

Socialist Challenge

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GARDNER'S OCCUPY

French anti-Nazi league needed to counter bombings

From Charles Lister in Paris

FOUR people have now died from the bomb which exploded outside a crowded synagogue in Paris on Friday. Another nine people were injured.

It was the bloodiest terrorist action that France has experienced since the Second World War, and follows a mounting campaign of fascist attacks in France this summer.

These included the machine-gunning of synagogues, schools and war memorials, together with raids on Jewish and immigrant quarters. The murders in Paris last week added to the recent deaths from fascist bombs in Bologna and Munich.

Last weekend tens of thousands joined demonstrations called by Jewish and left-wing organisations in France. The strength of the protests have put the Giscard government and the police on the spot.

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Many now want to know why the police are so efficient and 'heroic' at infiltrating and dismantling groups like Action Direct, the would-be French Baader-Meinhoff organisation, but are completely inept at arresting or even identifying those responsible for recent murders of left-wingers in France.

The most notorious cases are the killing of Henri Curiel, a revolutionary Marxist and founding member of the Egyptian communist movement, and Pierre Goldman, a Polish Jew who was sympathetic to the Fourth International.

The Henri Curiel Association says that there have been 159 fascist and racist attacks in France since 1977. Until the uproar over the latest outrages the Interior Minister, Christian Bonnet, described these attacks as 'tasteless pranks by nostalgics'.

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One reason for police and government indifference is the composition of the membership of one of the main fascist organisations, the Federation for National and European Action (FANE), which has renamed itself as the European and Nationalist Fasces (FNE) after FANE was banned a fortnight ago.

Le Monde estimates that a fifth of the organisation's membership consists of cops. The plain clothes police union says that the Interior Minister has had for some time a list of 150 members of FANE, including 30 cops, some of them high-ranking officers.

There are widespread demands for the minister's resignation.

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While there is an evident need for a united anti-fascist front, in France, along the lines of the Anti-Nazi League in Britain, this is not recognised by all those who are targets of the Nazi attacks.

Zionist organisations, which are involved in organising Jewish self-defence, are unfortunately associating anti-Semitism with anti-Zionism. Fights have broken out between zealots who chant 'Only solution, return to Zion' and those who chant 'Jews and Arabs united'.

The Israeli government is doing its best to exploit this division, stating on the weekend: 'The terrorist organisations operating in France and other European countries collaborate with the Arab organisation of murderers calling itself the PLO.'

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This lie, which covers for the Israelis' oppression of Palestinians, can only isolate the Jewish community in France from the forces of the left and immigrant organisations which oppose fascism.

The Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), the French section of the Fourth International, was one of the first organisations to respond to the Nazi threat. We are maintaining the fight for a united anti-fascist front.

Engineering workers take action to save jobs

TWO thousand four hundred engineering workers at Gardner's, the second largest engineering plant in Manchester, have occupied their plant in a determined effort to prevent the 590 redundancies which management are demanding.

The occupation has prevented management from moving machinery and carrying out their 're-organisation' plan. The whole workforce is in the plant every day.

This is the first time during this vicious Tory government that the workers in a large plant have stood up to redundancy by occupying.

The determination of the Gardner's workers was expressed by John Lefley, an AUEW Foundry member who works at the plant. He told Socialist Challenge:

'We just want it recognised that someone finally stopped, and someone's going to take this bloody government in hand. Now a few thousand workers are doing what the others didn't have the guts to do.

'If they'd all stood together a few months ago — the steelworkers, the engineers and the miners — Thatcher would have had to give in.

'It's the same with the TUC — leaving it until now without a fight. They should have started fighting as soon as Thatcher's government came in.

'They should stop arguing among themselves and go for unity against the Tories. This plant will fight. We'll fight to the end.'

Gardner's stands as a challenge to the whole labour movement. It shows the way forward against redundancies. Unemployment can be fought.

It exposes the complete inactivity of the trade union



leaders who have cried crocodile tears over unemployment but done precisely nothing.

Last Tuesday's meeting of the AUEW executive refused even to discuss Gardner's. AUEW General Secretary John Boyd told a three-person delegation that their case couldn't be discussed because it 'hadn't gone through proper procedures'.

Boyd wouldn't even let the Gardner's delegation use the phone to ring the plant!

It is vital the Gardner's

workers don't stand alone. Their example must be hammered home the length and breadth of the country. Solidarity with Gardner's can start to turn the tide against the flood of redundancies.

The fight for solidarity should be taken into every shop stewards committee and every AUEW district committee. Resolutions of support and financial help must flood in.

And the Gardner's fight must be taken up on Friday's demonstration outside the Tory party con-

ference and be used to help turn the 29 November demonstration against unemployment, called by the Labour Party NEC, into a massive show of strength against the Tories.

As the Gardner's workers say, they are fighting the principle of redundancy. They are fighting for the whole working class. The whole labour movement must fight for them.

Friday 10 Oct Brighton PICKET THE TORY CONFERENCE

All IMG and Socialist Challenge supporters to assemble at The Level Drive (directly up from the Palace Pier)

10am onwards by the Socialist Challenge van

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Fight for Jobs

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The Bevanites

Julian Atkinson takes a hard look at the Labour left of the Fifties — page 5

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10 Oct: FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO WORK

Labour's left strides forward

By Paul Smith, Alan Freeman, and Phil Hearse

Question: What have the Daily Mirror and the Financial Times in common? Answer: Both say that the Labour Party's week in Blackpool was a disaster.

The reasons for their common conclusion are listed in the *Mirror's* 3 October editorial. It notes that the conference passed mandatory reselection and the widening of the franchise for the leader, throwing the right wing and the trade union leaders into disarray.

The conference rejected any kind of incomes policy, called for withdrawal from the EEC, a 35-hour week without loss of pay, and scrapping Britain's nuclear weapons.

Although the attempt to widen the franchise was thwarted by the trade union leaderships' refusal to permit conference to decide on a method to implement this decision, the best delaying tactic available was a fresh conference in January.

Explode

This means that the debate will explode in the labour movement at large, and the right will have scant time to patch up its wounds.

These decisions will be seen as a signal to militants contemplating struggle against the Tories that they can demand and win the backing of significant sections of the Labour left in action, and that there is a good chance of imposing their demands on a future Labour government.

This is what has upset the *Daily Mirror* and the *Financial Times*.

At the Trades Union Congress, the Labour left saw the adoption of its platform, the 'Alternative Economic Strategy'. Even Callaghan said he could support its approach.

At that time, no section of the trade union leadership openly identified with the fight against the Callaghan-Healey wing in the Labour Party leadership. Instead, they passed a resolution for a five-year incomes policy

under a future Labour government.

The attacks on Chapple after the TUC Congress were not conceived as a purge of the right. Chapple was to be disciplined for rocking the TUC boat which was steering by common consensus away from any confrontation with

action which Socialist Challenge has consistently argued for.

A significant step forward was registered for this approach at Blackpool. Summing up on the debate about the control of the manifesto, Tony Benn made a dramatic appeal to the trade union

just too late, and the trade union block vote killed the motion on democratic control of the manifesto.

But his year of meetings with the regional committees, the combines, the district officials, culminating in rallies with AUEW presidential candidate Bob Wright, partly paid off. The left in the constituencies, completely behind Benn, managed to link up with the union vote on many of the most important issues of Labour's conference.

In other words, defeats for the left, delivered by the block vote, were not at all the diet of this year's conference.

A link up between the left in the Labour Party and the trade union leadership has been a goal of the left since the last constitutional changes in the Labour Party in 1918. How to retain and deepen that link up is the overriding concern of the more far-sighted of Labour's lefts.

Some folk have been saying it is the amount of influence that the trade unions exercise through the block vote that is the problem for the left. Their answer is to dismantle the block vote. This notion should be emphatically opposed.

Block

Of course, the control of the block vote must be firmly in the hands of the rank and file of the unions, and not cast at the bureaucratic behest. This point was dramatically underlined by the role of the AUEW leadership, refusing even to call a delegation meeting to decide on the method of electing the party leader.

But, more broadly, every socialist should be in favour of the maximum trade union influence in the Labour Party — especially in the context of Benn's remark that now the fight for democracy must be taken into the unions.



Photo: Andrew Ward (Report)

SMILES and grimaces: the platform looks on

The Labour Party conference has passed left reformist policies — Labour's left know that to win the leadership and implement their programme they need the support of the most important trade unions. It is in the unions that the battle to decide the fate of Labour's left and its policies must be fought. The trap is that paper commitment to the policies for some future Labour Government will be as far as the present union leadership go.

In the meantime Tory attacks on the working class will continue unabated, and the danger increases that these attacks will go unanswered. While the fighting spirit in the ranks is, for the moment, alive and well, continuous retreats would eventually take their toll.

A victory for the left in the unions in the fight against this Tory government is a vital precondition for the victory of the left in the Labour Party. And it is to that end that the Labour Left's policies and leaders must be turned. In the course of the struggle against the Tories, many of the policy positions of the Labour lefts will be tried and tested.

We should be in favour of such trials. There are several areas where the Labour left's policies are either inadequate or just wrong, like the support for import controls. Socialists will need to point out, in the course of the struggle, where these policies are wrong, and what needs to replace them. But the main point is to force the Labour left to apply socialist policies in the class struggle now.

Such a course will bring the movement slap up against the right-wing leadership of the trade unions. And they are the key log jam to any advance for the left.

Joint Labour Party/trade union action against the Tories is the call of Socialist Challenge. Already, the campaign against Thatcher's missile madness shows how opposition to the missiles can be turned into action against the Tories. The Lambeth conference against the cuts offers a similar perspective.

The same approach is vital on unemployment. The occupation of the Gardner's factory in Manchester against job loss must be the focal point for a massive campaign of support and solidarity at every level within the labour movement.

The October 10 anti-Tory demonstration, and the Labour Co-ordinating Committee trade union conference called for 1 November are ideal launching pads for the campaign for Gardner's, and the application of the Labour Party resolution for the 35-hour week without loss of pay. The LCC conference is the first big national gathering to discuss the fight for democracy and left policies in the unions.

Labour's conference to discuss the leadership in January must be prepared with a barrage of resolutions in the trade unions in defence of LP conference electing the leader. By such means, the steps forward made by Labour's left wing can be turned into big strides for the whole of the workers' movement.



Photo: LAURIE SPARHAM (IFL)

ERIC HEFFER — proposing the NEC's motion on the electoral college

the Tories. The 'no action' deal dominating the TUC forced the Labour left to sharpen its attack on the TU right.

They had to step up their appeals to the unions; and secondly they had to tie their fight to a much clearer set of policies, tailored to win support in the unions — a plan of

leadership, assembled before him in the Blackpool Winter Gardens.

He said that he agreed with the approach of the unions on many issues. Why did they not agree with him that to get government action on these issues, democratic control of the manifesto was required? His appeal came

View from the Imperial Hotel

BLACKPOOL's Imperial Hotel was the favourite watering hole for anybody who was anybody during the Labour Party conference. Like, for instance, Denis Healey and John Silken, contenders for Jim's crown.

Mid-week through the conference both these gentlemen were approached by steelworker Ray who behaved in a most grovelling fashion and asked for their autograph. So sure of their own importance were they that Denis and John were only too happy to oblige. John went as far as to ask the name of his fan and scribble 'To Ray from John Silken'.

Ray then backed away from his heroes touching his forehead, and wrote on the prized bit of paper: 'We the undersigned demand the immediate abdication of Jim Callaghan.' The petition with the auspicious signatures was passed round the bar at the Imperial.

Everybody knew it was a joke for neither Denis nor John could be so honest as to put what they really believed, in print.

★ ★ ★
THE Imperial was also one of the venues for the crêche provided by the Labour Party for conference delegates. A progressive move, you might think. Not really, for a charge of between £25-40 was levied for any parent wishing to use the facilities.

★ ★ ★
TWO quotes which show the clear-minded thinking of the Labour right:

'I support the *status quo* on constitutional questions' — Terry Duffy speaking at the Campaign for Labour Victory meeting on Monday night.

'No one on this platform supports the *status quo*' — Shirley Williams speaking at the same meeting on the issue of constitutional reforms.

★ ★ ★
MR. DUFFY was also the subject of the most popular badge at the conference. It appeared on Thursday morning, the day after Duffy had refused to allow the AUEW delegation to decide whether or not the block vote should be cast for or

against the proposed means of electing the party leader.

The next day the badge was adorning the chests of hundreds of delegates. It had two words, 'Stuff Duffy'.

★ ★ ★
TWO more quotes from the CLV meeting showing more clear thinking of the Labour right:

'There is an element of fanaticism in the party which wants no compromise' — Shirley Williams. 'It's time the compromising ended' — David Owen.

Following the hysterical witch-hunting speech by right winger Andrew Faulds at the conference, the left winger Reg Race MP applied a nice touch when he opened a fringe meeting the same evening. Said Reg: 'Fellow infiltrators, fellow Trotskyists, fellow entrists, welcome.'

★ ★ ★
SEXIST of the conference was the *Militant*. Throughout the proceedings supporters of this journal were selling copies of a large poster which portrayed Margaret Thatcher in grotesque underwear.

Few delegates seemed to be buying

this soft porn.

★ ★ ★
FINAL quotes from the CLV meeting comes from Terry Duffy. 'We are the barometers of public opinion,' he claimed. But what public opinion? Terry supplied the answer: 'What I am glad about is that the CBI view is now playing our tune.'

★ ★ ★
LAST thought on the union block vote controversy. Both ASTMS and the AUEW were mandated on the principle of widening the franchise for the leader: ASTMS were for, the AUEW were against.

But once the decision was carried by the conference the question arose, did the mandate still apply when it came to working out the details of the election.

Yes, according to Terry Duffy, who — without consultation with his delegates — voted against all proposals.

No, said Clive Jenkins of ASTMS who took the issue to his delegation where a discussion was held on which way to vote. Jenkins persuaded them to vote No to both. Isn't Labour Party democracy as now practised a wonderful thing?

Organising to strike out the Tories

A HOST of new sponsors were signed up during the week at Blackpool for the Labour Party Rank and File Trade Unionists' conference to be held in Leeds on 1 November.

The conference, called by the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, will discuss action against unemployment, and the fight for democracy in the labour movement.

Three members of the new Labour Party national executive have agreed to back the conference — Les Huckfield, Dennis Skinner,

and Neil Kinnock. Other MPs who have sponsored include Ron Brown, Alf Dubs, Alec Jones, Martin Flannery, Ernie Roberts, and Reg Race.

One discussion at the conference will focus on how the Labour left organises in the trade unions. In this context it is a good sign that a number of leading trades unionists have backed the initiative.

These include: Lawrence Daly, general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers; Jack Collins, secretary of Kent NUM; Bernard Dix, assistant general secretary of the National Union of Public Employees;

and Bob Wright, assistant general secretary of the Engineering Union.

Yet another of the sponsors is the Llanwern Steel Action Committee, and a fringe meeting held at the Labour Party conference by the committee underlined the importance of the left organising in the unions.

Dennis Skinner told the meeting: 'We can't wait for five years to get rid of the Tories. Every strike, every step must be supported now to do the job — the battle lines are drawn outside parliament.'

Such determination now

needs to be organised on a national basis, and the 1 November trades unionists conference can make an important contribution.

The conference will have three main sessions on 'Unemployment and the right to work', what demands and policies the left should fight for, and, 'Now do we organise in the unions?'

There will be plenty of time for discussion, and the delegates fee will be £1.25. The venue is Leeds University. Further details from the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, 9 Poland St, London W1.

What they said:

Benn 1

'ONE idea about how we abolish the House of Lords is that it should be the task of the women's movement. Because the House of Lords, being based on the hereditary principle, never had, until a few years ago any women members.'

'So perhaps it would reach some of the requirements of positive discrimination to decamp a thousand socialist women onto the House of Lords to vote it out of existence.'

Tony Benn at the Tribune fringe meeting, 1 October

Wright

'WE'VE got to publish and we've got to generate; not just a movement on the democratic basis, because accountability can only have one useful product. And that is that we challenge on policies, challenge on foreign policies, on policies dealing with the ownership of industry, the standards of our social services and health.'

'But above all those challenges have to be based on a socialist objective to change and transform this society and to bring an end to the system which creates unemployment and poverty in the midst of plenty.'

Bob Wright at a Labour Co-ordinating Committee meeting, 30 September

Benn 2

'IF we look at the history of the post-war years those who have defended themselves most successfully, who have regained their freedom or fought anti-colonial battles most successfully have not been those with nuclear weapons ...'

'They have been where determined citizens have banded together and resolved, by guerilla warfare, to resist, attack, and break free.'

Tony Benn at LCC meeting, 30 September

What next for the Labour left?

By Alan Freeman

HOW DID we win? How did the right snatch victory from us? How can we win it back again? These questions dominated the minds and discussions of every left winger at the Blackpool Labour Party conference on Friday afternoon.

If the media thought that the Labour Party national executive committee was the villain of the piece at Blackpool, Eric Heffer had news for them. He acknowledged that it was the constituency Labour parties which had made the running. 'We have had to run as fast as we can to keep up,' Heffer said.

Manifesto

It was the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD) and the Rank and File Mobilising Committee which organised the constituency parties. These bodies must be kept going and strengthened prior to the January special conference.

But there was a second, and probably more decisive, reason for our victories. This was the beginning of a fight inside the unions, which Benn exploited to the full in his summary on the manifesto issue. But there are major problems.

We can't win in the union leaderships alone. The union rank and file must be organised and linked up with the party rank and file. This call was notably absent from the speeches and perspectives of nearly all the PLP left leaders.

Same Duffy

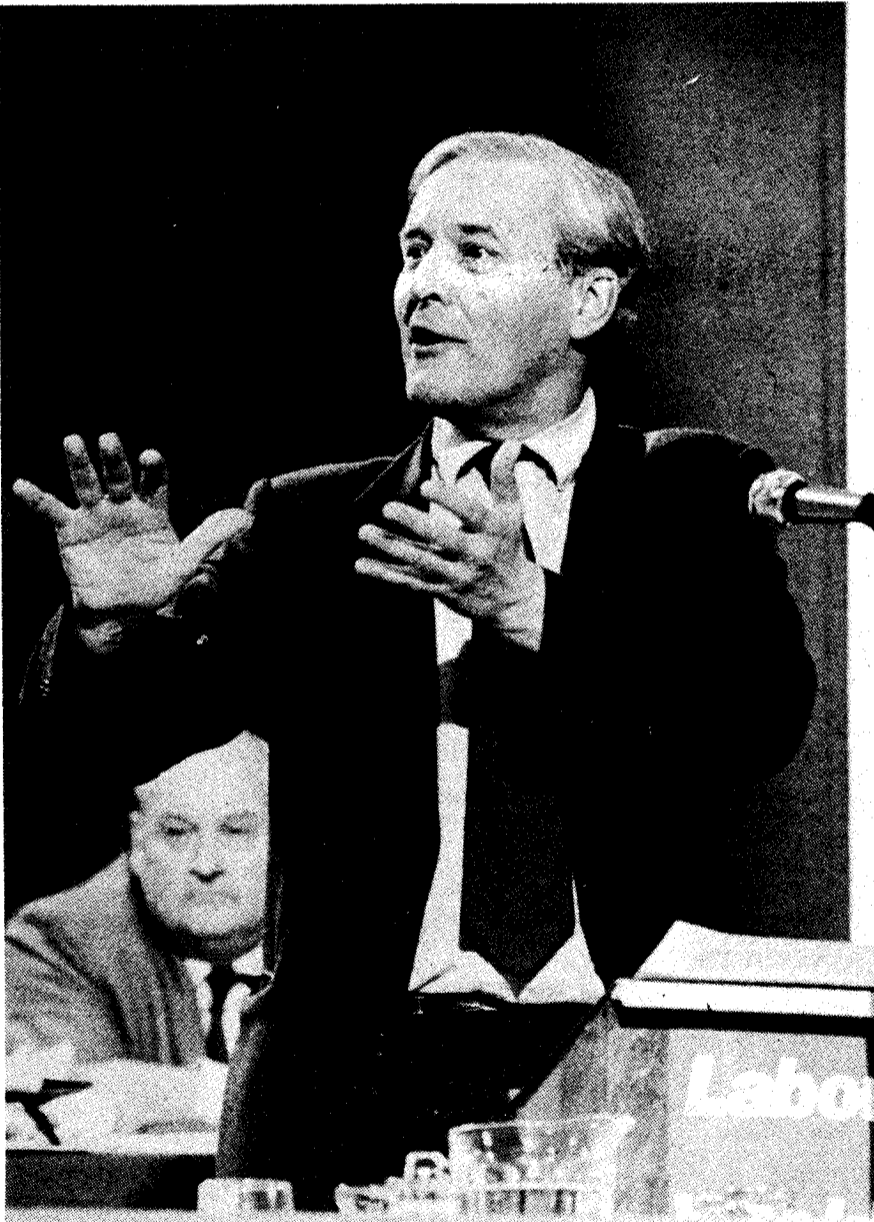
Secondly, we need a commitment to action. The connection between Duffy in the AUEW and Duffy at Blackpool must be spelled out: he wages Cold War; he ducks out of the fight on jobs and pay; he sold out Derek Robinson; and he sells out democracy for the same reason — he doesn't want to fight the Tories.

But this means that the labour left must show that they will stand beside the AUEW rank and file in struggle when Duffy deserts them. This means a commitment to action now, not in 1984.

The kind of left we need means a break with the traditions of the last 50 years.

Is Benn giving this lead? He has moved farther to the left than ever before. But by drawing a line against using industrial muscle to unseat the government, he is ruling out the only perspective that can cement the alliance between party and union rank and file needed to consummate his own victory.

These weaknesses show that a strong revolutionary organisation is now more important than ever. It can give a real backbone to a class struggle



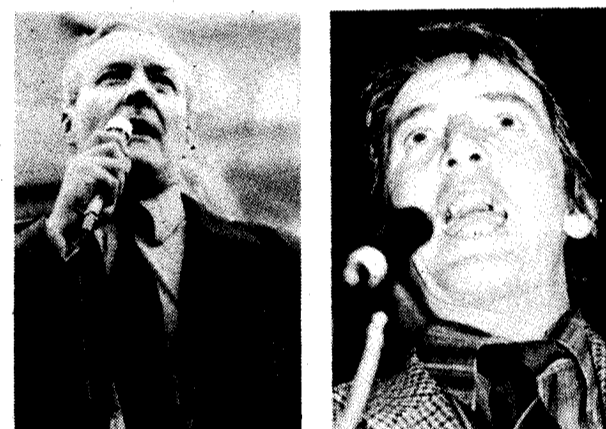
TONY BENN: his failure to call for industrial action against the government can undermine his victory

left in both the unions and the Party. Despite Benn's joking attacks on the splintered state of the far left, they were decisive in the conference victories. Only those who place their trust in the organised strength of the working class alone, and dedicate themselves to its complete victory, can be relied on to stay with it in its hour of need.

What prevents this fact being recognised by a far wider layer of militants is the continued disunity of the far left itself. If the Socialist Workers Party had been present with its industrial weight added to that of Socialist Challenge and if Socialist

Challenge and Socialist Organiser had presented their virtually identical lines through a single paper and a single organisation instead of two, Benn's jibes would have fallen on deaf ears.

The underlying reality would then have emerged: parliamentarism in all its forms is in crisis, disarray and chaos, with even the left wing splintered into Tribune, the LCC, the CLPD, and countless other little groups — with the only clear basis for a real re-unification offered by the programme and perspectives of socialist revolution.



Skinner

'I WANT the manifesto carried out. That is a very moderate aspiration.'

Dennis Skinner at a Campaign for Labour Party Democracy meeting, 28 September

Clarke

'WHAT we are up against is blind loyalty. People say: "I know better than you because I have been in government." They say they know better than you because they are on a platform — and then you have to wash out the platform they walk on.'

Eric Clarke, National Union of Mineworkers and NEC, speaking at CLPD meeting, 28 September

Foot

'I'M sure you asked yourselves what is that old bugger doing sitting on this platform? What is he going to say? I must admit I asked myself the same questions.'

Michael Foot, speaking at Tribune meeting, 1 October

Benn 3

'THIS country is, in my opinion, run by the Prime Minister, one or two other ministers, plus the permanent officials, plus the military, plus the security services. The power they influence over cabinets, as well as parliament, make parliamentary democracy something of a charade.'

Tony Benn, speaking at an Institute of Workers' Control meeting, 28 September

Soley

'THE unfinished business of the House of Commons is the creation of a united Ireland. That is also the unfinished business of the labour movement.'

Clive Soley MP, at a meeting called by the Parliamentary Labour Party Northern Ireland Group, 30 September

Photo: LAURIE SPARHAM (IFL)

Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

THE DEBACLE OF THE LABOUR RIGHT

A personal view of Blackpool
By Geoff Bell

THERE will be history books written about what happened at the Labour Party conference in Blackpool last week. Exciting books they will make.

The conference was so dramatic, important, and in the end, exhilarating, that it was a political occasion which dwarfs any gathering that the British labour movement has held for many, many years.

The extent of the sensation is that the Winter Gardens 1980 has shifted the terrain on which the British working class movement is camped.

For a while little happened at the conference to suggest it would turn out to be so memorable. The first two days were mundane and for the left of the conference, rather sombre.

A number of radical resolutions were passed — on economic strategy, education, low pay — but they carried with them a suggestion of unreality.

Vote

Every available forecast was that on the crucial issue of democratic reform of the Labour Party the left would lose. Such a defeat would mean that Labour MPs and the party leader would carry on as they had done in the past and happily ignore the conference decisions because the parliamentarians would remain unaccountable to the conference or their constituency party.

The pre-conference edition of the bulletin of the right-wing Campaign for Labour Victory was confident. 'CLV comes to this 1980 Party Conference stronger than ever,' was the claim.

The first indication that these words were bluster came on Sunday night when the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers' delegation voted by 18 to 17 to back the left-wing candidates for the national executive.

This decision was portrayed by AUEW president Terry Duffy as the result of accidental voting by one member of the delegation, and at the same meeting the delegation agreed to vote against all three of the democratic reforms being proposed.

With nearly a million votes in the possession of Duffy and fellow right winger general secretary John Boyd, this seemed to bear out the prophecies of victory for the right.

Bitter

Ironically, it was the CLV's own rally on Monday night that provided the strongest hint yet that the right would not have an unqualified victory. The stars of this meeting were the Gang of Three — Shirley Williams, David Owen, and Bill Rodgers. They did not behave as if they had it all sewn up. They were bitter, at times hysterical.

Williams compared the left to fascists. Owen predicted it would be a 'bad week'. Rodgers admitted he was 'always reluctant to come



The conference erupts as the vote on extending the leadership franchise is announced

to Labour conferences'.

The worries, even despair, evident at the meeting were given substance the next day when the results of the election for the national executive were announced. The left slightly increased its majority. 'NEC — worse than ever' was the morbid comment from the daily bulletin of the CLV.

The reaction of the left, as seen at a meeting held under the auspices of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee on Tuesday night, was muted. Although the discussion was entitled 'Which way Forward for the Left?', none of the platform speakers had a great deal to offer.

Chris Mullin of *Tribune* suggested that the constituency Labour Parties should withhold their affiliation fees if the reforms weren't passed — which seemed like someone drowning clutching at straws.

Tony Benn gave a jovial speech but one which had little to offer in terms of a perspective for the left. Audrey Wise, the other main speaker, had failed to win a place on the NEC and was openly disheartened.

And then came Wednesday. Wednesday, 1 October,

1980. Remember that date. Some day, exam questions will be asked about Wednesday, 1 October at Blackpool's Winter Gardens.

The session began with emergency motions on public spending and housing cuts. It was dominated by the anger and frustration summed up by Ted Knight, leader of Lambeth council, in a blockbusting speech which earned him a near standing ovation.

Passed

'We cannot wait,' he declared, and went on to call for 'massive industrial action on cuts to force the government to retreat and, if it will not retreat, to force it out'. Even the NEC could not restrain the floor of conference.

Its plea to remit the most left-wing motion was rejected. The motion was carried.

Next, a debate on Ireland. Only 35 minutes were allotted, but enough was said to suggest that many rank and file members of the Labour Party were to the left of both the parliamentary leadership and

the national executive on this issue.

The motion, calling for British withdrawal, was the subject of another remittal request from the NEC. The previous night a number of MPs had pleaded with the CLP delegates backing the motion to agree to remit and, as one MP put it, 'trust the parliamentary party — if it goes to the floor you'll only get ten votes'.

The pressure was rejected and when the vote was taken between 150-200 CLPs voted in favour. The resolution was lost, but the unexpected support it received showed that the left was on its feet and fighting.

The resolutions on the Common Market followed. At the start of the week Shirley Williams had said that if Labour were to stand on a withdrawal ticket at the next election 'I shall have no part of it'. Whether this statement discouraged or encouraged delegates to vote for withdrawal was the subject of some bar-room banter.

Whichever, Williams' blackmail was contemptuously rejected. The resolution was carried by a large majority. Party leader Jim

Callaghan, who had earlier in the week stated his opposition to the resolution, left the conference, head bowed.

With one or two exceptions the morning's voting went as expected. What was different was the atmosphere. There was a militancy, especially from the constituency section, curiously absent the first two days.

It was a question of mood, and not just this or that motion being passed. A head of steam was building up, steam which hissed at the right wing of the party as if to say get off our backs, we the rank and file of the Labour Party are going to have our day.

Fighting

The Wednesday afternoon was what everyone was waiting for — the resolutions on democratic reform of the Labour Party. These would decide, Tony Benn had said earlier in the week, 'Whether the Labour Party will be dominated by the parliamentary leadership or controlled by the rank and file.'

First came mandatory reselection of MPs. Russell Proffitt, a black delegate from Lewisham CLP, came to the rostrum to pour scorn on 'the clique' of the parliamentary party. 'This



Russell Proffitt

clique is middle class, this clique is essentially male, this clique is completely white.'

Right-wing MP Joe Ashton rose to the defence of his colleagues, but in a way which only condemned them in the eyes of the majority by saying that 25 MPs would join Roy Jenkins' centre party if the motion were passed. The retort came when Sam McCluskie, summed up on behalf of the NEC. 'Why don't you go then,' he shouted to the anonymous 25.

The next debate, on who should control the writing of the manifesto, got off to a nervous start because everyone was waiting for the result of the card vote on mandatory re-selection. Finally, chairperson Lena Jaeger put the delegates out of their misery. 'For the motion, 3,609,000. Against the motion, 3,5.....' the rest was drowned out by the cheers of the delegates.

Cheers

Mandatory reselection had been won, and although that had been half-expected it was deserving of celebration.

Tony Benn wound up the debate on the manifesto with the most persuasive speech of the whole conference. He began by proclaiming: 'In my heart I'm a Chartist...the annual parliament idea has a lot of merit.' He ended by saying: 'The conference must be given the power that goes with responsibility.'

The motion, which would have given the conference the right to decide the manifesto,

was lost. Yet it was a small majority, much narrower than had been expected, and here again was a hint that perhaps, on the third question, the election of the party leader, the right wing might not have the success that was predicted.

Parasites

The first discussion was on the principle of widening the franchise so that the unions and the CLPs would have some say, as well as the MPs, on who should be the party leader. 'It is,' said Eric Heffer, summing up on behalf of the NEC, 'a very moderate proposal'. But because it threatened the monopoly of power exercised by the PLP, it had become the crunch issue of the entire conference.

It was a sweet and joyful moment when Lena Jaeger announced the figures of the vote which took the election out of the sole hands of the MPs.

Tony Benn hurriedly popped another lozenger into his mouth to control his excitement. The constituency delegates rose to their feet like one huge tidal wave sweeping all before it.

At that moment it was obvious that the rest of the conference would be something of an anti-climax. So it proved. The union block vote prevented the details of how the leader would be elected from being decided. That such a decision will now take place in three months time will bring little comfort to the right wing.

Wave

On their behalf, the CLV's final bulletin described the events at Blackpool as 'a disastrous week'. As Dennis Skinner said at one of the fringe meetings: 'That's what hurts the right wing. They don't like losing. They squeal.'

The last words belong to Tony Benn, for it would be churlish to deny that if this conference was a triumph for any one individual then it was he. 'I believe the labour movement is on the eve of a great step forward,' Benn said at the start of the week.

Despite the left victories at Blackpool's Winter Gardens there is no guarantee of that, but it is the case that a path was cleared for such a step forward; a path that had



Sam McCluskie

been blocked by, among others, the weeds and parasites of the labour right.

Those will grow and breed again, fertilised as they are by the IMF, the millionaire press, and behind them the capitalist class. They will have to be trampled underfoot if the Labour Party is to even approach the implementation of the type of socialism that was talked about at Blackpool.

But only the spiteful would deny that Blackpool was a grand place to be last week.

Photo: LAURIE SPARHAM (IFL)

Photo: Andrew Ward (Report)

BEVANISM is the largest movement that the Labour left has produced. It was a response to the failures of the 1945-51 Labour government.

If on the one side the Attlee administration had put through a series of vital and radical reforms, on the other it had instituted wage freezes, put unofficial strikers in jail, fought the cold war from Greece to Malaya, and poured compensation into the pockets of capitalists whose decaying industries had been nationalised.

The response of the Labour left from 1945 to 1950 was scarcely visible to the naked eye. It was the Korean War, or rather its economic consequences, that catalysed a left reaction.

Mood

The Labour lefts of the late '40s were amazingly starry-eyed about the USA. *Tribune* never was able to distinguish fully between socialism and the New Deal and described Truman's victory in 1945 as 'a great victory for American labour' and for 'the common people over the world'.

When the Korean War started, the vast majority of the Labour left lined up behind the USA and South Korea. Michael Foot argued that US soldiers were 'dying to uphold a Labour Party principle'. Woodrow Wyatt, then a regular contributor to *Tribune*, suggested that North Korea should have nuclear bombs dropped on it.

This mood changed when it became apparent that US policy was not just content with rolling back communism in Korea but was thinking about attempting the same mission in China.

There was also a realisation that the *scale* of rearmament — for most of the left, and certainly Bevan, were in favour of some rearmament — threatened the social gains made by Labour. Gaitskell was a fervent supporter of NATO and was determined to rearm as soon as possible even if this meant less housing and welfare.

Leftism

In April 1951 Gaitskell introduced a budget that doubled arms expenditure and imposed charges in the health service. The Tories were exultant and the Labour left in Parliament and in the Constituency Labour Parties were enraged. Three ministers resigned: Bevan, Harold Wilson, and John Freeman. The Bevanites, as they became called, produced a pamphlet, called *One Way Only*, which sold a staggering 100,000 copies in a few weeks.

Attlee called an election in Autumn 1951 and this lowered the temperature of the fight within the Party. But Labour lost the election and the battle was bound to heat up.

The issue which sparked the next big explosion was that Bevan and 57 Labour MPs dared to vote against the Tory defence proposals in March 1952. The right opened a vicious witch-hunt and in October the Bevanite MPs were forced to cease their regular meetings.

The right-wing MPs were convinced that Bevanism meant electoral disaster. Roy Jenkins argued a case which is close to that recently raised by the right: 'The electorate is extremely conservative-minded and we can never win except with the kind of attitude represented by the

THE BEVANITES

Rise and fall of the tribunitary left

SINCE 1973, and particularly since the end of the 1974-79 Labour government, we have seen a resurgence of the Labour left. In order to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the political approach of the new Labour left it is useful to go back and look at the fate of its political precursor — Bevanism.

Here ANDREW JENKINS looks at the Labour left's most illustrious hero and the current around him.



Bevanite stars Dick Crossman, Harold Wilson and Anthony Greenwood. Behind Crossman, Bevan's wife Jennie Lee and a youthful Tony Benn.

right-wing leadership.' But the real fire-power of the right came from the trade union leaders who hated any suggestion of leftism. Deakin of the TGWU had prohibited communists from holding office in the union. A similar sanitation operation was envisaged within the Labour Party. Lawther of the Miners' Union gives a flavour of their politics when he accused the Bevanites of 'attempting to undermine the leadership in the same way that Hitler and the communists did'.

The left was attempting to counter the drift away from any commitment to socialist policies that the 'New Thinkers' as the Gaitskellites were called, were engineering.

The base of the Bevanites

was in the CLPs whose membership reached a peak in the period 1951-53. This control was shown when in 1952 the left won five of the six constituency places on the NEC, and all six in 1953.

The Bevanite revolt took up a variety of issues. It opposed German rearmament and proposed a more radical manifesto for Labour. It was concerned, but divided, over the issue of nuclear weapons. The Bevanites held hundreds of 'Brains Trust' meetings (panels of MPs available for questions would meet in Town Halls) up and down the country and Bevan and Wilson spoke to conferences of Amalgamated Engineering Union members.

They placed the emphasis on the parliamentary party

and elections for the NEC. Peggy Duff, who was working for *Tribune* at the time, joked that the 'Brains Trust' was so effective in pushing their candidates that 'some of us even discussed the possibility of charging a fee for this service'.

The most important single activity of the Bevanites, and the least typical, was their intervention in the 1955 dock strike. In government the Bevanites had had an abysmal record on trade union matters. They had supported 'socialist' wages policies and even a 'socialist' wage freeze.

Bevan had been Minister of Labour in 1951 when seven unofficial dockers' leaders were put in prison under wartime regulations until mass action had got them released. Then he went along with

TGWU leader Deakin in seeing the problem as communist subversion.

Things had changed by January 1955. Bevan was no longer a minister. The decline of the constituency parties, which with ups and downs has continued to this day, had begun. There was a new radicalisation in the unions and Bevan had to get a base in the unions if he was to become leader of the Labour Party. This time Deakin was denounced for slandering the dockers in calling them communists. Meetings were held, pamphlets produced, and *Tribune* sold at the dock gates.

This intervention prefigures the activity a new and credible Labour left would have to carry out.

The collapse of Bevanism came from its political and organisational inadequacies. After the ban on meetings in 1952, the Bevanites, or rather a small number of their leaders, met in secret. The so-called 'First XI' met weekly for a civilised meal at Dick Crossman's where the elite discussed policy. The 'Second XI' was made up of junior ministers and a few other activists like Ralph Miliband and Geoffrey Drain of NALGO.

H-Bomb

The Second XI organised the Brains Trust meetings and other events but had little communication with the leaders. The lack of organisation typifies the parliamentary side of Bevanism and was convenient for leaders who were impatient of any suggestion of real rank and file control.

The disintegration of Bevanism began in 1954. Bevan resigned from the shadow cabinet because of Attlee's support for the cold war alliance SEATO. Wilson, rather than backing Bevan, replaced him, with the support of Crossman. By early 1955, Crossman and Wigg came out in favour of the nuclear weapons, which, they argued, would enable conscription to be scrapped.

Bevan was ambiguous on the issue. He was against testing the H-bomb but was for *multilateral* disarmament and for staying in NATO. In 1957 the H-Bomb Campaign Committee held a meeting of 5,000 in Trafalgar Square.

Lessons

A new left was emerging both inside and outside the unions that did not relate first and foremost to Parliament or even the Labour Party. At the conference that year Bevan spoke for the NEC and lambasted the unilateralists

Conference, he argued, should not send a foreign secretary 'Naked into the conference chamber'. To ban the bomb and reject foreign alliances was 'an emotional spasm'. For once the headline of the *Daily Telegraph* got it right: 'Bevan into Bevin'. (Ernest Bevin was the right-wing Labour foreign secretary in the Attlee government).

The lessons of Bevanism are relevant today. For Bevanism to gain any real impact inside the Party it would have needed to relate consistently to trade union struggles and to those who were politically involved outside the declining CLPs. It needed to organise its supporters inside both the Labour Party and the unions.

This would have led to political debates that would have clarified what socialists should have done. It would have put the left MPs under greater control of the rank and file. All this would have been a dramatic break from the traditional methods of social democracy.

Shackle

The Bevanites trod another path. Their warped victory came in 1964 when Wilson, Crossman, Foot, Wigg, Davies, Barbara Castle and Anthony Greenwood formed a government that crawled to the Americans on Vietnam and tried to shackle the unions at home.

'Bevanism' in power had all the weaknesses of Attlee's government without a single one of its strengths.

Carter, Thatcher — hands off Iran!

THE Iraqi invasion of Iran is a new attack on the Iranian revolution. It can only boost the imperialists' attempts to crush the revolution and impose its own counter-revolutionary terror.

Washington, London and Paris profess 'neutrality' while building up their forces in the region under cover of the Iraqi attack, and threatening to intervene militarily under the pretext that their 'economic interests' are threatened.

Any such intervention under the guise of defending oil supplies or any other pretext would be nothing else than an armed attack on the Iranian revolution, just like the flopped American raid at Tobas to free the hostages.

Socialists in Iran and throughout the world should condemn the Iraqi military offensive and demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Iran.

They should denounce the manoeuvres of Washington, London and Paris and demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the imperialist naval fleets from the Gulf. They should also condemn the selling of imperialist arms to Saudi Arabia and warn against the danger of further imperialist actions, under the slogan of 'Imperialist Hands Off the Iranian Revolution!'

Coups

Iraq has provided sanctuary for officers and soldiers loyal to the old Iranian monarchy, trained and organised under the leadership of Oveissi, Palizban and Bakhtiar.

They are trying to form a 'white army' supported and armed by imperialism and capable of intervening in Iran. These exiled counter-revolutionaries could link up in any coup attempt with plotters in the Iranian army and the old state apparatus, not all of whom were uncovered in the foiling of coup preparations in June.

AN edited version of a statement issued by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on 3 October

We fight alongside the Khomeini regime against any imperialist-inspired attempt to overthrow it. Until the workers and peasants can replace the present capitalist regime with a government of their own any overthrow of the Khomeini-Bani Sadr government would signal the crushing of the masses and of the gains of the Iranian revolution.

But military defence of the present capitalist Iranian regime does not mean political support for it or to the institutions of the Islamic Republic. In fact the policies of the present regime have undermined the most effective defence of the revolution.

It has attempted to preserve the military hierarchy, riddled with plotters, rather than purging all the reactionary officers.

It has used troops to suppress those national minorities struggling for the right of self-determination, including a bloody military assault on the Kurdish people. A forthright declaration of the right to self-determination of the oppressed nationalities would generate enormous enthusiasm from the 50 per cent of Iranians who are non-Persians, as well as undermining further the Iraqi claim to be their saviour.

We support the call for an 'army of 20 million'. But this would be most effective through the formation of democratically organised militias and the election of rank and file committees in the armed forces, as occurred in the February revolution against the Shah.

Similarly the best way to deepen the gains of the revolution would be through the independent organisation of the toiling masses in workers shoras and peasants committees.

Such independent organisation

would help block any coup attempt by reactionary forces and help to open the road to a workers and farmers' government in Iran.

Alliances

The Baghdad regime has used the 1975 treaty between itself and the Shah as its pretext for an attack on Iran. But this treaty itself signalled a turn by Baghdad towards collaboration with the Shah.

The Shah stopped aid to the Kurdish rebels in Iraq in return for the division of the Shatt al-Arab waterway and renunciation of Arab sovereignty over three islands in the Gulf seized by the Shah in 1971.

Iraq agreed to halt all aid to the rebels in Baluchistan, and those in Dhofar fighting the Sultan of Oman. It also stopped its 'subversive' propaganda in the Gulf emirates and the Arab minorities in Iran. The treaty was a truly counter-revolutionary charter!

Since the overthrow of the Shah, Baghdad has distanced itself from the USSR and sought closer ties with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. The Iraqi regime hopes to take advantage of the weakening of the Iranian military power to strengthen its own role in the Gulf area.

Its other objectives include weakening and overthrowing the Iranian government if it can, as well as sealing off the influence of the Iranian revolution from its own people. Imperialism's support for these aims was reflected in the *Wall Street Journal* which wrote: 'With revolutionary Iran creating so much tension in the Middle East, Washington would clearly welcome any role that the Iraqis might play in



stabilising the Persian Gulf.'

Iraq's Baathist regime exercises a ferocious dictatorship against the masses, including its religious and national minorities.

The solution to the Iraqi masses' real problems lies in an alliance with the Iranian revolution, not military opposition, and through the overthrow of its own Baathist dictatorship.

The initial hopes of both Baghdad and imperialism for a swift Iraqi victory proved unfounded, thanks largely to the mobilisations

of the Iranian masses against the Iraqi attack. The designs of imperialism in the region can be countered by urgently raising the following demands throughout the international labour movement:

**Iraqi troops out now
Imperialist hands off Iran
Full support for the efforts of
the Iranian masses to defeat
the hand of reaction
Defend the Iranian revolution.**

By Brian Grogan

THE Iranian counter-offensive against Iraq has brought into the open the unholy alliance bent on destroying the Iranian revolution.

The Gulf states and Jordan, which had already been covertly aiding the Iraqi war effort, are now openly threatening to join it, while the fighting spirit of the Iranian people has caught the imperialists off guard.

When the Iraqis calculated the effects of the US cutting off from Iran the spare parts for the military hardware inherited from the Shah, they forgot to take into account the response of the Iranian masses.

In Khorramshahr, Abadan, and Ahwaz the Iraqi troops are encountering fierce house-to-house resistance as the people of these cities engage in combat alongside the regular Iranian army.

As the *Sunday Times* acknowledged: 'At the front, Muslim militants are fighting alongside Marxists and nationalists.' This also applies to the oppressed minorities.

The Arabs of Khuzestan have by no means seen the Iraq regime as liberators. They have been fighting against the Iraq rulers, which is hardly any wonder when it was the people from these areas, led by the oil workers, who were in the vanguard of the movement which over-

The Iranian people enter the war



threw the Shah.

More important has been the decision of the Kurdish leadership. The Kurds stopped fighting the Teheran forces as soon as the Iraq army crossed the border, and reports suggest that the Kurds in Iraq have chosen this time to renew their offensive against the Baathist regime in

Baghdad.

This further threat to Saddam Hussein is probably why Saudi Arabia and Jordan have decided to reveal their colours.

The *Guardian* on Monday revealed that 'powerful and usually respectable voices in the US ... are now arguing

openly for an armed strike to "install" a moderate pro-Western government in Iran lest the Shi'ite infection ... spreads an epidemic across the Gulf.'

The determination of the Iranian people to defend the gains of their revolution is not following the course chosen by Khomeini and Bani-Sadr,

the rulers in Teheran. The latter are concerned to beef up the capitalist officer corps, and many voices are now being raised to 'normalise' relations with US imperialism — supposedly to get the flow of spare parts re-started.

Such a development could only lead towards a counter-revolutionary coup.

The course of the fighting and the response of the masses confirms that the place for socialists is in support of the battle to defend Iran. This is where to fight for the extension of the revolutionary process and against attempts to consolidate the capitalist state and army in Iran.

Confused attitude to Rank and File groups

I AM partially heartened by your article on organising inside NALGO within the Nalgo Action Group (25 Sept).

I would be more firmly convinced if your attitude towards NAG was duplicated in other unions. In fact, to be honest, your attitude to Rank and File groups in other unions is typified by complete sectarianism and utter confusion.

The history speaks for itself. In both the Teachers union (NUT) and the civil servants unions (CPSA/SCPS) your comrades broke with the R & F groups (Rank and File Teacher, Redder Tape) — that is initiated a split — and then sat back and accused R & F groups for failing to mount joint electoral candidates! This, comrades, is surely an example of open hypocrisy.

Your article by the NAG comrades quite clearly shows that some members of the International Marxist Group are aware of the bankruptcy of Broad Leftism and of 'blocking' with all kinds of appalling Stalinists and only slightly less appalling class collaborationists of the Labourite kind.

Yet within the NUT and the civil service IMG comrades still adhere to sterile splitting and blocking, and refuse to reunite with the respective R&F groups — in spite of an open invitation to do so.

There is no way excuses can be offered on the lines of 'NAG is different', since the principle of R&F organisation remains constant — and that principle is the united front.

The only possibility that immediately strikes me is that the IMG is so completely wracked by internal factionalism that no stable principle can be adhered to.

Comrades, please try and sort yourselves out with regard to the R&F. Either be in or out, but at least maintain a principled stance. And try to be a little more consistent — in the civil service, for example, you can hop around Redder Tape like a cat on hot bricks.

Naturally we would rather have you inside R&F so that you can help us build a genuine fightback that won't collapse as soon as Labour is in power (as the Broad Left will do). Think about it and join the R&F groups!

J NICHOLLS, DHSS Metropolitan SCPS Redder Tape

Iran/Iraq war: 'take no side'

BY WHAT dialectical process did Brian Grogan reach the conclusion that revolutionary socialists must take sides in the Iranian/Iraq conflict? (25 Sept). There is not even a whisper of a Marxist analysis of the nature of the regimes of the two countries.

He writes that the aim of the Iraqi attack is to roll 'back the gains of the Iranian revolution.' Have not Ayatollah Khomeini and his mullahs done this very successfully themselves without outside help?

Of course we hold no brief for the murderous Baathist regime in Baghdad. But if Hussein has slaughtered com-

munist and Kurds, Khomeini has not been backward in persecuting Iran's national minorities. Hundreds, if not thousands of Baluchis, Kurds, Azerbaijanis, and Arabs have fallen victim to Great Iranian chauvinism and Shi-ite obscurantism.

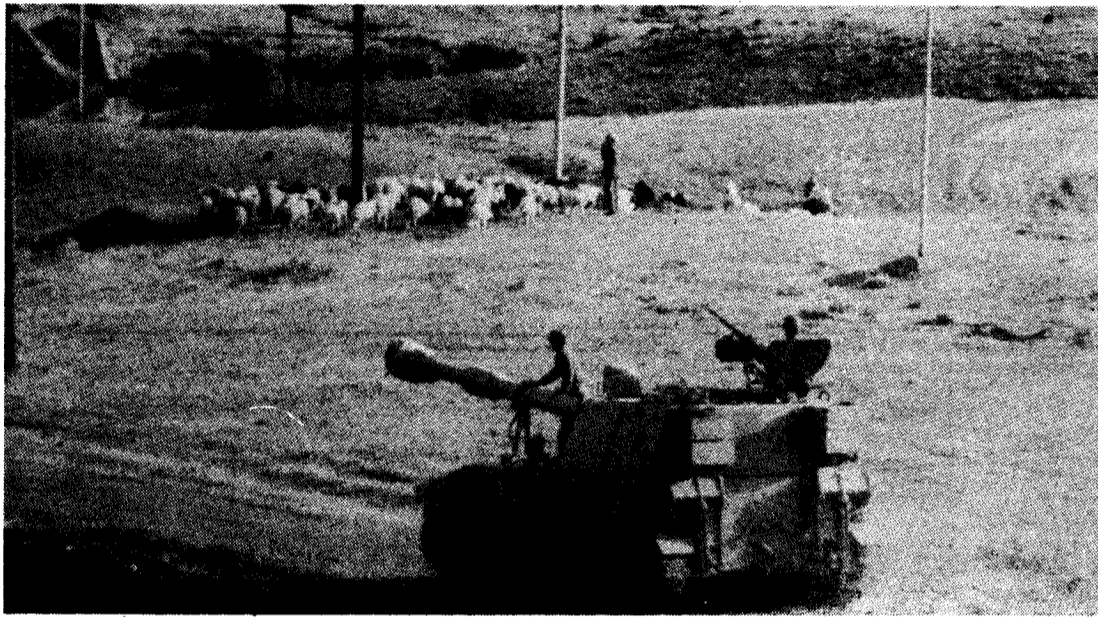
True, in Iraq Hussein has not yet forced women back behind the chador; nor is there any evidence of adulterers being stoned or thieves having their hands chopped off. But I am sure that Brian would not claim these as 'gains of the Iranian revolution.'

On the surface at least Iraq's war aims appear to be only the return of ter-

ritory seized by the Shah in 1975. There may of course be CIA involvement behind the Iraqi attack but as yet we have no evidence for this. We cannot base our political positions on conjecture.

The correct slogan for revolutionary internationalists to raise is *no imperialist intervention in the Iranian-Iraq war*. We must call on the masses of both countries to turn their arms against their oppressive regimes and to set up organs of genuine popular control. This would act as a revolutionary spark which would set the whole of the region aflame.

CHARLIE VAN GELDEREN, London



Khomeini as big a threat as Hussein

Your coverage of the Middle East war implicitly backs Iran, gives critical support to Khomeini, and thus slides towards social chauvinism.

This is the result of misunderstanding the nature of the war. You may be right to say that Washington, despite her neutrality, is secretly glad about the Iraqi attack on Iran; she may even be its author. But this by no means determines the character of the conflict.

Here is a war between two bourgeois governments; they are fighting for similar goals. Each wishes to soothe the discontents of its people by seizing its neighbour's oil territories, hypocritically befriending national minorities oppressed by their rival (Tehran champions the Shi-ite Muslims of Iraq, and

Baghdad the Kurds and Arabs of Iran). About this you say nothing.

The workers, peasants, and national minorities of the Gulf have nothing to gain from such a war. They should support neither the Arab chauvinists and expansionists in Baghdad nor their Persian counterparts in Tehran. They should overthrow them both. About that too you are silent.

I agree that the Iraqi attack could spell danger for the revolutionary gains of the Iranian masses. They will doubtless defend them. But you demand more: that they 'fight alongside the Khomeini regime'.

Yet the Khomeini regime has done just as much as Hussein to provoke the war which endangers the Iranian revolution. And now that the war has broken out, he, like Hussein, lashes his people to the treadmill of racial and religious hatred.

You even offer advice to the man: make your war with Iraq 'more effective' by democratising your army and freeing the Kurds and the Arabs of Khuzestan. As though he were some socialist fighting a revolutionary war, and whose only sin was to forget, all infrequently, to free the Kurds and Khuzestani Arabs. Do you not know that it is to oppress those very Arabs that Ayatollah Khomeini fights today on the plains of Khuzestan?

Khomeini is no less a threat to the revolutionary gains of the Iranian people than his adversary in Baghdad.

In the months following the February Revolution in Russia, the armies of Kaiser

Wilhelm advanced almost to the gates of Petrograd. The Bolsheviks understood that the gains of the people were in danger: weeks before the October Revolution, Bolshevik soldiers defended the approaches to Petrograd with their lives.

But the most urgent need, said Lenin, was to throw out the warmonger ministers and put the leaders of the workers and peasants in power. Then not only the Russian soldier but the Russian government would be able to say to the German troops: comrade workers, cease fighting, return home and fight like us for your liberation.

The people of the Gulf should do likewise: overthrow the capitalists in Tehran and Baghdad to secure a just and democratic peace. You, Socialist Challenge, demand neither revolution nor peace nor justice.

DAVE BAILEY, London

Oppose Iran/Iraq war

IF THE masses of the Middle East today are politically dominated by religious ideologies it is largely the result of the unprincipled policies pursued by the Soviet Union and its supporters in the Communist Parties since 1945.

Unfortunately Brian Grogan's article 'Hands off Iran' (25 Sept) adapts to the prevailing ideologies and spreads illusions — 'if Khomeini's present attack on the Kurds was called off and national rights granted them and the Arabs of Khuzestan', and so on.

Identical

Marxists do not take as their criterion for support a regime's 'policies' but its social base. Socially both Iran and Iraq are at present essentially identical. Both countries are dominated by a weak bourgeoisie which cannot rule directly through democratic institutions and therefore bolsters itself through Bonapartist mediators — a military clique in Iraq and a demagogic religious hierarchy led by Khomeini in Iran.

For the moment the Iraqi Baathist clique have their workers effectively under control; Khomeini has not yet been able to achieve that in Iran.

Marxists therefore do not take sides in the Iran/Iraq war. They oppose the war by calling on the workers and their allies to overthrow both regimes and establish workers' and peasants' governments in both countries. The democratic demand for national self-determination is part of that fight against Khomeini and the Baathists.

Minority

If US or other imperialist forces invade Iran (or Iraq) Marxists would fight against them because they would only reinforce the present society and strengthen the hold of reactionary chauvinism on the masses. But the demand for the right of self-determination for national minorities would still stand.

LF HOLLEY, Bath

Democrats with a capital D

IN THE interview on the USA (2 October) Tony Benn expresses support for the leader of the 'Democratic Socialist Organising Committee' (DSOC), Michael Harrington. Benn draws an analogy between DSOC's activities and the early days of the formation of the British Labour Party, and contrasts this with the position of the Trotskyists in the USA who see a party of labour being formed independently of the Democratic Party.

As far as I know, the main impetus for the formation of the Labour Party at the turn of the century came from the socialist groups and the rank and file of the unions, not from the bureaucrats or the Liberals.

Harrington argues that the majority of US workers support the Democrats, and therefore we should. Not only is this not true — 50 per cent of US workers don't vote at all, and probably about 5 or 6 per cent vote for the Democrats in the primaries — but Harrington ignores the fact that the Democrats are a party of big Capital.

It is entirely different from the Labour Party which for all its pro-capitalist leadership, is financed by the unions. The unions are incidental to the functioning of the Democratic party.

Harrington supports a party of the class enemy. He campaigned for Carter in 1976 as Carter was 'committed to' full employment, anti-militarism, women's and black rights! Presumably he campaigns for Carter now.

PHIL WARD, London

Wrong means not ENDS

I AM unclear about Socialist Challenge's attitude to the positions put forward by the Campaign for European Nuclear Disarmament.

Two of the major criticisms put forward by Redmond O'Neill in his pamphlet *Don't die for Thatcher* are that END does not call for Britain out of NATO and does not take a unilateral approach.

However in the pamphlet *Protest and Survive* EP Thompson says that 'each national peace movement will proceed directly to contest the nuclear weapons deployed by its own state, or by NATO or Warsaw Pact obligations... Its demands upon its own state for disarmament will be unilateral'. (my emphasis).

The pamphlet also says 'We offer no advantage to either NATO or the Warsaw alliance. Our objectives must be to... ultimately, dissolve both great power alliances'.

True there is a continual referral to gradualism and 'appeals' to governments which all seem pretty lame — thus the demand 'Britain out of NATO' is not put forward.

If my interpretation of *Protest and Survive* is right, I think that we should criticise its orientation to middle-class personages instead of seeing the need to use industrial and mass action to force governments to abandon nuclear weapons.

LES HARTOP, Coventry

Benn gets his facts wrong

'WHAT is history but a tale agreed upon?' said (I think) the first Bonaparte. There are also, of course, facts. Tony Benn's account of the development of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy would be less of a 'tale' and more like the actual history if he had a clearer grasp of the facts.

In his interview with Pat Kane and Hugh Richards (25 Sept) he says: 'All of a sudden, and very much to my surprise, there was the development of the Mobilising Committee... When the Militant tendency came in to the Mobilising Committee... all of a sudden it began to come alive.'

This account bears no resemblance to the reality. Apart from the fact that the Mobilising Committee did not die when Militant joined, it is the opposite of the truth.

The facts: Militant's involvement came after the Mobilising Committee was launched. It has been a formal involvement, tokenistic to the point of being nominal involvement. For example: Militant took 50 of the first broadsheet — about one for each of its organisers (Total sale: 17000). It took 75 of the second broadsheet (which carried an article by one of its people). The LPYS, completely dominated by Militant, took 200 copies of the first, none of the second. Less than 100 of the first broadsheet were ordered by Militant supporters in the provinces; none, as far as I know, of the second.

The paper *Militant* has only had occasional lukewarm articles on the Mobilising Committee. *Militant* has not been involved prominently in organising the local

meetings (with perhaps one exception); in most places it has not been involved at all, even to the extent of its people turning up.

In short, Militant involved itself just enough to keep contact with the 'Tribunite/Bennite Left' and just enough to stop its supporters asking why it stood aside. To the specific work of the Mobilising Committee its contribution was marginal — that is unless Benn thinks Militant has an occult power to influence the labour movement irrespective of what its members and publications do and say.

Of course, Militant's formal support has added to the appeal of the Mobilising Committee as the embodiment of a united left, which is something, I suppose. But it is not much. And Militant is not short of resources.

Strange also is Tony Benn's choice of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory (and Women's Fightback, which it initiated) to illustrate his perception that there has been a 'great splinter activity' inside and outside the Labour Party. The SCLV initiated the Mobilising Committee and, together with the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, 'carried' the major weight of its uniting and organising work, both at the centre of the campaign and throughout the country.

But comrade Benn or his advisors may just have noticed that the SCLV forms the revolutionary socialist wing of the Mobilising Committee...

JOHN O'MAHONY, (SCLV Steering Committee)

The day Upper Clyde worked over Heath

By Patrick Sikorski

OCCUPATIONS are the best way to fight redundancies.

By seizing their factory, workers can keep themselves together, instead of being scattered to their homes. Solidarity can be organised against the attacks of the bosses' media and the police and the courts on pickets and strike leaders.

Delegations can be despatched to build solidarity in the labour movement.

Occupations are far more effective than pickets in stopping the removal by management of supplies, machinery, and property.

If they are occupying, workers can say: 'We will return your possessions to you, when you return our future to us.'

Under the 1970-74 Tory government, there were over a hundred occupations against redundancies and as part of militant wages struggles. The classic occupation at that time was the workers' takeover of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders.

UCS was a consortium of five Glasgow shipyards which the Tories tried to break up. They wanted to close two of the yards and sell the others to private firms. The decision was announced on 29 July, 1971, and the next day all the yards were occupied.

A demonstration of 30,000 the previous month, accompanied by a one-day general strike in Glasgow in which 150,000 workers



took part had paved the way for the takeover of the yards.

On 18 August, 70,000 marched and £500,000 came in to the work-in's funds. Overnight UCS was at the head of a national movement against the Tory government.

The occupation was not a conventional one. The workers took charge of the plant, controlled the gate, excluded the liquidator, and prevented the movement of machinery. They also paid sacked workers from a fighting fund, and finished the ships under the supervision of the shop stewards.

The work-in had a tremendous impact. The shipyards were at the heart of the Scottish economy, the workers were in a strategic position, and tens of thousands of other jobs depended on them.

The shop stewards seized the chance to build a political movement to throw out the Tories. Hundreds of meetings were held up and down the country.

The August demonstration united the Scottish working class behind the demand to kick out the Tories. The Scottish miners talked of strike action.

But as in the steel strike this year, the TUC did everything possible to prevent the struggle spreading. Nevertheless the 'lameduck' policy of the Tories was smashed.

The government was forced to shell out £35m for restructuring three of the four yards, and in October 1972 Marathon Manufacturing took over the fourth yard. The work-in ended.

Heath struggled on for another two years before the miners' strike in 1974 administered the coup de grace. UCS had been the beginning of the end.

THE BATTLE FOR IMPORT CONTROLS OR M

By Paul Lawson

WHEN the last Tory government left office in 1974, the official unemployment figure was 600,000. In 1979, at the end of the Labour government which followed, unemployment had climbed to just under 1.5m. Today unemployment is over 2m (8,500 jobs having been lost in the last week alone).

These figures are well known to be gross underestimates of the real number out of work — many people, particularly women, who are unemployed do not sign on because they are not entitled to benefit.

Whatever the precise figures, the increase in unemployment has been huge. What is the cause of it?

The rate of employment depends fundamentally on the rate of profit. When profits are high, industry expands. New factories are built, idle plant is put back into action, new workers are hired.

When the rate of profit goes down, industrialists and owners of capital are reluctant to invest — it becomes more profitable to lend money to the government or building societies, or invest abroad.

As profit rates go down, weaker firms go bankrupt. Big firms start to close down their less profitable operations. Unemployment mounts. Profit rates in Britain have fallen dramatically over the past six or seven years.

According to the *Bank of England Quarterly Review*, company profits in Britain are now the lowest ever recorded — a mere 3.5 per cent. As the review points out: '...companies have responded by curbing their spending on fixed investment and stocks. Employment has fallen sharply.'

The drastic fall in profits result from a combination of the world economic crisis and the historic decline of British capitalism, which has been going on for over a hundred years.

The collapse of British firms' profitability is not the end of the story. The Tory government is using policies of unemployment as a deliberate weapon against the working class.

Since the mid-1960s successive governments have attempted to break the power of the organised workers' movement, in order to push down living standards and boost profits.

Fear

Harold Wilson's government introduced a wage freeze in 1966. It followed it up with Barbara Castle's 'In Place of Strife' proposals for curbing the unions. Since then there have been a sorry succession of wages policies and attempts to 'reform' the unions.

The distinctive feature of Thatcherism is its particularly savage use of 'monetarist' policies. The Tories hope that by restricting credit — squeezing the availability of bank loans to firms and individuals — weaker firms will go to the wall. As bankruptcies rocket, they hope capital will be concentrated in the stronger, more profitable firms.

At the same time the Tories are keeping their fingers crossed that the fear of unemployment will weaken trade union organisation and limit wage

demands.

Thus unemployment is the result of a combination of the crisis of world capitalism, the decline of British capitalism, and deliberate policies pursued by the government.

This shows the absurdity of the argument that the fundamental cause of job loss is a flood of imports. At the present time, as the volume of world trade declines, both exports and imports are falling — but imports are falling faster than exports.

Threats

The most popular demand in the labour movement to defeat unemployment is the call for import controls. Apart from the fact that this demand fails to address the real cause of unemployed, there are major objections from a working class point of view.

First, in the long term, import controls cannot work. Any attempt to substantially reduce imports by compulsory controls would inevitably result in retaliation from the other major capitalist countries — with the possibility of a new trade war.

British exports would be hit, with consequent disastrous effects on employment. The Labour government of 1964-1970 did implement what amounted to an import control — the temporary import surcharge of 15 per cent introduced in 1967. This had to be dropped because of the threats that Wilson received of impending retaliation from the other



Ford Dagenham workers lobby the TUC for import controls — aimed at other Ford workers in Europe

capitalist countries.

Apart from being unworkable, there is a more fundamental objection to the im-

port control strategy. It is an attempt to save British jobs at the expense of foreign workers. It exports unemployment.



RIGHT to Workers stop for a minute's silence in Southall at the place where the cops killed Blair Peach

Photo: PETE GRANT

R JOBS SS ACTION



pay, coupled with a ban on overtime. The trade unions should demand that bankrupt firms be nationalised under workers' control.

These demands, if fought for and implemented, would immediately create the basis for a class-wide fight against unemployment. But that can only happen if we start from the position that unemployment is caused by their crisis; the crisis of capitalism which no worker is responsible for.

Fiat workers in Italy have responded in exactly the right way — so ferocious was their reaction to the threat of redundancies that in the past week they have brought down the government!

Struggle

If the effects of unemployment are the result of capitalism's crisis, then the demand has to be for the work to be shared out with no loss of pay.

None of Moss Evans' pleading for import controls will contribute one iota to a real struggle.

In every union, the demand for a serious campaign for work sharing and the 35-hour week has to be taken up. A charter on unemployment, similar to the TUC's charter for women's rights, should be drawn up and fought for throughout the labour movement. Such demands can defend the workers' movement against the threat of unemployment and they can generate a movement which points to a more rational way of organising society.

Capitalism never finally solves the problem of unemployment; as slump follows boom, unemployment will always reappear. That's why the fight against unemployment cannot be separated from the struggle for socialism; the struggle for a planned economy in which the right to work will be a fundamental human right.

That's why the fight against unemployment can't be separated from the fight for mass action to bring down the Tories, and to commit the next Labour government to legislate the 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

The labour movement has been campaigning for the 35-hour week for decades. When there are over two million unemployed, and when hours worked in Britain are higher than almost any other West European country, it's about time we achieved it.

Divide

If we fail to generate action against unemployment, eventually it will not just weaken trade union organisation, but divide working people: unemployed against the employed, full-time workers against the part-time, women against men, skilled versus the unskilled. This is what can happen unless we unite and fight.

And that's why in addition to the demands outlined above we should emblazon on our banner the fight against discriminatory lay-offs — no selling of the jobs of women and young people. When the employers sack women, part-time workers, apprentices and school leavers, it's not to save jobs for anyone else, but to begin the process of threatening every worker's job.

Such proposals reach a high point of absurdity when workers from a multinational company like Ford simultaneously agree with the proposal to build inter-continental links with other Ford workers in West Europe against continent-wide attacks by Ford management — and at the same time call for import controls, presumably to keep out cars made by those same Ford workers!

Absurd

It becomes even more absurd when Ford cars in Britain are assembled with components made abroad. The import control argument falls to bits.

Most importantly, the fight for import controls — for example the campaign launched by the leadership of the Transport and General Workers' Union — is a substitute for a fighting programme against unemployment now. What would such a campaign amount to?

Unemployment has to be fought now, irrespective of the long-term strategy to defeat it. The struggle launched at Gardner's in Manchester shows the way: occupation against the threat of redundancy. The whole labour movement has to back struggles like that at Gardner's. Every threat of redundancy should be met by similar action.

Both the Labour Party and many unions are in favour of the 35-hour week with no loss of

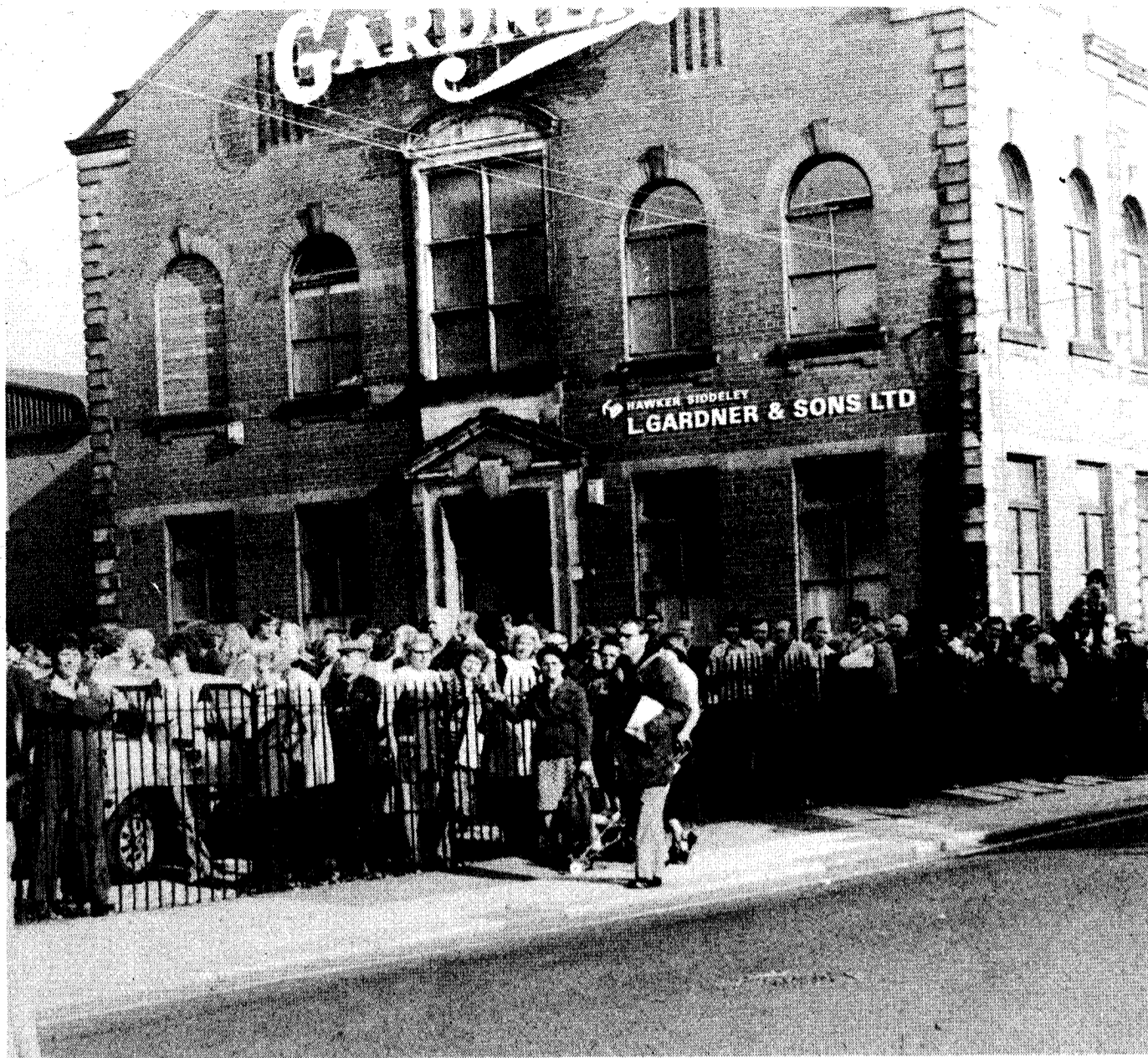


Photo: KEVIN COEN

Gardners occupy "against all redundancies"

'SOMEONE has to show the Tories that they can't get away with it'.

That's the sentiment of the 2,500 engineering workers occupying Gardner's diesel engine plant in Eccles, Manchester. The plant was occupied last Friday to fight 590 redundancies threatened by management.

Gardner's must win. It's not just to save 590 jobs — actions like this are an example to the whole trade union movement. It could be the beginning of a national fightback against unemployment.

JUDE WOODWARD talked to the Gardner's workers about their struggle.

The dispute began when management delivered the unions an ultimatum — 590 jobs had to go.

The AUEW convenor, Tom Macafee, at the head of a highly organised plant, suddenly found himself treated with contempt by the same management which had been sucking up

to him a few weeks previously.

He explains what happened: 'At the first mass meeting the workforce voted to fight the redundancies with industrial action if necessary. We proposed that management should withdraw the notices from the Department of Employ-

ment so that we could go on with discussions. But they couldn't see their way clear, so we had no choice.

'The membership see it as a moral issue to defend their jobs, so that the second mass meeting last Thursday re-endorsed the previous decision.

'After a stewards' meeting, we told management we were taking over the plant at 4.30 on Friday afternoon. We took the switchboard straight away. All calls into the factory — from customers or whatever — come straight into the convenor's office.'

Already the dispute has stirred up unfavourable press coverage. The media and management in collusion put out reports that the Thursday mass meeting had voted against action. This was a lie.

Tom Macafee says: 'The vote was closer than it had been previously. That's true, but then a lot of divisive things had been happening. There's forces of reaction in every factory, and in ours they had been working hard to swing the

vote at the second mass meeting, but they failed.'

Tom Farrelly, who works in the milling department, was even more blunt about it. 'The local press coverage is a load of rubbish, and the radio too. First they tried to say the vote was rigged, and then they got the police to say there had been trouble at the gates. It was all lies to stir people up against us.'

The Gardner workers know that they face a media witch-hunt, divisive tactics from the management, and a backlash from some sections of the workforce, especially the clerical section.

Organise

APEX members in the plant have refused to support the action. But the best way to overcome these pressures is to build up the organisation in the plant, and to take the struggle out into the trade union movement to win solidarity.

John Lesley and Steve Coddington work in the iron foundry, one of the best organised sections of the site.

They say it all: 'There's only two sets of people against the action — the management and the police on the gates. Once the bosses leave the place, they'll have some trouble getting back. We're going to be properly organised.'

Solidarity

'Then we'll have to go for solidarity throughout the Hawker Siddeleys Group. At Merrilees, Blackstone, owned by Hawker Siddeley, the convenor has already said they'll support us whatever action we take, strike or sit-in'

Solidarity action is especially important. Tom Macafee explains: 'We've already sent out letters to all the organisations of the trade union movement, advising them at every stage.

We'll now tell them we are in occupation. We have already had many telegrams and letters, pledging support.

'Next we'll be appealing for strike support and finance. We'll be happy to see any delegation that come down withing us well. We've seen the AUEW national committee, and we're expecting their support. Not only that, but we expect it very quickly. Duffy is a pillock, but he's duty bound to back us.'

Proud

Mike Brightman, a steward in the milling department and a member of the Socialist Workers Party, says: 'We're hoping that Gardner's will have a snowball effect. We're sending a delegation to the mass meeting of Chloride workers on Wednesday, just down the road.'

'We're hoping that they'll all take strength from us, all across the district. "Enough is enough" is our slogan. We want it to catch on in action. Maybe this dispute will turn the tide against redundancies and other people will pick up our slogan.'

'The important thing to get across is that the sit-in is against all redundancies, not just forced redundancies. We're against the principle of job loss.'

'We're proud. We had to sweat blood for what we've got here. If the support that exists in the unions across the country is forthcoming, then we could turn the tide and become a mini-UCS'

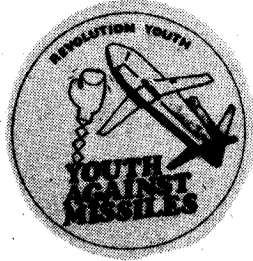
Tom Macafee should have the last word: 'The TUC are just not doing enough. The quicker they withdraw from the T-bone steak and beaujolais environment and see who the real enemy is, and fight them accordingly, the better it will be for all of us.'

Support and donations to: Tom Macafee, Convenor, L Gardner & Sons, Hardy St, Eccles, Salford. Tel 061-789 2201.



Tom Macafee, Gardner's convenor, addresses the workforce

Photo: KEVIN COEN



'It's our future - no to missile madness'

Labour movement conference against the missilies

THE resolution passed at the Labour Party conference in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament will be a tremendous boost to the campaign against the missilies.

Without doubt, the big battalions of the labour movement are the key to stopping the siting of Cruise missilies in Britain and spending £5,000m on Trident.

Campaigners against the missilies are planning a labour movement conference for some time in February. Sponsorship of the conference so far include:

MPs
Eric Heffer, Jo Richardson, Ron Leighton, Reg Race, Stuart Holland, Ernie Roberts, Alf Dubs, Dennis Skinner, Martir, Flannery, Judith Hart, Stan Orme, Frank Allaun, Joan Maynard, Tony Benn.

Labour Party

Tom Litterick (ex-MP), George Rogers (ex-MP), Ted Knight (Leader of Lambeth council), Hugh Jenkins (national chairperson CND), Derek Borden (Bury Labour Group leader), P Kelly (Salford West LP), John Parkinson (sec. Preston Trades Council), Carol Turner (Lambeth councillor), Victor Schonfield (treasurer CLPD), Graham Lane (Socialist Education Assoc.), John Lansman (sec. RBF Mobilising Cttee).

Trade unions

Bob Wright (Assistant Gen Sec AUEW), B Birdsall (UCATT Conventor), M Jaior (chairperson East region UCATT), S Glass (EC Midlands NUM), Albert Spenswick (Gen sec COHSE), Colin Barnett (Sec NW region TUC), E O'Brien (Asst Gen Sec NATSOPA), B Nicholson (EC TGWU), B E Birchell (convenor Thames Barrier Project), Betty Crawford (Convenor Ferrantia), Ken Slater (sec Accrington AUEW D C), E Riley (President Accrington AUEW D C), Stan Cole (pres Manchester AUEW DC), Arthur Scargill (pres Yorks NUM).



New Statesman

The 'Bomb plot' of nuclear attack used in Square Leg. Open circles indicate airbursts which in general cause little fallout; black circles show groundbursts which are responsible for most of the fallout. The map has been copied from a variety of official sources including maps on display at the Basingstoke and Wanstead bunkers which were open to the press last week. Almost all of the bombs 'used' were in the range of 1/2 to 3 Megaton - or from 25 to 150 times the power of the weapon which devastated Hiroshima. Broadly speaking, these are the sorts of warheads currently fitted to Soviet missilies targetted on Western Europe.

The attack came in two phases: a first strike very quickly after the attack warning, between noon and 12.10; a second strike drifted in from 1pm to 3pm. The shaded area on the diagram represents the limits of fallout after 3 hours, although the intensity of radiation in this zone would range from the mild to the quickly lethal. Around each bomb site would be a zone of blast damage and a 'main fire zone' which would in urban areas often turn into a firestorm. For a 2MT groundburst on a clear day (which this was), heavy blast damage would extend to 3 miles, with a main fire zone of 6 1/2 miles radius.

THE secret map used in operation 'Square Leg', showing the likely targets for Soviet missilies, and the area affected immediately by fall out.

Socialist Challenge - don't get left behind!

'TO ENSURE the success of the new look Socialist Challenge we must take it more directly into the class struggle, making an effort to reach those who need our politics, in order to struggle more effectively against all forms of oppression.'

This is what Wolverhampton IMG wrote in a letter to Socialist Challenge last week. And unlike many people who offer others good advice, the Wolves comrades have been busy over the summer putting their words into practice!

They write: 'At the beginning of the summer Wolverhampton IMG branch made a decision to maintain the level of its regular sales - 60 copies per week - rather than use the excuse of holidays to reduce that number.'

'We increased our sales' points in the town centre, outside the railway station, at factory gates and, most significantly, in

the pubs. Our pub sales have increased vastly, especially in Bilston where the steelworks' closures have resulted in 2000 redundancies.

'Even with our own reduced numbers and the Polytechnic vacation, our efforts brought increased sales, an increased order - first to 100 per week and then to 125 - and new readers and contacts.'

'We recruited 3 new members over the summer.'

'There is no reason why sales of the Challenge should drop over the summer. We have used this period to re-assess our sales and to double our order between July and September.'

Wolverhampton is not the only branch which has increased its sales - the 'new style' paper brought increased orders from Manchester, Sheffield, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Leicester, Brent, Hackney, and Haringey. Don't get left behind!



SOLDIER wearing special suits to protect them against the neutron bomb. Could you make one out of whitewash and brown paper?

AT THE end of the anti-missile march in Blackpool on 28 September, Gillian Whitworth speaking from the platform said: 'It is the future of youth that Thatcher is signing away when she orders her Cruise missilies.'

Certainly youth are at the front when it comes to action. Revolution Youth has taken the lead with a proposal to set up Youth against the Missilies.

The organisation says that it wants to unite all those youth prepared to fight for their future. It will be organising Youth against the Missilies groups, and aims to build large youth contingents to take part in the Glasgow demonstration on 25 October and the London CND demonstration on 26 October.

Side

There are several organisations among youth campaigning for nuclear disarmament. Some, like Youth for Peace, start from the point of view that every major power in the world is to blame for the current war drive.

They depend on the United Nations to bring about peace and disarmament. Some hope!

There is the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament; Student Against Nuclear Energy and School Students against the Bomb have emerged over the past few months.

Revolution Youth argues that these groups and thousands of other youth presently not affiliated to any organisation have to be brought together into a national force against Thatcher's missilies.

Anger

In Manchester, Youth against the Missilies has held a 60-strong picket of the BBC in order to protest against the suppression of *The War Game*, originally made as a BBC film.

In Preston, a Rock against Nukes dance was a great success, with 120 local youth turning up. A Revolution - sponsored meeting in Aberdeen, to set up a Youth against the Missilies campaign, at-

tracted 50 local youth and set up a school students' group.

Similar moves in other parts of the country tell the same story of packed meetings, anger turning into commitment to action, enthusiasm and fighting spirit.

Fight

Youth organised against missilies in this way have a great political importance in the movement against the war drive. And the way in which Revolution Youth is seeking to organise sets a good example to the wider campaign against Thatcher's missile madness.

This movement will be a vital part of the fight against the whole range of the Tories' policies.

Our allies in the campaign against Carter's and Thatcher's war machine don't stop at Dover. They are involved in every struggle being waged throughout the world against big business and its military backers.

The resources of the International Marxist Group must be thrown behind Youth against the Missilies. Obviously we should argue for such groups to be affiliated to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

Our aim is the broadest possible movement against the missilies. The youth action campaign allows the fullest scope for young people to express their concerns and their militancy. And that is the best basis to win youth to the fight against the war drive.



RALLY AGAINST THE MISSILES!

Thursday 23 October, 7.30pm

Speakers:
SAKAI (Revolutionary Communist League, Japan)
DOUG JENNESS (Socialist Workers Party, USA)
TARIQ ALI (International Marxist Group)
DICK WITHECOMBE (Manchester Against Missilies)
Representative of REVOLUTION YOUTH

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,
London WC1. Adm. 75p
(50p unwaged)

Organised by International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International



Poland: 'Solidarity' Union leaders give a press conference

Poland: Solidarnosc concentrates its forces

By Oliver MacDonald

THE one-hour general strike in Poland last Friday, organised by the new independent trade union centre Solidarnosc, marks the end of a month's intense efforts to consolidate the forces of the new workers' movement.

The strike, called to protest against the government's failure to grant the full wage increases won in August and its harassment of the new union, was a resounding success.

All the areas of Solidarnosc strength were solidly involved in the stoppage; plants not officially called out stopped work; and there were many indications of

broad and deep sympathy for the movement on the part of the working population as a whole.

Conservative estimates of the strength of Solidarnosc put its membership at between 3 and 5 million. Other estimates go much higher.

This level of support, in a workforce of some 12m, represents the most rapid rise in trade union membership in any country at any time in the entire history of the international working class movement. But considering the nature of Stalinism and the scope of the mass movement in August it is not surprising.

What has been much more in doubt during the last few weeks has been the possibility of organising and consolidating this force into a disciplined movement without a further mass upsurge.

Outside the Gdansk region, the bureaucracy had been trying its utmost to restrict the organised membership of the new

unions. Its general line has been to prevent the new union from being organised *nationally*.

The Communist Party leadership was banking on purely provincial union organisation unable to respond coherently to national policies; easily diverted into struggles against regional power centres, and easily divided in outlook from one region to another.

Kremlin

In these ways the new union could have been turned into Yugoslav-type local safety valves for the bureaucratic system.

These pressures had been felt within the union itself with some, including Lech Walesa, arguing that provincial organisation would be wiser than centralised, national leadership. But at a conference of delegates the week before the strike those within the new union who argued for a nation-wide organisation won the day.

The success of Friday's strike indicates that the bureaucracy will not be able to destroy the August victory without profound social upheavals.

Its apparatus of power remains in place only because the party leadership did not try to use it against the workers.

Moscow, of course, does have the military capacity to occupy Poland and slaughter the workers' vanguard. *Pravda* has attacked the notion of independent trade unions as anti-Leninist and anti-socialist. The Brezhnev doctrine justifying military invasion against East European countries by the Soviet Union was reiterated.

But the purpose of such statements was almost certainly not a preparation for military action. It is geared to changing the balance of forces within the Polish bureaucracy as the Central Committee meeting approached.

The Kremlin wants to strengthen the position of those in the bureaucracy who wanted to take military action against the workers during the August crisis, and who wanted to refuse the right of independent trade unions. For the Kremlin any reformist manoeuvre must be within a strategic framework of restoring full bureaucratic control over the working class.

On the other hand, for the Kania leadership in Poland, resistance from hardline elements

in the bureaucracy makes a vigorous and centralised manoeuvre much more difficult.

In the coming weeks the internal paralysis and divisions within the bureaucracy are likely to continue. The party leadership is unlikely to be able to make the sort of reforms necessary to gain some political authority and to take the political initiative.

The most important problem for Solidarnosc now will be the battle for access to the mass media — the old unions have had a daily paper, why not Solidarnosc? And secondly, even more crucial, is the need for the new union to come forward with its own programme for beating the social and economic crisis and for defending workers' living standards.

Plan

In the continuing economic crisis many workers who participated in the August struggle will find that their basic economic and social problems have not been overcome.

There will be dangers of sporadic and unco-ordinated actions to tackle these problems, and dangers also of disillusionment with the new union's leadership for failing to gain immediate relief from all these problems. The only way to overcome this will be for the new union to draw up its own comprehensive plan and mobilise the workers behind it, demanding that the government adopt the plan.

If the government resists the Solidarnosc programme, the new union could demand that both plans be put to the test of working class support. A national congress of work place delegates could be convened to decide on a new plan.

The books of the ministries should be opened to give the workers the facts on which to base a new plan. And by giving the workers themselves the right to decide, a new convulsive social confrontation could be avoided.

The only obstacle to such a course — the decisive one — is the desperate determination of the Stalinist bureaucracy to cling to political power. A united, organised workers' movement can destroy even that obstacle, with the aid of strong support from the workers of other countries.

Arguments for Socialism



Nuclear disarmament — East and West?

By Brian Grogan

SOCIALIST Challenge stands for unilateral nuclear disarmament and the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of Britain from NATO. We oppose general calls for 'world disarmament' or disarmament 'East and West'. We don't think socialists in the USSR should oppose the 'Russian bomb'.

The social and economic systems of East and West are quite different.

The capitalist economic system is expansionist by nature. It's a matter of life and death for capitalist profits to defend overseas investment and to expand markets. This is what lies behind the invasion of Iran, and the propping up of dictatorial regimes in Central America.

American imperialism may not be immediately threatening war against the Soviet Union or China. But in the long run the restoration of capitalism in these countries is exactly what the imperialists are working to achieve.

War and capitalism go hand in hand. War is inevitable unless we disarm our capitalist rulers and establish a socialist democracy.

The Soviet Union is not a socialist democracy. The privileged bureaucracy caste represented by the Kremlin has usurped political power from the working class. But the economy of the USSR is based on state planning. There is no drive for profits leading to aggression and expansionism.

The possession of nuclear weapons by the Soviet Union is overwhelmingly defensive. It is simply not true that the USA lags behind the Soviet Union in nuclear weaponry.

Even in last week's Thames TV documentary this myth was exploded by US defence experts. Possession of nuclear weapons by the USSR makes war less likely not more.

But it would be fatal to rely on the Moscow bureaucrats to halt the arms race. The best defence against war and imperialism is not simply military hardware but the militant mobilisations of the masses.

In Vietnam, for example, a badly-armed population defeated the most powerful military nation in history.

The Soviet bureaucrats do not use the active support of the masses around the world the defeat imperialism. Their policy of peaceful coexistence undermines the success of anti-capitalist mass movements.

The special privileges of the bureaucracy and its monstrous repression of all dissent do not present a glowing example of socialism to the workers in the West or the Third World.

That is why defence of the military capacity of the USSR must go hand in hand with political hostility to the Kremlin bureaucrats and a perspective of political revolution to overthrow them.

These two aspects of socialist policy are not contradictory, as was claimed by George Kerevan (Letters, 1 October). It is quite wrong of George to argue: 'The Soviet nuclear weapons industry is the prime material base for the military wing of the Soviet bureaucracy.'

The power of the Soviet bureaucrats, including the military wing, derives from its monopoly of political power over the working class.

The call for the renunciation of nuclear weapons by the Soviet Union, far from 'striking at the privileged caste in the Soviet Union', would prepared a massive victory for imperialism. It would further aid attempts at capitalist restoration.

The vast defence spending of the USSR is totally unjustified. Socialists would argue today for its reduction to raise the standards of living of the Russian workers and peasants.

A revolutionary government which did this could call imperialism's bluff on arms limitation and expose who are the real war-mongers. Maybe this is what George was driving at. But it is not the same as calling for Soviet nuclear disarmament.

Forums on Poland

Socialist Challenge forums on Poland featuring Steve Griffiths and Richard Rozanski (recently returned from Poland) and Oliver MacDonald (editor of Labour Focus on Eastern Europe).

Thur 9 Oct BIRMINGHAM. With Oliver MacDonald and Steve Griffiths. Committee Room 1, Digbeth Civic Hall, 7pm.

Wed 15 Oct BRENT. Tessa van Gelderen (IMG) debates Graham Taylor (CP, personal capacity). 7.30pm Anson Hall, Anson Rd, NW2.

Tues 14 Oct WOLVERHAMPTON (town). With Richard Rozanski and Oliver MacDonald.

Thur 16 Oct WOLVERHAMPTON. With Richard Rozanski. Poly Students Union, 1pm. Organised by the Socialist Society.

Wed 29 Oct YORK. University — evening with Richard Rozanski. Ring Tony on 413258 for details.

Fri 31 Oct PLYMOUTH. Polytechnic. With Richard Rozanski.

spare Rib

SPARE RIB, a women's liberation magazine, reaches its hundredth birthday on 16 October. It was launched as a monthly in July 1972.

Socialist Challenge took the opportunity to discuss the state of the women's movement with two members of the collective.

Jude Woodward and Valerie Coultas spoke to RUTHIE PETRIE and ROISIN BOID.

100 months of women's liberation

How is Spare Rib sold today?
We sell 25,000 copies of each issue through our two distributors. Subscriptions account for about 25 per cent of our total sales.

We also mail copies to individual women, women's centres and so on for selling. And about 200 copies go to a distributor in America. We hope to sell more there soon.

What's your attitude to other women's magazines? What do you think of Women's Voice which has obviously taken a leaf out of your magazine?

Some members of the collective did get a bit annoyed when they thought *Women's Voice* was, in appearance, copying *Spare Rib* too closely. Partly I think we should be flattered if other magazines copy our style, though of course there is a problem if what another magazine is trying to suggest is a similarity in approach and content when this isn't the case.

Women's Voice is much more oriented to women in paid work, whereas we want to look at women's lives in their entirety; to look as much at women at home, at sexuality, the problems of childcare, ways of presenting women in the media — not just at women who go out to work.

Do you think you could be accused of going the other way though, of having too much about health, sexuality and culture and not enough about women who do go out to work?

All women work — not just at

paid work. But no, I don't think we've been lax at all.

Looking through *Spare Rib's* content index, it's striking that we've written much more about women in paid work than about any other subject. What *SR* attempts is to make politically significant other areas of our lives which the left generally continues to ignore.

Why did you decide to interview Tony Benn in the 100th issue?

We wanted to interview a prominent political figure, but not a Tory. The left wing of the Labour Party is the parliamentary voice that most interests us, particularly given the debates on democracy now taking place.

There was only one dissenter. Did you think that members of the collective wouldn't want us to talk to a man?

No, I just expected you to be hostile to the Labour Party because of its record on women.

We don't blanketly support the Labour Party, but that doesn't mean we wouldn't interview someone in it. We wanted to find out something about Benn's view on feminism and the women's movement.

Tony Benn spoke at the National Abortion Campaign lobby, urging women to support the steelworkers. At the Debate of the Decade, he emphasised that the Labour Party was an 'umbrella organisation' that could incorporate many strands of opinion including feminism.

What do you think the relationship should be between the women's movement and the Labour Party now and in the future?

I think this does raise huge problems. Because the far left is weak in Britain, to me it's strategically quite important that feminists take the decision to work around left Labour Party concerns and that would mean injecting into it a feminist analysis on questions such as

housing, education, health...

But don't you think there's also a danger of the militant tradition of British feminism getting incorporated into the Labour Party?

No, to see that as a real danger I'd have to subscribe to Benn's own view that the women's movement is just one among many minority groups pursuing its own ends into a cul-de-sac.

I don't see any possibility of the women's movement subsuming itself to the Labour Party — the concept of autonomy is too strong for that; the women's movement is too diverse; and the Labour Party is too obviously lacking in its consideration of feminism for any kind of mass alliance to be made.

But isn't there a case for arguing that the women's movement in its old form faces a kind of crisis. National conferences don't occur any more. Feminist literature is very popular but that doesn't mean that lots of women are actively campaigning as they used to. A kind of passive feminism seems to exist.

Feminism has spread its concerns in so many directions, but the movement has lost some of its identity. Some older women in the movement seem a little nostalgic for the past, but I

On Show

Spare Rib is celebrating its 100th birthday with a special exhibition, recording the magazine's history and showing women how the journal is produced.

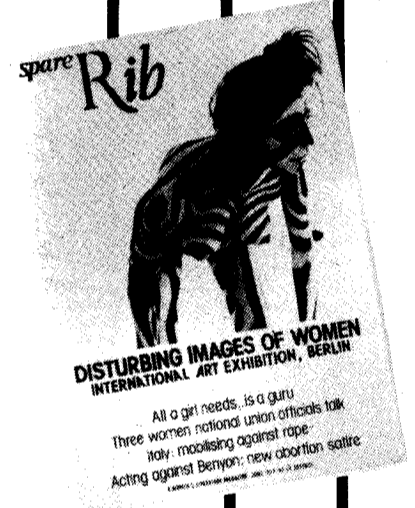
Events such as the setting up of the first women's refuge for battered women in 1973; the passing of the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts; the fight against the National Front at its most visible in 1977; and the revolution in Iran are recorded.

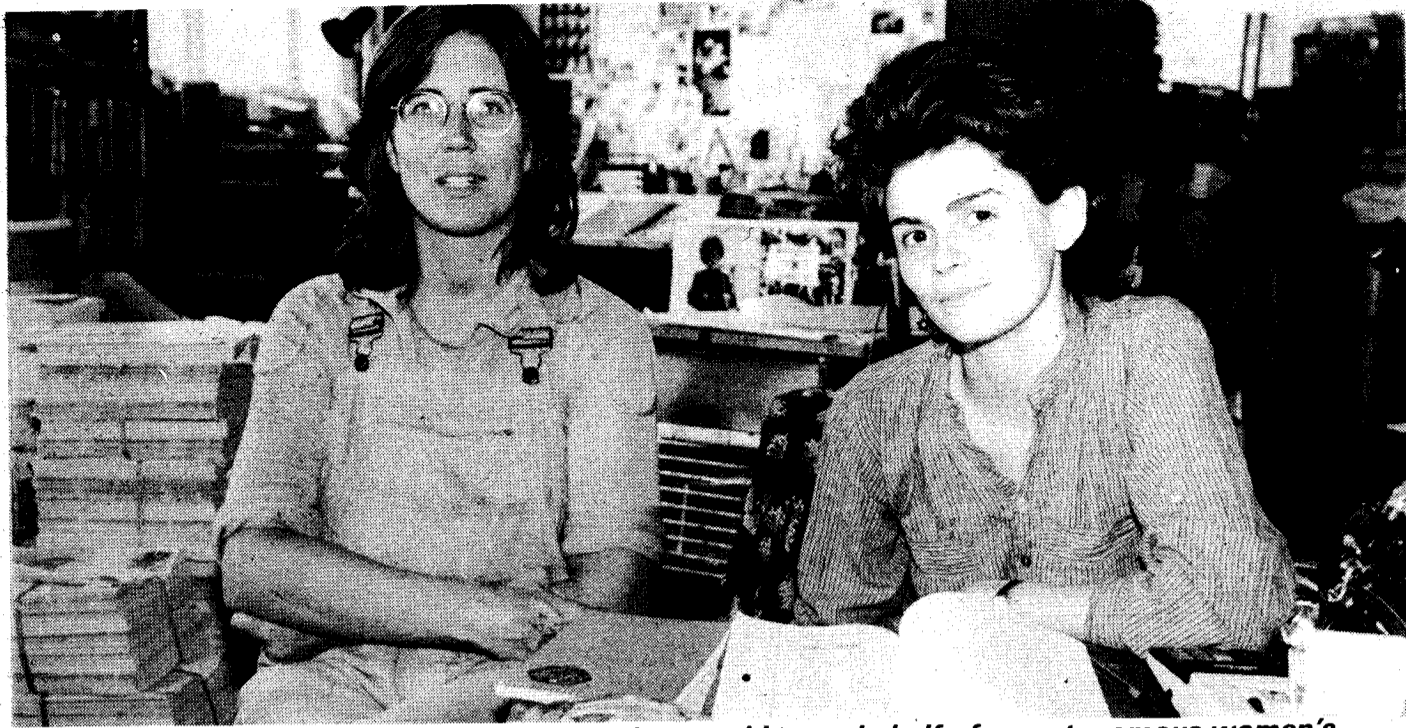
So, too, are those events concerned with *Spare Rib* as a magazine: becoming a collective in 1973; being banned in Ireland for being 'obscene' in 1977; producing special issues — a

visual issue and one on schools in 1978; one filled with fiction, poetry, and articles on women's writing in 1980.

The exhibition also shows how *Spare Rib* approaches advertising, money, attitudes to the left and the women's liberation movement; how *Spare Rib* attempts to let women speak through the magazine.

The exhibition is at the Cockpit Gallery, Princeton St, Holborn, London WC1. It runs from 30 October to 9 December, 10am-8pm.





Ruth Petrie (left) and Roisin Boid: 'We feel we're speaking on behalf of an autonomous women's movement'

G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

don't think we can look backwards.

What about your relationship to the campaigns of the women's movement, the abortion campaign, for example. Do you decide whether you will support a particular campaign?

As far as I know *Spare Rib* has never stated explicitly that it was going to take up a certain campaign. In describing ourselves as a women's liberation magazine it's understood that it is part of our function to do so — if women are involved in an action, then we cover it.

For example, Eileen Fariweather's article 'Abortion: the feelings behind the slogans' (SR 87) was a long time being planned. We discussed very carefully when it should be published.

I know you think we didn't give enough coverage to the Corrie campaign, but we wanted to write about abortion in a new way. We wanted to write about women's ambivalences towards it. We hoped to attract more women to the campaign that way.

But on *Socialist Challenge* we did take a decision to campaign against Corrie. We thought it was a really big attack on women's rights in Britain. Our campaign news column was chock-a-block full each week with campaign news, new groups were being set up everywhere.

Spare Rib did not report on the campaign in this way. We tried to cover abortion from different angles, and it was quite successful. It seems ironic that a socialist paper should report more about a feminist campaign than a feminist magazine.

We followed *Spare Rib* very closely at that time because we needed inspiration ourselves. Eileen's arti-

cle was the only major feature article during the entire campaign. If there is a problem with coverage, for example over the Corrie campaign, how can this be expressed?

Val used the term 'passive feminism' earlier — we're often surprised people don't write to us more expressing their views on certain articles and issues.

Our ideas and direction do come from our readers, and if lots of people had written to us about the Corrie campaign we would have had to discuss a change in our way of covering it. But that criticism didn't come.

Spare Rib doesn't claim to be the organ of the women's movement. We are not the only magazine women have access to. When I (Ruthie) first went on the collective three years ago, I wanted to see *Spare Rib* a more spot-on Marxist feminist journal. But I've learnt that one of its strengths is that it reflects the diversity of the women's movement, which includes a notion, for example, of male power being very dominant.

But which movement are you talking about here? Tony Benn's minority movement or the broader movement of women which accepts feminist ideas?

Do you think the vast majority of these women in the broader movement accept notions of 'male power'? How does *Spare Rib* as a collective reconcile this view of 'male power' with the reign of Margaret Thatcher?

I think the broad movement of women doesn't use a term like 'male power' or 'patriarchy' any more than they do a term like 'class enemy', but in our day-to-day lives I've no doubt that women clearly perceive and react against male privilege and domination.

I'm not clear what you're asking about reconciling our view with Thatcher. Obviously we don't support her and have made that clear in the magazine. Nor do we support a notion of the essential woman who needs to return to the true path.

Thatcher as a token woman in power demonstrates the effects of ideology on all of us. But it is true that *Spare Rib* has argued against using slogans like 'Ditch the Bitch' because they are anti-women. They attack Thatcher as a woman and not as a Tory.

What about your policy of not employing women in left-wing groups on the collective. Why do you have this policy?

We feel that we're speaking on behalf of an autonomous women's movement and that to have aligned women on the collective might threaten that autonomous voice.

Wouldn't that have been the case with the International Marxist Group's women's journal, *Socialist Woman*? You wouldn't have wanted

non-aligned women to speak for the IMG, would you?

Actually we did have non-aligned women on the editorial board in the early stages of the journal, quite a few. But a movement is different from a party. If the IMG had its own women's journal there would be nothing undemocratic about excluding non-aligned women because the IMG organises around certain political ideas.

But to exclude aligned women the collective implies that they're not part of the autonomous women's movement.

Spare Rib has never refused to reflect the opinions of women in left-wing groups. But as part of the women's movement we also work around certain political ideas, and autonomy is one of them.

Would you let a woman who was a member of the Labour Party work on *Spare Rib*?

Not automatically. We'd have to discuss it when it came up.

Women power in the Labour Party

By Judith Arkwright

'EQUAL pay, equal opportunity, equal power' is the title of a conference to be held this Saturday, organised by the women's action committee of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy.

Discussions will centre on a consultative paper on positive discrimination for women in the Labour Party.

If women had more say in the Labour Party and MPs were more accountable we would not have had those 55 Labour votes for the Corrie anti-abortion Bill. Maybe, too, we would be on the way to a party which really championed the needs of women.

It is not simply a question of electing more women

to parliament — after all Margaret Thatcher is a woman. It's a question of us women determining what policies we want.

The anti-Corrie campaign showed how effective action on the streets can be.

The Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts have so many loopholes you can see right through them!

What is needed is a fight in the Labour Party and the trade unions for new policies of positive discrimination for women in training and jobs, and a law giving women the right to choose over abortion.

That requires a strong organisation of women among the rank and file to fight for these policies.

The conference is on 11 October, 11am to 4pm, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Details from Heather Gebler on 01-458 1501.

Using the law for women's rights at work

By Denny Fitzpatrick

ANNA Coote's article on positive action for women's rights (25 September) compared the demands of the TUC Congress for positive action with the affirmative action programme in the United States, which puts a legal responsibility on employers to draw up goals and targets for women's employment.

This has greatly aided women and trade unionists who have fought to get women into jobs which were previously men's preserve.

However, as Anna Coote pointed out, the TUC and the National Campaign for Civil Liberties in Britain are not pushing for any such legal enforcement here. They favour voluntary agreements between the unions and the employers.

The NCCL conference next spring aims at bringing unions and management together to try and find areas of agreement for positive action. The TUC conference on 18 November asks: 'Is a positive action programme necessary, and if so what form should it take?'

The discussion document for the TUC conference uses the affirmative action programme in the US as a model but comments:

'An enforceable programme runs counter to the British tradition of voluntarism, and there is evidence that an enforceable programme tends to create widespread feelings of resentment — on the part of women who feel that things are not going fast enough, and the men who feel threatened by the implications of the programme.'

Once again voluntary agreements are favourable. The document adds: 'The time is not right for changes in the law.' Why we can't fight for positive action to be backed by both the law and the activity of trades unionists is not explained.

The equality legislation of the '70s has been ineffectual because of the inadequate backing of the trade unions, who simply relied on the government and the laws that were passed.

What the legislation omitted was the recognition that women need special measures of positive discrimination to offset our oppression. The Sex Discrimination Act expressly forbids such measures.

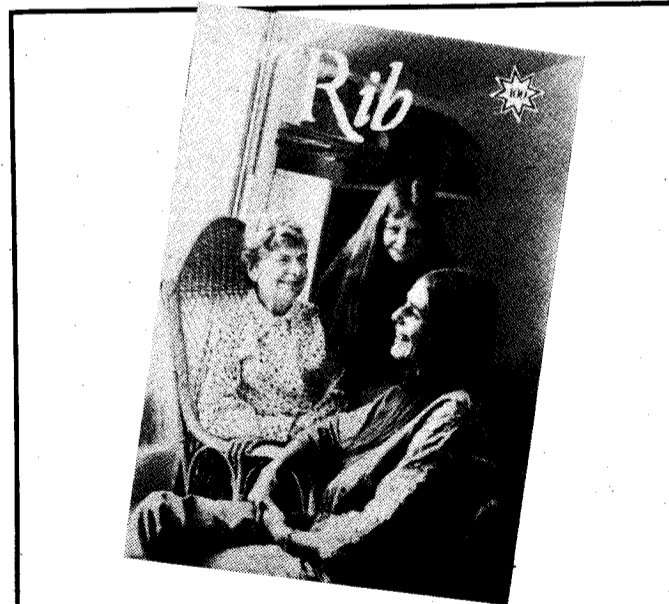
An amendment to the section of the Sex Discrimination Act dealing with positive action, to recognise that women suffer from past discrimination and need special measures to offset this, could be an important step in encouraging women in Britain to take action.

So, too, would an amendment making it obligatory for management to review their employment practices and set targets to increase the representation of women.

The law can be a stimulus but not a substitute for action. Of course, it is trade union pressure and the struggles of women that will ultimately count. But the fight for legislation for affirmative action can itself be a powerful stimulus.

Such a law would be a lever which all women and trades unionists could use in the fight for women's rights.

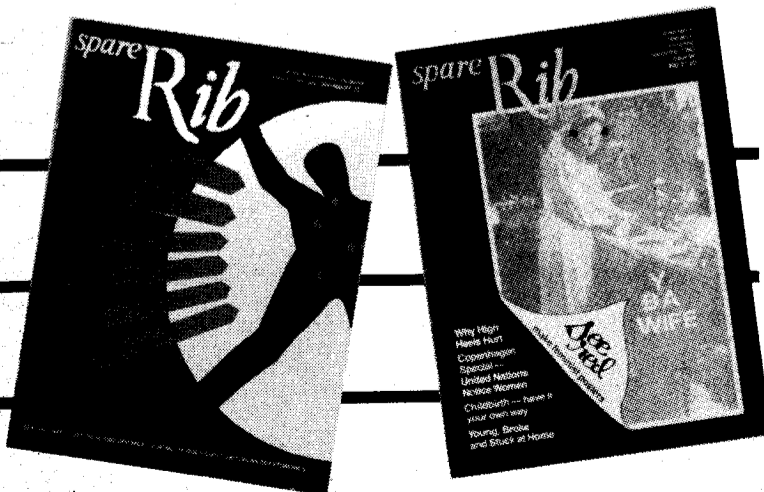
If the labour movement is to prevent women from taking the brunt of the current recession, positive action will need to be a crucial part of that struggle.



And in the 100th issue...

- ★ Decades — interviews with women aged 10, 20, 30, up to 100 finding out how they came into contact with feminism.
- ★ The domestication of women — excerpts from Barbara Roger's book about development policies in the Third World.
- ★ Nichole's Diary — a woman's diary, letters, and poems during the years she had cancer, describing the support she had from her women friends, as well as her experiences as a lesbian.
- ★ Women in the Temperance Movement.
- ★ Talking with Tony Benn.

Available from your newsagent, price 40p, or directly from: *Spare Rib*, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.



What's Left SC Events

RATES for ads to appear in What's Left. 5p per word or £4 per col. inch. Deadline: noon Sat. prior to publication. Payment in advance.

PROGRESSIVE Film Society: premiere of *The Voice of Kurdistan*, by Kurdistan Film Collective. A film on Kurdistan and the Kurdish liberation movement, mainly in Iraq, from 1974 to 1979. At Manning Hall, University of London Students Union, Malet St. 14 Oct, 7pm.

WOMEN IN ACTION — new issue on sale now, price 30p. Articles on Positive Action, Abortion, Employment Act and more. Orders to Box 2, Sisterwrite Books, 190 Upper St, London N1.

CIVIL Service creche campaign national conference. Sat 11 Oct, 2pm, at Kingsway Children's Centre, Kingsway Hall, 175 Kingsway, London WC2. All civil servants welcome. Creche provided.

STIRLING and District Chile Solidarity Committee. Day School on Latin America. Speakers: Humberto Arguello, Nicaraguan; Embassy; Gabriel Parada, El Salvador Solidarity Committee; Bob Sutcliffe, author and economist. Sun 26 Oct, 10am-5pm. Cowane Centre, Cowane St, Stirling. Adm 50p.

PUBLIC Meeting with Domitila De Chungara, a woman of the Bolivian mines, leader of the Siglo XX Housewives' Committee and author of *Let Me Speak*. Sat 11 Oct, 8pm. Westminster Cathedral Hall, Am-brosden Ave, London SW10. Adm £1.

RAR's greatest hits. Tracks include: Clash, Aswad, Costello, Matumbi. Only £2.99 from RAR, Box M, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.

THE Media and Northern Ireland. A day event at the New Cinema. The Midland Group, 24/32 Carlton St, Nottingham. Presentations by Carl Gardner and Half Moon Photography Workshop. Sat 18 Oct, 10.30am. Adm £2. Further details from Steve Neale (Nott 582636).

Organised in conjunction with Nottingham Troops Out.

Oxford Spartacist Forum, Tues 14 Oct, 7.30pm. 'A Workers' Poland. Yes! The Pope's Poland, No!' Oxford Committee for Community Relations, Committee Room, Princes St.

PAUL FOOT: 'The Fight Against the Tories', public meeting. Thur 16 Oct, 7pm. Old Theatre, LSE, Houghton St, Aldwych, London WC2. Organised by LSE SWSO.

NO NUKES Music continue 'Operation Cruise Endo' with their middle game at Old Queen's Head, Stockwell Rd, London SW9. 10 Oct — TV Personalities, Teenage Filmstars; 17 Oct — Thompson Twins, Normal Hawaiians; 24 Oct — Realists, Suttel Approach; 31 Oct — Plain Characters. Adm £1 per night.

SOCIALISTS seek self-contained flat for two. Tel Nick 01-359 8371 (day).

IMG / RY Notices

ENGINEERING Fraction: Sat 11 Oct, 11am-5pm Manchester Centre. All cdes in CSEU unions urged to attend. Agenda: perspectives; organisation of fraction; women's liberation.

NUT NATIONAL FRACTION Sun 12 Oct 11am-4pm. Venue in next week's paper. ALL CDES IN NUT MUST ATTEND. Agenda — the turn.

NALGO FRACTION Sun 16 Nov 12-5pm. National Centre. Agenda: the turn; perspectives; Cruise; women's liberation.

POEU FRACTION: Sat and Sun 15/16 Nov. Leeds. Agenda: perspectives; Labour Party; women's liberation. Details of venue later.

CPSA FRACTION Sat 22 Nov, 12.30-5pm National Centre. Agenda: the turn; perspectives; Cruise; women's liberation.

SC Events

MANCHESTER: SC public meeting: 'War in the Middle East'. Thur 9 Oct, 7.30pm, Star and Garter pub, Fairfields St, nr Piccadilly stn.

STOCKPORT IMG open meeting: 'Trotsky for Beginners'. Thur 9 Oct, 7.30pm, phone 236 4905 (day), 483 8909 (eve) for details of venue.

WOLVERHAMPTON. SC supporters meeting. 'Cuba's role in world politics'. 20 Oct, 7.30pm, Coach and Horses, Cannock Rd.

SOUTHAMPTON. 'Socialism in the '80s — which way forward?' Wed 15 Oct, 7.30pm, St Matthews Church Hall. Speaker: Steve Potter, IMG national secretary.

SC Sales

BRISTOL: SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. For more info contact Box 2, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpellier, Bristol 6.

CARDIFF: SC sales Newport Town Centre outside Woolworths 11-12.30; Cardiff British Home Stores 11-12.30. Also available from 108 Books, Salisbury Road, Cardiff.

COVENTRY: SC available from Wedge Bookshop. For more info about local activities phone 461138.

DUNDEE: SC available from Dundee City Square outside Boots, every Thursday 4-5.30pm, Friday 4-5.30pm, Saturday 11-4pm.

ENFIELD: SC available from Nelsons Newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.

HACKNEY supporters sell SC every Saturday morning at Ridley Road market E8.

HAMILTON: SC on sale 8-11 every Sat. outside County Bar Almada Street, every Sat outside Safeway 1.30-5. For more info contact Paul, 17 Clyde View or John at 54 Eliot St, Hamilton.

HUDDERSFIELD: SC supporters sell papers every Saturday 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peaseworks.

LAMBETH: SC available from Village Books, Streatham; Tetric Books, Clapham; Paperback Centre, Brixton; Oval tube kiosk. Also sold Thur and Fri evenings and Thur mornings outside Brixton tube.

MANCHESTER SC supporters sell 11-1pm Sat at OLDFHAM outside the Yorkshire Bank, High St; at BURY in the shopping precinct and at Metro Books; at BOLTON in the town centre; and in MANCHESTER outside the central reference library in St Peter's Square and at Grassroots and Percivals Bookshop. Tel: 061-236 4905 for further info.

NEWHAM: SC sale every Saturday, 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Market, Upton Park.

OLDHAM: SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local activities. Tel. 061-682 5151.

OXFORD: SC supporters sell every Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.

STOCKPORT: SC sold every Saturday, 1pm, Mersey Way. Can be delivered weekly: phone 483 8909 (evening), 236 4905 (day).

SWINDON: SC on sale 11-1 every Sat., Regent St (Brunel Centre).

TEESSIDE: SC on sale Sat lunchtime in the Cleveland Centre, and in Newsfare, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, and outside Woolworths on Stockton High Street.

Discrimination against blacks — it's official

By Philip Lindsay

WITH a High Court decision this week preventing an investigation of the workings of the immigration laws, the government will feel even more confident in mounting a major attack on black people with its proposed Nationality Act.

The High Court hearing confirmed what black organisations and the left have been saying for years: immigration laws are racist.

The Home Office took legal moves to prevent the Commission for Racial Equality looking into the operation of the 1971 Immigration Act. Counsel for the Home Office told the court: 'The whole system of immigration control is based upon discrimination.'

'It is of the essence of the Immigration Act that people will be discriminated against on the grounds of race or nationality and it is the function of certain officials to ensure that discrimination is effective.'

The CRE, he added, had no business interfering with official discrimination, i.e. racism. Mr Justice Woolf agreed, no doubt sounding the death knell for the commission for those black people who still have any faith in this discredited outfit.

The Nationality White Paper, which is likely to become law, seeks to deprive black people of several basic human rights. It proposes three classes of citizenship — an illegal measure under international law. Only one class, 'those who have close links with the UK and those who could be expected to identify themselves with British society', will be allowed the right of entry.

This class of people will be overwhelmingly white, with parents and grandparents born here.

Denied the right of entry will be 'British citizens' in the colonies, such as Antigua, Hong Kong and Gibraltar. These people, whose countries are good enough to be governed by Britain, and exploited for cheap labour or used for military purposes, are apparently not good enough to have the same rights as others, mainly white citizens.

The third class, who are also denied entry, are over 1.5m people in former colonies who opted for British passports.

These people, who were told they would not become stateless by doing so, could well end up without citizenship of any country.

The White Paper also wants to exclude previously stateless people who were granted British citizenship under the 1964 British Nationality Act. And it seeks to deny citizenship to people who are born in Britain if the government doesn't like the colour of their parents' skin.

The paper aims at intimidating people involved in political and union activity by arguing that citizenship could not be claimed by people of 'dubious reputation', those supposedly 'working against the interests of this country' and those 'who have no sense of loyalty to it'.

Of course, anyone who so much as goes on strike or speaks out against injustice is regarded in this light by the Tories.

Marriage provisions would also be tightened so that citizenship is only conferred on a spouse if that person has already been accepted for settlement.

The Tories' aim is to ensure that blacks outside Britain stay there, and that black people in Britain are forced to live in fear. In as many cases as the government can get away with, they will be deported.

There has been increasing harassment of black people by the immigration authorities.

In July over 30 people were seized and locked up for hours following raids on Bestway shops in London. An elderly black man was deported without even being allowed to return home.

In another raid 50 immigrant workers were grabbed when police vans with dogs converged on a factory. This is what the Home Office means by making discrimination 'effective'.

Behind the racist campaign is the desire of the bosses and their government to scapegoat black people for the capitalist crisis. They hope to turn white workers against black people.

The labour movement has to organise against the threat posed by the White Paper and put into practice the Labour Party's call for the repeal of the 1971 Immigration Act.

By carrying out such a campaign in the interests of the most disadvantaged sections of working people, and building links with black organisations, the labour movement will be in the best position to fight all attacks on working people.



Photo: PETE GRANT

Right to Work marcher arrested in Ealing

Police attack Right to Work marchers

By Pete Grant

JOHN Deason, secretary of the Right to Work campaign, was arrested in Ealing on Saturday. Police moved in after one of a small group of fascists who had been heckling the jobs marchers rushed forward and started a fight.

Seven more marchers were arrested in the melee that followed in which the police behaved brutally.

The 200 Right to Work marchers have come from South Wales through London en route to the Tory Party conference in Brighton, where a mass demonstration is to be held on Friday.

Describing the arrests, Roy, who had marched from South Wales, explained: 'A cop told me

to move on and then punched me in the stomach. He hit me in the back making me fall to the ground and then tried to kick me under a moving van. The driver stopped only six inches from my head.'

Another marcher, a redundant steelworker, added: 'We've come all the way from South Wales with no trouble from the police until we got to the Metropolitan area — just like the last time when we were at-

tacked at Hendon.'

The marchers went on to picket Acton police station to protest at police attacks and to demand the immediate release of all those arrested.

The marchers had arrived in West London fresh from their visit to Eton college to chant anti-Tory slogans at the sons of the rich. In Southall, the Tory-controlled Ealing council refused to let the marchers use a local school for their meal break.

But the local Sikh temple stepped in to provide food for the march. The marchers stopped at the spot in Southall where Blair Peach was murdered to lay a wreath and observe a minute's silence.

Gay men arrested for kissing

TWO gay men were arrested for kissing at a picket of the film *Cruising* outside the London Pavillion cinema on 28 September.

They have been charged with 'insulting behaviour' likely to cause a breach of the peace' and 'obstructing the highway.'

Cruising is seen by the gay community as an attack on gay people, misrepresenting homosexuality as a contagious disease. After the film was released in the United States, there was a significant number of attacks on gays from people who had seen it.

The result of a conviction for 'insulting behaviour' for kissing would prevent open displays of affection by gay people in any situation where it could be claimed that the 'public' might be insulted.

Arrests and harassment of gays have recently increased in Manchester, Hull, Stockport, Chester, and London.

Further information from: *Gays Against the Film 'Cruising'*, 7 Pickwick Court, London SE9 4SA.

'Don't Die for Thatcher — How to Stop the Other Missiles'. New Socialist Challenge pamphlet by Redmond O'Neill price 20p from 'The Other Bookshop', 328 Upper St, London N1. Add 10p p&p.

A NEW PAMPHLET has been produced by Socialist Challenge supporters employed in Post Office Communications. Articles deal with Tory plans for the telecom industry; the role of nationalised industries and the case for workers control. Copies are available from Socialist Challenge (POEU Pamphlet), at 10p. Discount rates on request.

Marxism Today

Theoretical and discussion journal of the Communist Party
Price 60 pence. Published monthly

In the October issue
Eric Hobsbawm interviews Tony Benn

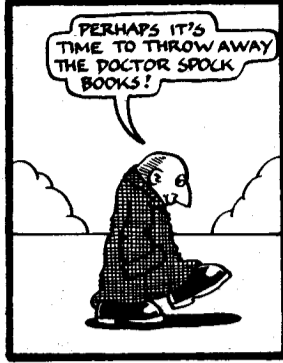
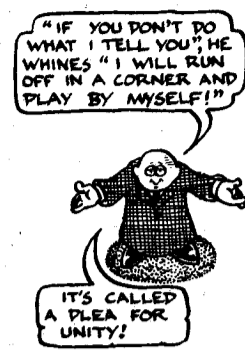
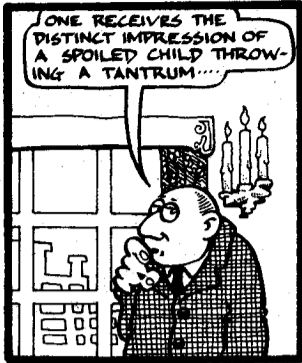
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Overpaid British workers? Forget it!

By Phil Hearse

BRITISH workers are among the worst paid in the industrial world. That's the finding of an investigation by the management consultants Inbucon.

Their investigation analysed average incomes, therefore the figures seem excessively high, since they average out manager's incomes as well as worker's

wages. The figure given for average British wages is way above the average industrial wage here.

Nonetheless the figures show the general trend, with a simple

message: British workers are at the bottom of the pile.

These are the figures for average annual incomes: Holland £14,205; West Germany £13,582; Belgium £12,658; Norway £11,103; Denmark £10,639.

Sweden £10,476; France £10,240; Austria £10,118; USA £9,664; Canada £8,917; Finland £8,804; Australia £8,278; Japan £7,751 — and finally the United Kingdom £7,266.

Living costs in Britain are very near the top of the league.

Only in Japan, Norway, and West Germany are there cities where it is more expensive to live than in London.

Right in there!

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE was right in there at Blackpool, helping the left to win and taking up the issues that some of them wanted to forget. We were there fighting for you — are you fighting for us?

The week began with a thousand strong march through Blackpool's streets on Sunday, taken on the initiative of Manchester Socialist Challenge comrades.

Throughout the week the Socialist Challenge team carried on this fight, canvassing support for the proposed labour movement conference against Cruise, taking the paper's exposure of NATO's links with the right wing onto conference floor.

We divided into groups to build the Lambeth cuts conference and the LCC's trade union conference, as well as taking up the fight for women's rights and our very successful intervention about Ireland.

Our team, augmented from time to time by comrades dropping in to help for a day, was accompanied by a mobile office with typesetting, photostencil and duplicating facilities placed at the disposal of the entire left — as one delegate remarked, at least we raised the

technological level of the left's input!

As well as helping produce the daily CLPD bulletin we managed to find time for our own daily bulletin, which was snapped up by delegates, particularly after Duffy sabotaged the extension of the franchise.

* All this takes money! Our total expenses came to £350: this was only partly offset by the 170 papers and 200 badges we sold.

We'll be back even stronger at the special conference in January — how about £20 from you to help cover it?

Our thanks this week to:
 Jim Lomax £12.50
 P Ward 10.00
 Burnley supporter 1.00
 J Avery 3.50
 Spanish comrade 10.00
 Anon (Birmingham) 1.00
 J Bernal 10.00
 MB 15.00
 Anon 10.00
 P Stanton 5.00
 D Sunnett 2.50
 M Cooper 2.43
 A Lenton 4.76
 Manchester IMG 13.50

Total £101.19

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BUY Socialist Challenge for a friend! That's the remarkable offer we're putting your way.

Some readers have been so impressed with our fantastically cheap 10 issues for £1 offer that not only have they got subs for themselves, they've decided to buy one for a friend.

Why don't you do the same? Do you know someone who's just getting interested in socialism? Then buy them a subscription.

Don't forget our offer of a free copy of *Trotsky for Beginners* by Tariq Ali and Phil Evans, with a year's subscription to the paper. These offers will not last forever — so take out your subscription now.

Local government staff back Lambeth conference

By Carolyn Sikorski

UNANIMOUS backing to the conference against cuts called by Lambeth council was given by Nalgo Action Group supporters at a conference on 27-28 September.

With an attendance of 120 supporters, the annual conference of NAG, the rank and file group in the local government workers' union, was the largest for several years.

A model resolution was adopted which seeks to commit NALGO branches to industrial action against the cuts. This will be raised in branches and shop stewards committees.

The conference recognised that white-collar and other local authority workers were not at the stage of taking effective all-out industrial action on their own.

For a successful struggle against the Tory cuts, councils will have to make a 'principled and determined stand' alongside the trade unions.

NALGO members in housing and architects departments are threatened with their work fading away. Unless this is tackled soon, it could seriously undermine the anti-cuts struggle.

Unfortunately a majority of Socialist Workers Party NAG supporters at the conference opposed an amendment calling for the sharing under union control of all available work which was not attached to empty posts.

could involve all workers in the affected departments and unite all NALGO members. The recent victory of the dockers was in defence of this principle.

The conference decided to fight for a national minimum wage of £4,000 and a flat rate wage increase. An amendment to inflation proof the next claim was defeated.

It was agreed to call for the launch of Council Workers Against Missiles and for political status for Republican prisoners in the north of Ireland. Support was given for the building of equal rights committees throughout the union.

But there was inadequate discussion of comprehensive policies to equip NAG members to fight for these issues over the coming year.

The proposal, which was lost, would have meant a fight for worksharing which

STRIKE AGAINST CUTS

By Alan Ball

'THE option of raising rates no longer exists. The only option left is confrontation' — Ted Knight, leader of Lambeth council.

That was Knight's message at a press conference this week, to publicise the conference called by Lambeth council and the local government unions in the borough against local authority spending cuts. The conference is to be held on 1 November at Camden Town Hall.

Knight was repeating the message he gave at the Labour Party conference, where he received a standing ovation.

Environment minister Michael Heseltine is threatening to deduct £9m from Lambeth's funds, and a similar

sum from 20 or more inner city boroughs.

As Brian Martin of the Lambeth council shop stewards committee emphasised: 'This dispute is not just about local democracy, but results from the Tory government's vindictive commitment to sacrifice local services on the altar of monetarism.'

On Monday night Lambeth Trades Council added its name to the rapidly growing list of sponsors for the conference. It passed the following motions which were proposed by Socialist Challenge supporters and which we urge other trades unionists and Labour Party members to take up:

'We call for a steering committee to be set up from the conference to carry out a systematic campaign to win

mass support for action against cuts. The steering committee should be mandated to call a further conference to organise action in support of any council or councillors penalised by the Tories.'

Referring to the Labour Party NEC's refusal to support the Lambeth conference and the need for backing from the leading bodies of the Labour movement if strike action is to be effective, Lambeth Trades Council:

'Calls on the NEC of the Labour Party and the TUC to back the Local Government in Crisis conference, and declare their support for any action it organises both locally and nationally against cuts and all attacks on local government'

See back page for conference details.

Organising in the Unions

Uproar in Ireland over Union's abortion policy

By Kate Holman, NUJ Equality Working Party

THE National Union of Journalists' policy on abortion was established at the union's annual conference in 1976. It remains among the most progressive policies adopted by any union, but the NUJ's all-male executive is doing its best to defy it.

The union's policy instructs the NEC to give active support to the campaign for free abortion on request, and urges all chapels and branches to participate in local and national actions to achieve this right.

A year ago, the executive refused to support a trade union conference jointly organised by the National Abortion Campaign and the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign. This brought a sharp reprimand from the 1979 NUJ annual conference, which reaffirmed the union's support for a woman's right to choose.

A sudden attack on the policy has now come from journalists in Ireland, and this has resulted in the executive's latest bout of dipping and diving. All at once — four years late — some journalists in the south of Ireland resigned from the NUJ allegedly in opposition to the union's stand on abortion.

The resignations — never more than a tiny minority — brought about a special meeting of Irish delegates, where a large number of male journalists agreed to campaign to remove abortion from among NUJ policies.

The executive then cooked up a verbal formula clearly intended to appease the hostile Irish members by assuring them that the NEC recognised 'the difficulty of organising a campaign for a change in the law on abortion in Ireland without the support of the Irish members'.

It added that 'no resolution calling specifically for changes in current Irish law on abortion has been carried by any NUJ delegate meeting'; while at the same time cloaking its betrayal of union policy.

The executive has already been embarrassed by the formation of the Irish Women's Right to Choose Group, which is committed to decriminalising abortion.

There is certainly support for a change in the law in Ireland, but the NUJ leaders have coldly turned their backs on members fighting for better conditions for women there.

According to NUJ rules, Irish members are bound by union policies just like members in Britain. Yet should NUJ members here be selecting policies for Irish journalists?

While the union's policy does not force anyone to campaign personally for abortion, should Irish members, some under the influence of the Catholic Church, be allowed to undermine advances made in Britain?

Opinion's vary on the left in the NUJ about whether one journalists' union should cover the two countries. Some see one union as a hangover from colonialists; others regard it as a useful international link.

Many feel that even if a split is desirable, abortion is not the right issue to bring it about. This position is backed by Irish feminists in the NUJ, who would be even more isolated in confronting Church and State if they were cut off from Britain.

Women in the union have made it clear how they feel on the issue of abortion. The ad hoc Journalists Against Corrie group was active in defeating the Corrie Bill this year and a stream of protests led by the union's Equality Working Party has greeted the executive's latest backdown.

The most convincing response will be an overwhelming reaffirmation of the union's policy on abortion at next year's annual conference.

Socialist Challenge

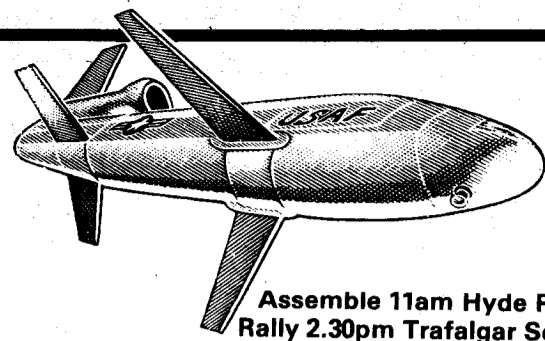
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Socialist Challenge

**MARCH
AGAINST
MISSILE
MADNESS**

Sunday 26 Oct



Assemble 11am Hyde Park
Rally 2.30pm Trafalgar Square
Organised by CND

Sale of council houses **THE GREAT RIP-OFF**

THIS week a terrible and lasting blow has been struck at the nation's housing stock — in the interests of big business.

The Tories' law to force councils to sell off council houses is now in force, and the government has launched a huge advertising campaign to encourage council tenants to buy their houses.

Council housing is a vital asset which enables many working people, especially the poor and the young, to have accommodation at reasonable prices. Before the

growth of owner occupation and council housing, most working people had to live in privately rented housing.

Whatever the problems with council housing, a return

on a mass scale to privately rented housing would be a disaster. Higher rents and homelessness would be the outcome.

What will be the result if the great Tory council house rip off goes ahead?

★ More and more of the housing stock will go into private hands.

★ Waiting lists will soar, young people will have much less chance of getting council flats or houses. They will have to put up with expensive, overcrowded, sub-standard accommodation.

★ The elderly and disabled will have to wait longer for the special accommodation they need.

★ Houses rather than flats will be sold. Councils will lose their better housing stock, so the council accommodation will become synonymous with poor quality.

Thatcher wants Britain to become a 'property owning democracy'. The Tory myth is one of a Britain where everyone owns their own home. But what is the reality behind that myth?

Housing should be a fundamental human right. In a society of owner-occupiers, with houses at their present prices, private housing is in fact a massive, life-time burden for ordinary people.

If the whole of the country's housing stock reverts to the private sector the only people to gain will be the banks, estate agents, mortgage companies, and the building societies — all those parasites who make huge profits from human misery.

The sales of council houses sums up Tory Britain. Behind the banner of individualism and 'self reliance' all the vital services and provision of the community are



Don't let Heseltine get up your nose

photos: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)



Homes like these will soon be all that's left when the best have been sold off

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Local Government in Crisis

National Labour and trade union
conference

Saturday 1 November, 10.30am

For credentials write to: Local Government in Crisis
Conference, Rm 103, Lambeth Town Hall, London
SW2 1RW

10 October: Women against the Tories

By Judith Arkwright

IT'S now widely accepted that the Tory government's policies will hit women hardest — the attack on maternity rights in the Employment Act; the Tories' support for restrictions on abortion; their policies on social security, and inadequate family benefits.

Female unemployment is increasing at twice the rate of men's.

The picket of the Tory Party conference on 10 October, now supported by many labour movement organisations, will be a demonstration

of the hatred which many people feel for this government.

A Women Against the Tories contingent on the picket has been called in order to point out the ways in which the government's policies are hitting women. It is important that women get together within the fightback to take up the struggle for our rights.

The contingent is supported by: Mrs Desai, Grunwick strike cttee; Mrs Brar, Chix strike cttee; Pam Corr, NUT executive; Val Dunn, National Union of Bakers executive; Eileen Fairweather, journalist; Yolanda Bystron, Defend Our Unions cttee.

Women don't want this government — let's tell them so on 10 October. For women's rights, not right-wing women!