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Labour
Party

Socialist Organiser

Against all bans and proscriptions!

HEALTH WORKERS FOR THE FULL CLAIM • Scrap the warships Pay the health workers

Health workers are lobbying the TUC this Thursday, 26th, to demand an all-out strike in the NHS with emergency cover under workers' control

HEALTH WORKERS FOR THE FULL CLAIM • Scrap the warships Pay the health workers

Inside, page 15: reports from the London Hospital, Edinburgh, Islington, St Mary's W9, etc.

Paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance No.97 August 26 1982 (Claimants and strikers 10p) 25p

Support the health workers

24-HOUR GENERAL STRIKE!

AS THE government starts to sound serious about its threat to put troops into the hospitals, and as pressure becomes stronger in the NHS unions for an all-out strike in the health service, the call is growing in the labour movement for a one day general strike in support of the health workers.

The Scottish TUC has convened a conference in Glasgow for September 11 to allow concerned shop stewards from outside the NHS to discuss the situation and what the labour movement should do about it. The Scottish miners and the Confed have already agreed to support the conference.

ASTMS has put a resolution to the TUC health services committee calling for a 24 hour strike in support of the health workers. The Islington Health Workers' Pay Campaign has called for a one-day Islington general strike on September 3.

Thus more and more sections of the labour movement are seeing the hospital workers' fight as the test case it is. The timid intervention of the courts to penalise the Fleet Street electricians for taking solidarity strike action has not put the frighteners on the labour movement. If anything, it has had the opposite effect.

It showed what they are frightened of. More and more workers want to take a hand and help the health workers beat the Tories.

The health workers' strike is giving focus and purpose and a rallying cause to the labour movement, whose militancy and selfconfidence had been badly shaken by the slump and unemployment. For nobody can doubt the justice of the health workers' demands, or the brutal cold-hearted class militarism that inspires Thatcher and her vicious government of exploiters, parasites, and Stock Exchange spivs, who refuse to pay them a living wage.

The Tories are not only carving up hospital workers but the entire Health Service too. Hypocritically denouncing the 'threat to life' which arises during the strikes, they are themselves determined to make basic health care in Britain something that is again bought and sold at market prices and governed by the drive for profit.

The health workers, many of whom are blacks, immigrants, and women – the especially exploited sections of the British working class – symbolise the entire working class in slump-paralysed Britain: underpaid, insecure, seeing society rotting and decaying all around them, abused and denounced for defending themselves. The labour movement instinctively understands this.

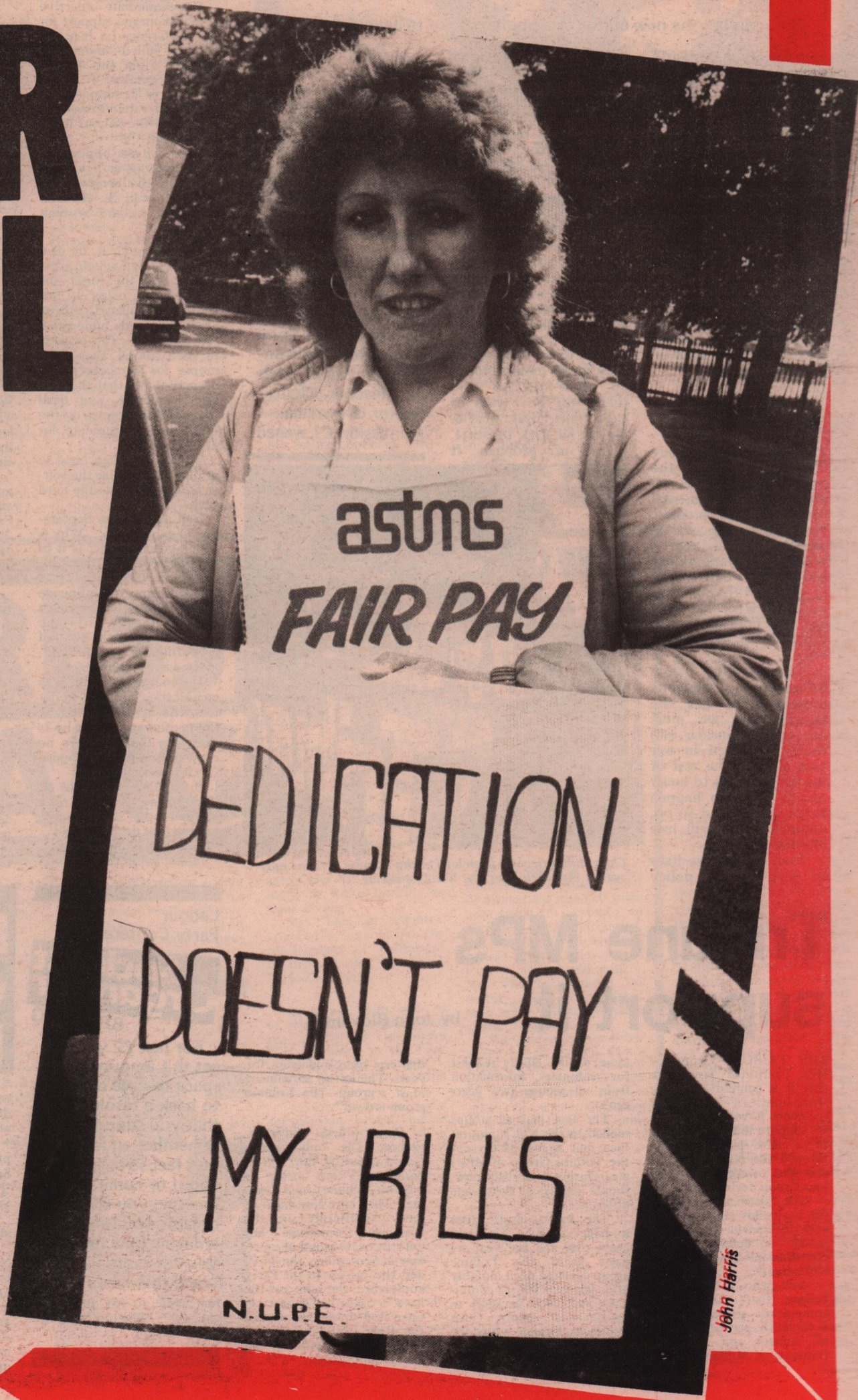
By rallying to the health workers the labour movement has begun to pick itself up and fight back. The rash of solidarity action, and now the call for a general strike which is beginning to echo and re-echo through the movement, is the measure of the revival of confidence and purpose.

There must be maximum support for the lobby of the TUC on September 6. It is right and proper that the health workers' lobby will merge with a lobby at the same time and place to get the TUC to take the fight against the Tebbit anti-union legislation seriously.

Demand that the TUC organise a one-day strike in support of the health workers.

Organise now to help prepare for it. Islington shows what needs to be done. A joint labour movement committee there has brought the Labour Party and the unions together to organise support for the health workers.

Such committees should be set up throughout the country to give support now and prepare for a one-day general strike.



John Harris

Labour witch-hunt



Tribune editor opposes purge

Chris Mullin, the new editor of Tribune, spoke to Jane Ashworth

THE history of our Party shows that whenever the right wing lose the political arguments, they go for a purge rather than coming back with better argument. You won't find the right wing publicly arguing in favour of the Bomb, the EEC or mass unemployment.

We've won the politics which are ultimately attractive to the Party and the public, and we have to keep on pushing them.

The right wing are strong enough now to push for a purge because they won back seats on the NEC last year.

Unions

The battle for democracy in the Party and the trade unions will continue to be fundamental for a long time to come. We have to concentrate on getting elected representatives in trade unions and the Party sufficiently in touch with the grass roots to want to carry out the policies they're supposed to be carrying out.

Yes, we have to join forces with everyone prepared to fight the register, but we must not become insular and totally absorbed in our own battles. The rest of the nation needs to know what's going to happen about bombs and so on, otherwise they will lose interest in us.

Even though we have to keep up the policy

debates, we have to resist the purge now. Reclaiming control of the NEC will be an important battle. We note with regret Pat Wall's decision to stand against the left slate. Surely Militant have most to gain from a left victory.

And the battle for trade union democracy will have to be stepped up — it's the union block vote which will win them their register, not the constituencies vote.

We do have to recognise the great danger that they might manage to set up their register and there will be a rash of expulsions. But providing we all stick together, there's no problem. It

won't be possible to expel unless the constituencies cooperate, and I see no sign of them doing that.

There will be a Tribune meeting, 'Resist the Purge', at Manchester Free Trade Hall on September 14, with Tony Benn and local speakers.

Tribune rally against the witch-hunt. Monday September 6 Corn Exchange, Brighton, with Tony Benn, Ray Buckton, Joan Maynard, Michael Meacher. Chair: Walter Greendale. Admission £1 waged.



Chris Mullin (second from left) at the London Tribune rally against the witch-hunt. Pat Wall is speaking.

Tribune MPs support it

by John Bloxam

THE TRIBUNE Group of MPs confirmed last week that it is committed to the witch-hunt. In a ballot of members it voted 39 to 27 to support the introduction of a new proscribed list through the NEC's register, and thus to confirm a previous Group decision.

The justifications given for the ballot result are not even a convincing smoke-screen — "defence of the constitution" and "it's not a witch-hunt".

And who can seriously believe that the present compulsory register, which is explicitly part of a system of control and exclusion (initially of Militant) is the

same as the NEC's request for voluntary information from all groups two years ago?

The fact that all groups replied to the NEC's request then, but almost all (except the Tribune Group of MPs!) are refusing to register now, should suggest at least some difference.

The ballot result raises a further question. Time and again over the last year we have heard the Tribune group declared dead, notably after last year's Party conference and their decision to register last month. Chris Mullin in Tribune wrote the epitaph: "Monday's vote was the final straw in a process

that has been underway for years. The left in parliament must regroup. The Tribune group is dead".

Since then, however, silence. The only visible action taken by the "left in parliament" has been to boycott Tribune group meetings! They have continued to meet unofficially in the 'Campaign Committee', but with the new round of meetings in September, the TUC, and the run-up to the Party conference, the rank and file have a right to expect an open lead to organise against the Right, not the present collective hesitation and verbal opposition.

Register: it's our right to resist!

John O'Mahony replies to a new argument from the witch-hunters

LAST week's Labour Weekly carried a particularly poisonous piece by one Stuart Bell, a prospective parliamentary candidate.

Under the headline, 'Civil War Approaches', Bell's message to the Labour Party is that if the rank and file organise to fight back against the impending witch-hunt and purge, then the responsibility for 'civil war', a perhaps decisive split in the Party, and probable victory for Thatcher in the next election will lie with those who fight the witch-hunt!

His immediate objective is to discourage support for the conference on September 11 called under the slogan, 'Fight the Tories, not the Socialists'. "What purpose is it supposed to serve, other than to weaken and divide the Labour Party still further?"

Does Bell also oppose the witch-hunting and purging apparatus that is now being set up? Not at all. He is in favour of it, and arguing for it.

In arguing for it, he uses the sort of demagogic arguments that the Right and soft Left are using up and down the country to spread confusion and undermine the fightback. The trick is to turn round the arguments for democracy and accountability that the Left has developed, and base the case for a purge on the Left's own arguments for democracy!

In this way they hope to inhibit and confuse the softer Left, and isolate the hard Left.

Bell asks of the September 11 conference: "Why is it being held at all? Is it to usurp the role of the Labour Party conference? Or is it meant simply to influence the decision the conference is likely to take over the registration or otherwise of non-affiliated groups within the Labour Party?"

He knows very well it is part of the campaign to defeat the witch-hunters at the conference. What he is saying is that we have no right to organise to oppose Conference.

If Conference decides on the register, he says, "then all members should unite around that decision, and", he adds demagogically, "indeed begin the prolong-

ed attack on Tory policy with Labour's alternative policies to win the next election".

Those, he says, who attend [the September 11 conference] are bringing the Labour Party closer to the irrevocable split".

Have you got that? If you try to influence Conference, or afterwards oppose a Conference decision to begin a process of driving out the Left, then you are not a democrat, you are splitting the Labour Party and sustaining Margaret Thatcher.

The effects of this right wing tripe should not be underestimated. The call for unity against the Tories is a powerful one with Party activists.

Is the Left under an obligation, according to the principles of accountability and democracy we have fought for, to comply with a Conference decision to set up the register? No, we are not, and there is no valid comparison with the demand for compliance with majority decisions by MPs and Party leaders.

That was a demand that those privileged layers of the movement carry out democratic decisions or face removal from their positions if they refused. It was a demand for Party control over the activities at Westminster and elsewhere of its representatives. It concerned the way the Party related to the outside world.

The register concerns internal Party affairs. It is an attempt to regiment the Party rank and file, to set up the Parliamentary Labour Party and various cliques of bureaucrats as the arbiters of what can and cannot be done inside the Labour Party, the broad political party of the labour movement.

We never argued against the MPs for a totalitarian 'democracy', with the sort of rigid centralism which is implied in the register.

The ultimate logic of the register is to put the Parliamentarians and trade union bureaucrats in control of whether or not rank and file and unofficial newspapers can be published: for a newspaper requires either vested wealth or a sustaining organisation.

Nobody proposed to forbid the MPs to argue for policies and to organise to win support for their policies; we demanded and demand that they should act according to Party policy in

long. We have the socialist duty to resist. And we have the democratic duty too.

That is the basic argument. But there are other and important ones.

**Labour movement conference: September 11
Fight the Tories, not the Socialists!**

At Wembley Conference Centre, London

All bona fide labour movement organisations are entitled to send delegates (maximum 5 per organisation), and are invited to sponsor the conference. Credentials fee £1 per delegate.

Credentials from Tony Saunois, 23 Ironside House, Homerton Road, London E9 5PW. Cheques payable to Labour Movement Conference Fund

their capacity as representatives of the Party and of Labour voters, retaining the right within the Party and trade unions to fight for their own policies.

The point of the proposal to set up a register is the openly proclaimed intention to conduct a political purge of the Party — to gut the Left and to break the drive for democracy, accountability, and socialist policies.

No serious democrat will accept the right of even the most democratic of assemblies to make anti-democratic decisions, or feel obliged to bow down before the claim that the anti-democratic decision was taken democratically. Even bourgeois democracy includes (or at least in its vigorous youth used to include) the right to resist, to organise to fight back, and to refuse cooperation.

If the conference decides to set up the register, every democrat in the Party will have the right and the duty to continue to oppose it and to attempt, by non-cooperation or whatever tactic is appropriate, to frustrate the attempt to turn the Labour Party back into the intolerant, oppressive, and often depoliticised disgrace to the labour movement that it was for so

Just how democratic will a decision on the register be, if it is taken in October? As democratic as the Labour Party conference. But that in turn, as we have argued throughout in Socialist Organiser, means: as democratic as the trade unions are.

All in all, not very democratic.

The decision on the register can be carried at conference only by the block votes of the union barons. Which union conferences voted for it? Which trade union branches have discussed it? Very few indeed.

With re-selection and election of the Party leaders, the rank and file was overwhelmingly for the proposals. That lent a powerful aura of rank and file democracy to the campaign, despite the fact that victory at Party conference depended on undemocratic unions like the T&G. A decision to set up the register at Blackpool will not be a democratic decision but the product of a bureaucratic carve-up by the union bosses, whose objective is to quell the rank and file drive for democracy and accountability before it spills over decisively into their unions.

As we have said before in Socialist Organiser, the Marxists are the easy target, the first target — but not the main target. The main target is the broad left without which there could not have been

the formal advances for democracy that have been won (so far mainly on paper).

The serious socialist or supporter of Party democracy who goes along with the register because it is a 'democratic decision' is a dupe of those for whom the register is a blow in the war to quell the democratic revolt of the rank and file.

We are back to the basic lesson of the setbacks the Left has had in the last year, of which the proposed register is one result. The Labour Party will not be democratic until the unions are. We must combine the fight against the register with a campaign to democratise the unions and for a really democratic Labour Party conference.

**Labour Party Conference
Socialist Organiser
BRIEFING**

For just £2 you can get this amount of space to urge delegates to back a resolution that you support, to remember an issue you feel strongly about or come to a meeting you are organising ... and its amazing how much you can cram into a space this size!

Just write to Nik Barstow, c/o 41 Ellington Street, London N7.

Labour witch-hunt



• Next meeting of the Unregistered Alliance: Thursday September 2, 7.30pm at County Hall, London.

• Unregistered Alliance's proposed resolution for the September 11 conference 'Fight the Tories, not the Socialists':

That the conference should express:

— Total opposition to the NEC decision, the compulsory register of groups [the new proscribed list], and any disciplinary action arising out of it;

— Full support for refusal to cooperate with any inquiries into groups and org-

anisations in the Party;

□ Full support for those groups and organisations who have refused to 'register';

□ Full support for those CLPs who have already indicated that they will refuse to discipline or expel any member for any reason arising out of the NEC report on the Militant tendency;

□ Support for the conference of Constituency Parties against the witch-hunt [Saturday October 30].

• Contact: Unregistered Alliance, c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.

Lobby TUC. Sep. 6, Brighton Conference Centre

A united Left to fight Tebbit

John O'Mahony reports on a new initiative

IN LATE July an important meeting took place in a committee room of the House of Commons. Convened by Reg Race, it met to discuss labour movement action to fight the Tory anti-union legislation, the latest round of which is the Tebbit law.

It was a small meeting of invited individuals, 'key labour movement activists'. Militants from all over the country attended — South Wales miners, the left of the NUR Executive, Oxford Trades Council, the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions and the Mobilising Committee for the Defence of Trade Union Rights were among the labour movement bodies represented.

Umbrella

The meeting decided that in September a new umbrella organisation, uniting the broadest possible forces, would be launched. Reg Race was commissioned to convene a meeting in September to initiate it.

The Geraghty case — the victimisation of the Fleet Street electricians' leader because they struck in solidarity with the health workers — has brought home to many workers what the Tories have done over the last three years. They have

created an entirely new legal framework for trade union activity. Solidarity action, the most basic of working class activities, the root of all trade unionism, is now effectively illegal.

Smart

This time the judge was smart enough to have learned from the experience of the Heath government ten years ago and he did not jail Sean Geraghty. He fined him instead. (Geraghty could still go to jail if he refuses to pay the fine: he says the decision is with his branch members). The threat of jail hangs over every militant who takes solidarity action in the future.

That's how far things have gone without even a respectable attempt by the official trade union movement to organise a fight back. The new organisation will begin the uphill work of changing this situation.

The meeting agreed on a proposal from Socialist Organiser that the model would be the Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy. This was the body that united a large number of campaigns, individuals, and political groups, to coordinate and organise the fight for democracy in the Lab-

our Party. A similar body for the fight against Tebbit would unite bodies like the Communist Party led Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, trade union Broad Lefts, the Socialist Organiser Alliance, etc. etc., in a campaign to agitate the labour movement about the murderous Tory drive to shackle the unions.

The new organisation would issue broadsheets, organise meetings in major centres with 'big name' speakers, put out factory leaflets in collaboration with shop stewards' committees, concern itself with the defence of workers who come up against the Tory laws. Its aim will be to prepare the labour movement for action to rip up the Tory anti-union legislation.

Criterion

It will adopt as its foundation stone commitment to struggle and non-sectarianism. No individual or grouping willing to help in the fightback will be excluded or discriminated against. Efforts will be made to involve the official trade union movement, from the highest level of officialdom to the lowest.

The test and criterion will be if they are really willing to help rouse the

labour movement and to fight the Tories.

In this way the broadest unity in action can be created, while making commitment to struggle central will rule out letting the official trade union leaders immobilise the campaign.

Chickens

The new initiative will get under way around the time that the second instalment of Tory anti-union legislation — Tebbit's — reaches the statute books. We will have a hard fight ahead of us. The official leaders long ago bowed their knees and their necks to the Tory yoke. Like trussed chickens they have squawked but done nothing — and these chickens are tied up primarily by their own timidity, conservatism, and unwillingness to fight the entrenched Tory government.

They reckon that they can live comfortably enough with the new Tory harness. The rank and file activists who were the shock troops of the fight against Tory anti-union legislation in 1972 and Labour attempts in 1969 have been badly affected by the slump, by mass unemployment, and by the official leaders' performance. The Left has been paralysed. The CP

tags along behind the trade union bureaucrats.

Depression

To launch a fight against the legislation they would have to risk a break with the bureaucracy which has, essentially, accepted the Tory legislation, and relies on a future Labour government to repeal it. The CP won't do that. The Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions has done very little, despite its

substantial influence.

The numerically most important organisation of the revolutionary Left, the Socialist Workers' Party, is now politically prostrated. Like a person in a state of clinical depression, the SWP exaggerates and magnifies the real problems and difficulties that exist, and the setbacks that the movement has experienced. Its self-induced paralysis has reached the stage of scrapping its rank and file groups in the unions.

The campaigning body set up by Socialist Organiser, London Labour Briefing, and others six months ago — the Mobilising Committee for the Defence of Trade Union Rights — has done something, but has been hampered by its lack of size, resources, and established support.

That's why the new body is such an important initiative. It can transform the situation. The slump has hit the labour movement pretty hard. The official leaders have done their best and their worst to turn the problems into demoralisation. It would be stupid to pretend that they have not had some successes.

Their betrayals and open scabbing (BL last November; ASLEF; the wretched Spanswick's attempt to dissuade the electricians from supporting his members) have become even more shameful as the relative decline in the rank and file has emboldened them.

Burst

But that's only one side of the picture.

The solidarity action of electricians, miners, steelworkers, and others for the health workers are on a level of class consciousness that matches and surpasses anything that took place in the years of the Great Militancy in the early '70s. A whole number of struggles in the last three years have shown that there is a willingness to fight that bursts through when workers feel driven to struggle and see the chance to do so.

A great bitterness has been built up in the working class, and it will burst out. It may well be triggered by some such incident as the Geraghty affair, by the victimisation or jailing of a militant.

This underlying situation is the grounds for believing that, belated though it is, the new organisation can turn the tide and play a role in rousing the labour movement to rip up the Tory legislation — and maybe the Thatcher government too.

Watch Socialist Organiser for details of the committee and its activities.

Tebbit

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

CALL 1-DAY STRIKE!

Angels in pinstripes

by Patrick Spilling

From our City Correspondent: THE CITY of London today put paid to Britain's knockers as stockbrokers started to spend, spend, spend our way out of trouble.

These angels in pinstripes put their money where their mouths are, by backing Mrs Thatcher's government all the way.

In 30 short minutes after lunch they added millions of pounds to the value of British industry as share prices rocketed to record high levels.

Snub

It was a humiliating snub to the CBI, James Prior and the Labour Party and has shown once and for all that the economic recovery is well on the way.

Now Britain can hold its head up in the world's financial markets. Stockbrokers are convinced that Mrs Thatcher's fair but tough stand against inflation mindless militants and extremists is finally paying off.

While some people pass gloomy reports mouth on about the government, and bemoan their fate, it is on the skill and hard work of the bowler-hatted boffins that our prosperity really rests.

The decisions of this handful of elite men can make the difference between prosperity and penury to Britain's leading companies. They are the SAS of Thatcher's army.

The boom in Britain came after shares in America also reached new high levels.

It was Henry Kaufman the maestro of the US stock market, who started the panic buy. Seeing his wife off from the rail station a passing journalist heard him mutter under his breath, "Buy, buy".

Within hours the shock news spread around Wall Street.

Later, interviewed on TV, Kaufman revealed the extent of the recovery. Asked about the future of the American economy, he said, "It couldn't get any worse".

To the finely honed

minds of America's market analysts, this was startling confirmation of the rumours. Only last week Kaufman had been predicting that things would get worse before they got better. Now he was clearly anticipating the end of the recession.

When the news reached London, there was pandemonium as stockbrokers jostled each other to be first in the queue. Fighting broke out around the oil sectors and one man was taken to hospital with a heart attack after being told he couldn't have an overdraft to buy bank shares.

Later falls of several thousand million were dismissed as routine profit-taking.

Meanwhile, Mrs Thatcher has reacted with anger to the news that the Parliamentary Labour Party has joined the CBI.

Mr Peter Shore, Labour's shadow spokesman, said they had decided to join after seeing how many bank-

rupt organisations were already in membership. "We have some friendly differences, of course we do, but in terms of wage cuts redund-



Daily Mail

DAILY EXPRESS

FINANCIAL TIMES

The Daily Telegraph

THE Sun

World News

Argentina

GENERALS IN CRISIS

Behind the resignation this week of Argentina's new economics minister and central bank chief stand worse problems for the regime. Martin Thomas reports.

BUS drivers and railworkers in Argentina struck for 24 hours last Wednesday, 18th. They are demanding wage rises.

The next day, the mechanics' union struck and demonstrated outside the presidential palace. According to the Guardian they were "demanding greater freedom and social justice".

The Paris daily Le Monde reports:

"Although the right to strike was suspended after the coup in March 1976, the military government has often had to face massive work stoppages, specially in late 1977, and even two general strikes, April 27 1979 and July 22 1981.

"Wednesday's action was decided under the pressure of the rank and file, and in some cases against the will of the national union officials. Contrary to usual practice, the military authorities at no moment threatened the strike leaders. The police and army kept out of the way, and Wednesday passed practically without incident".

"The union leaders", says

Bombay strike

INDIA'S SECOND largest city, Bombay, is paralysed by a general strike.

The general strike was triggered by a police-force strike. The police want better wages, allowances, and conditions. The government won't budge. So half the 25,000 Bombay policemen struck.

When the government arrested 69 of the leaders of the strike, unions linked to left-wing parties called a general strike.

Troops and para-militaries are in control of the city. A number of people have been shot and wounded.

The manoeuvring left-wing party leaders and their allies leading the unions are no doubt concerned to use the police strike against the government and probably to better their relations with a section of the state's repressive apparatus. The response to the general strike call, however, makes it clear that there is real labour movement sympathy for the police strikers in what may be seen as a test-case struggle against the government.

For the last seven months Bombay has also experienced India's longest mass strike, by 250,000 textile workers.

Italy

Italy's government crisis has been resolved, with the restoration of exactly the same team as fell 17 days ago.

The Socialist Party withdrew from the government with the apparent intention of provoking a general election, but has now agreed to support a continuation of the coalition headed by Giovanni Spadolini of the Republican Party.



Metalworkers demonstrating before the 1976 coup. Unions are demanding restoration of rights removed by the coup.

the Financial Times, "were reported to have been promised by President Reynaldo Bignone on Wednesday night that the Government would formally repeal legislation restricting union activity..."

"On Wednesday morning President Bignone appeared to have opted for a de facto lifting of the ban".

Union leaders are also discussing pay with the military government.

These events reflect both the weakening of the military regime caused by defeat in the Falklands war, and the pressure of a deep economic crisis forcing the working class into struggle.

Le Monde gives the following figures. "In six years of the military regime, living standards have fallen by

almost two thirds, and there was a fall of about 20% in the first half of this year.

"An unskilled worker earns on average a bit more than 50 dollars a month. According to the official institute of statistics, the minimum income necessary to purchase the contents of the 'housewife's shopping basket' is 124 dollars.

Meat

"The rise in the cost of living was particularly sharp in July... A revealing fact: meat consumption went down almost 50% in July by comparison with the average of the three previous months".

Gross national product fell 7% in the first half of

this year.

According to the Guardian and the Financial Times, internal dissent in the armed forces is running high.

Some groups of officers are pushing for more traditional Peronist-type economic policies - nationalist, protectionist, populist, statist - as against the orientation towards foreign capital and free-market economics pursued since 1976. (The chances, in present circumstances, of such a shift in policy curbing anything much, must be slim).

Others have less radical politics but want a more complete purge of the senior commanders involved in the Falklands defeat.

The Guardian concludes: "it may be only a matter of

weeks before President Bignone follows General Galtieri into anonymity".

For the Argentine working class, the question is whether it can equip itself with a socialist programme to take advantage of its rulers' disarray - or whether it will once again be prey to the bourgeois demagogues of Peronism.

Committee for Human Rights in Argentina: c/o 29 Islington Park Street, London N1 9QB. Newsletter subscription £3 per year.



MIDDLE EAST

From SO's correspondent in Haifa

SOLIDARITY DEMOS

TENS OF thousands have demonstrated in Kuwait against the Israeli genocide in the Lebanon. The demonstration put the blame for the war on the United States and called for action against US economic interests in the region.

25% of Kuwait's population are Palestinians. They are generally treated as foreigners and not allowed any political activity.

Hundreds of women also demonstrated in Jordan, denouncing the Arab regimes for their silence on the war. The beginning of the school year in Jordan was postponed, apparently to prevent students organising further solidarity actions.

A general strike call in the West Bank failed - fear was probably the main reason, as there is no family without relatives murdered in Lebanon.

Peace how

The 'Committee against the War' organised a 5,000 strong demonstration in the main streets of Tel Aviv on Saturday 7th. It called for immediate withdrawal of the Israeli army from Lebanon, and 'Israel, Palestine, two states for two peoples'.

It was a joint demonstration of the left, layers of the intelligentsia, and Arabs from the occupied territories,

mostly mobilised by the Communist Party.

The 'Peace Now' movement broke a month of silence about the war to hold a 2,000 strong torchlight demonstration in Jerusalem, on August 5. The first speaker, an ex-general, however, denounced the PLO and rejected the idea of a 'split with the government'.



Sharon and Begin

Model motion

The Labour Committee on Palestine is circulating this draft emergency resolution for Labour Party conference

Conference views with horror the election of Bashir Gemayel, the leader of the Falangist Party, to the Presidency of Lebanon and notes that it is no coincidence that a fascist president was elected as the PLO started leaving Beirut.

Conference condemns the forced evacuation of the Palestinian guerrillas from Beirut whilst the Israeli troops are free to impose their will politically and militarily on the Lebanon. Conference believes that it is the Israeli troops that should immediately and unconditionally withdraw, not the Palestinians, who were driven into the Lebanon by the Zionists 34 years ago.

Israel, through mass destruction of towns and cities of Lebanon and the enormous loss of life this has entailed, has been rewarded for its aggression with the departure of the main armed force of the Left, namely the PLO. State

Conference is opposed to any state based on religious or racial supremacy and calls for a democratic and secular state of Palestine as part of a socialist federation of the Middle East. Conference supports the right of the Palestinians to return to their homeland.

Conference is opposed to the confessional structure of the Lebanon, with its Maronite supremacy.

What import controls do for the other 750 million

WORLD poverty is likely to get worse. That is the message of the new World Bank report published this week.

At present some 750 million people - one-third of the world's population - live in what the World Bank calls 'absolute poverty'. And it will get worse.

The World Bank names protectionist policies by the richer countries - as well as the general recession - as reasons for pessimism. International bankers are hardly the people to give the most penetrating analysis of international exploitation, but on this point the World Bank is plainly right.

As world capitalist competition becomes sharper, the weakest go to the wall first. One symptom of this is the escalating debt crisis of the poorer countries - highlighted this week by Mexico's desperate efforts to reschedule its debt. The total outstanding debt of 'developing' countries reached \$520 billion last year, as against \$440 billion in 1980 and \$68 billion in 1970. In real terms the debt has been growing by 10% a year, while 'developing' countries' exports have grown only 4.6%.

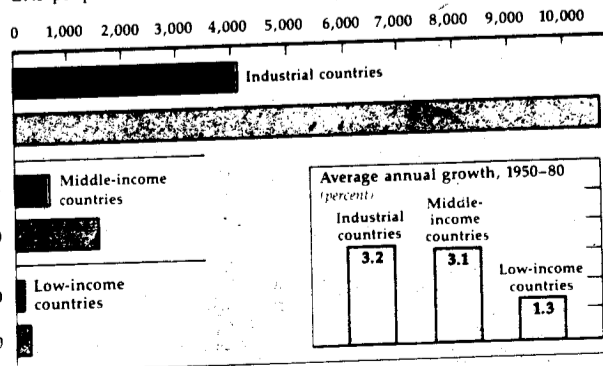
So much for the idea that import controls for Britain would be a socialist policy.

Income

GNP per person (1980 dollars)	1950	1960	1980
Industrial countries	4,130	5,580	10,660
Middle-income countries	640	820	1,580
Low-income countries	170	180	250

Average annual growth (percent)	1950-60	1960-80
Industrial countries	3.1	3.3
Middle-income countries	2.5	3.3
Low-income countries	0.6	1.7

GNP per person (1980 dollars)



In 1950 people in the poor countries were on average 24 times worse off than those in rich countries. In 1980 they were 43 times worse off....

Hong Kong

End the British Empire's lease of life!

Chan Ying proposes a campaign to end Britain's claim to Hong Kong

After the Battle of the Falklands, another part of the British colonial empire is attracting the limelight. Last week the value of shares on the Hong Kong stockmarket (third largest in the world after New York and London) crashed by 27%.

The world recession, protectionism in the EEC and USA against Hong Kong products, high interest rates and a local speculative building boom in high-rise office blocks and luxury flats had long threatened to topple the stockmarket. What triggered the slump was news from Peking and London about 1997.

Britain presides over a borrowed place, on borrowed time. Hong Kong's population is 98% Chinese. British rule results from unequal treaties in the 19th century. The People's Republic of China has always claimed sovereignty over Hong Kong, refusing to recognise those treaties which ceded Hong Kong island and Kowloon peninsula to the British, and leased the New Territories till 1997.

China's

Hong Kong is very different from the Falkland islands. Everyone but the most diehard Empire fanatic knows that the whole of Hong Kong, not just the leased New Territories, is China's for the taking and there is no question of sending a task force there. The colony continues to exist because of its economic benefits to China and the capitalist world.

Chinese leaders have said that they will reclaim Hong Kong 'when the time is ripe', but meanwhile Vice-Chairman Deng has asked investors to set their minds at ease.

Now however, economic

pressures have forced both governments to begin to declare their hand semi-publicly. While the British and Chinese governments prefer to keep their discussions private and commit themselves to nothing in public, commercial ventures in Hong Kong especially those involving land deals and the siting of factories in the New Territories, depend on security over at least 15 years.

London has already prepared the ground by appointing a Foreign Office mandarin (who of course speaks Mandarin) Sir Edward Youde, former Ambassador to Peking, as the new Governor of Hong Kong. He and the former Governor have been busy briefing Margaret Thatcher for her forthcoming visit to China and Hong Kong, where the colony's future will no doubt be the central item of discussion.



Mandarin Youde

China's leaders have opened up the debate by setting up a high-level working party, and consulting with prominent businesspeople and top managers of its own Hong Kong based enterprises such as the Bank of China, and several newspapers. It has floated elements of its position in a couple of Hong Kong journals: ■ China does not recognise the legality of past unequal treaties, and

claims full sovereignty over Hong Kong, Kowloon and Macau (neighbouring Portuguese colony). Restoring sovereignty cannot be postponed to the distant future.

■ The method of one nation, two systems, will be used to solve this question i.e. Hong Kong and Macau will continue as capitalist societies.

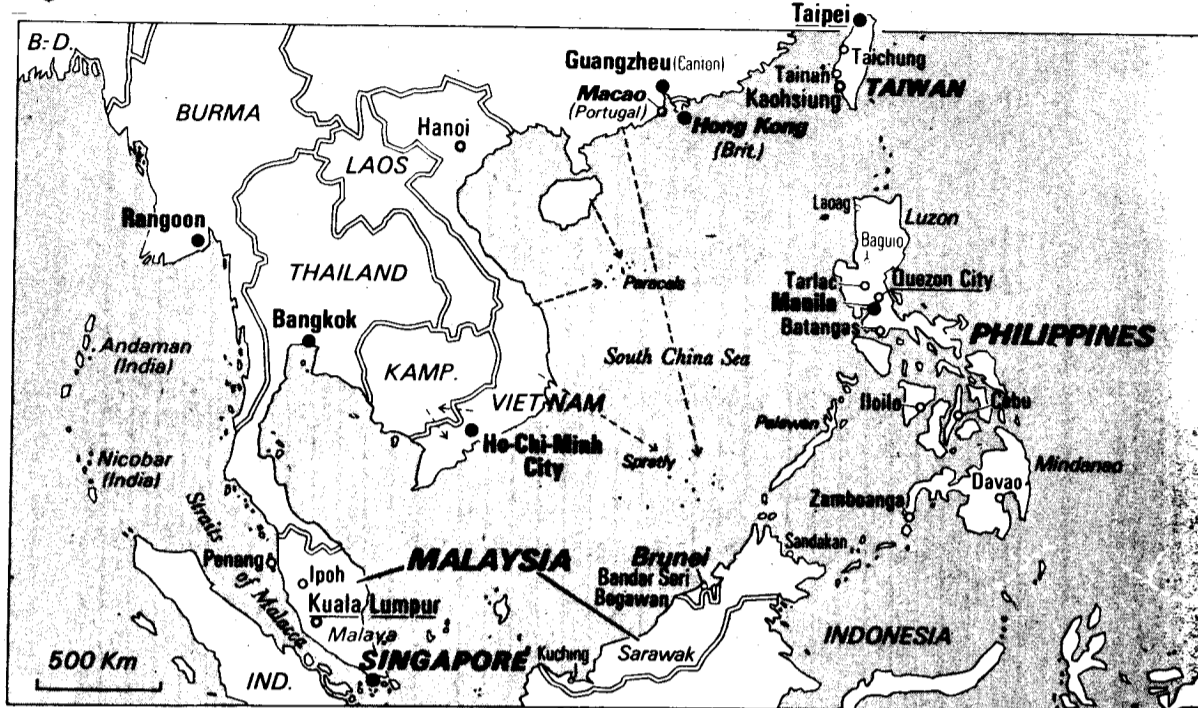
■ Specifically, Hong Kong shall remain a free port.

There is no mention of how this is to be administered, and the question of the role, if any, of the current British and Portuguese administrations is avoided. There is no mention of any process to consult with the Hong Kong people.

The Deng leadership has paved the way, first with joint ventures with Hong Kong and other investing capitalists, and then with the establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZ) which give investing capitalists even greater autonomy. This is part of the overall economic policies which the regime has adopted to modernise the economy with foreign capital, and with capitalist management techniques. (The new draft constitution has deleted workers' formal right to strike, and factory managers have been given new powers to discipline workers by fines and even the sack, in order to impose speed-ups).

Benefits

Hong Kong provides both an important source of investment capital, as well as capitalist techniques of exploitation. This is in addition to its other economic benefits to China: Hong Kong buys a quarter of China's exports, brings in about 40% of its



foreign exchange earnings, according to the Far East Economic Review. China's leaders would like to see Hong Kong as a super SEZ, to continue to reap such economic benefits as well as resolve the question of sovereignty.

If this is successful, it will demonstrate that such coexistence can work, and thus act as a further way of softening resistance in Taiwan to reunification with China.

The Hong Kong and Taiwan question are thus linked, and on both issues Deng and co. tread carefully, wary of providing ammunition for leftist opponents within the Party. Having been forced to compromise over US arms sales to Taiwan, Deng and co. need a success over Hong Kong to neutralise his critics within the Party.

It is not clear exactly what the Foreign Office have suggested to Thatcher — most probably some form of lease-back

arrangement (sic) not unlike the Falklands. But there is a wide gulf between such a post-1997 British administration and the SEZ envisaged by China in terms of 'money, language, passports and legal system' as the FEER puts it.

Failed

For socialists, it is a tragedy that 33 years after the present regime took power in 1949, it has failed to demonstrate to Hong Kong Chinese the superiority of a nationalised, planned economy over a capitalist jungle of a sweatshop under British colonial rule. On the contrary, the everyday experience of the Hong Kong working class is that of sending remittances back to relatives in Guangdong province because most foodstuffs denied them are shipped to Hong Kong instead; of friends and relatives queuing to get

out of China either by illegal emigration or by bribes just as one has to bribe Hong Kong police and government bureaucrats.

Hong Kong Chinese have no love for their British colonial masters whom they see as parasitical overlords, and they see Hong Kong as part of China, but they are in no hurry to exchange one set of bureaucrats for another, when this further depresses their living standards and offers them perhaps even less control over their everyday lives.

There is growing disquiet in Hong Kong that the Peking and London governments, in conjunction with their respective local agents in Hong Kong, will make all the decisions above the heads of the working people who have for decades toiled to produce the superprofits.

The negotiations between Britain and China are likely to be drawn out and conducted in secret. Hong Kong people will be kept in the dark, while debate on the question in China would be confined to the higher levels of the bureaucracy.

This may backfire on both governments, for an economic collapse could plunge the whole colony into chaos and upset both governments' plans.

Cake

The present lack of success of China's SEZ stems from the fact that few capitalists misunderstand the nature of China as a non-capitalist economy. The SEZ cannot guarantee the type of security and autonomy needed for capitalist investment, without them being a threat to China's collectivised economy, control over which China's ruling bureaucrats depend for their power and privileges. If such SEZs have not taken off, how can China have its cake in Hong Kong and eat it?

Awareness of China's dependence on Hong Kong for earnings and fear of its economic collapse which would upset China's strategic plans over Taiwan, could prove to be strong

bargaining points for Thatcher. China could be forced yet again into another unequal treaty with imperialism.

The working class in Hong Kong must become an active force instead of passive victim, as in the 20s when the colony was under the control of the seamen's — and later the Hong Kong-Canton strike committee.

Unfortunately the CCP at all levels is incapable of winning the trust of Chinese workers. Bribery and corruption has intensified in the past few years as a result of economic policies allowing capitalists a toehold into the Chinese economy. But unless the working class in Hong Kong is mobilised against both imperialism and local capitalists, then they will yet again be passive victims of whatever the CCP imposes on them, just as the CCP imposed its will on the working class as its army marched into China's cities in 1949.

Forge

The trade unions in Hong Kong, led by pro-Peking Stalinists, have subordinated the Hong Kong working class to the Chinese bureaucracy's foreign policy. But socialists in Hong Kong should campaign for a democratically elected assembly there which could take control, throw out the British and negotiate terms with Peking for integration in China on condition of protection for local autonomy and trade union rights. Hong Kong socialists should fight for the expropriation of capitalist holdings in Hong Kong by the Chinese state, but also for workers' control.

Socialists in Britain should campaign for Britain to renounce unconditionally its claim to the colony. Chinese workers cannot rely on British imperialism, not the CCP for democracy and a better standard of living; for that they will have to struggle to forge their own destiny. It is the duty of the British working class to support that struggle by fighting here for the end of British colonialism in Hong Kong.

But not for Barry

Barry Coy drives an expensive-looking car. For most people, such cars are a guarantee of extra-polite treatment from the police. But not for Barry.

He has sometimes been stopped as many as five times in one evening on suspicion of stealing the car. 'It gets to the point,' he says 'where I can never guarantee to be anywhere on time because I know I will be held up by the police.'

It is so bad that he has stopped driving and gets lifts from friends instead. He plans to sell his car and get a cheaper one.

What's the problem? Barry Coy is a young West Indian. And evidently the police in Merseyside where Barry lives, can't believe it's right for a young West Indian to have an expensive car.



PTA figures

The total number of people in Northern Ireland pulled in by the police under the Prevention of Terrorism Act has now reached 1680, according to the latest official figures [up to March 31, 1982].

The PTA, introduced in November 1974 supposedly as a short-term emergency measure, gives police the power to arrest and detain people without charge for 48 hours. They can hold people longer on the say-so of the

Northern Ireland Secretary 1367 out of the 1680 people arrested were in fact held for longer than 48 hours. In the first three months of this year, for example, nearly half of those arrested were kept by the police for four days or more.

The PTA also provides for people to be 'excluded' from Britain, from Northern Ireland, or from the whole UK. 22 exclusion orders have been made in Northern Ireland, 11 of them in 1981.

Meeting the deadline

One of the various complaints we get about the style of Socialist Organiser is slapdash endings to articles. After long paragraphs of detailed and careful argument, the final sentences will suddenly dash into sweeping declarations: 'This proves once again the crisis-ridden nature of capitalism/the need for a revolutionary leadership/the impossibility of reformist policies/etc' But we have illustrious precedents — no less than the great 18th century playwright Sheridan.

Sheridan, reports Nancy Banks-Smith in the Guardian of August 24th, was a great talker. And all credit to him. 'But one quite sees' she writes, 'this does cut down the time available for throwing pieces of paper in a dustbin or, as it is known in the trade, writing.'

When Sheridan had not finished The Critic two days

before opening, his father-in-law, a town editor, locked him in a room until he did. With, according to Don Taylor, 'two good bottles of claret.'

Here one's admiration for Sheridan's father-in-law falls off considerably. Two good bottles of claret amply accounts for a certain incoherent hilarity about the ending of The Critic: 'Flourish of drums, trumpets, cannon etc. Spanish fleet destroyed, etc.'

We can do it without the claret.

Tired of Right to Work marches? The Maharishi Mahesh Yogi has a more restful answer.

His 'World government' reckons that the answer is for 800 people (the number is the square root of 1% of Britain's population) to gather together in Manchester to meditate for a week.

They're still 600 short.

WATCH OUT FOR UB671

Gerry Byrne reports on the Rayner plan

AWARE that the Rayner recommendations for testing claimants' 'availability for work' could hit women worst, Welsh Women's Aid got a grant from the EOC to research the pilot schemes in the two areas in Wales affected - Ebbw Vale and Cardiff.

Their report makes alarming reading.

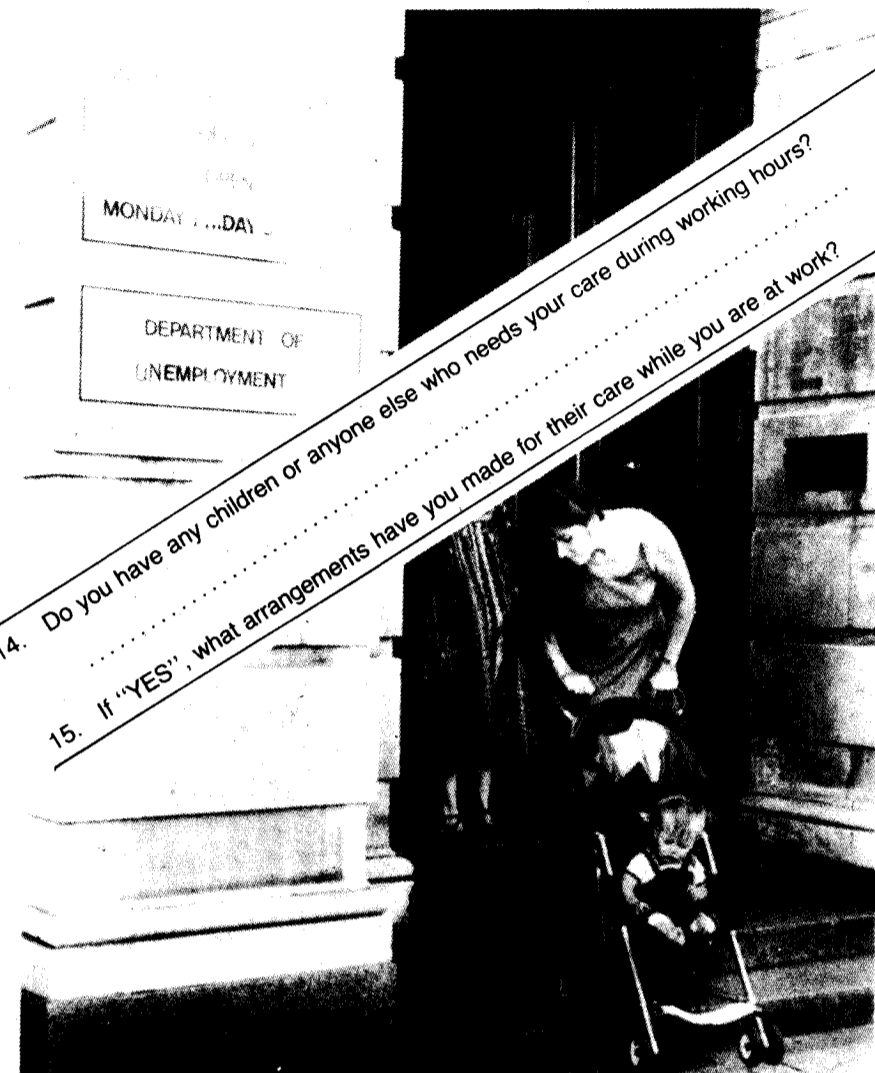
They found the questionnaire was administered arbitrarily; that questions about child care arrangements and availability for part-time work only would adversely affect women; and that so would the proposal to make registration at Job Centres voluntary.

The overall effect, clearly part of the scheme's appeal to this government would be to understate the real level of unemployment.

From October, all new claimants signing on for unemployment benefit will be given a detailed form (UB 671) to test their availability for work. Additionally, an amendment to the 'Social Security Claims and Payments' legislation which will mean that claimants who withhold information (like refusing to answer the questions on the new form) will be disqualified from benefit until they co-operate.

Scapegoat

In the pilot scheme only 2% of fresh claimants were given the detailed form which indicates that the number of those who might even be suspected of being unavailable for work is pretty minute. The purpose of the test seems to be scapegoating of the un-



employed, especially women, rather than any useful savings even in the government's own terms.

Over the whole period of the pilot scheme only 36 people were disallowed UB. In other words, the whole thing is harassment of claimants for the sake of harassment.

Childcare problems, according to CPSA, were responsible for the largest number of disallowals.

And this is the real sting in the tail of the Rayner Report.

Married women with children - who have only been able to claim UB in their own right in the last 4 years - are singled out for special harassment.

One of the questions on the UB671 asks what arrangements would be made for children in the event of being offered a job (it previously asked what

arrangements had already been made, but was changed under pressure). Both the local officers administering the test and the claimants themselves saw this question as directed primarily at women. Men with children expressed no problem with the question.

Interestingly, the vast majority of those affected in the survey said that while childcare might

create some difficulties they did not see it as an insurmountable barrier to taking a job if one were available (a big 'if' that!). This, in a situation like Ebbw Vale where 21.9% of women are registered as unemployed (the national average is 8.6% of women) and there are co council or private day nurseries and no registered child-minders.

It's clear that women with children will go to some lengths to be able to go out to work, and it's sheer effrontery to add the insult of prying questions at the UBO to their existing burdens.

Many women in the survey said they were available for part-time work rather than full-time: but availability for part-time may disqualify you from claiming UB. (It's an area open to discretion). So women are pressurised to say they are available for full-time work when they would rather do part-time.

Defined

This might seem paradoxical but it serves a clear political purpose. Women are defined, and often define themselves, primarily in terms of their domestic role. Their existence and needs as part of the workforce are seen as secondary. Defining part-time work as not 'real' work and overstressing the problem of combining childcare and paid work without providing the resources to deal with it, has a detrimental effect on the position of all women.

Women outside of paid employment, who would like a job if given the chance, are made invisible hidden from the unemployment figures and dis-

couraged from seeing themselves as part of the workforce.

The traditional division of labour is reinforced: man - breadwinner, woman - housewife and mother, even though this picture corresponds less and less to the reality. Women in paid work are marginalised as workers; their rights and conditions and job security are trivialised because that's not their 'real' job, their 'real' job is at home.

This point was well made by Jane Streater from One Parent Families at the press conference to launch Welsh Women's aid's pamphlet. What, you ask, has Rayner got to do with single parents, since they are not required to register as available for work and may find themselves better off on long-term social security than UB?

But single mothers more than any other group are vulnerable to being defined out of the workforce. Most single parents want paid work. If they are seen as unavailable for work, the childcare provision won't be forthcoming, the poverty trap is reinforced and they are condemned to pro-

longed miserable subsistence.

It's not a long time before the Rayner proposals become operable. While it may be that only a small number of claimants will be directly affected by having their benefit cut off, the issue affects every woman.

It's urgent for women's groups, unemployed and claimants' groups to get together with the unions in the benefit offices to mount a joint campaign, publicising the implications of Rayner and rendering it inoperable.

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK

Women's Fightback badge, in yellow and red. 20p (plus 15p post) for one, 15p each post free for orders of ten or more, from 41 Ellington Street, London N7.

Equal opportunities?
About 30% of women in waged work do office jobs about 20% in domestic or catering jobs, 10% in shops, 15% in unskilled factory jobs, and only about 25% in other sorts of jobs.

A recent report from Women in Manual Trades in Scotland shows that very few women get onto TOPS training courses for traditionally male-dominated skilled jobs.

Between 1968 and 1977 the number of divorces per year increased from 46,000 to 129,000 (figures for England and Wales only).

An increased proportion of the increased total were divorces after less than five years of marriage - 18% as compared to 13%.

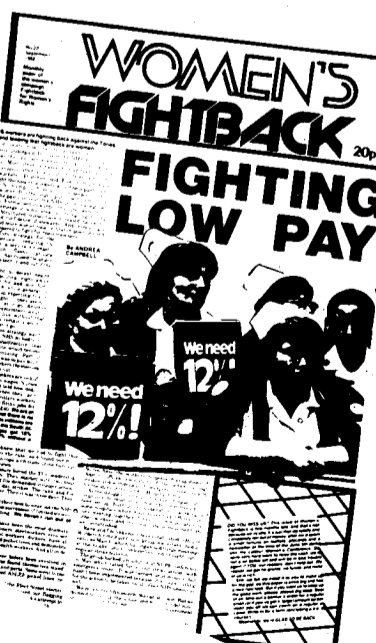
In 1976, when the Equal Pay Act was fresh and new, 1700 women went to tribunals for equal pay. Last year only 54 did.

The tribunals found innumerable loopholes, and women's earnings (per hour) are still only 75% of men's.

After a jump around the time of the Equal Pay Act, this percentage is now decreasing.

Despite all the campaigns of the 'Moral Majority', a recent opinion poll showed that 62% of people in the US support abortion rights.

New issue of Women's Fightback - 16 pages and articles on the NHS dispute, the jobs campaign, WF summer space, sexism in education, Judith Williams, Labour women's conference, etc. 20p from WF, 41 Ellington St. London N7.



COMING UP Women's Fightback AGM. October 23 County Hall, London. Open to all women, but only members and delegates from affiliated groups can vote. For conference details send s.a.e. to 41 Ellington St, N7; to join WF too send £3 (or £5 to include regular mailings and the paper).

AUGUST	
Mon	2 9 16 23 30
Tue	3 10 17 24 31
Wed	4 11 18 25
Thu	5 12 19 26
Fri	6 13 20 27
Sat	7 14 21 28
Sun	1 8 15 22 29

WHAT'S ON

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

LONDON Workers' Socialist League educational on basic Marxism. New series starting soon. Write for details and registration to WSL, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

SPARTACIST Truth Kit. New pamphlet on the politics and practice of the Spartacist League, by John Lister. 70 pages, £1 plus 26p postage, from WSL, PO Box 135, London N1.

BRENT Socialist Organiser/Women's Fightback joint meeting: Socialism in the 80s. Speakers: Gerry Byrne, Mick Woods. Tuesday September 7 7.30pm, Trades and Labour Hall, 375 Willesden High Rd, London NW10

SHEFFIELD Socialist Organiser. September 8. The Alternative Economic Strategy. September 22. The Labour Party witch-hunt. All at the Red Cow, The Wicker, starting 7.30.

LAMBETH/SOUTHWARK Socialist Organiser Group Open Forums. 8.30pm at 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5. September 2: Zionism and the Jewish Question. September 16: The Fight Against Black Oppression. September 30: Fighting Women's Oppression.

NORTH London Irish Solidarity Committee: showing of the film 'The Patriot Game', Friday September 3, 7.30, Holborn Central Library, Theobalds Rd. Admiss- ion 50p.

ISLINGTON SO Group. Next meeting: Sunday 29 August at 3pm, Thornhill Neighbourhood Project, Orkney House, Caledonian Road.

Tea and sandwiches provided. For baby-sitting, phone Nik (607-5268) in advance.

MIDLANDS People's March for Jobs. September 15 to 18: a five-pronged march from Stoke, Derby, Rugby, Hereford, and Shrewsbury, converging on Birmingham. Coordinator: Sid Platt, NALGO, 7th Floor, Tower Block, Centre City, 7 Hill St, Birmingham B5 4JD (021 643 6084).

CHILE/El Salvador festival: Thursday-Saturday September 24-26. Three days of music, poetry, theatre, exhibitions, films, seminars and workshops, at Manning Hall, University of London Union, Malet St, London WC1. Details: El Salvador Solidarity Campaign, 01-359 2270.

STOP SIZEWELL B - national rally/conference against the Pressurised Water Reactor. Saturday November 6, Central Hall, Westminster. Called by Anti-Nuclear Campaign.

PALESTINE Solidarity social to raise funds for medical aid for Lebanon. Sunday August 29, Bloomsbury Theatre.

POLISH Solidarity Campaign/Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group - demonstration and rally to mark 2nd anniversary of birth of Solidarnosc. Tuesday August 31, 6pm, from Speakers' Corner, London. Speakers will include Phillip Whitehead MP.

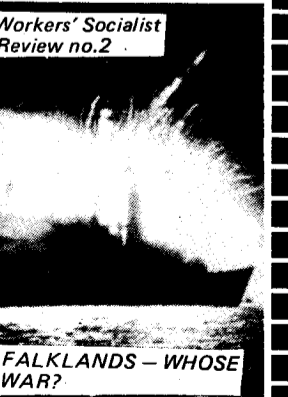
POLISH SOLIDARITY Contact addresses. Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group, Acorn House, 314/320 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP. Tel: 01-837 9464.

Glasgow Polish Solidarity Campaign. Ian McCalman, 18 Mossiel Rd, Glasgow G43. 041-632 1839. Edinburgh PSC. C/o Edinburgh Trades Council, 12 Picardy Place. Oxford Labour Committee on Poland, 468 Banbury Road, Oxford. 0865 58238. Coventry PSC. John Fisher, c/o ASTMS, 26 Queens Rd., Coventry. Labour Poland Solidarity Fund, c/o Cooperative Bank, 110 Leman St., London E1.

FIGHT THE TORIES, NOT THE SOCIALISTS!

Labour movement conference, sponsored by several CLPs, the Bakers' Union executive, and the LPYS National Committee. September 11 at Wembley Conference Centre. Delegates' credentials £1 from 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Advertisement



Out soon. 40 pages: single copies 70p plus 20p p&p, 5 copies £3.50 post free. Orders: WSL, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

NF are back in Brick Lane

by Will Adams

FOR THE last few months the National Front have had a stall on Brick Lane Market. They got it originally by booking it in the name of an individual member. But since it became clear what the stall is selling, there have been calls for the local Labour Council to withdraw the stall's licence.

Despite the efforts of some left-wing councillors, the council has avoided taking action.

The stall is important for the NF not only because it gives them a permanent pitch for selling their literature. It also boosts their confidence and serves as an organising base. There has been an increase in reports of racist attacks in East London over the period the stall has been operating.

Tower Hamlets Trades Council and Tower Hamlets Association for Racial Justice have called a march against the stall for 10am on Sunday August 29, starting from Club Row (near the Bethnal Green end of Brick Lane). The march is also supported



10am Sunday 29th August
Club Row, Bethnal Green Rd. E2

by Tower Hamlets Labour Party, the Bengali Welfare Association, Bengali youth organisation, and East London Workers Ag-

ainst Racism.

Maximum support for this march is necessary. The labour movement, Bengali and other black and

Asian organisations must make it a show of strength against the fascists, to let them know we won't let them operate unopposed.



...and in Chapel Market

SUPPORTERS of the Islington Anti-Nazi League have for years been turning up on Sunday mornings at Chapel Market in Islington to leaflet against racism and fascism. This has been despite determined and often violent opposition from the National Front and other Nazis.

Numerous mass attacks have taken place against the ANL, including the use of bottles, bricks, knives and other weapons. One Chapel Market NF supporter is now in borstal for stabbing and nearly killing an ANL supporter. Another, an ex-UVF member, was sent down for three years.

On Sunday August 1 a group of male and female Islington ANL were leafletting at Chapel Market. Beside

them was a larger all-male mob of NFers.

One of these was NF National Directorate member Ian Anderson, who in 1975 organised an attack by a busload of thugs on an anti fascist demonstration.

They taunted the ANL with racist and other abuse.

Then, suddenly, they launched a vicious and unprovoked mass attack. Some of the ANL scrambled to safety, others defended themselves.

Shortly afterwards, a vanload of ANL supporters was stopped on Upper Street by a police car with Ian Anderson in the back. He pointed three of them out to the police, who subsequently charged them with assault and actual bodily harm.

People who have shown up at Chapel Market every Sunday morning for years, in the teeth of intimidation and violence, can demand the financial and political support of all anti-racists. Legal aid was refused on August 4, though the Chapel Market Three have elected trial by jury. They must be defended.

Contact: Chapel Market Three Defence Campaign, c/o Islington ANL, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

SO info

Mersey's Left finds its voice

THE FIRST edition of Merseyside Labour Briefing comes out this week. It was inspired, as the title would imply, by London Labour Briefing.

Using the same format and style, it is an attempt to give expression to the current discussions among the Labour Left in the Merseyside area.

The idea was first discussed at a meeting of the Merseyside Labour Coordinating Committee, and the MLCC has been the major sponsor of the Briefing in terms of finance and production.

The MLCC decided, however, not to see it as its own house organ - rather, to follow the London example and open the Briefing up to all interested Labour Party members, no matter what shade of opinion.

Editorial meetings are open to all Labour Party members, and policy is to be decided collectively, with provision of space for minority views as well as individual contributions.

The magazine will be a forum for all views on the Labour Left, and not a 'line' journal.

Sponsorship for the journal is sought from all schools of thought within the Merseyside Labour Party, from single-issue campaigns, CLPs, wards, TU branches, etc.

Contributors to the first issue include county leader Kevan Coombes, city party leader John Hamilton. There is also a review of the Labour women's conference and an article against the register.

Copies from C.Erswell, c/o 59 September Road, Liverpool 6.

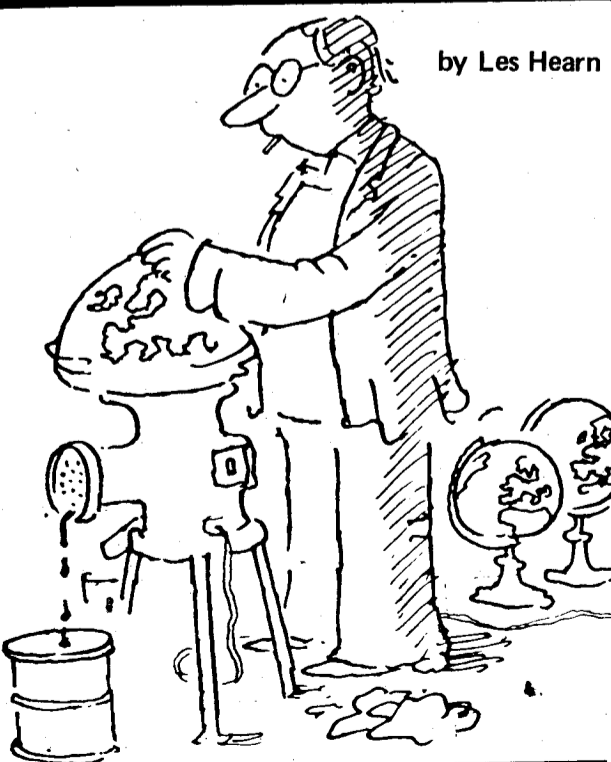
THE NEXT Socialist Organiser delegate meeting is on Saturday September 4, from 11.30am to 4.30pm at UMIST students' union, Sackville St, Manchester.

The agenda will include: the witch-hunt; preparations for Labour Party conference; resolutions including one on campaigning for police accountability; the NHS dispute; and other reports.

All local groups are asked to send delegates - and to operate 'positive discrimination' by sending a woman delegate if possible. Comrades who will be going to Labour Party conference are also specially asked to attend, whether they are local group delegates or not, for the discussion on Conference preparations.

For creche facilities or accommodation in Manchester, phone John Bloxam at 01-609 3071.

SCIENCE More trouble with tranx



by Les Hearn

RELEASE, the organisation which deals with legal and other problems of drug use, has just produced an excellent pamphlet, 'Trouble with Tranquillisers' (TWT)* about the fourth most widely used group of drugs (after alcohol, nicotine and cannabis) in Britain. This is the benzodiazepine tranquillisers and sleeping drugs (including Valium, Librium and Mogadon) - tranx for short.

Addictive

Introduced in 1960 to replace the highly addictive and hazardous barbiturates, their intended purpose is to relieve the symptoms of anxiety, or, in higher doses, to help people to sleep. Such has been their success that 2% of the adult British population takes them every day of the year, while 15% take them at some time during the year - tranx are the commonest drugs on repeat prescrip-

tions (where you don't have to see the doctor). Usage is higher among women and men without a steady job outside the home.

The problem with 'treating' something like 'anxiety' or 'insomnia' is that there is considerable scope for argument about what it is, and in any case there are many causes - but for medical purposes, these diverse causes and symptoms are given only one 'treatment'.

True, tranx do reduce anxiety and help people sleep - for a time! They lose effectiveness against anxiety after about four months and against insomnia after 3 to 14 days continuous use. This, of course, is what we would expect, knowing something of how tranx work (see 'Trials and Tribulin', SO 92).

Tranx may allow people to deal more calmly with their problems, but are probably more likely to allow people to avoid dealing with them - TWT

suggests some reasons for this:-

1. Taking a pill may make people feel that the problem is with them rather than their situation.
2. It may make them feel less confident about their ability to cope.
3. It may make them feel less miserable about their situation, making the intolerable tolerable, so they don't feel the need to change it.

Side-effects

Tranx also have many side-effects, mild and serious. TWT mentions dizziness, headaches, nausea, drowsiness, blurred vision, and slight loss of co-ordination (making it dangerous to operate machines). Some people may become depressed and even suicidal, an interesting observation in view of Paul Foot's report (last week's New Statesman) of two previous-cheerful old people who killed themselves while taking the sleeping pill Halcion (banned in Holland). We'll say nothing of

the possible link between Valium and cancer (SO 34, 35).

TWT goes on to talk about the serious problem of addiction to tranx, thought to affect some 100,000 people in Britain (5 times as many as there are heroin addicts). The serious withdrawal symptoms that can follow are listed (readers may remember these from SO 38 and 44) and are also described by a former tranx addict in a letter at the end of TWT:

'Throughout withdrawal I honestly thought I was going mad, I had never felt so ill. My head ... felt explosive. Noise was so unbearable ... Even eating (when I could) was so painful ... My eyes would hurt ... I became very confused at the world around me ... It appeared unreal; colours were much brighter, outlines more defined, more vital, vibrant, bigger than life sometimes.'

Clearly, such symptoms are not those of the original

anxiety, as TWT shows at some length.

Possibly the most useful part of TWT is the four pages of hints for coming off tranx which ends with suggestions for trying to change the conditions of life which cause anxiety.

TWT looks at the fact that twice as many women as men are tranx users and tries to analyse this in terms of the social unacceptability in women of a 'masculine' pattern of drinking alcohol to 'let off steam' or 'drown one's sorrows'. Alcohol is a drug which helps men let their feelings out while tranx 'help' women bottle them up.

Reject

TWT is an interesting, informative and useful pamphlet. Buy it, read it, use it!

*available for 40p plus postage from Release, 1, Elgin Ave., London W9 3PR.

MINERS VER

The miners turned the tide against the Heath government in 1972. They forced the Tories into a general election in 1974. They made Thatcher back down over pit closures in 1981. Now they have a new left leadership under Arthur Scargill. JOHN McILROY looks at prospects — and problems.

The ASLEF dispute, the NHS strike, and the use of the Employment Act against the Fleet Street Sparks, confirm if such confirmation is needed that leadership for a fightback against the Tories is simply not forthcoming from Great Russell Street.

It is amazing in terms of basic union principle that not one single TUC left-winger was prepared to demand a full public debate and vote on the General Council on the selling out of the train drivers by the Finance and General Purposes Committee. It is startling in terms of the reams of principled rhetoric about the necessity to fight the Tories anti union laws that not one single TUC left-winger should call for industrial action when Sean Geraghty appeared in court.

Baffling

It is baffling and incomprehensible that not one single TUC left should have protested when in defiance of the ABC of union tactics the TUC Health Services Committee separated NHS Days of Action on June 9th and 11th from the union day against Tebbit on June 10th, thus squandering the already limited potential of all three.

'Amazing', 'startling', 'baffling', and 'incomprehensible', that is, unless we understand the dynamics of the bureaucracy, spawned to serve our movement, whose mission now has become its misleadership and misrepresentation.

However it is no good, no good at all, simply bewailing the fifth column activities of Congress House, whilst striving unceasingly

to call the leadership to account, we must organise to create a situation where ASLEF will not go back to work at their behest, where a worker's court appearance will of itself prompt mass strike action, where NHS workers will extend their action without instructions from the TUC.

What we have seen these last months has been reverses, lost opportunities but not crucial defeats. Given these setbacks the job of the left in the unions right now is to prepare the ground for the next confrontation which will contain the seeds of possible large scale mobilization against the Thatcher government.

At the moment we should do three things: Fight demoralisation, do all we can to deepen and extend the NHS dispute and, whilst attempting to intensify the struggles we are involved in ourselves, turn our eyes towards Britain's mines.

The miners play an ambiguous role in working class consciousness. Sometimes their very strength can make other groups overaware of their own weaknesses, inducing an inferiority complex rather than galvanising them to emulate the NUM. But any national coal strike provides the opportunity for other workers to link up their struggles with it and create a focus for opposition to the State.

Balance

The balance of forces within our movement is also more favourable. It is relatively easy for Thatcher to stand firm against 25,000 traindrivers

— a little more difficult where 250,000 miners are concerned. And the same goes for Murray, Evans and Sapper.

It is after all only a little over 18 months ago that limited action by the miners threw the Tories into tremendous confusion. After three days of strikes opposing pit closures in early 1981 the Thatcher Cabinet caved in. 'We had no alternative' said Trade Secretary John Biffen, explaining on TV the Government's backdown. 'I didn't come into politics to be a Kamikaze pilot'.

A Financial Times editorial commented 'What is most notable is that the idea of resisting a strike — or even insisting on ballots — does not seem to have been seriously entertained. In Tory Britain, Miners Rule'.

Shambles

Such was the Tory demoralisation that Walter Goldsmith, Director General of the Institute of Directors, could claim: 'The scandalous surrender to the miners has reduced Mrs Thatcher's policies to a shambles. We might as well ask the miners' union when it wants to call the next General Election.'

It wasn't, alas, as bad as all that. By buying off the miners and subsidising pits that the NCB wished to close at one fell swoop, the Tories bought time, evading a conflict which, as Arthur Scargill pointed out at the time, could have 'created the conditions to get rid of this Tory Government once and for all.'

However, in the intervening period, 12 of the 23 pits in question have closed through the use of the

"I doubt whether the recent dispute between the coalminers and the government can be described as a total victory for the miners; talk of victory is premature. The Government sidestepped the issue because they realised they could not win. The miners had an unanswerable case. There was massive public support, but most important there was massive trade union support.

But what it did do — and this in a sense can be described as a qualified victory — was demonstrate vividly that if the working class are determined, then they can win against this or any other government practising capitalist economic policy. To that extent the working class received a lesson that provided they are prepared to back up their demands by militant industrial action, they can force governments to change course and employers to

concede demands which at one stage would have seemed impossible to win". Arthur Scargill on the Tories' 1981 backdown

"We have to convince our members that the struggle for wages and conditions is not itself enough. It is not sufficient to win a struggle for a wage increase that can be eroded by a government a few days later. We have to convince our people that there is a direct political challenge that affects the standard of life, that affects their very existence."

Arthur Scargill, April 1981

"We must prepare the conditions for the downfall of Thatcher and her monetarist policies, and the return of a Labour government pledged to socialist policies".

Mick McGahey, July 1981

agreed local procedure. There is more than one way to skin a cat.

That's what, as Callaghan before here, relied tremendously in her strategic relationship with the NUM on the existence of Joe Gormley and his built-in majority on the Executive. So often was Joe their ace in the hole, but now he has cashed in his chips, and in reward for years of faithful service, adorns the House of Lords and the race tracks.

The election of Arthur Scargill to the NUM Presidency — in an 80% poll he obtained 70% of the vote compared with 17% for his closest rival — represented a new mood in the pits. In his address to the NUM Conference in Inverness in July, Scargill described his election as 'a demand for a break with the past, a demand for a different kind of leadership.'

And it must be said that in the short period of his incumbency, Scargill has already shown the ability to give a lead. A host of apparently small measures — the transfer of the union headquarters from London to the coalfields, the rejection of plans for the miners' pension fund to be invested in South Africa, the swift hatching of the Gorleyite editor of 'The Miner' — all showed a new style at work.

'The era of behind the door negotiation beloved of Joe Gormley is over' said Scargill as he terminated discussions over pit closures with Norman Siddall, chairperson of the NCB within 10 minutes and walked out to address a crowd of cheering demonstrators.

Steps have also been taken in the direction of greater union democracy



John Harris

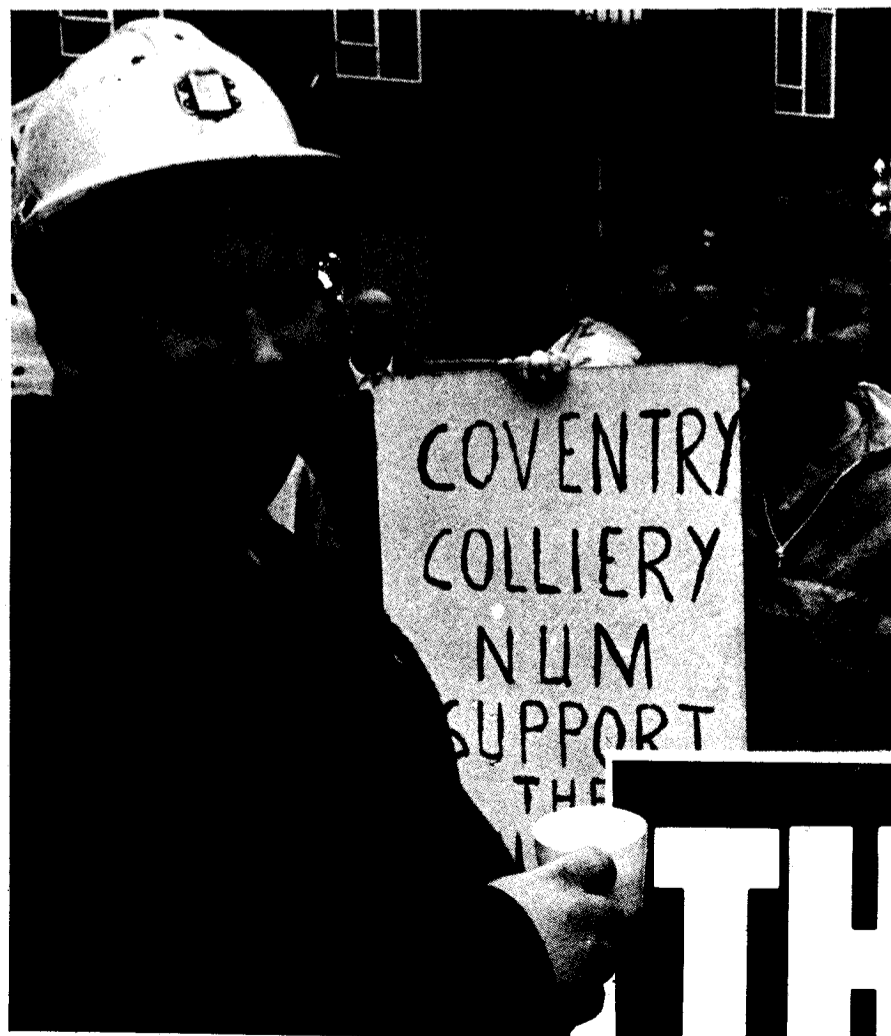
with the decision to re-elect NUM officials — including Scargill — every 5 years and restructure the union, amalgamating the outdated specialist groups with the NUM areas so that executive representation will at long last reflect to a greater degree the superior numerical strength of the left-led areas — Yorkshire, Scotland and South Wales.

This could cost the Right up to six seats.

The new-found confidence and élan of the left has thrown them into disarray. Whilst the old Gormley/opportunist/ right-wing 13-11 majority still formally exists, Scargill has been winning some executive motions with 16 or 17 votes. McGahey has joined Scargill as NUM representative

on the General Council replacing right-winger Mick Chadburn. Dyed in a wool opportunist Sid V cent of the Lancashire miners has declared that he can't beat the left, might as well join them!

It would of course be wrong to leave this there. We would like to see for example moves towards tying the salary of offic



John Harris

THE COMING

RSUS TORIES



itself nothing new. With Gormley the NCB could always rely on a little orchestrated brinkmanship, a few crumbs more than the going rate, at the worst a ballot with any leadership campaign being in reality one for acceptance to see them through. The real question with any claim is what is done to win it.

Here again Scargill has moved quickly. Instead of the past pattern of delays (which often would have dictated strikes on Midsummer's Day) the claim was submitted to the NCB on July 16th and the Executive have stated that they wish to complete negotiations by the November 1st settlement date.

Overtime

The claim also calls for a special delegate conference to be convened if the claim is rejected, followed by an overtime ban and an executive recommendation that miners should vote for a strike in any ballot.

This claim is absolutely crucial. As Scargill has argued, it must be campaigned for in every coalfield through pithead meetings, rallies and expanded editions of 'The Miner'.

'If our membership reject us, it will be seen as a green light to the Board and the Government not only to refuse us on wages but to attack pits, jobs and standards of life'.

Impasse

It will also give the green light to Thatcher for an intensified attack on all other sections. What happens in the pits this winter will affect every single worker and the future of the Thatcher Government. We must prepare now. Whilst the NUM remains the one union Thatcher would prefer not to confront there is no way she can go anywhere near meeting this claim. The scene is set for the development of conditions which could end the three year impasse between Thatcher and the unions.

A collision — a political collision with either a decisive breakthrough by the Tories or the removal of the Thatcher Government — is on the cards.

Indeed, Thatcher is already planning for this eventuality. Her advisors have just completed an emergency study of the position if the miners walk out of the pits this winter.



John Harris

to those of the membership. Left control of the union machine is a tremendous gain, but it will always attract the wrong kind of supporters and maximise the temptation not to relate to the ordinary rank and file.

In his desire to turn the NUM into a campaigning union and deepen the links with the membership, Scargill has outlined a broad project involving:

- A restoration to miners of the 20% cut in real earnings he argues has been suffered during the Gormley years, as well as a programme of wider welfare benefits to improve the standard of life.

- opposition to any pit closure for reasons other than exhaustion of reserves to be enforced by strike action.

- strike action to be immediately called if the Tebbit Law is used.

- opposition to the witch-hunt in the Labour Party, defence of the democratic gains, and a fight against Healey and Hattersley.

Context

Scargill has argued that all these tasks must be seen in the context of a fight to remove Thatcher from Downing Street. He has constantly argued that the two issues of wages and closures will become increasingly intertwined, that the success in the skirmish with the Tories in early 1981 must not breed complacency, and that militant policies for the benefit of the mineworkers are steering the NUM into another direct conflict with the Thatcher government.

Thatcher has little room for manoeuvre. In capitalist terms the position of the coal industry is a bleak one. The latest NCB 'State of the Industry Briefing' empha-

sizes once more the need for an end to 'uneconomic mining capacity'. It states that '12% of annual output is obtained from collieries which are presently unprofitable, representing an annual loss of some £250M'.

Closure

Against a background of falling demand for coal in a competitive market, tight government financial restraints, and grants which fall far below those which subsidize other EEC coal industries (UK aid works out at £3.70 per tonne compared with £10.90 per tonne for West German coal) a Board which is losing £1.5M per working day has one alternative: the closure of pits which push up the price of coal and pull down the rate of profit, and a tight control over wage increases which will do the same.

It is in this context that we have to view the campaign against closures which recently focused on the Snowden Colliery in the Kent Coalfield. It is also against this backdrop that the NCB will face the new wage claim, ratified at Inverness.

This claim which would work out at some 31% is to bring the basic minimum of surface workers up from £87.80 to £115. All other grades would receive commensurate flat rate increases, so that the minimum for the highest paid face workers would increase from £121 to £148.

The NCB claim that this would cost £420 million. Also on the table — and every bit as important — are retirement at 55, a four day week with no loss of earnings, and salary status.

This type of claim is in

his record is far superior to that of other union leaders, and as Jack Collins of the Kent NUM points out, he will be decisively tested out this winter. We should all stand with him in this test.

In doing so we should argue that there must be no dilution of the full claim.

It provides something worth fighting for. This will mean a long, long strike and the present balance of forces requires an immediate overtime ban to run down stocks.

Because of the state of the market, there is a record 50 million tonnes of coal in stock, half of that in the hands of customers.

As you read this, coal-based firms are frantically topping up further. The NCB reckon that with these levels available, an all-out strike would take at least 16 or 17 weeks to achieve the impact of 1974.

Moreover with a slack market, coal is ready at hand, and cheap, from Poland, South Africa and the USA.

Thatcher's advisors believe that coal carriers could tie up at Amsterdam and have their cargo carried in small ships to the non-registered labour ports in the UK. They also hope that as with the 1980 steel strike, coal could be driven around Britain by road.

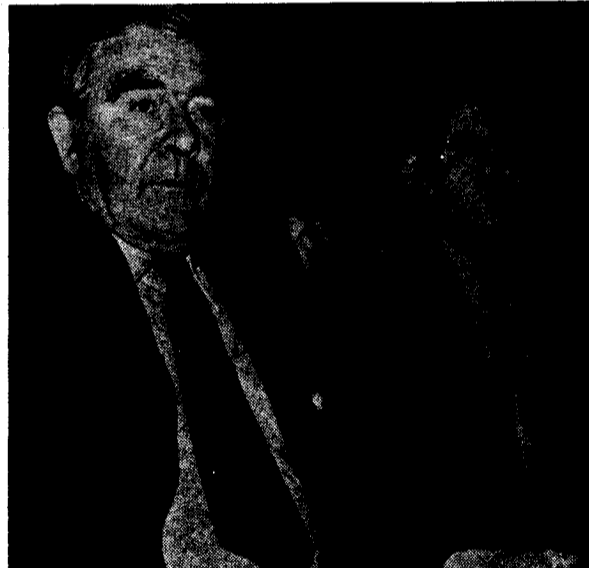
The Tories are in training camp, and quietly confident that while it may go 15 rounds they will get the verdict.

Many S.O. readers will have political differences with Arthur Scargill over a range of issues, from his lack of support for Solidarity in Poland to his lack of direct industrial support for other sections of our class, and his failure to polarise issues sufficiently on the General Council. However,

Black

The NUM should immediately seek undertakings from all other unions to black all coal in the event of a stoppage to avoid the type of suicidal delays that we saw during the steel strike. Plans for mass pickets should be prepared now, and the NUM should campaign for solidarity strikes by other workers. A campaign for other unions to bring forward their wage claims to synchronise with the NUM should be started by Scargill and McGahey on the TUC General Council.

The watchword should be: Remember 1926! Organise now!



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SPAIN: 3 The Left

A Socialist government - and then what?

Henry Phillips concludes his series on Spain with a survey of the state of the Left

FEBRUARY 23 1981, the day of the attempted military coup, still haunts most political leaders and parties; but none more than those of the workers movement and the left.

On that night the Spanish left was forced to endure a trial which everyone (though none publicly) acknowledges that it failed disastrously.

On that night it was clear for all to see that the coup failed not because of any mass mobilisations against it by the left or workers' movement, but because some of its main protagonists got cold feet at the last minute.

On that night the still very limited democratic gains of post-Franco Spain showed themselves to be frighteningly vulnerable, with no strong forces protecting them.

The present political lines of the main workers' organisations in parliament and of the two main trade unions are based on conclusions drawn from the experiences of February 23.

But the conclusions have not been that the workers must prevent a further coup by strengthening their mobilisation and vigilance against threats from the right.

On the contrary they have used the failure of February 23 to argue that the weakness of the workers' movement dictates the need to compromise with the bourgeoisie in order to mollify and placate the right.

King

Immediately after the coup both the Socialist and Communist Party leaderships rallied behind Franco's chosen successor King Juan Carlos who was most probably connected with the coup plot himself.

In Parliament the Socialists followed this not by opposing the governing UCD's failure to bring full democracy to Spain but by forming a parliament alliance with them to halt the moves towards democracy which so alarmed the military hierarchy.

The most significant result of this has been the passage of the Law for the Harmonisation of Autonomy (LOAPA) which slams a brake on further advances to regional autonomy and limits the gains already made in Euzkadi (the Basque region), Catalonia, Galicia and Andalucia. This reactionary act was passed explicitly to allay the generals' often expressed fears that the Spanish state was breaking up.

The Socialists did, it is true, oppose the government over the country's recent admission to NATO. But many of the right-wing generals are opposed to NATO entry as well.

On the economic front the PSOE has been as compromising as on national rights. Its trade union, the UGT, along with the Communist-dominated Workers' Committees last

year signed a pact with the employers and the government, known as the National Agreement on Employment (ANE), which is a typical 'Social Contract'. The unions undertake to control the level of wage claims (in effect accepting real wage cuts) which the government and employers undertake to create new jobs (350,000 of them to be precise). And the result of the pact is equally typical. Wages have been held down below the rate of in-



Carrillo

flation; but jobs have not been created.

Contempt for the pact has become widespread but concrete opposition has been very limited. This has mainly been because of the PSOE leadership, which has for over a year been relatively free of any left opposition.

There are several reasons for that. One is the successful purge of the left in the PSOE and the UGT which took place between 1979 and 1981. A second is the relative decline of the far-left organisations, which grew like mushrooms in the post-Franco political climate.

The biggest of them, the Maoist Party of Labour (PTE) and the ex-Catholic Revolutionary Workers Organisation (ORT), fused with each other two years ago and have since been dissolved altogether. Another group with Maoist links, the Communist Movement (MC), still exists but counts for very little even in the Basque region where it is strongest.

Basque

The Basque left (Euzkadiko Ezkerra) recently formed from a fusion of part of the Basque Commu-

nist Party and the political-military wing of ETA, has attracted a good deal of curiosity as a hitherto unknown political animal. But it is too amorphous, politically and organisationally, to form a major political pole of attraction and in any event it is restricted to Euzkadi.

In other regions local Socialist Parties have (as in Andalucia) all but disappeared beneath the PSOE's political steamroller.

As in the rest of Europe, the various Trotskyist groups remain fatally divided and marginalised, despite their growth in the mid-1970's. Most of them have strongly criticised the main organisations for their failure to mobilise against the coup. But, except in a few localities, the criticisms have failed to find an audience, though Trotskyist candidates did poll a remarkably large number of votes in the recent Galician and Andalucian parliamentary elections (still not enough to gain representation).

Demise

But the main reason why the right wing leadership of the PSOE holds undisputed sway in the workers' movement at present is the demise of the Spanish Communist Party.

Not that the CP is in general a left critic of the PSOE. In fact its secretary general, Santiago Carrillo, has been criticising PSOE leader Felipe Gonzalez for adventurism in not recognising the threat to democracy in Spain.

Against the PSOE's present apparent determination to rule alone after its expected victory in the next general election, the CP puts forward a plan for a coalition with the liberal bourgeoisie (in which it includes the UCD) against the right.

Despite these positions to the right of the PSOE, the CP has been capable of being a pressure on Gonzalez because it has until recently been a serious



Gonzalez - successfully pushing the PSOE to the right

rival for the political allegiance of important sections of the working class. And it has always been capable of taking the odd tactical left position. For instance it has opposed the PSOE over its support for the LOAPA.

But for the most part the Spanish CP no longer poses any political threat to the PSOE. In the last two years it has endured convulsions as massive as the UCD.

First of all it has split between the pro-Moscow faction and the Eurocommunists around Carrillo. In Catalonia the pro-Moscow faction has now established a new party, the Party of Catalan Communists which includes a majority of the working class base of the old PSUC (the semi-autonomous Catalan Communist Party) and which tends to take a more militant line than the CP on issues of the domestic class struggle.

Elsewhere in Spain supporters of this faction have been expelled from or have left the party in considerable numbers.

The CP has also been eroding at the other side from the activities of part of their Eurocommunist faction who have objected to Santiago Carrillo's iron autocratic fist with which

the party is ruled. Many of these, too, have resigned or been expelled.

In the Basque country the whole leadership of the Eurocommunist faction broke with the Carrillo leadership and went off to unite with the left nationalists of Euzkadiko Ezkerra. While retaining some of its worker militants, the rump of the Basque CP has become politically invisible.

Splits

With the exception of a very few areas the Spanish CP has moved in three years from being an important, if minority, party of the Spanish working class to being a party debilitated by splits and public factional fighting. 100,000 out of 160,000 members have departed in two years.

It lies convulsed on the battlefield of Spanish politics, its limbs hacked off and its torso bleeding and scarred.

At the most recent Central Committee meeting Carrillo described this as a strengthening of the party because it had taught loyal militants to value the party. It looks as if the Spanish CP will be unable to survive any further such strengthening!

If so, how long will they permit it to remain?

The answer to that question depends on others. What policies will a PSOE government pursue? Will its election unleash a new upsurge of militant struggles as with the election of the Popular Front in 1935? There is little doubt that the PSOE leadership will try to pursue as cautious and moderate a policy as possible.

Office

But they will take office in conditions of extremely high unemployment and possible financial panic caused by their election. Workers and those affected by economic crisis will have great expectations of the first non-Francoist government for nearly 50 years.

At present the Socialist economic programme contains very little to deal with the material problems of Spanish workers. Like that of Mitterand or the Labour Party in Britain, it is a combination of more public investment and wage control to expand production and jobs.

Allende

But before Francoism has been politically laid to rest, most Spaniards see the appropriate parallels not in Mitterand or Foot but in the origins of Francoism, or in the regime of Socialist President Salvador Allende in Chile.

And so many of them rightly view with alarm the fact that the PSOE stands on the threshold of power without any policy to destroy or even control the powerful Francoist caste which still leads the Spanish armed forces - no policy, that is, apart from appeasement.

Military

That is about where the secure predictions end. Huge questions then loom up. Will the military and the far-right allow such a government to take power?



In the Basque country and Catalonia workers demand regional self-determination



SPAIN: THE LAST TIME

'REVOLUTION and Counter Revolution in Spain', first published in 1938, was written by an American Trotskyist, Felix Morrow.

He was a leader of the American Socialist Workers Party and was on the editorial board of its weekly newspaper: 'Socialist Appeal, which carried extensive coverage of the Spanish Civil War at the time.

In addition to 'Revolution and Counter Revolution in Spain, he also wrote a pamphlet 'The Civil War in Spain - towards Socialism or Fascism' which is included in current editions of Revolution and Counter Revolution in Spain.

This provides very good background, particularly for those who do not have a great deal of knowledge about Spanish society before the outbreak of the civil war. It gives a good outline of the main economic and social problems of Spain, and the events of the early 1930's before the coming to power of the popular front government in the elections of February 1936.

Revolution and Counter Revolution in Spain' itself was written as the events of the Spanish Civil War unfolded. It is, however, not just a description of the events of the Spanish Civil War, but an attack by Morrow on the futility of attempting to defeat Franco through the 'People's Front' coalition with the bourgeoisie. This was the central strategy of both the Stalinists and the Socialists in Spain after September 1935.

Turnabout

The idea of a popular front was put forward at the Seventh congress of the Comintern in 1935 - a complete turnabout from the previous Stalinist position of refusing to have anything to do with even social-democratic parties.

The Comintern now advocated alliances not only with social democratic but also with openly bourgeois political parties -

Another article in our Socialist Bookshelf series: ANN DUGGAN introduces Felix Morrow's book 'Revolution & counter-revolution in Spain'

in order that the Soviet Union could win an alliance with England and France against Nazi Germany. The 'popular front' tactic was solely a means to achieve this end.

Morrow describes how in order to maintain the 'popular front', the workers parties in Spain subordinated their policies to those of the bourgeois parties in the Front.

When Franco staged his uprising in July 1936, his forces were met by armed militias of workers in many parts of Spain - mostly under the influence of the CNT-FAI (anarchist organisations) and the much smaller POUM (workers party of Marxist unification, formed in September 1935 by the fusion of two other groups. Trotsky characterised them as a centrist party.)

Morrow vividly describes the way in which the Spanish workers organised themselves and reacted to the fascist uprising in the early part of the civil war.

Morrow criticized the leaders of the CNT and the POUM for their failure to build and organise independent workers' soviets on the basis of the numerous independent workers' and peasants' organisations which already existed in Spain.

As well as attacking the 'popular front', another major theme of Morrow's book is the role that a revolutionary party should have played in the events in Spain. Morrow predicted (and events proved him right) that by refusing to build Soviets on the basis of the independent workers' organisations that the CNT and the POUM would increasingly be drawn into the popular front.

Morrow describes how totally counter-revolutionary the policies of the Popular Front were. They did nothing to forward the aspirations of the Spanish workers and peasants.



A Republican fighter falls in the Civil War



The Popular Front government gradually dismantled the organisations which had been set up by workers. They disarmed the militias and recreated a 'bourgeois' army and police force.

They refused to grant the Moroccans independence (Morocco was then a colony of Spain) and so lost what could have been a valuable ally against Franco - instead Morocco became one of Franco's strongest bases.

By providing no alternatives to these policies the POUM and CNT were in fact helping to make the rope which finally hung them. The popular front government, driven by the Stalinists, eventually turned their attention

to ridding themselves of their radical supporters. Morrow describes how the Stalinists imported police agents, secret trials, torture, assassinations and other such methods from the Soviet Union to deal with the would-be revolutionaries in Spain.

Treacherous

Morrow's account of the role of the Stalinists in Spain is far removed from the Stalinist version of their 'glorious' past. (Their treacherous role was even commented upon by George Orwell, no revolutionary, in his book 'Homage to Catalonia.)

Morrow shows that the

policies of the Popular Front and the inability of the workers parties to build an independent working class movement and leadership, inevitably led to the demoralisation and defeat of the workers and peasants in Spain.

The very small Trotskyist International at the time tried to intervene in the events in Spain and reorientate the POUM. In the Spring of 1937 a small Trotskyist group split from the POUM and put forward a united front programme to the CNT and POUM workers - to unite to fight the persecution by the popular front government and to set up their own workers and peasants committees.

They were however a small group, and events in Spain had already gone too far for them to have much impact.

Morrow's account remains to this day one of the best Marxist accounts of the Spanish Civil War. It is a very lively and exciting book to read, and very clear in its analysis of the often complex events and political ideas surrounding the Spanish Civil War.

Morrow's analysis clearly shows the need to develop an independent revolutionary leadership for the working class movement. The lack of this leadership in Spain had tragic consequences for the Spanish working class and peasants.



Debate in Solidarnosc

The coming week will see demonstrations against martial law in Poland, to mark the second anniversary of Solidarnosc. Exiled Solidarnosc activist MAREK GARZTECKI spoke to Socialist Organiser about the debates in the Polish workers' movement.

Before martial law there was a debate in Solidarity between those who were saying that you've got to go very carefully to avoid provoking an invasion and aim to change things bit by bit, and those who were saying that you had to overthrow the bureaucracy. Do you think that the debate has continued with more people coming to the second point of view?

First of all you must understand that this debate during the period that Solidarity was legal, was very much influenced by the geopolitical situation in Poland.

It isn't the case that there is a wing of Solidarity that wants to preserve the regime with cosmetic changes and another wing that would like to overthrow it.

If Poles were given a free choice 99% would say get rid of it altogether. The debate was over the best tactic and some people were saying, 'Look, we cannot provoke the government because they have the army, and we are surrounded on all sides'. It is not like Great Britain with only the sea as its border.

We are surrounded. In fact it isn't even necessary for the Russian army to march into Poland. Since the last War we have had a quarter of a million Russian troops inside Poland and they could do the job quite well in five hours.

So it was a question of going into compromise for as long as possible so that we could 'contaminate' other countries.

If you think that the revolution in Poland is

possible without revolution in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, or the Soviet Union, you are mistaken.

It is impossible. It is like trying to make a revolution in one town in a country.

Can you declare a revolutionary republic of Birmingham inside Great Britain?

So the question was whether we should wait and try to get the government to prolong the life of Solidarity by a day, by a month, and I think now that the debate has slightly changed in this way. Firstly most people have lost any illusions that you can talk honestly to this government or that you can have any democratic changes within this system.

But we also recognise that while the government has its police, and army, it

is completely unable to rule the country.

So they may again give us some concessions, they may again make Solidarity legal, and do the whole thing again.

I think most of the Solidarity people are prepared for negotiations, for bargaining with the government, for making the whole damn circus again. Not because they believe they can reform Jaruzelski into believing in Solidarity, but only because we believe that with every passing month, there are things happening in other East European countries.

We need a few more years, maybe two years, to really 'contaminate' these countries and start this avalanche process in which all the dominoes will fall.

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.

HEALYITES DOWN UNDER

AN INTERESTING sidelight on your campaign against the libel case brought by Vanessa Redgrave and Gerry Healy's WRP.

The Healyites are quite capable of seeing it as a principle that the capitalist courts should not be used against the labour movement — when it suits them.

In New South Wales, left-wingers (members of the Communist Party of Austr-

alia) in the Builders Laborers Federation have gone to law to get a court-controlled ballot for BLF secretary and organiser.

The local Healyite paper, Workers' News, has not only argued against this, but sided more or less fully with the present (right-wing) leadership of the NSW BLF.

PAUL WHITE, Melbourne, Australia.

Defend the Kray twins?

THE 1950s and early '60s were an era in which a mass women's and gay movement were only an idea in the minds of a handful of isolated individuals. It was into an East End working class culture strongly permeated (as it indeed still is today) by a strict sexual division of labour within the family and a dominant macho ethos, that the Kray twins were born.

The fact that both Ron and Reg were gay and could find no public cultural expression or outlet for their sexuality was an important factor in understanding their career of crime. What's more, even in 1969 when they were brought to trial this was barely comprehend-

defend the acts of violence perpetrated by the Krays as a method of solving non-political disputes. However, we also have a duty to strip away the repressive facade into which capitalism inserts the real relationships of exploitation.

The Krays were part of an oppressed minority — in that sense it is an obligation on all revolutionaries to unconditionally defend them.

RAY ATTWELL, Rochdale.

YCND leader in the '60s

A BOOB, I fear, in your article on the history of the Labour Party Young Socialists (July 22).

Misha is a male Jewish name, and Misha Goldmann was no exception to the rule. He was a Young Communist League member, but, unlike his party (which then anyway opposed CND) he was a sincere unilateralist from 1958, took part in demos, and on at least one occasion voted for a unilateralist non-CP member against a Stalin-

ist hack. However, after the CP (in 1960-1) changed policy and climbed on the CND bandwagon, he returned to party orthodoxy. I don't know what he did after 1962.

LAURENS OTTER, Wellington, Salop.

P.S. In fairness to Grant, it is worth recalling that Healy voted for the expulsion of the Grantites from the earlier Labour League of Youth more than once in the years 1953 to '58.

Taunt

John Pearson, in his biography of the twins, "The Profession of Violence", documents how Ron in particular had undergone personal degradation over a long period of time from a number of heavy straights. Jack "the hat" McVitie was a case in point.

In order to prove their allegiance to the masculine stereotype, and simultaneously repress their genuine sexual proclivities, they answered bourgeois society and its taunting hypocrisy with the only language they knew — violence.

As socialists we cannot



Not robber but robbed

AFTER having the privilege of a third long letter in Socialist Organiser, Stan Crooke still avoids explaining his original position to us. What does sub-imperialism mean scientifically?

Instead, he defends his analogy between Argentina and Russia, and holds Lenin responsible for his own confusion on imperialism and particularly on Russian imperialism.

For Lenin it was not simply territorial claims or petty investments that defined a country as imperialist.

Lenin explained imperialism as "... monopolistic capitalism. Every cartel, trust, syndicate, every big bank is a monopoly. Super-profit has not disappeared, it still remains. The exploitation by one privileged, financially rich country of

all the others remains and has become more intense.

Four rich countries

"A handful of rich countries — there are only four of them, if we are to speak of independent, and really large, gigantic, "modern" wealth — England, France, the United States and Germany — have developed monopoly — in vast proportions, they obtain super profits amounting to hundreds of millions, even billions. They "ride on the backs" of hundreds and hundreds of millions of foreign populations and they fight among each other for the division of the particularly rich, particularly fat and particularly easy spoils. This is the economic

and political essence of imperialism ..."

On the question of Russia (which is the most confusing issue for Stan Crooke) Lenin says.

"Monopoly is enjoyed by the finance capital not of one, but of certain, though only a very few Great Powers. (In Japan and Russia the monopoly of military power, vast territories, or special facilities for robbing other peoples, China, etc. partly supplements, partly takes the place of, the monopoly of modern, up-to-date finance capital)."

Argentina does not possess a "gigantic", "modern wealth" nor does it possess "monopoly of military power", "vast territories" or facilities for robbing other peoples or nations; instead Argentina itself has been robbed for decades by

the few privileged imperialist nations.

In the imperialist epoch "the exploitation of classes was supplemented and its potency increased by the exploitation of nations."

Argentina is exploited

Russia was one of these privileged, (more correctly due to its backwardness "less privileged") imperialist countries and was exploiting other nations; in contrast Argentina is a country exploited as a nation by imperialism.

That is why Stan Crooke's analogy is false to the core, confused, and leads him into terribly wrong conclusions.

JACK JOHNSON, London

Time to join TSC

An appeal from the Turkey Solidarity Campaign

This 12th September marks the second anniversary of the military coup in Turkey. For the peoples of the country — Turks, Kurds and Armenians — the two years of military rule have been an unprecedented period of impoverishment and repression. Eschewing democratic principles, the Generals who strutted to power at the head of 557,000 soldiers imposed a grim and harsh dictatorship intolerant of political dissent and public debate.

After they had toppled the elected government of conservative Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel, they dispensed with the 1960 constitution which guaranteed parliamentary democracy in Turkey.

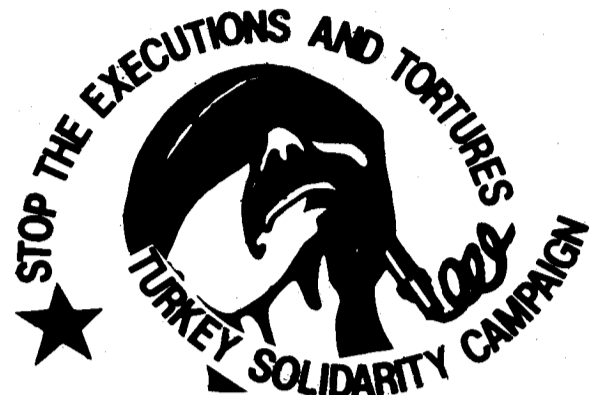
Trade union democracy was held in equal contempt. They issued a decree banning the main trade union confederation — called DISK — and outlawing strikes and mass factory meetings.

Declaring martial law across the country, they instantly despatched selected hit-squads to round up socialists and trade unionists who could provide a focus of democratic opposition to their regime. Over 100,000 were detained in their raids.

Stamp

The Generals claimed their takeover was necessary to stamp out endemic political unrest in Turkey. But the crackdown wasn't applied to the Fascist Nationalist Action Party, the perpetrators of the street violence and terrorism, with the same ferocity. Prejudiced to right-wing politics, with vital allies in the fascist party hierarchy, the Generals deliberately allowed the fascist party structure to survive intact.

The thrust of the repression was directed against socialists and trade unionists — because the Gen-



Affiliate to the Turkish Solidarity Campaign. Write to: TSC, BM Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX.

erals wanted to weaken resistance to the pay cuts and price rises they wanted as part of their economic strategy.

But their offensive wasn't just restricted to the Left. Democrats who defended the democratic rights of the Left were similarly subject to repression. Most recently the Generals have put on trial the leaders of the Turkish Peace Association for subversion.

As the Generals approach the second anniversary of their coup, they are diverting attention from such repression with prom-

ises to return Turkey to democracy next year. But the democracy of the Junta is rigid and authoritarian. The 'democracy' is a facade for a strong state.

The Turkey Solidarity Campaign is anxious that the Junta's hints of a return to democracy should not stall solidarity action in Britain.

Set up before the coup, the Campaign believes that the vital work of rallying support for the people of Turkey must continue remorselessly. Why not commemorate the second anniversary of the coup by joining the Campaign?



Socialist Organiser Alliance

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BL: bonus claim will sap the fight

Bill Peters reports on preparations for this year's wage review

THIS YEAR'S British Leyland wage review, which (like last year's) is strategically important to Tory wages policy, has been dealt a heavy blow by the Communist Party.

At a meeting of the shop stewards' combine committee last Saturday, Jack Adams, combine committee chairman, Longbridge convenor, and a leading member of the CP, successfully pushed through a policy motion for this year's review which places BL workers at a serious disadvantage. It calls for a claim based on bonus consolidation.

Bonus consolidation was precisely the basis of last year's dramatic sell-out by the General Secretaries and the TUC. They negotiated a sell-out settlement based on the guarantee of the first £3.75 of the bonus, despite this being contrary to policy of the Combine Committee, the convenors' conference, and the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC).

Model

This sell-out was a model for the ASLEF betrayal.

Now the sell-out merchants like Grenville Hawley of the T&G and Ken Cure of the AUEW will hardly believe their luck. This year, instead of the problem of fighting and conspiring to get away from a straight wage claim and onto juggling with the bonus, they could have the Combine Committee behind them.

There were two motions at the Combine meeting. The policy moved by Adams from the Longbridge works committee called for consolidation of the maximum bonus of £30, £16 on the rate, and 13.5% on minimum time rate. The resolution from the shop stewards' committee at the Cowley Assembly Plant called for £20 on the rate, across the board, and NO negotiation on the bonus.

The call in Adams' motion for £16 on the rate as well as bonus consolidation is beside the point. Since bonus consolidation is company policy, it is obvious that they will negotiate on that, not the basic rate.

Offer

Adams know very well that they will not consolidate the full £30 (which only one or two plants are getting), or anything like that, but will offer to consolidate the £3.75 they guaranteed last year, and probably offer to guarantee a few pounds more on top of that.

This will then be presented as partially meeting the trade union claim, yet it will not mean an extra penny in the pockets of the vast majority of BL workers, since their bonus is already in excess of that.

An added factor is that Adams' escape route will be placed in the hands of the 'new' JNC set up out of last year's sell-out, which is



worse than the previous committee. Additional places have been created, most of which have been filled by full-time officials.

There are now 17 full-time officials on the 38 man (and they are all men) committee. These include Terry Duffy's brother, Dennis Duffy

In this situation the combine committee decision cannot be accepted by BL workers. This year's wage review is critical, not just for the rate of pay, but as a challenge to the whole strategy of the company, which is to smash the trade union movement, establish total management control, and drive up the rate of profit.

Edwardes has made major steps along this road as a result of the sell-outs of the last two reviews. Another debacle this year would hand him the initiative still further.

This policy is hard to defeat from the level of individual plants. United action on a review is the best time to take Edwardes on.

Adams' policy must therefore be reversed. This can still be done, since the claim is not yet officially formulated. The Combine

Committee decision has no official standing, although of course its decisions have considerable authority.

Last year the Combine recommendation became the official claim, although Adams was opposed to it. It was a Cowley motion for a straight wage increase and refusal to bring the bonus into it.

Procedure

The JNC has announced the following procedure for drawing up the claim.

1. Plant shop stewards' meetings at the beginning of October.

2. There will be plant mass meetings only in the Cowley Assembly Plant and the Swindon Body Plant - on the grounds that none of the other plants want them.

3. Each of the unions will hold a separate delegate conference on October 4.

4. A full delegate conference of all unions on October 6.

5. A JNC meeting on October 7/8.

To establish a fighting policy in this process will be difficult. First we must fight for mass meetings to take place in all plants. When the JNC calls for no mass meetings, it shows it has no will to involve and mobilise the membership. But without such involvement no real fight for any claim is possible.

Second, shop stewards' committees should reject the combine committee claim and support alternative proposals for a flat rate increase claim. Put the policy to mass meetings; insist on a full democratic procedure in each union, mandate the delegates to the delegate conferences.

Adams, the CP, and the right wing will fight hard against such a policy. Already they are talking about "the difficult trading situation" and pointing to the fall in Metro sales and the two-week lay-off at Longbridge at the end of September and beginning of October.

These factors are not determining the mood of the BL workforce. They are influenced by wage packets that are impossible to live on, and

the constant attacks from management that cannot be adequately fought from the individual plants.

Unite

The necessary factor for a fightback in BL is a claim which will unite the workforce and limit the scope of the leadership to sell them out.

Bonus consolidation is the opposite of that - and Jack Adams knows it!



"Bonus consolidation is the opposite of what we need - and Jack Adams knows it!"

BL attacks disabled workers

THE THIRST for surplus value is ruthless, and the management team of South African trained Michael Edwardes in BL are now pursuing it in the most brutal way.

In the Cowley Assembly plant, the 'Edwardes Mafia', as they are known to local managers, have now reached a new level of dehumanisation by attacking the invalids in the plant - the disabled and the blind.

These work in what is known as the 'panel room' where they do light sub-assemblies.

Management have gone into the panel room and pressurised them, particularly those who can walk or see, to go onto production jobs.

Already, under the 'plant audit' clause negotiated by the national officials and the TUC when they sold out the wage claim last year, hundreds of non-production jobs are being abolished.

Workers over 60 years of age, many of whom have

never worked on a production line, are being forced onto jobs which young, fit workers struggle to hold. Sometimes they are switched for day shift to night shift at the same time.

They are told. That is the job. If you can't hold it, leave.

Although strikes take place, and some workers are protected, it doesn't halt the relentless management drive.

This is the outcome also of sell-outs by the trade union leaders. The mobility terms of the 'blue paper' forced in by Edwardes in 1980 are fully supported by the likes of Terry Duffy.

It is the ugly face of Thatcherite Britain in the 1980s: the reflection on the shop floor of the policies of a government which has been allowed to wage war against the working class for 3 1/2 years, and protected by the trade union leaders' sabotage of every threat to their rule.



UCW: a leap forward, some steps back

THE RULES Revision Conference of the UCW made a giant leap forward on trade union democracy, but also some steps backwards.

The giant leap was to carry the amendment to Rule proposed by the East London Counter Branch that all general officers elected after the 1982 Rules Revision shall be elected for a term of office not exceeding five years.

They will also be eligible for re-election. Existing officers may voluntarily stand for re-election under these arrangements, and there will be a suitable amendment to the contract of employment.

General secretary Alan Tuffin made a strong speech against the amendment, listing the very many unions that at present do not have re-election every five years. But he lost his argument by comparing the issue to re-election of governments, and saying that the union "should not behave like politicians".

He also quoted statements from Tebbit and other Tories in favour of elections of union officials. But it was the membership who were asking and demanding re-election to control the officers of the union - and not election by individual postal ballot, as the Tories propose, but by the membership who attend branch meetings.

Eric Lovett, replying, said that the comment about not playing politicians had come across almost like what we hear from those in power in right wing military juntas!

On the card vote, there were 9,073 for the amendment, and 7,362 against - a majority of 1,711.

On the other side of the balance sheet were the amendments to discourage the emerging Broad Left within the union, by forbidding unofficial organisations to use the initials UCW or the name of the union.

It was carried. Alan Tuffin had insisted that it was no witch-hunt, but the second amendment seemed to belie this. It was to prevent members meeting to discuss union business without the authority of the EC.

As one delegate put it, Moses Tuffin has now handed down two more commandments to us. Thou shalt not take the name of the

UCW in vain; and, thou shalt not discuss the job.

The card vote was extremely close, with 7,770 for and 7,508 against, with 2,348 abstentions. A lot of branch delegations were split.

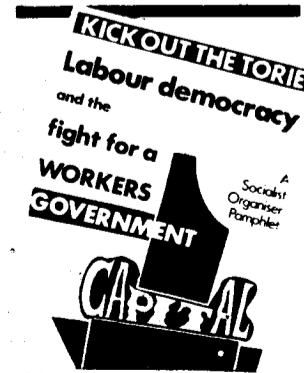
The Broad Left must now push forward its policies. The witch-hunting tactics of the union bureaucracy must not get the upper hand and drive fear into the membership.

Support for health workers

If there was any doubt about whether the membership of the UCW wholeheartedly support the health workers in their present struggle, it was ended by the welcome given to two health workers from Coventry on Saturday.

They told us they would lose the dispute unless other trade unionists came out in support, and called on the UCW delegation to the TUC conference to help defend their members' health service.

On Sunday the Notting Hill branch put an emergency motion for the UCW executive to call industrial action in solidarity with the health workers, but this was ruled out of order. More UCW branches need to put pressure on the executive for action on this and on the attack on jobs in Telecoms.



40p plus postage from Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8

BSC swings the axe

WITH another swing of its axe, British Steel has announced that it will cut 3,000 more jobs.

Tens of thousands have already gone in recent years, and there is no end in sight.

Bill Sirs, leader of the main steel union, ISTC, has promised resistance to the latest cuts — but on a scale that is scarcely adequate.

Overtime bans, limited stoppages, and work-to-rules are the methods being considered, he said.

Sirs also called for import controls — this at a time when steel companies in the US are pressing for tighter controls to keep EEC (including British) steel out of the US. The US steel bosses complain about the state subsidies to the EEC steel corporations: in the US more than 100,000 steelworkers are laid off.

Who wins from the roundabout of demands for import controls in

country after country?

The ISTC is also formulating a pay claim for a 9.5% increase from January 1. The claim includes rejection of local productivity deals.

ISTC leaders say that they expect a zero offer from BSC, but no plans yet exist for action.

Some increased left influence in the ISTC is however shown by a recent executive decision — hotly contested by right-winger Sirs — to concede policy-making powers to the union conference.

Until a few years ago ISTC had no conferences at all — and when it started having conferences, they had no power. This year's conference voted to demand policy-making powers.

ISTC has also submitted a resolution to this year's TUC calling for the unions to break all links with the Tories and bosses in 'tripartite' committees.



Scottish steel workers' anger explodes

IN THE early '70s, 10,000 Scottish steelworkers lost their jobs. In 1980 alone, it was 11,000. Now BSC have announced a further 1,000 redundancies for this year, with the closure of Parkhead Forge, a cut of 320 jobs at Ravenscraig, and the virtual closure of Clydebridge steelworks — where 535 of the remaining 700 workers are to go. Six years ago 3,000 people worked at Clydebridge.

When BSC Plates Division James Mackenzie drove into Clydebridge to announce, he was met by 200 workers throwing apples and safety helmets at him and shouting 'Get out, you bloody bastard'.

He didn't expect any militancy, since the general feeling in the works has been one of demoralisation and cynicism since the national strike, with the rundown of the works, the closure of another Cambuslang steelworks in 1980, and the recent redundancies at nearby Hoover.

But, as convenor Jimmy Burtney said, "We realise that if we don't fight here, we won't have the chance to fight on the dole queues".

Unemployment in Cambuslang is one in four.

The only positive action taken so far is the ISTC and APEX making sure that no orders are diverted from Clydebridge. Other options are now being discussed, including stopping key production, and a demonstration through Cambuslang sponsored by the local Trades Council and Labour Party.

Splits

Splits over the effects of these cuts on the rest of the Scottish steel industry have already appeared. Jimmy Burtney has said: "Ravenscraig is under threat, and the closure of the plate mill is the first step in an orchestrated plan to destroy the Scottish steel industry".

But the convenor at

Ravenscraig, Tommy Brennan, has said that this is "absolute rubbish", as has the MP for Motherwell, Jeremy Bray.

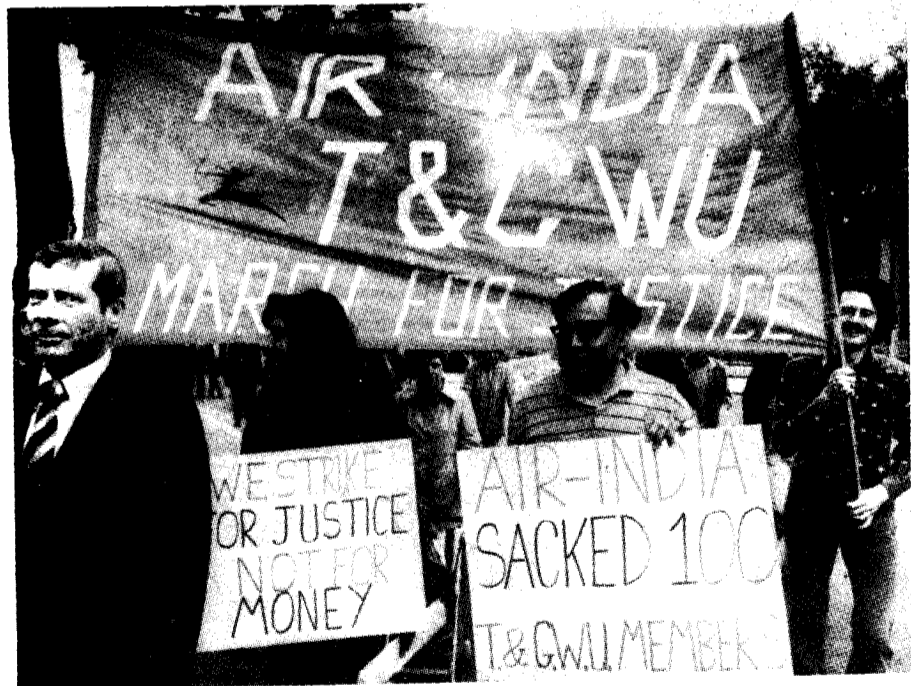
BSC are certainly considering 1100 more redundancies for May 1983, and works supplied by Ravenscraig are being closed or cut back.

Action

The attitude of Bray and Brennan does not exactly inspire confidence in their willingness to help build a mass campaign to defeat the BSC plans. Nor does that of STUC representative Dougie Harrison, who said on Scottish TV news: "We need government action now".

The government is active — active in closing down the Scottish steel industry! What we need is working class action that will echo the Clydebridge workers' message and kick out the Tory government.

IAN McLEISH



Air India pickets begin to bite

OVER the week, the Air India pickets have

On Monday 16th over 100 strikers, along with workers from other airlines and the Indian Workers Association, marched from Hyde Park Corner to the Indian High Commission at Monday (16th) to present a letter of protest. The workers are on strike for basic union rights. Their demand is that the management of Air India agree to basic union agreements already made. Air India attempted to operate without the union — an agreement

they had signed only a few days previously.

When Alroy de Silva was sacked on July 2, over 100 workers who had been on an overtime ban and work to rule came out on strike. Management then sacked 91 of the strikers.

Donation

Donations and messages of support should be sent to TGWU Air India branch 1/1305, c/o Transport House, 7-9 South Road, Southall, Middlesex.

PRIVATISATION

Docks backing

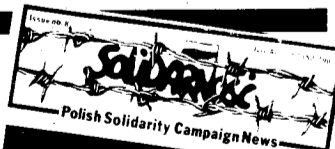
Liverpool dockers have now decided to support NUPE strikers at the city centre market by blacking action.

The strikers — market cleaners — are demanding that the Liberal-controlled Liverpool City Council should drop plans to give the cleaning contract to private enterprise. Council leader Trevor Jones is, however, obstinate, and is now talking about 'privatising' cleaning for all the markets.

Joint

The Council Joint Shop Stewards' Committee has called on other sections of council workers to take selective action [supported by a general levy] in solidarity with the NUPE strikers.

Meanwhile, NALGO action to black work on plans to privatise street cleaning and housing management is continuing. The council has not yet followed Birmingham's example in threatening disciplinary action.



Available from SO, c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL. 30p plus 20p p&p.

Engineers' strike wins

ENGINEERS on the postal side in the POEU last week won a victory which should reverberate through the whole union.

These engineers, who form barely 10% of the POEU membership (being outnumbered by the telecoms engineers) have been facing an increasingly hard management since the Post Office was split into British Telecom and postal services.

The POEU National Executive called a one-day strike of all POEU members on the postal side for Monday 23rd, specifically against postal management's decision to scrap the agreement in force before the split on 24 hour rota cover on Bank and public holidays. It was also more generally directed against postal management's drive to scrap ALL pre-split agreements.

The threat of the strike

forced the management to concede the issue just three days before the action was due.

This victory should also strengthen the postal engineers' standing within the POEU, and help to put an end to sell-outs such as when the POEU leaders steered through a pay deal at this year's conference which left the postal engineers with a smaller pay rise than their counterparts on the telecoms side.

It should also help their struggle to remain within the POEU — many postal engineers fear that the union leaders want to ditch them.

And it will aid telecoms engineers who are pushing for industrial action against the privatisation of British Telecom — the greatest threat the POEU has faced for years.

RICKY HOUSTON

Glendale

WORKERS at Glendale Engineering, Hythe Road, London NW10, still need support. They have been on strike for eight weeks to demand union recognition for the AUEW. Blacking is vital to win this dispute; also needed is help on the mass pickets (every Monday from 7am) and money (to the Strike Committee c/o Mick Woods, 76 Austen House, Cambridge Road, London NW6).

London Hospital Spreading the strike will stop the sacking

by Andy Chapman
and Will Adams

Management have sacked Phil McEntee, a NUPE steward at the London Hospital, Whitechapel. He was suspended on August 12 and accused of fraudulently altering a control sheet (see last week's Socialist Organiser).

After last Tuesday's vote for all out action with no emergency cover, the strike was solid with all but a handful of NUPE members out and with picketing during the day.

On Thursday 19th, a mass meeting moved to occupy the hospital administration block, forcing management to come to a decision on Phil's case.

Management had been delaying the decision, hoping that the strike would weaken. But the occupation forced a decision — they sacked Phil.

Join

The stated grounds for his dismissal were that he and his trade union representative had refused to attend a second disciplinary hearing with management to consider 'new evidence' — a typewritten, unsigned statement from an anonymous patient which, management claimed, showed that Phil had been absent from work at some time during the afternoon of May 4th.

Only management have seen this supposedly conclusive 'evidence'.

But management weren't even very sure about this

shaky piece of evidence. In their dismissal letter to Phil they claim that the patient concerned had attended the second disciplinary hearing — which Phil had refused to attend.

But then, three days later, Kerr, the hospital administrator, admitted at an ASTMS meeting called to discuss Phil's case: 'The patient's recollection was hazy and didn't prove one thing or another.' So much for the patient's statement!

NUPE have been attempting to spread the action to other sections of the hospital workforce. ASTMS in the computing department agreed not to cross NUPE picket lines and then on Monday 23rd voted 20-3 for a two-day strike.

The works department have voted for financial support. NUPE nurses are organising for support and neighbouring hospitals have mass meetings planned. Local Labour Party members have helped on the picket line and have provided a megaphone.

Sympathy action will be very important to win the strike. Management have been sending out nurses in uniform to persuade lorry drivers who have agreed not to cross the picket line to offload across the road so that administration officers and nurses can carry the goods through the picket line.

Management argue that all supplies are emergen-



Pickets at the London Hospital — determined to win reinstatement for framed-up shop steward Phil McEntee. (Photo: Morning Star)

cies, which is clearly absurd. The TGWU must instruct its members not to offload to help management break the picket.

At the end of last week, management sent a letter to all the strikers, appealing to them to return to work. But a mass meeting on Monday wasn't swayed by management's pleading. There was a clear vote to continue the action.

As Phil McEntee told the meeting: 'It isn't just for me that you've voted to strike, it's for everyone. The management have plans to reduce workers' jobs in this hospital — 19 in the laundry and 100 in household. You won't have a union left to defend you. You're voting for yourselves.'

There is a call among the workforce for an independ-

ent inquiry into the sacking. But management's behaviour to date has shown that they have little interest in the facts of the case — the way they have changed the charges and the evidence show this. What will win Phil McEntee's reinstatement is a strengthening of the strike with tighter picketing and a spreading of the strike to other sections and other hospitals.



The men didn't understand...

Susan Carlyle reports from the London Hospital workers' occupation of the admin block

'We'll tell them we won't shift until we get an answer'. The proposal at the London Hospital mass meeting to occupy the administration block came from a group of women workers.

So we set off. The administrator came out shaking and said he would not give an answer until we all left.

Silence. Then two men said: 'Oh well, we'll go out' and started signalling the women out.

Before the wavering could spread though, a woman spoke up. 'We're not going'. Arguments broke out. The men could not understand why the women were so determined to stay. But stay we did — for two hours.

Women started to talk about their experiences in work.

'When you go into management, they treat you really badly. They think you must be soft in the head or something to be even doing this job.'

They don't seem to realise it's a job we've got to do. They consider all of us stupid to be doing cleaning and have no idea that we have no other choices. We do a job that fits in with what we have to do outside of work — looking after our homes, seeing to the family.

What else can women like us do? We need the

money. Many of us are on our own.'

'These administrators don't know what it's like to live like that. They live in other parts of London. They treat us like dirt.'

One of them, she doesn't even acknowledge your presence — not a nod or a word from one year to the next. She doesn't even go through the motions of being pleasant to you.'

And there were more arguments. 'I'm going to go. What's the point in staying. I'm not going to get any money for this. My husband's money won't cover this.'

'You've got a husband! I've got four children. Some of us don't have a husband bringing in a wage. If I can stay, you can too.'

'I've only got a couple of years to go.'

'It's easy for you to say that. I'm staying with the union.'

'Well all right. I'll stay.'

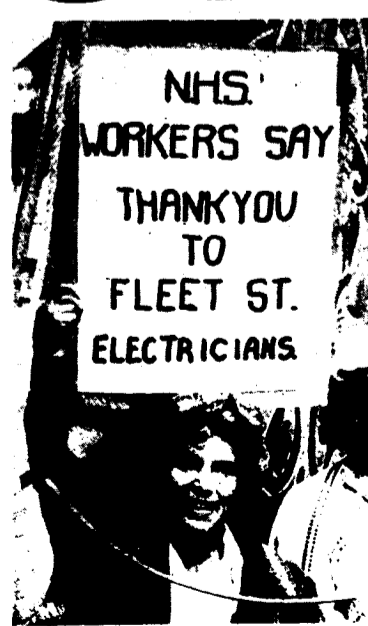
Finally we got the letter confirming Phil McEntee's sacking. We left, voting to continue the strike and raise support in neighbouring hospitals. 'If we don't fight now, we won't have a union next year.'

Send messages of support, donations etc. to London Hospital NUPE Branch, c/o THAP Books, Whitechapel, London.

Show that you support them...



STRIKE!



SUPPORT THE HEALTH WORKERS PAY CLAIM!

Join the picket at the Whittington Hospital, Archway, 9am Friday 3rd September.

MARCH at 10am from the Whittington, through Islington to a rally at Barts Hospital, Smithfield.

LOBBY THE T.U.C. for national action to support the health workers, on Monday 6th September

Called by the ISLINGTON HEALTH WORKERS PAY CAMPAIGN Union Offices, St Mary's Wing, Whittington Hospital, Highgate Hill, N19

Islington health workers are striking on September 3 — and calling on other workers in the borough to join them in a one-day general strike in the borough. They'll also be going down to Brighton on September 6 to lobby the TUC.



Threats at W9

The vicious managers at St. Mary's, Harrow Road, London W9, are continuing their attempts to victimise militants who led the occupation of the hospital against closure last year and early this year.

Ethel Samaroo, a domestic was sacked on June 28th for refusing to clean floors.

Julian Nettal, the administrator and Mrs Slaven, the Domestic Manager, have been trying to get domestics to do a combination of duties for over 18 months now. This effort has been a major part of the rundown of the hospital and the attempts to close it.

Ethel Samaroo, following the lead given by shop steward Rita Maxim earlier this year, was prepared not to go to the disciplinary hearing. She was advised by the T&G full time official that she might be sacked for refusing to go!

The Central Sterile Supplies department, the kitchen and the laundry workers came out on strike as soon as Ethel was sacked.

The first two appeals were lost, but on the third appeal, Rita Maxim came as a witness [despite the fact that the full-time officials did not want her there!]

After an extremely long hearing and Rita's statements in Ethel's defence, she was reinstated.

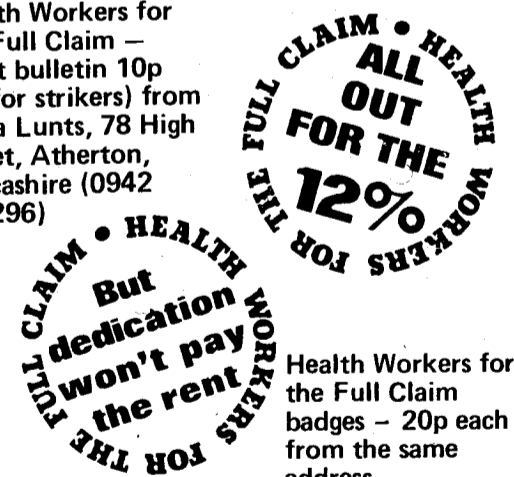
Ethel is the third person actively involved in the occupation who has been sacked. Two people have been reinstated at the third appeal.

Following Ethel's successful appeal, the Domestic Manager made another attempt to victimise Rita Maxim on July 15th. She accused Rita of 'making a scene and becoming abusive' and of not cleaning cubicles [which were infectious] when told to do so.

Rita is fighting this latest harassment.

It is certain that management will continue their attempts to sack the activists but the workers at St. Mary's are still fighting back.

Health Workers for the Full Claim — latest bulletin 10p (5p for strikers) from Anna Lunts, 78 High Street, Atherton, Lancashire (0942 877296)



Health Workers for the Full Claim badges — 20p each from the same address.

Edinburgh all out

100 members of NALGO and NUPE are now on indefinite strike at Trinity House, the main NHS administrative centre in Edinburgh.

They walked out demanding that management should withdraw its threat to dock their wages in retaliation for blacking mail; and they are appeal-

ing for support to other NHS workers in Edinburgh. Post workers [UCW] and engineers [UCW] are respecting the picket line.

The Western General hospital in Edinburgh, which was all out for the whole of the August 9/14 week of action, is continuing with selective strikes.

Socialist Organiser

BACHIR Gemayel's party, the Falange, was founded by his father Pierre on the model of Hitler's Nazis. Bachir rose to supremacy by building up the Falange militias to 6,000 men, imposing conscription for them in areas under his control. Now this sectarian gang leader, with Israeli backing, is president of Lebanon.



LEBANON

THE NEW ORDER

PEACE in Lebanon? After driving out the PLO fighters – who were only in Lebanon because the Palestinians were driven out of their homeland 34 years ago – Israel and its local allies aim to construct a 'new order' in Lebanon. Israeli warchief Ariel Sharon is hinting at further advances against remaining PLO bases in northern Lebanon, and prolonged Israeli military occupation. Falangist leader and new president Bachir Gemayel will be out to settle scores.

Socialist Organiser's correspondent in Haifa sent us this report:

FOR THE press and the politicians of the big powers, the only real issue in Lebanon is the evacuation of the Palestinian guerillas from Beirut. But the issues go further. Bachir Gemayel, sponsored by Sharon as president of Lebanon, has declared that none of the 600,000 Palestinians will be allowed to stay in the country. And Sharon, when asked how long the Israeli army would stay in the Lebanon, replied that it had stayed 15 years in Egypt before peace was achieved.

The withdrawal of the Palestinian guerillas from Beirut, forced by the high civilian casualties, is only one stage of the 'grand plan' for the 'new order' in the Lebanon. The next stage, according to Sharon, is to get the Syrians and the Palestinians out of their remaining areas. And Sharon has 'hinted' that the Israeli army is within 25 kilometres of Damascus – i.e. within shelling distance.

For Gemayel the next step will be to take revenge on the Lebanese Left and the disarmed Palestinians. It should be remembered that at Tel al Zaatar it was after the Palestinian fighters surrendered that many thousands of people, including children and babies, were shot.

Today many areas are

already under the direct control of the Falangist militias. That is why the PLO supported the call for an international force. They preferred to surrender to the master, and not to his local mad dogs.

Fund

But that doesn't mean that they trust the American negotiators, who are supposed to mediate for peace at the same time as they continue to supply the finance for the most murderous kind of war.

On one of the worst days of the bombing in Beirut, there was a full-day festival on Israeli TV, with Israeli and American singers and actors mobilising the public for contributions to the 'Security Fund'. International businessmen and arms dealers, and all the 'nice people' from politics and society, were also in the studio for the live show.

This week a one day general strike was declared by the Druze population in the occupied area of Lebanon. The cities of Sidon and Tyre have been put under curfew by the Israeli forces in retaliation for guerilla attacks on military headquarters. There have been

several demonstrations by women in these cities to demand the release of the thousands of prisoners taken by the Israeli army.

Women interviewed on one demonstration in a village, but more importantly the whole Israeli aggression, and the bombing and the blockade on water and food and medical supplies for Beirut.

Even the thousands of Palestinians who cling to wreckage of the refugee camps despite the destruction by the Israeli army and the harassment by the Falangist gangs are concerned about much more than their own problems.

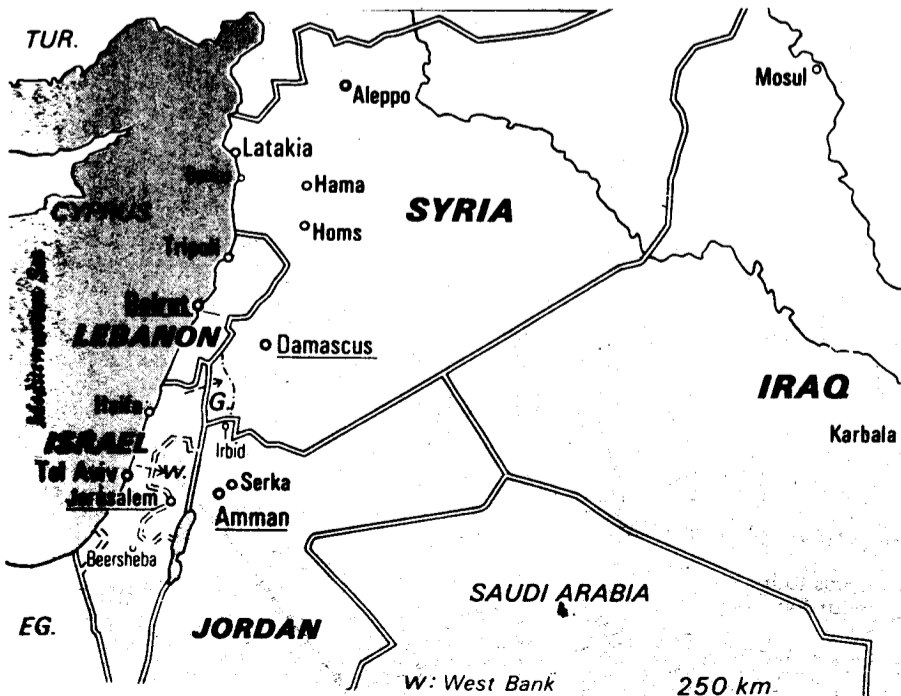
A journalist who has been in Rashida tells this story: "In a half-destroyed house lives the family of Mukhamed Fhahrour, aged 67, a refugee from the village of Alma-rehaniya, near Zafad. He is the only man in the house.

"His sons and his daughter's husband are detained. His daughter Khalida, 25, was born in the camps. She says: "We are afraid of the soldiers of Major Said Haddad and Bachir Gemayel. They come here, steal our property and rape women. We asked an Israeli officer if the army would defend us. He said: they're just doing to you what you did to them before."

Truce

"I want to go back to my parents' village and live there with the Jews in peace. I have never been there.

"The Fedayeen are not saboteurs. They are fighting for our liberation. Why can't you understand that? You destroyed the whole of the camp. How will we live through the winter in this situation? Why do you hate us so much?"



£6000 fund



AUGUST is a slow month for fund-raising – but it need not be this slow! Only £54 this week – £30 from a social in Edinburgh, £20 from supporters in Leeds, and £4 from the York group. Here are the area-by-area totals towards our £6,000 target.

Glasgow	41.40	34%	Nottingham	114.00	114%
Edinburgh	70.00	22%	Leicester	86.00	22%
Stirling	-	-	Northampton	-	-
Carlisle	-	-	Cardiff/Bristol	45.00	45%
Durham	110.00	110%	Oxford	423.50	83%
York	4.00	8%	Southampton	-	-
Bradford	-	-	Basingstoke	45.00	45%
Leeds	88.00	88%	Brighton	-	-
Hull	1.25	-	London	304.00	14%
Sheffield	102.50	103%	Miscellaneous	744.51	-
Merseyside	120.00	38%	TOTAL SO FAR	3504.96	59%
Manchester	163.00	42%			
Winsford	-	-			
Stoke	20.00	67%			
Birmingham	448.00	87%			
Coventry	574.80	137%			

Send donations to the Fund to: Socialist Organiser Fund, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.