

Socialist Challenge

Sweeping election victory for French socialists

By Paul Lawson

FOLLOWING the victory of Francois Mitterrand in the presidential elections, the French Socialist Party has achieved what appears to be a landslide victory in the first round of the elections for the French Parliament.

With something like 38 per cent of the vote, the Socialists are likely to get an overall majority of the seats, giving Mitterrand the chance to carry through his programme.

The SP's victory is not only a bitter defeat for the right wing Gaullists and Giscardians, but reflects a shift away from the Communist Party, which is tainted with the divisiveness and sectarianism its leadership has displayed. But the organisational strength of the CP in the factories remains intact.

The likelihood now is that Mitterrand will be able to govern without the support of the Communist Party in parliament, although it seems that he will give the CP some minor posts in the government to prevent it from playing an oppositional role.

New

A new period of French politics has opened up which will have a profound effect on all the major European countries. After years of right-wing government, the French workers expect a major change.

The election of a Socialist government represents a political counter-blow which the workers have prepared against the attacks of the bosses.

It shows the same dynamic that is developing in Britain — in response to the economic attacks of the bosses, the workers look to overall political solutions which can begin to overcome the effects of the crisis.

In France the working class will now go through an extended period of testing out the solutions offered to them by the new reformist government.

Signs

The question is whether after this period the new government will be able to meet the expectations of a real change in the life of the workers. The signs are not favourable.

To really defend and extend the acquisitions of the workers in the direction of socialism, it would be necessary for the government to take radical anti-capitalist measures and call on the workers to mobilise to carry them out.

But the programme of the government is exceedingly moderate, envisaging only a limited number of nationalisations, and no real assault on the overall power of capital.

Reforms

France under Mitterrand will stay in NATO and the EEC. It will remain a capitalist state, offering the workers only limited reforms. But in a period of economic crisis there are grave limits to the reforms which can be offered — even the increase in the national minimum wage could be easily destroyed by a new spurt of inflation.

The working class expects its demands and needs to be satisfied, so it is inevitable that after a 'period of grace' the workers will mobilise to win them. Either the Mitterrand government will be pressurised into taking action against the interests of the bosses or it will come into collision with the millions of workers who have propelled it into power.

ATTACKS ON THE INCREASE Defeat the racist onslaught

BLACK PEOPLE are under attack. Racist violence has doubled in the past year according to a report compiled by the Union of Pakistani Organisations.

The violence may come from right wing thugs but it is driven by rising unemployment and made worse by the police.

Coventry is a prime example. Police allowed racists to murder Satnam Singh Gill in the middle of the main shopping precinct two months ago. They then told black youth to stay out of the city centre!

The struggle of blacks in Coventry to be free to walk the streets without fear is in its eighth week and confrontations increase daily.

Over 200 people have been arrested, mostly anti-racists.

Police harassment was a major factor in the Brixton uprising last April — and it is continuing now, even as the Scarman inquiry gets underway.

At the end of last week several people were arrested in dawn raids by the anti-terrorist squad. Hundreds of others have been arrested in intervening weeks.

For too many white youth the voice of the fascist right is louder than the voice of the labour movement.

They believe the lie that black people are taking their jobs, instead of laying the blame at the feet of those who are responsible — the bosses, the Tory politicians, and capitalism.

The labour movement must take up the battle against racist violence.

Hattersley's promise that the next Labour government will repeal some of the racist immigration and nationality laws must be kept to.

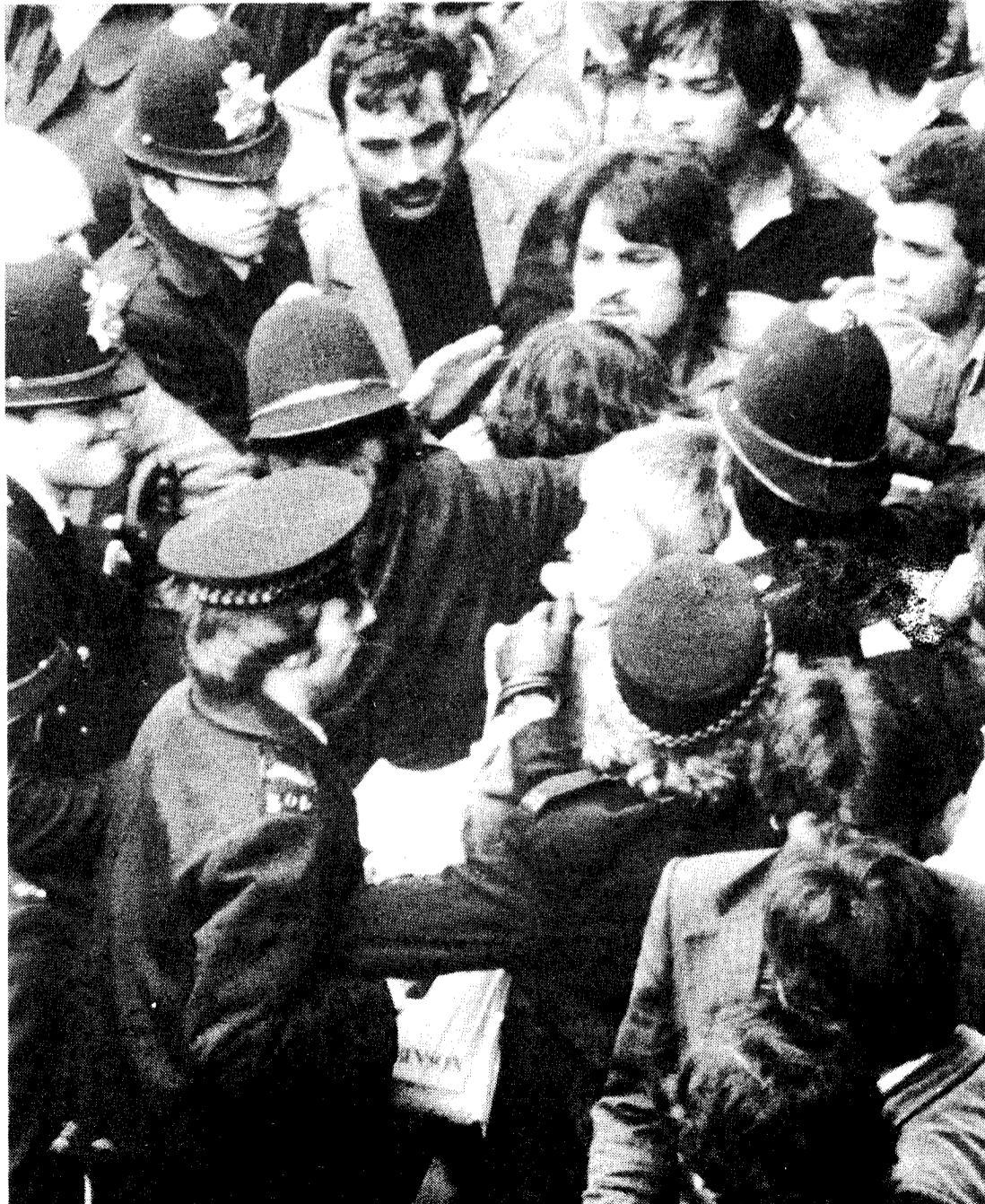
The TUC has belatedly issued its Charter for Black Workers which attempts to give an answer to the discrimination that blacks face in the unions and on the jobs.

The labour movement must join the campaigns around the victims of racism like Nasira Begum, those charged as a result of the Brixton uprising and the Coventry demonstrations.

The struggle against unemployment must be stepped up — only this struggle can give an answer to the influence of the fascists among white youth.

The labour movement must give full support to the self-defense efforts of the black population.

On 3 July a day of action against racism is being organised in Coventry — factories, offices, shops and estates all over the town will be leafleted. The time has come for the labour movement to throw back the racist onslaught.



While skinheads shout racist abuse, police move against demonstrators protesting against parts of Coventry being barred to black people

JOBS NOT BOMBS: CARDIFF 4 JULY

Occupation of Rover would inspire jobs fightback

From a Rover correspondent

DURING the protest demonstration a fortnight ago against the closure of the SD1 Rover plant in Solihull, a group of workers raised a slogan which was rapidly taken up by many of the marchers.

They chanted: 'Michael Edwardes, Michael Edwardes, We ain't going on the dole.'

From protest action to an all-out fight against job loss is a big step.

Militancy isn't lacking, but the struggle against unemployment requires a political break with the traditional framework of trade union action.

The argument which has to be won is that occupation of a threatened plant can only be a part — but an essential part — of a strategy to save the SD1.

Stopping the closure of the Rover plant requires a head-on confrontation with Edwardes' plan for BL as a whole. There is no special case for the SD1.

The arguments against closure are against the Edwardes' plan, and ultimately against the Tory government.

Assault

The Tories have used BL as a spearhead for its attacks on the working class movement. The 5 per cent wage rises at BL; the enforced speed-ups, and the assault on trade union rights which have been carried through in BL are now being extended to the rest of engineering.

In the contracts which BL is now making with suppliers, there are detailed specifications of the amount of labour to be used, and the wages that will be allowed.

Saving the SD1 means stopping these attacks. The plant has to become a focus for the rest of the labour movement, and this will only happen if the workers in our plant take militant action to defend their jobs.

Occupy

With the plant facing closure, such action can mean only one thing — an occupation.

The first task will be to physically prevent the company transferring the work to Cowley. The unions there have taken a position of boycotting the SD1's work, but this will mean nothing unless we take up the fight.

The company claims that closing the SD1 will save £8m a year, but it refuses to give detailed figures. We believe the real figure is much lower.

We have to demand that the company's books are opened, not simply on the immediate issue of the SD1, but on the whole of Edwardes' plan.

Although the company is publicly owned and financed, BL has never revealed its plan. The company is too important for

the working class for its policies to be left to a handful of industrialists operating under the cloak of commercial secrecy.

Even on BL's figures, it would need under £200 per car to keep the plant open.

Crisis

The workers in SD1 are not responsible for the crisis in the industry, and we have to demand that the company should pay the cost of keeping our jobs until it solves the crisis which is of its making.

Balanced against the cost to the company of saving jobs is the social cost of closure. In terms of lost revenue, expenditure on unemployment benefit, rate rebates and rent, an unemployed household costs the Exchequer almost £7,000 annually.

It is a crime against the working class that the immediate cost to a capitalist enterprise is deemed more important than the cost to the community as a whole. If SD1 closes, people will face years of hardship on the dole and most of the older workers will never work again.

Solutions

Solutions to the crisis demand national political action and a programme to be implemented at the level of government and industry by the working class.

The labour leaders are long on anti-Tory rhetoric and short on politics. In particular, they avoid taking steps for an all-out confrontation with the Tories. They prefer to wait for the next election.

That will come too late to save millions of jobs. The fight has to start now. The mood in the working class has changed, and the potential for an all-out fight against unemployment is growing.

Focus

An occupation in BL would be a major focus for that growing mood of resistance and it would stimulate similar action elsewhere.

It would force the union leaders to give support to the fightback against unemployment that millions of working class people are now anxious to see.

From a Rover correspondent



Photos: MIKE TURNER (Socialist Challenge)

'What worries me is, do we know our friends?'

By Eddie Squires,
Shop Steward, Rover SD1

I have been at the Rover SD1 plant from the first day of the £90m plant opened. I remember the look of satisfaction and pride of both workers and management as the first SD1 rolled off the line.

The sub-contractors who were still working on the plant were impressed by the brand new Rover car standing at the end of the line in all its glory. That was a short five years ago.

Plant manager No.1 was removed because he wanted to build the car with the quality that Rover cars were renowned for, but he fell short of quantity for the launch date.

Manager No.2 was sacked because he was under instruction to go for quantity, only to find that SD1 was congested with unfinished cars.

No.3 went for reworking all cars which needed rectification, but even with unlimited overtime this was impossible. The company and unions agreed to let cars go to dealers with shortages.

Edwardes was brought in by the Labour government to trim BL. He trod softly at first, but once the Tories came to power Edwardes took out his axe. His new bosses gave him a free hand, and a new team of under-managers was

brought in to sort things out.

Three thousand workers have been made redundant at the SD1 over the past 18 months those who stayed have been treated like morons. We have been cursed, bullied, and disciplined over minor matters.

Our wage rise was 5 per cent, against the 38 per cent rise collected by Edwardes. We are the most efficient plant in BL. Over the past 12 months our bonus has averaged £13.50 week, compared to the next best plant, which averaged £1.50.

So you can imagine how stunned we were when it was announced that the SD1 is to close. To me and many of my mates, this wasn't simply an announcement that another 2,000 were to go on the dole. It was a declaration of war — for our jobs and the youth of this town who will need the jobs after us.

We will take up the challenge. Our union leaders should understand that we will not let them isolate us. We remember Speke, Derek Robinson, Canley, and Ansell.

It's not a Rover fight — it's BL. And if that's not strong enough, we must seek the power of the miners, dockers, and transport workers. We can and will win if the union leaders stand up and be counted.

We all know the enemy, but what worries me is do we know our friends?

Diary of the deputy convener

Monday 8 June. Action committee meeting in the morning, where we report back on the Leyland combine meeting. We organise coaches for the lobby of the Transport Union's automotive group national committee on 18 June, and of the TGWU's biennial delegate conference, which starts on 22 June.

It's also decided to go for another £1 collection, and we begin to organise for the big solidarity demonstration on 15 August in Birmingham.

We will have to visit all the main factories in Birmingham and the Black Country. We decide to ask Benn, Scargill and Kitson to speak.

Tuesday: Management inform us that there are 20 vacancies on the Land Rover. This rapidly becomes a hot potato.

Wednesday: The shop stewards meeting at dinner time agrees to all the action committee proposals. But a couple of stewards warn that the response to the new £1 collection will be worse than the first.

One of the problems at the moment is that the stewards tend to go with the mood of the section rather than lead and change it.

Thursday: First reports on the £1 collection are disappointing.

I speak to four sections and go through the main arguments, balancing the £8m savings claimed by management against the social cost of closure. The mood gets better.

Friday: The money starts coming in but the Land Rover jobs issue is still simmering.

Among some of the more militant stewards there is a 'make or break' attitude: ask the mass meeting for action now and if we don't get it we can wrap the whole thing up.

This has to be combated. The most important aspect of this campaign is winning the membership to fighting the closure, and



that won't be done by delivering ultimatums. We will go to a mass meeting next week.

PAT HICKEY,
deputy convener
Rover SD1

Stop the missiles

'Lessons of the first wave'

The Labour left and CND

THE CAMPAIGN for Nuclear Disarmament is today stronger than ever. Opinion polls show a majority against Cruise and Trident missiles. The slogan coined by Socialist Challenge supporters — Jobs not Bombs — is taken up everywhere in the labour movement.

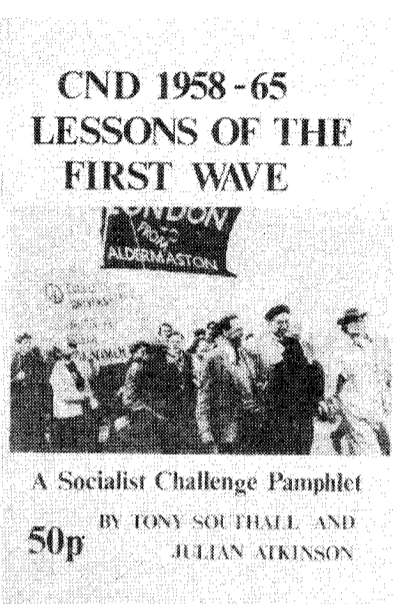
Last autumn's demonstration against the missiles was at least 80,000 strong.

But the immense support for the anti-nuclear weapons movement should not be the occasion for complacency, for a very obvious reason. CND has already been through one period of mass support, twenty years ago. It organised massive demonstrations and the Labour Party conference, in 1960, voted for unilateral nuclear disarmament.

But CND, despite its mass support, was defeated last time round. A new 60 page pamphlet by Socialist Challenge supporters TONY SOUTHALL and JULIAN ATKINSON, veterans of the last wave of the movement, argues that this defeat was a result of a lack of political analysis and strategy.

If history is not to repeat itself, the lessons of the first wave have to be assimilated.

'CND 1958-65 Lessons of the First Wave' will be a vital reference point in the debates about the way forward for the movement



New Socialist Challenge pamphlet 'CND 1958-65'.

Available from PO Box 50, London N1 2XP, price 50p plus 20p p&p.

against nuclear weapons, and in particular the necessity to combine mass action with a labour movement orientation.

Below we publish a much abridged extract on CND and the Labour left.



for Democratic Socialism, run by Bill Rodgers.

To their surprise they found that the CND and Labour lefts were not running a campaign in the Party and union branches.

An open letter to Robin Cook MP

Dear Comrade Cook

Over the past year and a half you have become known as one of the most determined and forthright supporters of CND in the Parliamentary Labour Party — speaking out up and down the country, against Cruise and Trident missiles.

We think this activity has been admirable. Unfortunately, you have hit the headlines over the past week or so, denouncing the candidacy of Tony Benn for deputy leader of the Labour Party.

Now this is strange. Just a couple of weeks ago, the leadership of the PLP decided to abstain in the defence debate.

75 Labour MPs decided not to go along with this, and in accordance with Labour conference policy, voted against the government — against Cruise, Trident and the rest of the government's insane 'defence' plans.

You were one of those 75. So was Tony Benn. As a result, Benn was 'carpeted' in the shadow cabinet and subject to a torrent of personal abuse from the members of the body.

Unfortunately, you have joined in the campaign, instead of defending the right of Benn (and yourself) to go along with Party policy in the voting lobbies of the House. What is the explanation for such illogical behaviour?

You say Michael Foot 'should be trusted to carry out Party policy. But weren't you a little bit concerned that Foot appointed Brynmor John, a strong opponent of unilateral disarmament, as his defence spokesperson? Does this strike you as a promising sign?

Tony Benn shares your unilateralist views. Denis Healey is an unabashed supporter of Cruise, Trident and the British 'deterrent'.

The fact that Foot and the rest of the Shadow Cabinet didn't want an election for deputy leader shows that they were quite happy to have Healey in an advantageous position to become the next leader of the Party, when Michael Foot retires.

If you want a Party leadership which is going to fight for unilateralism, we suggest that you start supporting Benn and stop acting as a hatchet man for the anti-unilateralist right.

Since your behaviour is so illogical we would be more than happy to open our columns to an explanation from you.

Comradely yours,
Socialist Challenge

CND never had a consistent strategy towards the labour movement. There was certainly no ongoing campaign aimed at the factories and the rank and file members of the unions and the Labour Party. Instead there was the Labour advisory committee.

This was set up in the autumn of 1958 and comprised left MPs and union leaders like Frank Beswick and John Horner. They were not used to the open mass campaigning style of CND.

To be less than kind, their political experience had involved politicking in little rooms during the Bevanite revolt and then getting thrashed by Gaitskell and the right.

Ian Mikardo expressed the blinkered view of much of the Labour left when, in an interview with Taylor and Pritchard he dismissed the importance of CND as a mass movement as against the strategy of winning key figures in the organised labour movement:

Sketchy

'Another 10,000 or 20,000 or 50,000 non-political people don't compensate for those who can exert political pressure at the point of action.'

CND's work in the unions was sketchy. Far more was done by the Direct Action Committee (DAC) whose main spokesperson was Pat Arrowsmith.

The aim of DAC, a few local trade union committees, and later the industrial sub-committee of the Committee of 100, was to popularise and agitate for industrial action against the bomb. In 1962 the CND conference passed such a resolution. It was opposed by Michael Foot and the rest of the ex-

ecutive. It was never implemented and Arrowsmith and Michael Scott resigned in protest.

The 1960 Scarborough conference should have been the greatest victory the Labour left had ever won. The union votes were there. The proposing speech by Frank Cousins was lacklustre. The response of Labour leader Gaitskell was electric. He rejected unilateralism and would 'fight, fight and fight again to save the Party we love'.

Many of the left leaders listened with a sinking feeling. The issues were wider than mere nuclear annihilation — the party could split and the next election be lost.

Another worrying feature of the victory was

that the constituency parties (CLPs) supported Gaitskell by 512,000 to 260,000. The right wing were prepared to wage a counter-attack to reverse this decision.

The problem was whether the Labour lefts were prepared to seize on the victory that the Aldermaston marchers had put into their hands. Their proven specialism was in gallantly losing and remaining a critical but loyal minority. Would the lefts have the will or political ability to fight again?

The unilateralist victory at the 1960 Labour Party conference left the CND leadership quite unprepared. Jacquetta Hawkes was 'absolutely astonished' by the vote and had been 'quite unaware' of what had

been going on. AJP Taylor regarded the Conference decision as 'really a distraction...'

The Labour left were in a dilemma. They had the authority of conference behind them. But if they attempted to apply those decisions, Gaitskell and the right would fight. There would be a risk of splitting the party and wrecking its electoral chances.

A few cried 'forward'. MP Zilliacus called on CLPs to ensure that MPs either supported conference policy or resign. But most cried 'back'.

In Parliament only five MPs voted in line with conference policy during the defence debate. The right also began to organise in the unions and the Party as the Campaign

POEU conference - marking time

THE annual conference of the Post Office Engineering Union, held in Blackpool last week marked a new stage in the confrontation between left and right in the union.

This was best symbolised by the eve of conference meetings addressed by Tony Benn and Denis Healey. At the annual Broad Left pre-conference gathering almost 700 people heard Tony Benn say: 'I support the Broad Left in the POEU, I support its policies.'

He went on to make a stirring indictment of the failure of 'welfare capitalism' and of the need for radical socialist change. He received a standing ovation and after the meeting almost 300 'Tony Benn for Deputy' badges were sold.

Meanwhile, a few hun-

ded yards away a meeting of 200 supporters of 'Mainstream' were addressed by Denis Healey and Eric Varley. Their message of apologising for the last Labour government, alongside virulent denunciations of the left-wing went down well with their 'moderate' supporters.

Frustrate

Fleet Street had shown considerable interest in the conference. *The Daily Mail*, *Times*, *Telegraph*, *Sunday Mirror* and the *Daily Express*

had all launched vicious attacks on the POEU Broad Left on a scale not seen since the right-wing take-over of the AUEW. The Tory press were clearly rattled at the prospect of the Broad Left, which already held 9 out of 23 seats on the NEC, taking over.

The combined effect of this onslaught and the weak-kneed 'leadership' from the NEC took its toll on the conference, but the right-wing were frustrated in their desperate attempts to unseat some of the Broad Left supporters. They especially went after Phil Lloyd, a *Militant* supporter from Swansea, the most outspoken and uncompromising left-winger on the NEC.

While some lefts' votes were down slightly, Phil and

other vulnerable left-wing NEC members actually increased their support. The end result was the same as last year's 14-9 right-left split.

In opening the conference, general secretary

**By Colin Talbot,
POEU Westminster**

Bryan Stanley spoke of it being 'the year of the Bill', referring to the Tories' British Telecommunications Bill, which aims to carve-up the Post Office.

The POEU's campaign against the Bill has been pathetic. The NEC had failed to carry out a conference mandate to use industrial action to defeat such attacks on the Post Office. Stanley ex-

plained that industrial action would merely have provoked worse attacks and that we had to continue the fight 'until the return of the next Labour government'.

This cautious 'wait and see' approach dominated the whole conference, as delegates rejected any calls for industrial action against the many and varied attacks we face. They also voted overwhelmingly to accept a 12 per cent pay package, which included some adjustments to our shorter working week agreement.

In the debate on 'trade union unity', the NEC proposed a federation with the CPSA (Posts and Telecoms section) and the Society of Post Office Executives

(SPOE) a junior management union. This specifically excluded any unity with the Union of Communication Workers, either across the old Post Office or even with the 35,000 UCW members employed in British Telecoms.

Unity

The federal structure proposed is cumbersome and bureaucratic, providing for unity at the top and disunity at the rank and file level. Nevertheless, delegates accepted these proposals by 70,000 votes to 59,000.

We certainly need trade union unity in the Post Office, but we need a rank and file trade union under the con-

trol of our members — a merger of the POEU, CPSA and UCW. We also need friends in the Labour Party, like the Bennite left wing who are committed to defending the nationalised industries, unlike Healey and Varley. But above all, we need to put our own house in order and start fighting back.

Many militants came away from this conference feeling a bit let down. Far too many had expected an easy victory over right-wing apathy, whether in the elections for the NEC or the fight for action against the Tories' attacks. It's clear that we need to organise the Broad Left to fight for militant policies at the rank and file level more than ever before.

Lee Jeans women will march for jobs

By Des Tierney

THE LEE Jeans occupation is now entering its 22nd week. At the end of the month the women from the factory will lead a march for jobs across Scotland, organised by the Scottish TUC.

This demonstration could be vital in building much needed support from the labour movement, as the occupation is under threat.

This week the workers at the occupation agreed to set up a committee to examine the possibility of establishing a co-operative to find an alternative use for the factory.

The names of those proposed for the committee are enough to raise suspicion. Apart from the labour movement representatives from the STUC and the National Union of Tailor and Garment Workers, it includes Mr William Wolfe, president of the Scottish National Party, and Ross Finnie, economic spokesperson for the Scottish Liberals.

Secure

The occupation is secure for the moment, and the Lee Jeans workers have insisted that the committee back the continuation of the occupation.

However, the setting up of the committee and its proceedings will undoubtedly strengthen those who wish to see the occupation turn away from its militant boycott campaign and building support in other sections of the working class.

Support

Despite the magnificent support the occupation has received from workers throughout Britain, Lee Jeans owner, the VF Corporation, is undeterred. VF is a multinational company. It employs 18,500 workers throughout the world and its total sales were \$633m in 1980.

For such a company the loss of the stock which the Greenock workers hold is not very important, as long as it is able to supply markets from other

sources.

The only thing which could force such a company to maintain its operation in Greenock would be the threat that it could lose its British sales, which amount to 5 per cent of the British jean market.

Campaign

This could only be achieved by a nationally organised campaign in the ports and consumer outlets. NUTGW have shied away from such actions.

The NUTGW has allowed over a 100,000 of its members to be made redundant in the past ten years. It collaborates with the textile manufacturers in calling on governments to implement import controls.

Boycott

The STUC has presided over the loss of 150,000 jobs in the past ten years. It depends on the goodwill of employers to invest in Scotland as a solution to Scotland's unemployment. Both hope to peacefully persuade the Tory government to give the Greenock workers some handouts to keep production going.

All is not lost, however; the Lee Jeans workers are maintaining their occupation and their campaign to stop the movement and sales of VF products.

This will bring them into conflict with the committee set up by the STUC. Trade union militants can play their part; everything must be done to ensure the campaign gains support.

One shipload of VF products held up in any port throughout the world



Lee Jeans has launched a wide-spread advertising campaign in its effort to keep its 5 per cent of the British jean market. The

sexism displayed by the campaign in its posters is in marked contrast to the women in Greenock who are fighting for their jobs.

would do wonders for the morale of the occupiers. Similarly a consumer boycott movement which begins to have serious in-

roads into Lee Jeans sales in Britain would set the occupation on the road to success.

Messages of support and donations to the Treasurer, Lee Jeans shop stewards committee, 45 Brougham St, Greenock, Scotland.

Laurence Scott sit-in: 'There's no turning back'

THE determination of 650 striking engineers at Laurence Scott Electromotors, Manchester is as strong as ever.

Convenor, Bob Penchion explains: 'We've been sat in for eight weeks now to stop a closure and there's no turning back. It's not only a fight for Laurence Scott, but a fight for the whole country.'

Over a thousand jobs are now threatened at the nearby ICL plant, so all eyes are on the fate of the sit-in at Laurence Scott.

Bob Penchion believes, 'If they get away with it here, then jobs will go all over. If they don't then employers will be a bit more wary.'

The Manchester North district of the engineering union has given a new boost to the sit-in by calling a weekly levy of their 15,000 members, potentially raising a much needed £1,500 a week to sustain the action.

Arthur Snipe, owner of Laurence Scott, has made a move too in the last week. Each of the 650 workers were sent their P45 and a 'week in hand' wages.

Bob Penchion sees it as an attempt to frighten the workforce, but as he explains, 'He had no impact, in fact he's just shoved more coal on the fire by giving us an extra week's wages, we're very grateful!'

The convenor is hop-

ing, as LSE make motors for the coal industry, that strong support will come from the miners: 'We'd like a blacking of five companies owned by Arthur Snipe — Mining Supplies, Mechforge Ltd, Mechconstruction Ltd, Mechcaste Ltd and the American Longwall Mining Corporation'.

Increased support is also being sought from the workforce at the different Mining Supplies plants. And Laurence Scott workers are looking for more than money from the Manchester area.

They want a mid-week march called by the Confed unions and have already met with Labour Party officials to plan a major rally with national speakers. For, as their financial appeal states, the dispute at Laurence Scott will be won or lost by the amount of solidarity from the rest of the trade union movement.

Donations/Messages to: Laurence Scott Stewards, G. Fryer, 20 Roundcross, Romiley, Cheshire.

NAC
LAR♀

Lobby of Parliament

SUPPORT
THE ABORTION
FACILITIES BILL

» 24 JUNE «

2.30pm onwards

Photomontage: JENNY MATTHEWS

Labour Party

JACK SMART, leader of Labour-controlled Wakefield district council, recently declared: 'Government ministers should resign rather than be party to massive cuts in public expenditure.'

What is remarkable about this statement is that Smart, who is also the chairperson of the

Labour right in Wakefield is smarting

Association of Metropolitan Authorities has, in his leadership of Wakefield council, slavishly carried out every cut and rate rise demanded by the Tories.

Moreover, left councillors who objected have found themselves disciplined by the Labour

group. Finally, Jack Smart and his cronies have attacked Wakefield Trades Council because of its campaign to stop the district council closing the local Snapethorpe Hospital. Smart is directly responsible for the closure threat as he is the chairper-

son of Wakefield Area Health Authority.

Three left-wing councillors have been suspended from the Labour group since November. The charge against one was so ludicrous that the suspension was soon lifted.

But councillor Derek Fatchett is still suspended.

His 'offence' was to say publicly: 'Let's make sure we get a new Labour government not committed to the policies of the Callaghan/Healey government but following the policies of the 1980 Labour Party conference.'

The other purge victim is David Hinchcliffe. His

offence was to say that he wished for a speedy resolution of a dispute between the council and its school caretakers, as the caretakers were among the council's lowest paid employees.

Hinchcliffe had not been told of a group deci-

sion not to mention to dispute publicly.

The right wing offensive is being answered. a result of moves Wakefield CLP to defeat Derek Fatchett, a branch of the Labour Coordinating Committee has been formed. A petition support of David Hinchcliffe has also been drawn up, and a demonstration against an attempt to close Snapethorpe Hospital will take place on Saturday 27 June.

Communist Party join attack on Manchester Labour left

By Redmond O'Neill

'NOBODY should be under any illusion that the left movement in the Labour Party does not contain this narrow, sectarian element.'

These words, referring to the present struggle between left and right in Manchester City Labour Party, don't come from Shirley Williams or David Owen. They are taken from a recent article by Jim Arnison in the *Morning Star*.

This article takes to task those in the Manchester Labour Party who have been engaged in a running battle to force the Labour group, which controls the City Council to carry out party policy of 'No cuts, no rent increases and no loss of job opportunities'.

The immediate focus of local press attacks, as well as that in *Morning Star*, is that six sitting councillors have not been shortlisted by wards for selection as Labour Party candidates.

As a result, Norman Morris, leader of the Labour group, announced he will not stand for election next year.

Hit

Socialist Challenge asked Arnold Spencer, a member of the City Council for Mossdale ward, to comment on the recent witch-hunt in the local press and on Jim Arnison's attack in the *Morning Star*.

Arnold Spencer explains: 'There has been a hue and cry raised by the press that a left wing clique within the party is putting various councillors on a hit list. All that has happened is that the wards these councillors represent have not put them forward for the panel of candidates to the City party.'

'What is really involved is that activists at the grassroots are saying they want to be represented by people who carry out party policy after they are elected.'

Rediscover

'There is nothing peculiar about this situation — it is happening all over the country. It is a rediscovery of socialism within the Labour Party.'

In Manchester the Labour group has been divided for two and a half years. As Arnold Spencer puts it: 'The roots of this conflict lie in an argument about policy. Should we

more or less totally comply with government requests for cuts in services and resulting job loss or should we, in concert with other Labour councils, make a stand to defend the services for the people of the city?'

Cuts

'At both the 1979 and the 1980 conferences of the City Labour Party a policy of "No cuts, no rent increases and no loss of job opportunities" was adopted.'

Nevertheless, the majority of the Labour group, have pushed through three major packages of cuts since then, raised rents and eliminated something in the order of 600 jobs, in direct defiance of party policy.'

The *Morning Star* article concludes by saying: 'Surely there is a case to be argued that disagreement with such people ought to be dealt with in a spirit of comradeship and unity, and not by adopting the right-wing tactics of the witch-hunt.'

Expelled

This may sound reasonable but when the left wing minority of the Labour group followed party policy and voted against cuts in March 1980, the 13 dissenting councillors were expelled by the right wing from the Labour group.

Arnold Spencer records the reaction of a section of the local Communist Party at that time: 'Following our expulsion the trades council, which seemed to be heavily influenced by the CP, passed a motion of confidence in the Labour group leader and his policies.'

'So, despite the fact that seven of our eight constituencies were backing us and the Labour executive eventually upheld our appeal against expulsion, it appeared to us that

Struggle over Manchester Labour

JIM ARNISON dissects the long-running battle over policy within Manchester City Labour Party.

...cies, but other sections of the movement should also examine whether they have done enough in this regard.

...movement of mass opposition the choice facing the councils is not a simple as some people try to make out."

...Manchester, like other councils, had to decide whether to implement cuts or defy the government.

...In opting for the first alternative, they brought forth the wrath of those, including some of their councillor colleagues, who are part of the left movement now campaigning for greater democracy and accountability.

...A positive feature of this movement is that it has shaken some people who for years have been doddering along, only showing signs of political activity at election time.

...But there are also negative features, not least of which is

...the ultra-left tendency to virtually ignore the main enemy and to campaign in such a narrow, sectarian manner as to weaken and divide the movement.

...One of the Labour councillors who have come under attack, said: "They can say that a councillor is being removed from the panel for having voted for rent increases, but the victim can claim to have voted to keep 100,000 houses under council control rather than having them handed over to a Tory government commissioner."

...The nub of the question is whether defiance as demanded by the Labour left in Manchester would have led to a great movement of people acting in defence of the council — a movement which would have had to face the task of taking on the government and bringing it down.

...There is not much point now in saying that such a movement

...would have developed in support of council defiance.

...What is fact is that few were working to bring about such a movement, and that the argument in the Labour Party and the Labour group only reached the people through the media.

...In fact the debate has failed to reach deeply into key sections of the trade union movement, like the powerful engineering unions' confederation districts and other important manual workers' unions.

...General and Municipal Workers' union official, Dick Pickering is convinced that a clique exists within the city party which is intent on taking it over.

... "There is quite definitely an ultra-left element in this," he said.

...Key trade union sections are not being brought into the argument sufficiently, he said. "Some of the manual unions are at fault for their neglect of the trades council. Most of the run-

...ning is made by delegates from unions catering for social workers and lecturers.

... "Without in any way being anti-intellectual, I would say there is an imbalance, and people with more experience, particularly of working-class struggles are not making their voices heard in this debate."

...When Manchester city council called a citizens' lobby of Parliament in March to protest about government policies, the *Morning Star* published an interview with Labour leader Norman Morris.

...The purpose was to help support for the lobby; however the fact that Norman Morris is a primary target of the left to some of them describing paper as "right wing."

...All that can be said about is that it obviously came from people whose Marxism is more to Groucho than to Nobody should be under any illusion that the left movement in the Labour Party does not contain this narrow, ultra-left element.



Laurence Scott occupation — supported by Manchester's Labour left.

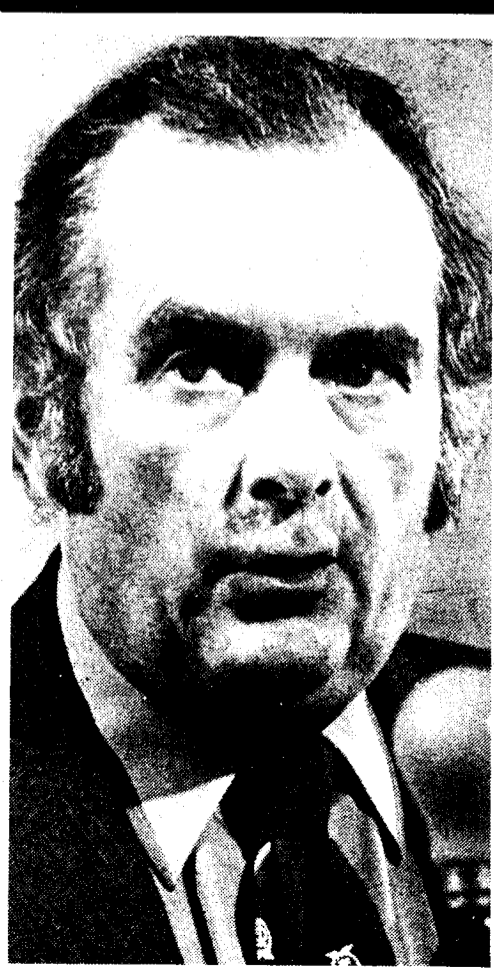
every working class struggle in Manchester: 'When the workers in the housing department took strike action, basically opposing cuts,' Arnold Spencer points out, 'they were violently attacked by the Labour group, fully backed, as is usual by the Tories.'

'On the other hand the City Labour Party supported that strike and has since supported Royal Pride, Mosedale and most recently the Laurence Scott sit-in.'

Lead

Arnold Spencer sums up the row: 'There is an influx of people into the party who want to change it in a socialist direction. What gives me nightmares is the thought that in 30 years time I'll be like the present majority leaders. So the aim of democratising the party is also to make sure that when the Left wins leadership there are enough checks to make sure we don't get power mad.'

'In that sense there is no Manchester peculiarity; in essence what's going on here is nothing more than a local reflection of the national struggle within the Party around accountability and democracy.'



Alex Kitson, who attacked Benn over Ireland.

Metal mechanics vote for electoral college

THE divisions in the Labour Party are having an effect in even the smallest unions.

This was illustrated at the recently held conference of the metal mechanics at which delegates voted in favour of the Labour Party retaining the electoral college system for the election of the leader and deputy of the party.

As to who the deputy should be, a proposal for the union to back Tony Benn was unsuccessful. Instead, the issue was referred to the union's executive.

In the course of the debate Alex Kitson, from the party's national executive did his best to thwart support for Benn. He launched an attack on those whom he said, broke the unity of the party by speaking out on Ireland.

But it was significant that a minority at the conference did support a resolution attacking the Tory/Labour bipartisan approach to Ireland.

In the shadow of these divisions at the conference there was overwhelming backing for the fightback on jobs. The conference's only unanimous vote was for an emergency resolution backing the occupation at Laurence Scott in Manchester.

With the conference over, the socialists in the union will be concentrating on campaign for the executive to back Benn at the Labour Party conference.

Ireland can be won in the labour movement

By Bristol supporters of the H Block prisoners

WHEN it comes to the issue of Ireland, something is moving in Bristol.

On the May Day march in Bristol Irish solidarity activists carried a 24-foot banner reading, 'Bobby Sands, MP'. A good initiative but, in itself, nothing remarkable.

But then, in the rally after the march Communist Party member Brian Underwood, one of the main organisers, demanded that the banner be removed from the hall. He was forced to put the issue to the vote — and lost by about two to one.

The Irish solidarity movement has expanded in the wake of the hunger strike. But more importantly, this

small incident shows that the chances of winning support in the labour movement for the Irish struggle have greatly increased.

And this was not the first success in Bristol. In April, the trades council supported the hunger strikers' five demands and the demand for political status.

The local Labour Committee on Ireland has spoken at several Labour Party meetings, including Tony Benn's Bristol South-east general management committee.

The GMC in Bristol North-east passed a motion on the prisoners, while the West constituency called for an end to bipartisanship with the

Tories. And all this before Tony Benn made his recent remarks on Ireland.

Nor have there only been successes in Labour parties. This month the Transport Union branch and TF Lucas, Kingswood — one of the best organised factories in the Bristol area — passed a motion in favour of 'troops out'.

This came after leading stewards had argued for the motion for several weeks on the factory floor.

All of which shows that provided the work is done, and the effort is made, significant sections of the labour movement can be won to progressive positions on Ireland.



The Bobby Sands Banner carried on Bristol's May Day march.

IRISH ELECTIONS

H Block victories just the tip of the iceberg

THE growing instability of the neo-colonial part of Ireland was highlighted by the general election on 11 June for the Dublin parliament.

The seats were divided almost evenly between the governing bourgeois party and the bourgeois opposition.

The first, Fianna Fail, has 78 seats; the second, Fine Gael and Labour, 80. Six highly peculiar independents hold the balance of power.

H Block prisoner candidates won two seats, effectively denying Fianna Fail any possibility of putting together a stable majority.

Whatever kind of weak government emerges from the intensive wheeling and dealing which has now begun, it will be much more vulnerable than the previous one to pressures of rising anti-imperialist feeling, focused on the H Block issue and the impending economic disaster that is visible to all observers.

Outlet

The relative economic development of the past years was fuelled and sustained by borrowing, and the day of reckoning for the imperialist banks and financial institutions is approaching.

At the same time, the comparative economic prosperity of the last years and the closing-off of the traditional outlet of emigration has produced explosive growth of the numbers of youth who are beginning to flood onto a tight job market.

In this situation the Irish people are desperately looking for political alternatives.

This was reflected by the wild fluctuation in the opinion polls in the pre-election period, as well as by the erratic pattern of results.

The national coalition of Fine Gael and Labour which governed the country from 1973-7 left an evil memory of repression and open capitulation to imperialism.

A repeat of such a

By Gerry Foley,
Dublin

government was not an attractive alternative, but the incumbent regime had done nothing to deal with the economic problems.

Failed

Its anti-imperialism did not go beyond a little pale verbiage and some dubious publicity gimmicks, such as the Dublin/London summit talks with a vague agenda and even vaguer purpose. In some respects collaboration with British repression even increased under Fianna Fail.

The cabinet presided over by Charles Haughey has let the British government drive four Irish political prisoners to their death without even making an official protest.

Since the Irish government failed to take the political prisoners under its wing, the Irish people did this directly by electing two of them to membership of the parliament that is supposed to represent the entire nation.

These two prisoners have now been given recognition as political prisoners, as representatives of the oppressed Irish people themselves by the only means available to them.

Moral

When one prisoner has been elected to the British parliament, and two to the Irish parliament how can the Thatcher government continue to claim the prisoners are criminal? How can any Irish government claim it is not its responsibility to defend them?

In a whirl-wind tour in support of the H Block campaign, Bernadette McAliskey stressed:

'When one half of the population is under 30



Over 3,000 people showed their support for the prisoners in

London's H Block demonstration on Saturday.

years of age any government or party that says that young people between the ages of 20 and 30 who are starving themselves to death to uphold the dignity of our people aren't a matter of national concern, has no moral right to rule.'

The attendance at Bernadette's rallies was largely youthful, especially in Dundalk, in Louth, where an H Block prisoner was later elected.

She said: 'The press is talking about the cynicism of youth towards the big parties. That's not cynicism, that's common sense. They're not about to be fooled.'

Bernadette also appealed to workers at industrial centres: 'Take back the trade unions from those who betray them, put them back in the

forefront, the cause of labour is the cause of Ireland.'

The H block rallies and the votes which the H Block candidates received astounded the press and the politicians, both here and in Britain. Moreover, the visible success of the H Block campaign candidates was only the tip of the iceberg.

The intervention of the H Block movement in the electoral arena was severely restricted by the traditionalist wing of Provisional Sinn Fein. It had insisted that the H Block movement could only support prisoners who would be unable to take their seats if elected.

Leap

This wing of Provisional Sinn Fein also found it difficult to col-



The H Block election victories wiped the smiles off the faces of Fine Gael leader FitzGerald and Fianna Fail's Charlie Haughey.

The latter group, now a pro-imperialist sect, made gains only as long as it was the only alternative to the big parties. Everywhere that an H Block candidate stood, SFWP was cut down to size.

Nonetheless, the failure of the H Block campaign to contest more constituencies allowed two hardened enemies of the prisoners to get into parliament and hold the balance of power — that is, Joe Sherlock of Sinn Fein the Workers Party, and Jim Kemmy of Socialists Against Nationalism.

Lunatic

Another independent, Noel Browne, is confused enough on the national question to be talking about blocking with Kemmy and Sherlock. Only the gross default of the anti-imperialist forces could explain the fact that such lunatic sectarians could play an important role.

The other three independents are maverick populists, more inclined to vote with Fianna Fail. One of them Sean Dublin Bay Loftus, is an ecology candidate whose vote came from both left and right.

Peoples Democracy, the Irish Trotskyist group, stood two candidates on a revolutionary anti-imperialist programme — Vincent Doherty, a leader

of the H Block movement, in the premier's Dublin constituency and Joe Harrington, a respected trade union activist in Limerick city.

Against a powerful machine, Doherty rolled up 1,481 first preference votes out of 40,581 cast in a five-seat constituency; that is, more than one fifth of the vote needed to be elected. Harrington got just under 1,000 votes on the basis of a very small-scale campaign in an area where anti-imperialist feeling is relatively low.

The Irish Labour Party suffered such heavy losses that its very survival would be threatened by a continuation of its coalition policy.

It may be forced to reject the tempting fruits of exclusion in the government from the hand of Fine Gael, thereby leaving no other possibility open but that of a rickety minority government.

Given the inability of the incoming parliament to elect a stable government, the likelihood is that the next general election will be held in a relatively short time. The anti-imperialist movement will consequently have the chance to re-orientate itself, so as to take full advantage of opportunities available.

It already had greatly increased possibilities to bring pressure to bear on behalf of the prisoners.

'A struggle for human dignity'

The organisation we called the Free Trade Unions of the Coast was formed on 30 April, 1978. I heard about it on Radio Free Europe. (Laughter) It's unfortunate that I had to learn from so far away what was going on close by.

The committee was founded by three persons: Andrzej Gwiazda and two others. Gwiazda is now national vice-president of Solidarity. One of the others was a secret police agent, but we didn't know that then. How this group survived we still wonder today.

We had constant difficulties, were constantly harassed by the authorities. Over the course of two years we were able to put out only eight issues of our paper *Robotnik Wybrzeza* (Coastal Worker).

The police would search our homes and confiscate not only published issues but also typewriters, typing paper, even ball-point pens. In their reports they listed these as 'criminal evidence'. And they used other methods to harass us, such as temporary arrest for forty-eight hours.

Influence

Later they began to have people fired from their jobs. But we continued with our activities, and our influence began to grow. So the authorities transferred me out of the shipyard to another factory, illegally, and kept me there for three months.

There was a difference between what I had been earning and what I was paid at the new place. The shipyard was supposed to make up the difference, but they wouldn't let me into the yard to collect my pay.

Finally they had to let me come back to the shipyard. When I came back, I tried to give every worker in the yard a leaflet telling about my case. They began searching me at the entrance to prevent me bringing in literature.

One day I managed to smuggle through some copies of *Robotnik Wybrzeza*, with our explanation of some changes in the work and payment system. I was fined for 'disrupting work'.

Afraid

After I was fined I appealed to the workers for support, but they didn't act because they were afraid. They thought that if someone is punished, there is nothing you can do about it.

But I knew it was against the law, because our Free Trade Unions group had a legal adviser, a doctor of labour law, who is a great man; he is still our adviser. He helped me write an appeal. And everybody was very surprised, because I won in court. I was paid damages.

Still they continued with their reprisals against me. Sometimes they would lock me in the cloakroom at the main entrance to the shipyard for two or three hours. So that they could say I was late for work and



ANNA Walentynowicz is a leader of the Polish independent union, Solidarity. The strike in the famous Gdansk shipyards last August began over her sacking as a crane driver in the yards. DeAnn Rathbun and George Saunders interviewed Anna with two of her co-workers, Jerzy and Maciej, both pipefitters at the shipyards, for *Intercontinental Press*. Below we reprint excerpts of the discussion dealing with how the August events began and the harassment of dissidents which was commonplace before last August.



Polish shipyard workers from Gdansk: since Solidarity was founded the harassment they suffered has decreased enormously

punish me. This happened several times.

When they did this I started to shout as loud as I could to tell the manager of my department that I was being held there, that I was not late.

So they parked a truck next to the window, so that when I would yell no one could tell where the voice was coming from.

Another way they harassed me was to turn off the crane that I was operating. I had to stop work and climb down from the crane to find out what was wrong, and they used that as a pretext for charging me with leaving my work station. This happened many times.

Trials

But every time I was fired, I fought in court and was reinstated. I had six trials. The judge was surprised that these cases kept coming to court, because the management had no

legal basis for its actions.

The only way out of this constant harassment was to appeal to the workers at the yard. I had a meeting with the other members of the Free Trade Unions group, and we decided to issue a leaflet telling who I am, how long I had been working, how many trials I had won, why I had been tried, and what the manager was now saying.

Leaflet

Our friends handed out these leaflets on 14 August, and that was the day the Gdansk shipyard strike began.

Jerzy: About a hundred people marched through the shipyard to the department, then to the main gate, where we demanded that Anna be brought to the yard. It was a really beautiful action on the part of the workers. Just before she was brought to

the yard, there was a meeting with the general manager and the first secretary of the party organisation of the shipyard. There was an excavator which was used for people to stand on to speak.

Maciej: When the general manager got up on this excavator to speak — it was about nine o'clock in the morning; work starts at six — Walesa appeared on the excavator. Just the moment before, the manager had asked 'Who is leading this strike?' And Walesa appeared on the excavator and announced: 'I will lead this strike.' (Laughter) And he went into the manager's office to begin negotiations.

Walentynowicz: I was hiding to avoid arrest by the secret police, who kept me under surveillance. I was at the medical clinic of the shipyard, which is out-

side the gates, when I heard that the strike had begun. I went to the window in the third floor hallway and saw that the cranes were not moving.

Alina Pienkowska (a nurse at the clinic and a leading activist of the Free Trade Unions group) and I locked ourselves in the ladies' room; we thought probably a strike had started and the secret police would try to seize us.

Police

I went outside, to try to make a call to Warsaw, and there I saw two familiar men from the secret police getting out of a car. I understood that I couldn't make any phone call, because they were coming for me. I hopped onto a street car and went to the part of Gdansk where I live.

By now there were four secret policemen following me. I went into a shop, as

though to do some shopping, but really hoping to be able to call Warsaw from the store. But they were too close behind me.

Nervous

So I ran across the street against the traffic and rushed into a friend's house. From there I could see there were now six plainclothesmen standing outside the house, looking around nervously.

When the car from the shipyard arrived at my home, my friends there — who knew my usual hiding places — after they had made sure that it wasn't a trick, sent the car to where I was. And of course I went to the shipyard.

And that was the beginning of the Gdansk shipyard revolution of 14 August, 1980.

Now about the strike itself. After I returned to the shipyard and joined

the negotiating committee, it turned out that the manager really didn't want to come to an agreement with us.

Demands

The first day there were two demands: return Walentynowicz to work and increase the pay of all workers at the yard one thousand zlotys a month. The next day our demands grew: return Walentynowicz to work; return Walesa to work; and raise the monthly pay by two thousand zlotys.

Walesa and I were allowed to come back and the agreement was signed. This was on Saturday 16 August. The manager won one concession. The monthly raise was reduced from 2,000 to 1,500 zlotys. So the strike was over. The Polish national anthem was sung. The manager went to his office.

Workers

But as we were leaving the hall a large group of my fellow workers were waiting for me, and one of them said, 'What have you done? You have fulfilled your private demands, that's all. Do you know why the manager agreed to your demands? Because the other factories of the seacoast are on strike.' But we hadn't known.

Alina Pienkowska and I went running back to the hall to declare a solidarity strike, but the microphones were off. The shipyard loudspeakers were announcing that the strike was over and that everyone had to leave the shipyard by 6pm. The gates were open and people were leaving.

So Alina and I went running to the main gate. Now Alina is very small, a tiny person, but full of initiative. She stood up on a barrel and began to appeal to those who were leaving. 'We have to help the others with their strikes, because they have helped us. We have to defend them. We have to guarantee their security and ours.' Somebody from the crowd said, 'She's right!' The gate was closed. Success. Happiness.

Strike

The same thing happened at the second gate. Some young people organised a microphone and an amplifier. Then Walesa joined us. It had not been appropriate for him to call for a solidarity strike, because five or ten minutes before, he had announced that our strike was over. Now that the first two gates were closed, we went together and closed the third.

But out of 16,000 workers, maybe only 6,000 remained. We tried to make contact with other shipyards. About the time we did, I saw the general manager leaving in a motorboat. I made an announcement on one of the microphones near the gate. I told the workers' defence guard that the manager had left and that now we were the masters of the shipyard.

Building the Minority Movement

Socialist Challenge REVOLUTION

Industrial Workers Conference

London 27-8 June

Entry by ticket only from PO Box 50, London N1 2XP

By Pamela Holmes (AUEW)

THE tremendous response to the Peoples March for Jobs has shown the willingness of working people to stand up and fight for their rights. The miners' victory over the Tories on redundancies showed how powerful we can be. So why do we have to take further punishment from Thatcher and her gang? Because the existing trade union leadership is scared stiff of mobilising the strength

of the working class and organising a real fight back.

The working class found itself in a similar situation in the years leading up to the general strike in 1926. The response that militants made was to build the National Minority Movement (NMM), which got its name from the familiar right wing and Tory press complaints about every problem being due to 'a minority of trouble-makers'.

The Minority Movement described itself as 'an organisation of militant trade unionists who, realising the extent to which the present leadership have committed themselves and the unions unreservedly to class collaboration, have banded

together to restore the original purpose and fighting spirit on which the trade unions were founded, to secure a new leadership with a policy based on a realisation of class struggle and a complete reorganisation of the unions....'

In the early 20's the working class had suffered some big setbacks. The 'Triple Alliance' of railway, transport and mine workers had collapsed in its first big test, letting the miners go down to serious defeat in 1921.

In 1922, the engineering employers forced a national lockout to impose wage cuts. Unemployment grew rapidly to 17 per cent whilst union membership plummeted. The shop stewards movement col-

lapsed, decimated by redundancies.

The economy picked up during 1923-24, but the trend towards class confrontation developed as the capitalists continued their fight to restore the rate of profit by wage cuts and longer hours.

Actions

The spring of 1923 saw the first big mass actions in industry since 1920 — among dockers, vehicle builders, jute workers, builders, agricultural labourers and boilermakers.

In the autumn, the Communist Party started a campaign to launch the Minority Movement.

The campaign began with a series of propaganda meetings aimed at uniting the various position currents in the movement around an action programme to fight the existing leadership.

They aimed at fighting the very leadership of unions, a 'leadership... upon a realisation of the struggle'.

The organisation of NMM reflected its aims — had sectoral and national features based on sectoral class wide demands.

The founding conference of the Movement was held in August 1924 and was attended by delegates of 270 organisations representing 200,000 workers.

None of this would



IN preparation for its trade union conference in July, the Labour Co-ordinating Committee has produced a pamphlet 'The trade unions and socialism' by Pete Rowlands, which argues for breaking down the traditional divides between the 'industrial' and 'political' wings of the movement.

It also backs the Alternative Economic Strategy.

BRIAN HERON looks at the political case put forward in the pamphlet, which will be an important under-pinning of the debates at the conference.

THE LCC'S conference at Central Hall, Westminster, on 18 July will undoubtedly be one of the most important rank and file trade union conferences held this year.

Given the wave of struggles like Laurence Scott, Lee Jeans and Rover which are taking place, and the political developments around events like the People's March for Jobs and Tony Benn's campaign for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party, the conference is likely to be attended by hundreds of trade union militants eager to discuss the way forward.

Benn

The last LCC trade union conference in November was a shambles — if Socialist Challenge supporters had not turned out in force, there would have been only around 30 people present. But the political situation has changed.

The LCC is closely associated with the politics of Tony Benn, and his election campaign has electrified the whole labour movement, open-

ing up a furious debate on policy in both the Labour Party and the trade unions.

It is to Benn that the most advanced militants are looking, and against the militancy that these militants represent that Foot and Healey have firmly set themselves.

According to the LCC, Pete Rowlands' pamphlet is 'the first serious assessment of Britain's trade union movement from a committed Labour left perspective'.

In fact it is a dreadful mish-mash of borrowed ideas, which attempts to combine a pessimistic view of the state of the class struggle (one not too dissimilar from that of the Socialist Workers Party), with a gradualist and right-wing political strategy, all too reminiscent of the Communist Party's 'British Road to Socialism'. The two are closely connected.

Rowlands argues that 'during a decade of mounting economic crisis and — for much of that period — unprecedented industrial militancy, a socialist breakthrough has

not been made; indeed socialist ideas are under widespread attack'. Further, since the election of the Tories their attacks 'have met with little response' and the 'trade unions have moved slightly to the right'.

We take sharp issue with this assessment below, but what is central to Rowlands' argumentation is how we got into this situation through the debacle of the last Labour government because it is on the basis of this argumentation that Rowlands draws his wrong conclusions about the relationship of trade union militancy and socialist strategy and objectives.

Apparently we arrived where we are now because of the failure of the Labour government's social contract, which is explained by the failure of the trade union leaders to fight for the Alternative Economic Strategy:

Doomed

'Short of a substantial implementation of the AES, for which little if any political preparation had been done, the Social Contract was inevitably doomed.'

This failure to push the AES was due to the unions' 'bureaucratic nature, remoteness from their membership and aversion to pushing their political role...' and led to the 'anguish of the Winter of Discontent which led not as some of the left thought (who? BH) to revolution or a radical left government, but the most reactionary government since the 1930s'.

There we have it! But all is not lost since 'the ebbing away of militancy in the last few



years' has produced a 'healthy debate around many issues'.

If there is an ebbing away of militancy, something better be done quick because the present surge of the Labour left is not due to clever manoeuvring or something like that, but a result of the crisis in the Labour Party that the years of massive class militancy and polarisation have produced.

Kitson, Basnett, Jenkins and the rest are being pushed all over the place because the base of their unions is moving to the left.

The Social Contract of the last Labour government was doomed, not because the union leaders failed to fight for the AES, but because in reality it was an attempt to tie the working class to the deflationary and pro-capitalist policies of an utterly right wing Labour government.

The workers were right to fight back against it and throw it out. But Rowlands and the LCC have a point. It is true that the old ways of battling against the employers and government are no longer adequate.

The working class is on the defensive. A political battle is taking place in the workers' movement to hammer out a new perspective.

Miners

But this political argument takes place in a context of undefeated strength. The miners showed how quickly defence can be turned into attack.

However, the movement needs an overall political perspective. But that perspec-

The fight for socialist policies in industry 27-8 June, London

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been possible without the leadership of a revolutionary party — the Communist Party — rooted in the main industrial unions which comprised the NMM. From 1919 to 1922, the Communist International (Comintern) under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, carried out a systematic fight with the infant British Communist Party to knock on the head the infantile notions of the CP which lead them to silly positions such as 'Tory and Labour — two of a kind'.

Such an approach had prevented the CP from gaining a serious hearing amongst the mass of workers, despite the dedicated work which they had conducted in defence of the miners during the build up to

Black Friday and the ignominious collapse of the Triple Alliance.

Faith

In 1922 the CP summed up its new attitude at the time of the elections: 'The Communist Party cannot oppose the Labour Party in so far as it is a party of the workers any more than it can oppose the trades unions as such; but it can, as it does with the trade unions, fight the reactionary junta and seek to transform the Labour Party into an instrument of revolutionary progress. The faith of the workers in the present leaders of the Labour Party must be tried and outlived by experience. This experience the

Communists will help them obtain by their actions.'

It was this understanding which allowed the launch of the NMM in the unions and shortly afterwards the complementary National Left Wing movement in the Labour Party.

Some things have obviously changed since the 1920s. The bureaucracy has completely consolidated its hold over the apparatus of the Labour Party. But the same general approach is valid. An independent left wing must be built with its feet in the unions and its head in the Labour Party.

The organisation of such a left wing will be one of the key questions discussed at the Socialist Challenge industrial workers conference.



Conference UNIONS SOCIALISM



tive has to be linked and integrated with a way of mobilising the full strength of the movement against the Tories and for socialist policies.

This brings us slap bang up against the problem of the trade union bureaucracy. According to Pete Rowlands: '...the problem of bureaucracy denotes not so much a distinct stratum of personnel but rather a relationship which permeates the whole practice of trade unionism.'

This account evades the problem of the real live

bureaucrats, who are a distinct stratum and who build and benefit from bureaucratic relationships in the workers' movement.

Fault

Arguing against the SWP's simple-minded notions of the bureaucracy, the pamphlet says:

'The main fault with this analysis is that it substitutes sociology for politics, seeing the crucial difference as lying between members and officials,

rather than between left and right, taking no account of political differences within the leadership and within the membership, which as we have seen, have grown recently.'

It is certainly true that sections of the bureaucracy, under pressure, will align themselves with class struggle.

Tony Benn bases himself on a section of the trade union bureaucracy. The differences within the leadership are of vital concern for the ranks — they open the door to dealing

with the bureaucracy as a whole.

This is a political error of the SWP; the fight with the bureaucracy can't be dealt with just by militancy, it is a political fight. It will involve a struggle to force the leadership to defend the interests of the working class.

Role

But all this can't obscure one basic point. The role of the bureaucracy can't simply be explained by the fact that they are officials, irrespective of politics. But the very example of what happened under Labour during the social contract — when the union leaderships sided pure and simple with the class collaborationist Labour leadership — shows the conservative nature of the bureaucracy.

A new rank and file leadership is needed in the unions and the Labour Party, organised around a programme of action and class struggle methods. It will be built in bitter struggle with the existing labour bureaucracy.

Here we are coming close to the essence of the pamphlet's arguments. The trade union movement is seen as an extra-parliamentary power base for a future labour government.

Power

'We need to be able to mobilise the extra-parliamentary power of the working class, and its allies, to defeat the extra-parliamentary power of the ruling class.'

If this means that a socialist government would have to rely

on the mobilisation and direct action of the masses to carry through its programme, then we agree. If it means that mass action would just be a subsidiary adjunct to parliamentary action then we disagree, because the decisive centres of ruling class power — monopolies, banks, courts, police, army etc. — are outside parliament.

In fact, it seems that the LCC means the latter variant, because your ultimate strategy is inscribed in what you try to do today. There are two important lines of thought about how to get a government committed to socialist policies and it is important to disentangle them.

'Protest'

One line — that of the TUC, endorsed by the CP — is to build a 'protest' movement against aspects of government policies around demands like that of import controls, which can link up with sections of disgruntled employers. This was the CP line on the People's March.

The other approach starts from the struggles at Lee Jeans, Laurence Scott and Rover, and puts forward joint Labour Party/trade union action to bring down the government, around a fighting programme designed to mobilise the workers against the bosses, including central points like the 35-hour week.

The latter course obviously implies the 'right' of workers to bring down the government through mass struggle — a line which the LCC does not accept.

Many of the things which the LCC puts forward to drive the Labour Party discussion deeper into the unions can only

be applauded.

We entirely support things like workplace branches of the Labour Party, closer links between trades councils and CLPs, promoting broad lefts with a less electoralist approach and so forth.

But the paradox of the LCC is that whereas it has political positions on the need to link trade union and Labour Party action, its political positions are well to the right of other campaigning bodies inside the Labour Party.

The reason is very clear: the LCC tries above all to link the Labour Party and unions while preserving strong ties with the union bureaucrats.

The more the LCC goes into the unions, the more it will be under the pressure of an intolerable contradiction between class struggle actions and policies, and an alliance with a leadership whose very existence is based on a compromise with capitalism.

Labour Co-ordinating Committee Conference Trade Unions & Socialism

Speakers include:
Tony Benn, Arthur Scargill
Bernard Dix, Audrey Wise

Central Hall
Westminster
Sat 18 July
Delegates from TUs and Labour Parties
Contact LCC, 9 Poland St., W1

Where you can buy Socialist Challenge

Scotland

ABERDEEN: SC available at Boomtown books, King St. For more info ring Bill 896 284.
DUNDEE: SC available from Dundee City Square outside Boots, Thur 4-5.30pm, Fri 4-5.30pm, Sat 11-4pm.
EDINBURGH: SC sold Thur 4.15-5.15pm Bus Station, St. Andrews Square and bottom of Waverly steps 4.30-5.30; Sat 11.30-2pm East End, Princes St. Also available from 1st May Books, or Better Books, Forth Rd. More info on local activity from SC c/o Box 6, 1st May Bookshop, Candlemaker Row.
GLASGOW: SC sales every Thur/Fri 4.30-5.30pm at Central Station. Also available at Barretts, Byres Rd; Clyde Books, High St; Glasgow Bookshop Collective, Cresswell Lane; Hope Street Book Centre.
HAMILTON: SC on sale 8-11 every Sat outside County Bar Almada Street, every Sat outside Safeway 1.30-5. For more info contact Paul, 17 Clyde View or John at 54 Eliot St, Hamilton.

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BANGOR: Sat 10-12 town centre.
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SWANSEA: SC sales outside Co-op, Oxford St, 11am-1pm, Saturdays.

England

BATH: SC on sale at 1985 Books, London Road, and Saturdays 2pm-3pm outside the Roman Baths. Phone 20298 for more details.
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BRADFORD: SC at Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.
BRISTOL: SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. More info Box 2, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpelier, Bristol 6.
BURNLEY: SC on sale every Sat morning 11.30-1pm St James St.
CHESTERFIELD: SC sold outside Boots, Marketplace, Sat 11.30am-12.30pm.
COVENTRY: SC available from Wedge Bookshop. For more info about local activities phone 461138.
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD: SC sales in Time Square, Sat 10.30-1.30pm.
HUDERSFIELD: SC sold Sat 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peaceworks.
LEEDS: Sat 11-1 at Lands Lane Pedestrian Precinct and 10.30-12.00 at Headingly Arndale Centre. Corner Bookshop, Woodhouse Lane.

Bookshops

BANGOR: Rainbows, Hollyhead Road, Upper Bangor, Gwynedd.
BRADFORD: Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Sandgate.
BRIGHTON: The Public House, Little Preston St.
BIRMINGHAM: Other Bookshop, 137 Digbeth, Birmingham.
DURHAM: Durham City Co-op Bookshop, 85a New Elvet.
ILFORD: South Essex Bookshop, 335 Ley Street.
MILTON KEYNES: Oakleaf Books, 109 Church Street, Wolverton.
OXFORD: EOA Books, 34 Cowley Rd.
LIVERPOOL: News from Nowhere, 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool L1

What's Left

RATES for What's Left, 5p per word or £4 per col. inch. Deadline: noon Sat. prior to publication. Payment in advance. Phone 01-369 8180.

Conference of Socialist Economists 1981

On the theme of Exploitation and Oppression - Rethinking Socialist Strategy
 Bradford University, July 17-19
 Booking/details: CSE 16 St Alphonsus Rd, London SW4

SOCIALIST Feminist Forum: 'Import controls and the alternative economic strategies - should feminists support them?' Second in a series of discussions following the Women and Imperialism conference, 27 June, 10.30am-5pm, North London Poly, Holloway Rd, London N7. Adm £1.50 waged, 50p unwaged. Women only. Creche provided.

INAUGURAL conference of Journalists Against Nuclear Extermination. 27 June, 10.30am-5.30pm at Central London Poly, Cavendish St, London W1. Adm £1. Workshops and plenary.

SC Events

HARINGEY: Public meeting, 'Can Ireland unfree ever be at peace?' Tues 23 June, 7.30pm. TU Centre (Old Library), Brabant Rd, Wood Green, London N22. Speaker from TOM and Geoff Bell (Socialist Challenge).

MANCHESTER: SC sold 11-1pm Sat at OLDHAM outside the Yorkshire Bank, High St; at BURY in the shopping precinct and at Metro Books; at BOLTON in the town centre; and in MANCHESTER outside the central reference library in St Peter's Square and at Grassroots and Percivals Bookshop. Tel: 061-236 4905 for further info.
NEWCASTLE: SC on sale every Sat 11-1pm outside Fenwicks. Also available at Days of Hope bookshop, Westgate Rd. For more info ring Phil or Pete on Newcastle 737507
OLDHAM: SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local activities. Tel. 061-682 5151.
OXFORD: SC sold Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.
SHEFFIELD: SC on sale Thursday, Pond St, 4.30-6pm; Saturday, Fargate 10.30-12.30pm.
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STOCKPORT: SC sold every Saturday, 1pm, Mersey Way. Can be delivered weekly: phone 483 8909 (evening), 236 4905 (day).
SWINDON: SC on sale 11-1 every Sat, Regent St (Brunel Centre).
TEESSIDE: SC on sale Sat lunchtime in the Cleveland Centre, and in Newsfare, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, and outside Woolworths on Stockton High Street.
WOLVERHAMPTON: SC sales on Thur/Fri at Poly Students Union from noon-2pm and British Rail 4.30-6pm; and Saturday near Beatles town centre from 11am-2pm.
YORK: on sale every Thursday, dole office Clifford Street, 9.30-11; University Vanburgh College 12-2; Saturday at Coney Street 11-1.

London

BRENT: SC sold Willesden Junction Thur 4.30pm.
EALING: SC sold Thur, Ealing Broadway tube, 4.30-5.30pm
ENFIELD: SC at Nelsons newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.
HILLINGDON: SC sold Fri, 4.30-5.30 at Uxbridge tube station; Sat 10.30-12.00 outside Woolworths, Uxbridge shopping centre.
KILBURN: SC sales every Sat, 10am in Kilburn Square, and Thursday 8.30am at Queens Park tube.
LAMBETH: SC available from Village Books, Streatham; Tetric Books, Clapham; Paperback Centre, Brixton; Oval tube kiosk. Also sold Thur and Fri evenings and Thur mornings outside Brixton tube.
NEWHAM: SC sold Sat 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Mkt, Upton Park.
PADDINGTON: SC sold at Portobello Rd market Sat at noon.
WEMBLEY: SC sales Fri 6.45am at North Wembley BR Station.

LONDON: Central Books, 37 Grays Inn Rd; Collets, Charing Cross Rd, WC2; Paperback Books, Brixton and Charlotte St; Kilburn Bookshop, Kilburn High Road, NW6; The Bookplace, Peckham High St, SE15; Books Plus, Lewisham; Balmam Food Co-op; Housmans, 5 Caledonian Rd, N1; Compendium, Camden Town NW1; Owl, Kentish Town; New Beacon, Seven Sisters Rd, N4; Bookmarks, Seven Sisters Rd, N4; Centerprise, 126 Kingsland High St, E8; Dillons, QMC; Page One, E15; The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, N1; Reading Matters, Wood Green next to Sainsbury's.
YORK: Community Books, Walmgate.

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 accidental death of an anarchist
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BOOKS for Southern Africa. Funds urgently needed - cheques, POs to Books for Southern Africa, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.
T-SHIRTS: 'Solidarnosc' symbol, red on white, 'Jobs not Bombs' red and black on white or yellow - all in small, medium and large. Women's symbol red on yellow, black on red, Fourth International symbol, red on white, red on yellow, black on red - medium and large. All above £2.99 incl. p&p. 'Fight racism' small only, red on white - only £1.50 incl. p&p. Orders to SCD T-Shirts PO Box 50, London N1. Cheques payable to 'The Week'. Bulk order prices on request.
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IMG notices

WOMEN'S Liberation work - next fraction on 18 July in London. Venue to be announced.

Come to the Revolution rally

By Ann Henderson

SATURDAY 27 June - note that date in your diary! On that evening Revolution is holding its first anniversary celebration rally in London.

Three years ago the International Marxist Group launched the youth paper Revolution. Last year supporters of the paper founded an independent youth organisation, Revolution Youth, in political solidarity with the IMG and the Fourth International.

Over the past three years Revolution has proved the most regular and widely read socialist youth paper. It is well known for its consistent support for workers' struggles throughout the world - from Nicaragua to Poland. More than any other youth paper it has given regular support and coverage to Youth CND, fighting against Thatcher and Reagan's war drive.

tion is also under attack with savage cuts in school and college budgets.

Young people need allies in their fight to change society - that's why we stand for joint Labour Party and trade union action to kick out the Tories. It is to the labour movement that youth are increasingly looking to solve their problems.

Freedom

Revolution Youth stands for building an organisation of young women, young workers, young blacks and all young people who are fighting for freedom and an end to the capitalist system which offers youth nothing. We're fighting for socialism as are Socialist Challenge and the Fourth International.

That's why we have speakers from Peoples Democracy in Ireland and the French revolutionary youth organisation in solidarity with the FI at our London rally. And that's why Socialist Challenge supporters should come to our rally on 27 June, sell our paper Revolution, and give financial aid to building our organisation.

YOPS

The policies of this Tory government hit youth particularly hard. Not only is youth unemployment soaring, but those on YOPS schemes are expected to survive on £23.50 a week for six months before being thrown back on the scrapheap. Higher educa-

JOBS NOT BOMBS

The T-shirt to be seen in!

Jobs not Bombs, in tasteful red and black on either white or yellow T-shirts. Ideal for every unemployment or CND demo. Sizes S, M, L, only £2.99 incl P&P.

Orders to: SCD T-shirts, PO Box 50, London N1. Make cheques payable to 'The Week'.

Socialist Challenge Symposium

Marxism and Democracy
 Wed 2 to Sun 6 September in London
 Discussions, debates, forums on:
 Britain, Central America, Ireland, Eastern Europe, art, cinema, music and literature

Book these dates now - 2 to 6 Sept!

New issue of REVOLUTION now out!

Reagan's war drive, revolutions in Caribbean, Labour Party, Ireland, interview with Polish students, Coventry and much more. 12 page issue, just 20p. You can write to Revolution, send for copies of the paper or send financial support to: REVOLUTION, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.



Photo: GM COOKSON

The 'local' target, however, we hope to meet as soon as possible. So far only Brent supporters have met their target. Spec. thanks to them.

Mention should also be made to our talented comrades in Stockport whose donation represents (part of) the proceeds from their internationally bestselling 'John Lennon commemoration' poster.

Our thanks this week to:

Hemel Hempstead	£30.00
Tower Hamlets	350.00
Brent	260.00
Southwark	129.24
Cardiff	53.50
Camden	43.38
Huddersfield	20.00
Oxford	100.00
Southampton	20.00
Stockport	95.63
Swindon	7.50
Lambeth	30.00
Hackney	100.00
Leeds	150.00
Bristol	15.50
Bangor supporters	4.60
Standing Orders	65.00
Martin Avery	5.00
Anon	75.00
MB	20.00
Andy Jones	3.00
Ed Mahood	10.00
R Haggie	4.00
Labour Party school	322.50
Mandel Rally	800.00
Total	£2713.85
Grand total	£31210.00

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New Socialist Challenge pamphlet

Stalinism & Bolshevism
 By Leon Trotsky

45p, available from:
 The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, London N1.

Socialist Challenge PAMPHLET 45p

International
 July issue now out!

Articles on Labour and Ireland, socialism and disarmament, politics of porn, miners strike, Peter Fuller on art and much more.

Just 60p from your local Socialist Challenge seller. Socialist Challenge supporters place your orders now - bulk orders cash in advance 40p a copy. Send to: INTERNATIONAL, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

'What can you do when reporters' wives go on strike demos?'

By Marion Bowman, recent member of the NUJ Equality Working Party

IN THE last years of the Vietnam war, when public opposition to the US government's war policy was becoming increasingly 'respectable', the American press also began to shift away from the official view that the war was not only just but winnable.

At that time Ben Bradlee, executive editor of the *Washington Post*, complained to a colleague: 'We tell reporters not to march in a demonstration. But what can you do when their wives march in demonstrations?'

Apart from the giveaway that *Washington Post* reporters were men, the remark is interesting because it offers an insight into that process which goes some way to answering a question constantly being asked by supporters

of the Campaign for Press Freedom:

Why do journalists endorse the values and views of their employers and where do they draw the line?

Another US editor, Turner Catledge of the *New York Times*, provides further clues. In his book *My Life and*

the Times, Catledge wrote that in hiring staff he wanted 'independent, creative men, thoroughbreds... not the sort who could be bossed or browbeaten. I had to make them do what I wanted done, often by making them think it was what they wanted done.'

Priorities

That statement is sufficiently contradictory to explain why it often is that journalists believe themselves to be completely objective when their work, founded on selectivity, reflects the priorities of particular types of people.

These anecdotes highlight an important issue for press freedom — that of content and how news values and editorial policies are created and adhered to.

It is easy enough to argue

that the current system of ownership of the press is the source of much of the injustice perpetrated by the newspapers. But when it comes to questions such as 'Why does the TUC Women's Conference get so little coverage, and then only of a trivial nature?' the answer is less clear.

To deal with problems like that, discussion has to range wider than concern for the right of reply or the support of alternatives like the *East End News* or the desirability of a labour daily.

How different would the final product be?

Beliefs

Very little is known by the general public about the beliefs of journalists or the nature of their work. Journalists themselves have a need

for reassurance so strong that the whys and wherefores of their craft are rarely debated critically.

So it is significant that organised dissent among journalists recently has come from that group who are already vulnerable to employers' prejudices — women.

It is easier for male journalists to identify with the values of male employers, to be the 'thoroughbreds' of whom Turner Catledge wrote. Women, on the other hand, have never had the automatic foothold in the province of the powerful that gender bestows. Quite apart from what men think women are fit for, there is the simple fact that women are not men.

Women

The increasing number of women working in journalism who spurn the 'Queen Bee' role, who identify with each other and with women outside the industry, has given rise to a new spirit of dissent from the sexism of conventional, male-created journalism: dissent which affects many other areas of journalistic practice.

Discussions about sexism, that ideology of male supremacy most popularly recognised in the page three pin-up but one which involves the complexities of omission, condescension and distortion, raise many issues central to press freedom and the role of journalists in society.

Censorship, ownership, allegiances, alliances, trade union organisation, social, as well as industrial, relations — all these have to be considered once objection to sexism is voiced.

It is important therefore that women in the NUJ have put as much emphasis on the nature of the work of journalists as on straight employment matters such as equal opportunity in recruitment and promotion, maternity and abortion rights, or provisions for working parents like creches.

Equal

There is no guarantee that equal numbers of men and women in the workplace will mean equal treatment for the female public in the pages of the press, but men and women do have different life experiences and it may be more difficult for male employers to convince female employees that the systematic subordination of women in their own work is, as Turner Catledge put it, 'what they want done' too.

Indeed, the fact that young women trainees, very much the minority in provincial newspaper offices, can now be crushed only temporarily in their dissent by news editors saying: 'If you don't agree with me, you have no news sense and you'll never make a journalist' is an indication of how that process of endorsement can be interrupted.

Equality of opportunity for women and minority groups, support for those struggling against sexism and racism and enfranchisement of the powerless have implications for press freedom and the creation of a just press which should not be overlooked as the powerful are taken to task.

Free Press

• This article is taken from *Free Press*, bi-monthly bulletin of the Campaign for Press Freedom. Details of the bulletin and the campaign, from: CPF, 274-288 London Rd, Hadleigh, Essex. Tel 0702 553131.



Possibly no reporters' wives, but certainly women journalists were among those who occupied the London Evening News in January 1978 and secured the right to reply to articles attacking lesbians who have babies by AID.

Photo: VAL WILMER

Pacesetters on pay *Time Out* strike

By Geoffrey Sheridan

A STRIKE at a radical magazine might not seem to have a great deal of relevance to the trade union movement.

Most of the alternative publications which flourished in the heady days of the late 1960s and early '70s have since gone to the wall, and if yet another has run into trouble it hardly warrants headlines.

Yet the London weekly magazine *Time Out* is a long way from bankruptcy, of either the political or commercial variety.

It furnishes the capital with a radical appraisal of the police, the courts, local government, the welfare state and much else besides. Its cultural coverage, if sometimes arcane, is a stimulant for developments in the arts and a boost to the audiences they need.

Fringe

The impact of the strike, now in its sixth week, can be seen most visibly in the fringe theatres and independent cinemas in London, where audiences have plummeted since *Time Out's* listings were halted by the industrial action.

With the disappearance, too, of the magazine's Agitprop column, which provides a free noticeboard for meetings, demos, and the like, a touch of nerves can be detected among the left in the metropolis.

Time Out's achievement can be measured against the two other listings publications in London.

Where To Go and *What's On* are aimed at the kind of person who looks to Soho for a night out on the town, yet their combined circulations are less than the 80,000 notched up by *Time Out*, which has an annual turnover of over £2m.

Threats

Over the years, the magazine's publisher, Tony Elliott, has made threats about disposing of his money-spinner to IPC or a similar enterprise, yet under the effective editorial control of its staff, *Time Out* has shown

that radicalism is no deterrent to sales.

Battle

And if many of the magazine's readers (and staff) are now middle-aged and mortgaged, *Time Out's* politics have not developed a paunch — which is reason enough to lend solidarity to the staff's battle.

What lies behind the strike is an unusual union agreement. Most significantly it provides for pay parity. The 64 staff below management level — whether a theatre critic or typesetter — are on the same salary, which is presently £8,700 a year.

Elliott wants to wave goodbye to that. It doesn't take a genius to appreciate that wage differentials — the norm in the newspaper and publishing world, as well as British industry at large — divide up the workforce, which is exactly what *Time Out's* publisher has in mind.

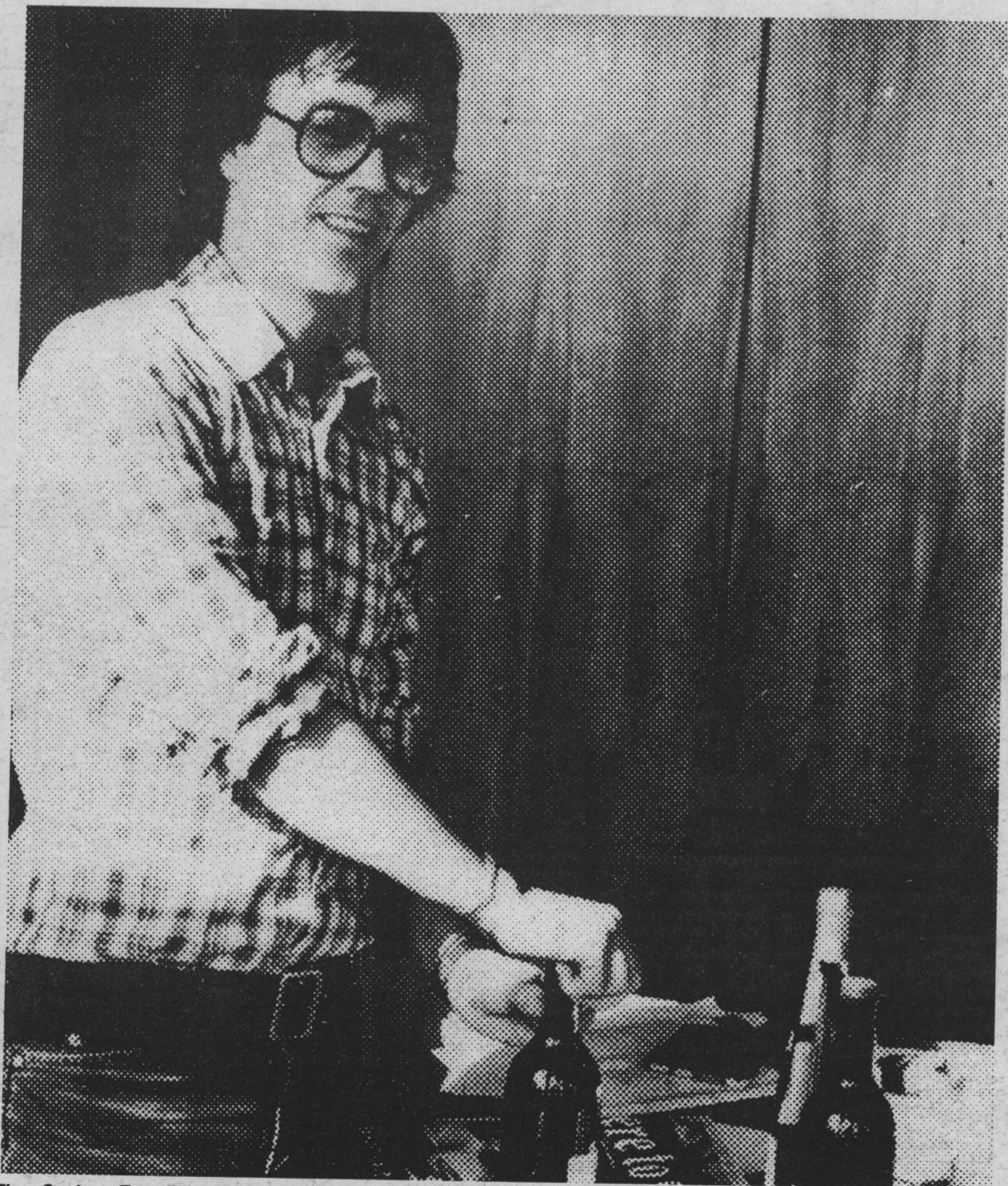
Conditions

As it happens, the agreement specifies that the same pay and conditions should apply to any other magazine that Elliott might launch. He wants to terminate that as well.

Neither is he happy about the clause which says that he has to consult the federated chapel, which brings together the NUJ, NGA, and SOGAT, about any business venture involving *Time Out* cash.

Although the strike is primarily to defend the existing agreement rather than win improved pay or conditions, confidence prevails in the chapel.

A High Court order forced the staff to abandon their month-long occupation of the magazine's offices, but they are now happily ensconced in Action Space, and the



Time Out boss Tony Elliott trying to forget about the strike

Labour GLC has offered other premises rent free.

One of the main activities is the production and distribution of their strike-sheet, *Not*. The cost of the 25,000 copies of the weekly bulletin is being met by revenue from advertising.

The best news for the strikers last week was the

decision of the national council of the NGA to hold firm on a boycott of any *Time Out* printing. When I relayed this information to Tony Elliott, his first reaction was: 'Oh God, I'm half asleep.'

There is a lot of truth in this.

His appraisal of inter-union solidarity did not

take into account the fact that the NGA has initiated amalgamation talks with the NUJ, which the print union leaders are unlikely to want ditched through their failure to back the *Time Out* strike.

That NGA women typesetters are part of the magazine's federated chapel, and enjoy pay and

conditions well above the norm in the industry — a good example of the kind of unity which is needed to bring about a favourable merger.

Agitprop listings for inclusion in *Not* should be sent to: *Time Out* chapel, 314 Gray's Inn Rd, London WC1. Send support and donations there, too.

USA 'mised' us on El Salvador

By Toni Gorton

LAURENCE Eagleburger, an Assistant Secretary of State in Reagan's administration visited Europe in February with documentary evidence that the guerillas in El Salvador were being supplied with weapons by the Soviet Union, Cuba and other communist countries.

Based on this evidence European leaders were solicited for support for Reagan's line in El Salvador.

The only trouble is that the document wasn't based on papers 'seized from the guerillas' as Eagleburger claimed, but from presumptions of the State Department, according to Jon Glassman who was its principal author.

He now describes it as 'misleading' and 'over-embellished':

For example, the evidence for 'nearly 200 tons' of military supplies said to come from captured papers actually comes from 'intelligence based on the air traffic, based on the truck traffic'.

Another figure of 800 tons of 'most modern

weapons and equipment' was taken from a figure of 130 tons of weaponry stored in Nicaragua and multiplied by six!

Juggle

This sort of logic is reminiscent of the Tory plan to juggle the unemployment figures by only counting those who apply for benefit rather than those looking for work — a difference of about 10 per cent.

It would be humorous if the stakes weren't so high. The war

of liberation in El Salvador continues and the death toll grows daily. In San Vincent the other day the undertakers ran out of coffins...

London students have chosen 4 July, American Independence Day, to picket the US Embassy. This is organised jointly by the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign and the London Students Organisation to call for 'Thatcher, Reagan — Hands off El Salvador' and 'Students against Imperialism'.

Assemble 5.30 to 7.30pm, US Embassy, Grosvenor Square, nearest tube Bond St. Further details from the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign, tel 01-359 2270, or LSO tel 01-637 5892.

Spain: abortion on trial

By Frank McBride

MORE than one hundred years imprisonment is being sought in total for eleven women who took part in abortions in Bilbao, Spain. The prosecutor is asking for sentences ranging from 60 years for the women who carried out the abortions to six months for the women who underwent them.

All abortion in Spain is totally illegal. The pill is available but difficult for many married women to obtain; it is virtually impossible for single women.

The eight women on trial who had abortions are married and had been refused contraceptives from their doctors. Some chemists even refuse to stock condoms.

For the rich, of course, clandestine abortion is available. For up to £1,000 a woman can have an abortion in Madrid that is safe from health risks

and police raids. For others, it is the back streets.

This present trial was originally begun in 1979 but was suspended after massive mobilisations in favour of amnesty for the eleven and for the right to abortion.

Now there is a right wing offensive in Spain attacking living standards, civil liberties, national rights and women's rights. Divorce in Spain is still impossible and a new law at present going through parliament is being weakened with every amendment.

Despite the present reactionary climate in Spain, the Women's Assembly of Bilbao believes it can mobilise the solidarity movement that was built up in 1979. As the Assembly puts it, the campaign then 'completely upturned Basque society. Until then even the word abortion was clandestine. Abortions, like other women's matters, didn't leave the kitchens and stairways.'

Now the women are hoping the issue will once again take to the streets, the council and trade unions.



Bolivian workers support fund set up

CONTRIBUTIONS to aid the clandestine trade union struggle against the Bolivian military dictatorship are urgently needed.

Money raised so far has gone towards the upkeep of trade unionists in hiding, the support of families of those

killed or jailed and the purchase of typewriters and other printing equipment. £1 will enable over a thousand leaflets to be printed and £5 will support a family for a week.

Since the coup a year ago all trade unions have been outlawed, real wages have fallen by 50 per cent; over

5,000 people are in political exile. All of Bolivia is a military zone.

Despite the repression there have been two 48-hour strikes and go-slow campaigns.

For further information and donations contact the Bolivian Workers Support Fund, 54 Studley Rd, Forest Gate London E7. Tel 01-471 6000. Bank account: 01-43338275, National Westminster Bank, 1 Hurdwick Place, London NW1 2JG.

Mustard and Chile - a hot combination

By Toni Gorton

RECKITT and Colman, the British mustard company is promoting a new product. In a full-colour, glossy newspaper called *Roundabout* it extols the virtues of — Chile!

The paper asks: 'Isn't it about time we started looking at the good things about this spectacular country?'

'Chile and Atlantis — our business in Chile — are well worth studying: because they're both success stories and they're both good at solving their problems in dynamic, original ways.'

In a truly original way, Colman's explain that the Chilean military only 'reluctantly' after displaying 'remarkable patience' took power in the coup against democratically elected Salvador Allende in 1973.

Freed

And it dynamically transmutes Catholic Church figures of 15,000 dead and 50,000 arrested, tortured and imprisoned by the military into 'several hundred'.

But let's not quibble about damned statistics because after all Chile 'today is a pleasant place to live.'

'Political prisoners have been freed, repression eased and the right to argue against official policies is always in evidence' the company says.

Chile also seems a pleasant place to die as the United Nations reported late last year, with an increase in human rights violations.

negative.

Well part of the reason people get hot-blooded about Chile, say our mustard moguls, is due to the involvement of the CIA.

Allende

'But, people tend to forget that the ordinary people of Chile would, without doubt, have unseated Allende without the help of the CIA, had

he so continued to mismanage their country.'

That's okay then the CIA saved the Chilean people the bother of doing it themselves, that was nice of them wasn't it?

Now here's one to interest all our British readers. People get hot about Chile because Chile has proven monetarism works!

The Colman's comment tell us that 'Chile's economy is run by a group of economists known to Chileans as "the Chicago boys".'

Reagan

'They have been practising for some years the philosophies preached by Professor Milton Friedman and endorsed by President Reagan of the USA and Prime Minister Thatcher in the UK.'

'Unlike in the UK', however, the ideas are working. It is, of course, only fair to say that in putting the philosophies into practice Chile did not have democratic processes getting in the way.'

Facts

That's good to know. Does this mean that Maggie's persuasion of Milton's philosophy will lead her to embrace General Augusto Pinochet's methods? That is something to think about.



Photomontage: PETER KENNARD



SPECIAL ON CHILE

This month we continue our pull-out supplement series on Latin America with a look at one of the most controversial countries of that continent — Chile. Ravaged by left-wing and communist governments, Chile nevertheless represents an object lesson to many countries in deep economic trouble on how to recover from an almost impossible position.

Are we being two-faced about Chile? Is it time for the world to think again? Read the Roundabout special issue.



Black people and the health service

White health service professional workers have a sickening assumption of the superiority of white middle class cultural norms.

A group of GPs in Brent said with complete confidence and scientific detachment that 'the pain threshold for Asians is half that of Caucasians — they complain twice as much for half the reason.'

In the NHS the mythology is that Afro-Caribbean women are feckless and irresponsible, while Asian women are compliant but stupid.

West Indians are dubbed as having no culture, the problems for Asians is their culture.

Either way, black people's diets, child rearing practices, family relationships, highly established medical systems, are seen as either inadequate or downright harmful.

Meanwhile the SUS law has helped create the stereotype of Afro-Caribbeans as reckless, irresponsible and criminal, while the immigration laws have encouraged white people to see Asians as law abiding perhaps, but only because they have no legitimate reason for being in Britain in the first place.

In December last year a clerk at St Bartholomew's Hospital decided to check the eligibility of a particular patient. She rang the DHSS and within a few minutes they rang back with details.

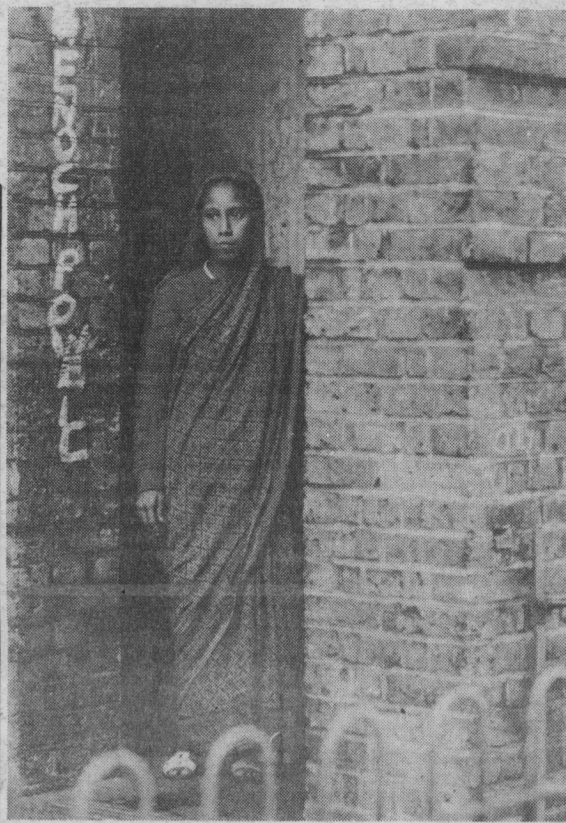
The memorandum she passed to the surgeon treating her read as follows:

'When the above named presented a doctors' letter for a surgical outpatient appointment, I was not happy about her eligibility for NHS treatment. I contacted therefore the DHSS who in turn have obtained the following information from the Home Office:

'Arrived U.K., 1974, was given extensions for temporary stay until September, 1975; was then told to return to Cyprus, appealed against decision but appeal dismissed and told to embark August 7th, 1979.

'The DHSS have alerted immigration authorities that she is still here and have given me authority to tell her that she can't be treated.

'But if you consider her condition to be an emergency one (you are) to treat her on a paying patient basis only.'



Low income, bad housing and hazardous working conditions mean bad health. Black people face some of the worse housing and working conditions in Britain, as well as the constant stress of racism.

A report from Brent Community Health Council challenges the view that black culture is to blame for black people's health.

Racism permeates every aspect of the NHS, from its recruitment policies to its assumption of the superiority of white diets, family systems, traditions of healing and approaches to child rearing; from mythologies about black 'pain thresholds' to eligibility for NHS treatment.



Photo: Robert Golden



Black people are the most exploited group of workers in Britain. They are forced to take the lowest paid jobs, and they are the first to lose them at a time of unemployment. Unable to afford the food they and their children need and living in substandard and over crowded housing, it would be surprising if black people in Britain did not suffer worst health than white people.

But there is little consciousness in the NHS of the economic and political causes of poor health amongst black people.

Dr Sklar represents general practitioners in Brent. When asked if working conditions affect people's health he replied: 'Not really, you see in this country conditions of work have been modified not to cause ill health.'

The British Medical Association has been involved in a campaign for the screening and exclusion of immigrants on health grounds.

Young Asian women coming to Britain as fiancées have been subjected to sexual examinations to establish their virginity; the BMA has now sanctioned the use of wrist X-rays to ascertain age (although there is no medical consensus on the validity of the method).

And all immigrants coming to Britain are now subjected to chest X-rays and are deported if active TB is found, often separating women and children from their husbands.

The BMA's campaign has firmly established in the minds of people that black people cause disease. Ted Gang, the civil servant in charge of health services for ethnic minorities at the DHSS is able to say that 'deafness among Asian and African children is probably associated with factors such as lack of hygiene, spitting, etc...'



Photo: Mike Sheridan (IFL)



Black people first encountered the NHS, not as a service provider, but as an employer. Wages were low and hours were long.

Black nurses and doctors found themselves, like the ancillary workers, doing the hardest and least rewarding work. In addition overseas nursing students are constantly reminded of the insecurity of their status as students because if they stop being a student they face deportation.

Many students pass the course only to find themselves deported. No reason need be given.

As one nurse said: 'The effect of racism is to isolate the overseas nurses, they are keeping a low profile, often don't complain and are sometimes even reluctant to join trade unions.'



Black People and the Health Service

This excellent report, from which these extracts are taken, comes out of black people's experience in Brent. But it is not just about Brent. It is about policies and practices which are dominant throughout the health service in Britain. Copies from Brent CHC, Rear Block, 16 High St, London NW10. 50p a copy. Research by Amrit Wilson and Jeanette Mitchell.

Photo: Victor Burgin

Photo: Nick Oakes

BPC union support for Pergamon strikers

By Carol Russell, NUJ striker

AT a demonstration in support of sacked strikers last week, there was clear evidence that workers in other Pergamon-owned companies are ready to join the fight against Robert Maxwell, Pergamon's 'millionaire socialist' boss.

Maxwell held a lunch party to celebrate his takeover of BPC (British Printing Corporation). About 50 people from Pergamon-BPC unions turned out to picket and leaflet guests.

Henry Nimmo, Oxford's Labour Mayor, refused an invitation to the lunch because it would involve crossing a picket line. Other guests, such as

Diana Dors in the role of author, assorted BPC managers and loyal scabs, had no such scruples, but some, including Ms Dors, stopped to talk to strikers on the way out.

NUJ members at BPC know that if Maxwell defeats the Pergamon strikers they are next in line. There are plans to introduce some of the Pergamon staff conditions into BPC. NUJ Chapters are considering a joint claim for the whole company. If the Oxford strikers' demands were met in full, their pay and conditions would still be worse than the existing conditions at BPC.

The NUJ at BPC are now asking for further improvements and it looks as if this may lead to a dispute. Print workers in other BPC unions are also beginning to fight Maxwell's 'survival plan' for the company, which has so far involved over 2500 lost jobs. Some SOGAT members have already taken action.

Rail-workers demand job fight

By Mark Findlay, Leeds NUR

THE mood at the NUR Guards and Shunters conference on 15/16 May was for action against the Tories' unemployment policies.

A motion from the Three Bridges branch called for the union executive to threaten action over job loss in the industry, such as British Rail's closure of the collection and delivery parcels service with the direct loss of 9000 jobs; the rationalisation of the freight system bringing the closure of many marshalling yards, including the largest at Tinsley; and the curtailment of passenger services with the threat of line shutdowns and early closure of stations.

Delegates were also angry at the union's other policies, and its general secretary, Sid Weighell, in particular. A motion from Paddington No 1 branch was passed unanimously, expressing concern at the delay in renegotiating last year's pay agreement which had extended guards' ticket duties as part of a productivity package.

Other resolutions raised the threat of 'one person operations' — trains without

a guard — and a Leeds City branch resolution condemned the steady erosion of guard's responsibilities. Delegates were impatient with the lack of action from the union leadership on pay, jobs and conditions.

NUR Broad Left formed

ON Saturday 6 June a conference of socialist militants in the National Union of Railwaymen decided to set up a Broad Left alliance to fight for militant socialist policies in the NUR.

A programme to defend railworkers from Tory attacks was adopted, and a steering committee elected. A major objective will be next year's rules revision conference of the NUR. The sharpness of the attacks on railworkers and the attempts to dismantle whole sections of British Rail makes this alliance very timely.

The conference also supported winning the NUR to defence of the democratic gains inside the Labour Party. Given the significance of the fight for Benn as deputy leader and the despicable witch-hunting style of general secretary Sidney Weighell, such an issue is clearly of major significance to all railworkers.



Roach Bridge workers fight on

By John Shutt

Roach Bridge Paper Mill is squashed in the countryside between Preston and Blackburn. Operated by a private firm whose owners reside in the Isle of Man, it has been notoriously difficult to unionise. A dispute at the mill which is now in its 28th week promises to be the Grunwick of the north-west. But so far the workers there have not had the national publicity and organisational support they deserve.

Last December, the workforce decided to elect a union committee which was immediately recognised by the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades (SOGAT). Management reacted promptly by sacking shop steward Frank Brown on the pretext of bad time-keeping. When the workers walked out in sympathy the management sacked all 50 union members and since then have refused to talk to union officials.

A 24 hour picket has been in operation ever since, including on Christmas and New Years Day. SOGAT have boycotted all supplies in and out of the mill. During their 20 week vigil the workers have had to put up with severe provocation from the management, cowboy lorry drivers, scab workers and police harassment.

About sixty workers still cross the picket line each day. They are ferried to work by

Nuttals and B&B Taxis of Preston, paid for by the management. Most are non-union but a few hold AUEW, EETPU, and TGWU cards, despite the fact that the dispute has been backed by all TUC-affiliated unions. In spite of the boycott, lorry drivers from Sandon Products (Leeds), Blackburn Chemicals, Tate Fuel Oil (Otley), Alliance Dye Co (Bolton), and Hendersons (Paisley) still cross the picket line with supplies.

It is the police harassment which the pickets have found most disturbing. Paul Fox, Father of the Chapel, describes the situation: 'One night, I think it was 3 March, two scabs came out of the works gate and started picking and provoking us. A scuffle started, when suddenly two policemen who we didn't know were inside the mill, came out and picked up two of our pickets: Eugene Pill and Mick Curshaw. The police took them inside the gate, beat them up and charged them for assaulting the police!'

Paul points out that the police are always on hand when scab workers are shipped in by taxi and he himself is often picked up for questioning without being charged. On Sunday 24 May he was held for 7 hours before being released. Before the dispute Paul was taking home £60 for a six day week. Now management have increased wages for scab workers to £100.

After 26 weeks on the picket line there are now only 30 of the original 50 pickets left. But those left are confident that they can still win provided the support of the whole trade union movement is mobilised.

Preston Trades Council is trying to mobilise support and secretary John Parkinson stressed: 'It's not just other employers in the paper industry which have their eyes on this dispute. It is employers throughout the whole north west. A defeat here will not just be a defeat for SOGAT, but for the whole trade union movement.'

Donations, messages of support and details of mass pickets can be obtained from John Derrig, SOGAT district sec, 66 St Georges Road, Bolton. Tel Bolton 389899. (cheques made payable to Roach Bridge Strike Fund)



Keep talking, Duke

Dear Philip,

I JUST wanted to tell you how much I appreciated your comments the other day. You're quite right to tell unemployed people to make up their minds about what they want.

Nothing worse than indecisiveness, I always say. I mean, fancy not knowing what to do with one's leisure time.

One can always go out on the pony or sail in the yacht. Some times of the year it's really fun to go and shoot a few partridge or take a few salmon out of the river.

One can even go out to the Royal Stud, can't one? There's the home cinema, the wife's stamp collection, her art collection and if things get really desperate one could even run one's fingers through her jewels.

You know how to use your leisure time, don't you Phil? So keep up the good work and set standards for all of us, especially the three million lucky, lucky people who have all the free time they want.

I mean they don't even have to sit their way through those dreary ten-course state banquets or get involved in their son's 3,000 guest wedding. Why should they complain?

So tell it like it is, Phil, we all like to know where we stand.

Admirably,

Your Socialist Challenge Court Reporter.

PS. I see that at least one of your subjects, Marcus Simon Sarjeant, knows how to use his leisure time.

NALGO ballot affiliation to Labour Party

By Carolyn Sikorski

AGAINST the advice of the executive committee the NALGO conference in Blackpool last week took an historic decision to ballot its 782,000 members on affiliation to the Labour Party.

The executive were defeated on other important issues: the conference decided to affiliate to CND and adopted a policy of unilateralism; and it voted against the national leadership to recruit the unemployed into special sections of existing branches.

Members can now be instructed not to cross picket lines; the union will support members taking 'unlawful' industrial action and there has been a 'simplification' of the methods for calling strike action.

However, despite stirring

speeches from the platform on action against the £64 million cuts proposed by Secretary of State for Scotland George Younger, £53 million of which will be cut from Lothian, delegates were given no clear lead about actions to be taken by the branches.

It was left to Socialist Challenge supporters in the NALGO Action Group to call a fringe meeting. More than 60 delegates heard Socialist Challenge supporter Janice McGee from Lothian explain that the cuts represented the loss of 1 in 4 jobs and that it was essential that Scotland was not left to fight alone.

Delegates were urged to argue in the branches for motions to the Local Government Group July meeting on pay for a nationwide walk-out and non-co-operation with central government if commissioners are used against Lothian Council's 'no cuts' stand.

A meeting of all branches in the Scottish district is urgently needed to co-ordinate action.

South Wales miners back Benn and Scargill

By Helen Slyomovics, Cardiff North CLP

'THE South Wales miners will support Tony Benn for deputy of the Labour Party and Arthur Scargill for NUM president,' declared Emlyn Williams, president of the South Wales miners to an audience of several thousand at last weekend's miners' gala.

A march to the rally was headed by the lodge banners of Tower, Penrhiwceiber and Maerdy, representing a century of historical struggles.

Will Paynter, veteran NUM leader, spoke to the youth in the audience: 'You must learn to understand this capitalist system and how to replace it with a socialist alternative one. It is not enough to take part in marches, the 1930s hunger marchers didn't change capitalism.'

Emlyn Williams echoed this sentiment: 'The TUC has the task of fighting mass unemployment; if they think only marches will defeat the

Tories they are in for a shock.' Referring to six South Wales pits which had not received any capital investment since February he said this was 'a slow strangulation by the government and the National Coal Board.'

Des Duffield, vice president of South Wales NUM argued: 'The miners have shown that this government is not invincible. It can be defeated by the organised force of the working class.'

While many miners were present at the gala from other areas there were few Labour Party banners present. It was left to Neil Kinnock MP to



speak for the Labour Party to the heckling of the miners calling for support for Tony Benn.

Kinnock claimed that the only way to shatter this 'rich scroungers and petty scabs' government was to unite on policies. But he was unable to answer the heckling miners who demanded to know which policies and which leader could do the job of finishing off the Tories.

Computer workers job threat

By Rita Mitchell, secretary of Manchester joint union committee, ICL West Gorton

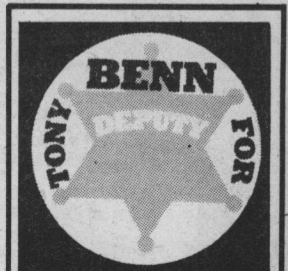
The recent announcement of 5,200 redundancies at ICL is seen by the workers as a further step towards the death of the British computer manufacturing industry. The joint unions have voted to reject the redundancies and are pledged to fight.

It is clearly seen as a fight on two levels. First against the management whose overall plan is to get rid of its manufacturing base in Britain and transfer production to South Africa.

Secondly against the actions of this Tory government which have been a major factor in the problems of the ICL. It sold off the National Enterprise Board shareholding, then discontinued the procurement policy (an agreement that any government installation buying a computer would give preference to ICL machines).

The long wrangles over the contract for the PAYE computer have contributed to the loss of confidence in ICL and its products. The joint unions feel that the recent £200m loan guarantee to the company was conditional on

these redundancies being made. They are determined to follow the lead given by the Gardner's workers who fought their management over redundancies and won.



Tony Benn for Deputy — 'The fastest selling badge on the People's March, (Morning Star, 1 June). You too can have a copy of this hot property for just 20p (plus 11½p postage).

Give-away bulk rates are available. Write to: Islington Research Group, c/o PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Walsall Tenants fight increases

By Chris Palmer

20,000 council house tenants in Walsall have been refusing to pay the £3.25 per week rent increase due from 1 April. The increase, imposed by Michael Heseltine, Tory Secretary of State for the Environment, followed the withdrawal of a loan repayment grant which left the Borough Housing Revenue Account over £6 million short.

The Labour-controlled council declined to directly confront the Tories over this issue, fearing to make themselves into another Clay Cross.

Instead, the 34 Labour councillors, led by council leader Brian Powell, and Dave Church, chairperson of the Housing Committee, called meetings of tenants on the council estates.

On 5 February a meeting of Walsall council tenants decided that the fight was on — but that it should be a fight involving the 5 million council tenants throughout the country.

Their plan was not to make it a local battle but a national one in which Walsall could take the lead.

To rally support locally for its decision to recommend its members to refuse to pay the increase, the tenants' association organised a 500-strong demonstration on 14 March.

The build up to the rent strike culminated in a mass lobby of the House of Commons on 25 March. Where over 500 tenants and 15 councillors were present to hear David Winnick, Walsall North MP, explain how the rent increases were only one part of the Tories' attacks on working people. 'I know your anger is directed at the Tory government,' he said to the cheers of the tenants.

But the Walsall tenants cannot hope to defeat the Tories on their own, even though support amongst the tenants has stayed solid. The fight has to be taken up nationally.

As Don Brayford, president of the tenants' says, 'In every part of the country tenants' organisations should convene public meetings. Heseltine should be flooded with further demands to meet tenants from all parts of the country. There must be no let up in pressure.'



Anti Royal Wedding Badge.
Red and black on white 20p each plus s.a.e. 15p for orders of 10 or more (postage included)
From Toast the Royal Couple, c/o Birmingham's Other Bookshop, 137 Digbeth, Birmingham B5 6DR
Cheques payable to Birmingham's Other Bookshop

Scottish Nationalists turn left

By Bill Loxton

A RADICAL left turn was taken by the Scottish National Party (SNP) at their recent national conference in Aberdeen. The conference voted for a campaign of civil disobedience against unemployment, for withdrawal of Scotland from NATO and for unilateral disarmament.

The conference also gave a rapturous reception to strikers from the Lee Jeans occupation in Greenock. Jim Fairlie told the conference from the platform: 'Let us remind the interested parties that before they throw these women out of the fac-

tory they will have to pass the SNP.'

This new left shift reflects a desire of the party rank and file to get away from the 'Tartan Tories' image which proved so disastrous in the 1979 election. It has been led by the '79 Group which includes former Scottish Labour Party leader, Jim Sillars, and Margo McDonald.

The strategy of this group is to push for Scottish independence and left wing policies as the method of building the SNP. Such a move would include SNP involvement in campaigns like CND and against unemployment, and possibly an attempt to build a base inside the trade unions.

The left/right battle in the SNP was shown in the elections for leadership posts. Jim Sillars was elected on to the executive as vice-

chair for policy along with a number of other left wing members. And after 5 recounts SNP parliamentary leader Donald Stewart was defeated by William Wolfe in the election for party president.

Up to now the SNP has always been seen as a bit of a 'joke party' and rightly so. Its mixture of romantic sentimentality and divisive nationalism has been decisively rejected by the Scottish working class.

But with the growing social and economic crisis in Scotland, the appalling record of the Scottish TUC in fighting unemployment, and the impotence of the Labour-controlled groups in the big towns, there is a real danger that this new radical SNP could see a resurgence of popular support.

Save Mike Cooley's job

By Pete Rosner

BLATANT victimisation — that's the only way to describe it. Mike Cooley, a leading trade unionist at Lucas Aerospace Willesden, has been informed by letter that he is sacked.

As a member of the Lucas Aerospace Combine shop stewards committee Mike helped draw up the famous Lucas Plan for Socially Useful Products — a fighting alternative to management's plans for large-scale redundancies. He is a TASS representative at his site, a member of the TASS national negotiating committee at Lucas, and a past president of his union.

The sacking took place after management broke a union agreement and told

Mike his engineering job at the restructured Willesden site was gone. They offered him a personnel job instead to prevent him carrying out effective union work. When he refused that job he was sacked. TASS has given him official backing.

Mike explained to Socialist Challenge that his victimisation was part of a concerted crackdown by the company, who recently sacked an APEX representative at Liverpool who was only

reinstated after industrial action.

Lucas management are extremely hostile to Mike's ideas on technology and disapprove of the links he and the Combine committee have with the Centre for Alternative Industrial and Technical Systems (CAITS). They have objected to his taking unpaid leave for research activity.

Stakes

Mike believes that a fundamental issue of freedom of expression is at stake in his victimisation — the right of trade unionists to time for study



to enrich their movement with ideas and information. Mike Cooley's job must be saved!

Send messages of support to: Ken Gill, AUEW TASS, Onslow Hill, Little Green, Richmond, Surrey; and to Mike Cooley's representative: Phil Asquith, 138 Ludgate Harle Skye, Burnley, Lancs.

Edinburgh Women's Festival

By Ros Young and Jo Black

AFTER two years of Tory misgovernment, women have had enough and we are fighting back!

Women occupying the Lee Jeans factory in Greenock to defend their jobs and a woman's right to work are giving a lead to the Scottish working class and showing the way forward in the fightback against the Tories.

The strength of their struggle comes not only from their own determination, but, as with our victory in the campaign against the anti-abortion Corrie Bill, from the massive support of the labour movement.

The Festival for Women's Rights Against Tory Attacks in Edinburgh on 20 June is part of this fightback. It will be a focus for women from the labour movement and women's organisations to celebrate our past victories, to exchange ideas and to discuss plans of action for the future.

Themes

The main themes of the festival are a women's right to work; a women's right to choose — abortion and contraception in Scotland; women against



the war drive; violence against women; Ireland; and women against racism and fascism.

We will also have films, videos and exhibitions on these themes, theatre groups, bands, a disco and activities for the children.

We hope this festival will contribute towards the growing movement to get rid of the Tory government and the fight to ensure the next Labour government is fully committed to policies that will defend and extend women's rights.

PROGRAMME

Edinburgh

Venue: Trades Council and Playhouse

Top of Leith Walk

Solidarity march with Nasira Begum and Cynthia Gordon

WEST Indian and Asian women led a 1,000 strong march in Manchester on 6 June chanting 'Come what may we're here to stay'.

The march was called to protest against the threatened deportations of Nasira Begum and Cynthia Gordon. There were contingents from their defence committees and those of Jaswinder Kaur and Nasreen Ahtar; the Asian Youth Movement, and Socialist Challenge.

Also present were three constituency Labour Parties — Manchester Ardwick, Mossdale and Liverpool Wavertrey.

Trafford and Bolton trades councils sent delegations along as did white collar unions NALGO and ASTMS and the National Union of Seamen.

Men: a licence to kill?

By Tessa van Gelderen

GORDON Asher strangled his wife, carried her body to his car and buried it under a half-built by-pass. But he walked from the courts a free man because his wife had 'cheated' him by taking two lovers.

Handing out a six month suspended sentence the judge told Asher, 'You have suffered enough'. The *Daily Star* (9 June) described Asher as 'the tortured husband' while the *Daily Express* called him 'long suffering'.

Another husband was not quite so lucky when he killed his wife. Robert Anderson was jailed for two years after he was found guilty of manslaughter (pronounced man's laughter?) on the grounds of diminished responsibility.

But, like Gordon Asher, Anderson's wife was to blame for her own demise. She had after all refused to have sex with him for three months.

It was, therefore, understandable that when Anderson lost 'control, he lost it in a catastrophic way', as his defence put it.

Mind you he did seem to have gained enough control after the 'frenzied killing' (*Daily Star*, 10 June) to visit friends in clubs in Bristol.

But while women's lives are clearly expendable, and women are obviously to blame for the violence men subject them to, it's worth remembering June Grieg.

She is still serving a six-year prison sentence, imposed nearly two years ago, for killing her violent husband. Exposed to years of battering, she lived a life of hell.

Yet the appeal judges rejected the argument that she acted in self-defence. They said that 'there were various expedients open to a woman regularly subjected to rough treatment by her husband, but a licence to kill was not one of them.'

Yet a man whose pride is hurt presumably does have a licence to kill.

Re-instate Susan Shell

By Jamie Gough

SUSAN Shell has been sacked from her job in a home for young women by the Labour-controlled London Borough of Barking. The reason is purely and simply that she is a lesbian.

When Susan admitted she was gay the Director of Social Services asked her to resign and, when she refused, sacked her. This decision has been upheld by the council's Appeal Committee.

In Susan's last job, with Brentwood council, she was refused promotion because she was a lesbian. Barking have said that she cannot be employed because she presents 'a very high risk' to the young women at the home.

In other words, the council have decided that lesbian sexuality in itself is bad, and that young lesbians in council care must not receive any positive model or support for their sexuality.

Susan has been strongly backed by her union, NUPE, which has a national policy against discrimination. On 9 June 60 people picketed a council meeting to demand her reinstatement. What is needed is a massive response from the Labour Party and the unions against Susan's sacking. It is disgusting that a Labour council should prac-

tice such flagrant discrimination.

In a recently published discussion document Labour Party NEC wrote 'There can in our view be no valid reason for dismissing an employee for the sole reason that he or she is homosexual.'

Send resolutions to: Leader of the Council, London Borough of Barking, The Civic Centre, Dagenham, Essex; copies to the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights, c/o 10 Burstock Rd, SW London.

Campaign for gay rights in the Labour Party

ON 6 June a conference of people was held in Manchester to re-form the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights. The Conference was a success.

There was a strong feeling that there are new opportunities in the Labour Party to open up by the production of a discussion document on gay rights by the national executive committee, and by the espousal of gay rights by Tony Benn.

There was support linking the campaign to the struggle for gay rights in the trade unions.

An immediate campaign to force the NEC to produce their discussion document, the 'Socialism in the series and distribute to branches — at the moment is only available in manuscript on request.

The campaign is to be organised through regional groups, to allow maximum participation, linked by a national co-ordination committee. Membership is open to members of the Labour Party or of TUC-recognised unions and affiliations are sought from labour movement bodies. Write to Clive Bent, 1 Westbourne London W3 6JL.

Socialist Challenge

Socialist Challenge REVOLUTION

Industrial Workers Conference

Entry by ticket only from PO Box 50, London N1 2XP

London 27-8 June

Why I'm coming to the Industrial Workers Conference

By Phil Davies, Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades Executive (personal capacity)

I HAVE just been made redundant from Schreibers in Manchester, along with all the stewards bar one. We'd won a number of battles against management. Last year we fought off a management attempt to close the whole factory.

We had a militant organisation on the shop floor. But a number of the key militants were not prepared to fight the present redundancies when most of them can still find jobs in the trade.

They'd been on short-time working for months. They explained that they didn't want to keep on working for such an anti-union employer as Schreibers. What they failed to appreciate was that their getting out — even if they do find another job easily, which is likely — is that they have sold their jobs which aren't theirs to sell.

I am hoping that this type of problem can be taken up at the Socialist Challenge industrial conference. In my opinion the tasks of socialists is to map out the steps to get a government committed to the sort of socialist policies which can take the means of production out of the hands of the Schreibers of this world.

A resolution supporting the candidature of Tony Benn for deputy leader of the Labour Party was adopted by the FTAT Executive Council in May, proposed by Phil Davies. This is now to be sent to all branches for discussion and an article will appear, in the July issue of the union journal, explaining that the decision was not based on an evaluation of personalities but of policies.

By Steve Pilley shop steward, Crafts, British Steel, Rotherham

MY family has always been Labour. But I only came across revolutionary ideas during the steel strike. Then I learned that the positions that people dismissed as being 'communist' were things that explained the real character of the situation.

The steel strike showed us the real character of the police and the Tory press and showed that underneath it all our society is still divided into classes, with the bosses trying to drive us down.

When people tell me to go to Russia, I explain that that system is not what we are fighting for and explain the situation in Cuba as something much nearer to what I am fighting for.

In Rotherham, we have set up a CND group. We have a group based on the River Don plant. Many workers today, particularly the younger ones, are dead keen on political ideas — fighting Thatcher and the bomb and supporting the struggles in Central America.

To be able to discuss and exchange ideas with many other militants in different industries and different parts of the country will be a great experience.

CIVIL SERVANTS HAVE NO CHOICE: ALL OUT NOW!

By Phil Dexter, CPSA Newcastle

ON THURSDAY the council of civil service unions meets to consider the next steps in the civil service dispute.

There has never been an all out strike in the civil service. But a strike that hits the docks and the airports, Inland Revenue and the Ministry of Defence is certain to wreak havoc and hit the Tories where it hurts.

The response must be a call for an indefinite all-out strike. The CPSA (the largest of the nine unions involved) have been balloting the membership.

Although the response is mixed, the North-east, Scotland and the north of England have recorded votes three to one in favour of strike action.

The fact is, we have no choice. The Tories are intent on smashing the civil service unions and we have to win this dispute. After the defeat at the hands of the miners the government is looking for some scalps.

Defeat

Shortly after the Tories came to power in 1979, Nicholas Ridley MP presented a document to the cabinet. The Ridley report stated that the way to defeat the working class

was not to take on the 'big battalions' of the miners, the dockers or the engineers.

Weaker

Instead the government should confront the weaker sections of the trade union movement. Four groups were singled out: British Leyland, steel workers, the rail unions and the civil service.

The Tories have had some success with this strategy, but now need a big victory at a time when workers are feeling more confident.

The civil servants' dispute is no longer limited to this year's pay claim of 15 per cent with a £10 underpinning minimum for lower grades. This is now a test of strength between the government and

the whole union movement.

We are ready to fight this battle to its bitter end. And it will get bitter. Picketing is likely to become ferocious as some of the smaller unions representing management grades drop out.

Despite the Tories'

'Code of Practice' we intend to have at least 500 pickets outside the gates of our office at Newcastle.

In the last 15 weeks we have gone out of our way not to hit claimants. But selective action has not worked and the CPSA membership is now ready to play what was always

regarded as the 'last card'.

We are sick and tired of the government's attitude towards the civil servants. We want an early end to this dispute and we want nothing less than the full claim. The membership are ready to fight and we expect our leadership to act.



Photo: MORNING STAR

999 - Tories put lives at risk

There was an overwhelming response to the strike call by ambulance crews in Scotland and London last Monday. Action may now be stepped up in the fight against the government's derisory 6 per cent pay offer. Of course, the media tried to say that the workers were putting

people's lives in danger. But as Terry Pettifer, a spokesperson for London ambulance workers points out: 'The ambulance service has been under funded to the extent that lives are at risk because we do not have enough staff.'

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