

Socialist Challenge

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Throughout Europe

ONE MILLION AGAINST THE MISSILES

LAST WEEKEND nearly a million people marched throughout Europe against the threat of nuclear extermination — 250,000 in Italy, a similar number in London, 80,000 in Paris and 200,000 in Brussels. This vast turnout comes just one week after 300,000 people demonstrated in Bonn.

This massive wave of sentiment against nuclear weapons is in response to the decision of NATO to

site Cruise and Pershing missiles on European soil — in preparation for fighting a European 'theatre' war.

The demonstration in Italy was further spurred by the announcement that the Cruise missiles in Italy will all be stationed in Sicily — aimed at the Middle East and North Africa, rather than the so-called 'Russian threat'.

Doubtless the turnout had something to do with Ronald Reagan's unfortunate gaff — when he admitted that US war plans included the possibility of fighting a 'limited' nuclear war — limited to Europe that is.

But the ordinary people of Europe and in particular the youth are giving their response. They want no Cruise, no Pershing and no Euroshim!

Alliance's Croydon victory

AS PREDICTED, the Liberal-SDP coalition has won the Croydon by-election. Huge resources, including over 1000 canvassers were thrown into the campaign by the SDP and Liberals. The media gave the alliance campaign enormous publicity.

Even so the alliance victory is a huge one and demonstrates some important lessons about the trends in the support for the SDP-Liberals, and the strategies needed to defeat them.

Of course the defeat of the Tories was massive — a 24 per cent swing against them. This was a huge vote in the relatively prosperous south against Thatcher's deflationary policies. But the fact remains that the votes for the Liberal-SDP alliance came almost equally from former Tory and Labour voters — the Labour vote in fact was reduced by 50 per cent.

In Warrington, the majority of the votes for SDP candidate Roy Jenkins came from previous Tory and Liberal voters. But Croydon shows that the SDP can make real inroads into the Labour vote.

Unfortunately, Croydon was not a good test of how Labour would fare if it challenged the SDP-Liberal alliance with bold socialist policies. The Labour candidate, Stan Boden, seemed to think that the best way to fight the appeal of the SDP is to impersonate David Owen.

Boden deliberately distanced himself from the left policies of the Labour GLC, and left-wing Labour speakers were kept out of the constituency.

Putting forward social democratic policies naturally led to a (Liberal) Social Democratic victory. Boden should have learnt the lesson of Doug Hoyle's near disastrous performance in Warrington — keeping a 'low profile' on policy is not the way to challenge the SDP-Liberal advance.

John Grant

John Grant MP, former junior government minister, has told Islington Central Labour Party that he does not intend to stand for re-selection as the Labour candidate. His move was obviously pre-emptive.

Like the now-departed Michael O'Halloran in Islington North, and the not yet departed George Cunningham in Islington South, Grant was under threat from his own constituency activists.

Grant made a sickening speech on Monday night to his GMC, saying what a good representative he had been, and how he had never got any support from the local party.

Grant will probably not join the SDP. But that doesn't mean that he wasn't an eminently suitable case for reselection. He will be remembered as the Treasury junior minister who authored the consultative document on the four per cent wage norm prior to the 'winter of discontent'.



Dorothy Prosser, family and friends have been picketing Winson Green every Saturday

Photo: Socialist Challenge

Dial Winson Green for Murder

BARRY PROSSER, a 32 year old carpenter, was remanded in Winson Green prison in August 1980, after being charged with criminal damage (of a doorknob in his brother-in-law's flat). On the morning of the 19 August he was found dead in his prison cell.

The Prosser family were not fooled by the verdicts of the two Birmingham magistrates who argued that there was 'insufficient evidence' for a jury to convict any of the three prison officers, Messrs. Jackson, Price and Smith. The regime in Winson Green is notorious throughout Birmingham. Here was a case of a cover up, one that the Prosser family was determined to expose.

A surprise change of heart by the Director of Public Prosecutions, Sir Tony Hetherington, has re-opened the case. The unusual procedure, using a voluntary Bill of Indictment, going over the heads of the magistrates and committing the three prison officers for trial by jury at a Crown Court, was announced by the DPP last Thursday. The Prosser family's intransigence seems to have paid off.

MIKE TURNER and VALERIE COULTAS talked to the Prosser family on Wednesday last week in Birmingham — only 24 hours before the surprise announcement of the DPP.

DOROTHY PROSSER, Barry's wife was the last member of his family to see Barry alive, on 18 August 1980. 'Barry was not feeling well that day. He told me that the officers had told him that if he didn't behave he'd be kicked in the knackers. Harrison, one of the warders, was there throughout the interview.

Barry seemed frightened of him, agitated. Dr Louch had seen him that day and when my interview finished Barry fastened his belt.

I could see he had no marks on his body at that time.'

Yet three medical examinations after his death showed Barry to have been beaten. The reports said that these injuries could not have been self-inflicted. Barry's brother, Trevor, repeated the evidence given in two magistrates courts. 'There were marks all over his body. He had a ruptured stomach, broken throat, broken toe. He'd been hit that hard in his eyes that he'd had a haemorrhage.'

Trevor was also suspicious that the mattress in Barry's cell had never been brought before the court and the cell had been cleaned out by the next morning. 'I think Barry refused to have an injection and was beaten up.'

The police, he felt, were worried that the warders all over the country would go out if these three were convicted of murder.

Dr Louch had testified in court that Barry's violence was confined to objects, never to people. The Prosser family were very insistent about Barry's character: 'The local police who knew Barry couldn't believe it. They'd always given him a good name.'

Barry had been in Winson Green before for a similar offence and he'd been on probation for two years. When he was found dead he was waiting to be transferred to hospital.

'His acts of violence were mainly against objects in his own house,' his brother explained. 'He was never once violent in my house.' Barry had managed to buy his own house and start up a small business.

The Prosser family believe that Barry's 'unstable character' is being used as an excuse to cover up unrestrained brutality in Winson Green prison. Barry's sister, Jean, is adamant that the courts already have plenty of evidence to convict these officers.

One testimony, however, that has been ruled out is Galvin's the prisoner who was in the cell next door. The reason given for this is his low IQ and the fact that he is a prisoner!

Galvin only came forward with his evidence at the second trial at the coroner's court because, unsurprisingly, as an inmate of Winson Green prison he said he distrusted the police. 'Galvin claims that he heard Barry shout out and that Price had a big scratch down his neck,' said both Dorothy and Trevor Prosser.

The Prosser family have been fobbed off throughout their eighteen-month long campaign to bring the prison officers to trial for Barry's murder. They've picketed outside Winson Green prison every Saturday for weeks.

'We've written to the Queen, William Whitelaw, Margaret Thatcher. We wrote to the *Sunday People* but funnily enough it's

one of the few papers now that hasn't replied. They said they'd put it on file.'

As our interview finished the Barry Prosser case had clearly hit the headlines. The press and TV were descending on the Prosser family like a swarm of locusts.

About time too for as Dorothy Prosser said speaking to the BBC: 'My husband was unlawfully killed. No-one can pay for the price of my husband's life, nobody knows what we've been through. It's been heartbreaking.'

'I discuss it openly with my children because I think they ought to know. I was married to Barry for 13 years and myself and the children have not been able to get on with our own lives with this hanging over our heads.'

'I've had people phoning, telling me to carry on taking up the case, people signing petitions, the public's behind me. It's made us more determined to carry on until we have justice.'

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

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

Name.....

Address.....

Age.....

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

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

By Davy Jones

THE CONFRONTATION between the Polish workers and the ruling authorities has reached a new stage. Following last week's Communist Party leadership reshuffle the government is trying a classic carrot and stick approach to Poland's independent union movement, Solidarity.

The 'stick' is a new wave of repression against the workers' movement as with the arrest of seven Solidarity activists for allegedly spreading 'anti-socialist propaganda'. Solidarity's response was this Wednesday's one hour general strike.

The 'carrot' is the open discussion in Poland of the formation of a government of national unity centred on the army, the Church and representatives of Solidarity.

This move is the latest in a series taken by the authorities to accustom the Polish workers to the army's role in everyday life. First, military personnel were put on occasional duties such as traffic control.

Then last month army patrols and convoys through civilian areas were stepped up. Throughout this time the army newspaper *Zolnierz Wolnosc* has taken an uncompromising stand against Solidarity.

Government spokesperson Jerzy Urban covered up the authorities' provocations by threatening Solidarity: 'Some Solidarity activists do not even hide any longer that they want a test of strength with the authorities.'

'Democracy cannot be achieved in a condition of anarchy. The state, which is leaning toward a fall, must attempt all steps necessary for its salvation.'

Arrests

The repression began on 20 October when police were sent in to arrest Solidarity members selling union news sheets in Katowice. Needless to say this provocation, timed to coincide with the maximum number of passers-by in the town square, caused a mighty protest from union supporters.

Police used tear gas to disperse a crowd of 2,500 demonstrators, and during the melee that followed Tadeusz Buranowski, a Katowice Solidarity praesidium member, was beaten up by the police.

In a further provocation on the same day 'hardline' students from the so-called Marxist-Leninist school attacked the local party headquarters at the Katowice steelworks and demanded the resignation of party 'wets'. The students dressed as steelworkers beat up some lower-ranking party officials in the building at the time.

Queues

Solidarity has not remained silent in the face of these government attacks. Some 100,000 workers in Zelenia Gora region have been on strike for almost two weeks to protest against the dismissal of a Solidarity union leader.

And in Zyrardow 12,000 workers, mainly women, have been on strike against food shortages that have led to three day-long queues for meat!

Carve-up on the central committee

STANISLAW KANIA was removed from his top position as Communist Party leader in a well-organised move by hardliners led by Stefan Olszowski. Kania had come under increasing fire from the Kremlin and party hardliners for his backtracking in the face of Solidarity's political demands.

Kania previously had the support of the centre ground in the party leadership, but his precarious balancing act between the warring wings of the party led to his eventual downfall. In the crucial vote on whether to accept his resignation moderates and hardliners alike deserted him. There were 104 votes for and 79 against.

He has been replaced by Wojciek Jaruzelski from the army hierarchy. And in the wings stands the Kremlin's 'hard man' Olszowski who brought Kania's balancing act to an end.

And in Wroclaw the following day police were called in to deal with a rowdy local demonstration against food shortages.

The local authorities responded by banning public meetings and arresting Solidarity activists. After a seven hour strike of bus and tramworkers the authorities lifted the ban and released the Solidarity members.

Using the pretext of this 'unrest' the Polish government has ordered troops to be sent to some 2,000 towns and cities, to help with food distribution, a breakdown of transportation and 'local disputes'.

And as we went to press a one-hour general strike was planned for Wednesday to protest government harassment of Solidarity activists.

But behind the scenes the government is also planning a daring political manoeuvre. The ruling Communist Party is so discredited in the eyes of the masses that they are having to increasingly rely on other institutions to defend the bureaucratic order, such as the army and the Church.

That's what lies behind the calls for a new government of national unity involving the army, the party, Church and Solidarity, as a last-ditch attempt to

prevent the workers' movement from totally undermining the present bureaucratic system.

Party hardliner, Stefan Olszowski, floated such an idea a fortnight ago and last weekend the small Democratic Party, which is closely aligned to the ruling Communist Party, echoed this appeal for a broader governmental bloc.

The aim of such a manoeuvre would be to force Solidarity to take joint responsibility for the economic and social crisis and to discipline its radical wing. This would threaten to split the unity of Solidarity and compro-

mise the independence of the working class from its bureaucratic oppressors.

The reason for all these desperate measures to undermine Solidarity is that the Polish workers have mounted a formidable challenge to the whole corrupt and bureaucratic political system. They are not fighting for a return to capitalism but for real workers' power and control over society and the economy.

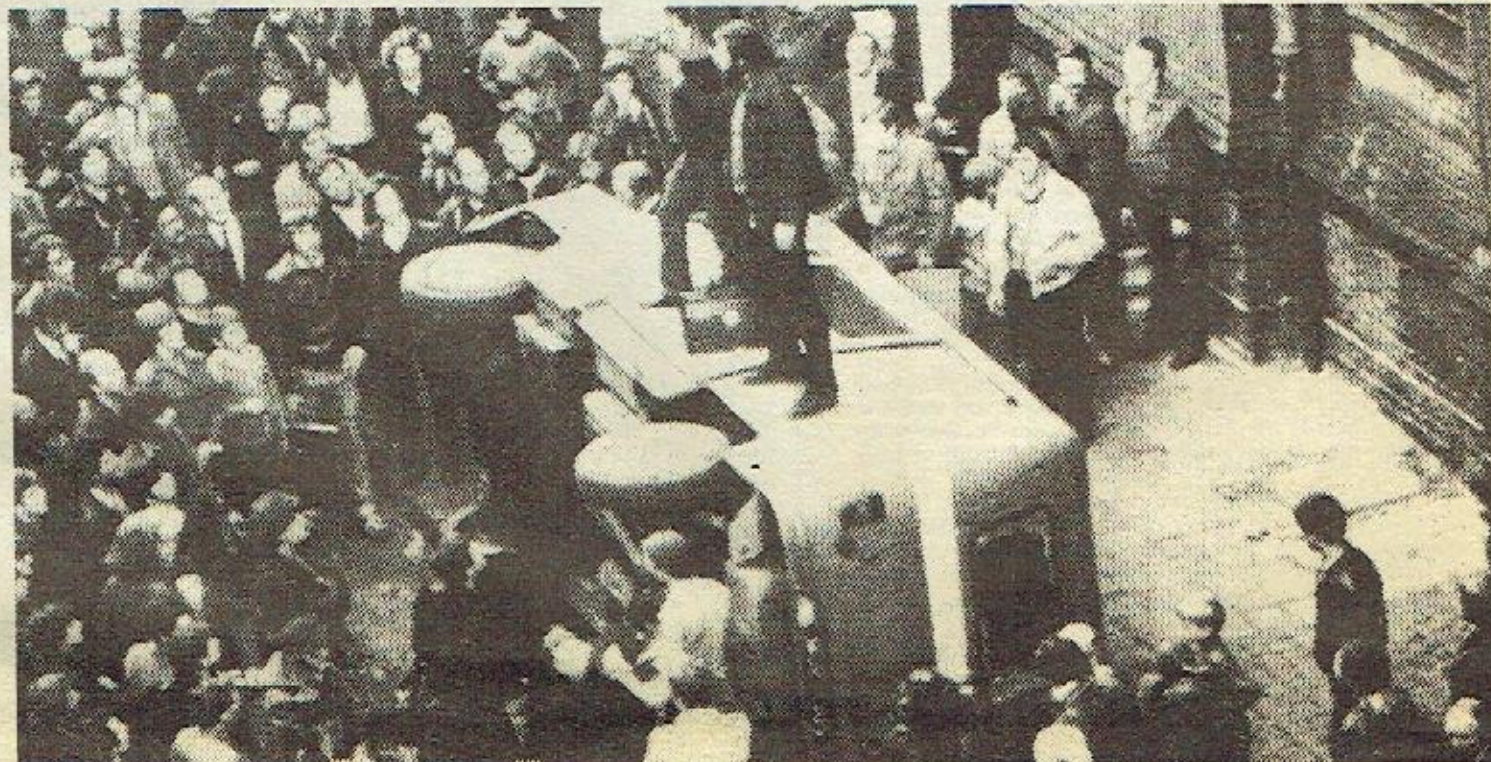
Evidence of this challenge is the development of workers' self-management councils across the largest industrial regions, the beginnings of an alternative

press to the official media, and the demands of the workers for the right to free elections and a multi-party system.

The two powers in Poland are moving towards an inevitable test of strength: on the one side stands the mass of Polish workers and peasants, and on the other, the ruling bureaucrats and the Church and Army hierarchy.

In that confrontation it is essential that the labour movement in this country gives its unconditional and full support to the Polish masses' struggle for power.

Support the Polish Workers



After the disturbances in Katowice last week, Solidarity officials appeal for calm from an overturned police van



Walesa at the recent Solidarity conference: will Solidarity be drawn into a government of national unity

What you can do to help Solidarity

- 1) Argue for political and practical support for Solidarity inside your labour movement organisations. Twin your organisation with a corresponding factory or union branch in Poland, arrange for a delegation to go to Poland from your union or Labour Party region or district.
- 2) Raise within the labour movement funds for printing equipment for Solidarity's different regions, details can be obtained from Labour Focus on Eastern Europe.
- 3) Get your labour movement organisation to order Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, c/o Box 23, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8.
- 4) Help us raise money to get revolutionary Marxist literature into Poland, including the production of a Polish Inprecor. Send cash to: Red Weekly (Polish fund), c/o PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Carworkers — the miners of the 80's?

ALAN THORNETT, Deputy Senior Shop Steward at Cowley, gave his view of the mood of the Leyland workforce at a Workers Socialist League meeting in Birmingham on Tuesday of last week. Socialist Challenge was there.

THE VOTE for strike action was overwhelming. At Cowley there was only a handful of votes against. There's little doubt that Edwardes' threat increased the vote.

I can't think of any kind of precedent for such a vote. To be threatened with the sack, thrown on the dole and then to vote for strike action, the vote is extremely important.

The workforce are quite clear where they are going. They're absolutely determined nothing can crack it. Duffy'll find it difficult. The company will find it difficult.

There's a myth been built up about carworkers over the last few years — that they're not willing to fight. But this ignores the role they played in forging the shop stewards movement in the fifties.

Because of that role and their past militancy they've been a consistent target of the employers' offensive. They've paid the price for the economic recession and the decline of the car industry.

But carworkers are still one of the most well organised sections of the working class. They control the point of production. If they stop work they can paralyse the engineering industry, affecting a quarter of a million jobs.

This year's wage round, we argued for £20 at Cowley; it was fought through and adopted by negotiators. In August BL offered us 3.8 per cent.

Bonus

A change took place in the leadership. The Joint Negotiating Committee met and passed a very hardline resolution, the one that was put to the mass meetings — no further negotiations unless substantial offer made on main rates.

Why did this resolution come forward? Grenville Hawley (National Officer of the Transport Union) was very militant at the convenors' meeting on 9 October. When a secret ballot was discussed he said the suggestion should be treated with the contempt it deserves.

As to the bonus he pointed out that it melted like snow in the sun. Terry Duffy has even pointed out that this strike could bring down the government.

So what has happened? Pressure from the ranks for more cash is great but also it's a reaction against the extreme nature of this Tory government. The draconian measures it's threatening to shackle the unions with to take us back to Taff Vale, have created a situation of dislocation between management and unions.

You only have to look at the TGWU's record with the head line '4% NO WAY!' And the executive's resolution — draw up pay claims on the basis of free collective bargaining and pursue them rigorously. The general executive council states quite unequivocally that in both private and public sector living standards should be defended.

This represents a substantial shift in the TGWU, a substantial shift in the AUEW. When did the AUEW last make a strike official in advance?

Prepare

It's clear that sections of the trade union leadership are prepared to back some struggle against the 4 per cent.

In Cowley the workforce is getting stronger. Now that the sacking threats come out, wages have become less of an issue. The procedure's been exhausted on the annual wage review.

What BL is saying is that we've no right to strike, that we'll be in breach of our contract on 1 November. If they can sack us under these conditions what's at stake is our right to have a union. 58,000 workers sacked at a stroke! Three quarters of a million sacked as a result!

The way we don't address ourselves to the Edwardes' threat is to say it's a bluff. We have to prepare for it happening. It becomes an issue for the entire trade union movement if these sackings occur, for the whole membership of the trade unions.

Logical

When the Pentonville Five were put in prison the TGWU called its trade groups out in the docks. This was enough. If the BL membership face the sack the TGWU should immediately call on its trade group among carworkers to come out and call on the rest of its members to join.

Hugh Scanlon called his membership out when the AUEW funds were sequestered. It's logical that the TUC should call a general strike if 58,000 workers are sacked at a stroke.

It's unprecedented. That sort of action would put the continued existence of the government on the line.

It's a very bad mistake to wait until 1 November. We should be campaigning now in other trade unions, and through trades councils to get solidarity. When Edwardes decides what to do on 1 November he will look at how the other unions are responding.

On the 4 per cent, those that are now waiting for answers, like the local authority workers, there's no point in them sitting back and allowing themselves to be isolated.

If BL is cracked, the 4 per cent will most certainly go through. This will give the green light to Tebbit's anti-

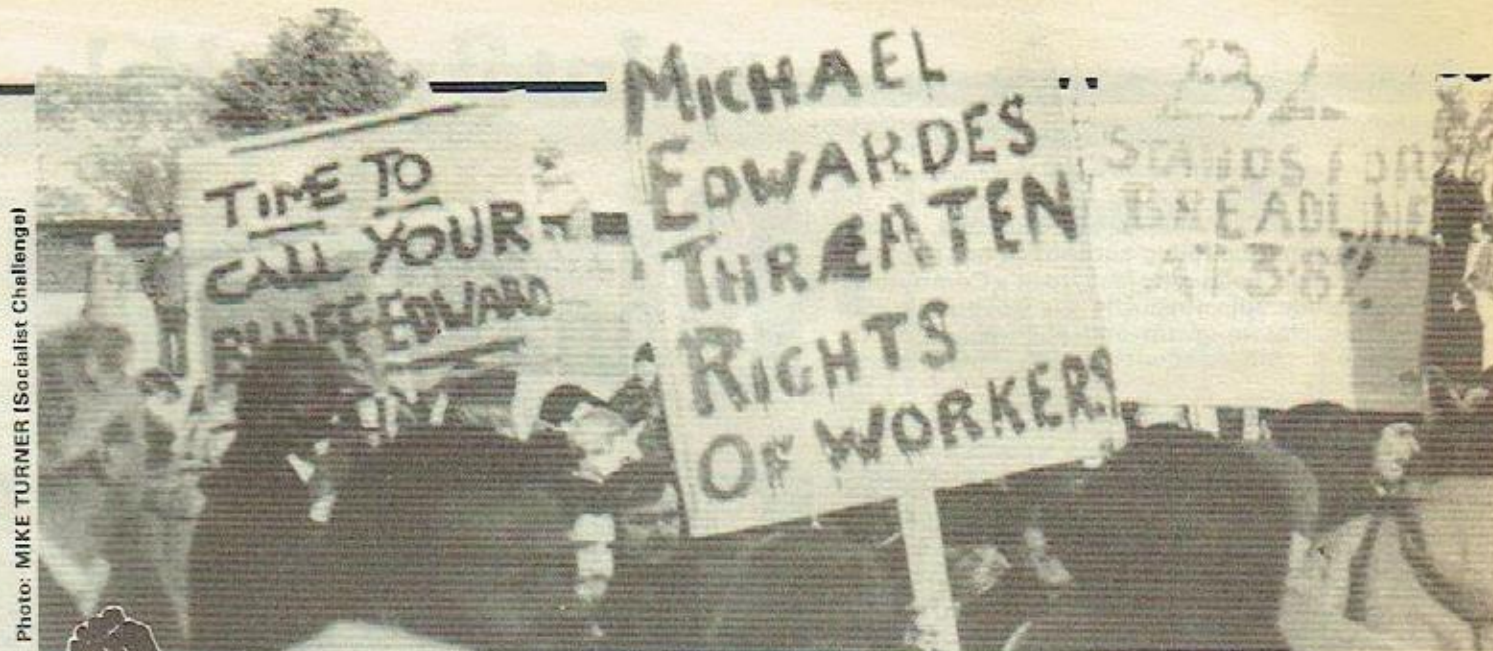


Photo: MIKE TURNER (Socialist Challenge)

LEYLAND

This week the BL workforce could be on an all out national strike for a decent pay rise. But the labour movement, Edwardes and the government all know this action is a test of strength between the working class and the Tories.

On these pages, three militants who have been active in BL for a number of years explain the factors that have led to this confrontation — and what is required now in order to win.

The result was that the workforce has been divided from the beginning and any action was rapidly isolated and defeated. Only national action could provide an adequate response to Edwardes.

But the initiative for this lay with the officials. Instead they have presided over massive attacks on the gains of the post-war shop stewards movement, without offering a serious fight.

Inside BL the shop stewards organisations have been drastically weakened by the company's attacks. At plant level shop stewards committees have functioned at a very low level of activity and many sections have had no steward.

Many of the stewards are new and in the prevailing conditions have had little chance to gain experience. At national level the combine committee has scarcely functioned

Why BL workers are fighting back this time

By Pat Hickey TGWU

THE BL vote for strike action undoubtedly came as a surprise to many in the labour movement. For the last three years BL workers have accepted wage rises well below the rate of inflation and well below the going rate.

As well as attacks on the shop stewards organisation, the workforce had accepted the loss of more than 66,000 jobs, and the ending of mutuality clauses on staffing levels which had massively increased the work load for the remaining workers.

The vote for strike action was overwhelming from the major plants. The two to one figures quoted in the media included plants which have accepted or been given notice of closure and smaller plants which have been on a two day week.

But at Longbridge, Cowley, Land Rover/Range Rover and Jag, Brown's Lane, the vote was carried with only a handful against.

This contrasted sharply with the previous three years when the workforce had been divided on the question of action against BL's imposition of wage

Duffy and Grenville Hawley recommended a strike from 1 November if the offer was not improved.

For the last three years both unions have sought to avoid any such confrontation. The AUEW has recommended acceptance of every pay offer and has even instructed members to cross picket lines; while the TGWU, at best, has said it would back plants if they took action.

and productivity deals. Many expected a repeat performance this year.

Even inside BL it was impossible to make a firm prediction. There was no doubt that workers were fed up with falling living standards and constant increases in the work rate and fed up too with never ending threats of closure.

But this had been the case previously. So what changed? The most important factor which resulted in the dissatisfaction of the workforce expressing itself to take strike action, was the lead given by the AUEW and TGWU national officials. Both Terry

trade union laws.

We have to be aware of the limits of the trade union leaders. The Miners' Union has adjourned talks indefinitely to see what happens at BL. Gormley says, 'Why should we always be leading things?' (He meant the miners not him, of course.)

The politics of the situation will be the same in 1981 as it was in 1980 with the steel strike. The trade union leaders will be prepared to have a knock at the 4 per cent, but they'll pull back at coming out together.

First Gormley, then Fisher will be likely to back down. We've got to go into all the unions now, bring the review dates forward, take on the arguments about the SDP. Some of the right-wing are arguing that it would've been alright to take on the Tories last year but now we've got the SDP.

We're soon going to be told that we've got to keep the Tories in office to keep the SDP out! I think we've got a good chance of winning the arguments now.



Photo: John Sturrock (Report)

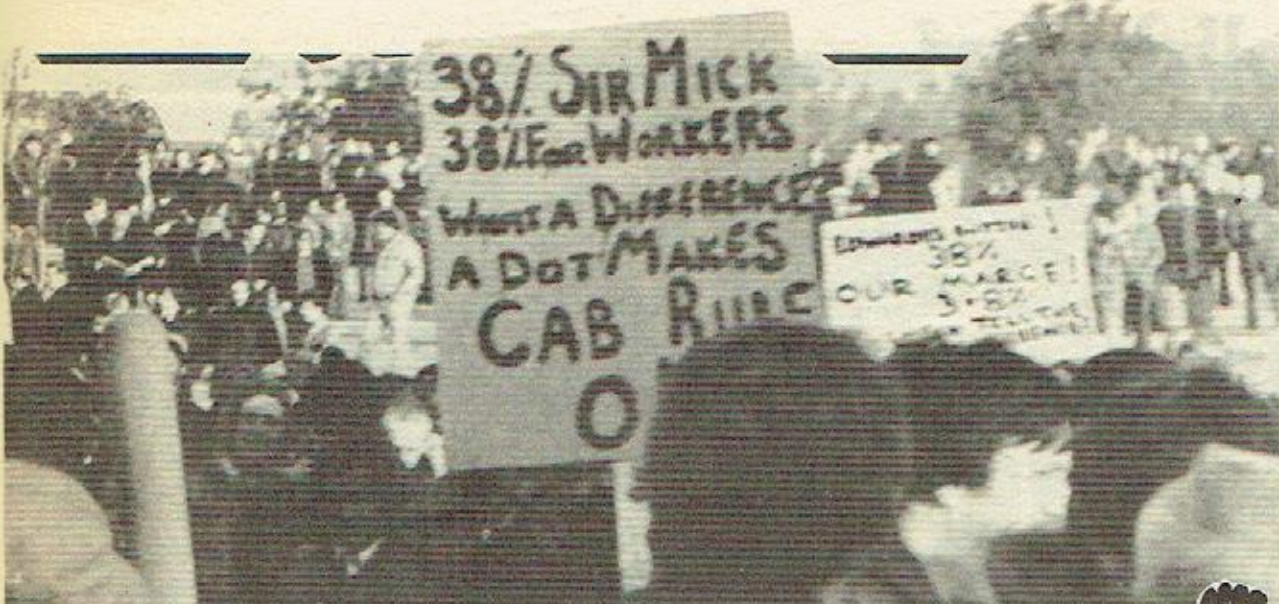
Alan Thornett

and the leading convenors have done little to pull any effective national organisation together.

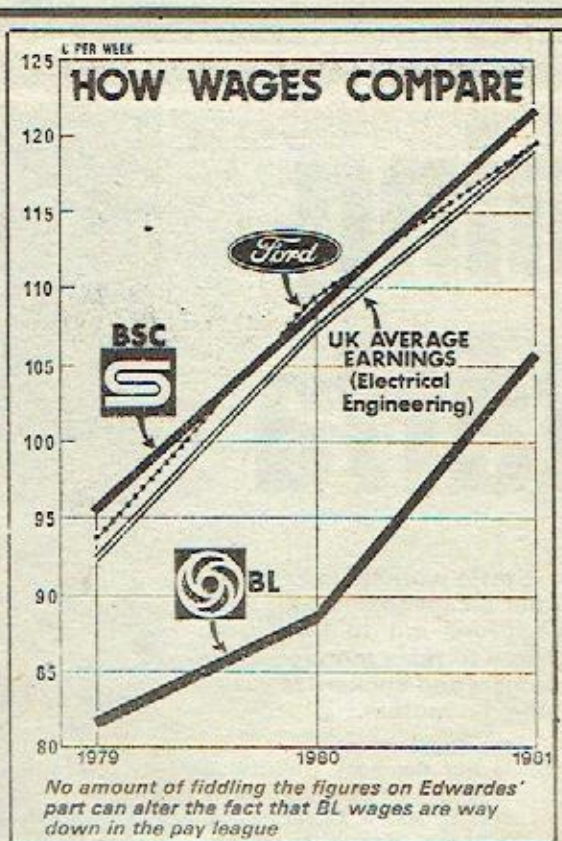
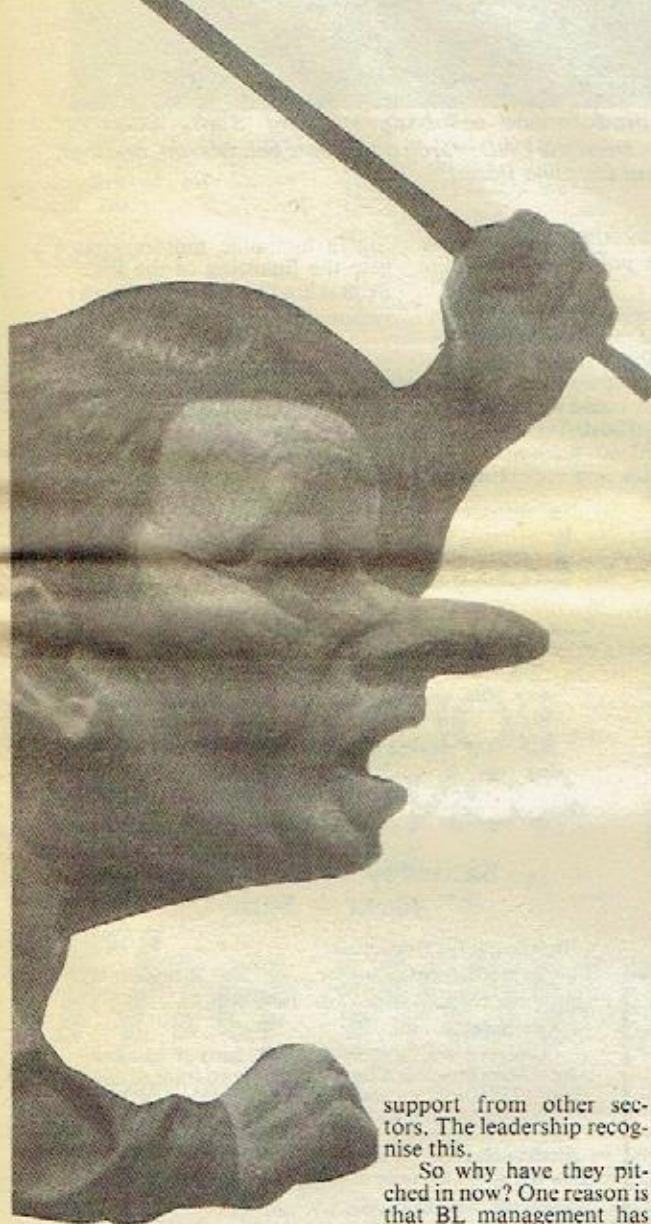
The result has been that the leadership is firmly in the hands of the officials at this stage. And here lies the danger: a strike at BL will have great political significance.

It challenges the Tories at the sharpest point of their attacks on the working class. Any significant concession will represent a serious weakening of the government's policy.

If the dispute is to be won, it will require huge resources from the union and, most particularly,



AND



posed a serious counterpoint. It's important we have this type of co-ordination and communication. Edwardes is able to use plants as guinea pigs, trying tactics in one plant and if they work moving onto other plants. We've had no communication to deal with these tactics. We've been isolated and fear comes from isolation. It's official AUEW policy to resist redundancy, but we've seen 40 per cent of jobs lost with the Edwardes' plan. Given the right circumstances the leadership should push for occupations to resist job losses. Instead they went for the Edwardes' plan because their policies have been those of appeasement. These policies of appeasement have not worked for us because the management just comes back for more. First Edwardes said his intention was to end wildcat strikes. Now, when our strike decision has been taken through accepted procedures, he threatens the sack. The British Leyland workers have been steamrollered by Edwardes and his plan. Leyland has never had sufficient investment and has spent massive amounts on interest payments on loans. We also need a management team with greater social responsibility on the principle of Leyland as a public company to provide a continuity of employment in the British car industry. Edwardes has no such responsibility. It's like letting a dog loose in a butcher's shop. We have to have an idea of work-sharing miles removed from the company's idea. We also have to make sure there is accountability. Of course, the present government wouldn't stomach this. We'd need a Labour government. Even here we need to be mindful that it was Callaghan who imposed Edwardes on us in the first place. We'd need a different type of government with different policies. The union officials are weak because they are afraid of the link up between industrial and political action like you saw in the General Strike. The unions have never really been right since then. I cannot see how the TUC can stand back now. The tactics of Edwardes are obvious and they affect everyone. We'll be out when other workers are giving the 4 per cent the two fingers. The strike action should be made general. This is a dispute with the government to smash the unions. We cannot let them get away with it.

'It's our last chance'

GEOFF STOCKHAM, Deputy Convenor, Rover Works, Cardiff (personal capacity), spoke to Celia Pugh

THE VOTE at the Cardiff Rover plant exceeded our expectations. It was over three to one to come out on 1 November. It was a gut reaction to the tactics of Edwardes.

Our plant has always been moderate. There are three groups of workers. One group want to take on Edwardes whatever he says. Another group is the opposite and conceded on every front. In between are the majority who are shifting sand. One of the determining factors in the strike vote was that national leadership had been given. Even though Duffy's present call isn't too strong, it shows the membership will respond. Edwardes' brutal tactics have galvanised this. The company has waged a psychological battle for the minds of the members. Our task is a difficult one to win the minds of the members back. The problem with people like Duffy and Chapple is they take the easy way out, saying they represent the views of the average, moderate membership. You'll never get support for action if you don't take the more difficult road to develop the membership's awareness of what life is really about and develop a consciousness for mass resistance. It's a damning indictment that Duffy makes statements to the press be-

moaning the strike as a tragedy. If he was a member of the CBI you'd expect such statements. He's been forced to back strike action because his back is up against the wall. He must be aware of the implications of the Edwardes' style of management for the whole of the labour movement. Edwardes has a direct link with the government and he's got disciples like Ian MacGregor in the steel industry. The only way the monetarism of the Tories can succeed is if the trade union organisations are smashed to bits. The main point in this dispute is not money but industrial relations. Duffy recognises that the trade unions are being backed up into a wall and unless they stand up he'll lose members. There are also people waiting in the wings to buy up BL and liquidate parts of it. We should question Edwardes' motives with his brutal tactics — perhaps he wants a scapegoat to close us. We cannot be intimidated by this. We'd all like to choose our battle ground, and this may not be the best one. But it's the only one we've got, it's our last chance.

The other is that the Tories' proposed anti-closed shop legislation could be a real threat to the unions in BL and in other engineering companies if the unions don't do something for their members. For the leadership, forcing some concessions from BL is extremely important, for BL management, the problem is that any concession will be seen by the workforce as a sign of weakness, which they will exploit to contest speed ups and so on. The officials have said they want an increase on the basic rates. But they spent five hours talking about guaranteed bonus. They do not want this fight. There is still a chance that a deal will be cobbled together. Other sections of the leadership are carefully avoiding a general confrontation. Joe Gormley has openly stated that negotiations with the National Coal Board have been put back to avoid the miners' final offer coinciding with BL's. The Ford claim is due in mid-November and the public sector's is also due. The way forward is for all these claims to be brought together in a united struggle against the government. BL workers will be in the forefront of this process. It will be essential to develop a counter-weight to the leadership from the beginning. It will be essential for local and national strike committees to take control of the struggle and to reach out to other workers, as a first step in recomposing the shop stewards organisation in BL.

support from other sectors. The leadership recognise this. So why have they pitched in now? One reason is that BL management has become increasingly contemptuous in its treatment of the officials. Terry Duffy has made it clear that this is a major factor in his considerations.

Ford workers go for £20 more, 35 hours

By Mick Drake, Dagenham assembly plant
ON FRIDAY 30 October the Ford Motor Company will be replying to the 1981 wage claim of its 55,000 plus manual workers. The claim is a good one. The demands of £20 across the board, a 35 hour week and improved pensions, are clear cut and break down pay grade divisions. The claim has been ratified by a national meeting of Ford shop

stewards in Coventry — the first time this body has met since 1978. Two well argued leaflets from the national negotiating committee have also been mass distributed in the plants. This is all to the good. But it remains the case that the actual claim was drawn up by a handful of full time union officials and convenors and simply rubber stamped by the Coventry conference. The shop stewards actually overturned the officials' recommendation in order to adopt an identical claim in 1978. The big question is — will Ford workers fight? In 1978 our nine week strike destroyed Healey's five per cent wage limit policy and opened the way for the lorry drivers and public sector workers. In 1981 the shop floor is well aware that with 3 million unemployed and Thatcher's

four per cent things are more difficult. In addition most Ford plants have been slaughtered by short time working for the last eighteen months. Due to the lack of direction and fight from the plant and national union leaderships over short time working, more people are taking voluntary redundancy now than a year or so ago. However, the biggest and most decisive plants — the Body and Assembly Plants at both Dagenham and Halewood — have not suffered short time. Halewood has the new Escort which has sold faster across the world than any car in Ford's history. And Dagenham is currently being re-equipped for the launch of the car which will replace the Cortina. In addition, Ford UK is still making money, which is being used to prop up the near bankrupt Ford USA.

The major responsibility of stewards and plant leaderships is, therefore, to convince the shop floor that the claim can be won. It has to be pointed out that two weeks of determined strike action by Halewood workers earlier this year destroyed the company's disciplinary code; that Dagenham lorry drivers have fought to work, despite official sabotage; that Dagenham press shop workers are currently blocking the shipping abroad of 20 stamping dies which threaten hundreds of jobs. We have the power to win and we won't be fighting alone. Leyland workers are facing the government head on. Miners, lorry drivers and tanker drivers are all lined up with big claims. The job of our national officials is to pull these together into a common onslaught against Thatcher's four per cent.

Winning at Staffa

By Toni Gorton

NOW four weeks on strike Staffa workers in East London have mounted a 24-hour picket to save 390 jobs. And they have sent delegations out to the labour movement across the country to raise money for the strike fund and to get the miners and dockers to put an embargo on the Staffa hydraulic motors.

According to a spokesperson for the shop stewards committee they met with a 'fantastic' and 'unbelievable' response from the miners in South Wales in particular.

In addition to these basic forms of winning support for their strike, the Staffa workers also aim to win the Labour Party, at London and national level, to make Staffa a focus for the fight to save inner city jobs.

The street fighting that took place in the big cities over the summer exposed the deep rage of the young in particular about their no-hope future.

Michael Heseltine, Minister of the Environment, who led a government team investigating the Toxteth riots urged the recent Tory conference to rebuild the inner cities with government cash to tackle the horrors

of unemployment.

But the Tory government continues to offer the Staffa management a £4.5m relocation grant to move the plant to Plymouth.

When the original announcement was made in June about the closure of the Leyton plant, the workers approached the Labour-controlled Greater London Council who promptly offered to match the government grant to keep the company in Leyton.

The company refused to accept the GLC offer because, as was revealed in secret documents discovered during the sit-in, it would be more profitable to locate the company in Plymouth — labour costs could be reduced and the strength of the two unions, the AUEW and ASTMS could be broken.



Socialist Challenge supporters in East London helped Staffa workers produce and sell badges saying 'Staffa Stays in Leyton'. Here Tina, an ASTMS member helps bring in part of the £700+ from the CND march on 24 October. Martin, another ASTMS member felt particularly pleased at having sold badges to Tony and Caroline Benn.

Hackney North MP, Ernie Roberts, has already asked a question in parliament about the sense of providing millions of pounds to move Staffa to Plymouth in view of the inner-city crisis.

The Staffa joint shop stewards committee approached their local MP, Bryan Magee, to organise a meeting

with Labour MPs to launch a national campaign against the government's relocation plans.

Magee refused on the grounds that it was up to their unions to run their dispute.

However, various GLC councillors are discussing with the Staffa JSSC the possibilities of such a campaign and on Tuesday 3 November there will

be a full meeting of the GLC to debate a policy statement on Staffa.

Getting the backing of the GLC and the Parliamentary Labour Party for a vigorous national campaign to block the Tory grant could mean victory for the Staffa strikers.

It could aid the campaign to stop the sale and movement of

Staffa hydraulic motors, and help the financing of the strike by making the Staffa dispute a national byword.

Send all messages of support, donations and telegrams to Chris Newson, AUEW Strike Committee, 39 Somers Road, Walthamstow E17. Tel 01-539 0886.

Staffa campaign swings into action

By Toni Gorton

In the POEU

Socialist Challenge supporters in the Post Office Engineering Union report that the London City branch gave £400 to the Staffa strike fund.

Brother Binnie, a West Indian steward on the night shift at Staffa, won the branch by his clear account of the management's actions in shutting the Staffa factory in Leyton.

Not only did the branch give £400 but it is sponsoring a young Staffa worker to go on the TUC's Jobs Express during November.

Full of enthusiasm, the branch will produce material explaining the dispute and asking for workplace collections from its 3,500 members.

It decided to make the union office available to the Staffa workers to produce publicity and a strike bulletin and will also campaign for support for Staffa at national and regional level of the POEU.

During the meeting, officers and members said why the Staffa fight against closure was especially important for POEU members.

Staffa was the first workforce in London to say no to redundancy and no to the Tories; no to their bosses' stripping their factory of 390 jobs in the move to Plymouth; and no to their Tories, whose relocation grants allow firms to strip inner city areas of jobs, making millions of pounds in the process.

The secretary explained that Staffa could only win if it had the strength of the organised trade union movement behind it and therefore the branch had to put its resources at its disposal.

London City branch is prepared to ask sister unions to support Staffa by putting an embargo on Staffa products but felt that a call from the engineering union involved, the AUEW, was a more effective way to ensure success.

In the TGWU

The East London Coordinating Committee of the Transport and General Workers Union meeting on 25 October unanimously agreed to circulate all affiliated branches with the Staffa appeal.

However, during a discussion on getting an embargo put on Staffa products, the chairperson of the No 1 Region, Road Transport and Commercial Section, reported that no official union approach has so far been made concerning the firm and drivers who removed the hydraulic motors from the premises when police took over on 17 October.

Right to Work rally

A lively rally of some 300 people in East London on 21 October donated a very useful £500 to the Staffa dispute, £50 of this was given to a spokesperson from the Laurence Scott dispute in Manchester.



Check list

- Arrange a speaker for your Labour Party, union or community organisation
- Pass resolutions of support especially directed to the national executive committees of ASTMS and AUEW
- Take collections wherever possible using the official collection sheets with the union stamp
- Plan fundraising events
- Sell badges — Staffa stays — order from Chris Newson AUEW strike committee, 39 Somers Road, Walthamstow, London E17. 20p each & 15p postage. No reduced rates for bulk orders. Cash with order. Quote Socialist Challenge

Laurence Scott NATIONAL SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE

Saturday 14 November
10am — 5pm

Application for credentials

Please send us credentials for.....delegates. We enclose a cheque/postal order for £.....@ £2 per delegate.

Delegates will be accepted on the basis of four from Joint Shop Stewards Committees and two from all other bona fide labour movement bodies.

An agenda and more information will be sent with delegates credentials. There will be as much time as possible allocated to contributions from the floor with priority given to those in dispute.

Name of organisation.....

Union or Labour Party.....

Workplace.....

Name of secretary.....

Address.....

.....

Telephone.....

.....

Please return to: W J Partlan, 15 Lines Road, Droylesden, Manchester

Creche facilities will be provided if requested up to one week before the conference.

East London Benefit Dance planned for LSE and Staffa

By Frank Gorton, trade union liaison officer for Hackney North Labour Party

TONY Benn MP is one of the many labour movement figures to sponsor a giant fundraising event in East London on 6 November to raise money for the striking workers and their families at Laurence Scott in Manchester and Staffa in Leyton, East London.

The benefit has won a lot of support from the labour movement in London, with official backing from the Leyton and Hackney North Labour Parties; from the Trades Councils in Walthamstow and Hackney; and from GLC councillors Paul Boateng of

Walthamstow and Peter Dawe, of Leyton.

Other MPs in support include Ernie Roberts, Reg Race, Ian Mikardo, Stan Thorne, Stan Newens, John Tilley and Jo Richardson.

Tickets are being sent out throughout the labour movement and people are being asked to donate the price of a ticket even if they can't attend and allow a Staffa worker and their family to go.

If you would like to come or sponsor a striker, cheques should be made payable to: Walthamstow Trades Council (Benefit) and sent to: F Gorton, c/o 37 Dunedin Road, Leyton E10.

LSE/Staffa BENEFIT DANCE

Leyton Assembly Hall, Municipal Offices

The High Road, Leyton, London E10

Friday 6 November, 7.30-11.30

price £2.50

Laurence Scott boss foiled by mass picket

By Patrick Sikorski

OVER 400 Laurence Scott workers and other trade unionists from the Manchester area successfully prevented Arthur Snipe of Mining Supplies, Doncaster, from re-opening the Openshaw factory on Monday on terms which would have meant none of the strike leadership being among the 150 offered jobs.

There are still 230 workers supporting the dispute, all of whom must be offered jobs.

The vast majority attended the mass picket from 6am onwards, supported by workers from Chloride; Salford and Frederick bus depots; SEI; GEC; Gardners; four Ferranti factories; the direct works department; and Francis Shaw's.

Gate

Only one worker who had left the dispute responded to Snipe's call and presented himself at the gate for work. He didn't get any further.

Police arrested one picket, Chris Murray, an AUEW member from Ferranti's Moston factory, and a Socialist Challenge supporter, on a charge of obstruction. The arresting officer was Superintendent Rutledge who was in charge of the unsuccessful police operation to allow management and scabs to enter the factory.

For a time it looked as if the police were going to make Chris pay the price of their defeat. He was detained for over three hours, told that he would not be allowed bail and would be kept in the cells over night.

A 'flying picket' of three car loads of Scott's workers immediately picketed the police station in Grey Mare Lane.

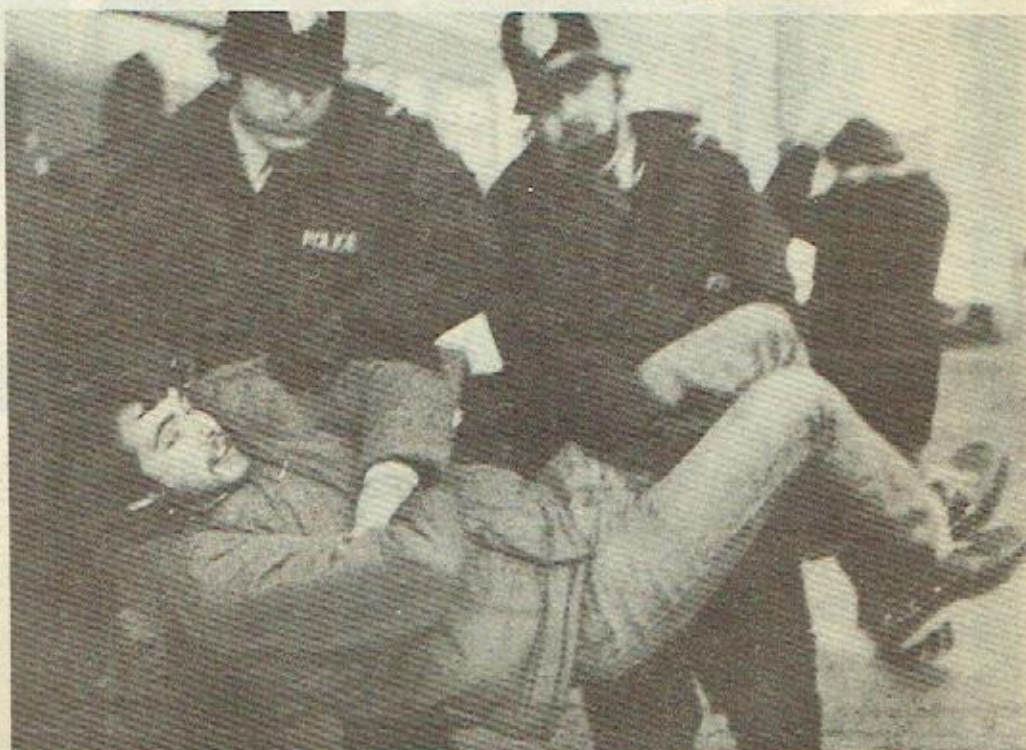
Furious police threatened the pickets with immediate arrest and kept them continually on the move, but within half an hour Chris was allowed to make a phone call.

Scott workers stood £50 bail and he was released.

Disgrace

As Joe Hobson said, 'They always try it on and if you let them get away with it you'll get your nose rubbed in it. Their behaviour this morning was disgraceful.'

After six months on the picket line, feelings against the managers who arrived to set up an employment bureau, boiled over. The police still insisted on trying to force their way through the picket lines and the superintendent had even lent



Police seize striker Phil Penning but later drop him and arrest Chris Murray

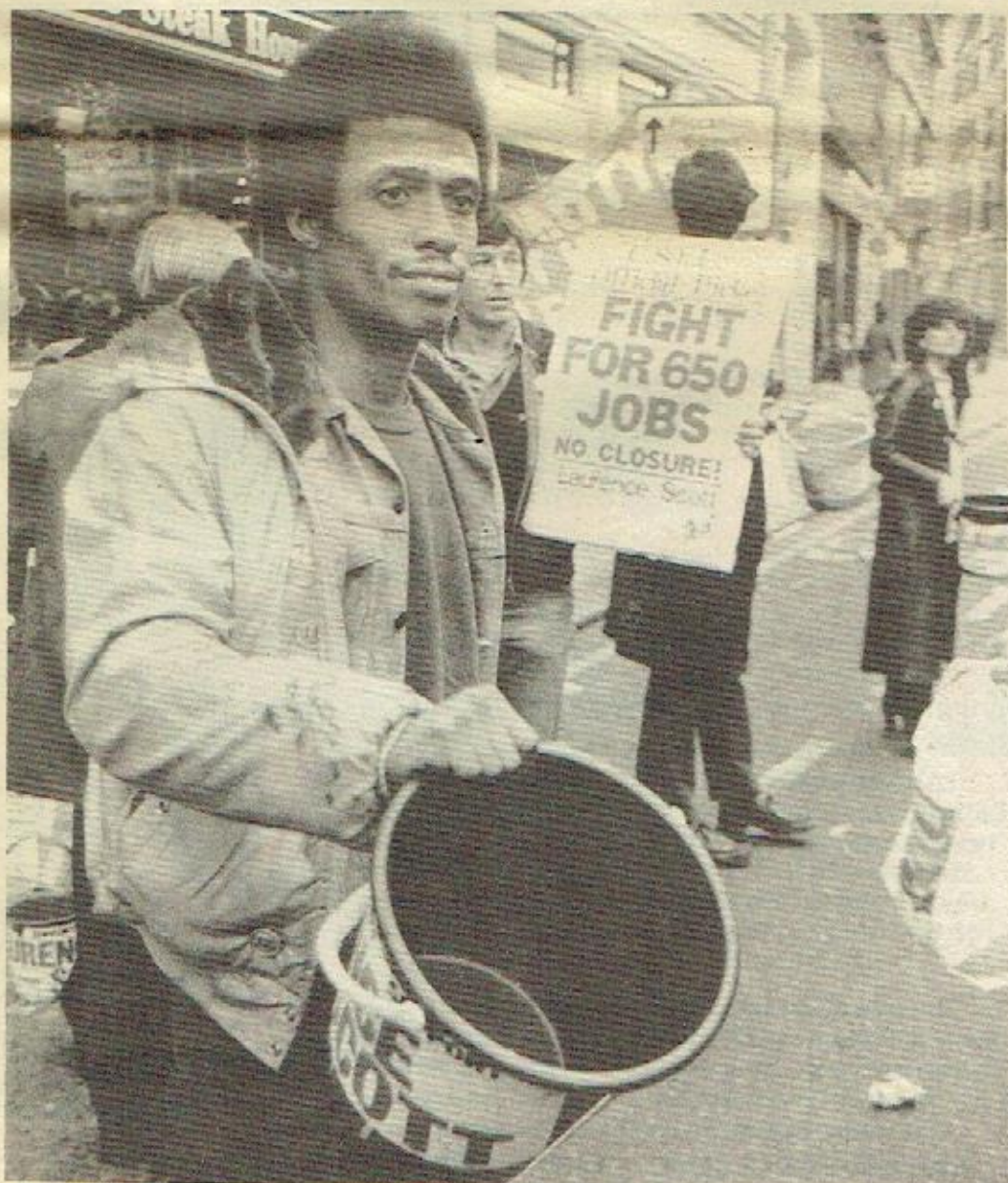
management his own car to drive to the factory.

This scotched any remaining ideas of police impartiality. Police, management and the

superintendent's car suffered as a result.

Finally the local SPG (Tactical Aid Group) was called in to remove convenor Denis

Barry from the factory entrance and free the personnel manager, Ian Lees, who had been trapped in the factory for two hours.



One of the LSE strikers at the CND march where demonstrators dropped almost £1000 into the buckets.

Union leaders attack strike and turn heat off the boss

By Patrick Sikorski

IN THE face of the rock-hard determination of the Laurence Scott workers, now in the 27th week of their

fight to keep their factory in Manchester open, the national officials of their union, and the boss, Arthur Snipe are being forced into more manoeuvres to break the strike.

If during the last week the heat has been turned off Snipe, the blame must be laid once again at the door of AUEW president, Terry Duffy and general secretary John Boyd.

Earlier in the dispute Duffy and Boyd unilaterally withdrew official backing from the LSE workers despite opposition from Manchester North District Committee and despite the normal rules of procedure. Official backing is vital to the ability of the strike to win.

The LSE workers took their case against Duffy and Boyd to the AUEW Final Appeals Court where it was confidently expected the ruling would go in their favour.

On the contrary, Duffy and Boyd refused to hand over correspondence and the court has gone as far as it can at the moment in passing a motion of censure against the national executive.

While the shop stewards were fighting the Boyd/Duffy manoeuvres, Snipe went onto the offensive, sending out invitations to all 650 'ex-employees' offering them first consideration for the 150-175 jobs available from Monday 26 October when the factory would re-open for 'reduced production'.

The shop stewards declared that there would only be a return to work when the 230 still on the picket line are offered jobs and immediately called a mass picket from 6.30am on Monday.

Two management teams who turned up on Thursday and Friday to open an 'employment bureau' were given short shrift by pickets.

The LSE workers are unanimously supported by the Manchester (No 29) Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions District Committee which last Thursday called on all union members not to cross the picket line.

The Confed District Secretary, John Tocher, who is also the AUEW divisional organiser, addressing the strikers last Thursday, made it clear that the offer of 150 jobs was an attempt to split the strikers and was proof positive of collusion between Snipe and national AUEW officials.

It is also clear that neither Boyd,

Duffy or Snipe want the factory to re-open with the strike leadership going back in.

Snipe would face a triumphant workforce and the national AUEW officials would face a bastion of opposition to their undemocratic regime.

The arrogance of Boyd and Duffy toward the democratic rights of the AUEW membership was shown when they refused to hand over the relevant correspondence to the Appeal Court.

The court said it was their right to sit indefinitely until the evidence was produced. Boyd replied that they could sit as long as they wanted.

The court unanimously censured the executive but although the Manchester North District Committee has been allowed to recall the Final Appeal Court if they're not satisfied with the situation, this can't be done until they're officially notified of the court's decision.

Who's job is it to inform them? Sir John Boyd! and he can take up to three weeks if he wants to.

It's safe to assume that the whole thing will be delayed several more weeks and in the meantime any ruling about the national officials will be a matter of history and have no favourable outcome for the LSE workers.

Every branch and district in the AUEW is being mailed this week with a letter explaining Duffy and Boyd's latest manoeuvre and calling for a campaign of resolutions censuring the executive and recalling the National Committee immediately.

Motions of censure have already gone forward from Manchester North, Manchester South, Sheffield and North London District Committees.

This will be the third time that the Scott's fight against Duffy and Boyd has been carried to every branch of the union.

Scotts workers confidently expect a big response and a new flood of financial help to add to the figure of almost £1,000 collected at last Saturday's giant CND demonstration.

Rush messages of support and donations to 20 Roundcroft, Romiley, Cheshire. And get delegated to the solidarity conference.

THIS TIME W



E.P. Thompson speaks at rally

EVEN THE POLICE said there were 150,000 there. The real figure was more like 250,000. But whatever the precise number, last Saturday's CND demonstration showed that the second generation of anti-nuclear campaigners has arrived with a bang.

The campaign to get rid of nuclear weapons and nuclear bases from British soil is larger than it has ever been — and last Saturday's demonstration was bigger than any that CND mounted in the late fifties and early sixties.

Spurred on by Reagan's statement that a 'theatre' nuclear war in Europe was quite conceivable, and the massive demonstration in Bonn the weekend before, nearly a thousand coaches and 30 trains poured into London.

It was a massive political victory for CND, and a slap in the face for Thatcher and the Tories.

The vast majority of the marchers were youth. Overwhelmingly they came with CND and Youth CND local groups, with students unions, and a small but significant minority with the Labour Party Young Socialists. The youthful character of the demonstration was an indication that this second wave of CND will not be easily co-opted or dispersed.

There were two things in an overwhelmingly positive day which were not so good. First, although there was a good turnout of Labour Party branches, the response from the unions was not so good. The TUC has adopted a position in favour of unilateral disarmament at its last congress. The mobilisation of its forces would massively add to the weight of the movement.

Second, Michael Foot's speech was characteristically ambiguous and once again hedged on the question of unilateral disarmament. He said that a future Labour government would translate these measures of nuclear disarmament 'into practical action'.

The fight over the policy of a future Labour government is crucial. This year's Labour Party congress just failed to pass the two-thirds majority to ensure that unilateral disarmament is automatically put into the next election manifesto — and it was some of the unions, in particular the AUEW, that provided the decisive votes against.

To take the campaign forward we have to carry it further into the unions and accept no compromises, no half-hearted formulas from Michael Foot and the Labour leadership. We want unilateral nuclear disarmament. Last Saturday's demonstration shows that this time we can win.



WE CAN WIN

Reagan expects Euroshima

REAGAN has spelled it out. He said he could envisage a war in Europe in which there was an exchange of tactical nuclear weapons, without either side 'pushing the button' for all-out nuclear war. This confirmation of US war scenarios will come as no surprise to anti-missile campaigners.

The only thing that's surprising (a little anyway) is that Reagan has been so stupid as to admit it in public. He was just confirming the words of ex-US admiral Gene La Rocque: 'We will fight the next war in Europe — if you dummies are stupid enough to let us!'

Reagan's scenario is identical to the notions of 'theatre' nuclear war which have been touted by Western strategists over the last five years. The scenario amounts to this. A war with the Soviet Union will start on the 'central front' — in other words in Germany.

The United States would attempt to defeat the Soviet forces by using tactical nuclear weapons. This could involve the launching of some cruise missiles from Western Europe at targets in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union itself, but not an all-out nuclear exchange between the Soviet Union and the United States. The cruise missiles would hit some military targets, but not Soviet cities.

Retaliation by the

Soviet Union would be against targets in Western Europe but not against the United States. An all-out nuclear exchange would thus be avoided.

What would be the point of such a 'limited' war? A 'theatre' war would be one in which both sides attempted to win ground in Europe. For the West of course this would mean 'destabilising' Eastern Europe — so that some East European countries, and perhaps even the Ukraine, could be won away from the Eastern bloc.

The very fact that such a thing is discussed shows that the Western powers are now seriously considering that war — even nuclear war — can again become a 'rational' method for dividing and re-dividing world influence. The new generation of nuclear weapons — the neutron bomb, cruise and Pershing missiles are all designed to be used in a nuclear war which remains 'limited'.

The victims in the European theatre war which Reagan expects are not too difficult to ascertain: Western Germany would probably be completely devastated, Eastern Germany ditto, probably large slabs of the Western Soviet Union, and — surprise, surprise — large parts of the United Kingdom? Euroshima is on the way, unless we fight it.

Photos by
Pete Grant and
Larry Herman



Where do the SDP stand on Ireland?

By Geoff Bell
AT LONG last, discussion on Ireland at party political conferences has come in from the cold. Both the recent Tory and Labour conferences discussed the issue. Not, however the SDP.

That makes it difficult to establish just what the SDP does have to say about Ireland. But there are a number of clues. For example, who gave as a reason for joining the SDP: 'Labour has achieved nothing in Northern Ireland, they were no better than the Tories?'

The quotation is from Michael O'Halloran, MP for North Islington. His Irish radicalism will come as a surprise to the members of his former local party.

Quit

Labour critics of O'Halloran in North Islington were angry that he had refused to vote against the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), and had refused to advocate the local party's policy of 'troops out now'.

But in a statement to the *Irish Times* O'Halloran now claims it was Labour/Tory bipartisanship on Ireland which forced him to quit. Mind you, that's what he told an Irish newspaper. In a statement to the British press he gave as a reason for his defection, 'the new hard left Labour Party — the party of Tony Benn and Ken Livingstone.'

Unlike O'Halloran, Benn and Livingstone have been to the fore in speaking out on Ireland.

Some might think it unfair on the SDP to suggest the hypocrisy of Michael O'Halloran is typical of the party. But the SDP's confusions, on Ireland as on so many other issues, does not end with O'Halloran.

The opinions of Shirley Williams are another example. Williams has something of a history in discussing Ireland. She represented Labour's NEC in party conference debates on the subject in 1973 and 1974. On the latter occasion she promised that the Prevention of Terrorism Act, introduced by another SDP convert Roy Jenkins, would be repealed after six months.

This lie hasn't stopped Williams continuing to publicise her views on Ireland. In July, she wrote an article in *The Times* with the bold title 'Let us shake off these policies of despair in Ulster.'

Troops

The policies she was referring to were not, as most people would assume, the existing ones, but rather 'an independent Ulster, repartition or the withdrawal of troops'.

Instead, Williams suggested, 'economic aid for the province through the EEC', and 'A renewed initiative toward power-sharing'.

The EEC suggestion was made because

Williams sees this institution as a cure-all for problems everywhere. But her advocacy of power-sharing was hardly the breaking of new political ground promised by the SDP.

Rejected

Indeed 'power-sharing' must be the most trampled-under-foot ground in the North of Ireland. It has been proposed and rejected as many times as Shirley Williams has been given space in *The Times*.

If one member of the gang of four has little to offer on Ireland, what about another one — David Owen?

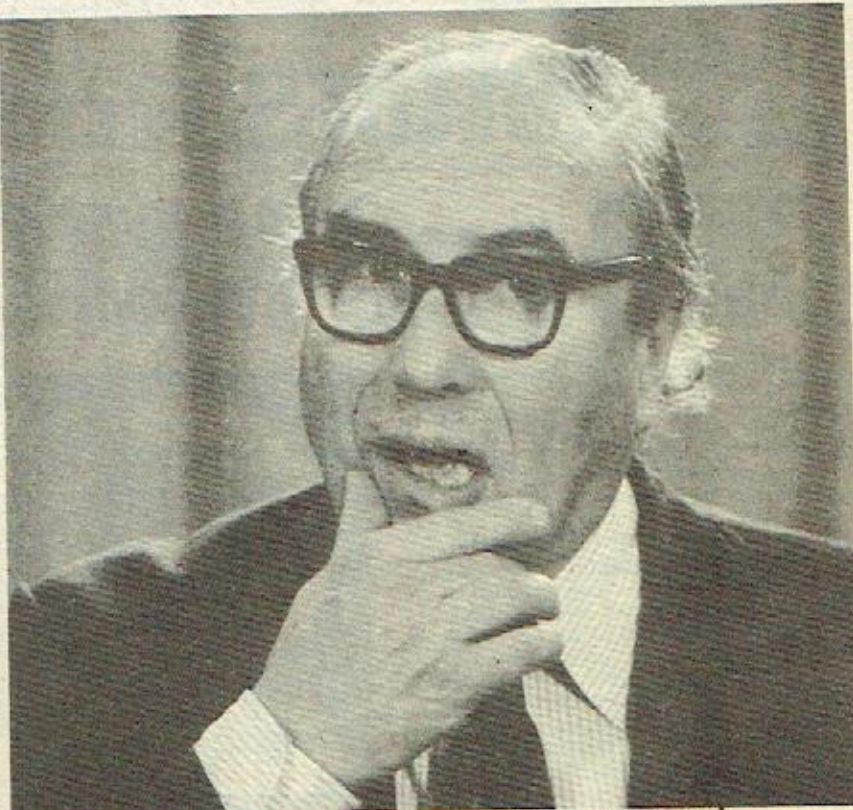
In an interview on Irish radio on 1 October he called for a 'major political initiative in Northern Ireland which would in-

volve London, Dublin and Belfast.' He went on to suggest that 'Britain might use economic leverage' to force North of Ireland Loyalists to develop closer ties with the South.

This suggestion of economic threats to bring about Irish unity may have come as a surprise to Shirley Williams. In an interview in the *Irish Times* in February she maintained: 'It is an illusion to suppose that the majority in Northern Ireland could be forced into unity with the Republic'.

Vote

The contradictions deepen the further the personal records of SDP converts are explored. There are the cases of James Dunn and Neville Sandelson. Both were Labour rebels on Ireland. Unfortunately, they rebelled in



Roy Jenkins — as EEC president resisted discussion of Ireland

different directions.

Sandelson was one of 43 Labour MPs who voted against the Labour government's deal with the Unionists in 1978 whereby the latter were promised more seats in parliament, in return for supporting

the Callaghan government. Sandelson's opposition to this was one of the few principled decisions he ever made.

Dunn's rebellion was more recent. In August, after Bobby Sands election victory, the Tories proposed to change the rules whereby no more Irish political prisoners would be allowed to stand for election. Labour opposed this move, but Dunn declared his support for Thatcher. He said he would defy the Labour whip and vote with the Tories. So strongly did he protest that the shadow cabinet decided to allow MPs a free vote on the issue.

Win

Judging from other votes that SDP MPs have taken part in on the Commons floor it will be Dunn's right wing views rather than Sandelson's

more progressive approach, which will win out.

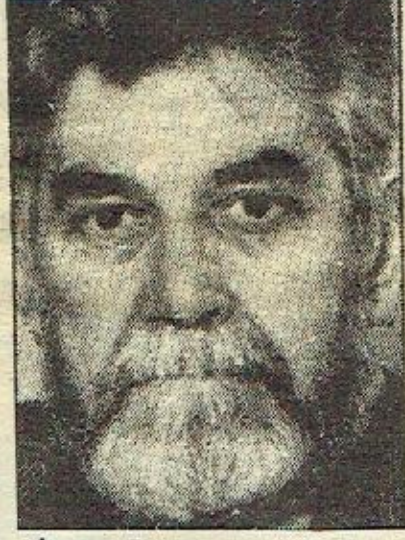
In July, the SDP voted in Parliament against a call from Labour to review the PTA. On the other hand, Sandelson is the party's official spokesperson on Ireland. Confusing, isn't it?

But perhaps Shirley Williams' dream of the EEC coming to the aid of the SDP and Britain over Ireland will be realised. There is just one drawback to such a scenario. For the last four or five years the Irish government and more republican-minded Irish MPs in the European Parliament have sought to raise the Irish issue inside the EEC.

These moves have been firmly resisted by the EEC establishment. For a considerable part of that period the very top of that establishment was an EEC president whose name was Roy Jenkins.



Michael O'Halloran



James Dunn

The way forward

Statement from the National Committee of the Irish revolutionary socialist organisation, Peoples Democracy

PD WELCOMES the ending of the hunger strike. Like many Irish people all over this island, we breathe a sigh of relief that no longer do the prisoners have to sacrifice their very lives for five basic demands.

We salute the tremendous courage and the overwhelming determination shown by the prisoners who for five long years lived with the brutality and torture in the H Blocks and who resisted the British criminalisation policy.

The death of ten prisoners and the building of a mass campaign in Ireland and at an international level has prevented the Brits from defeating the prisoners. But we could not call this a victory for the prisoners either.

The outcome of a political struggle is not always judged on the terms on which it is eventually settled. It is best assessed on which side emerges from the struggle stronger. And by that criteria there is no doubt that the Brits have suffered a setback.

A brief summary of our gains over the last two years clearly indicates this: Two election victories in the Westminster

constituency of Fermanagh South Tyrone, two prisoners TD's, (MPs) in Dail Eireann, several important election victories in the May Six County local government elections, worldwide protests against the intransigent Thatcher government, worldwide sympathy for the cause of an united Ireland, marginalisation of the Social Democratic & Labour Party because of their failure to support the prisoners and the highest level of mass mobilisation that Ireland has seen for ten years.

Our successes have struck a chord of fear among Fianna Fail, the SDLP and the Coalition. These misleaders of the Irish people are planning to strike back. The trial of the campaign militants following the British embassy riot is the first step.

Fitzgerald intends to follow this with an attack on Irish Unity through Articles Two and Three of the Constitution. His plan is simple; remove the goal from sight and you smother the aspiration. We must fight back.

The anti-imperialist movement must build on its gains. Disunity will allow the bourgeois nationalists to regain lost ground and claim leadership. There are opportunities but they will disappear quickly if we sit still or choose the wrong road.

The Way Forward essentially means: (i) Opposing the Coalition and Fianna Fail in Cavan-Monaghan and the coming

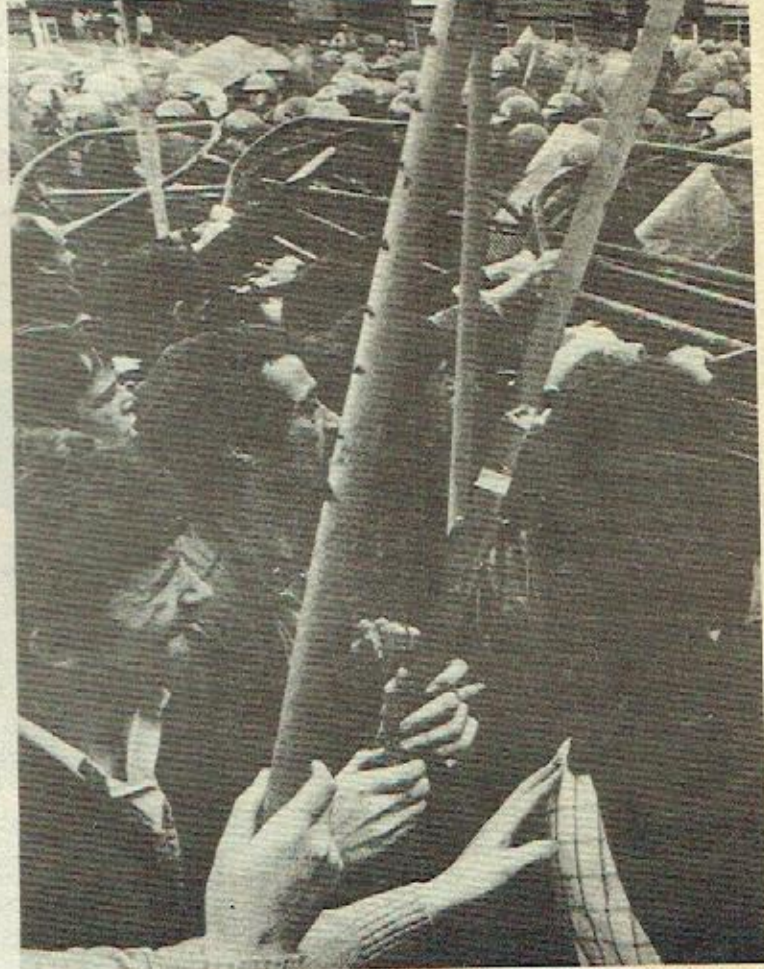
election through uniting around an anti-imperialist programme; (ii) The political defence of the campaign militants specifically the Belfast 34 and the Embassy 19 (iii) Unity against partition, organise to fight for an United Ireland.

This is the way we must continue. Relying on military activity will squander our gains. The London bombing was counterproductive. If continued it could harden out reaction and stifle pressure for Irish Unity within the British labour movement.

The energies of anti-imperialist would best be channelled into the task of bringing the greatest number of people into active struggle against partition. If we transfer everything into a bombing campaign it rules out real participation by the southern working class — the necessary ingredient to break down partition and force the British out.

Going into the heart of the Southern working class remains the biggest challenge to the anti-imperialist movement. The H Block campaign came close but not close enough.

An all Ireland mass movement of working people is the only real guarantor of Irish Unity and British Withdrawal. It is also the best defence against sectarian Loyalist attacks which thrive in times of disunity or confusion. The UDA and the UFF must be answered with the unity of the mass movement.



H Block protest in Dublin July 1981

Letters
Letter: **letters** Letters
LETTERS

CND and NATO

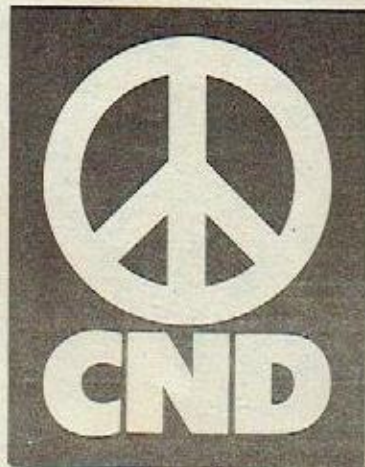
AN otherwise interesting and useful article on the problems of British membership of NATO by Rich Palsler of Sheffield CND (Britain Out of NATO, 15 October) gets it wrong, I think, about CND campaigning on the issue.

He quotes the CND constitutional aims correctly (dissolving all military blocs) but goes on to talk only about NATO. CND campaigns around its constitutional aims by linking the demand for British withdrawal from NATO to the perspective of establishing a European Nuclear Free Zone, including the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact.

I think that Rich gives a slightly misleading view of the treatment of NATO and dissolving military blocs in CND's publications. He quotes Frank Allaun's *Questions and Answers** as saying that Britain could refuse Cruise and Trident and remain in NATO. This, as pointed out in the preface, is Frank's personal view.

Even so, this doesn't mean that Frank, still less CND, thinks we should not wind up the military blocs. This constitutional aim is printed prominently on the back cover.

Meanwhile a number of other CND pamphlets (for example Betty England's *Nuclear Disarmament for Britain** and Phil Bolsover's *Civil Defence**) call for withdrawal from NATO as part of the process of winding up the military blocs. Phil's pamphlet,



PUBLICATIONS

in fact, concludes with the words: 'We are a nuclear target because we are a member of the NATO nuclear alliance'. Nothing ambiguous about that.

To sum up, I think we need to avoid the trap set for us by the right-wingers who claim that we simply advocate withdrawal from NATO and otherwise leave the status quo intact — as though creating a European Nuclear Free Zone wouldn't alter politics in Europe!

CHRIS HORRIE
Publications Secretary,
National CND* Available from CND
publications, 11 Goodwin St, London
N4.

Cuba: what are the facts?

STEVEN Archer's letter *Chile, Cuba and the masses*, 15 October, stated that 'the Cuban revolution wasn't a proletarian, socialist revolution'.

Just what kind of revolution was it then that smashed the old armed forces and the police, establishing the rebel army and a new police drawn from revolutionary fighters; set up people's militias (which defeated the US organised Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961); implemented agrarian reform, dividing land and setting up co-operatives; started centralised planning of industry and control of foreign trade as well as beginning the mass expropriation of US interests?

But then he follows that statement by saying that 'the mass mobilisations of the working class did not obtain full class autonomy ... it didn't throw up organs of workers power.' Perhaps this is why it wasn't a socialist revolution?

But what are the facts? In September 1980 over one million Cubans rallied to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Committees to Defend the Revolution (CDRs). Over five million (more than 80 per cent of the population between 14 and 65) participated in these bodies.

They organise block by block their 'social' and vigilant activities. They elect for People's Power (PP), set up in the early '70s to increase decision making and control in management and planning of the economy.

The participation in these bodies is extremely high. At one meeting I attended of CDR and PP this summer, between 85 to 95 per cent of people attended. Along with the establishment of PP in the '70s, the trade unions, which now encompass 97 per cent of all workers, were revitalised.

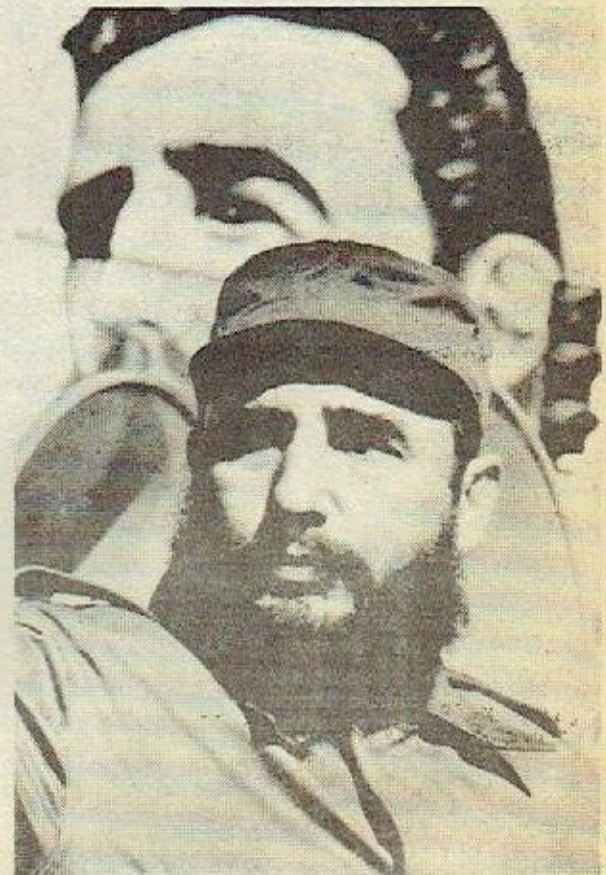
There is also the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) which organises in a similar way to CDRs, defending women's rights, leading the ideological struggle against machismo. The youth organise through the CDRs, the pioneers and the young communists.

The latest of such organisation of people's power has been the setting up of Territorial Troop Militias (MTT).

In his 1 May 1980 speech Castro said: 'We will not rest until every Cuban ... has a rifle, a grenade or mine and has been given the necessary training for carrying out his sacred duty of defending his homeland to the death.'

This was the Cuban leadership's response to Carter's anti-Cuban manoeuvres in the Caribbean last year. From the beginning the Cuban leadership has relied on mass mobilisations and participation of workers to defend the revolution.

This, together with the



massive strides forward in health, welfare and education, makes Cuba one of the best examples of workers states we have today.

To say that the Cuban leadership isn't consistently revolutionary marxist is one thing. But to dismiss it and alongside it, the Nicaraguan and El Salvadoran movements as petty bourgeois is to defy reality.

The emerging new generations or revolu-

tionary workers and peasants coming out of Nicaragua, Grenada and El Salvador is hardly going to be interested in building a mass Leninist party of the Fourth International if our programme as interpreted by Steven Archer leads us to characterise the Cuban revolution and its revolutionary leaders in such a sectarian way.

DENNY FITZ-PATRICK
London

Women and the Labour Party

TESSA van Gelderen's article on women at the Labour Party conference (7 October) gives the impression that the only discussions taking place on women's issues were those on positive discrimination within the Party and a woman's right to work.

Certainly the debate on positive discrimination was important — because women organised to successfully challenge the male bureaucrats who run the conference to force it onto the agenda.

But it is unfair both to those women campaigning for Labour Party support for a woman's right to work march and to those women who fought to en-

sure that there were debates and fringe meetings on numerous other aspects of women's fight against their oppression, to imply that a woman's right to work was a central question at Brighton. This was just not the case.

Within the conference itself it is worth noting that a number of resolutions paid particular attention

to women: abolition of the cohabitation rule and non-discriminatory benefits and taxes were in the resolution on social security, well-women clinics were supported in a resolution on the NHS, and a resolution backed by the National Childcare Campaign which called for the provision of free comprehensive childcare facilities was passed overwhelmingly.

By far the largest fringe meeting on women, attended by about 800 people, was a debate on whether women are oppressed by sex or by class.

This issue was also raised at the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign meeting on positive legislation for abortion, and on the conference floor by a woman delegate who, to applause both from the largely-male trade union delegations and from such figures on the platform as Neil Kinnock, declared that being a woman was no problem: her oppression was solely due to her class position.

Whilst this debate can easily become a diversion, it cannot be ignored. Fighting for positive discrimination in the Party and for labour movement

support for positive action in the workplace and positive legislation on abortion all require taking up the specific oppression of women within a class analysis.

Socialist Challenge should be taking up this question — not sweeping it under the carpet.

Apart from being one-sided, Tessa's article contains an important misconception — that the women delegates were well-organised. This was most certainly not the case. CLPD's Women's Action Committee managed to organise some women to fight to get positive discrimination on the agenda but that was all.

Women involved in

LARC and Women's Fightback thought up the idea of flowers for Kinnock 'for his services to sexism'. Hardly an organised move, given that a lot of women opposed it on the grounds that it would 'trivialise the struggle'.

Women managed to make an impact at this year's Labour party con-

ference, despite their lack of organisation. What we need to be looking at is what we could have done if we had been organised, rather than implying we'd already succeeded.

JOAN TWELVES
CLP delegate to LP
Conference; member
of LARC Executive
Committee

Once more on democracy

THE LABOUR left often argues for only limited democracy in the movement (for example, all power to General Management Committees) on the grounds that the rank and file are subject to the mystifications of the mass media.

Unfortunately, this attitude sometimes appears in *Socialist Challenge*. But if we can't convince the labour movement rank and file, who can we convince? In any case, resolutions passed without coming out of a mass campaign are not worth the paper they are written on.

Of course the establishment media influences the rank and file; but the answer is not to exclude them but to subject them to contrary influences. The postal ballot maximises the influence of the media.

Collective discussion and decisions help us. *Socialist Challenge* correctly argues that all strikes should be conducted with ultimate authority going to regular mass meetings of the strikers.

To be consistent with that we should campaign for the Labour leadership and the big issues (for example unilateralism) to be decided on the basis of full consultation with the membership carried out through plenary meetings of the constituency parties and the trade union branches.

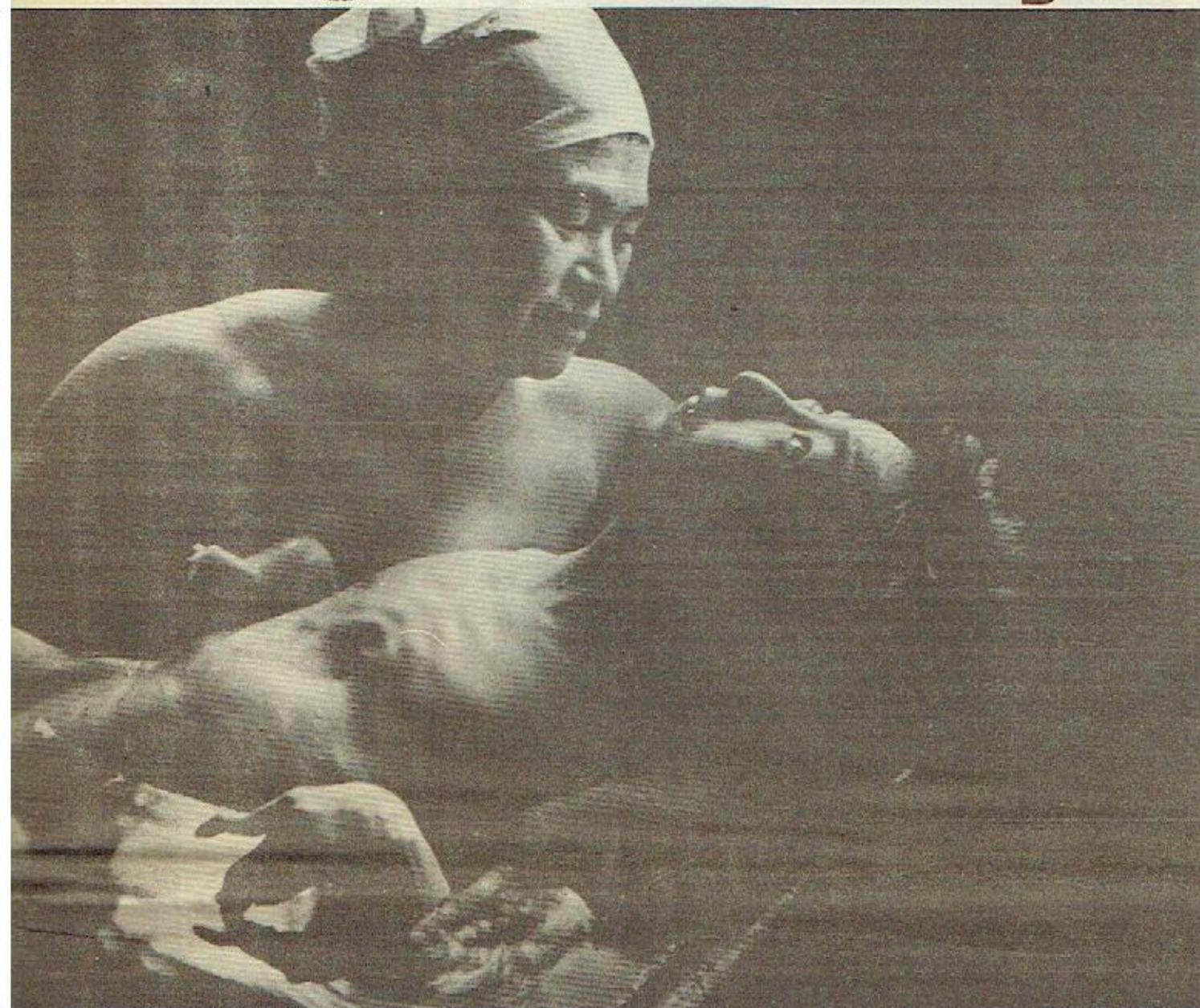
CHRIS ARTHUR
Brighton

PS It would be most interesting to hear union by union how the recent consultation/failure to consult has affected consciousness among the membership.



LABOUR PARTY

Our right to healthy children



Tomoko Uenura, born in 1956 in Minamata on the Japanese island of Kyushu, was attacked by mercury in the womb of her outwardly healthy mother. No one knows if she is aware of her surroundings or not.

The demand for 'a woman's right to choose' which the abortion movement has adopted, includes the demand that women should have the right to uncomplicated pregnancies and healthy babies.

But today, infertility clinics are reporting rising attendance, and deformity amongst new-born babies is on the increase.

The growth in these types of problems is not due to natural causes but to changes in the environment in which we work and live.

LEONORA LLOYD has been examining the new risks to health and fertility which our unequal society has created.

Lead is poisonous to children. It causes hyperactivity and even mental retardation.

Those who are most affected live in inner cities, in areas with high levels of traffic, because the most important source is petrol fumes.

Poorer children, with nowhere to play but the streets, are the most severely hit of all. The younger the children, the more susceptible they are.

The effects of lead have been known for years and its use in paint for children's furniture and toys has long been banned.

Now, after lots of pressure, the government has agreed to reduce the lead content of petrol. But the reduction will not happen until 1983 and will anyway be too little.

The reluctance of the government is due to pressure from the petroleum industry and vehicle manufacturers.

Workers using lead in industry are also at risk. Lead, and other heavy metals (manganese and cadmium) can cause reduced sex drive, lower

fertility and genetic mutations, leading to malformed fetuses, spontaneous abortions and still-births.

Workers can take lead home on their clothes and bodies and their children have higher than average lead concentrations in their blood.

Lower fertility can also be caused by carbon disulphide which is found in coke ovens in foundries and paint manufacture.

Everything that causes cancer in adults can affect the foetus. The same process that affects the adult cells will alter the composition of the foetal cell.

Whilst cancers in adults may not show up for twenty years, a change in just one cell, if it occurs at a crucial point in foetal development, can affect a complete organ or limb.

These facts are well

known, but industry and the government are reluctant to take the necessary action.

Every year some 300 to 400 new chemicals are brought into use.

The revolution in food processing means that children and pregnant women are eating foods with emulsifiers, dyes and artificial flavourings whose long-term effects on humans are simply not known.

It takes 20 to 30 years for many cancers to develop. By the time they show up, it takes extensive detective work to trace their cause.

That's why some food dyes have been used for years before being banned,

and why some people may still get cancers from them in the years to come.

Pregnant women are still being prescribed drugs whose long term effects are not known. New food additives are constantly being introduced.

In most cases, these products are not necessary. They result from the drive for profits.

Convenience foods are certainly convenient for the multi-nationals, but many are of doubtful nutritional value.

Labelling is vague, with words like 'emulsifier', 'permitted preservative', or 'artificial colouring' hiding high risk substances.

The recent history of medicine is littered with examples of these additives causing damage to health and fertility.

Menstrual disorders, leading to difficulty in conceiving, can be caused by chemicals found in drug manufacture, chemical plants, plastics and rubber factories and dry cleaning — for example, benzene, toluene, and zylene.

Chemicals can easily cross the placenta, affecting the foetus. These chemicals, called teratogens, may be present in the mother's blood because of the type of work she does.

They do the most damage in the first six to eight weeks — usually before the woman is sure she is pregnant. Allowing pregnant women to switch to less dangerous work is therefore not good enough. The workplaces where teratogens are used must be made safe for all workers.

The same chemicals can show up in the mother's milk — dry cleaning solvents breathed in by her can cause liver disease in her baby.

The foetus can be affected because of genetic factors. Yet there are less than 30 centres in Britain where potential parents can go for the counselling which is necessary for people with a family history of certain genetic disorders.

Some of these disorders are sex-linked, such as muscular dystrophy or haemophilia. Tests during pregnancy can determine the sex of the foetus and an abortion offered if necessary.

Other tests are available, and more are being researched here and in the States. But in some areas

they are simply not obtainable, because the consultants are not prepared to offer abortions!

The situation is bad enough in the West, but in the Third World it is disastrous.

Drug dumping takes place on a huge scale, as drugs found unfit for us to use are released in areas with less stringent laws. Contraceptives found to be dangerous are forced on underdeveloped countries as a condition of food aid.

When the Dalkon Shield (a type of IUD) was banned in America, it was dumped in Paraguay, Israel, India and 39 other countries. It was not only unsafe — even causing deaths — it was not particularly effective as a contraceptive!

Tetracycline, an antibiotic, is contra-indicated for pregnant women and children, but is released in many parts of the poor world without any warnings.

American companies who made a dangerous design of baby dummies continue to supply them to other countries after their use was banned in the States.

Not only baby milk products are promoted in dangerous ways in the poor world. Advertising for products like Coca-Cola gives the impression that these are good 'foods' for children, rather than being positively damaging to their health.

Cigarette smoking is also heavily promoted, without any of the health warnings mandatory in most western countries, or any restrictions on nicotine content.

Insecticides banned in the West are still manufactured here and exported to the Third World.

For example, a pesticide known as DBCP, banned in the States in 1977, is still being exported for use in banana plantations in Ecuador.

It causes cancer and sterility in humans. Ironically, most of the bananas are imported into the US.

Industry and our environment can be made safe. The knowledge is there but it is not very profitable to put it into use.

Until industry is run in the interests of all, the health of workers — now and in the future — will always be secondary to the great god of profit.

Murder trial — fresh evidence produced

THE DOWN'S syndrome baby, said to have been murdered by a consultant paediatrician, was at birth suffering from brain and lung damage which could have proved fatal.

Fresh evidence proving this was produced in court last week at the trial of Dr Leonard Arthur who is accused of murder-

ing baby John Pearson.

The Home Office pathologist, Professor Usher, who had carried out the post-mortem examination on the baby had stated previously that the administering of the drug dyhydrocodeine (DF118) was the greatest single factor

causing death.

However, when slides prepared from the baby's tissues by Professor John Emery, a world expert on cot deaths, were presented to the court, Professor Usher agreed with defence council Mr George Carmen that: 'the seeds of death, or potential death,

were already sown before birth...'

While admitting that part of the prosecution's case had been 'inaccurate and misleading', Professor Usher still maintained that death had been due to poisoning involving DF118.

The trial continues.

INTERNATIONAL
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Folk music and protest

Jenny Flintoft interviews Leon Rosselson

THE language of the oppressed has long been one of the elements of folksong. For centuries songs have chronicled the dependence of women on husband and father under patriarchy, the exploitation of landless labourer and factory worker under capitalism, and the miseries of poverty and war.

For the Irish, folk songs — especially Republican songs — have been a vital consciousness-raising force in their fight against British imperialism.

In Brittany, Alan Stivell's singing has drawn attention to the French suppression of Breton culture.

In Euskadi, (the Basque country) folk dance and song, despite being prettified and made into a tourist attraction, are still a powerful affirmation of national identity.

Those struggling to build a new, democratic Chile in the early 70's drew strength and inspiration from the work of singers like Victor Jara:

*I don't sing for love of singing
Or to show off my voice*

*My guitar is a worker ...
... for the people who labour*

Pinochet's thugs acknowledged the power of Victor Jara's guitar by breaking his hands before they killed him.

In Poland, the people have largely rejected a traditional music devitalised by the bureaucracy and left bland and innocuous.

Modern political folk music has been mainly underground; it is now emerging. In Gdansk in August a free song festival was held, called *Zakazane Piosenki* — 'forbidden songs'.

America has seen Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan and many others.

It is no secret, however, that the British folk scene is ailing — falling audiences, sexist com-

pères, indiscriminating use of material.

Political songs have thus tended to develop outside the folk circuit (for example, CND songs and women's songs — especially those used on the abortion demos).

The left has tended to concentrate on slogans, ignoring the propagandist potential of songs.

One singer/songwriter whose songs are simultaneously political and folk songs is **LEON ROSSELSON**.

Rosselson sings his own political satirical songs in folk clubs, concerts and for political benefits.

He has written three songbooks and made more records than he can remember.

JF: How would you describe your politics?

LR: My politics are libertarian socialist. My songs don't demand a party political commitment.

I don't see politics as separate from other things.

I express myself by singing political songs. I try to make people think, feel, laugh.

JF: How do you see the role of politics in the folk scene?

LR: Individual club organisers and members may be politically committed, but there's little political direction in the folk scene.

There's no consistent political tradition in British folksong — it's quite different from America.

There are the industrial ballads — some of which date from the last century

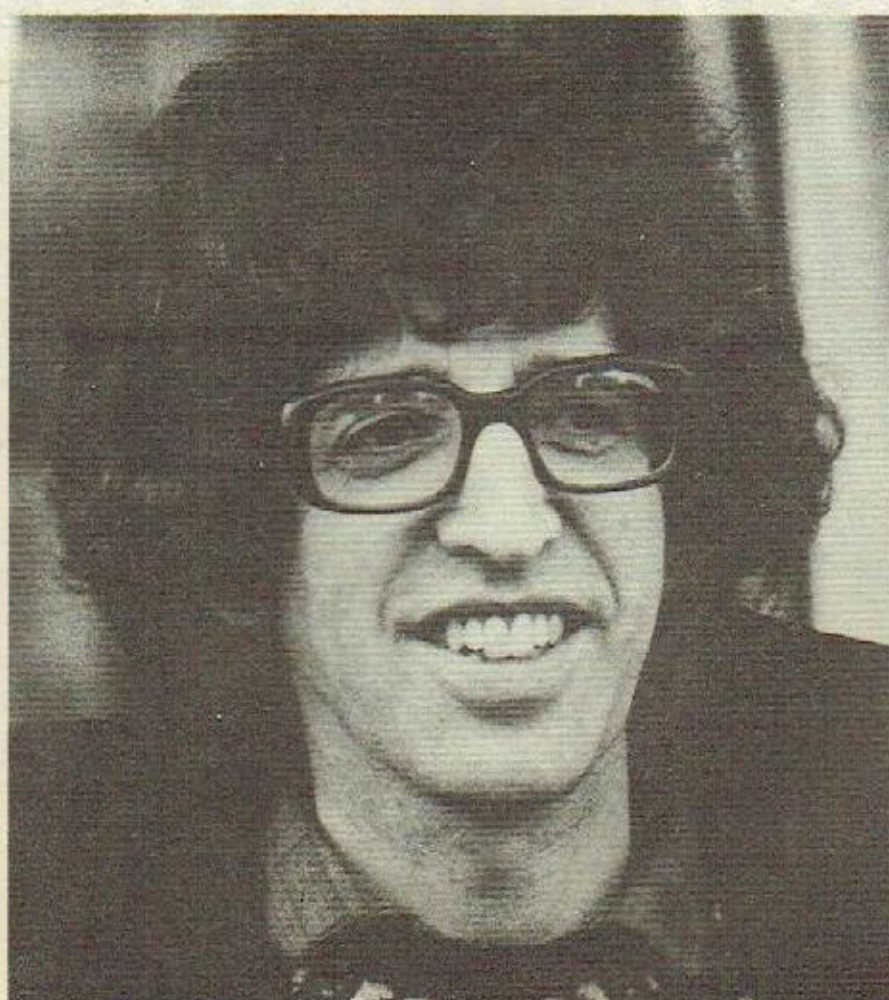


Photo: FRANCESCA PACATEAU

Leon Rosselson

— for instance, the songs which came out of the pits — but this is a small tradition.

Rural songs are more popular. Many of the songs sung around the clubs aren't really worth singing — they're merely nostalgic, or perhaps easy chorus songs.

Some songs are sexist too. Some compères and even some performers, make sexist comments.

Women, who don't normally go to folk clubs but come along because Frankie Armstrong is singing, won't put up with it — they challenge it.

The folk scene doesn't reflect the way things have changed over the past ten years — the rise of the women's movement.

I think this is because there are so few new singers, so few new songs.

JF: Do you mainly sing in folk clubs?

LR: At least half of my work is outside folk clubs — political things like CND concerts.

I sang at the Labour Party Conference — while the voting for deputy leader was taking place!

Also folk festivals — Frankie Armstrong, Roy

Bailey and I went to the Vancouver Festival in July. It was very political — not like an English festival.

JF: Your next record is about opposing nuclear power?

LR: Yes, with Frankie Armstrong, Roy and a number of other singers.

There's some overlap with nuclear weapons. But we're planning a record that will be specifically anti-nuclear weapons soon.

The release date of *Nuclear Power — No Thanks* is 1 November — it might be out earlier.

THE GOOD OF THE NATION

The state of the nation is all my concern, when I'm gnawing a crust for my dinner, I can't afford meat on the money I earn, and I'm growing steadily thinner. But it's all for the good of the nation.

The nation, the nation, the nation is in such a terrible state, stagnation, inflation, if we all pull together, we'll once again make Britain Great.

1. The state of the nation is all my concern, when I'm gnawing a crust for my dinner, I can't afford meat on the money I earn, and I'm growing steadily thinner, But it's all for the good of the nation.

The nation, the nation,
The nation is in such a terrible state,
Stagnation, inflation,
If we all pull together, we'll once again make Britain Great.

2. The balance of payments worries me sick, when I'm freezing to death in the bus queue, I'll be ice if the bus doesn't come double quick, but I know there are things a man must do, when it's all for the good of the nation.

The nation, the nation,
The nation is in such a terrible state,
Stagnation, inflation,
If we all pull together, we'll once again make Britain Great.

3. The lack of investment keeps me awake, I can hear the rain drip through the ceiling, my bedroom's an igloo, the floor is a lake, but I'm warmed by this wonderful feeling that it's all for the good of the nation.

The nation, the nation,
The nation is in such a terrible state,
Stagnation, inflation,
If we all pull together, we'll once again make Britain Great.

4. The stock market's jumpy, the outlook is grim, and my body with sorrow is smitten, I won't last the winter, I've hummed my last hymn, let these words on my tombstone be written: He died for the good of the nation.

The nation, the nation,
The nation is in such a terrible state,
Stagnation, inflation,
If we all die together, we'll once again make Britain Great.

from the sycophantic slugs
And the Coronation ash-trays
and the Coronation mugs...

Nothing is spared, nothing is sacrosanct. Few of those of us with a Christian upbringing, however firmly we have rejected it, will fail to be shocked by 'Stand up for Judas':

*Judas sought a world
where no one starved or begged for bread,
The poor are always with us,
Jesus said.*

The songs are complemented by artist Jeff Perks' striking graphics. Particularly memorable is the book's front cover.

This is a great songbook for singers — the complexity of the words being set off by simple catchy tunes.

But it's also a songbook which you can buy just to sit down and read.

'For the Good of the Nation' is also the name of Leon Rosselson's latest LP. It was recorded before a Yorkshire folk club audience and at the 'Beyond the Fragments' conference. It has five songs and a poem from the songbook plus six other songs by Rosselson.

Covering much the same themes as the songbook, it includes old favourites such as 'Stand Firm' — an anti-bomb song written in 1964 and still frighteningly relevant — 'A Question of Numbers', as well as newer songs.

The live-recording format gives him plenty of opportunity for witty introductions and asides.

ROY BAILEY's fine voice joins with Rosselson's on the first track *Let's Give Thanks* and FRANKIE ARMSTRONG, a feminist singer well-known for her work in the abortion campaign, sings in some of the choruses.

All three have been doing concerts and gigs together all this year. The next one is at the Tricycle Theatre in Kilburn on 1 November. Called 'No Causes for Alarm', it is described as 'an anti-nuclear show to raise the spirits of the dead.'

Other satirical political records by Leon Rosselson and Roy Bailey include *That's Not the Way it's Got to Be, Love, Loneliness and Laundry, Palaces of Gold, and if I knew Who the Enemy was*.

(If you have problems obtaining any of these, write to 'Fuse Records', 28 Park Chase, Wembley, Middx.)

For the good of the nation

For the Good of the Nation by Leon Rosselson and Jeff Perks contains songs and poems written over the past five years.

The songs are a blistering attack on capitalism and all it stands for in Britain — patriotism and the monarchy, religion, racism, sexism, the press, the police, advertising and consumerism, war and nuclear weapons.

In the title song, Rosselson denounces the increasing poverty of working people in this country:

*I can't afford meat on the money I earn
And I'm growing steadily thinner
But it's all for the good of the nation*

The conditions of workers in other countries, especially black workers in South Africa and Namibia, are described in 'Who Reaps the Profit?'

*We drown in the dust
We choke in the heat
Our skin grows sores
Our lungs rot ...*

*You take the uranium out of the earth
You throw the corpses in*

'Barney's Epic Homer' describes how people experience work in our society as alienating and grinding.

*Press, turn, screw, lift, early shift and late shift
Every day the same routine
Turning little piggies into plastic-packaged sausages
To sell in the heliport canteen*

In a different mood, so does 'Why Workers Must Work Harder':

*So that the turners of wheels
may die of boredom every day,
every day.*

His description of the monarchy is apt:
*The solemn, sacred emptiness, the monumental yawn
And the slime exuding daily*



Free the Bradford 12

By Chris Guthrie

THE CAMPAIGN to free the Bradford 12 received a big boost on Thursday 22 October when five more defendants were finally given bail, after languishing in jail for almost three months. The committal proceedings had been picketed by 100 people from Bradford 12 support groups from around the country.

The Bradford 12 are young black militants, facing charges of conspiracy to cause damage and grievous bodily harm and to manufacturing explosives. These charges carry maximum sentences of life imprisonment.

The twelve were arrested at the end of July following the alleged discovery by the police of a box of petrol-filled milk bottles on some waste ground in Bradford.

After their arrest the twelve were subjected to racial abuse by the police and were not allowed to see relatives or solicitors for two days. The police claim that they extracted one or two 'statements' from the defendants during this period.

Yet from the start all the defendants have pleaded not guilty. No petrol bombs were used in the Bradford 12 case. None of

the defendants have any previous convictions for petrol bomb or explosive offences.

The prosecution has explicitly drawn out the political aspects of the trial. First, conspiracy charges which were made infamous by the case of the Shrewsbury pickets can be used for political ends. Under these laws you have committed a crime if you merely discuss breaking the law.

Worse, you can then receive a longer sentence than if you had actually committed the offence. Evidence which is not normally admissible, such as from one defendant about another and the political beliefs of the defendants,

can be used in evidence. Second one of the reasons previously used successfully by the prosecution to deny bail to one of the defendants was that he may have been involved in political demonstrations around the Bradford 12 campaign. Even now one of the conditions of bail for almost all the defendants is non-attendance at any public meetings or involvement in any political activity.

The Bradford 12 case involves by far the most serious of all those charges arising from the summer uprising. It is an attempt to stamp on all black people fighting for their rights, and to criminalise black activists leading that struggle.

The granting of bail is one important victory. The campaign will go on and be strengthened until the trial is stopped and the charges are dropped.

For further information contact: London Support Group, c/o 54 High St, Southall, Middx. Cheques payable to: Bradford Support Group (London).

Squatters offered homes by GLC

By Piers Corbyn

SQUATTERS in the contentious Elgin Avenue estate in Paddington, West London have been offered rehousing by the Labour-controlled Greater London Council.

The squatters had protested against the GLC's plans to sell off the council houses on the estate, in defiance of election pledges. The GLC maintained they had no option but to sell the houses after taking 'advice' from Tory lawyers.

After a meeting on 19 October between the squatters, GLC leader Ken Livingstone, Gladys Dimson, GLC housing chairperson, and two council officers, the squatters in occupation of the effected houses in Elgin Avenue were promised alternative accommodation. But the GLC are still intending to carry through the sale of these houses.

No Comment

'A trainee soldier described as showing leadership potential threw a petrol bomb into the path of a car, Calder Juvenile Court hearing today.'

The 16 year old boy from Halifax admitted having a petrol bomb and using conduct likely to breach the peace.

He was fined £50 and bound over in the sum of £50 for one month.

He had not been given a custodial sentence, chairman (sic) of the magistrates, Mrs Mildred Berry told him, as they felt he was suited to Army life and did not wish to impede his career.'

Halifax Evening Courier, 14 October.

Steel victory

By Paul Highfield

WORKERS at British Steel's Port Talbot plant notched up a small, but significant victory last week.

The entire 350 strong workforce on the plant's 'pickle line' had been on strike for a week in support of four co-workers who had been sacked for 'poor production performance'. But last Friday, the four were reinstated, pending talks.

Precisely what was meant by 'poor production' is unclear. Port Talbot works, the pickle line included, has doubled its productivity over the past year. Even Norman Tebbit, the Tory government's new union hit-man, used the example of Port Talbot workers as a striking example which others should follow during the Tories' TV broadcast last week.

For the workers, the increase in productivity has been achieved at enormous cost. In just over a year the number employed at the plant has fallen from 12,000 to 5,000. Safety standards have declined dramatically, and workers are

doing dangerous jobs for which they aren't even trained.

The workers are also operating under a constant threat of closure; strip plants throughout British Steel are forced to compete with each other to try and ensure that it will be their plant which will stay open.

Now there are signs of a fightback against such conditions. Last month a section at Llanwern walked out in protest against the harsh management regime. Local union officials hastily cobbled together a deal to get their members to return to work.

Then came the strike at Port Talbot over the four pickle line workers. David Jeffs, union branch secretary of this section vowed, 'If we go back to work, we go back as a branch, and that means everyone, including our four sacked colleagues'.

This determination has paid dividends. The outcome of the strike shows that despite all they have gone through in the last 18 months Welsh steelworkers are by no means defeated.

St Mary's will stay!



March for St Mary's — day of action on 3 October

Winston Rose — will there be a prosecution?



Winston Rose's mother at her son's funeral

THE Director of Public Prosecution is said to be 'examining papers' relating to the unlawful killing of the 27-year-old black, Winston Rose.

Winston died in a police van on 13 July. Last week a coroner's jury declared he had been unlawfully killed.

Although a jury is not allowed to name anyone when it delivers such a verdict, there is no doubt who it had in mind when it announced its judgement — the 11 police officers who chased Winston, grabbed him and finally threw him in the back of their van.

What made the case all the more scandalous was that Winston Rose had committed no crime. He was said to be mentally ill, and the police had been called

to take him, by force, to a mental hospital.

This force included PC John Young locking his arms round Winston's neck for two minutes. Winston died through choking on his own vomit.

This was caused, the court was told, by a lack of oxygen because no air could get through to his mouth or nose. A witness told the court that Winston was thrown into the police van 'like a piece of meat'.

Thora Rose, Winston's widow, said after the inquest, 'Thank God this hasn't all been swept under the carpet.'

To make sure such a cover-up doesn't take place now will mean demanding PC John Young and others in his police gang are indicted for the killing.

By Dominic Costa, Westminster Hospital, ASTMS group secretary

THE Tories' biggest ever hospital closure plan was forced into temporary retreat, last week.

The occupation and work-in by the workers at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, West London, forced the management to withdraw its threat to close over half the 300 acute medical and surgical beds and the assembly department by 19 October.

The rank and file occupation committee — which has the official backing of NUPE, TGWU, COHSE and

ASTMS — first heard of management's climb-down from local ambulance drivers' convenors.

The ambulance workers had played an important role in the dispute by continuing to bring patients to the hospital in defiance of management's assistance that wards were closing.

Nurses, sisters and ancillaries had also continued to accept admis-

sions to the wards and treat the patients. A successful day of action by the hospital workers and their supporters on 3 October, which included a protest march, was a further encouragement to resist closure.

The effect of such pressure was seen by the middle of last week with the news that management had indefinitely postponed the closure plans. But this doesn't mean the dispute is over.

Last Friday, management and senior consultants persuaded junior doctors at the hospital to implement a 'treat and

transfer' policy — to treat patients, but transfer them to nearby hospitals.

Other management manoeuvres could follow. Accordingly, the occupation committee remains in existence, a 24 hour picket is being maintained and a solidarity conference on 21 November is going ahead. For the moment St Mary's will stay open, but the fight is not finished yet.

Messages of support are still needed. These, and details of the solidarity conference, are available from the Occupation Committee, St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Rd, London W9.

A step forward for Liverpool typists

By Al Walker, Vice Chairperson, Liverpool NALGO

AT A meeting on 21 October, Liverpool's City Council agreed to hold talks with the local government workers unions, NALGO, on the typists and machine operators dispute.

This was a real step forward for the 400 women employed by the City Council who have been on strike for over three months over a pay regrading claim.

Despite the fact that the strike has caused massive disruption to local administration in the City,

Liverpool Council's Liberal leader, Trevor Jones, had always been opposed to resuming negotiations or going to arbitration.

But at the Council meeting, Liberal Councillors drew back from supporting Tory proposals to sack all the typists if

they didn't return to work in the next month.

The Labour Party Group called for the re-opening of negotiations with NALGO and, if these failed, an agreement to go to arbitration.

At a further meeting between the Council and NALGO on Monday 27 October, the City Council leaders rejected the union's proposal for further negotiations but were prepared to agree to some form of arbitration.

The form of arbitration will be determined by

the NJC. But the terms of reference are to be worked out between Liverpool NALGO and the City Council.

This could prove to be a sticking point since the union will reject a simple comparison with other local authority workers.

They will argue for comparability with other public and private sector workers and for a whole range of considerations, such as low pay and equal opportunities, to be taken into account.

Socialist Challenge

BL: ALL OUT

FOR VICTORY



WHATEVER the outcome of behind the scene manoeuvrings on the part of Duffy and Edwardes in the BL dispute, one thing is certain. The overwhelming vote in favour of strike action for £20 across the board increase was a vote to take on Edwardes once and for all.

BL workers have had enough of falling wages, speed ups and job losses. They have had enough of back room deals between their union leaders and management. They've had enough of this government.

When the BL workers voted to come out on 1 November, they knew they would be heading for a massive confrontation with the government. They knew they had been let down by the leadership of their unions time and time again.

But such was the anger and frustration at the derision and contempt thrown at them by Edwardes with his paltry 3.8 per cent increase on the basic rate, the workforce knew that national strike action was the way

to win.

Terry Duffy, president of the engineering union and Grenville Hawley, National Officer of the Transport Union, were only too aware of this growing mood of resistance in the ranks of BL workers. That is why they were forced to announce official support for the strike even before the vote was taken.

But the union leaderships don't want this strike. They will be looking for a deal.

As Duffy said in an interview in the *Sunday Mirror* (25 October): 'It's the first time he (Edwardes) hasn't rung when there's been a problem. After all this time and the trouble we've sorted out together...'

A strike now is trouble for both Edwardes and Duffy — and it will certainly be trouble for the Tories. There are big stakes in this dispute.

A win for the BL workers will be a massive victory for the whole working class. It will be a green light for all the other pay claims in the pipeline — the miners, and local authority workers in particular.

It will be a massive blow to the 4 per cent pay limit that the government is trying to impose on the public sector.

But a defeat for the BL workers will be a green light for the Tories to continue their vicious anti-working class policies. There has to be full support for the workers at BL from the entire labour movement.

A victory can start the process of kicking out Duffy, kicking out Edwardes and kicking out the Tories.

Organising to win

By TGWU Jaguar Steward, Leyland Action Committee.

BL'S SENIOR stewards meeting on 22 October, formally endorsed the massive vote for national strike action from the shop floor. They decided to exempt five plants under formal notice of closure. These plants will not take part in any future votes on the pay claim.*

Transport union national officer, Grenville Hawley, reported plans to set up a national strike committee and to issue a pamphlet outlining the BL workers case.

He also spoke of the need to make the preparations to occupy any plant threatened with liquidation and called on the senior stewards to go back and organise effective picketing.

Picketing is obviously the first priority and steps are being taken this week to ensure the complete shutdown from 1 November. District strike centres should be set up in each area, district strike committees should be elected to link up the plants and to keep in touch with London.

As well as pickets, further steps are important to actively involve the membership in winning the dispute. Regular strike bulletins should be issued in every area to provide accurate information. Weekly report back meetings for all strikers should be organised as when stewards normally meet their members at work.



Steps should also be taken to include strikers' dependants in such meetings to make sure that they understand the issues at stake and are united in support of the claim.

The clash at BL is correctly against Edwardes but also against union bashing supporters in the Tory government. It will be vital for BL strikers to campaign for and organise massive support from other workers and from the Labour Party.

Delegations should be sent to other factories to seek support. Workers with their own claims outstanding, Fords, miners, engineers, local authority and so on, must be urged to press for action alongside BL.



Demands must also be raised for national trade union action to oppose Edwardes' threats of mass sackings and closures.

If the BL workers are beaten everyone will suffer. If we win, only Edwardes and the Tories will suffer.

* Rover SD1, Morris Engines Coventry, Alford and Alder, Hemel Hempstead, Speke No1 and Cardiff Paris are the exempted plants.



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