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Labour
Party

Socialist Organiser

Against all bans and proscriptions!

Paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance. No. 90. JUNE 24 1982. (Claimants and strikers 10p) 25p

TOGETHER WE CAN BEAT THE TORIES!

Health workers, miners, railworkers... common cause against the Tories

MINERS, council workers, firemen, civil servants, water and sewage workers, and building workers, are set to strike in solidarity with the health workers this Wednesday, 23rd.

To find a similar scale and enthusiasm in solidarity action, we have to go back in the history of the labour movement to July 1972 - when some 250,000 workers struck to free dockers jailed under the Industrial Relations Act - or even to the 1926 General Strike.

At the same time miners' and steel unions have pledged themselves to support the railworkers' strike planned for Monday 28th. They will black supplies normally transported by rail.

For once the labour movement has dramatically broken from the jinx of isolated - brave, but usually defeated - action. During boom times, piecemeal industrial action often can win gains. In the midst of capitalist slump, it is much more difficult, and solidarity is much more needed.

The new wave of solidarity action shows the way to beat the Tories.

In both the health service and rail, employers have responded with last-minute concessions in an effort to split union ranks.

In the NHS, leaders of the Royal College of Nursing and other professional groups have accepted an offer of 7½% for nurses. All the TUC-affiliated unions have rejected the 7½% and the accompanying proposal

of 6% for ancillaries.

With inflation over 10%, the union demand for a 12% increase is a bare minimum. And the unions also insist on a uniform offer for all NHS workers.

The RCN acceptance must not be allowed to disrupt the united union action. The RCN is not a trade union. Nurses and other health workers who have joined trade unions did not do so to have their policy dictated by non-unionists.

Escalate

On the contrary, the need is to escalate the struggle to all-out strike action with emergency cover under workers' control.

The British Rail bosses' offer of compromise on their productivity conditions reflects the fear they feel at the unions' plans for action. But - amounting only to a proposal to introduce BR's plans a bit more gradually - it is no basis for calling off action.

The BR pay offer remains at 5%, delayed for five months, in response to the union's demand for 15%.

ASLEF train drivers on the London Underground are already on strike against cuts in services imposed as a result of the Law Lords declaring cheap fares unlawful. London Transport has reinstated 30 NUR signal technicians suspended for refusing to work on the new schedules, but there is strong feeling in the NUR for all-out indefinite strike alongside ASLEF.

Likewise it is vital that ASLEF members press for their rail union to join with the NUR's all-out strike on British Rail.

Jobs crisis

On every front, solidarity will be the key to victory. And for socialists the job is to develop and explain the potential for a class movement against the Tories.

Behind all the immediate disputes stands the Tory government's cuts policy and the capitalist jobs crisis. They call for a political response from the whole labour movement:

*for a pledge by the Labour Party that the next Labour government will restore all the cuts; for automatic inflation-protection for the funds of public services; for millions for hospitals and not a penny for capitalist 'defence'.

*for the nationalisation without compensation of drug and other companies which leech off the NHS; for workers' and community control of the NHS.

*for an integrated policy of transport as a public service.

*for kicking out the Tories, and for a Labour government that will break from the traditions of previous Labour governments and be a workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement, acting decisively against the bosses and their state.



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AS the Zionists interperse their "cease-fires" with more slaughter, we have background articles on the PLO and the Lebanese left

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Labour witch-hunt

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Rail dispute

REPORTS from NUR and ASLEF members, with history of rail unions

Gay Pride

FEATURE from Labour Campaign for Gay Rights, plus other articles

Health Workers for the Full Claim meeting: Sunday July 4, 1.30pm to 5pm, Labour Club, opp. 'Night Out', Bristol St Birmingham.
Health Workers for

the Full Claim bulletin (0942 877296). Financial contributions urgently needed. - no.4 out soon. Order from Anna Lunts, 78 High St, Atherton, Lancs



MIDDLE EAST

A Jew's plea: stop Begin!

"AS I write I'm listening to the radio announcing that 'we' are in the process of 'achieving our objectives' in Lebanon: guaranteeing 'peace' for the inhabitants of Galilee.

These Goebbels-type lies make me mad. It is clear that this vicious war, more barbarous than any of the previous ones, has nothing to do with the London assassination or the security of the Galilee; but if the leaders of the opposition, 'respectful' professors, so-called 'objective' journalists all

repeat like parrots the slogans of Begin and Sharon, what can you expect from the man in the street?

For the moment (but I don't think this will last long) 'national unity' is almost complete. 'This is Israel's finest hour', said Begin in the Knesset, where only three hands were raised against the war (nine others — including the Mapam deputies — only dared to abstain).

What is left to face up to this chauvinist intoxication, shared — so long as

the figures of our losses and the no doubt disastrous political consequences are not yet known — by all our ultra-patriots? We are only a very small group of oppositionists.

We here, like the Palestinians there, are completely isolated, abandoned even by those close to us, and... defeated. At least for now.

To all this must be added the scandalous support of Reagan and his accomplices.

No-one speaks any more of a limited invasion within

40 kilometres of the frontier; it is a real blitzkrieg, without limits, without front line or rear, without any restrictions.

I hear the sound of our planes non-stop; day and night they go to bombard populated towns and villages, and camps of refugees who have been chased from their homes once already — by us.

No pity! Jews, sons of Abraham, the 'compassionate', without pity? Jews, themselves victims of so many cruelties, can they be so cruel? What shame!

The greatest achievement of Zionism is just this: the 'dejudaisation' (if such a word exists) of the Jews.

Dear friends, I implore you to do everything in your power to stop Begin and Sharon achieving their double aim: the final liquidation (I use an expression which is fashionable here these days) of the Palestinians as a people, and of the Israelis as human beings."

Benjamin Cohen, Professor at Tel-Aviv University.

PLO and the shift towards seeking a West Bank statelet

by ROY STOVES

IN West Beirut the Palestine Liberation Organisation remains under intense attack by the Israeli army, the strongest and best-equipped army in the Middle East.

In order to see how the PLO — with an absolute maximum of 40,000 full and part time fighters, no air-force and negligible armour — could find itself entrenched in a position of conventional military defence against the colossal Israeli military machine, it is necessary to look back at the history of the Palestinian liberation movement, its political and strategic positions.

The PLO was originally formed in 1964 by the President of Egypt at the time, Gamal Abdel Nasser.

The organisation he established was small, unimportant and limited chiefly to demagoguery — often of an outright reactionary nature.

In 1965 another small but unheard of organisation called Fatah — led by Yasser Arafat — began minor guerrilla actions against Israel.

However, it was only after the 1967 war, when Israel annihilated the Jordanian, Egyptian and Syrian armies and occupied the West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, Sinai and the Golan Heights, that Fatah really came into its own.

The so-called 'progressive' or 'Arab socialist' regimes such as Syria and especially Egypt, were discredited, and in the void created by their demise the small guerrilla organisation of Fatah was looked to by large sections of the Palestinian population as the only force capable of waging a genuine struggle against the Zionist state.

The demoralised Arab regimes were only too happy to divert criticism of themselves by giving great verbal support to the Palestinian 'fedayeen' or guerrilla fighters.

From the very beginning Fatah claimed to be eclectic and 'non-ideological', stating that they took ideas from many political trends of thought and 'adapted' them to the unique context of the Palestinians' struggle.

Almost immediately after the 1967 war, Fatah guerrillas infiltrated the now-occupied West Bank, hoping to develop a standard guerrilla war using the



Arafat with Hussein — the butcher of 'Black September'

West Bank population as the 'sea' in which the guerrilla 'fish' could swim — to use the terminology of Mao, who was one of Fatah's many early 'influences'.

The guerrillas, however, had very little success, political or military. They were recruited largely from the teeming refugee camps of Jordan and Syria and their motivation of 'The Return to Palestine' in itself had little appeal to the workers or peasantry of the West Bank.

Their political ideas did not include even a basic class analysis, nor did they even promise social or land reforms. It was a movement of national liberation.

Military inexperience and unsuitable open countryside also contributed to the withdrawal of the guerrillas not already killed or captured over the Jordan River.

By early 1968 Fatah had pulled back its base area into Jordan, although the urban guerrilla war in the crowded camps of the occupied Gaza Strip continued ferociously until 1971.

Over half of Jordan's small population is actually Palestinian and this vast reservoir of support was utilised by Fatah who threw guerrilla units into Israeli-occupied territory almost nightly.

Then, in March 1968, a mass Israeli reprisal raid consisting of armoured columns and 20,000 troops was heroically repelled by

Fatah forces at the town of Karameh in western Jordan.

The seemingly-invincible Israeli army received a 'bloody nose' at the hands of Arab fighters and the propaganda value was immense.

Thousands flocked to join 'the fedayeen' and at the next PLO conference the Fatah guerrillas swept to power in the organisation and Arafat was voted chairman.

Whatever the political limitations of the movement, it is beyond doubt that Fatah at this time roused and moved the Palestinian masses in an unprecedented manner, here at last were Palestinians taking the struggle for liberation upon themselves.

A sense of hope and pride were rekindled. The PLO began to establish what was practically a 'state-within-a-state' in Jordan — especially in the refugee areas where the PLO ran hospitals, schools, and clinics and policed the camps. King Hussein of Jordan felt unable to prevent this as support for the PLO was riding high and he was uncertain of all his army's loyalty.

It was at this time that other organisations were formed within the PLO. Two significant groups to the left of Fatah were the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP).

The Popular Front,



The PLO can draw on a vast reservoir of dispossessed Palestinian peasants

led by George Habbash, is a militarist left-nationalist organisation — it refuses to negotiate with Israel. The hijackings and international terrorist operations for which the PLO became famous in the late 1960s were largely the work of the Popular front.

The Democratic Front, a left split from the Popular Front, did not agree with the PFLP in its belief in the revolutionary potential of the petit-bourgeoisie, nor its emphasis on military action.

The DFLP began a discourse with Israeli socialists connected to the Socialist Organisation (Matzpen) on the role of the revolutionary party in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Soon afterwards, however, the DFLP moved sharply to the right and towards the USSR. They are now in broad agreement with the Israeli CP on most issues — such as their recognition of Israel.

Although not officially recognised as the Palestine CP, their Stalinist manoeuvres, their popular frontism and their espousal of the 'two-stage' theory of an independent state then class struggle, places them wholly in the ranks of the Stalinists.

All of the 'fedayeen' organisations, even the DFLP in its most left wing phase, have failed to seriously contemplate carrying out the anti-Zionist armed struggle on a

class basis, trying to link with the Israeli working class against Zionism.

The starting point for Israeli socialists should be solidarity with the Palestinians, recognition of their right to struggle against Zionism and recognition of the PLO as their representatives; however this was made much more difficult by the indiscriminate bombings of markets, bus-stations, etc., of which the Israeli working class were the prime victims.

So the class to which the PLO should have looked to in order to build support was alienated even further.

Unable to view the 'white settler' attitude of many Israeli workers towards the Palestinians in a dialectical way, and politically incapable of exploiting the innate class antagonism of the Oriental Jewish working class against the European/American bourgeoisie and Zionist establishment, even the best elements in the PLO retreated behind their nationalist barrier, where they have remained, largely speaking, to this day.

In Jordan, the lack of a class analysis and the subsequent failure to organise with the Jordanian masses for the overthrow of Hussein led to the partial isolation and crushing of the PLO in Jordan during 'Black September' 1970, when Bedouin units loyal to Hussein were used against the Palestinian

camp and PLO bases in Amman, the capital, and elsewhere.

Forced to evacuate the whole of their forces from Jordan after more fierce fighting in 1971, the PLO moved its headquarters to Beirut, Lebanon, where there was also a large Palestinian refugee population, and a weak central government.

The delicate confessional balance of power in Lebanon (where the Christian pro-Western Lebanese held political control) had been put under strain by the influx of Palestinian refugees in 1948 and the establishment and consolidation of PLO power in the camps further threatened the status quo.

Christian Phalangist militias armed and organised against the PLO and their leftist allies. Again the PLO avoided involving itself in the Lebanese class conflict until it was given no choice but to do so.

Villagers and workers who had to tolerate continual Israeli bombing raids in reprisal for PLO actions were not supported in their struggles against the Lebanese bourgeoisie and crucial opportunities to develop an armed struggle hand in hand with and embedded in the Lebanese working class were lost.

Still commanding almost total support from the Palestinian masses (and bourgeoisie), the Palestinian revolution did not, in practice, generalise the anti-Zionist struggle into

an anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist struggle.

It was natural that the PLO still held the support of large sections of the Palestinian bourgeoisie, as Arafat continued to solicit and receive vast financial support from the most reactionary Arab governments, such as Saudi Arabia, as well as from the state capitalist regimes such as Syria.

By 1974, the Israeli army's defences were so sophisticated, and its armoury so powerful, that guerrilla activity from across the borders had become limited to occasional 'suicide missions'.

Military impotence, coupled with the reactionary nature of much of the PLO's support and the class composition of the leadership, was making the drift towards a 'negotiated solution' almost inevitable.

First the Stalinist Democratic Front, then Fatah, began to speak of recognising the right of the Israeli state to exist in return for the granting of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The major stumbling block was that the Israeli government, then as now, sure of their army's invincibility and refusing to recognise the Palestinian national rights that they felt would undermine the legitimacy of the Israeli state itself, simply refused to negotiate with the PLO. The only way to force them to negotiate, the PLO felt, was to mobilise international, especially US, pressure upon Israel to negotiate a 'solution'.

Socialists should argue for the recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, while at the same time calling for a class struggle crossing the Palestinian-Israeli national divide — opposed to Zionism, imperialism and the Arab bourgeoisie, including the PLO leadership.

The contacts between left Palestinian organisations (SO no. 84) and Israeli Trotskyists must be broadened and built upon within the Israeli and Palestinian working class. The Zionist war machine will not be defeated militarily, it can only be destroyed by the Israeli and Palestinian working class, struggling for a socialist Palestine for Arabs and Jews.

CONFUSED PATTERN OF LEBANESE LEFT ORGANISATIONS

While the press reports from Lebanon refer to the PLO, they are vague on the Lebanese Left. Andrew Hornung spoke to **MAGIDA SALMAN**, a Lebanese revolutionary now living in London

What is the make-up of the alliance usually referred to as the Lebanese Left? The so-called left is very heterogenous. Often the left includes forces that cannot really be termed leftist at all. What is called the Lebanese Left is an amalgam of nationalist forces: some purely confessional forces allied to some working class trends. And by working class trends I mean really the Lebanese CP. Historically, if we want to talk about a working class movement in Lebanon we can only talk about the LCP.

How did this working class movement emerge? This movement was created among the Christian working class at the beginning, because at the beginning of the century the places that were trying to industrialise were in the Christian community. The CP organised the first trade union movement in Lebanon. Later on, with the development of the service sector and the impoverishment of the South, a lot of people — mainly Shi'a Muslims who had been very poor peasants or agricultural workers in the tobacco plantations — emigrated to the towns and constituted a new element in the small Lebanese working class.

The CP began to develop in this milieu too. It is important to keep this in mind when considering the later relations between the Shi'a Muslims and the Palestinians in the Beirut area. In addition to the economic migration, many southern Shia moved to the outskirts of Beirut because of the constant Israeli attacks.

What are the political elements making up this Left or to give it its proper title, the Lebanese National Movement?

To begin with there were the nationalists, the Lebanese section of the Arab Nationalist Movement, the Nasserites. On the Lebanese level, it was more of a movement than a party.

After 1967 there was a big radicalisation in the Lebanese Left which ran parallel to development of the CP. I say "ran parallel" because the CP kept its distance from the nationalist movement.

This radicalisation came into contact with Marxist intellectuals and a New Left grew up of which the present day Organisation of Communist Action is the only significant organised force, the rest being tiny grouplets. The OCA had a working class orientation but not much of a working class base.

While the CP failed to take up many of the big

ORGANISATIONS



Masses mourn the death of Nasser

issues of these times, they did keep their working class base.

There is also the Independent Nasserite Movement and its armed wing Murabitun. After the death of Nasser and after the '67 war, the Nasserite movement in Lebanon as

elsewhere was in crisis. On the one hand there were Nasserites who were firmly wedded to the Egyptian state and on the other hand more independent elements. After several splits the present organisation and Murabitun emerged. They are mainly based

in Beirut. Then there are the Ba'athists.

What distinguishes the

Ba'athists from the Nasserites ideologically?

Nothing really. The Iraqi and Syrian Ba'athists back certain individuals who have no real base other than the weight of these regimes. There are only one or two MPs and of course a few people around them, but basically they are only as strong as the non-Lebanese regimes they represent.

Is the Syrian Social Nationalist Party backed by Syria too?

No. Originally the Syrian Nationalist Party — a Lebanese Party that calls for a Greater Syria — was ideologically very fascist. It contained a lot of classic anti-semitism, is organisationally very hierarchic.

It appeared in the 1930s in Lebanon, based originally in the Christian mountain areas. It played on the theme of the national unity of Christians and Muslims, anti-confessionalism and the building of a Greater Syria which would be a great nation based on an entente between workers and employers.

It was not an agent of Syria. With the boom of the 1960s, the influx of Arab money into Lebanon, and various external radicalising influences like Vietnam and the Palestinian question the SNP went through many splits.

One of the splinters, one led by In'am Ra'ad, made at least a verbal turn towards



MIDDLE EAST

ards a kind of Third Worldism, taking up now and again Marxist terminology too. This is the SSNP.

The Progressive Socialist Party is often described as if it were the lynch-pin of the Lebanese National Movement. What sort of a party is it, and has it changed since the assassination of its leader, Kemal Jumblatt?

In a way it isn't a party at all. It doesn't have a properly organised base in the sense of a modern political party — that is one way in which the Phalangists, for instance, are different from the Muslim parties and even from some of the Christian groups: the Phalangists are a proper political party, with a well organised apparatus and a functioning base.

The PSP is really a collection of MPs elected by the Druze community, a community which, despite the socialist leanings of the Party, is itself deeply traditional. The PSP is not a party based around a programme, but built around a man, Kemal Jumblatt.

Since Jumblatt's death things have not changed except that his son Walid does not have the prestige that his father had. His father was, after all, a very important figure not only on a Lebanese but on an Arab level.

You said at the beginning that this Lebanese

Nationalist Movement cannot be called truly leftist. Is this because a number of the elements of it that you have described are not of the Left or is it because the orientation of the Movement itself has not been a leftist one?

Both really. The fact is that the Lebanese National Movement has often fallen into confessionalism.

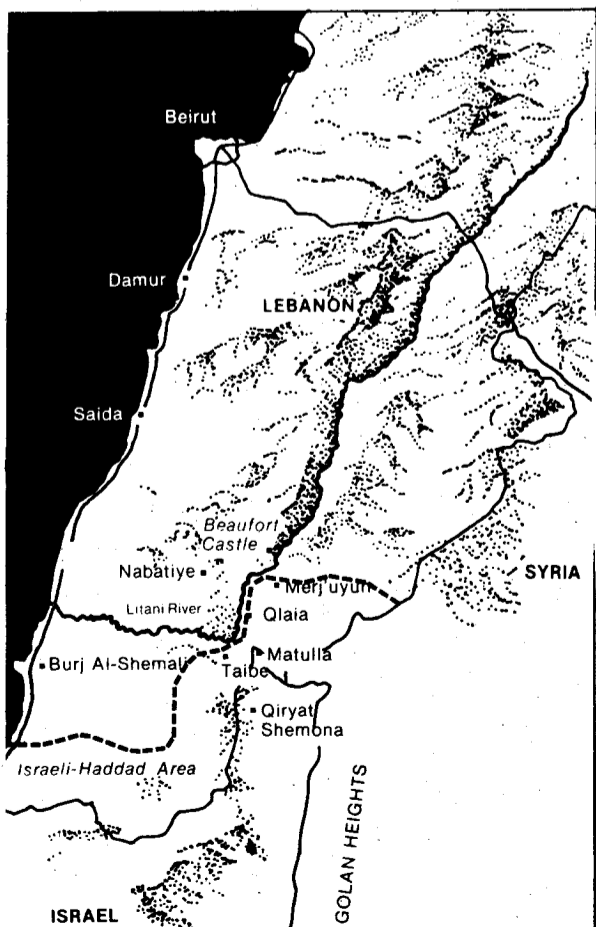
Also, despite the leftist and working class approach of some elements within the LNM, the Movement has not actively fought for class demands, not even on the question of education.

There has been a real absence of any programme to alter social conditions: everything has been focused on restructuring the state, and that means in the present context altering the confessional division not really overcoming confessionalism and the social and economic backwardness of which it is in large part a product.

The Leftists in the Movement have basically liquidated into this conception and into a general current of populist phraseology.

The CP, which once had a record of fighting for working class demands, has largely dropped the working class elements in its programme and drawn closer to the Syrians. The war has only increased this nationalist tendency and deepened the confessional divisions.

—YES, THERE IS ACTION AGAINST THE WAR—



WAR fever has united most of the Jewish population behind Begin. But, as a militant from the Workers League of Palestine visiting Britain told us, opposition exists.

"On June 5, in the first days of the war, there was a demonstration of 2,000 in Tel Aviv. 2,000 is big for a left wing demonstration.

"The demonstration had originally been called in protest against the Zionist occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, but was turned into an anti-war protest.

"It was organised by the Bir Zeit University Solidarity Committee, which is supported by the Israeli Communist Party, Matzpen (sister organisation of the IMG), the Workers League and some university intellectuals, non-aligned people and anarchists.

"This Committee was formed after the Zionists shut down Bir Zeit University in the West Bank. The university has now been reopened, but the Committee has also been

active in solidarity with the strike in the Golan Heights.

"The Druze Arab population in four villages in the Golan Heights has been on strike since February, refusing to accept Israeli identity cards and demanding UN identity cards instead. Despite repression — invading houses in the middle of the night, shooting people including children, and arrests — the Zionists have been unable to break the strike.

"There have been other smaller demonstrations against the war. In Jerusalem the Bir Zeit University Solidarity Committee organised three demonstrations of 50 or 100 people — one at Begin's house and two at the Hebrew University which were smashed by the police and fascists. They also organised a demonstration of 500 together with the feminist movement.

"In Tel Aviv there have been two further small anti-war demonstrations — one organised by the committee, and one by left-wingers in Hashomer

Hatzair.

"At the beginning of the war there was a lot of euphoria. But now a lot of Jewish workers are not happy about the war. I've had Jewish workers who are not at all left-wingers saying to me that it's not right to see children fighting against tanks — that it's like the Warsaw rising (against Nazi occupying troops in 1944).

"The Arab population in Israel feel defeated. Almost all of them have families in Lebanon, and almost all of them support the PLO. But the more politically active people see the treachery of the Arab states.

"The war has been able to stop strikes. In El Al — the Israeli airline — there was a political strike against the moves by religious parties and the government to stop Saturday working. But that has ended. Some strikes had started, and others were planned, over the new two-yearly wage agreement due from April. But since the war started, the Histadrut — the Zionist 'trade union' movement, though it

isn't really a trade union organisation — has signed an agreement.

"The agreement grants a 10% immediate increase and cost-of-living increases of about 80% over a year — while inflation is about 100 to 120% per year. That's much less than workers were demanding. And just in case the last week there have been price rises averaging 22% on petrol, electricity, milk, bread, etc. and a 3% increase in VAT.

"What we say is that Israel is not really a nation-state. It was created by imperialism, not for the Jews to live in peace — we have had no peace but continual wars — but as a state like an aircraft carrier, to help maintain imperialist interests in the Middle East.

"The Arab nation also has been artificially divided by borders imposed by British and French imperialism.

"We say that the solution is one democratic and secular state in Palestine. This can only be achieved through a revolution throughout the Middle East.



Back to normal in Buenos Aires: the armed forces resume the fight against their main enemy . . .

ARGENTINA: THE GENERALS FIGHT ON

by Martin Thomas

"IT ALL seemed so cosy and right to the generals and admirals... the Falklands were there for the taking, and the world would probably accept their capture as an accomplished fact.

"The US had been carefully building up an excellent relationship with the pro-western Galtieri and so would probably limit itself to a lame protest; the Russians, heavily dependent on Argentine grain shipments, would make sure nothing went awry; and Argentina's friends in the Third World would applaud a victory over colonialism.

"Britain, deep in its economic crisis, would swallow a temporary discomfort. At home, Argentines would forget their anger with the junta over long years of dictatorial rule and economic mismanagement".

Just 2½ months after making such calculations (described in the Economist of April 24), the Argentine military regime faces a very different prospect.

The different branches of the armed forces are at each others' throats. The political parties are confidently clamouring for a return to civilian rule.

Less noisily, but more importantly, revolt must be breeding in the powerful Argentine working class. The days before the Falklands invasion saw the biggest workers' demonstration against the junta since the coup of 1976, and a general strike had been called for a few days after. Now the national unity euphoria must be wearing off, with workers beginning to ask hard questions about the class interests in which the junta undertook its expedition and sent hundreds of conscripts to their deaths.

And by all indications the vocal sympathy which the junta got from some other Latin American states for its 'stand against colonialism' will evaporate rapidly, as those states hasten to resume normal relations with the US.

After defeat on the Falklands, Galtieri blustered about continuing the war. Within the military, the air force presented the most radical alternative.

They dissociated (according to Le Monde, June 19) from the police repression of the anti-government demonstration in Buenos Aires on Tuesday 15th. And after meeting with his top brass, air force chief Lami Dozo made a programmatic speech on Thursday 17th.

"Change must begin here and now... The country can no longer be the laboratory for economic models transplanted from abroad [i.e. the monetarist policy pursued by the junta since 1976].

"Effort should be made without unjust sacrifices... We want a country without privileged or oppressed, a just, democratic, free and noble country".

For the political parties this attempt to curry their favour by demagoguery was too little, too late. Explaining the decision by the Multipartidaria (a bloc of the

major bourgeois parties) to boycott a meeting called by the junta on Wednesday to discuss liberalisation, a Radical leader said:

"The situation demands a 180 degree turn. The economic and social policy of the regime is rejected by everyone. Those responsible for it must go. Never mind the statutes they want to impose on us".

Meanwhile, after meetings on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, Galtieri had been dumped by the overwhelming vote of the army high command. Interior Minister Alfredo St Jean was made interim president.

The army is now proposing retired general Reynaldo Bignone as president; the air force and navy chiefs say that if Bignone is imposed as president they will not support him. The air force has suggested its own candidates for president. The three forces have joined together in promising civilian rule by early 1984 at latest.

The prospect of a military president openly rejected by two of the three wings of the armed forces underlines the deep political crisis in Argentina. And behind it looms an economic crisis.

Argentina's foreign debt problem, massive before the war, is now monstrous. The Guardian (June 22) reported "A large chunk of Argentina's medium-term debts fall due for repayment over the next 12 months.

"Without new loans the junta will be faced with a stark choice: ask the international banks for time to pay, or tighten the fiscal and monetary screws in a way which could provoke internal strife and revolution".

This financial crisis will surely drive the Argentine bourgeoisie to mend its bridges with the US.

Whether the Argentine working class is able to orient and organise itself in time to make the threat of revolution real is another question. The best thing the British labour movement can do to help to fight against Thatcher's plans to create a 'fortress Falklands', which could allow the Argentine military or its bourgeois civilian replacement to keep national unity for war in the forefront of politics.

Australian solidarity

PORT Kembla unions have worked out how to deal with warmongers. Unions there have resolved to seek ACTU endorsement for bans by maritime unions against both British and Argentine vessels for the duration of the Falklands war.

This move comes as a response to an earlier, chauvinist-inspired ban on Argentine shipping only, by right wing unions.

Port Kembla unions consider both sides are at fault in the conflict.

The bans are already operating at Kembla. The

ACTU will be asked to support extending them to other ports. If this happened, exports to Britain alone worth \$252.4 million last financial year could be disrupted.

from the Australian monthly SOCIALIST FIGHT



PRESS GANG

Opening up the Spanish front

ACCORDING to a MORI poll in the Sunday Times, 81% of adults feel prouder to be British after the military victory in the Falklands.

The paper didn't say where the poll was conducted, but the figure was too low by about 19% to have been taken amongst the soccer supporters in Spain.

The Daily Mail reporter in the press box described how the entire British press corps dropped their pens, jumped to their feet and punched the air when Belgium scored against Argentina. It wasn't a confession. It was a boast.

The reporters and commentators at the World Cup see themselves as the natural continuity of the reporting from the Falklands — although the Ministry of Defence are not so far holding up the scoreline ('British sources today strongly denied reports that the French had

scored an equalising goal shortly before half time...')

Copy and pictures are meanwhile flowing in earnest from the South Atlantic, relegating the thousands of dead and injured in the Lebanon to small unimportant war in a far off land.

Prince Andrew was hailed as a hero. According to most reports he had bravely hovered his helicopter in the air to act as a decoy for the Exocet missiles. It is doubtful whether this could have been sold to his mother ('Good day, Ma'am. Admiral Woodward here. We needed someone thicker than an aircraft carrier to draw the missiles away and your son fitted the bill. We knew this is what you would have wanted' 'No, Admiral, we did not').

Starving Argentine prisoners abandoned by their country's leaders also made good copy. The number taken prisoner was

overestimated by about 6,000 to make the victory all the sweeter. This was later said to be a 'misunderstanding'.

Below the headlines it was clear from the text that the British were surprised by how much ammunition was still left. The famous bombing of Port Stanley airfield turned out to have been a complete flop — despite regular stories appearing that no planes could land there.

The Sunday Times reported that there were very few cases of malnutrition and that the commander of the land forces had turned down offers of food from the United States, despite announcing that Argentine prisoners were in danger of starving to death. The Sunday Times also reported that stories of Argentine troops looting the shops were untrue.

It will probably take months if not years for the

lies which have cheerfully been peddled for months to be exposed.

Reporters in Spain have no personal risk to run but they have ensured that football is just the continuation of war by other means. There is no nonsense of keeping politics out of sport.

A pensioner couple from Wales won a trip for two to the World Cup and said that they wanted their prize to go to a wounded soldier from the Falklands. A Para corporal and his wife were flown out.

Immediately the TV set up a meeting between the soldier with his broken arm, broken ribs and damaged lungs and Bobby Charlton, who assured the soldier that 'our lads' in Spain were thinking every day about how they could emulate 'our lads' in the Falklands.

The commentaries are peppered with military metaphors. The British

supporters in the crowd sing out the National Anthem, giving particular emphasis to "Send her victorious..."

The Archbishop of Canterbury, who endorsed the British fleet with a blessing from the Almighty, was reestablishing his peace credentials, by suggesting that British football fans should cheer if Argentina wins the cup. He must be joking.

Even the Northern Irish and Scottish teams don't really get a look in here, where the English team claims exclusive right to be British.

The football fans usually take a pasting from the press but this time round their every excess is being hailed as legitimate patriotism, instead of mindless thuggery.

There is a paradox to be explained in the opinion poll. In April a similar poll showed only one in seven prepared to see 100 British

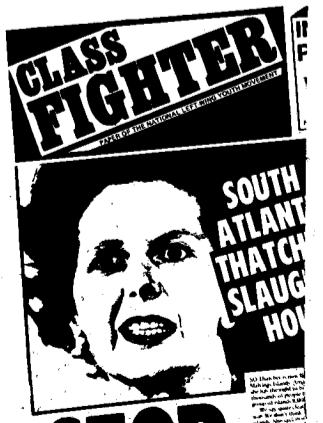
soldiers killed to retake the islands. Now four out of every five were shrugging off 250 dead (MORI does not even consider the Argentine dead to be worth asking about).

It shows that opinion polls are not a reflection of what the majority want to happen — but a measure of how well what has been done has been marketed.

It didn't need a con however to convince everyone they had won. The real victors of the Falklands war could be seen at another sporting occasion.

There were 30,000 people lining Royal Ascot to see the Queen arrive in her open carriage.

They also sang the National Anthem. But this was not the bellicose raucous singing of the football fans abroad. This was the reverential measured rendering of those who know that they are playing their song. Truly the Malvinas are theirs!



Class Fighter — paper of the National Left Wing Youth Movement of the LPYS. 10p plus postage from BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX.



—Why Marxists are in the Labour Party—

'Entrist', 'infiltrator', 'disrupter' — the accusations fly thick and fast.

But why are Trotskyists in the Labour Party? And do we have a right to be in the Party?

CHRIS ERSWELL replies to the right wing.

TROTSKYISTS are accused of being "secretive" and "dishonest", organised in clandestine "tendencies" and "factions".

But people who say it is wrong for groups to organise themselves within the Party as a faction or tendency around a newspaper should bear the following points in mind:

* The very same people who are complaining now about internal tendencies would be the first to moan if these groups set up independent parties standing their own candidates against Labour, splitting the vote.

* Historically the Labour Party was set up not as a single homogeneous party, but as a federation of working class organisations which individually retained their autonomy, internal rules and full timers.

The trade unions, the Independent Labour Party and other socialist groups came together in the aftermath of the Taff Vale judgment to form the Labour Party. Did this mean that these individual organisations, the trade unions and the ILP, had to sack all their full-timers and close down their newspapers?

Did this mean that these organisations had to stop holding conferences and electing their own officers?

To even ask the question is to show how ridiculous



is the talk about "parties within parties". Is the ILP today a "party within a party"? The Co-Operative Party? The unions?

What about the Fabians and the Tribune Group — let alone the Manifesto Group, Labour Solidarity or the Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding?

Long before Trotskyism was even heard of, the revolutionary British Socialist Party, forerunner of the CP, was affiliated to the Labour Party. John McLean, Britain's greatest Marxist revolutionary, stood in elections as a Labour candidate. The young (and then revolutionary) Communist Party applied to affiliate as an autonomous organisation to the Labour Party. They were denied this right because the right wing McDonald leadership didn't agree with the CP's views — so much for democracy. Using the Tory

press they managed to sway Labour Party conferences against the CP's request to affiliate.

Affiliation would have entitled local CPs to send a delegate to local GMCs and District Labour Parties as well as nationally a delegation to Labour Party conference — just like all the other affiliated organisations. It was denied them because their views were different from McDonald and Snowden.

Five years later, these same right wing careerists deserted the Labour Party and formed a coalition with the Tories.

Chance

The Trotskyists, who carried on the revolutionary tradition of the early CP were faced with a similar problem. Like the CP, there was no chance of them gaining the right to affiliate to the Labour Party.

So they joined anyway as individuals, and organised with Labour co-thinkers, retaining their autonomy in defiance of the right wing autocrats.

Trotskyists and others in the Labour Party today are only asserting our right to fight for our views in an organised and effective way, against the attempts of the autocratic dictators who have historically denied the revolutionary left the right to affiliate as autonomous organisations.

Moreover, the word 'entryism' rings false — with its implications of Trotskyists appearing from some dark, mysterious corner and "infiltrating" the wholesome ranks of Labour. Many Trotskyists were active in the trade unions and Labour Party well before they became convinced of Trotskyist ideas — and indeed they became convinced of those

ideas precisely as a result of their experience in the labour movement.

Having disposed of one red herring, we must consider the objection raised by Michael Foot that belief in parliamentary democracy is a litmus test for membership of the Labour Party.

Violent

Trotskyists are denounced because we advocate the violent overthrow of the state, because we allegedly wish to set up an Eastern European style dictatorship, and because we allegedly deny the legitimacy of parliamentary democracy.

A picture is painted of mindless hot-heads engaging in violence for no reason, for the hell of it. The peaceful road to socialism is contrasted to the horrors of the Stalinist atrocities. Leninism is glibly equated with Stalinism and the Trotskyist struggle against Stalinism is dismissed with a contemptuous wave of the hand.

Truth

To disentangle the truth from this web of facile and cynical slander is not easy, given that any army of professors, wiseacres, and media-men have spent half a century burying it.

To deal only with the central issues: do Trotskyists believe in parliamentary democracy? To answer this question properly and clearly we must say that we believe that only a parliament of non-exploiting working people can be democratic, and we believe that a parliament dominated by the state of the exploiting classes cannot be truly democratic because they will respect their material interests before a democratic decision that seeks to re-distribute their wealth.

Majority

An institution can only be truly democratic to the extent that all participants respect the majority decision.

Those who impudently ask whether Trotskyists

believe in parliamentary democracy should consider this: instead of looking for evidence of Stalinist totalitarianism amongst the anti-Stalinists by way of Orwellian double-think, surely any true democrat (like Michael Foot) should address himself to another slightly more obvious question.

Do the employers and their political representatives believe in parliamentary democracy? Will they respect a majority decision which outlaws their robbery of the working class?

If we really live in a free democracy, why is it only confined to the House of Commons? Why does democracy end when you enter the corridors of Whitehall?

Who elects the senior civil servants, the officers in the army, the Chief Constables, owners of industry, editors of newspapers, judges, etc?

Do they believe in parliamentary democracy?

The answer is, of course, yes — as long as no action is taken to outlaw their massive wealth and colossal robbery of the working class.

Instead of looking for dictatorship among the democrats, let us look at a real contradiction staring us in the face: the undemocratic nature of the bosses' state outside of Parliament. Why is Michael Foot silent about this?

Trotskyists are rebuked for advocating violence to overthrow the employers. This is supposed to place us outside of the peaceful reformist traditions of the Labour Party.

'Extra Parliamentary' activity is condemned when carried out by the working class, but when the Law Lords wage an extra-parliamentary war against even the very modest GLC fares policy, it is best to remain tactfully silent.

Yet those who preach pacifism to the unarmed exploited classes in the Labour Party, say nothing to the exploiters who are armed to the teeth.

In fact, those who, like Foot (and Benn), advocate a pacifist ideology to the labour movement, are in fact disarming that movement both ideologically and physically in the face of a ruthless enemy.

Pacifist

A genuine pacifist would recognise that the property owning classes will use violence to prevent the labour movement from seeking to break free from the constraints of crisis-ridden capitalism. A sincere pacifist would correspondingly seek to disarm that class in order to prevent their bloody suppression of the labour movement.

In order to achieve that ask, a consistent and honest pacifist would be forced to come to the clinical assessment (as opposed to a cowardly ducking of the issue) that in order to disarm the ruling class it is first necessary to arm the working class.

In short, if pacifists are not to be regarded as phony pacifists, as agents (conscious or blind) of the

bourgeoisie, they would declare that only the revolutionary disarming of the robber class can minimise the bloodshed, and prevent the suppression of socialist and trade unionists who are seeking to liberate the working class from the profit system.

Is such a perspective inconsistent with the traditions of the Labour Party? After all, has not the whole orientation of the party been towards electing a Labour government? Wasn't the Labour Representation Committee convened to represent the labour movement in Parliament?

In what sense can we speak of the Labour Party ever having any connection whatsoever with extra-parliamentary "revolutionism"?

Trotskyists work as hard as anyone to win over the working class politically through electoral and campaigning activities and to win elections on a socialist programme. We are for winning reforms, for extracting as much as possible from the system.

But let's look at the trade unions of which the Labour Party is the political wing.

Any trade unionist who has ever been on strike knows that picket duty consists for 90% of the time of peacefully persuading other trade unionists not to cross the picket line. This is the "winning over" of other workers to our point of view: the trade union equivalent of electoral activity in the Labour Party.

Departure

But every so often an employer will seek to cut short this process by bussing in scabs with the help of the police, forcibly smashing through the pickets. The trade union response has always been traditionally to resist such attacks by organising a mass picket.

The experience of Grunwicks, Sattley and Laurence Scotts has demonstrated this graphically. Workers were faced with either meekly allowing the employers to use force, or organising a force of their own to defend the picket line.

Here is the point of departure for the revolutionary traditions of the Labour Party and trade unions. Were the "violent" and "revolutionary" actions of the NUM at Sattley inconsistent with membership of the Labour Party?

Should the NUTGW occupiers at Lee Jeans have been banned from membership of the Labour Party? Should the Manchester North AUEW DC be disaffiliated from the Labour Party for supporting the Laurence Scott pickets?

Were the pickets not "extremists" in occupying their factory against closure; in organising mass pickets to "forcibly" prevent the removal of plant and machinery? After all, such unparliamentary behaviour could hardly be described as being consistent with the "peaceful, reformist traditions" of the Labour Party, could it?

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WHAT'S ON

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

Islington Socialist Organiser meeting "Islington - Women's City?". Speakers: Rachel Lever (Women's Fightback) and speaker from Islington Council's women's committee.

3pm, Sunday 4 July, Thornhill Neighbourhood Project, Orkney House, Caledonian Road. Tea, coffee, sandwiches provided. For babysitting ring 607 5268.

POLISH SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN bulletin:

new issue out now.

Individual copies, or sale-or-return bundles, can be obtained from Marion Pitman, 29 Hampton Road, Twickenham, Middlesex. (01-898 7165) at 30p per copy.

Subscription (six issues) £2.50.

Contact: Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group, 64 Philbeach Gardens, London SW5 (01-373 3492), or c/o National Union of Journalists, Acorn House, Grays Inn Road, London WC1 (01-837 9464).

Glasgow Polish Solidarity Campaign. Ian McCalman, 18 Mossiel Rd., Glasgow G43. 041-632 1839.

Edinburgh PSC. C/o Edinburgh Trades Council, 12 Picardy Place. Oxford Labour Committee on Pfand, 468 Banbury Rd., Oxford. 0865 58238.

Coventry PSC. John Fisher, c/o ASTMS, 26 Queens Rd., Coventry. Labour Poland Solidarity Fund, c/o Cooperative Bank, 110 Leman St., London E1.

HEALTH WORKERS for the Full Claim meeting - Tuesday June 29, 7.30 at Headington Labour Club.

Speakers (in personal capacity): Dominic Johnson (NUPE convener, Churchill hospital), Jo Coxhead (Oxford CoHSE secretary).

SOLIDARITY with health workers: North Islington Labour Party meeting.

Thursday June 24, 7.30 at Archway Central Hall. Speakers: Jeremy Corbyn (Labour prospective Parliamentary candidate for North Islington and NUPF), Syed Boukhari (CoHSE)

LONDON Workers' Socialist League educationals on basic Marxism. New series starting soon.

Write for details and registration to WSL, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

Saturday June 19 to Sunday June 27 is Gay Pride week.

Events on Saturday 26th include:

GAY PRIDE carnival parade. Saturday June 26, assemble 12.30 at Reformer's Tree, Speakers' Corner, London, and march at 1pm to Malet Street.

Other gay pride events:
* Dance and disco, Manning Hall, ULU, Malet St. 4.30-6.30 and 7.30-midnight.
* Gay black group — all day event at ULU, Malet St.
* Gay youth movement (under 26) — meet outside Buckingham Palace for picnic, 11am.

* Gay workshops 3-5.30, Room 2c ULU. 'Irish gays in London': workshop 5.30-7.30, Room 2c ULU.
* Information stall at Gay's the Word bookshop, 66 Marchmont St, London WC1 — 11am to 8pm.

WORKERS' march against Racism: FROM Brick Lane through Brixton to TUC conference in Brighton. September 4 to 8. Sponsors include: Jayaben Desai, Anwar Ditta, Nasira Begum, Tony Benn, Ted Knight, Ken Livingstone, Paul Boateng. Details 01-274 3951.



COHSE: LEFT WINGERS FIGHT FOR ACTION

JANE GOSS reports on the Broad Left's work at last week's COHSE conference

A REMARK which sums up the week was made at a Health Workers for the Full Claim fringe meeting. When a delegate said that if it had not been for Group 81 (the Broad left) the conference would have been very dull and boring.

Both in the fringe meetings and the debates the left provided the only political expression of the week.

In a year which is facing the most serious attack on trade unionism ever seen in this country the COHSE leadership refused to even discuss the Tebbit Bill.

A resolution on Tebbit with two good amendments was lost as the delegate moving it was not at conference. An emergency

resolution was ruled out of order. But Group 81 had arranged a fringe meeting on Thursday with Michael Meacher, a COHSE sponsored MP, speaking on Tebbit.

110 people came to hear about the Bill, took away fact sheets and are now committed to discussing it in their branches.

As a speaker at the meeting pointed out COHSE's record of opposing industrial relations legislation is not exactly reassuring and everyone felt that Tebbit should have been debated in order that a firm policy on fighting the Bill could have been decided on.

The leadership, wary of members who are prepared to fight, would rather sit

back with the other TUC bureaucrats and talk about their opposition instead of actively fighting the Tory attacks.

Not content with stifling debate on Tebbit, Spanswick on the same afternoon issued a statement about two branch secretaries who have been sacked for organising strike action but refused to allow any discussion and would not allow the sacked members to speak to his statement. He gave no commitment that COHSE would call for supporting strike action in line with the NEC's emergency pay resolution which was passed on Tuesday.

But one of the sacked officials spoke at a health workers for the full claim

fringe meeting on Wednesday night.

A resolution calling for indefinite strike action had been defeated on Tuesday in favour of a weak NEC resolution calling for sectional strikes. The attendance at the Health Workers for the Full Claim meeting showed that there are a lot of COHSE members who are prepared to strike indefinitely and realise it is the only way to win. A special bulletin was produced for conference and nearly everyone at the meeting agreed to take orders for future bulletins.

The conference firmly established the role of Group 81 in COHSE. Rule change is biennial and most of the changes proposed by

the left in the campaign for more democracy were lost.

A resolution which would have given delegates control of Conference Arrangements Committee was only lost because the President refused a card vote.

But there was no doubt about the impact of the Broad Left. Every day brought us more credibility and more supporters.

The final Group 81 organising meeting on Friday discussed a strategy for strengthening and improving the organisation during the next year. The enormously successful fringe meetings provided a political perspective for the first time at COHSE conference. Changes are on their way in COHSE and the sooner the better.

No entry to members!

ON Monday, Albert Spanswick, under strong pressure from delegates, admitted to conference that visitors' passes would not be issued to members who wanted to come to conference for the pay debate the following day on the basis that the visitors gallery might collapse and this would weigh heavily on his conscience.

Come Tuesday morning, the visitors gallery was, as usual, half empty. But the hall and surrounding areas were swarming with police.

An NEC meeting at the weekend had apparently decided to turn the conference into a fortress against members expected to lobby on Tuesday. They feared a repeat of the militant scenes the previous week on a lobby of the TUC's NHS committee.

A busload of members

turned up expecting to be allowed to hear what conference was going to do about their pay claim. Three COHSE members walked in unopposed and asked to speak to their delegate.

The conference steward, seeing they had no visitors passes, called the police who manhandled them out of the hall.

A delegate tried to raise this appalling event on the conference floor and the rostrum microphone was switched off.

The members eventually got visitors passes from their delegate but were visibly shaken by the experience.

Many delegates and visitors who witnessed the event said they had never thought they would see the day when members of their own union would be evicted from their own conference by the use of police force.



JOHN HARRIS



JOHN HARRIS

Union leaders sitting on a volcano

WHILST the union leaders sit around the rooms of the Trades Union congress in London, they are blissfully unaware that they are sitting around the edges of a volcano far more serious than Vesuvius ever was. The National Health Service volcano is ripe, waiting to erupt, and when it does, not only one town will be devastated, the whole country will be engulfed in the ensuing chaos.

For many years — too many years, Health Service workers have sat back and accepted the crumbs which have been tossed in their direction, crumbs that have been squeezed out of various governments without much effort by the union leaders.

However, this year the workers have shown that they will no longer be appeased by pittance, and this so-called generous offer which has been made, may well be the final straw which breaks the camel's back.

On Tuesday June 8, National Health Service

workers staged the latest of their one-day strikes, with the support of many other workers, notably the miners, the fire brigade and the seamen, who feel that our cause is one worth fighting for. They were interested in our plight enough to stand alongside us, but were our leaders interested in us? Apparently not, for on the following day a contingent of Health Service workers from all over the country travelled to London to lobby the TUC in an effort to draw attention to the plight of the nurses and ancillary workers, and to urge them to try to do more for us.

However, when they arrived at the TUC headquarters the doors were barred and the union leaders declined to emerge from the security of the building to listen to our pleas. A handful of the more agile amongst us managed to slip through the police barricades, into the interior of the building to hand a letter to Mr. Len Murray, who promised that

he would read the contents out at the conference. He, the leader of the TUC at least showed a little interest, but what of the upper levels of the Health Service?

Mr Albert Spanswick, of COHSE, did not pay any attention to the delegation from Sheffield, where his members have been on strike, and he made it blatantly obvious that he was not interested in one nurse who tried to talk to him regarding our struggle.

Reshuffle

Perhaps the time has come when the Health Service unions have a reshuffle at the top, as does Mrs. Thatcher with her cabinet from time to time. For if our leaders are paying little attention to us, how can we expect those at higher levels to do so?

Outside the doors of Congress House, there stands a statue depicting a man holding out his hand to one of his fellow men to

help him rise from the ground, is it not about time that our leaders followed the example set by this statue, which was obviously commissioned to depict the struggle the working class has had to form a body which will help him to raise his standard of living.

Poverty line

The National Health Service workers need a helping hand to raise them above the official poverty line, where they have been floundering for far too long. Surely the men to do this are, or should, be our union leaders. When are we going to see the helping hand extended to us by our union leaders?

When are the union leaders going to save the lives of the life-saving force of this country — the National Health Service workers?

D.D. Gunn, on behalf of Salford Area Health Workers

SPANSWICK VETOS NAC AFFILIATION

THE unbelievable and impossible happened at COHSE conference on Friday. Albert Spanswick in his wisdom, reversed on behalf of the NEC, a decision which was taken that morning by conference!

He was not ruled out of order, he ignored the fact that his action was in direct contravention of the union's standing orders.

And in one short speech he wiped out the conference decision to affiliate to the National Abortion Campaign.

Group 81 supporters walked out in disgust at such blatant manipulation. Apart from the staunch and vocal anti-abortionists everyone was stunned at what happened.

Since the NEC decided not to implement the affiliation to NAC called for last year, the left have been organising and working to get the abortion issue firmly decided at this year's conference.

A reference back of the order paper was moved at the beginning of conference in an attempt to get abor-

tion discussed before Friday.

This was rejected. We organise a fring meeting on abortion. Over 1500 leaflets countering the SPUC/LIFE arguments were handed out to delegates during the week.

The work paid off on Friday with conference passing by 500 votes a resolution censuring the NEC for its failure to affiliate to NAC after the 1981 conference, and instructing COHSE to affiliate without delay.

Another resolution calling for a campaign around the change in the notification forms was lost.

During the week the right wing and some national officers had made vague references to the 'left fringe' and their intervention.

However, as soon as the resolution on abortion was passed the right began a fierce lobby of the NEC and the Conference Arrangements Committee in an attempt to rescind the decision by an emergency resolution.

The Conference Arrange-



ments Committee chucked the 'Emergency' out. Not prepared to accept this the lobbying by the right continued in a disgusting statement by Spanswick "clarifying" the situation using what he said was the "confusion" of the morning's debate he reversed the results of a card vote!

No doubt the NEC, sulking at actually being censured, gave their approval to his statement. Certainly none of them, (including the one woman) left the platform in solidarity with delegates who were walking out.

It was a bitter end to the conference and another blow to women in COHSE. The continuous arguments over abortion in COHSE reflect the imbalance in the role which women play in the union.

The majority of delegates are men yet 77% of the membership are women. Instead of seeing abortion rights as a class issue the

bulk of delegates view it only as a 'moral' issue.

Several women delegates argued against abortion not only by saying that contraception is freely available but also by saying that contraception is solely the woman's responsibility and she must take the consequences of her "irresponsibility".

These are arguments which activists must take up and oppose politically.

It is unlikely that Spanswick and the NEC will get away with their latest attack on women. The issue of abortion and the manipulation of conference will be raised in branches and regions.

Meanwhile individual branches should affiliate to NAC if they have not already done so, and details of affiliations should be sent to Spanswick along with condemnations of this latest attack on the right of conference to decide COHSE policy.

WHERE NEXT ON TEBBIT?

THE mass pickets and sympathy strikes in the NHS pay dispute, and the political strikes on June 10, would certainly be unlawful under the Tebbit Bill and probably were in large measure unlawful already under the Prior Employment Act.

Yet the Tories and the bosses knew better than to take on these thousands of workers mobilised in class action. Prudently they avoided any talk of using the courts.

At the same time the TUC leaders are disavowing any and every hint of working class action to stop — or even protest against — the Tebbit Bill. Leaflets at railway stations is about as far as they go.

The contrast sums up the problems in the fight against Tebbit. The labour movement has the strength to stop the Bill — but our leaders will not mobilise it.

Their long-standing excuse is that trade unionists are depressed and demoralised by the slump. It was always a half-truth at best: whatever the difficulties of a struggle, the point was that the leaders' line added to the difficulties rather than combatting them.

But now the depression in the working class movement is clearly lifting. As Socialist Organiser wrote

last week: "The mass movement is moving again for all to see".

There is still time to stop the Bill. It has completed its course through the Commons, but is not likely to become law or come into force until about September. Already the director-general of the Engineering Employers' Federation — aware of the potential strength of trade union resistance — has called on the Tories to postpone putting parts of the Bill into force.

The Mobilising Committee for the Defence of Trade Union Rights was formed in April to campaign for action to stop the Tebbit Bill. Its slogans were:

*Break all links with the Tories, withdraw from tripartite committees like the NEDC.

*For the TUC to call a one-day national strike, as preparation for the indefinite general strike action needed to defeat the Bill.

Since April many trade union and Labour Party bodies have affiliated to the Mobilising Committee or taken its leaflets to distribute. And the two slogans have had increasing resonance, especially in recent union conferences.

The call to withdraw from the NEDC will come up at the September TUC. But

the campaign for breaking links and for one-day strike action can and should be pressed ahead now in individual unions.

The GMWU conference has called for increased powers for the TUC to instruct individual unions to take strike action. This call needs to be taken up — and strengthened with a campaign for a commitment to all-out strike action in the event of the Tebbit Bill being made law and used against trade unionists.

Finally: the campaign against Tebbit should be taken through the whole labour movement, not just the trade unions. The Mobilising Committee is seeking commitments from Labour councillors and Labour councils to defy the law, especially its ban on 'union labour only' conditions in contracts.

Available from the Mobilising Committee, 23 Middle Lane, London N5 8PL:

*Act Now Against Tebbit: basic statement of the Mobilising Committee.

*How does Tebbit's Bill affect you: factsheet on the law prepared by Ruth Goldman.

*Draft statement against the Tebbit law for Labour councillors.

Send s.a.e. or £5 per thousand for bulk orders.

Huge support for Welsh strike

MARTIN BARCLAY
(NUPE branch secretary,
Cardiff Royal Infirmary,
in personal capacity)
reports on the June 16
Day of Action

MINERS, seamen, civil servants and council workers took strike action in Wales on Wednesday 16 June alongside the NHS workers.

Cardiff saw an unprecedented display of working class solidarity as over 10,000 workers took part in

the demonstration against low pay in the health service.

Health workers lined the last hundred yards of the route and gave them a reception that moved several miners to tears.

From the platform Emlyn Williams declared the solidarity of the miners with the health workers, pointing out that the best possible way to defeat the Tories anti-union legislation was for non-NHS workers to support hospital pickets.

Earlier in the day, miners

and seamen paid a visit to the Heath Hospital and Cardiff Royal Infirmary picket lines, providing a tremendous boost to the morale of the strikers.

All-out action

Since that Wednesday, several sections in these two hospitals have expressed support for all-out indefinite strike action.

However, the attitude of the leadership was clear from

the platform at the rally. Charlie Donnett from the GMWU, the man who described NUPE as cowboys when they voted for all-out strike action, claimed that an all-out strike would result in a bigger death toll than the Falklands in just one week and there was no way that NHS workers would come out on all-out strike.

Derek Gregory, NUPE Divisional Officer for Wales, didn't even mention all-out action in his speech. All we had was militant-sounding platitudes about the nasty Tories.

Fight on

Obviously NUPE officials must be made to fight for union policy in this pay campaign and not let it drop because of the likes of Donnett.

On the same day the South Glamorgan Area Health Authority decided to close Rhydylafar, a major orthopaedic hospital. Again the militant attitude of the miners shone through and a determined campaign of civil disobedience was put forward as the way to stop the closure.

Breakthrough

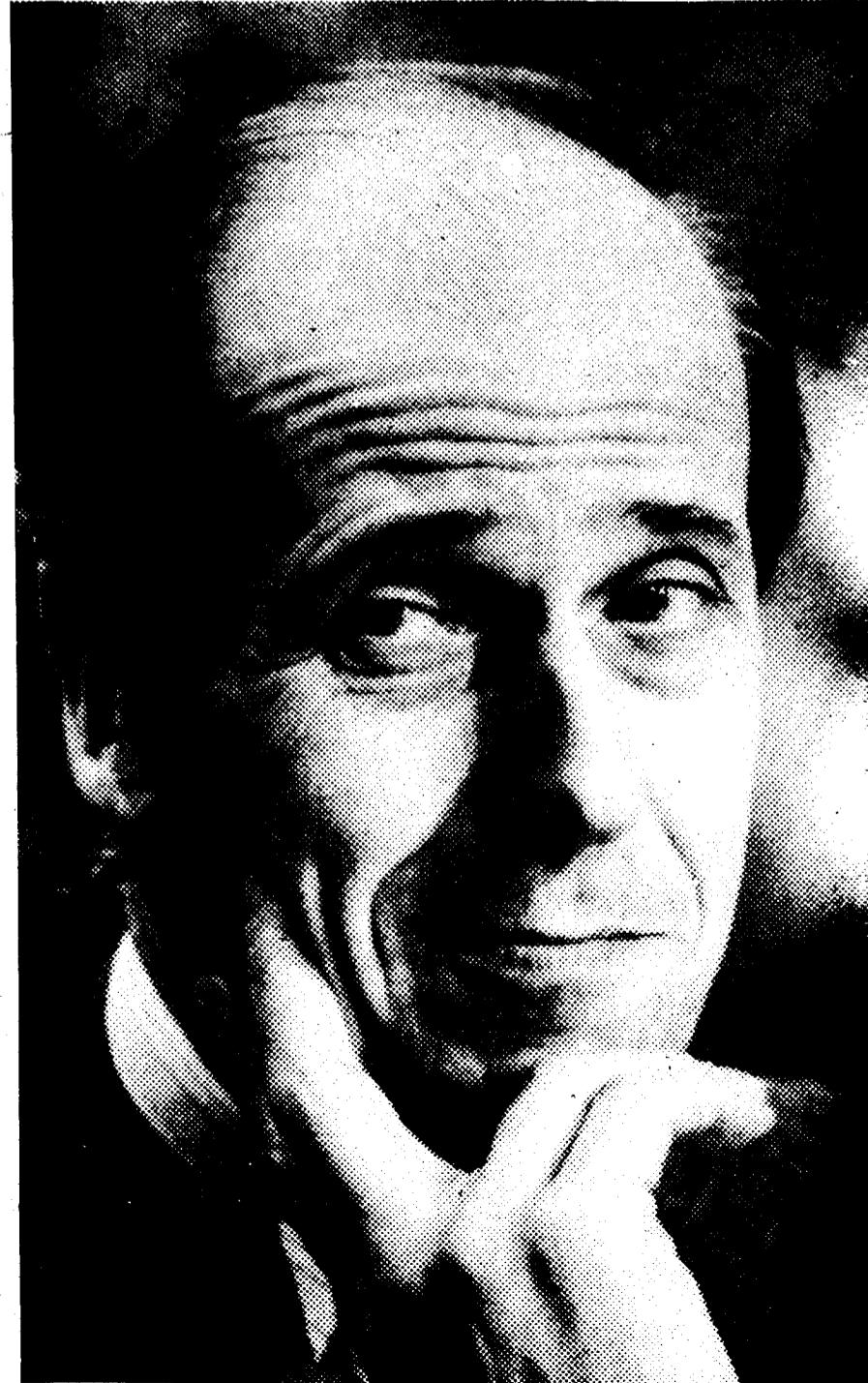
NHS workers should learn the lessons. That day was the culmination of several weeks of hard lobbying and was the most significant breakthrough we have had in this pay campaign and in the long awaited fightback against this government.

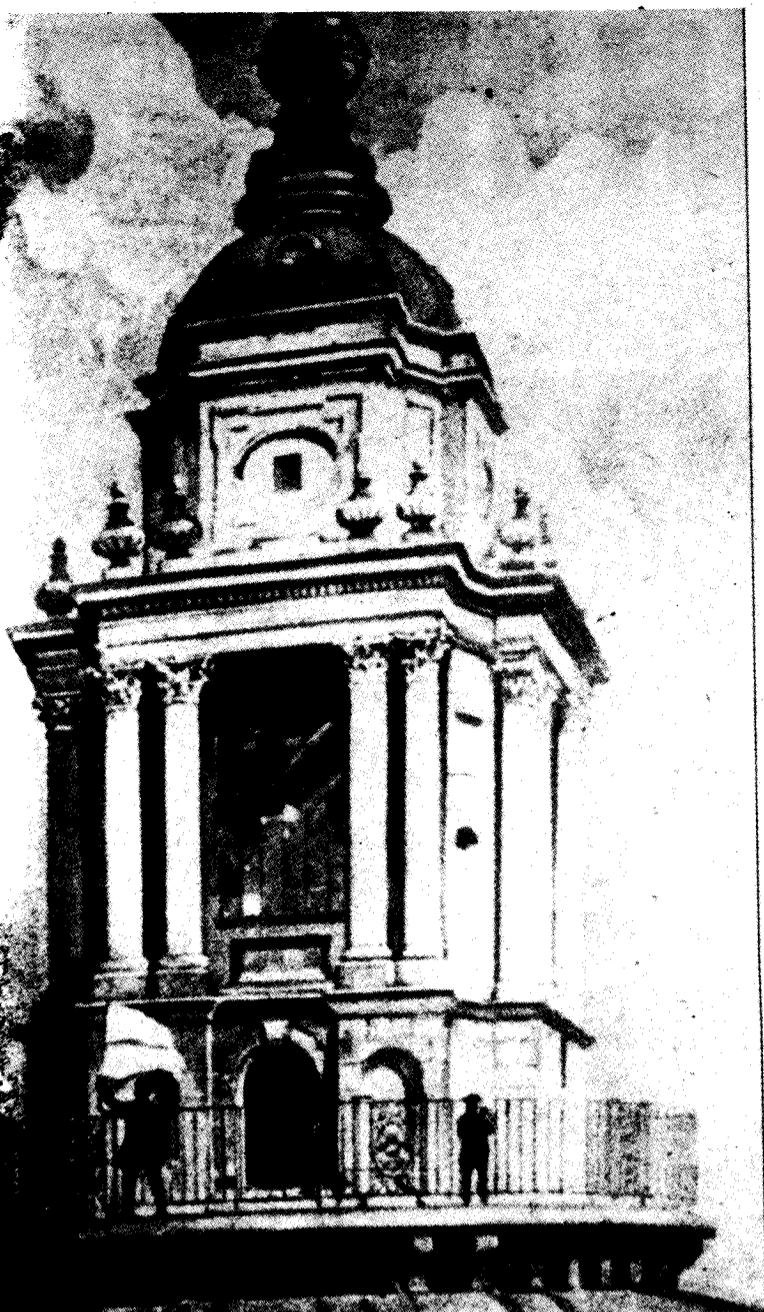
MARTIN BARCLAY



Above (and on facing page) scenes from the Day of Action

JOHN HARRIS





View from the dome of St Pauls during the 1911 rail strike



NUR Executive meeting 1926: J.H. Thomas is seated at the back of the table to the right of the chairman

RAIL WORKERS VICTORIOUS BANKRUPT LEADERS

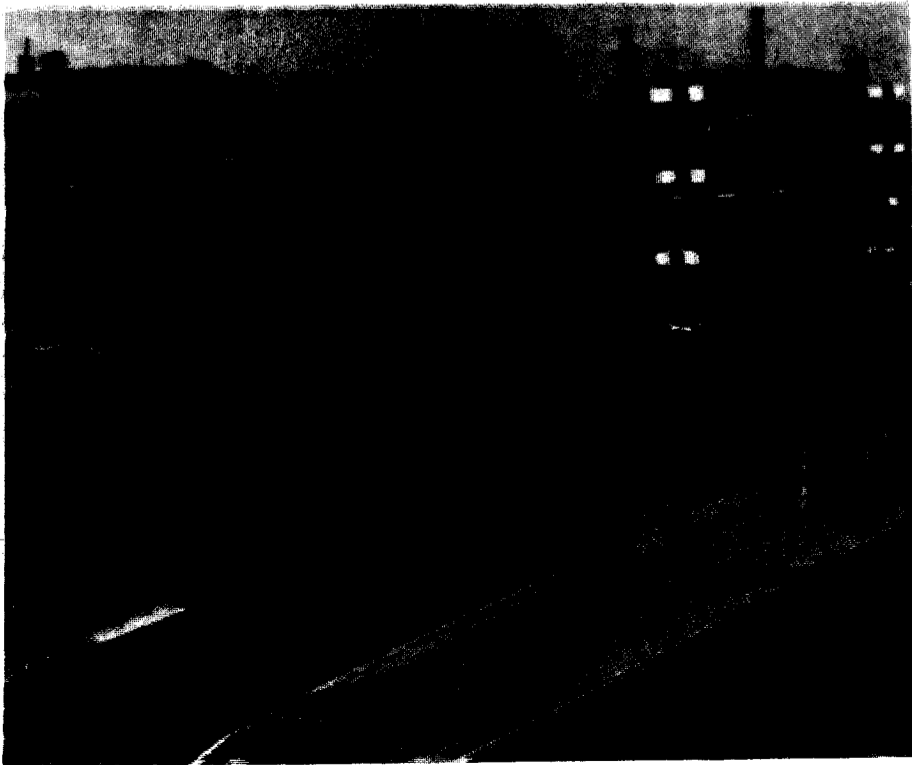
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And the industry with the first 'industrial' union attempting to cover all grades has also been the one most characterised by 'craft snobbery' and inter-union division.
It is not possible to deal with all these events in railway and trade union history in a short article like this, but it is possible to point to some trends that remain relevant to this day.
When the railway system was built by the first 'navvies' in the 1830s and 1840s its construction represented a new phase in industrial capitalism. Profits were never high and rationalisation and amalgamation came almost from the start.
Nationalisation was supported well before the end of the 19th century by capitalist politicians like WE Gladstone.
This even before there was great competition from the motor car and the road systems, railways were under constant economic pressure. This helps to explain why railway employers were particularly vicious with their own employees.
The unions were not recognised for many decades after their foundation and improvements for railway workers were often secured through parliamentary lobbying

where support could more easily be obtained.
Railway workers in the late 19th century were able to gain easier working conditions and shorter working hours through legislation. They even got support from Lloyd George and the post 1906 Liberal government to put pressure on the employers to set up a 'Conciliation Board' in 1907, and eventually to agree to negotiate with the unions following a national two-day strike in 1911.
Liberal MP
It is not entirely surprising therefore that Richard Bell who was General Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants from 1897 to 1910 was a strong supporter of the Liberal Party — indeed he was a Liberal MP. However his members became more and more convinced that they had little to gain from such a political stance.
The consequences of the Taff Vale strike of 1900 after which the ASRS had to pay over £28,000 for the 'crime' of going on strike changed all that.
Railway workers and many others realised that they needed independent labour action.
This feeling was further reinforced in 1908 when a certain Victor Osborne, a

member of the union and a Liberal, got a legal judgement against the union's financing of independent Parliamentary candidates. This campaign reinforced support for independent labour representation amongst trade unionists as a whole and helped to radicalise railway workers in particular.
The old Liberal General Secretary Bell went in 1910 and support for stronger trade unionism resulted in the setting up of the NUR in 1914. The Union supported the Triple Alliance with Miners and Engineers for mutual support in disputes. It was in the forefront in the 'Definitive Strike' of 1919. This



Waterloo at a standstill in the 1911 rail strike

was the first national general strike ever called by a union in Britain. It caused a significant political crisis and was largely successful in terms of its demands on wages and conditions.
This was not the end of militancy of railway workers in this period. In 1919

the Railway Clerks Association secured recognition. (This has been known as the Transport Salaried Staff Association (TSSA) since 1951, and was the pioneer white collar union with strong links in the labour movement as a whole though at times a conservative force within railway trade unionism).
In 1924 ASLEF ran a national strike in a successful effort to maintain the differentials of drivers, though NUR members worked normally.
In 1926 all sections of railway workers, including the white collar group, supported the miners in the General Strike and many suffered victimisation as a result.
Nevertheless, the railway workers suffered in this period under a leadership unworthy of the struggles of union members. John Bromley, General Secretary of ASLEF from 1914 to 1936, who appeared on many left wing platforms in the early '20s moved rapidly to the right after 1926, preaching the special privileges of his members.
Stuffed shirt
The NUR for their part had the misfortune to be inflicted with Jimmie Thomas as General Secretary from 1916 to 1931.

Thomas, collaborator, was Stuffed Shirt and amused and invidious the arising with who closely associated. He spent General Secretary trying to his personal not successful way worked as a result of the strike.
Wa
In the tions, the steam rail comparat wage le When the nationalis nobody of all the d received sation. osity w railway In the the NUR compelled bers to ca after the pitiful wa in the y out on a first call since the NUR drivers — as t

Counting the cost of "railwaymen's charter"

WHEN THE NUR signed the "railwaymen's charter" in 1980 with BRB it was said to be a joint approach to government. It committed the NUR to accept job losses "to match the new business situation", closure of collected and delivered parcels, a reduction in freight marshalling yards and administrative changes involving the introduction of computers, etc.

From the BRB came a promise to seek investment in electrification, loco and wagon building, channel tunnel, advanced passenger trains, and so on.

The NUR insisted that these changes should result in better pay, longer holidays, better working conditions and a shorter working week for remaining staff. Moreover, there should be no compulsory redundancies.

This agreement was accepted by the government who promised investment to be synchronised with changes. Those of us on the railways who argued that such promises were worthless and that such a joint approach with management only tied our hands to their advantage, got little hearing.

Now, in the last 18 months, 17,000 jobs have gone. C&D parcels has closed, marshalling yards

ROB DAWBER (Sheffield City NUR) sketches the background to the pay battle due to start next week

have been shut and administrative changes have gone through.

Working conditions have not improved but worsened; ten deaths in the first three months of this year. We now have a basic 39 hour week but it had to be self-financing. And we need about 20% to return our wages to the 1979 level.

Electrification has not taken place - in fact withdrawal of the promise of it is once again being used to threaten us in this dispute.

The channel tunnel has not materialised and the advanced passenger train has been scrapped after spending £40 million developing it.

On loco and wagon building, a programme of renewal which would have created 6,000 jobs is in a situation of threatened shut-down.

While some of the workshop closures have been postponed for six months, BRB want the same number of redundancies (5,000) to come from the regional workshops.

Privatisation has gone on apace on the railways. Hotels have gone in two packages



Weighell - sold out down the line

so far. The NUR invested half a million pounds in the first of these!

Plans are well advanced for the sale of Sealink, more BR hotels and the BR docks board.

In 1979 BR had 130,000 wagons, 17,000 of which were privately owned. By 1986 it plans to have 34,000 wagons, 25,000 of which will be privately owned.

The extra wagons for private ownership will also be built by private enterprise.

BRB also want to get rid of 3,000 of the existing 11,000 miles of track.

Clifford Rose, personnel

manager for BRB, boasts that they are well on their way to a planned loss of 38,000 jobs by 1985.

Meanwhile the government has just responded to BR's claim of this year's public service obligation grant by knocking off the extra to cover inflation since last year and then another £15 million.

Investment is not taking place. Wagons are being botched, locos cannibalised for spare parts, and so much track is unsafe that speed restrictions have meant that the Western Region, for example, has had to be retimetabled.

No-one can deny that the NUR leadership has sold its members down the line on a set of promises from the Tory government. They've sold our jobs and conditions as their side of the bargain and got their noses rubbed in it, though sadly, not by the members.

Against this background comes the latest offer - 3% for the whole year if we accept six productivity items by the end of July and there are no disruptions at all.

Investment

And disruption or strikes will jeopardise the investment for electrification.

All these threats and pleas to common sense are in a letter sent to each railway worker from Peter Parker. He says we are broke, we can't afford to borrow money, and BR expects to lose £165 million this year. He doesn't say that the Tory government is behind all this, turning the screw and egging the BR Board on.

Incidentally, Peter Parker has just accepted a pay rise of £15,000 (20%) on his £64,000 salary.

Rail works victory

2,000 workers at the Glasgow workshop of British Rail Engineering Ltd walked out on Thursday 17 June in the face of management's provocative attacks on their bonus rate payments.

Three days prior to the walk-out, Coburn, the works production manager, had informed the works committee, of a £2.42 cut in the bonus to be paid out that week, although he was unable to produce any production figures to justify such a cut.

(Coburn was moved to Glasgow after successfully closing down the Ashford works).

Support for the strike was 100% so no pickets were placed on the gates. Even the works security were out on strike as well as they too received the bonus payments, leaving the managerial staff to patrol the site and man the gates.

A mass meeting on the Friday voted to continue the strike and on the following Monday production managers from Derby travelled up to Glasgow to find a formula for ending the dispute.

The formula included: full pay for all days worked the previous week including the full bonus rates; maintenance of existing bonus rates; the setting up of a working party (involving management and union officials from outside Glasgow) to inquire into the causes of the strike and propose new methods of calculating bonus payments.

This formula was accepted at a further mass meeting and in the short term at least the management offensive has been pushed back.

In the long term, the workers face real dangers with Coburn, in line with BR policy, seeking to increase productivity and reduce the size of the workforce.

TIMS OF

WILLIAM BOOTH looks at the history of the rail unions NUR and ASLEF

turned class into a fine known as 'Mr' by cartoonists viewed with contempt by those from amongst the aristocratic riff-raff he was most hated.

Every day of the week in May 1926 it went out. Though the efforts were valiant, many railways were victims of the defeat of itself.

levels

Following generalisation of the era of the railway, jobs were secure, but they were diminished. Railways were in 1947, closed it, least of capitalists who were not shown to

By part of 1955 leaders were by their membership industrial action had accepted a increase. Later ASLEF came on strike, the by any union general Strike. members including are instructed had been in

1924 - to work normally by their leaders. This induced feelings of bitterness which have by no means disappeared at the present day.

As a result of the attitude of their leaders many NUR members left their union and joined ASLEF, helping to maintain divisions that also persist.

It was in the 1960s that decades of moderation and collaboration by leaders of the NUR allowed the massive run down of the railways by ex-ICI boss Beeching, virtually without a fight. The industry lost a large proportion of its network, and the unions tens of thousands of their members.

The powerful commercial interests behind the road lobby had matters entirely their own way in part at least because of the weak and ineffective leadership of the NUR. This is nowadays admitted even by most of the current leadership, as is indicated in the second volume of Bagwell's official history of the union (p.134).

In the early '70s, as many readers will remember, there was a partial fight back by the unions and a restoration of some of the wages and conditions that had been lost. The NUR leaders, like their predecessors have become involved in productivity negotiations which attack the conditions

of their members.

The Tories at the moment are more determined than any of their predecessors to reduce investment in the public sector in order to come to the aid of various private interests. In this situation it has been ASLEF members who have been in the forefront to defend working conditions in their campaign against 'flexible rostering'.

However, history shows clearly that NUR members cannot be held back permanently by the 'moderation' of their leaders. The battle on which they now seem likely to embark will undoubtedly have at least as much significance as that of 1911, 1919 and the 1972 strikes.

They can help not only to defend wages and jobs but also to force back the Tory attacks on the railway industry.

Once again the rail unions are entering a struggle of great political significance divided amongst themselves. Militants in ASLEF often argue that they need to maintain a separate union not because they are 'superior' to NUR members but because they can more easily secure industrial action in the present set-up.

Surely now is the time to think whether such attitudes can persist, when it is necessary to challenge the right wing leaders throughout all the unions.

At any rate, unity of all sections of railway workers and of the trade union movement as a whole will be essential for the success of the impending battle.

ASLEF ready to fight rosters

STEVE GOOD (Kings Cross ASLEF) reports on why the rosters loom larger than the pay claim

A RECENT circular from the ASLEF executive committee includes a "leak" from the British Railways Board. The "leak" is a letter from BRB central management to local managers on how they should implement the variable rosters.

After exhausting all the channels of consultation, management will make up their own flexi-rosters, and if men refuse to work them they will be sent home.



ASLEF leader Buckton

"It is equally important" the letter says, "that those rosters produced are in accordance with the RSNT criteria as your staff have been directed and that they are well prepared and can be sustained in demonstrating the benefits to staff without fully exploiting, in the first instance, the savings to be derived together with the re-allocation of work."

Soft-sell

In other words it's a soft-sell - or downright deceit! The new rosters are to be presented at first as attractively as possible with little variation on the eight hour day, and then tightened up later to cut jobs and worsen conditions.

Variable day programmes have now been drawn up for implementation at all depots on the Great Eastern with the exception of Stratford. Rosters drawn up for Hitchin depot are due to commence on July 5 and there isn't a single programme over 8 hours, in order to make the new rosters look as harmless as possible.

However, management have told Hitchin drivers that if they do not work the new rosters and are sent home, their work will be covered by Cambridge and

King's Cross men!

Management are indeed clutching at straws if they believe this ploy will work. King's Cross branch of ASLEF are committed to opposing the rosters even if they have to go it alone.

The possibility for the unions to score a resounding victory are there, yet ASLEF continues to equivocate over the NUR strike call.

Perhaps even more disturbing is the total lack of direction over management's criterion to impose the new rosters: so far the only instruction to ASLEF members comes in the form of an instruction to local union representatives not to consult over the rosters. King's Cross branch has called upon the Executive to organise immediate national action if management attempts to impose new rosters.

Otherwise we will have one depot taking action over the rosters, getting the immediate support from possibly five or six other depots, but those few depots remaining isolated.

Under those conditions the whole fight against flexi-rosters could collapse in total confusion. The executive must demonstrate leadership at this critical time. It is not a time for resting on the laurels of the previous strike.

Unions must fight for Gay rights!

THE number of local authorities with Equal Opportunities policies providing protection for gays could almost be counted on one hand. (Lothian Region, Greater Manchester, GLC, Nottinghamshire, Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Lambeth).

Only seven out of 517 are known to have added those two important words, "Sexual orientation" to the attributes listed in Equal Opportunities policies as free from negative discrimination in employment.

On the positive side, all seven are Labour controlled and there are prospects of others amending their policies in the coming year, as a result of the leftward moves in the composition of some Labour Groups following the local elections in May. Manchester City and Islington come immediately to mind.

Nottinghamshire County Council is the latest to approve a new employment policy, and so became the first authority with teaching functions to protect its employees from anti-gay discrimination. In this it is in advance of the Inner London Education Authority where, it is alleged, the lawyers are worried about conceding equal opportunity to gay teachers.

Indeed, Nottinghamshire Tories objected to the inclusion of sexual orientation in the statement of Employment Policy on the depressingly familiar grounds that children would be 'at risk' from gay teachers.

'Human morals would be debased to the lowest possible level' declared Tory Councillor Madge Whittaker, during the Committee debate.

And whilst Labour councillors rebutted Tory attacks on this and other points relating to gays,

Chris Richardson and Richard McCance, Labour Party members and gay activists in Nottingham, examine the campaign for gay rights in employment with particular reference to Nottinghamshire, where the activities of the Gay, trade union, and labour movements have secured a notable local advance

their position was essentially a defensive one. They hadn't mentioned sexual orientation until the Tories raised it.

Similarly, Frank Higgins, Labour Chair of the Resources Committee responsible for the Policy, made no reference to sexual orientation when interviewed a few hours later on local radio. More curiously, neither did Tory spokesperson Fred Woodward, in spite of making gays their main target in the half hour committee debate, and despite having said that they would accept an Equal Opportunities Policy — providing job protection for gays was left out.

Ultra-positive

Tories are not alone in objecting to employment protection for gays. Some Labour authorities have done so too; though, of course, with our own best interests at heart.

The ultra-positive view is advanced that since they don't discriminate against anyone it is unnecessary to single out minority groups, such as gays, which might consider themselves in need of protection.

To single out groups would, so the argument goes, be a form of discrimination. This was the atti-

tude of Barking Council's Director of Social Services in 1977, replying to a National Council for Civil Liberties questionnaire, and sums up the attitude of many of the local authorities which took the trouble to respond:

"The situation in Barking is that there is no laid down policy regarding the employment of homosexual women and men. Every applicant to the Department for vacant posts receives the same consideration and an appointment is made by the Committee who select the person they feel is most competent to carry out the duties of the vacant post. The Committee have no strong views on employees' activities outside working hours and to my knowledge there has never been a dismissal on the grounds of homosexuality. I know this does not cover all the points of your questionnaire but I trust it will at least give you some indication that there are no prejudices operating within my Department or, for that matter, within the Authority."

Yet it was Barking's Labour Council which dismissed Susan Shell last year, solely for being a lesbian, and which ignored the approaches of the trade unions and the hundreds of postcard objections sent to the Leader of the Council in a campaign organised by Gay Rights at Work.

Like women and blacks, the gay movement has learned from cases like Barking the need for positive written commitments to non-discrimination as an essential first step towards equality in all aspects of employment.



Time for an SO gay caucus

NO TIME like the present. There has been talk of setting up a gay caucus in the Socialist Organiser for — but somehow it has not been done. However, the Socialist Organiser AGM coming up this week and the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights is holding a workshop at it, so that is a golden opportunity.

Why have a gay caucus? The struggle to get rights and liberties recognised as an issue in the labour movement has made advances in the last ten years or so. But that, many gay people cannot feel comfortable 'come out' in labour movement or even left organisations. Socialist Organiser has no exception.

And work needs to be coordinated with the Campaign for Gay Rights, who have conducted regular articles in the Socialist Organiser, with other campaigns, SO gay caucus could be more effectively run. Women's Fightback with the National Left Youth Movement (NLYM). The LPYS Summer Camp is approaching (week in August) and are always fruitful in on gay liberation. [Well, we've not got the YS majority yet we're working on it!]

It is also fitting that a gay caucus is set up last day of Gay Pride — so be at the LCGM shop at the AGM!

[If you can't make the SO AGM, write to the Caucus, c/o 28 Lane, London N8 8P.

Few of us are so naive as to believe that a small change in the fine print of an employer's policy statement is, in itself, going to make any dramatic change in the work situation and quality of life for gays, but it is a necessary campaign to wage.

Raising the issues becomes an educational event for both sides; often positive responses conceal strong underlying prejudices. In Nottinghamshire the controlling Labour Group recently accepted an offer by the local Campaign for Homosexual Equality to be shown the tape/slide kit "Homosexuality: A Fact of Life" prior to the monthly Group meeting.

Held early on a Monday morning it was perhaps not surprising that only 15 of the 55 Labour councillors turned up to see it, but the really unfortunate aspect of their response was that so many believed that showing the kit in schools would lead youngsters at an impressionable age into a life of homosexuality, to borrow a familiar cliché.

They still saw gayness as, at best, a temporary aberration or, at worst, an unfortunate accident to be tolerated among those born 'that way'. And they still believed that homosexuality could be passed on like some contagious and incurable disease to those who were naturally, healthily heterosexual.

Perhaps it is therefore significant that the Nottinghamshire change in policy came about primarily as a result of trade union initiative. Eight years have elapsed since Nottinghamshire gay trade unionists began their campaign for job protection in the

County branch of NALGO, which resulted in their Equal Opportunities Committee taking up gay rights as a relevant issue.

Gay activists in CHE meanwhile kept NALGO informed of research into anti-gay discrimination at the workplace.

With NUPE also committed by national conference decision to support the rights of it gay members the situation was ripe for a joint approach to the County Council, and this also took place last year in the context of a re-negotiation of employment policies.

The County's policy includes some useful clauses which must be pursued by the gay and labour movements locally. Firstly, all employees are to be informed of the Statement. Secondly, "more detailed research in consultation with the trade unions, ethnic minorities and other minority groups" on aspects of employment discrimination is to be undertaken.



EQUAL RIGHTS? LATER, LATER!

THE National Executive Committee, at its meeting on 16 June, voted 9-7 to veto a "Labour's Programme 1982" recommendation that the age of consent should be brought down to 16 by the next Labour government.

The NEC want 18, which is a tremendous snub to the hundreds of Party activists, Union and Labour Party branches which have passed motions and attended meetings in support of 16. An indication of the weight of opposition to 16 came when Michael Foot and Dennis Healey voted against 16 in favour of 18.

The first time the NEC

considered the matter, they voted to back off from any commitment to an age of consent. Neil Kinnock MP — whom many comrades remember for his shocking remarks about "queers" during the 1980 CND Rally — successfully persuaded the NEC that the bravest socialist proposal Labour ought to put before the electorate should be yet another "Committee of Enquiry" into gays!

Letter-writing

The Labour Campaign for Gay Rights organised a letter-writing campaign and this had some effect:

Kinnock shifted his position... to support 18.

But the "compromise" of 18 is no compromise. Either the Party is going to accept equality or its not. The NEC has not accepted this principle and has confirmed the suspicion of many that the NEC is turning a deaf ear to the voices of the grass roots and the Scottish TUC who have supported 16.

It's not just on gay rights that the NEC is retreating: Ireland, women, blacks, foreign and economic policies have all been watered down after years of democratic debate in the labour movement.

The Labour Campaign

for Gay Rights is calling on trade unions and Constituency Labour Parties to pass amendments to the formal motion "to adopt the NEC report ('Labour's Programme 1982') by amending the recommended age of consent for gay

men from 18 to 16. Comrades have August to take action. Labour Campaign for Gay Rights hopes for level of response. them c/o Gay Centre, Bloom St., Manchester M60.



LABOUR CAMPAIGN FOR GAY RIGHTS
National Conference
Saturday 24 July, 1982
11am - 5.30pm at

Queen's Walk Community Centre, Meadows
Workshops on LCGR, Labour Party Discussion document "The Rights of Gay Men and Women" — 'Is it enough?', plenary session and LCGR AGM.

Registration £2 waged, £1 unwaged. Conference open to members and supporters of the Labour Party.

- *Creche
- *Facilities for disabled
- *Crash pads (if booked in advance).
- *Left bookstall

For more information write to LCGR, 21 Devonshire Promenade, Lenton, Nottingham, NG7 2DS or phone Chris Richardson, 0602 780124.



A contingent of Scots Greys join police to escort scabs through Salford in 1911

AS Tories and top generals bicker about the allocation of increased defence spending in the wake of the Falklands war, Labour leaders have not been able to resist offering them some advice and solidarity.

Shadow defence secretary John Silkin has backed the naval lobby. The government's strategy, he complains:

"Does not actually defend us and doesn't adequately defend NATO either... We need to be a strong maritime power if we are to play our part in defending our country and NATO. It is still of the utmost importance to be able to have sufficient sea power with air cover to send a fleet half-way across the world."

(on Radio 4 "Today", June 21)

Silkin is perhaps the most clumsily outspoken, but far from the only, Labour leader to take up this debate.

The start of the war brought a succession of labour movement figures arguing that it proves that the Trident missile system would not have been any use — and that therefore there should be a shift of resources from costly large-scale nuclear weaponry to smaller "conventional" units.

And with a question mark hanging over the future of Britain's naval dockyards — involving the jobs of thousands of workers — union leaders too have joined in the debate on the structure of British "defence".

TGWU official Mick Martin, for instance, secretary of the trade union side of the Defence Shipbuilding Trades Joint Council, has argued that the Falklands crisis proves that Britain cannot afford to run down its conventional navy.

But all such discussion on defence policy leaves out the main issues. WHO is being defended? Against WHOM?

Why should Thatcher's viciously anti-working class government in Britain be allowed — let alone encouraged — to dispatch any ships, planes or weapons to wage war half way around the world?

Thatcher has used the Falklands war to try to reassert the armed might of British imperialism as a force to intimidate the peoples of the 'Third World' countries in the Southern hemisphere.

Now the Tories want a strengthened Navy and air force to enable them to do — or threaten — even more of the same thing, and establish a real, long-term military base on the Falklands: and Silkin

WHOSE ARMY? WHOSE DEFENCE?

HARRY SLOAN raises some questions that should be asked by Labour's leaders after the Falklands war



wants to help them!

The British army has been at war every year since 1945 — and not once could it be said to have been defending the British people.

In Kenya, Cyprus, Aden and now in Ireland it has waged wars against oppressed peoples fighting to free themselves from imperialism — against the allies of the British working class.

And its other main actions have been directly against the British working class itself, in strikes. These have been limited so far. But top army commanders openly state that the main use of the British army in coming years will be for civil war, not war against other powers.

Our enemy is to be found at home — the capitalist class of industrialists and bankers; the Tory

government which acts for them politically; and the state machinery, courts, police and armed forces, which uphold their rule and authority.

Any serious development of mass working class struggle in Britain will see these mechanisms for the "defence" of the capitalist state used as a means of attacking the workers' movement.

So what, then, should be the response of the labour movement to this talk of defence? One apparently very democratic approach has been spelled out recently by Peter Tatchell, Labour's non-endorsed candidate for Bemandsey.

He argues that: "Though I support nuclear disarmament, I am not a pacifist. As much as I abhor war, I would be prepared to fight to defend Britain if we were attacked

by a foreign aggressor...

"One... non-nuclear alternative to the present policies is a strategy of territorial defence by a mass citizen's army."

Pointing out that such a policy would raise no danger of being utilised for aggressive purposes, and offer effective defence against invasion, Tatchell goes on to claim that:

"The civilianisation of the armed forces entailed by a mass citizen's army would facilitate greater democratic control of military power. It would lessen the possibility that the armed forces could ever seize power in a coup..."

Charm

This of course has a certain truth and charm to it: but it is when Tatchell describes his proposed means of getting to this point that the weakness is exposed:

"Of course a citizen's army could only be created in the context of a long overdue democratisation of the armed forces..."

This renders the proposal simultaneously abstract and utopian.

It is one thing to take up or support demands for democratic rights for rank and file soldiers — while recognising the difficulty of mobilising around such demands in a professional rather than a conscript army.

It is quite another to cling to the illusion that the standing army — a backbone of the capitalist state — can be "democratised" effectively out of existence and peacefully transformed from an instrument of repression into a mass democratic body incapable of attacking the working class.

Tatchell is plainly sincere in his advocacy of a non-aggressive defence policy: but despite the fact that he is hounded by the right wing for advocacy of "extra parliamentary" politics he has failed — we think — to grasp the nature of the capitalist state itself, and the need for mass prolet-

arian action to smash that state.

Counterposed

We can, of course, go along with the call for a mass citizen's army: we too stand for the arming of the working class. But in today's conditions it is important to see that this is counterposed to the existing standing army, not the result of peaceful reforms within it.

Rather than seeking legislative changes through parliament and hoping for pressures for democratic reforms inside the armed forces, socialists must recognise the need to take up now the fight for policies and action which will lead towards the policy of a mass popular army as part of the struggle for a revolutionary workers' government.

Let us start from the problem of defending the working class and its most oppressed sections.

How can black communities defend themselves against racist and fascist violence? Should they wait for the police to act, or look forward to a mass citizen's army?

Immediate

No, the task is an immediate one. Defence of black people can only come from the formation of workers' defence squads, drawing the most militant blacks, together with the best forces from the organised labour movement to form independent bodies that will drive the fascists off the streets.

This same lesson holds good for the workers' movement. Jobs, living standards, working conditions and social services must be defended against the employers' offensive. This calls for mass action in which unions must be defended against the legal attacks waged by Tebbit and Prior, and against the violent assaults of police anti-picket squads.

Such defence of the working class again calls for independent workers

detachments, defence squads to protect picket lines and mass meetings.

To defeat the Tory government requires more than piecemeal struggles: it requires all-out general strike action in which we as workers organise collectively in local councils of action, both to establish our own control over emergency services and essential supplies, and to defend ourselves against state harassment and attack.

Disband army

From such local groupings the workers' movement must establish its own militia, an organised challenge to the centralised military power of the capitalist class and its state machine.

The toppling of the Tory government must be followed not by a return to the Parliamentary charade of Labour governments this century but by the fight for a workers' government which will be answerable to the workers' movement and set out to disband the capitalist standing army and nationalise the major industries, banks and trusts without compensation under workers' management.

The moment such policies were put forward would mark the time when this country became our country — not the country of our main enemies, our ruling class — for us to defend against external aggression.

And we should do so with a workers' army, a mass people's militia firmly under the control of the labour movement.

Integrated

In contrast to the capitalist standing army, based on separating off an armed force from the rest of society and training it in rigid, mindless discipline to make working class recruits the pliable tools of the Tory top brass, such a militia would be integrated with and controlled by the working class communities.

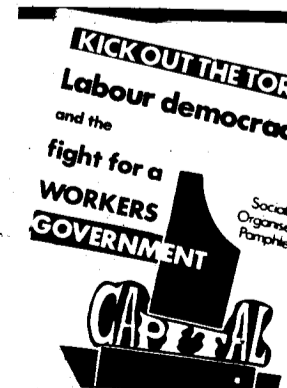
It would be based on universal military training and election of officers.

In contrast to the capitalist standing army's glorification of violence and military values, the people's militia would base itself on discussion and education about exactly what must be defended and how.

Instead of preaching the mindless patriotism of "my country, right or wrong", the people's militia would see itself as first and foremost a force for the liberation struggle of working people internationally. It would defend Britain against reactionary enemies — but central to such defence would be offering clear proof to the workers' movement on a world scale that the British workers' government was an anti-imperialist government which would immediately withdraw troops from Ireland, the Falklands and every other colonial outpost.

It would pledge material and political assistance to every struggle against imperialist oppression.

The struggle must certainly begin now. But it must focus not on 'democratising' the imperialist armed forces but building our answer — mass working class action, for workers' defence.



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

Writeback CORRECT TO CARTOON THATCHER



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

POSSIBLY it is a sign of political progress that the old stock images and symbols of British imperialism are no longer readily recognised, and are less widely utilised by the capitalist class. — This does not mean of course that there is less imperialist propaganda: rather that it tends to be slightly less brash and brazen in its presentation — though the grosser excesses of the Falklands war could mark a new

period of regression in this respect. However, it is clear that what used to be the familiar daily sight of Britannia, the armed female figure-head of British nationhood who appeared on the back of the old large penny piece, no longer rings a bell with many men, women and young people today. And probably for this reason, the recent SO front page cartoon — based upon linking Thatcher to a grotesque Britannia

figure rowing a dead body across the ocean towards the rising sun of a General Election — appears to have incurred more anger at its alleged 'sexism' than examination of its politics among your correspondents. This criticism seems to be wide of the mark. The cartoon is plainly not just an attempt to portray Thatcher as a woman; how in that case could the Britannia headgear be explained? Nor is it an



attempt to deny that both Thatcher and Britannia

are female figures standing for the armed might of British imperialism. Correspondents have claimed that the figure has grossly enlarged breasts: I do not think this is true — or part of the immediate impact of the cartoon. It may not be the world's greatest example of caricature — indeed facially the figure is to my mind much more like Mr. Punch than Margaret Thatcher! — but I think the cartoon is a serious attempt to depict a situation in which the Thatcher government is plainly hoping to exploit the war for its own authority and prestige at home.

The technique of exposing and depicting imperialist policy by using individual imperialist leaders as a recognisable reference point is historically well-established and no innovation in SO. Should Thatcher be relieved simply because she is a woman? I find it hard to see how the cartoon would not have been seen as 'sexist' had it depicted Thatcher as a bulldog, John Bull, General Kitchener, the British Lion or any of the stock 'male' symbols of British imperialism.

It is imperialism and its political leaders who are the enemy of women's rights the world over: Thatcher is one of those leaders. It is as such that she is correctly attacked in the SO cartoon. HAROLD PILKINGTON, Wolvercote



Fight war chauvinism

THE North Staffs Trades Council at its June meeting narrowly rejected a motion against the Falklands war.

The motion before the Trades Council, presented by AUEW-TASS, was clearly inspired by Militant.

It talked about initial 'blunders' by the British government, presumably referring to the fact that Thatcher had allowed Galtieri to invade the Islands in the first place, the hypocrisy of the Thatcher government in only now recognising the fascist nature of the Argentine regime, and the way in which Thatcher's economic policies had created an army of 'economic conscripts'.

The motion went on to condemn the war and set out three demands for the TUC to campaign for:

- 1) An immediate General Election to return a Labour government in the interests of workers here.
- 2) A campaign for trade union rights for the armed forces.
- 3) Assist the Argentine workers in overthrowing the junta.

Socialist Organiser informed the TASS delegates that we would put an amendment adding immediate withdrawal of the fleet, and the blacking of all war work. The Militant supporter moving the motion denounced us as wreckers, confusing a clear class line. There was no resonance for such a call in the labour move-

ment, he fumed.

A few minutes later the President of the Trades Council stated that the West Midlands Region of the TUC had called for the withdrawal of the fleet.

To give credit to the comrade from Militant his speech moving the motion was a round condemnation of Thatcher's war well presented, as was the speech of Don Scott seconding the motion.

A Labour Party member sympathetic to Socialist Organiser's position on the war moved our addendum to the motion.

After arguments from a number of delegates that they had no mandate to vote on the addendum because it had not been presented before their branches, the original motion was voted on and rejected, 24 to 32.

This reflects the weight of chauvinist sentiment that revolutionaries must combat in the labour movement, rather than acquiesce in as the Militant does.

More encouraging was a vote shortly after this to organise a broad labour movement conference in North Staffs on the Tebbit Bill. Union branches and Labour Parties will be able to submit motions on how to fight the Bill.

Yours comradely,
ARTHUR BOUGH,
(delegate, ASTMS 832 branch)



Solidarity with El Salvador on March 27

Latin American event

FOLLOWING the success of last year's Cultural Festival for Chile and El Salvador, it has been decided to make this an annual September event, and to embark again on three days of music, theatre, poetry, painting, dance, films and discussion workshops.

Last year there were contributions from Tepeuani, Jose Armijo, Karaxu, Red Ladder, CAST, Steel and Skin Adrian Mitchell, John duffer, Charles Beauchamp and many, many others.

Well over 1,000 people attended the three days and we are hoping for a much bigger participation this year. The theme of this year's festival is "Anti-intervention in Central America, and Solidarity with Latin American peoples in their struggle for self-determination", and it will concentrate particularly on Chile, El Salvador and Guatemala.

There will be three days of music, theatre, poetry, exhibitions, films, seminars and workshops at the Manning Hall, University

of London Union, Malet St., London WC1.

Sponsors

The sponsors of the Festival so far include Chile Solidarity Campaign, Chile Anti-Fascist Committee, El Salvador Solidarity Campaign, Chile Cultural Committee, and Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign.

We should like to ask for your support for this event, either by making a donation towards the costs, or by offering practical

and material help in publicity, etc., or helping in whatever way you feel appropriate.

More details can be obtained from the above address, and we will of course keep all interested parties fully informed on the progress of the festival preparations.

Thanking you in advance for your support and solidarity.

(For the Festival Committee)
Alejandra Altamirano

SCIENCE DUMPS STRUGGLE LIFTS OFF

by ARTHUR BOUGH

LAST year SO Science carried the story of the fight of residents in the Sandford district of Stoke against a toxic waste tip. After a local SO supporter and another Labour Party member discovered what was going to happen at the tip a campaign was rapidly launched to stop things in their tracks.

The progress of the campaign is a classic example of the way in which right wing Labour councillors allow council officials to run things, and the tactics these councillors adopt to exempt themselves from criticism.

One of the District Councillors for the area was a member of the Planning Committee which in 1979 had authorised toxic waste tipping at the site, whilst another District Councillor for the area was also a County councillor (for a different area) sitting on the Waste Disposal Committee which had approved the licence to tip toxic waste at the site. Not surprisingly therefore their reaction was extremely hostile to the two of us who had told the residents what was going on.

We were told that no one should have been told

because it would embarrass the Labour-controlled Council. In the weeks that followed all kinds of threats were made against us from libel actions to a mysterious motion of censure to be discussed at the District Party EC which just as mysteriously disappeared. Phone calls were made to other residents warning them against Trotskysts and trouble makers using them for their own ends.

After two meetings attended by several hundred people, the councillors decided they had better come out with verbal support for the residents. In the background however, they continued at best to do nothing.

If they hoped the residents would quickly tire and could be split they were in large measure wrong. But it was not until after months of bland assurances that things began to disastrously wrong for the Council.

In September an explosion at the tip rocked nearby houses. Tipping was halted while an investigation was conducted. As this was paid for by the company tipping at the site, Cleanaway, residents were not surprised

when it turned out as a whitewash.

But tipping of toxic waste had been stopped for several weeks, and now District Council elections were beginning to figure in the Council's thinking. The outcome is that the County Council has now bought the site from Cleanaway for use as a domestic refuse tip.

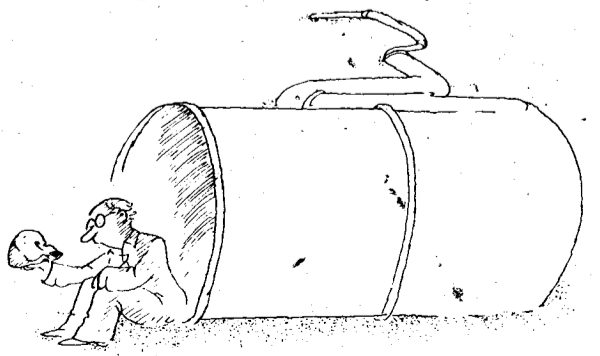
Whilst this was not the solution that many residents had hoped for, it has generally been accepted as a victory against the Council, and has helped to stimulate other residents in the area to protest against other bureaucratic Council decisions which are blighting their

environment.

Ironically, in the last 12 months two other proposals for toxic waste tips have been made in the City, one on the City Council Deputy Leader's ward. After all the publicity that had been attracted over Sandford other Councillors knew a good election ploy when they saw one.

Guardians

Not only did the City Council adopt a policy of opposition to the siting of all toxic tips in the City, but the Labour Party proudly presented this policy to the voters in the District elections as proof of what Guardians of the people the Council really are.



Socialist Organiser Alliance

Get Organised!

SOCIALIST Organiser fights to act as a real campaigning paper which can organise workers in the struggle for new leadership. To do so we need consistent support and money. Socialist Organiser Alliance groups have been established in most big towns. Why not join with us? Supporters are asked to undertake to sell a minimum of 6 papers per week and contribute at least £1.50 per month (20p for unwaged). If there is no group in your area why not help us to build one? To 'Get Organised', write at once to us at 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Name

Address

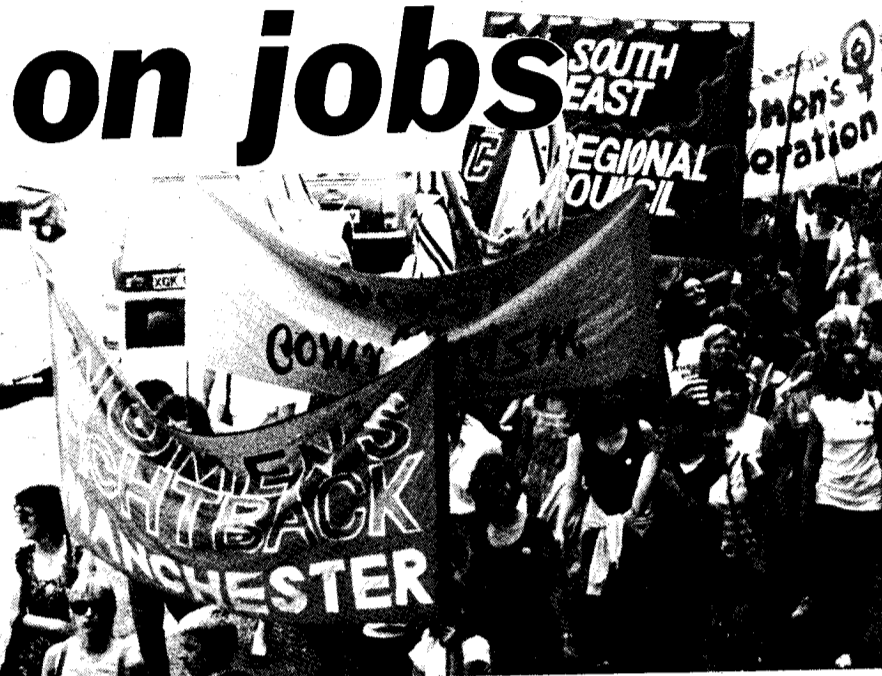
Let's shout loud enough to be heard

Women in struggle



Take struggle forward from June 5 march

ANNE CONNELL argues the case for a Women's March for Jobs to widen the fight in the labour movement



Enthusiasm of June 5 march should not be lost

JUST over a year ago, I was living in the leafy suburbs of the London Borough of Harrow.

One bright morning I went with my small daughter and a group of friends up a hill which led to the boundary of the borough — just south of Watford.

A crowd gradually gathered there, on the edge of the common; sundry kids, Labour Party members, local councillors, leaders of the GLC — that kind of thing.

We milled around for an hour or so and then, appearing over the crest of the next hill, we saw what we'd been waiting for. The green and white banner which headed the People's March for Jobs.

Within a few minutes they were among us. There was laughing, waving,

cheering, handshaking as we greeted these people who had been on the road for nearly a month and covered over 200 miles.

I was very moved by the whole thing, and lifted my daughter over the heads of the crowd so she could

shake hands with the leaders of the march. (She was actually rather more interested in ice-cream by this time, but forgive her, she was but a child).

We joined them, then, on their day's march to Wembley and it was —

quite literally — a day I shall never forget.

Another day I shall never forget was June 5 of this year, when women took to the streets of London in their thousands to protest at women's unemployment. In building for this

march, it seemed that the issues we had opened up were never-ending. Women are losing their jobs much faster than men — so why were there so few women on the People's March?

For that matter, where were the children? At home with their — presumably equally unemployed — mothers? Out of sight. Still — after all this time — invisible.

And when women do have jobs — what are they like? The gap between the average male wage and the average female wage is actually widening — equal pay legislation notwithstanding.

How many men are selected for jobs on the basis of their looks, charming smiles or 'good grooming'? How many men are not taken seriously at job interviews because they are young and married and will probably start a family in a

few years?

Wonderful though the People's March was, and as full of admiration as I was for the men who did it, I wonder just how much effort by how many silent, invisible women enabled them to do it.

Vicars

And for that matter where was the politics of the People's March? Its platforms were stuffed with full time officials and vicars, who offered no lead at all for those looking for a fight to defend their jobs and to defeat the Tory government.

Can we imagine women, who have been at the forefront of every struggle on jobs and wages in the last year, simply accepting such a bureaucratic gag on political discussion?

Perhaps our examples will show men trade union-

ists a thing or two about how to fight redundancies and closures. The occupation at Lee Jeans was a beacon of struggle for the whole labour movement, and it is women who have led the most tenacious recent fights for unionisation.

Let's bang out this message of struggle to offer hope to employed and unemployed alike that they can fight the Tory government.

A Women's March for Jobs. It's a grandiose, huge idea — but it can be done. We learned that by what we did on June 5 with just a handful of women, minimal resources and in the teeth of a fair bit of opposition.

This wouldn't be just the People's March all over again, but with the men/women proportions reversed. This would be a Women's March in every sense of the word; women telling their own stories, raising their own issues in their own way with their own voices.

And the kids, too. They won't be tucked conveniently away at home. (Can you imagine many men taking that on for a month while mum took to the road?) They'll be there, too, in buses and coaches when they can't walk, going on ahead to nurseries, schools, toddler clubs, women's refuges.

Run like hell

In Alice Through the Looking Glass, the Red Queen had to run like hell just in order to stay in the same place. If you're a woman, you often have to shout your head off in order to be heard, and perhaps you have to take over the roads of the whole country for weeks at a stretch in order to stop being invisible.

On June 5, the banners and the placards, the music and the songs flourished for a few brief hours along the Embankment to Battersea Park. If we start building now — building on the strength and will that is already there in women's groups across the country, then this time next year those few hours can be turned into weeks, and the thousands of women into tens of thousands. They're there, already. Just invisible, that's all.

THE Women's Right to Work Action Committee, who called the June 5 march, will be holding a "Where to now?" meeting at 11.30am on Saturday 3 July at UMIST Union, Sackville Street, Manchester. It's open to all women who are interested in building on what we achieved on June 5 and the idea of a Women's March for Jobs will be a prominent theme. No need to register in advance, just turn up and ask for the Action Committee meeting.

What we're up against

REPORTED in the papers last week were two incidents guaranteed to infuriate any woman who read them, . . . and hopefully a lot of men!

The first, reported in the Daily Telegraph is horrific, not only because of what happened, but also because of the anti-woman slant of the report.

Headlined 'Women's Lib protest at killing verdict', the article describes how a jury had to be escorted from a court in Winchester as there was 'an angry crowd of women' from whom there had been 'shouts and screams of protest' during the trial.

Then the reporter explains how a Peter Wood had admitted killing Mary Bristow — "a Women's Lib campaigner". Wood

'strangled her with his bare hands, battered her over the head with a meat tenderiser, and smothered her with a pillow.'

Deserved it?

But then there is an implication that this 'Women's Lib campaigner' might have deserved some if not all of what she got. Apparently Mary Bristow, a librarian, was 'ahead of her time . . . believed in free love'. (For this Daily Telegraph reporter, believing in free love appears to be synonymous with being a 'Women's Lib campaigner').

Mary Bristow "liked to help people less fortunate than herself, and Wood, with his working class background seemed an ideal

pupil. A blond, muscle-bound fitness fanatic, he ran 100 miles a week and enjoyed parachuting". He boasted in court of having 40 mistresses and said that he and Mary Bristow agreed to take lovers as and when they chose.

Mary did . . . and was brutally murdered.

The horrible story is presented almost as a warning to any other woman who is a 'women's lib campaigner' or who believes in free love or even just likes "helping people less fortunate than herself". Don't tangle with musclebound fitness fanatics, they just can't control themselves.

Wood was found guilty of manslaughter and cleared of murder, and sentenced to only six years.

The other report was of a student union meeting at Reading University which voted to disband the student women's group as it was closed to men. Three executive officers of the union resigned as a result. Only one of them was a woman.

There were 300 at the meeting, though the union has 5,800 members. The majority of the people voting against the women's group were men from the university's two all-male hostels.

Last September the women's group picketed one of these hostels when the men had invited a stripper to perform for them. Subsequently the women's group was not overly grateful when men

from this hostel decided to set up a group called Campus Watch to protect women from rapists on the campus.

The women's group set up a group of their own and operated a rape-crisis telephone line.

Cut off funds?

Now these male defenders of women have succeeded in closing down funds to the women's group which was prepared to challenge their sexist attitudes. Could there be any better argument for having a women's group closed to such pigs as these men obviously are?

Clearly not — but many people, women and men, say "Well, because there are a lot of male chauvinist pigs, does that mean all men, even sympathetic ones should be excluded from women's groups?"

I would argue yes — if and when the women in the group feel they want it to be closed to men.

Often even sympathetic men can dominate meetings — unconsciously.

Partly this is to do with the way they've been brought up — men are supposed to lead, be decisive, be dominant and so on.

Deferring

Partly it's because women find themselves deferring to men automatically, sometimes even if there's only one in the meeting.

There are many argu-

ments in favour of women-only meetings — but the overriding consideration must be given to the wishes of the women themselves at a meeting. If a woman feels more confident or comfortable in a women-only situation, then I think it's more important that she should be able to express herself freely than the man who might prevent her speaking — even if he would not intend to do that.

Many meetings on women's rights and liberation are mixed — open to both men and women. It's a small sacrifice for sympathetic men to defer to women's wish to have a closed meeting when they want to.

Clearly the two male officers at Reading University Students Union understood that.

by Jo Thwaites

A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE

LABOUR RIGHTS CAMPAIGN AGM

Sat. 26 June at Lambeth Town Hall, SW2. 11am - 4pm. Creche available.

For further details phone 670 6459 or 582 2955

Copies available (20p plus postage) from 41 Ellington St, London N7

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK

WE WANT JOBS

BRADFORD 12 SHOCK VERDICT

Self defence is no offence!

by Morag Sarkar



THE Bradford 12 trial was a political trial from beginning to end. The case began with a political statement from the Bradford 12 and ended with the jury making a political assessment of the case, which was self defence is no offence - the Bradford 12 are innocent.

So last Wednesday the remaining 11 defendants were acquitted with no coverage on national TV news and very little coverage in the press the following day.

It seems that the media are either not interested or maybe even scared about reporting the outcome and implications of the verdict

that this Jury had set a precedent on defending the black community, on the police and on conspiracy law.

The Bradford 12 were found not guilty because the jury believed that they were defending the black community from the threat of fascist and racial attack during a period of intense racial unrest where the police were not interested and failed to give that protection.

The case exposed the failure and attitude of the police to the West Indian and Asian communities. As far as they were concerned there was no prob-

lem of racist attacks for the ethnic minorities living in Bradford.

The attitude of the arresting police officer was revealed in the following statement: "West Indians in tea cosy hats motoring in town centres constitute by appearance alone suspicion that they were involved in muggings".

The case also exposed the conditions under which black people live in Britain. Always under the threat of their families, their homes and themselves coming under physical attack.

The solicitor for the Bradford 12 puts it this way: "For the Asian commun-

ity, this is a country families are subjected to daily abuse, in which the graffiti of Nazi Germany remains unerased on walls, where the men who protect the ideology that sent Jews to the gas chambers walk the streets in public parades escorted by the police force, - a doctor knifed to death by a racist who wins a £5 bet, a taxi driver has his throat cut because he, like the doctor, is the object of blind hatred because of the colour of his skin."

These are the conditions black people live in in Britain. And this is why the Bradford 12 had to defend its own community. One

slogan in our Bradford 12 Campaign was Self Defence is No Offence - Free the Bradford 12. And this is what the jury's verdict was.

After this success we must build on its foundations. The Leicester Bradford 12 Committee is now in the process of organising a national anti-racist, anti-fascist conference. We wish to build the campaign and not allow any of the issues raised in the trial of the Bradford 12 like police harassment, fascist attacks to drop. The fight has just begun.

Contact: The Bradford 12 Committee (Leicester) c/o Blackthorn Bookshop, High Street, Leicester.

NO WITCH-HUNT!

from back page

union establishment have been mortally alarmed by the drive for rank and file control in the Party, as indeed have the ruling class and its press.

It threatens the whole system of see-saw politics in Parliament on the basis of no fundamental difference in the way the two main parties administer the system.

The setbacks and subsequent retreats of the Left have given the signal for the counter-attack.

After the Blackpool conference victory in 1980 we warned in Socialist Organiser that if the Left did not push on to decisive victory, then there would inevitably be this backlash.

"Blackpool... unblocked some of the passages through which a real revolution can surge.

It is one of the most important political breakthroughs for the labour movement in decades. But at best it is half a revolution: the opening half.

We would do well to remember what Saint-Just said during the French Revolution: "Those who make a revolution by halves only dig their own graves."

Workers' Action had made the basic assessment of the alternatives that faced the labour movement before the first breakthrough in 1979:

"Remove the 'checks and balances', that is, make the Labour Party accountable to its members, and the framework for an easy coexistence within Labour's 'broad church' is gone. ... The option of muddling along and avoiding sharp, binding decisions and choices is diminished. Also diminished is the scope for the 'socialist' faking which for decades has provided so much of the cement for the Labour Party 'coalition'...

In a genuinely democratic Labour Party, where decisions and policies might immediately be tested for their relevance to the real world, the climate would suddenly turn unfavourable for this type of politics. The choice would be between the hard, class-struggle left, and the hard class-collaborationist right...

[Now] either the left will go on from a victory on democracy at Brighton to consolidate the Labour Party as a genuinely socialist party



The French Revolution: "those who make a revolution by halves dig their own graves".

seeking to overthrow capitalism on the basis of the class struggle of the working class, and build up a mass membership around such policies. Or the left will be purged and the Labour Party transformed from its present ramshackle self into a tight and intolerant party modelled on the West German, Swedish and other Social Democracies..."

Those are still the alternatives. And the proposals of the commission of inquiry would amount to a very large first step towards the intolerant model. There will be worse to come if they get away with it.

They must not get away with it. The proposed purge, whose first victim will be Militant and maybe Socialist Organiser, is not in response to anything the hard Marxist left has done. It is in response to the democratisation drive.

Militant did not inspire, initiate, lead or organise that campaign. The CLPD did. Militant is the 'easy target', not the target.

The goal of the witch-hunters is to restore the PLP and the bureaucracy to

real control within the new rules established in the last three years. Their strategy is to divide and disorganise the broad left coalition that defeated them in 1979 and 1980.

Militant and other Marxists are only the first in line. If the witch hunters take into their hands the power of preventive censorship of what can and cannot be published in the Labour Party, and the right to purge at will by declaring whole layers of the Party 'outside the law', then sensible people should conclude that they will use it, and not only against the Militant.

Those Lefts in the ILP, Clause 4, and others, who help tie the noose for Militant now, or who discreetly 'mind their own business', should be clear in their minds about one thing: they themselves will afterwards have to live in the shadow of the noose.

* Every unofficial publication and group in the movement must be got to declare that it will not register under the proposed 'aliens law'.

* As many CLPs as possible must be got to declare

that they will not implement the proposed new rules.

* CLPs should be got to declare for the positive right of minorities to organise in the party, and of groups like the CP, SWP, WSL etc to formally affiliate - should they want to - to the mass party of the trade unions.

But these are emergency measures. The right/soft-left drive against a democratic Labour Party can only be securely stopped by a left offensive. The attempt at a purge is the consequence of the left's retreat after the setback we suffered at the last Party conference.

Resume

We must stop the Left's retreat and resume the offensive. Everything else will depend on that.

* Turn the Labour Party outwards to challenge the Tories, and in the process build a mass membership which wants the Party to be a democratic, fighting, class organisation, and will not tolerate a new dictatorship of the parliamentarians.

* Organise in the unions now for Labour Party democracy - and for trade union

democracy.

* Fight for socialist policies and democratic accountability so that Labour can be a real alternative to the Tories. Fight for a workers' government challenging capitalism, not a re-run of the 1974-9 Labour government.

* Campaign to draft Tony Benn to challenge Foot for the leadership.

* Mount a new crusade in the movement to stop Labour's would-be authoritarians in their tracks.

VIDYA ANAND, a member of the London Labour Party executive, told Socialist Organiser: "Witch hunts, proscriptions, and inquiries are sought by those comrades who do not believe in democratic principles. What they can't win by argument and persuasion, they are now seeking by coercion and intimidation."

"I am sure the labour movement will reject it totally".

What they are saying

NORTH Islington Labour Party has declared it will be joining other Labour Parties to form a campaign in the Party against witch-

hunts unless the NEC decides on Wednesday 23rd to drop the whole issue.

The North Islington Executive Committee met last Sunday, 20th, and decided to lobby the NEC meeting.

CLPD

"CLPD is open to any member of the Labour Party. Our accounts are available for inspection and the minutes of our meetings are also widely available. We support the right of any group of Labour Party members to organise within the Party with a view to winning majority support for their beliefs.

"We also give notice that the CLPD will take no part in any proposed register of non-affiliated groups which is, in our view, an attempt to introduce a new proscribed list. Instead we call on the Parliamentary leadership of the Labour Party to cease the attack on Party members and to concentrate instead on fighting the Tories and the SDP."

(Motion passed unopposed)

VALERIE WISE (GLC Labour councillor):

"I want to go on record as totally deploring the witch-hunt. I think that their attacking Militant is only the tip of the iceberg - they'll be on to all the rest of the Left in the Party next. That's what the Register is for.

I think the leading members of the Labour Party doing the attacking on the rank and file activists would be better employed using their energies attacking the Tories. I don't accept their argument that they're making the Labour Party a viable alternative to the Tories for the next election.

I'm totally against any sort of registration of groups in the Party whether it is Militant, Socialist Organiser, London Labour Briefing, Labour Herald or Tribune. We must have a united campaign of all these groups - the whole rank and file of the Labour Party - to fight this witch hunt".

IAN WILLIAMS (member of NUR National Executive):

"I consider that Weighell is trying to 'clean up' the NUR and now he's trying to do the same in the Labour Party - with so much success in the light of a report going to the NEC.

"What he's forgotten is that witch-hunters usually end up burning the innocent parties and the 'witches' just go underground. I don't think he's dealing with witches just now anyway. He and I like just go around pointing the finger at people whom they disagree. I don't think this will be very long. Sid Weighell and other right wingers are due to retire soon - at least in the next five years.

"What we need now is a united campaign to fight the witch hunters now as they show that we're not going to stand for this kind of backlash. And I think we'll win."

Coventry
backs
NHS fight

Tebbit retreat



A great victory? Norman Tebbit this week backed down on aspects of his new youth cheap-labour scheme.

The scheme - to be launched in September 1983 with an initial intake of 100,000 - will pay £25 per

week and will not be compulsory.

Tebbit had originally proposed to pay £15 per week and make the scheme compulsory. He shifted stance in the face of opposition from the TUC, the CBI, and the MSC.

So is it victory? £25 per week is certainly cheap labour, even if £15 is cheaper. Though the scheme will not be compulsory (at first, anyway), anyone refusing to go on it will have his/her benefit cut by 'an appropriate amount' for six months.

And the modification has ensured that the new Tory scheme has the full support of the TUC - rather than the trade unions campaigning for the right to real jobs, and real wages, for all workers, old or young, men or women.

Partial victory in S&K strike

THE month long strike at S&K warehouse in Birmingham is over. The 30 workers who had been out for union recognition, the reinstatement of victimised workers and improved wages, voted to return on the recommendation of TGWU District Official John Partridge at a meeting last Thursday.

The final settlement is a partial victory for the workers: S&K have agreed to recognise the union and

to raise wages by 60p across the board (even so, the minimum is still only £1.40 an hour!)

However, two of the leading activists in the strike, Baljinder Singh and Diana Medford, have not been reinstated.

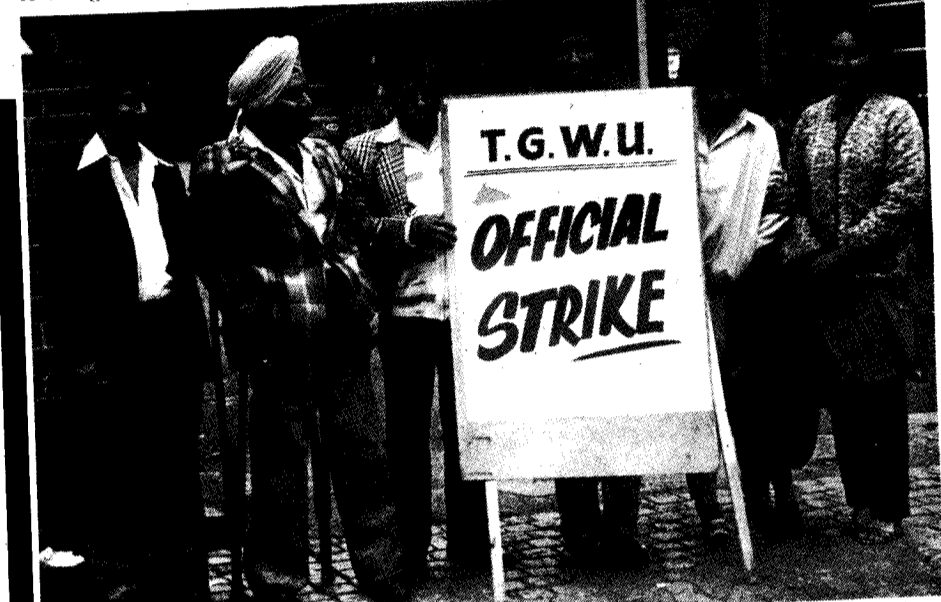
It seems that Baljinder and Diana may have chosen to accept a pay-off from S&K rather than prolong the strike. However with stronger support from the TGWU (the workers were

not even receiving strike pay although the action was official) Baljinder and Diana would not have been put in such a difficult position.

The newly unionised black workforce have nonetheless shown how strong they can be.

As one of the strikers said: "Things will never be the same again at S&K."

Jim Denham



NALGO fight for stewards

NALGO members at branch level have been fighting for a properly organised shop stewards system for a number of years. The campaign was highlighted at conference where a motion on stewards organisation was supported by over 70 branches.

A very successful fringe meeting was held and although the motion was not reached, the issue was raised on two occasions by speakers from the floor.

The basic problem is that the NALGO NEC will not ratify the development of stewards' systems where shop stewards committees have direct representation on branch executive committees.

The NEC seems to prefer leaving stewards' commit-

tees isolated in the workplace but rank and file pressure built up over conference week has resulted in some gains.

However, the national campaign for a proper shop stewards' organisation in NALGO has only just started, with two bulletins being produced for conference. A further bulletin

will be produced shortly detailing the gains made at conference and covering further developments.

For copies of the bulletin contact Bill Hamilton, NALGO Office, 7 Chapel Street, London E15 (01-519 7457).

BILL HAMILTON
Newham NALGO

Defiant on Bill

In what was described by many speakers as the most important debate of the NALGO conference, Norrie Steel of the NEC led a vitriolic attack on the Tebbit Bill in which speaker after speaker deplored the Bill's provisions and the "horrors which face us when this Bill becomes law".

Steel told conference that the whole TUC was engaged in a massive campaign of opposition in which NALGO must play its part.

He explained that wherever trade unionists were involved in defending their jobs, they would come up against the new Tebbit laws and quoted the privatisation of the gas industry as one obvious area.

An amendment was moved calling for defiance and non-cooperation with

the courts when trade unionists are prosecuted.

Norrie Steel replied that this would just build up case law against the unions and stifle our right of reply!

The amendment was narrowly lost.

Alan Ferguson from Strathclyde pointed out that it might be necessary for NALGO members to place themselves outside the law if they were to take effective industrial action.

Although no rule change was agreed, NALGO policy is now to defend its members placed outside the law, but Alan Ferguson warned that: "Verbal opposition isn't worth the paper it is printed on." NALGO would have to act to defend existing trade union rights.

Defend Barry Turner!

COUNCILLOR Barry Turner and Bradford North Labour Party member Matthew Kirkpatrick, recently arrested on a local anti-fascist demonstration, are beginning to build support for their defence campaign.

A labour movement inquiry held at City Hall received a wide range of witnesses all of whom testified to the events as Councillor Turner had described them. The lobby had been peaceful, the police over-reacted - using dogs later in the day.

The events all happened against the background of the recent purchase of plastic bullets by the West Yorkshire police, a decision which was not taken before any committee.

The Labour Group will

now be issuing a statement of support for the two defendants. The Bradford Trades Council has declared its full support and has publicly called for a full labour movement inquiry into the activities of the police and of fascist organisations in Bradford.

One of the objects of the inquiry will be to make public the large amount of data already collected concerning the failure of the police to take action following assaults or incidents which concern ethnic minorities in the city.

Keighley Trades Council, Bradford North Constituency Labour Party, Bradford West CLP and University Ward Labour Party have also added their full support.

Socialists discuss councils policy

by Stephen Corbishley

150 Labour councillors, trade unionists and Labour Party activists from the Left in London's Labour Parties came together last Saturday (19th) for the first time to analyse the results of the May 6 election.

Agreement was easily reached that on balance the results were not the victory that many had expected and worked for.

A more important lesson was spelt out by Valerie Veness, when she revealed how Heseltine was making moves against Islington, Camden and Southwark, with orders to speed up the selling of council houses, and that no council could fight without the support of others in this period.

This was reinforced when councillors and Labour Party activists emphasised how they wanted to pick a joint fight on the question of rents in 1983 and how this could unite the Labour Parties, Councils, trade unionists and communities actively in confrontation with the Tories.

Frank Hansen from Brent sketched out some of the problems that face the new wave of left wing councillors in Labour controlled boroughs.

He cited the power of right wing blocks to isolate the new councillors and how this is reinforced by the almost uncontrollable power of council officers to lie and manoeuvre and block in favour of policies that will not challenge the Tories.

One major weakness of the conference was the lack of trade union presence, particularly of those unions organised in the local authorities.

Socialist Organiser supporters strongly emphasised the need for the new left councillors as well as the Labour-controlled councils to develop a strategy of turning outwards to the trade unions - especially the rank

and file. Particular stress was placed on the immediate need to build support for the NHS workers currently in struggle.

Only two decisions were taken at the conference. The first motion called for total opposition to the NEC report on Militant, the idea of a register and any moves towards the expulsion of Militant.

This was carried unanimously. A powerful contribution from Ted Knight placed his move by the right wing in the context of previous witch-hunts in the Labour Party since 1945. It was also agreed to sponsor a campaign against the witch-hunt, to be coordinated by Jeremy Corbyn.

The second resolution was to set up the Association of Socialist Councillors with the intention of providing an

organisation that could both pool experience and provide support to those isolated in right wing groups.

It would also take initiatives in coordinating the fightback both in and out of the council chamber.

This unique initiative will however be undermined unless it bases itself on a militant stand. The Briefing statement signed by over 50 council candidates for the May 6 election lays the basis for such an association to get off the ground.

The Conference to establish this association will be held in September and a small steering group was set up with a range of councillors from different boroughs and different political interests including Socialist Organiser and Briefing supporters.

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Socialist Organiser

FRESH HEIR

The Princess of Wales has given birth to the next heir to the throne - and as expected, it's a parasite!

The bonny, bouncing baby weighed in at several tons around the neck of the working class and a hospital spokesperson said "Mother and baby were doing very nicely, thank you."

The news was broken to crowds queuing up outside St. Mary's Hospital for NHS

treatment - the same hospital where the Princess was booked in to a £126.90 a day room.

According to sources inside the hospital it bears striking resemblance to the human race. It takes some years for the royal instincts to emerge (writes a doctor).

Prince Charles was present at the birth just like any ordinary father and helped the Princess through

her labour with so phrases like "Oh, goodness, what a g mess!" and by getting his footmen to massage back.

A spokesperson for the royal family said training the new parasite would be as soon as possible, but income from the crown could not be counted until it could count six figures.

NO TO THE REGISTER! PRESS HOME THE FIGHT

by John O'Mahony

THE LABOUR Party's committee of inquiry into Militant has published its report and recommendations. This Wednesday, 23rd, the NEC of the Labour Party will discuss it. It is expected that a bloc of the right and the soft left will carry it by a small majority.

The main recommendation is that the Labour Party should "establish a register of non-affiliated groups of members to be recognised and allowed to operate within the Party".

"All such groups must apply to and be acceptable by the NEC for registration. The decision of the NEC on eligibility for registration shall be final".

In practice this would mean a register not only of 'groups' but also of newspapers and other publications. For unless there is 'private' wealth available, you cannot produce and circulate a labour movement newspaper without an organised group of active supporters.

These proposals, if they were implemented consistently, would mean a big shift towards an authoritarian regime in the Labour Party.

The register would create a regime in the Party far more strict, and with immensely greater powers of regulation in the hands of the leadership, than what existed under the old system of banning and proscribing named organisations, which existed until 1973.

Under that system an unofficial grouping or newspaper was 'tolerated' unless and until it was banned. It needed a positive decision to repress them.

Under the proposed new system it would be the other way round: no socialist grouping or newspaper will be tolerated unless it is positively approved, after being vetted, assayed, and assessed



Unless the Left fights to go forward from the victories on democracy, the right will push us back

by the Party bureaucracy acting for the Parliamentary leadership.

Such a system could be implemented as a savagely repressive regime, or as a tolerant liberal one.

The Party leadership will be lavish with promises and commitments to a liberal regime. Some of them - Foot for example - may sincerely intend to have such a regime.

The choice will rest with the Party machine and the Parliamentary and trade union leaders whose wishes they will serve. At each moment they will interpret it in the way that serves their own interests.

Throughout the country the choice to harass members, interfere with the circulation of 'unlicensed' newspapers, and try to suppress them locally - the choice to attempt to expel from the Labour Party people associated with 'unstamped' papers - will rest with local bureaucrats and often with right wing cliques and caucuses.

The latter do not, as a rule, have ideas and unofficial newspapers to push, and

therefore will not need to register.

The soft left and the literate right are fond of quoting against the Marxists such maxims as Lord Acton's famous: "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely".

Why do they now think that any Party leadership is to be trusted with the centralised bureaucratic power to systematically root out all will any unofficial groups and publications it chooses to regard as heretical, alien, or inconvenient?

Michael Foot, and the retiring general secretary Ron Hayward, may perhaps now intend that such powers should be used sparingly. What if Dennis Healey becomes leader, or if some Peter Shore or other does?

At stake here is * The right of the rank and file to think and publish ideas and commentaries other than those of the official Party leaders.

* The right of like-minded groups of people in the vast membership of the Labour Party to get together to work out socialist policies, ideas, proposals, and initiatives to put to the rest of the Party as alternatives to the official policy and philosophy.

* The right of others as well as the PLP to organise where necessary to propagate and fight for such ideas and proposals, and to counterpose them as an effective organised force to the official machinery of the labour movement.

In short, at stake is the right of effective, that is, organised, dissent. Groups like the PLP have their organisations and caucuses, their 'full-time' secretaries and assistants, access to the bourgeois media, etc. etc. The rank and file worker does not. The Marxist rank and file especially does not.

Without the right to

effective dissent, there can be no effective democracy.

The Labour Party is politically a broad party because it is the party of the broad labour movement, which has 11 million organised trade unionists, 7 million of whom are affiliated to the Labour Party. There are many different opinions in that movement - a hundred schools of thought contending. Membership is not self-selected on a precise political basis.

Workers join and vote for what they see as a class party.

Then if they want to participate in its policy-making processes, they face a top heavy structure crowned by Parliamentarians who have traditionally been a law unto themselves, and are now fighting with some success to go on as before.

Power at conference, where, nominally, decisions are made, is held by trade union bosses - unelected or elected once or twice in a working lifetime.

The policy of the party can be worked out in one of two ways.

By the free play of ideas, proposals, projects and initiatives. Or by decree from the top, from the PLP and union executives.

If it is to be a free play of ideas, that presupposes and demands freedom to organise and make propaganda.

The traditional way in the Labour Party has been the bureaucratic, top-down way. Since 1979 the pace has been set from the rank and file in revolt against Labour's record in government.

The committee of inquiry's proposals are the blade of the counter-attack by a thoroughly determined establishment. They want to crush the revolt now and insure themselves against the rank and file for the future.

At stake now is whether

the result of the attempt at political and organisational self-renewal which the labour movement has been making for the last three years will be the destruction of the relative openness of the Labour Party which

allowed that attempt to be made.

For the decisive test of whether or not an organisation is democratic is this: does the party possess the internal mechanisms and the potential to develop and put forward a radically different policy and leadership in competition with those established and in control? If it does not, then it is not democratic.

At best, adjustment comes through 'palace coups' and parliamentary clique fights, and the rank and file are deprived of initiative and real control.

The possibility of internal self-renewal in turn depends on whether or not an opposition, at the various stages of its possible development, has the freedom to function within normal party discipline and rules without being aborted or pushed out of the party.

If you look at the history of the so-called Communist Parties, and of various pseudo-Marxist and pseudo-Trotskyist groups - against which the 'super-democrat'

Foot likes to inveigh will invariably identify qualitative organisational generation at the where this process became choked off.

It is the first step such a change in the Labour Party that long-time long-time democrat, and proclaimed libertarian Michael Foot is now helping to organise.

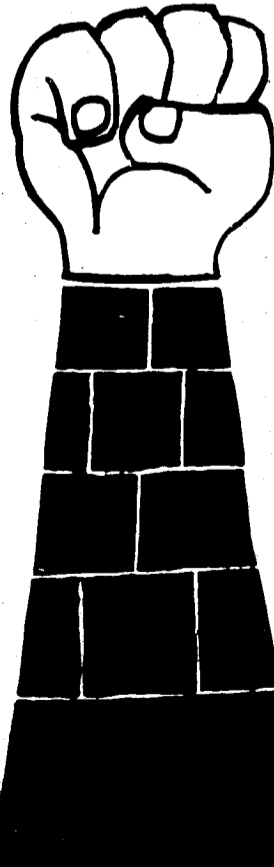
How does it happen?

Foot finds himself in this role because part of a political revolution in the Labour Party. The post-'79 and file revolt shook may have destroyed 'tolerance' had rested decades: real power the hands of the PLP it didn't matter what were in the air and what solutions were passed at conference.

The determined by the rank and file privileges of the PLP changed all that. The PLP and increasingly the

Continued page

£6000 fund



"£50 badge sales. £5: I cut grass to raise money for the fund. £5.80: first part of money from sponsored swim for the fund."

That covering note with a £60.80 cheque from Keith White in Coventry shows the special fund we need to reach our £6,000 target.

Other recent contributions are £50 from Cowley BL workers, £5 from John Cunningham (Sheffield), £50 from John Bloxam (£60 from Steve Leharne (Sunderland)).

From Scotland we've received a copy of special fund appeal leaflet circulated by comrades there.

Two localities have now gone over 10% of their targets: Durham/Sunderland Coventry (110% each). Region by region score is Scotland and North £20 (6%); Yorkshire and North East £269.50 (54%); North West £228 (30%); West Midlands £773 (84%); East Midlands £110 (20%); South West and West £15 (8%); West £402 (63%); London and South East £245.50 (12%); Miscellaneous £13.80.

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

Our AGM

DATE: Saturday June 26 and Sunday June 27.
PLACE: Lanchester Polytechnic, Priory St, Coventry.
TIME: 10am to 5pm Saturday, 10 to 4.30 Sunday.
TO DECIDE: perspectives and structure for the Socialist Organiser Alliance over the next year, and to elect the Socialist Organiser Secretariat.
OPEN TO: all paid-up Socialist Organiser supporters (with the right to vote), and observers from trade union branches, Labour Party branches, and other labour movement bodies.
AGENDA: will include workshops on aspects of Socialist Organiser activity, and workshops with invited speakers from the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, the Labour Committee on Ireland, the Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group, the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights, etc.