a £30 million turnover employing 17,000 part-timers out of a labour force of 20,000) are looking for new business in the face of factory closures.

Generally this part of the Tories' agenda and ideological onslaught on the working class is aimed at... and the... because...

As recently as 1963 a (Tory) government committee, looking at over 100 years experience of the incompatibility of capitalists like Evans and public health, stated "Local Authorities should not employ contractors to collect household refuse".

Today, however, the Department of Environment pressures councils to contract out not only refuse collection but school catering, housing and road maintenance, while the press propagates the image of municipal workers as workshy and overpaid.

As the Southend Standard said of Arthur Smith's comrades "Over the years, the workmen had built up a nice little number which meant many could get a fair week's pay for less than a fair week's work. Then they screwed overtime out of the council (well, that means we ratepayers) in ludicrous fashion" (3.3.81).

Heard that somewhere before? Train drivers? Car workers?

A big factor in Southend was that union organisation had developed apace during the seventies, protecting workers and stopping cost cutting. This is a vital factor behind Exclusive Cleaning's claim that ratepayers are getting a better service and saving the... and the... because...



Municipal laundries are prime targets for the private profiteers

\*No to privatisation! The problems of mass unemployment and crumbling social services can only be resolved through a planned socialist economy: the fight must be for workers' control and to prepare for workers' management within the nationalised industries.

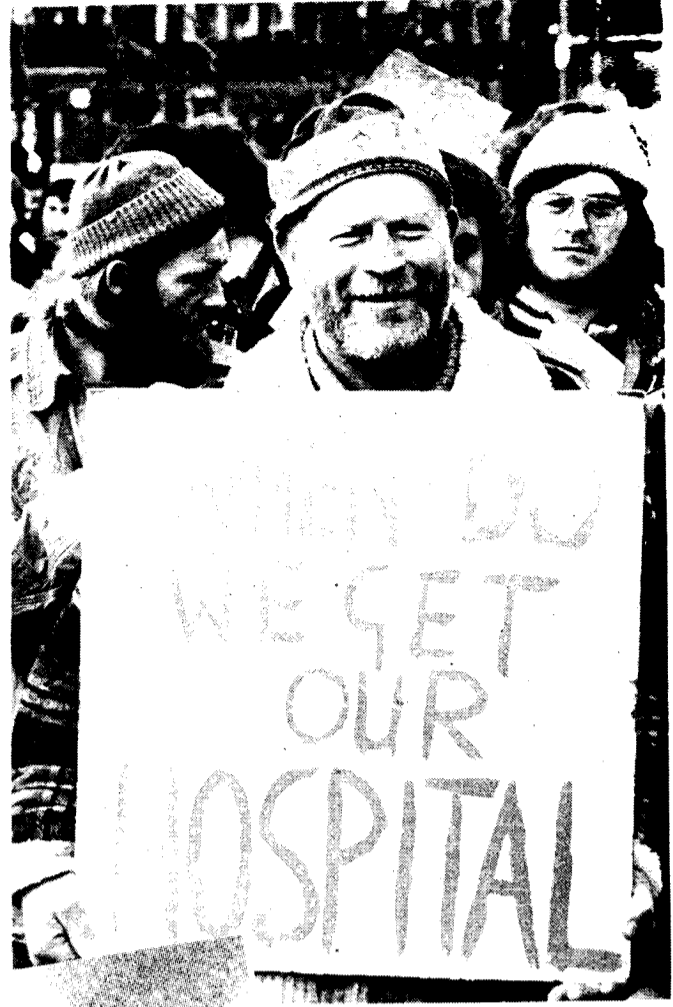
\*Open the books of the public sector — particularly those faced with Tory privatisation plans. Expose the links between the public services and the network of private suppliers, contractors and bankers who reap profits from them. Prove the case to the workers' movement for mass action to force the nationalisation of the banks and other major industries without compensation, as part of a socialist plan for full employment and improved public services!

\*Defend all jobs and working conditions! For strike action, occupations and full supporting blacking action to halt the hiving off of public services and nationalised industries. Force the union leaders to call all-out action! Kick out the Tory government!

\*Labour Party policy, adopted in 1980, is to "restore to public ownership, without compensation, the assets of our public sector industries sold off by the



Tories (below) sell off the profitable bits like North Sea oil, for the benefit of Stock Exchange sharks, while (right) essential public services are starved of funds



The TUC have produced a pamphlet condemning privatisation of cleaning services and to provide public sector trade unionists with ammunition against it. However, workers faced with this threat will have to rely on themselves. One initially useful step would be the convening of a cross union conference of stewards involved in Municipal Cleansing.

This would provide an opportunity to discuss the lessons of the privatisation experience, break down isolation, establish links and coordinate strategy. It is something all members of the TGWU and GMWU should think about.

We need however, to link the fight against privatisation of cleansing services with the entire privatisation strategy of the Tory government.

This was summed up by

the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Nicholas Ridley, who said last December, "The vast majority of people in this country have already come to the same conclusion as us: that we should try and return everything to the private sector that is nationalised... that is what we are doing".

The thinking behind this is simple: the parts of publicly owned industry which are potentially profitable will be gobbled up by thrusting capitalists. The screws will be turned upon the reduced workforce, and more surplus value sweated out.

The parts of publicly owned industry which are unprofitable will be destroyed, but their destruction will raise average productivity across the economy.

Thatcher is restrained by the resilience of the workers' movement, the cautious response of capital and the fact that private capital simply cannot operate some services which nonetheless are vital to capitalism.

The Tories have moved, however, slowly but surely. The first step was British Aerospace in 1980. BA workers are now facing 3,000 redundancies.

This was followed by "Britain's biggest ever employee buy-out", the National Freight Company. The management of the NFC proposed last June that they, the 26,000 employees, and 18,000 pensioners should buy the company from the government as an alternative to a sell-off to the private sector.

This was advertised as an answer to the crisis, but it is difficult to see the conditions of workers being improved under this hybrid coop or its prospects being bright in a tough market. NFC has declared 10,000 redundancies over the last 2½ years and profits have been eroded.

Yet workers' financial participation will in reality be very limited. The 2,000 middle managers have subscribed about £1,600 each to provide the bulk of the minimum needed for the scheme to go ahead, with the top 20 managers subscribing up to £25,000 each.

**Shares**

Another success for the Tories was their £224 million disposal of a near-50% stake in the Cable and Wireless Telecommunications Group. Investors were prepared to pay about £200 million for shares in the

group, and by the deadline last October the issue was almost four times over-subscribed.

The Tories are also looking to the future in a determined way. They insisted that small shareholders should be favoured, both to meet the needs of their "small business" ideology and to increase the problem of renationalisation by a Labour government.

The looting of British Leyland has also continued. The Forklift subsidiary at Coventry has been sold off to Climax Holdings, and Marshall and Son are buying up the machinery distribution rights and order books of the tractor plant at Bathgate.

**Assets**

Typical of the way the Tories want privatisation to work was the sell-off of the Prestcold part of BL's special products division. Abell, a self-made millionaire was in charge of this division from 1975 to 1978. When he left to take charge of Leyland Vehicles the Financial Times stated "that he must take responsibility for their (Prestcold's) financial near collapse".

But it was all in a good cause. When Abell left Leyland Vehicles in January 1981 he became head of Suter Engineering, a medium-sized engineering firm.

**Grief**

A year ago British Steel reached an agreement on the creation of Phoenix 1, a joint project for the rationalisation of wire rod and bar production. This 50-50 owned operation is now trading as a new company, Allied Steel and Wire, outside BSC control.

However, the attempt to inject a further private sector element into the steel industry through involving BSC and Glen with three other companies in the production and marketing of engineering steels - Phoenix 2 - has come to grief, despite Thatcher's high prioritisation of the privatisation of parts of the steel industry.

Similarly, the scandal surrounding the sale of Amersham International - a public sector company dealing with radioactive material used in health care - when it was found that merchant bankers N.M. Rothschild had underpriced the share issue by £25.5 million, has led to greater scrutiny of the Tories' policies. Even Tory backbencher Edward D. Cann called for an inquiry.

**Greed**

money that headed for the Government's latest privatisation offering Amersham International has been under-riding. It has once again labelled the City as the nation's chief repository of greed. And Amersham is not an isolated case. British Aerospace a year ago and Cable and Wireless last Autumn were similar tales if on a lesser scale.

At the moment Thatcher intends to drive ahead with four main projects:

- \*The selling off of British Telecom.
- \*The floating of the British National Oil Corporation's production and exploration interests.
- \*The privatisation of British Gas's oil assets.
- \*The hiving off of British Airways.

**Gravy**

All of these schemes are presenting problems. It has been revealed that Rothschild have already been paid £7 million for its work on the carve up of BNOC even before legislation has been passed enabling the sale.

As the Oil and Gas Enterprise Bill which will give the Tories sell-off power goes through Parliament, Gavin Laird (AUEW) and Clive Jenkins, ASTMS member of the BNOC Board, have denounced the proposals to sell BNOC into a publicly owned trading arm and a production and exploration company with shares and bonds.

prices knocking several hundred million pounds off the sale value of BNOC assets.

The majority of the BNOC Board want privatisation but they disagree on method and timing.

But in British Gas, Sir Ernest Woodroffe, a member of the Board and self-confessed "staunch Conservative", has opposed the selling off of assets. A detailed 500 page investigation into British Airways' troubled finances drawn up by top accountants Price Waterhouse, has questioned the viability of a carve-up when BA is £11 million in debt.

As the Guardian commented, "the private sector is remarkably reluctant to buy something that is losing £200 million a year".

Yet capitalists are salivating to get their gobs into the rich gravy of British Telecom. The Chancellor announced in the Budget a BT bond which would allow the corporation to raise up to £150 million from private investment.

This is not now likely to go ahead. Instead half the shares will be simply sold off to "the public" with a Bill being rushed through in October.

Last year's Telecommunications Act allowed BT to take stakes in commercial partnerships. Its first major venture was to link with British Aerospace and Marconi to form United Satellites to provide direct satellite broadcasting. Now the private sector will share with BT the new cable revolution which will offer multi-channel TV plus electronic mail, home banking, shopping, security and information services.

Just at the right time the Prime Minister's advisory panel on information technology published its report on cable TV. "I believe that there is a consensus that this is a good development and should be cashed in on" said Charles Read, its chairperson.

Consensus? Certainly, on the panel. They consisted of the Managing Directors of Mullard Ltd (electronics manufacturers), Rediffusion Ltd (heavily involved in cable TV) and Information Technology Ltd.

"Cash in" Assorted Owners' Business News comments: "British Telecommunications and Cable companies BNOC, BSC and GEC are expected to be the main beneficiaries of the sale of BNOC assets. The sale of BNOC assets will be worth £200 million to the Treasury and £100 million to the shareholders of BNOC."

Tories". Yet when Tony Benn referred to this policy in Parliament last November he was publicly upbraided by Foot and the Party's right wing.

The fight against privatisation requires that the renationalisation policy be upheld, and implemented - and that those leaders who reject it be removed.

\*The establishment of a socialist society offering jobs and decent living conditions for all requires not just the defeat of the Tories but the fight for a new leadership in the labour movement.

Previous Labour governments have administered capitalism in collusion with the bosses and bankers, basing themselves on the established state machine ignoring or defying Labour's rank and file.

What we need is a workers' government - a government based on the labour movement and accountable to it, taking decisive measures against the bosses' state machine and capitalist privilege.

The Left must therefore organise and fight to transform the labour movement: to democratise it, to win accountability; and to arm it with the will, the mass involvement, and the clear policies necessary to enable it to push through working class solutions to the crisis of capitalism.

# Women in struggle



# Hackney boost for right to work campaign

by Karen Hammond

ON 24 April, Hackney Women's Right to Work held a one-day conference attended by 40 women. The aim of the conference was two-

fold. Firstly to advertise and build support for a national demonstration and festival on June 5. Secondly to

launch a campaign in the local area which would take up the whole issue of women's working conditions in Hackney.

Hackney's high percentage of sweat shops of non-unionised small clothing factories made the tasks of organising the conference

difficult. Yet there is a dire need for such a campaign in Hackney. For example, between 1975 and 1979 there was a loss of 10.3% of women's full-time jobs, compared with 1% for men.

Many Hackney women are homeworkers and there are 4,000 who are employed as contract cleaners, working less than 16 hours a week and so unprotected by employment laws.

## Factory

They can be hired and fired at will and since 1971 pay and conditions have rapidly deteriorated. Nearly half the cleaners earn less than £1.05 an hour. Another large employer of women in Hackney is a toy factory called Lesneys. Women at Lesneys have no job security because they are employed on 3-monthly contracts.

The conference, which was attended by trade unionists and Labour Party members among others, began with an introduction to the situation of women workers in Hackney.

This was followed by workshops on a variety of areas from public employees and unemployed women to nursery facilities.

The afternoon took the form of action workshops where how to organise and fight against redundancies was discussed; the stand up and be counted campaign; positive action; YOPs schemes; and how to build for the national demonstration and festival.

## Unions

It was felt that we needed to take our recommendations back into the local unions and Labour Council in order to make our demands realisable.

In fact, looking back over the last few months, prior to the conference the most positive and encouraging thing is that the women present that day decided to take the campaign for women's right to work further and not let the fight end on June 5.

# TERROR - IN THE FAMILY HOME

THAT men who rape 8 year old girls should be encouraged to continue their association with their victims, that efforts should be made not to disrupt their "loving relationship" is a pretty horrifying proposition. Yet that is precisely the view that prevails when the man happens to be the child's father.

Sarah Nelson in a carefully argued but shocking book "Incest - Fact and Myth" exposes the attitudes of "caring agencies" and the "experts" in the field and contrasts them with the reality.

Incest is defined officially as sexual intercourse between closely related individuals. This inadequate definition leaves out other forms of sexual abuse which do not include penile penetration but may be equally traumatic for the victim. And it does not include sexual acts committed by men who may be in similar positions of power and authority over the child but are not related by blood - such as mothers' lovers or boyfriends.

## Facts

Even using the narrow definition, the facts are startling.

The overwhelming majority of incest cases are between fathers and daughters, and most of the rest are step-fathers and step-daughters, or grand-fathers and grand-daughters.

The average age of the victim when the incestuous assaults begin is somewhere between 8 and 10 years old, though cases have been reported of incest starting when the child is a toddler and continuing till she reaches adulthood. Once begun it very often continues regularly for several years.

These facts rather

demolish the myth that incest is a once-in-a-lifetime fall from grace on the part of the father.

The physical effects on the victim are stomach-turning. Victims suffer vaginal tears and infections, ulceration and several venereal diseases. They often develop psychosomatic symptoms such as migraines, stomach pains and skin disorders.

## Violence

In addition, in many cases, physical violence is used to compel the girl's cooperation including battering, burning and locking or tying them up.

Since incest persists over many years, another under-reported effect is pregnancy. Sarah Nelson suggests that many instances do not come to light because of miscarriages and abortions, and paternity being attributed to another man e.g. a boyfriend.

But even so the figures suggest that pregnancy results in between 10 and 20% of cases.

An unwanted (sometimes abnormal) child, born to a mother maybe as young as 11 or 12, seems like just one more vicious twist to an already appalling situation.

On top of the physical effects, certain psychological damage appears with appalling frequency - depression, neurosis, and suicidal tendencies. Very often it takes the form of behavioural disturbances.

One therapist who treated 500 drug addicts found 70% had been child victims of sexual abuse. A worker involved with runaway adolescents noted that half were victims of sexual abuse (who could blame them for running away?). Various reports have suggested a link between incest and girls subsequently taking up prostitution.

In one study 25% of prostitutes interviewed had been incest victims. In another, 51 out of 103 prostitutes claimed their first sexual experience had been with their father.

Also many girls react by being completely turned off sex throughout their adult life. This can extend to other areas of their lives, so that they feel socially isolated, unable to communicate and unable to form close relationships with other people.

The most common reaction is self-disgust, feelings of degradation and worthlessness (which may go a long way towards explaining the other behavioural consequences).

The facts Sarah Nelson produces present a shattering toll of human misery, wrecked lives, damaged bodies and minds. But perhaps the most sickening aspect is how this contrasts with the received view of those who are supposed to help and the alleged "experts" in the field.

## Myths

She examines the most prevalent myths among the professions and exposes the reactionary assumptions behind them.

One of the commonest responses, as in rape, is to blame the victim. So, for example, the child is presented as sexually precocious or provocative, or it is claimed that she unconsciously desires sex with her father.

In contrast to the hysteria when a child is molested by a stranger the "experts" inveigh against notions of childhood innocence and Freud's theory of infantile sexuality is paraded.

There are several inconsistencies in this argument. It totally ignores the evidence that very often force is used to subdue the girl's opposition and that identifiable physical damage results: in this view, the child must not only be provocative, but mind-bogglingly masochistic.

It does not follow simply from the fact that a child is a sexual being that she deserves to be raped. We would not accept that argument for adult women, it should be even more intolerable for girls.

## Victory

Many of the victims report that they had no idea what was being done to them. Only much later they came to realise it was a sexual act and begin to feel guilt as well as their initial pain and fear.

"Unconscious" desires present an immediate double bind: "if they are uncon-

scious how can a child be held responsible for them? It reveals a staggering hypocrisy that girls are encouraged to be pretty, flirtatious "little women" and then accused of "provoking" rape.

The second response is to suggest that incest is an acceptable part of certain "subcultures" (read working class or poor deprived families). Apart from the nauseating class bias of this, it again ignores the facts.

Firstly, it is clear that neither the victim nor the perpetrator actually do see it as "acceptable": it is a "family secret", the victim feels degraded and abused, the father threatens further violence if she reveals their "secret".

Secondly, although much of the documentation comes from deprived, "low-class" families, this has more to do with how the act comes to light than any real evidence that it is more prevalent in these families.

Evidence from adult women who go for psychiatric treatment and reveal in the course of it a history of child abuse, indicates that it is just as common among "nice" middle class and

professional families, but that they are less likely to come to the attention of social workers or the police.

Another gambit is to blame the mother. She, through illness, overwork or attempts at independence, refuses to provide for her husband's sexual needs and therefore, it's only to be expected that he should turn elsewhere. The eldest daughter, especially, is a ready-made stand-in.

The mother then turns a blind eye as the pressure is off her.

## Mother

In fact the mother herself may also be the victim of violence and marital rape. She herself lives in fear and dare not or is unable to protect her daughter.

She may be ill, constantly pregnant or forced to work very long hours to provide for her family in a situation where the father does not work or spends all "his" money on himself.

But can the mother's actions honestly be seen as blameworthy? Is this another case of contributory negligence?

Underlying all the myths and scapegoating (and Sarah Nelson details many others) is a profoundly oppressive view of the family and the roles that should be acted out within it. It assumes a

view of male sexuality, that its demands are imperative and must be satisfied, that somehow men are helpless to control its overwhelming force and therefore not responsible for their sexual actions.

## Family

Really the only "must" is a social one: men can and will get away with it, women must satisfy them and repress their own desires and aspirations.

Far from the social workers' myth of the "disorganised family", with "disordered role allocation" the reality seems to be the opposite.

Incest takes place in families where the traditional roles are extremely rigid. The men do not expect to do any work round the house and demand to have their every whim, sexual and otherwise, pandered to. The women are in a literal sense slaves, unable to escape the situation and powerless to fight back. The girls are trained from a very early age to follow in their mothers' joyless footsteps.

While incest is not "normal" and we should refuse to accord it even that implied toleration, it does seem to be the case that its abnormality lies in the direction of being a highly exaggerated form of what are considered to be the normal duties of men and women.

**MARCH WITH US TO THE LABOUR PARTY WOMEN'S FESTIVAL AND RALLY**

**COME AND JOIN US ON JUNE 5th**

We'll be assembling at County Hall, Waterloo, from 10.30 and the march will start to move off at 11, and go to Battersea Park for the national Women's Festival and Rally organised by the Labour Party. There'll be women's bands, stalls, theatre, open-air discussion forums, a rally with national and international speakers, plus food, kids' entertainment & creche, and lots more.

JUNE 5th

WOMEN'S RIGHT TO WORK

HOW YOU CAN HELP

\* Come to the Action Committee meetings - there is a meeting every Monday evening at 7.15 at County Hall, Waterloo. Send us a donation. Publicise the march in your local press, at work, at college, at school, among your friends.

\* Leaflets from: Action Ctee for a Woman's Right to Work, 181 Richmond Road, London E8.

The march is called by the ACTION COMMITTEE FOR A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO WORK, and co-sponsored by the SOUTH EAST REGIONAL COUNCIL of the TUC, with the support of the London Labour Party, the Royal Arsenal Co-op Society, the National Union of Students, the Bakers' Union, and dozens of local groups, union branches and Labour women's sections, as well as all the major campaigns, groups and publications of the WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT.

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK

MARCH

WOMEN'S RIGHT TO WORK

JUNE 5th

New issue of Fightback - 10p plus postage from 41 Ellington St, London N7.

# MAY DAY ON THE WEST BANK



## Report from the Workers' League (Palestine)

PALESTINE - May Day was commemorated in the West Bank of the Jordan River and the Gaza Strip, occupied by Israel in 1967 by mass assaults on police stations, the setting up of barricades, throwing of stones at Israeli military vehicles, burning tyres on main roads and raising the Palestinian national flag.

The leadership of the trade unions in the territories occupied in 1967 had decided not to hold any May Day demonstrations and meetings in protest against the imposition of the Israeli 'civil administration' and the ousting of three elected Palestinian Mayors.

But in the village of Dura regarded as the fortress of the 'Village Leagues', an illegal mass demonstration was held.

After shouting slogans against these 'Village Leagues' - artificial bodies of collaborators with the Zionist occupation, set up by the Israeli Army in a desperate attempt to diminish the mass support of the Palestine Liberation Organisation - youth stormed the local police station,

broke whatever they could, and raised the Palestinian national flag on the roof.

In the Palestinian territories occupied in 1948, presently comprising the racist state of Israel, five major May Day demonstrations were held.

### Bused in

The Histadrut, branding itself 'the Confederation of Hebrew Workers' but actually the largest employer in Palestine, had organised a 15,000-strong demonstration marching under 'Zionist slogans such as "For a realising and colonising Zionism" and "For the Judaisation of the Galilee", as well as slogans supporting the Camp David imperialist accords.

The Histadrut has been one of the main backbones of the Zionist movement in Palestine since their early 1920s. The overwhelming majority of demonstrators were bused in from the privileged colony-settlements (kibbutzim).

The Histadrut marched under the flags of the racist state of Israel, with some red

flags for decoration, and ended by singing the Zionist hymn.

A similar demonstration was organised by the Histadrut in the Northern city of Haifa, with an attendance of 3,000.

A rival demonstration to that of the Histadrut was organised in Tel-Aviv by the Israeli Communist Party. This completely Stalinised party traditionally joins the demonstrations of the Histadrut - seeing in the Histadrut a genuine trade union with bad leadership, and denouncing any attempt by workers to organise outside the Histadrut - but was excluded this year from joining by the leadership of the Histadrut.

The CP demonstration also marched under combined Israeli and red flags - as the ICP is openly pro-Zionist, supporting the formation of the state of Israel, and vigorously defending its existence.

It differed from the Histadrut demonstrations by its composition, which was mainly working class.

The demonstrators carried slogans in support of the formation of a Pales-

tinian statelet beside the state of Israel, denouncing Israeli policy in the West Bank, and calling for Jewish-Arab brotherhood and Israeli-Soviet friendship.

There were two demonstrations, however, where no flags of the racist state of Israel were raised and only red flags could be seen. These were the demonstrations organised by the progressive nationalist Palestinian movements in the territories occupied in 1948.

### Decrees

One was held in Um-el-Fahem, the third largest Arab village in the 'Green Line', by the Abna-el-Balad ('sons of the village') movement. Leading members of this movement, and other progressive nationalist movements, have continuously been under restriction by the military authorities: they could not leave their own towns, and they had to register twice a day at the local police stations.

All these decrees are based on the 'Emergency Regulations', first introduced by British imperialism

when it ruled Palestine, and afterwards adopted by the Zionist state.

The second demonstration was held in Kabul, a village in Northern Palestine. This demonstration was jointly called by the Abna-el-Balad movements of Acre, Kabul, Lydda, Arabe, Sakhnin, the A-Nahda movement of Taybe, The Progressive Nationalist Movement groups in the universities of Haifa, Tel-Aviv, and Jerusalem, and the Workers' League.

### Joint

A joint committee of all these groupings, including the movement of Um-el-Fahem - the National Co-ordination Committee - was outlawed in February 1981 by the Military Commander, but each of these bodies continues to operate alone.

The Kabul demonstration was planned to include a march in the streets of the village, but this was cancelled after repeated police threats that such a march would mean shootings and deaths.

The 300 demonstrators who gathered in Kabul shouted slogans such as "Popular Revolution", "May Day - a holiday of the revolution and revolutionists", "Revolution till the victory", "No substitute for the PLO", "The Golan Heights belong to Syria - not to Begin and his dogs", as well as "Crush Imperialism - build Socialism".

The participants stood

for a moment of silence in memory of the Palestinian martyrs. Eniyat Bour'al, a young woman representing the Abna-el-Balad movement of Lydda, reported on the recent police raids and attacks on the movement in Lydda. Three members were detained after a police frame-up. If prosecuted they could be imprisoned for long periods.

She was massively applauded. Lutfie Agbaria, a young woman representing the Progressive Nationalist Movement group in Tel-Aviv University, argued for the importance of the fight for the rights of women workers. An Arab Druze from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights told the demonstrators about the brutality of the Zionist army, and how the local Druze population has succeeded in maintaining an eight week strike against the annexation of the Golan Heights by Israel.

The representative of the PNM group in Jerusalem insisted on the importance of workers organising outside the Zionist Histadrut and the setting up of independent trade unions which will realise the unity of Arab and Jewish workers. In that he was joined by Henry Lowi, the Workers' League representative on the platform.

The Workers' League representative explained the need for solidarity with the independent trade union Solidarnosc in Poland, currently under heavy attacks. He went on to denounce the imperialist front around the latest British aggression over the Falklands.

After citing 'sources' in the Zionist army high command, quoted in the Zionist press the day before, which confirmed that the killings of Palestinian demonstrators in the West Bank are a deliberate policy intended "to cause an erosion in the number of Palestinian demonstrators and thus bring the demonstrations to an end" ('Ha'arets', 30.4.82) he went on to say that Arab-Jewish unity of struggle and the independence of the working class are necessary in order to bring about the liberation of the Palestinian homeland, the dismantling of the racist state of Israel, and the formation of a free, democratic Palestine, where Jews and Arabs will live in peace.

The demonstration - with a relatively large percentage of women participants and speakers, and reflecting the growth of the nationalist movement in the territories occupied in 1948 (more in the formation of young movements in new cities and villages than in direct numerical growth) - ended with the demonstrators singing revolutionary nationalist songs.



## Crisis watch

## A new empire?

by Martin Thomas

"If there is ever to be another British Empire, the South Atlantic is where it could be."

So said the Sunday Telegraph of May 9. You might expect that it was boosting the patriotic zeal of the gin-and-jag belt with visions of the recapture of the Falklands as the first step in a new spread of red on the map, with Princess Di sent out to Buenos Aires to be crowned Empress of Argentina.

But not at all. The Telegraph article, by oil company boss Colin Phipps, argued that Britain should hand over the Falklands to Argentina - but strike a hard bargain.

### Prize

The oil and gas resources of the South Atlantic are, he says, "the big prize".

Now: "Irrespective of the validity of the Argentine claim, in practice it will not be possible to exploit the Malvinas Basin, or to develop the Falklands themselves, without Argentine cooperation. There is already a well-established oil industry in central and southern Argentina and in southern Chile, and the infrastructure this provides will be essential for any major developments."

Thus Phipps proposes that Britain should offer Argentina a deal - Argentine sovereignty over the Falklands and a British/Argentine deal to split the loot from exploitation of the seas round the Falklands, in return for a firm British grip over the (much bigger) resources in the practically uninhabited regions of the further-out South Georgia and Sandwich Islands and of Antarctica.

Of course, Marxism does not (despite what many anti-Marxists say) compel us to believe that direct and immediate economic interests are always the guiding motive of capitalist policy.

### Guesswork

Phipps concedes that estimates of the oil resources of the South Atlantic are largely guesswork, and that "although the oil industry could certainly begin to exploit the Malvinas Basin today, it is unlikely that the South Atlantic would become exploitable much before the end of the century".

General considerations of prestige and saving face clearly weigh heavily with Thatcher.

But Phipps' article does make it clear that the British government's interests when it comes to make a deal in the South Atlantic are not quite what they would seem from all the froth about the Falklanders' rights and the horrors of the Argentine regime.

One final point. Phipps is now an oil company boss. But until three years ago he was... a Labour MP! With Labour MPs like that, who needs Tories?

May  
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## WHAT'S ON

Paid ads 5p per word, £4 per column inch. Send to Socialist Organiser (What's On), 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

**U.S. HANDS OFF El Salvador!** Demonstrate against Reagan's visit. Sunday June 6, 12.30 at Hyde Park, Monday June 7, 5.30 at US Embassy, Grosvenor Square. Tuesday June 8, 1pm, lobby of Parliament. Contact: Reagan Reception Committee, PO Box 51, London SW10.

**LUTTE OUVRIERE** fete: international festival of revolutionary socialism. Saturday to Monday, May 29-31, at Presles, Val d'Oise, France. A delegation of SO\* supporters will be going over to the fete: all comrades interested, please write to SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

**SUPPORT** the Palestinian people: rally, Saturday May 15, 12.30, from Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park, London. Organised by Palestine Solidarity Liaison Cttee.

**PROTEST** march against racist fire-bombings in Guildford. Saturday May 15, 1.30pm at Foxenden Quarry. Organised by Guildford CARF.

**KIGASS** strikers solidarity demonstration. Saturday May 15. Assemble 10am in Leamington: coaches at 9.30 from Pool Meadow, Coventry

### POLAND

Contact: Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group, 64 Philbeach Gardens, London SW5. 01-373 3492.

**LONDON Workers' Socialist League** classes on basic Marxism. Next one: Marxism and domestic labour. Friday May 14, 7.30pm. For details of venue, write to PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

**EL SALVADOR:** public rally in solidarity with FMLN and FDR. Saturday May 15, 7pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. Organised by El Salvador Solidarity Campaign.

**WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK:** call-back meeting from the March 27 trade union conference. Saturday May 15, 2pm, County Hall, London SE1.

### SOCIALIST ORGANISER MEETINGS & FORUMS

**SHEFFIELD:** Every other Wednesday, at the Brown Cow, The Wicker. Business 7.30, discussion 8.30. Next meeting May 26: 'The role of trade unionism'. June 9: 'Women's right to choose'.

**ISLINGTON:** Every other Friday, 7.30 at Caxton House, St John's Way, London N19. Next meeting May 14: Central America.

**EDINBURGH.** Monday May 17, 7.30pm, at the Trades Council, Picardy Place: 'Fighting the Cuts'.

**KILL THE TEBBIT BILL.** Mass rally organised by Yorks & Humberside Regional TUC. Sunday May 16, 10am to noon, Sheffield City Hall.

**WITHDRAW the Fleet:** Edinburgh demonstration against Thatcher's war. 11am, Waverley Bridge. May 15

**SOLIDARITY** with Chile, Central America, and the Caribbean. National conference, Saturday-Sunday May 22-23, starts 11am, Sheffield University. Sponsors include Sheffield & Rotherham Trades Councils. More details: Cath, 0742 588052.

**CLASS FIGHTER**

**INSIDE YOUR PAPER:** FREE THE BRADFORD 12

**WOMEN'S RIGHT TO WORK**

**STOP**

**SOUTH ATLANTIC: THATCHER'S SLAUGHTER HOUSE**

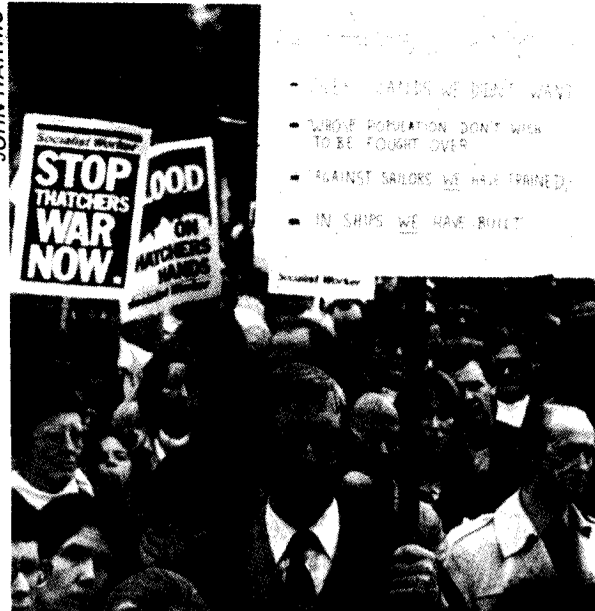
Class Fighter, paper of the National Left Wing Youth Movement of the I.P.Y.S. NEW ISSUE! OUT NOW! 10p plus postage from BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX.

# Writeback

We invite readers to send us their letters, up to a usual maximum length of 400 words. Send to 'Writeback', Socialist Organiser, c/o 28, Middle Lane, London N8.



JOHN HARRIS



## Nurses and strikes

THERE are a few points I'd like to make in regard to Anna Lunts' article on the NHS and strike action in SO 82.

Nurses have been striking and taking action for years prior to 1970, contrary to the article.

The following is a list of some actions taken:

1918 - in Anna Lunts' own hospital, the Prestwick Asylum, the National Asylum Workers Union withdrew 200 employees, and 429 from Wittingham Asylum over pay negotiations. A long struggle ensued, nurses blockaded

themselves in the Asylum and didn't allow anyone in.

There are reports of bloody fights with the police.

1937 - nurses in London had a sandwich board march through London, wearing black masks to avoid recognition.

They took some strike action, and all student nurses threatened to hand in a

month's notice unless they had a decent pay rise.

In 1949 the same actions occurred. Nursing history sees fit to emphasize this struggle by solely referring to the fact that the nurses were addressed by students standing on coal wagons.

Hope this puts a few facts right.

MARY IRESON  
Cardiff

## STANDING BY SCOTTS

I WAS very glad to see your coverage of the Laurence Scott dispute in SO82.

You are to be congratulated on continuing to support this beleaguered group of workers when so many others have deserted them.

After all they are still threatened by a legal bill for £6,000 and a case under Prior's Employment Act.

Particularly disgraceful has been the role of the SWP.

These people added to their 'Here today, gone tomorrow' reputation in industrial disputes.

When Scotts was 'where the action was' they would give elbow room and Socialist Worker had detailed coverage.

But once the hard defensive slog set in after the picketing of Doncaster was called off you couldn't see them for dust.

Since Christmas there hasn't been a word in Socialist Worker.

Lindsey Greig wrote a really bad article in Socialist Review in January, arguing that it was the mistakes of the workers that lost the strike.

He claimed that what happens in a workplace before a strike begins is decisive.

What a fatalistic recipe for passivity! Why did Greig bother with Scotts at all?

'That silly specimen' one of the strikers aptly commented 'wants his arse kicking'.

Of course mistakes were made; but the workers came forward tremendously as the strike developed and the going got rough. The betrayal of the union leaders and the lack of solidarity were the central problems: which brings us to the CP.

They did give moral and financial support.

For example at the November AUEW NC, prominent Stalinists Halverson and Cole voted to support the strikers.

Local CP stewards too collected money and attended the picket line. All the time however they refused to build for industrial action.

You got the impression that they wished the Scott workers had accepted the sell-out.

They constantly harped on tactical mistakes made by the strikers as an excuse for not giving support.

Who can doubt that if the CP had put their shoulders to the wheel the Scotts strikers would now have the 260 branch resolutions required for a ballot on the removal of Boyd and Duffy.

The "revolutionary socialists" of Militant largely averted their eyes from the Scotts workers who were actually fighting the Tories now.

As one industrial militant said to me: "When I'm through with the struggles of the day I like to relax and get my mind on something that's altogether different from politics, so I read Militant".

By the way, anybody who believes that reformists don't fight should look at the excellent track record in this dispute of MP Charles Morris.

And so to the IMG who put in a lot of hard work (their record was probably the best of any tendency) but alas in their usual non-political way.

They claimed that the slogan 'open the books' should not be raised in relation to the NCB and its suppliers as 'it would get nowhere'.

### Obsession

They criticised Socialist Organiser's attempts to analyse the differences between local officials and the AUEW leaders, tactically important in such a struggle, as "showing an obsession with the bureaucracy".

And they failed to take up vital questions such as extending picketing to Doncaster, claiming this would "usurp the role of the elected strike committee".

One final thought. If the fighting qualities shown by the Scotts workers can be built on and extended then Tebbit may not be in business for much longer.

Comradely greetings,  
M. STARR  
Oldham

# Stand with Falklanders

## OUR REPLY

RICHARD MOORE seems to refute his own argument. "The Falkland Islanders will be pushed aside once Britain and the Argentine rulers agree on joint exploration."

Surely it follows that the Left would play into the Tories' hands if we didn't demand withdrawal of the task force!

We are doubtful about Richard Moore's neat economic explanation of Thatcher's war. Developing the oilfields of the South Atlantic is a task for decades, and can hardly be guaranteed by Britain these days through sending the fleet. And prestige is an issue for governments and ruling classes.

But on Richard Moore's account, too, we cannot rely on Thatcher's fleet to act in the South Atlantic as defenders of the Falklanders' rights.

Whatever the pretext for sending the fleet, it will act as an imperialist fleet. It is already clear that the fate of the Falklanders is utterly secondary, as a motive for

the fleet's action, to asserting the authority and strength of British militarism.

To support the fleet on the basis of the Falklanders' rights would be like supporting saturation policing in London on the basis that it might protect some people from violent crime.

We want safe streets - but we argue for the labour movement to organise to ensure that, and we base our attitude to the police on their overall role. Likewise, we regard the rights of the Falklanders as a matter for the international working class, and we base our attitude to the British Navy on an overall class assessment.

Our call for withdrawal of the fleet has nothing to do with pacifism - i.e. a wish to wash our hands of war in general.

We are in favour of class war. We are in favour of national liberation wars.

We are against imperialist wars - and for class war to defeat and overthrow the imperialist warmongers.

not help laughing when the left suggested that it was basically a question of prestige. If that is a scientific analysis, then try again. Capitalists are forever looking for new markets and resources and will use force to ensure this.

The Falkland Islanders will be pushed aside once Britain and the Argentine rulers agree on joint exploitation (probably with a leaseback agreement). The Tories have used the vulnerability of the Islanders to win world support for economic and military action against Argentina, and the left has played into their hands by demanding the withdrawal of the task force.

The result has been an added perk for the Tories of having national opinion in favour of their action and so allowing them to ride on an unjustified wave of popularity. We shouldn't avoid supporting the rights of the Falkland Islanders just because Thatcher claims to support those rights.

### Solidarnosc

Should we have nothing to do with Solidarnosc

because of verbal support given by Thatcher and Reagan?

The Falkland Islanders would probably accept Argentine sovereignty if their way of life could be guaranteed.

We should demand that the Falkland Islanders have full control over their lives and the Islands, both if they wish to become independent and if they wish to negotiate with Britain and Argentina.

There is no parallel between the six counties of Ireland and the Falklands; to make one is absurd.

Ireland had a native population when invaded by Britain, the Falklands had none. It has only been a point of rivalry between European colonisers and settlers. No-one has mentioned about the Argentinians driving out native Indians from their lands at the time the USA and Britain drove out Spanish-speaking settlers from the Falklands.

Fraternally,  
RICHARD MOORE  
London

# Mexico target for US joint operation?

THE USE of cannabis, both as a medicine and for enjoyment probably goes as far back in prehistory as does the use of alcohol.

Only in the last 50 years however, has it been made illegal. Most importantly is the US, though the rest of

the West was to follow. And the US has also been putting pressure on its client states, or those dependent on it to some extent, to follow suit, e.g. Mexico.

The US government has been leaning on the Mexican government to allow, and

itself undertake, the spraying of cannabis crops with the weedkiller paraquat (they wouldn't do it in California!).

The spraying was suspended because of fears for the health of people who smoked paraquat treated

cannabis (paraquat is the stuff that takes two weeks to kill you, for which there is no treatment).

It may be resumed soon with the addition of an evil smelling compound to warn smokers of its presence.

But the US government

seems less concerned with the health of Mexican farm workers or with the effects on the environment.

Paraquat is a persistent herbicide. It lingers in the soil, preventing plants from growing for some time. And the effects on tropical soils

could be disastrous.

Without plant cover to hold the soil together, the top soil is soon washed away by rain, resulting in loss of fertility and growth of deserts, as found when tropical forests are cleared.

## SCIENCE



## Support your science column!

APRIL 19 was the centenary of the death of Darwin, one of the greatest scientists of all time. (Marx wanted to dedicate 'Capital' to him). And we missed it!

That's one reason why we need more volunteers to write articles for the

science column (we know that at least one SO reader has some knowledge of evolutionary theory).

We will get something written on Darwin soon, but remember that the Science Column depends on you as well!

# News from the ozone

by Les Hearn

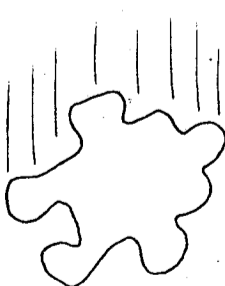
SOME GOOD news and some bad news. The good news is that the damage to the ozone layer of our atmosphere from chlorofluoro carbons (CFCs) is much less than previously feared. The bad news is that even this damage could result in a large increase in skin cancers.

CFCs are what makes spray cans spray. They are gases, so when they are let out into the atmosphere, they mix with the rest of the air and eventually some CFCs reach the stratosphere or upper atmosphere. Here it breaks down, producing chlorine, which then starts to destroy

the ozone layer found there.

Ozone is a special form of oxygen, whose importance is that it absorbs the dangerous ultra-violet light from the sun. The less ozone, the more UV light reaches the ground, where we are.

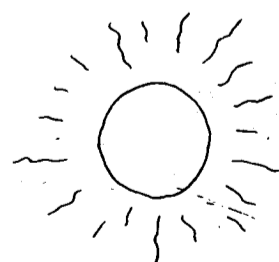
Already, in the US for example, some 90% of skin cancers are caused by UV light of the sort absorbed by ozone, and the US National Academy of Sciences estimates that every 1% fall in the amount of ozone will result in between six and 15% more skin cancers - and the drop in ozone is estimated



at five to nine per cent by 2000.

In other words, a rise of between 30 and 135% in skin cancers is likely in the US alone, and all because some capitalists didn't want to jeopardise their profits by asking a chemist for the effects of releasing CFCs into our atmosphere!

[Info: New Scientist]



# MUSIC TO SERVE SOCIALISM?



Cornelius Cardew, the composer and performer, was killed in a road accident last December at the age of 45. His death robbed not only our musical life of one of its boldest and most original contributors, but also the political struggle of a consistent and principled fighter for his view of socialism.

Cardew was probably best known as an exponent of 'avant-garde' music, through his work with AMM and the Scratch Orchestra, and improvisatory works such as Treatise and the Great Learning.

This aspect of his work, however, forms but a part of the gradual evolution of his work which at the time of his death appeared to be on the brink of finding a solution to the problem of evolving 'music for socialism'.

After studying at the Royal Academy of Music in the 1950s, where he was influenced by the works of Pierre Boulez and Karlheinz Stockhausen, the leading figures of the Western European avant-garde at the time, Cardew studied with Stockhausen in Cologne, and assisted in the composition of Stockhausen's Carre. He soon rejected, however, the 'super-objectivity' of post-Second World War serially-

## Wendy Frankland pays tribute to the composer Cornelius Cardew.

composed music, characterised as it is by angular and aggressive tonality, and a denial of the human agency in its performance, and turned instead to the methods of random and arbitrary composition of the American avant-garde epitomised by John Cage.

At the opposite extreme to Stockhausen, Cage expounded the idea that the performer has an equal influence over the form and content of a composition as the composer, thus making each performance of any work unique and different from any other.

It is this anarchistic philosophy that dominates Cardew's major work of the 1960s. His music of this period was highly individualistic and poetic, with a strong improvisatory quality - works such as February Pieces which has been described by Cardew's close associate John Tilbury as being 'full of little phrases



Cardew's Vietnam Sonata honoured the NLF's fight against imperialism

which are subtly associative of other musical worlds, past and present - phrases which haunt and disturb the memory."

### Poetry

This unique blend of bold experimentation and gentle poeticism is summed up by the American composer Alvin Curran who has said that "Cornelius was always a true revolutionary, but his poetry was far more interesting and natural".

Cardew describes Treatise - one of his most characteristic works of the period - thus:

"Treatise is a continuous weaving and combining of a host of graphic elements (of which only a few are recognisably related to musical symbols) into a long visual composition, the meaning of which in terms of sounds is not specified in any way... Any number of musicians using any media are free to participate in a reading of this score, and is free to interpret it in his own way... What I hope is that in playing this piece each musician will give of his own music - he will give it as his response to my music, which is the score itself..."

In 1966, Cardew joined the improvisatory group AMM, a group of five musicians who produced collectively improvised works and operated on a democratic basis with no nominated leader.

### Scratch

The method of working in AMM led on naturally to the formation of the Scratch Orchestra in the late 1960s. The genesis of the Orchestra was a composition class that Cardew ran on Friday evenings at Morley College and which was open to anyone interested, trained musicians and the musical ignoramus alike.

The aim was to break away completely from musical elitism, and reflected Cage's philosophy of transcending conventional notions of what was acceptable musical form and content.

The Orchestra also reflected Cardew's preoccupation with questions of democracy - anyone was free to contribute ideas or devise

compositions for performance; often the most original and enjoyable ideas came from people with little or no musical training.

John Tilbury recalls the feeling of the Orchestra's work:

"The Scratch Orchestra was a musical commune - self-contained (it performed mainly its own music) self-reliant, engaged in a wide variety of situations: ritual pieces, improvisations, popular classics interpretations; fields, railway stations, streets, demonstrations, trains, buses etc..."

### Confucius

It was for the Scratch Orchestra that Cardew wrote one of his finest and best-remembered scores, the Great Learning, a work in seven parts for percussion and voices, the text based on the writings of Confucius.

Parts of the Great Learning can be heard on a Deutsche Grammophon record, and something of the controversial nature of the work can be gathered from John Tilbury's recollection of a performance of the work at the Cheltenham Festival.

"... the audience had become split into two factions, one supporting, one attacking the music, which could hardly be heard. In the artists' room after the concert, an elderly gentleman who looked like a retired colonel... pushed through the crowd to confront the composer. He grabbed Cardew's hand and said, 'Thank you, Mr Cardew. What a relief to hear your music after all this terrible modern stuff!'"

### Elite

By the beginning of the 1970s, however, the contradictions and frustrations within the Scratch Orchestra were bringing about its collapse. Whilst its work attracted interest, controversy and even outright hostility, its professed aim of breaking down the barriers of conventional music and reaching out towards 'ordinary people' was clearly not being realized; the Orchestra appeared to be turning into the very kind of introverted elite that it had set out to

oppose - at best they appeared to be a bunch of harmless eccentrics.

As the heady euphoria of the late sixties gave way to the harsh realities of the seventies, Cardew and many of his colleagues turned towards a political orientation and began to study the Marxist classics with a view to grappling with the knotty problems of art and politics.

### Idiom

In 1973 he wrote: "I have discontinued composing music in an avant-garde idiom for a number of reasons: the exclusiveness of the avant-garde, its fragmentation, its indifference to the real situation in the world today, its individualistic outlook, and not least its class character (the other characteristics are virtually products of this).

"I have rejected the bourgeois idealistic conception which sees art as the production of unique, divinely inspired geniuses, and developed a dialectical materialist conception which sees art as the reflection of society and at the same time promotes the ideas of the ruling class in a class society.

"At a time when the ruling class has become blatantly vicious and corrupt, as it must in its final decay, it becomes urgent for conscious artists to develop ways of opposing the ideas of the ruling class and reflecting in their art the vital struggles of the oppressed classes and peoples in their upsurge to seize political power."

Cardew's initial commitment was to Maoism, and he rewrote the Great Learning replacing the Confucian texts with those by Mao, but most of the music he wrote during the 1970s was melodic and tonal, drawing on folk songs, workers' songs and those of oppressed people.

### Stockhausen

Works of this period include the Thalmann Variations (1974) dedicated to the memory of the German communist, Vietnam Sonata (1976), Boolavogue (1981), We Sing for the Future (1981) and Bathanielied which was written for a campaign, in which Cardew was active, to save a children's hospital in West Berlin.

By now, Cardew had reacted completely against

the established avant-garde and went so far as to characterise Stockhausen as an agent of imperialism (in his book Stockhausen Serves Imperialism) saying that the ideology behind his music was inherently that of the ruling class by fostering the notion of idealism - that things could be changed by thinking about them without any dialectic struggle or conflict.

Cardew was involved actively in the struggles against fascism and racism in London and was imprisoned for his part in organising resistance to fascist attacks on ethnic minorities. His last appearance a week before his death was at an anti-fascist concert which he had organised in a community hall in North London where he was playing and singing alongside a packed multi-racial audience.

### Memorial

John Tilbury has written:

"Cardew was a highly controversial figure who suffered adversity throughout his life because of the uncompromising stand he took on many musical and social matters. In the truest and best sense he was a man of principle whose respect and concern for people and their condition led him inevitably beyond music - making into political activity to serve the cause of socialism... [his] death signals the end of an era."

The problems of the reciprocal influences of art and socialism will continue to exercise the minds of those involved in the struggle for socialism. Cornelius Cardew made a valuable and lasting contribution to reconciling these questions; he had a lasting influence on all those who worked with him and he will be sadly missed.

A memorial concert to Cornelius Cardew is to be held on May 16 at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London. The concert will be a retrospective of Cardew's work from 1961-1981, including excerpts from Treatise and the Great Learning, material from that period not previously performed and examples of Cardew's socialist compositions.

Wendy Frankland

## Send him packing!

Ronald Reagan, leader of the biggest arms drive in history outside wartime, and main prop and support of the El Salvador military butchers, visits his loyal ally Margaret Thatcher in June. Join the protests: Sunday 6 June, 12.30 at Hyde Park; Monday June 7, 5.30 at Grosvenor Square; Tuesday June 8, 1pm, lobby of Parliament.

Contact: Reagan Reception Committee, PO Box 51, London SW10.



## Reagan's other red carpet

DEMONSTRATE @ EMBASSY  
GROSVENOR SQUARE JUNE 7 5.30pm  
LOBBY PARLIAMENT JUNE 8 1pm

## Socialist Organiser Alliance

# Get Organised!



SOCIALIST Organiser fights to act as a real campaigning paper which can organise workers in the struggle for new leadership.

To do so we need consistent support and money. Socialist Organiser Alliance groups have been established in most big towns.

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If there is no group in your area why not help us to build one?

To 'Get Organised', write at once to us at 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

# Bus crews fight cutbacks Docks retreat

LONDON bus crews staged a one hour strike during last Monday morning's rush hour (May 10), in protest at London Transport plans to cut bus services by 15 per cent.

The strike, called by the London Bus Committee (made up of delegates from all LT's 64 bus garages), was widely supported. Further such strikes will be called without warning between now and the end of July

when the cuts are due to be made.

The disruption of the bus services lasted for considerably longer than the strike hour itself, since it takes at least two hours to get all buses out of the garage and back on the road.

Some bus crews are always rostered to work both morning and afternoon rush hours, and are therefore paid for the time between even though they are not

actually working then. Management docked these workers five hours' wages, paying them for seven instead of the normal 12 hours. Two garages stayed out all day in protest at this.

But this penalty could also lead to reluctance to support further one hour strikes.

The committee has no plans at the moment to call for stronger action than the one-hour strikes, which though disruptive are far too limited to stand a chance of getting the cuts withdrawn. However, engineers at some garages have refused to cooperate with a minor package of cuts and alterations to the services brought in by management on April 24.

### Backed away

The engineers have prevented management from transferring routes and buses from one garage to another, and have refused to work on new buses of a different type transferred into the garage.

At the moment management has backed away from any disciplinary action against the engineers wherever the engineers have been strong.

The July cuts include a large amount of reallocation of routes between garages, the introduction of new buses to be operated by one person instead of two, and the outright closing down of 17 routes. The engineers' action could prove a major block to these cuts if it takes place widely across all garages.

ANDREW ROSSING

THE INDEFINITE national docks strike set to begin on May 10 was called off in return for a rather vague agreement by the government to 'discuss' with the union taking one of the 80 or so unregistered ports in Britain into the National Dock Labour Scheme.

These 80 unregistered ports employ 6,000 unregistered dockers, while there are 18,000 registered dockers in the NDLS ports.

The docks and waterways committee of the T&G decided on Wednesday 5th to recommend calling off

the strike, and the lay delegate meeting on Saturday 8th agreed.

John Connolly, national docks secretary of the T&G, said that the Falklands war had influenced the decision: "We would not want a strike that might damage our policy in the Falklands". He would rather let Thatcher's war damage the fight of British dockworkers to protect their jobs!

All the government has agreed to do is listen to the union's proposals.

The government calls for 'specific and detailed

proposals' from the union on each port put forward for addition to the NDLS. The employers will naturally present the case against. The government will be judge and jury.

This union strategy of taking the unregistered ports one at a time has two things wrong with it, therefore.

Even if it could succeed, it would take years. But there is no chance of convincing the bosses' own government by reason and argument to do what both the government and the port employers will fight bitterly

rather than do - take all or most of the 6000 unregistered dockers into the NDLS. It would be easier to convince Thatcher to hang herself.

So this policy is a blind alley. A substantial minority of dockers at the lay delegate meeting on May 8 knew it and voted against calling off the strike. Many more dockers will learn it when they come up against the stonewalling of the government and the employers. And that will probably be very soon.

JOHN O'MAHONY

## NHS

## pay from back page

to do it any other way!

As Murray drove off, hospital workers shouted: "That's our car you're driving, that's our suit you're wearing". We were disgusted by his attitude.

At 1pm the press were ushered inside to hear Albert Spanswick deliver the press statement. We tried to follow them but we were roughly pushed out and the doors were locked.

Posters saying "The TUC locks out workers" were stuck to the doors, which caused them great embarrassment!

Eventually a porter came out to tell us that the committee had decided on calling a 24 hour national strike, followed by weekly two hour strikes.

At 2pm, Bob Jones of NUPE came out to confirm the news. As the delegates came out, we shouted "What do we want? All out national strike! When do we want it? Now!" They went off with the message ringing in their ears that only all out action would win the 12% claim. And we went away feeling that it had all been worthwhile.

Our lobby had added to the pressure on the TUC leaders. And we saw ourselves on both national television channels when we got home.

Meanwhile, action is now starting to hot up following the NUPE Executive's recommendation to reduce the NHS to an accident and emergency service only. In the Manchester area over 1,000 workers in Oldham took strike action on Monday 10th. Three workers were arrested during militant picketing.

On Tuesday, workers at Salford Royal Hospital took one day strike action.

Nationally many hospitals have been put on an 'accident/emergency only' footing. Last Friday NUPE staged a one-day strike in Northern Ireland. There will be a three day strike this week in Camberwell, in London.

Local inter-union coordinating committees and joint shop stewards' committees are being set up all over the country.

Health workers are angry that our union leaders will not use the mandate they have been given to call all-out national action (with emergency cover under workers' control), instead leaving the initiative mostly to local branches. But we are determined to use every opening that the official calls to action provide, to step up the pressure.

All NUPE branches that can should submit emergency resolutions to the forthcoming national conference, demanding that NUPE set a date for all-out strike action.

## Adopt

## a Polish prisoner

AS THE attention of the British left shifts understandably towards campaigning against the Falklands war, it is important to remember the need for solidarity with the Polish labour movement.

Struggles across the May Day weekend meant that the 1,000 internees released by Jaruzelski's Stalinist junta were swiftly replaced by over 1300 fresh arrests.

### Posed

International support for the Solidarnosc leaders in jail or victimised out of their jobs, and material aid for their families is crucial to their struggle.

The Solidarity Trade Union Working Group has been actively promoting a campaign for union branches and Labour Parties to 'adopt' a prisoner. So far around 100 out of a list of 2000 have been adopted - including five Polish miners adopted by South Wales NUM lodges following a successful speaking tour.

### Draft

Meanwhile the Working Group continues its activity without any significant assistance from the leaders of the British labour movement.

Readers should campaign both for their own branch organisations to adopt a prisoner, and for resolutions to Regional and National Executives demanding full scale support for the Working Group.

Further details - from STUWG, 64 Philbeach Gardens, London SW5.

## FUND

The monthly fund still looks dismal, depleted by the special fund.

With £5.70 from South East London, £49 from Coventry, £4 from Hull, and £3.70 from a new group in York, we have £62.40 in the post so far this month.

Send contributions to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL. Cheques payable to Socialist Organiser.

# Kigass women battle on

WOMEN at Kigass, Leamington Spa, are in the sixth week of their fight for union recognition.

Kigass boss Arthur Wardman, having offered an £8 per week rise to scab workers (boosting their wages to the fantastic sum of around £44 per week!), has now written to the strikers offering them the same if they return to work without the union.

This attempt to undermine the strike has brought only one woman back to work. Wardman has been forced to agree to meet union officials as the strike begins to bite.

Although the dispute has been made official by the AUEW, the women have even now not received any strike pay. The struggle apparently 'inconveniently coincided' with the AUEW national committee.

Support has been forthcoming, however, from local workers at AP, Ford, Lucas, Rolls Royce, and from local Labour Party branches.

### March

Mass pickets are being held every Saturday, at Warwick from 4.30 and subsequently at the Leamington factory. And the women have called a march through Leamington on Saturday 15th, assembling 10am at the Pump Rooms to march through the town to the factory.

Join the march, and send donations to the strike committee c/o J.Patone, 13 South Terrace, Whitnash, Leamington Spa, Warks.

JOHN HARRIS



Kigass - still strong after six weeks

Affiliate to the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign, 29 Islington Park Street, London N1



# FORCE RELEASE OF SAAWU

# LEADERS!

by Jim Farnham

THREE black leaders of the workers movement in South Africa have been charged under the Terrorism Act.

The three - Thozamile Gqweta, Sisa Njikelana, and Sam Kikine - are leaders of SAAWU, one of the main trade unions which organise black workers, and which has been repeatedly involved in militant struggles.

They will be tried together with three white militants who have been active in the non-racial workers movement - Cedric Mayson, Alan Fine, and Barbara Hogan. If convicted they face massive jail sentences, and can even be sentenced to death.

The decision to proceed with these charges represents a significant development in the on-going attempts by the South African state to control the workers' movement.

The last few months have seen the death of one unionist in detention, the repeated detention of many unionists,

the banning of some union leaders, and repeated arrests and convictions of strikers.

6 ANC guerrillas are in South African jails, facing execution. The six just charged under the Terrorism Act have all been in detention for long periods and there can be no doubt that they have all faced torture.

Over the last period, several detainees have had to be hospitalised.

### Death

The death in detention of one trade unionist, Neil Aggett, in February sparked off a mass strike inside South Africa with thousands of workers taking protest strike action.

Repeated strikes show that the workers' movement is not bowing down before the attacks which the state constantly launches against it.

It is the task of the British labour movement and the labour movement inter-

nationally to see that the black workers of South Africa are not left isolated in the struggle to defend their organisations and fight for their demands.

When more than 200 SAAWU strikers were arrested last year, the Australian TUC backed a week's protest blacking action. This was repeated to protest against the death of Neil Aggett.

The fight must be taken up to make sure the British labour movement follows this example.

Already, a week of action and a national protest demonstration have been called for to build solidarity with the SAAWU members who are on strike at Wilson Rowntree in South Africa.

### Support

We must make sure that these receive national support from the TUC and Labour Party. Inside every



union branch and Labour Party ward, we must fight to ensure the maximum possible mobilisation for these demonstrations.

\*For a TUC/Labour Party national demonstration in solidarity with the workers' organisations under attack in South Africa!

\*For a week of protest blacking action of all goods to and from South Africa!

\*Solidarity with black workers in struggle!

\*Release all the victims of the Terrorism Act. Release all political prisoners. Defend SAAWU and all workers' organisations against state attacks!

THE AUEW Executive is now backing a move from Rowntree shop stewards to call on the TUC to convene a conference of all shop stewards and officials from the Rowntree empire, to be addressed by SAAWU.

The TUC International Committee is considering the resolution, and it is vital that similar resolutions are processed through the other unions - TGWU, USDAW and GMWU.

Also, the Anti-Apartheid Movement has set a Rowntree 'week of action' from June 16 to June 26, culminating in a national demonstration in York and a rally outside Rowntree Mackintosh headquarters.



# TUC and Tebbit: hunt the policy!

by Ian Kaye

THE TUC has recently issued a review of its campaign against Tebbit; but readers will have to look hard for it. The review forms some 3 pages in the 40 page "Annual Report 1982" which will be presented to trades councils conference in Bournemouth next month (June 4-6).

The timetable goes like this: in October, the meticulous reader learns, the general council "gave initial consideration to the shape of the TUC's campaign" and agreed to "win strong support from union members, employers (!), MPs and the general public; and develop strategies to counter the adverse effects on trade union activities when implemented".

But workers have no common interest with employers - least of all on

this Bill. This is an employers' Bill, not an Employment Bill; the interests of management are represented through it, and they will be precisely the people to use it, if it is passed.

The same page of the

**DELEGATES dissatisfied with the official TUC 'campaign' will be organising a fringe meeting at the Trades Councils' conference on "The TUC and Tebbit". Oxford Trades Council has decided to sponsor this meeting, and is seeking the support of other trades councils.**

report, covering the same month, October contains this statement: "They (the

General Council - not the employers!) reaffirmed their determination to campaign vigorously against the government's proposals and to oppose the legislation at every stage."

Strong words indeed! "Determination" and "vigour". But of course this begs the question, what kind of opposition?

Before readers of Socialist Organiser start filling the nation's overcrowded hospitals with cardiac arrests, something should be pointed out. This was in October. If the TUC had meant genuine opposition - a campaign centred around strike action to stop the Bill, the real way of "mobilising members" - it should be visible by now.

On the following page of the report, the call for the April 5 conference of Executives is reported. (A decision

made in December).

The objective of this was "to secure the agreement of affiliated unions for a series of specific steps to oppose the legislation once implemented".

Here the report comes back to square one. The TUC is again calling on trades unionists to "emphasise" to employers the "dangerous consequences" of the legislation. We should "dissuade" bosses from initiating "damaging legal actions".

At the same time (of course) as using all means available to get the message across to members, etc. etc.

From the way the TUC campaign was run so far it is obvious that the General Council have really put their back into one particular part of the campaign: talking to the bosses and the government.

Delegates to the Bournemouth conference seriously willing to fight the Bill should reject this section of the report, and take up the policies of the mobilising committee.

\*Demand that the TUC withdraws from their cosy chats with the Tories in the NEDC and other committees.

\*Use a one-day general strike on the day the Bill becomes law as a way of mobilising the whole movement for extended strike action against the legislation.

**Tebbit** Union leaders must **BREAK LINKS WITH TORIES NOW!**

**CALL 1-DAY STRIKE!**

## Hull TUC sets up campaign

THE campaign against the Tebbit anti-union law is stepping up in Hull. On Thursday 6 May Hull Trades Union Council decided to endorse the Mobilising Committee call for action, with one amendment (that instead of nothing being done by the TUC, not enough was being done).

Hull TUC further decided to hold a major public meeting on the Bill on June 3 and to order 10,000 copies of the Mobilising Committee fact sheet, to build a maximum attendance.

Leafletting of shop stewards' meetings, factories and estates are all planned.

Regular emergency meet-

ings of Hull TUC Executive with shop stewards and local full time officials will be held to plan the campaign.

Action has not been confined to Hull TUC. A local Mobilising Committee has been set up to raise the issue throughout the Hull labour movement. Already many local union branches and Labour Party wards are discussing the Tebbit legislation as a matter of urgency.

To date, Hull NUPE Education and Longhill Labour Party ward have

## Crunch looms on the Rail

THE railways are all set for a major confrontation in only a few weeks' time.

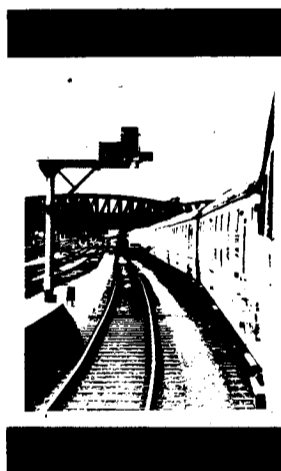
The BR Board have announced the closure of three carriage works as part of their programme of shedding 39,000 jobs and privatisation. This has evoked intense opposition in the towns affected. In Shildon, almost the whole population marched against the decision.

Since then McCarthy has made his report on the flexible rostering dispute. It didn't matter what he reported since it is BR policy to get flexible rostering whatever, and management are talking privately about an 8-week shut down if necessary.

It was widely expected that McCarthy would have to recognise the strength of the train drivers' case and come down on their side. In fact he has backed up the Board, though setting out 13 "safeguards" reflecting the train drivers' justifiable fears.

BR will of course now use this report to try and impose rosters, rather than rejecting it.

Meanwhile, the pay claim has been left in abeyance.



It should have been settled in April (we don't even know what's been asked for yet!) but BR has said it must wait upon a "satisfactory" outcome on flexible rostering.

We've had the usual bluster from Sid Weighell about being on strike alert over the threat to the carriage works but nothing on the pay issue, and we can be sure that now flexible rostering is back on the agenda, he'll be getting

his knife out.

We certainly should be on strike alert - not just talking about it. A whole number of threats to railworkers' jobs, conditions, and wages are coming together and we have the job of not just opposing this board's (and through them, the Tories') plans for the decimation and privatisation of the railways but also of making our union fight.

\*Most of what we've had so far has been the NUR buying shares in the ownership of the privatised hotels 'to look after the members' interests better' (as bosses?) and attacks on those prominent in the NUR Broad Left.

It is quite likely that Hissing Sid will appeal to the NUR AGM in June to overrule the Executive decision telling him to leave off.

We cannot let this continue. We have to fight back now. Railworkers should demand that the pay claim be pursued now, that we take total opposition to the carriage works closure and we resist any further erosion of working conditions or jobs.

## Force TGWU to take action

When TUC leaders first discussed their response to Tebbit's Bill, the T&G urged withdrawal from the NEDC.

And many rank and file activists are not as willing as Moss Evans to drop that call now in favour of the TUC's no-fight eight points.

The forthcoming June meeting of the TGWU's lay General Executive should be a chance to push for action.

Socialist Organiser urges readers to push through TGWU branches and committees resolutions to the GEC for:

\* Breaking all links with the Tories in the NEDC and other tripartite committees,

\* A recall Biennial Delegate Conference to decide on strike action against the Tebbit Bill.

## COURT THREAT

'Women for communism' face a court injunction for their action of supporting women trade unionists on strike for union recognition.

Women supporters of the RCG leafleted C&A calling for a boycott of goods by High Street shoppers in support of the Rulecan strikers.

The response of Rulecan boss Rattles is to go to the courts to stop this sympathetic action, saying that the leaflet is 'libelous'.

It certainly states, among other things, that wages earned at the factory were as low as £30 a week: this can

## RULECAN TALKS by Winnie Murphy

AT LAST it seems that a breakthrough may be in sight for the 40 women still on strike for union rights.

In a surprise turnaround in his resolve not to discuss with the NUTGW members picketing for their jobs, Rulecan boss Rattles had a discussion with the General Secretary, Alex Smith.

He was said to have agreed to reemploy the remaining strikers in a new factory, with union rates and an agreed fall-back rate of £50 for a period of time!

This news was given at the meeting called by Joyce Clare of Liverpool NUTGW shop stewards and the two Executive Board members for the North West to explain their actions over the dispute.

It was more than obvious that the striking women were in no mood for excuses.

They clearly had the support of other shop stewards in the union who also expressed dissatisfaction at the way the EB members seem to be accountable to no one once they are elected to the position in the union.

The suggestion of actually removing these two so-called representatives was very much in the air.

After a hostile reception from the strikers, Commun-

ist Party member Hentry Suss admitted they were wrong to lift the blacking and that the leaflet campaign was putting a great deal of pressure on Rattles.

Then the surprise new deal was announced.

Not surprisingly, it should be treated with caution. One of the clauses was that the official involved in the strike would no longer be allowed to represent the factory and another official would take over.

It seems that this was agreed by the General Secretary. But as he is now out of the country (I'm sure in the interest of his members!) everything is in the air.

The decision of the shop steward, Joyce Clare - to carry on picketing, and to call for the reintroduction of blacking and any sympathetic action - is the correct policy until the women are actually given their jobs back and written agreements are received by the union.

Messages/money: NUTGW, Room 46, 62 Dale Street, Liverpool 2.

**Mobilising Committee in Defence of Trade Union Rights**

**ACT NOW AGAINST TEBBIT**

**TORY THREAT TO OUR UNIONS**

**Break links with Tories!**

## WANDSWORTH STANDS FIRM

ABOUT 500 council manual workers marched through Wandsworth on Monday 10 May in support of the dustmen fighting against privatisation of refuse collection.

The day of action had been organised through the local government manual workers' shop stewards' committee, but the turnout was disappointing.

The Wandsworth dustmen's strike is the first nationally against privatisation, and the issue should unite all council workers. Out of 100 stewards at the committee meeting, only one had called for strike action in his depot - getting

unanimous support.

Lack of belief in workers' readiness to respond has clearly limited the support mobilised for Wandsworth.

The job of turning the stewards' committee into an authoritative body becomes more urgent.

### Calls

Meanwhile, however, Wandsworth NALGO members are continuing to refuse to answer telephone calls put through by agency telephonists brought in by the Council to smash union opposition to privatisation of council services.

The council has sent out letters saying they won't pay anyone taking supportive action by refusing to answer telephones.

Support for the union's position is being built up. Petitions are being circulated with members committing themselves to NALGO's line. And they are staying at work insisting on their right to be paid.

The industrial action has not stopped with the Tory election victory on May 6, and will go on until the new council promises not to privatise services.

**Spread the news!**

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# DOCKERS TO STRIKE AGAINST TEBBIT

by John O'Mahony

SOMEWHERE, somehow, and by somebody, a beginning must be made in the fightback against Tebbit's Bill. That's what bitter, angry, frustrated militants all across industry have been saying during these last months.

The TUC has stood by feebly twittering while Tebbit's new blade is fitted into the existing anti-union guillotine.

Now the dockers have said: *we'll start it*. There is to be a one-day national docks strike on June 10th, the TUC's 'Union Day'.

The June 10 dockers' strike is connected with their fight to defend the National Dock Labour Scheme. They

chose to strike on the TUC's day for protest against Tebbit because they recognise that Tory anti-union laws aim to abolish their legal right to strike for such a political goal as ports reorganisation, and thus to cripple their ability to defend themselves.

The dockers know that it was industrial action that stopped Heath in his anti-union drive and made it impossible for the then Tory government to operate their Industrial Relations Act as it had been designed to operate. They spearheaded that action, providing its shock-troops, martyrs, and heroes.

It was the jailing of five dockers for refusing to obey

the anti-union laws that roused the labour movement to act to get them out of jail and to serve notice on Heath that the labour movement would not obey anti-union laws, *whatever Parliament said*.

The dockers know that it was *unofficial* industrial action that stopped Harold Wilson's government from proceeding with its planned anti-union legislation - In Place of Strife - in 1969.

They know that a one day strike on June 10 is not enough - but it will be a beginning.

All the TUC wants to do on 'Union Day' is to have mass leafletting against Tebbit's Bill. This is grotesquely

inadequate and inappropriate. A better name for what they propose would be: 'Day of the timid bureaucrat'.

Their 'Union Day' - *though we must support it and build on it* - is not ours because their trade unionism isn't ours.

Theirs is the unionism that does not lift a hand in self-defence as the rights and protections gained by generations of workers in over 100 years are stripped away. The unionism of the dockers and other militants is that which inspired tens of thousands of trade unionists into mass street demonstrations outside Pentonville Jail when the five dockers were jailed

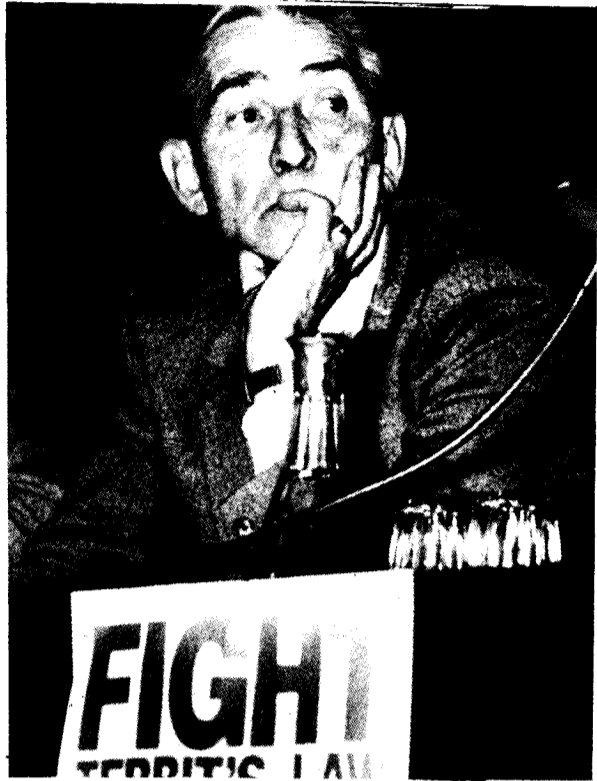
- and propelled a quarter of

# Socialist Organiser

MAY 17:

THIRD READING of the Tebbit Bill - Monday May 17.

Protest rally 12 noon to 2pm at Clerkenwell Green, London. Organised by London Print Branches Liaison Cttee.



JOHN HARRIS

*A day of leafletting? Surely that'll be safe.....*

a million across Britain into unofficial strike immediately they heard the news of the arrests in July 1972.

The dockers' decision is proof that this unionism is not dead.

*Militant trade unionists should treat the dockers' decision as a marker for industrial action against Tebbit* - a landmark that will allow the movement to regain its industrial and political bearings: *We must build on it*. The TUC call for leafletting focuses the mind of the labour movement on Tebbit. Now the dockers' decision to strike can focus attention on effective action to stop Tebbit. It gives the vital lead in starting it.

There are other work-

places - especially hospitals - which can follow the dockers' lead and strike on June 10, often linking their own particular issues to Tebbit's anti-union drive.

Strikes by even a few militant plants as well as the dockers on June 10 could mark the turn of the tide against Tebbit - and against Thatcher.

Many thousands of militants are seething with anger at the inactivity of the TUC, but are depressed by the slump, by unemployment, by the general atmosphere of defeatism that has developed around the Tory anti-union offensive. This defeatism has crippled the response of even the revolutionary left.

Now the dockers have

sent out the message that some workers are prepared to strike. Militants and socialists should start an immediate campaign to make this known in the labour movement and to get other plants, factories, and hospitals to follow the dockers' lead.

The movement in 1969 that stopped Wilson built up slowly after a period of depression in the labour movement. The decisive turning point was a one-day stoppage on May Day by some hundreds of thousands of workers across industry.

*The dockers' decision means that now we have the core of such a movement, to turn the tide.*

We must now organise to build a big strike movement for June 10 around that core.

Strike action on Union Day will serve notice that day of the militant is coming back and that the day of the bootlicking bureaucrat and of the rampant Toryism it allowed to rule unchallenged is ending.

## One step beyond 'do-it-yourself'

# ALL OUT ON NHS PAY!

A DELEGATE conference of shop stewards representing 20,000 TGWU members in the NHS voted on May 11 for all-out industrial action - only to meet a stonewalling veto from top TGWU officials, who insisted on the TUC line of action by dribs and drabs.

NUPE members have voted crushingly for industrial action - only to receive a limp recommendation from their leadership for limited, partial, local action as each area sees fit.

64 NUPE laundry workers at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary will go on all-out strike for three weeks from Monday 17th. But coordinated national all-out action, with emergency cover under workers' control, is one thing that NUPE certainly is not calling for.

Under pressure, the NHS union leaderships have however called one coordinated national action - a 24 hour strike on May 19. This gives militants a chance to rally forces and step up the struggle for action sufficient to win the full 12% claim.

FURTHER COVERAGE - page 3.

## Lobbying for action

by Anna Lunts

THE TUC Health Services Committee has called for one day strike action on May 19. This is only a beginning, but a very important one. All the NHS unions will be involved in national 24 hour strike action.

The health service union leaders have come under tremendous pressure to give a real national lead. The long list of unofficial strikes and other actions, and the 99 per cent NUPE vote in favour of taking industrial action, show the strength of feeling

on the ground. Lobbies of the NUPE Executive and TUC Health Service Committee helped to hammer home the message.

Five members of NUPE from my hospital went to lobby the NUPE Executive on May 7. They refused to allow us to speak to the meeting, but we ran inside the hotel and went in the meeting anyway.

After no discussion, the chairman ruled that we were not allowed to speak. "You should take these things up

through the official channels'.

We stopped long enough to put our point across, however, and to note the bottles of alcoholic drink and the other comforts lined up for the members. Charing Cross Hotel seems an expensive and inappropriate setting for a union the majority of whose members' wages are below the official poverty line.

The lobby of the TUC Health Services Committee on May 10 was far more

successful and vocal.

35 workers from the Salford Health Authority travelled to London, setting off at 5.15am. When we got there, NUPE assistant secretary Ron Keating came out to assure us that our views would be taken into account, but that we could not speak to the meeting.

We were refused entry to the TUC building by employees who behaved like bouncers. We sent up a letter but no answer was given. Some of us slipped in on the pretext of going to the toilet, but 'guards' were positioned on the stairs and the lifts.

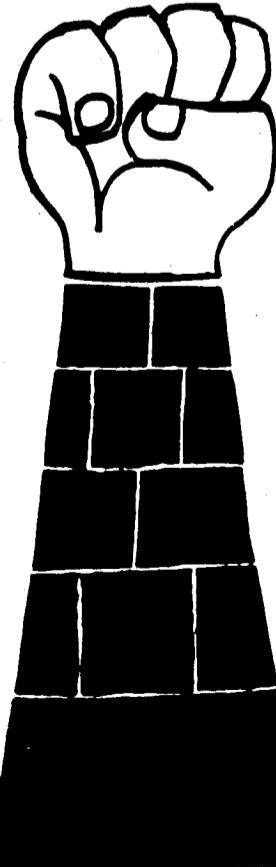
By 12.30 the press and television had arrived in force, and we gave several interviews.

One of the highlights of the day was when Len Murray stepped out into his multi thousand pound limousine, shortly before 1pm. We asked him why the TUC had not been giving more of a lead, just leaving it up to local health service union branches to organise action. He said it was undemocratic

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# £6000 fund



This week's postbag brings £50 from Colin Johnston, £50 from Durham supporters, and £45 from a fund-raising social in Basingstoke.

So the total now stands at £1695.80. Progress towards our £6000 target is shown by the red patch below.

Remember: we want to reach that £6000 by the end of July. So that means an average of £400-plus per week from now on!

Send money to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL. Cheques payable to Socialist Organiser.