

Socialist Challenge

**SOLIDARITY WITH
LAURENCE SCOTT
WORKERS!**

Stop press: The workforce has voted to continue the occupation *against* the recommendation of union officials.

See pages 8, 9 and 10

TORY REPRESSION



THOUSANDS OF YOUTH ARRESTED

Editorial

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DRIVEN to despair by the hopelessness of unemployment, harassed by the police, forced to live in the decaying inner cities without hope for the future — Britain's youth have boiled over in anger. The riots in Liverpool, Moss Side, London and Southall have reached the proportions of virtual insurrection against authority — insurrections of whole communities.

These uprisings have been predictably led by the most oppressed and exploited — the black and Asian youth. In Southall, intimidation of the community by National Front thugs resulted in the organised defence of the community by the youth.

Elsewhere, the frustration of the youth and the community have boiled over against the police. The first thing that every socialist and labour movement activist should be saying is that, faced with the misery of Tory Britain, the youth are right to rebel. Every person arrested in the riots should be released, every charge should be dropped. *The labour movement should defend those arrested.* Defence committees should be established in every locality.

To be sure, for revolutionary socialists, riots and violent attacks on the police are not the most effective methods of struggle. Nonetheless the recent riots, like the uprisings in the black ghettos in the United States in the 1960s, are a genuine expression of the misery and rage of the exploited and oppressed.

When they struggle against their tormentors, when they hit back at the police who harass them, and when they take the consumer goods which they are unable to afford, then we stand with them irrespective of our opinion of the tactical advisability of such actions. Nothing has been more sickening than the ritual condemnation of the rioters by Labour Party spokespeople.

TORIES — THE REAL CRIMINALS

The real criminals in this situation are the Tories. It's their policies which have doubled unemployment in a year, hastening the catastrophic decline of British industry, which have smashed up the social services and driven down living standards — especially those of the unemployed.

These criminals say that the riots are 'nothing to do with unemployment', talk darkly about 'outside agitators' and make plans to toughen the Public Order Act, introduce a new Riot Act, give the police new weaponry and equipment. Nobody in the labour movement should be taken in by this Tory nonsense. Our first task is to put the blame for the tragic situation in the cities where it belongs — not on the

Defend youth rebellion



youth, but on the Tories and their vicious anti-working class policies.

The recent events give added urgency to the task of mobilising to kick out the Tories, to use every opportunity to fight against their policies and prepare the way for a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

DEFEND THE COMMUNITIES — POLICE OUT

The first task of the TUC and Labour Party is to provide a focus for the battle against this reactionary government. The miners fight against pit closure, the Civil Servants' strike and the huge demonstrations against unemployment have shown that the power and fighting spirit exists to kick out the Tories.

The TUC must now act against this government of wreckers. We cannot

afford to stand by and watch the Tories dismantle our economy and society. We must prepare a general strike to remove the Tories. A one day general strike against the Tories is a first useful step.

The 19 September demonstration against unemployment in Birmingham will be a massive explosion of anger against the government — and can act to channel the frustration of youth against the Tories.

A massive programme of public works, not Murray's pathetic proposal of £500m, must be presented by the unions and the Labour Party to rebuild the inner cities.

The insanity of a system which proposes to spend £6 billion on a missile system, while the cities slide into decay and millions rot on the dole — must be challenged. The meaning of the fight which Socialist Challenge has waged for Jobs not Bombs is now completely clear in all its implications. The Labour Party and

the trade unions must reach out to the youth in the inner cities.

The labour movement should join in the task of defending the communities. Our first demand should be for an end to police swamping of the communities and for the right of the community to veto the activities of the police in their areas.

The Asian youth of Southall showed they were perfectly capable of defending their community against the racists' provocation.

The presence of the police in these areas, with their dawn raids against alleged 'looters' and saturation harassment on the streets, is designed only to cow and intimidate the ordinary people of these areas, to force them to lie down and accept their exploitation passively. The police, including the Special Patrol Groups and Tactical Aid groups must get out of the communities.

COMMUNITY AND YOUTH MUST ORGANISE

In the next period, in addition to organising legal defence, the labour movement and the communities should organise for struggle. The police and the Tories have declared war on the communities and youth. There is no possibility that the authorities will allow these events to go by without trying to take their revenge.

The communities and the youth should organise assemblies to work out the political tasks ahead. What is needed now is the giving of a *political perspective* to the militants.

This means taking up the methods of mass mobilisation and mass organisation against the racists and police.

The precise form of organisation of the community and the youth will vary from area to area. In Southall, in past years, there have already been assemblies of youth which have debated out the struggle against fascism and state racism.

The most political sections of the communities and youth *will* look for political answers. They have to be organised by the Labour Party and the Labour Party Young Socialists, the only organisations with the mass credibility to do the job.

The struggle in Ireland, the situation in the Labour Party, the actions of thousands in the unions and now the youth rebellion have put the Tories on the run. This is the beginning of the end for the government. But like a wounded animal, its savagery will grow as its death comes closer. It is brutally clear that the way to win socialist policies is to remove this government. There is not a moment to lose.

GET THE TRUTH OUT ON THE RIOTS

In the next few weeks, socialists have to do a tremendous job of explanation inside the labour movement and beyond, to get out the truth on what happened — and combat the flood of press lies.

All Socialist Challenge and Revolution Youth supporters should be organising meetings with this aim in mind. In particular Socialist Challenge should be used, to sell on council estates and in the localities to hammer home the truth about what happened. If we don't do it, no one else will.

Socialist Challenge

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

Name.....

Address.....

Age.....

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

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

The youth uprising: the socialist view

THE youth rebellion is the topic of conversation in workplaces and pubs throughout the land. Socialist Challenge here presents its view on basic questions which socialists will have to answer in the coming weeks and months.

Is the 'rioting' justified? Surely socialists don't support looting and destruction of property?

Violent outbursts by the most oppressed sections of society are inevitable. When millions of people are filled with rage at the daily injustice which they have to put up with, when they are driven to desperation by the hopelessness of their lives, then outbreaks of violence always occur.

Throughout history defiance of authority has been the motor force for change. The British parliament only has any authority because it organised a civil war against the king to conquer it.

Women only won the vote because they organised a militant campaign on the streets.

It is no accident that the rioters have turned on the police — their role is to defend the existing order, to police the misery that capitalism and the Tories have created.

Yes, the youth rebellion is justified — the youth are right to rebel against a system that offers them nothing.

The youth of today have looted shops because they lack the jobs and money to buy consumer goods. In this society there is the productive capacity for everyone to have a decent life.

But instead a few are rich, and many are poor and desperate. Looting is perfectly understandable. Socialists don't think that skirmishes with the police or looting shops are the way to change society.

But no change will come unless the exploited and oppressed stand up and fight. The youth have started to do it. Socialists can only rejoice.

Doesn't the rioting make the government bring in new repressive measures — tougher anti-riot laws, banning of marches, new courts and police equipment?

The Tories and the ruling class don't need a reason to bring in new repressive laws. They respond in this way because repression is the only way they know to control society.

Before the riots they brought in the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which enables people to be held without trial, the new Employment Act to prevent effective picketing. They armed whole sections of the police, created the Special Patrol Group and so on.

The ruling class will always

be able to find an excuse for stepping up repression. Incidentally, isn't it amazing how quickly virtually every police force in Britain got new riot gear? In fact, they already had it. The present uprising were just an excuse to use it.

But aren't the police just trying to keep the peace and defend property? Won't they defend the black communities if the youth stop attacking them?

The police aren't neutral, defending everyone equally. That is a fiction. They are there to defend the existing society, that society includes unemployment, racism, poverty.

The police's job is to ensure that those who protest against such conditions don't threaten those who are responsible for them — the bankers, the bosses, the Tory rich. The cops are there to protect the status quo.

The police aren't interested in defending the black communities against racists — more often they defend the racists. The attitude of the police is graphically shown by a simple fact. When racists and anti-fascists confront one another, the police invariably invoke the Public Order Act to ban marches. If they were serious about defending the black community and stopping racism, they would prosecute and arrest the National Front and British Movement leaders under the Race Relations Act.

But they never do — for political reasons. The fascists and racists may be an occasional nuisance for them, but they regard the blacks and the labour movement as their enemies.

Will new laws stop the uprisings?

No. Already thousands of youth have been arrested — fear of arrest will not prevent them mobilising on the streets. After the anti-fascist demonstrations in Southall in May '79, hundreds of Asian youth were tried and many sent to jail. But still Southall is a centre of militancy.

So long as there are more than 3 million unemployed, so long as the youth, especially the black and Asian youth, are given no future and harassed by the cops there will be trouble. More repression, harsher laws, could even make the situation worse.

Should parents take more responsibility for their children and keep them off the streets?

The ideas that the uprisings have been caused by irresponsible parents' is one of the more ludicrous pronouncements by Home Secretary William Whitelaw.

The youth rebel because

they are the most oppressed and because they have least to lose. Whenever the mass of ordinary people say 'enough is enough' and start to fight, youth are always the most courageous, the most determined.

In the black communities it is often the youth who are prepared to do what their parents think ought to be done, but lack the determination or organisation.

When the fascists attacked the community in Southall on 3 July it was the youth who responded and defended the area. If they are outside of the control of their parents, then in general it is a good rather than a bad thing. Let anyone who enjoyed being 'controlled' by their parents say the opposite!

Isn't 'community policing' the answer?

No. Community policing — more blacks in the police force, more 'bobbies' on the beat, is just a velvet glove to hide the iron fist. It is an attempt to get sections of the black and Asian communities to collaborate with keeping themselves in order, rather than having riot police do it.

No kind of policing is going to create more jobs, rebuild the inner cities or restore British industry. It is only the complete transformation of the priorities of society — away from a society based on profit to one based on peoples' needs — which will create the possibility of solving these problems.

Britain's cities need a massive programme of public works to rebuild them. With tens of thousands of unemployed building workers, and millions of bricks and other building materials stockpiled, the means exist to do the jobs.

British industry needs millions of pounds pumped in to it to renew investment and create tens of thousands of new jobs. With billions of pounds being spent on nuclear missiles, and the banks making huge profits, the means exist to get on with it.

Our Front Cover

THIS week's front cover features a picture of Socialist Challenge supporter Pauline Roe after being bated by Special Patrol Group cops in Handsworth, Birmingham. Pauline later had 16 stitches in her head.

She was clubbed three times by the SPG thugs. While on the ground she heard one say, 'What have you done to her? Let's get out of here quick.'

Sir Philip Knights, Chief Constable of the West Midlands, on Monday rejected a claim by the Birmingham Labour Party that the Special Patrol Group had acted in a provocative manner.

But the police attitude was best summed up by Jim Jardine, Chairman of the Police Federation, don't give a damn for the bleeding hearts, the so-called liberals and Marxists who can do nothing but complain about police brutality. Let our members get after the rioters and looters and let us stop worrying about what other people will say afterwards.

Pauline Roe is a former member of the executive of the National Union of Students.



Photo: NEWSLINE



We need to kick out the Tories and get socialist policies working — the sooner the better!



YOUNG, ANGRY AND

Brixton Station →

Get the economy rolling



HAND ROLLING TOBACCO

The Virginian

BEWARE OF THE LION WITH HIS FOOT ON THE TROUBLE MAKER'S TAIL

ROAD

DURING the past few days young people in almost every major town in England have taken to the streets in battles with police which are virtually unprecedented in the past 50 years.

The smugness of the Tories about their ability to control the social effects of their catastrophic economic

policies has been smashed and urgent talks are going on about how to deal with the crisis.

These on-the-spot reports from Socialist Challenge correspondents give some idea of what is happening on the streets and some of the facts which are emerging about police activity in particular.

Southall Friday 10 July

A WEEK after the successful resistance to the skinhead invasion of Southall on 3 July rumours of further skinhead attacks reached a peak.

Police contributed to these rumours more than anyone else.

On 10 July police asked parents to escort their children home from school and asked local

The Moss Side revolt

By Redmond O'Neill and Jude Woodward

THE time is 1am on Wednesday, 8 July. A pall of smoke hangs over the 'meadow', a large field in the middle of Moss Side, Manchester. A hardware store has been burnt to the ground.

The 400 police, cowering behind their shields watch helplessly as young and old 'shop with no money', 30 yards from the police lines. If the cops charge the crowd it just melts away into the nearby housing estate.

Doors are open to anyone who has to bolt for cover. The whole community, led by the black youth, is in open confrontation with the police.

It began around 10pm on Tuesday night when a thousand strong crowd of mainly black youth stormed Moss Side police station. It was under siege for 30 minutes, with its windows smashed and police cars outside wrecked.

The police later admitted they had feared for the safety of those inside the station, and those outside seemed to sense it at the time for when they moved off they knew they had won the freedom of the streets. Moss Side was theirs.

At first, when the youth trotted down Princess Road, six abreast, smashing shop windows and daring the police to react, the rest of the local community seemed tense. But no private houses were touched so soon everyone began to relax.

Everybody came out onto the streets, neighbours who hadn't talked to each other for years began to exchange opinions. Young and old moved in on the shops. The black youth had led a carnival of the community. James Anderton, head of the Manchester cops, stood no chance.

The following night Anderton sought his revenge, swamping Moss Side with his police. From early evening snatch squads in meat wagons

cruised around the area at 80mph. By 9pm about 50 people had been arrested, by midnight, 150. And yet not one petrol bomb had been thrown.

Curfew

But by 11.30pm a total of 900 police had imposed a curfew in Moss Side. The police prosecutor was later to say in court: 'Any responsible person who knew what had been going on would stay in their own home. The only reason to be out is to be looking for trouble.'

In effect, the whole community was forced to stay in their homes. This is what James Anderton's police operation, so praised by Willie Whitelaw, really meant.

Anderton attempted to justify the action by claiming the trouble in Moss Side had been the work of outside agitators. He said: 'I personally cannot believe that it is within the intelligence and capacity of the young people involved to plan an operation on the scale.'

There must be other people involved, intent on causing destruction and anarchy in the inner city areas. There is no doubt in my mind that the whole thing was pre-planned and organised.'

That was also the



theme of local Labour MP George Morton who blamed 'people coming in from outside'.

But if it was all the fault of 'outside agitators' why was it necessary for the police to intimidate the community by swamping Moss Side with riot police?

Why were workers returning from night shift chased by truncheon-wielding police on the Thursday night? Why were people arrested for standing on their doorstep?

Talking to local people afterwards a clearer picture emerges. Everywhere, people say the same: 'It's all Thatcher's fault.' 'It's down to unemployment.' 'The police have gone too far.' 'The kids have had enough.' 'They're arrested for walking down the streets.'

Georgina, a 15-year old in Moss Side said: 'You can understand it. The police seem to think they are some kind of superior species. You're doing nothing and they all

roll up and make out they're something special. No one likes being treated like that. If they have a go at me I walk away 'cause I don't want any bother, but I understand how it gets so you just won't take it anymore.'

Bas Johnson, a bus driver who operates from a depot in the heart of Moss Side, explained the reaction in his garage: 'A lot of people saw it coming. Most blame the Tory government.'

Anderton's victims

'WE were picked up by the cops a couple of yards outside a friend's house. We were just looking, trying to see what was going on.'

'Most of those arrested were bystanders. The police just moved in with truncheons on anyone seen on the streets. One young black woman was arrested in a telephone kiosk. She's been fined £100 for obstruction.'

'All in all, hundreds have been arrested in Manchester for no other crime than walking their own streets. Those accused of throwing petrol bombs or bricks were badly beaten at the police station. But the cops themselves openly boasted of using bricks.'

'In the cells we all faced continuous intimidation. We were packed in eight to a cell. The mattresses had been removed. We were all held overnight with all the lights blazing and the cops bursting in every 20 minutes to keep us awake. Their idea was to get us into court quickly and as worn out as possible.'

Frank Elvey and Duncan Edwards were two of those arrested in Moss Side.

Leeds, Sunday 12 July

At 4am on Sunday morning barricades went up in Chapel-town, Leeds.

Along Roundhay Road shop windows were smashed, goods were taken and barricades erected with burning overturned cars.

But it was almost as if the looting was symbolic. After all, who would want a Black and Decker grass trimmer when nobody in Chapeltown had a

lawn? All day Saturday in Chapeltown there had been coppers in twos and threes on every street corner. Others were in blue transit vans, hungrily roaming the streets.

Right at the start of the rioting I saw police vans drive past the action. They deliberately waited for the trouble to escalate before moving in.

By 5.30am the police had forced us in-

to a myriad of side streets. Our number had dwindled to 50. But for a while we had established a no-go area in parts of Chapel-town, although there were too few of us to reach our real target - the business district of Leeds.

Still the police had not been able to defeat us, and the next day blacks walked the streets with a new found air of confidence and celebration.

Photo: JOANNI O'NEILL

FIGHTING BACK

factory employers to send their workers home early to avoid the troubles that were coming.

With these moves they built up an already tense situation into an electric one. Shopkeepers all around the area boarded up their shops and tales of planned confrontations were two a penny.

Workers in the Southall Rights office counted up the number of skinheads reported to be assembling in neighbouring areas and came to a figure of 66,000!

In the evening groups

of youth stood around Southall discussing what was going to happen.

There was so much tension that the whole thing was bound to blow.

Finally about 150 youth started marching towards Jingles, a disco less than a mile from central Southall, which is a haunt of young racist thugs.

Within a few minutes they were ambushed by lines of cops with batons and shields. The fighting which broke out was totally confused.

Hundreds of youth

were running to and fro, most of them just watching what was taking place. Others were throwing rocks at the law and at any shop window that was handy.

But the police easily had the upper hand and some of them took delight in attacking and arresting young people many of whom had done nothing.

Over 100 were arrested, many of them badly beaten up and many Asian and English shops were damaged.

Community reaction

is confused. The events earlier in the month were seen as a victory for black self-defence and had focussed attention on the need to fight racism, unemployment and police harassment on a national level.

A national demonstration in Southall, now banned, had been called by local groups.

As we go to press local organisations are meeting to discuss what comes next including the rescheduling of the national demonstration.



Woolwich, Thursday 9 July

Around noon, a group of skinhead youth tried to climb over a wall of a nursery school. Their target was black children. The school

was hurriedly closed, but a rumour started that skinheads were planning to contaminate the area later that afternoon.

Shops, banks and pubs soon had their windows boarded up; offices were closed; the police advised schools to 'evacuate'.

By 5pm, the streets and markets were deserted. From about 6pm black and white youth, mainly West Indian and Asian, started to assemble. They met at the main square near a sikh temple where an ANL meeting was due to take place, and the Tramshed dance hall where skinheads were due to arrive later that evening. There were some police with dogs.

Just after 8pm the crowd heard that fascists were arriving on the Woolwich ferry. There was a rush to where the ferry docked and a few windows were smashed. But it was nothing serious.

As it turned out

there were no fascists on the ferry so the crowd turned back the way they came.

There was now a massive police presence which tried to disperse the crowd away from the town centre. Wherever they went the youth were harassed by the cops. It was sheer provocation.

Meanwhile, the ANL meeting took place but 60 fascists had a go for it. They were chased away by Asian youth.

During the next few hours most of the arrests took place. They did so, by and large, as the crowd was dispersing. The next day the media attributed the smashed windows and 'looting' — of which there was very little — to a pre-planned riot.

In reality it was an exercise in legitimate self-defence, against a possible mass attack by fascists, and a military-style offensive by the cops.

Birmingham, Friday 10 July

Violence flared last Friday in the predominantly black and Asian area of Handsworth in Birmingham. Rumours had spread round the city for two days that groups of the National Front and British Movement skinheads were about to invade the area.

The Indian Workers Association advised shopkeepers in the area to board up their shops, and issued a leaflet calling for a mass mobilisation to defend the area against racist attacks.

By 9pm on Friday there were 1000 youth on the streets. Superintendent Webb, renowned in the area and nationally for his pioneering of 'community policing' was singled out for the first attack.

He appeared alone on the streets, the youth surrounded him and found

him reluctant to answer their questions. They then placed a bottle on his head.

At 10.30pm the youth started to attack and loot the shops. Police in full riot gear appeared on the scene twenty minutes later. On the subsequent two evenings police attempted to impose a virtual curfew of the area, but the youth returned to the streets in force.

Over 300 youth have been arrested, but all refused bail. There is talk in Birmingham of special emergency detention centres being opened to deal with those arrested.

Many of the detained youth appeared in court on Monday morning. One of the mothers of an accused black youth suggested that Downing Street might be a better target next time.

Stoke Newington, Friday 10 July

There was no provocation. The youth were just standing round, waiting for something to happen.

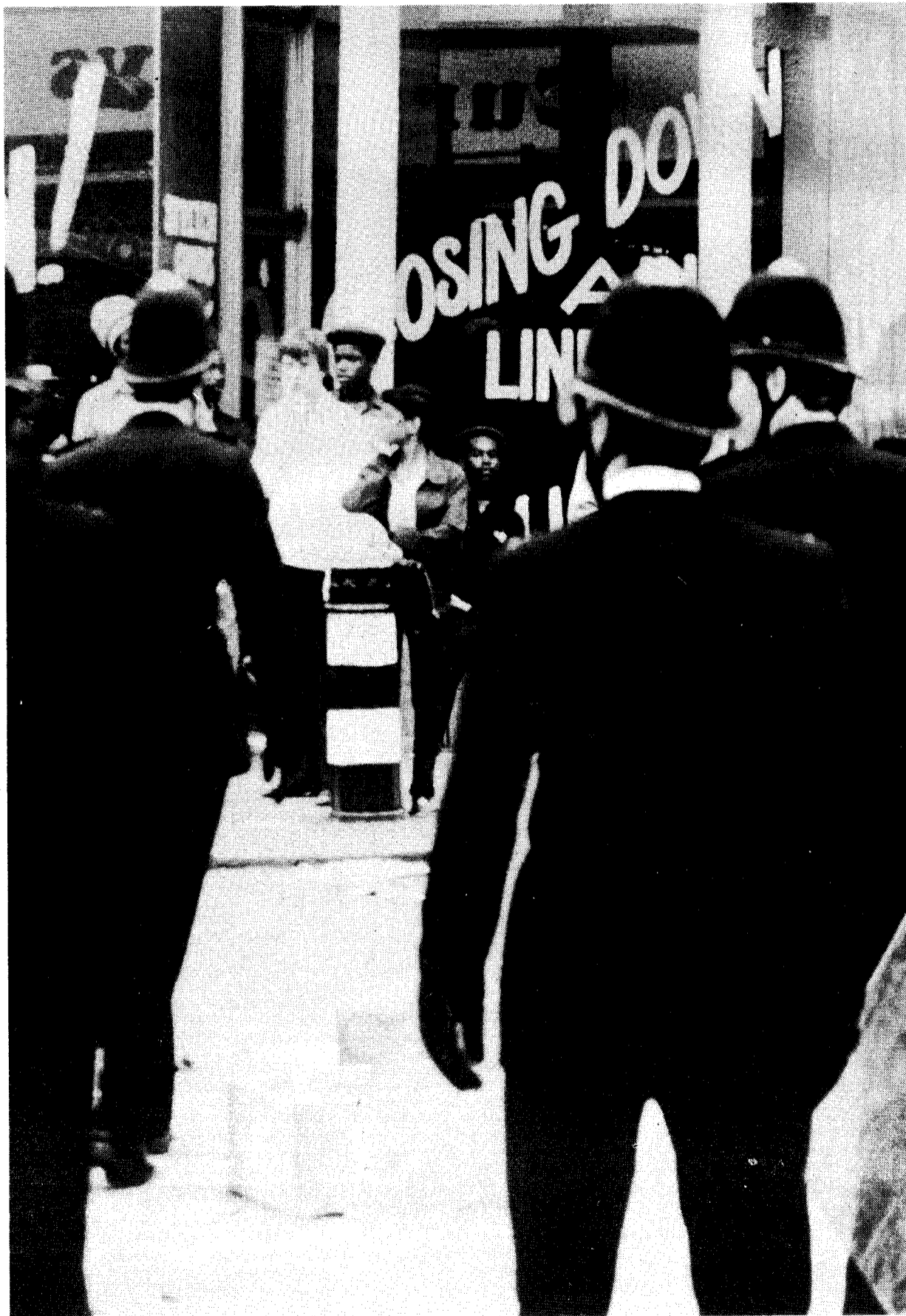
The cops started it, about 35 of them, by launching a sudden baton charge. Then the trouble began. As the cops moved up the road one of them was hit by a stone. Then they charged, out for blood. Three SPG vans arrived and drove straight at a group of youth. The cops were hysterical.

More and more youth started to come into the area, ready to fight back. A brick was thrown through a furniture shop

In another shop the 'looting' was a picture of Charles and Di that was taken out and ripped to shreds.

The cops chased and beat up anyone they could lay their hands on, mouthing racist obscenities as they went on the rampage. But the youth resisted, throwing bricks as the cops charged.

It was all spontaneous, consisting of isolated incidents of looting and vandalism.



Islington, Sunday 12 July

MORE than four hundred people attended an Anti Nazi League rally against fascist violence in Islington last Sunday.

The size of the rally was a big success as the police ban on marches in London led many people to believe that the event was cancelled. The real nature of this ban as an

attack on the democratic rights of the labour movement was clearly revealed by Sunday's events.

A large crowd of fascists were allowed to peddle their racist filth at the nearby Chapel Market while the peaceful Anti Nazi rally was denied permission to organise its

own mass leafletting at the market or to demonstrate against the fascists.

Speakers at the rally included George Cunningham, Labour MP for Islington South, and Paul Holborow from the Anti Nazi League.

Bob Pennington from The Other Bookshop called for a

united labour movement campaign against the fascists: 'The policies of the Tory government are responsible for the despair and anger which lies behind the recent social unrest up and down the country. Thatcher and her gang are the real criminals and looters.'

Photo: JOANNE O'BRIEN

'They don't agree with rioting, especially after one of our drivers was hurt, but they're not prepared to blame the kids because they know they're just reacting to being thrown on the scrap heap.'

Arrests

The truth about Moss Side is relatively simple. The black youth led the whole community onto the streets: it was an opportunity to have their voices heard. The police response was to crack down with blanket policing, curfews, raids, arbitrary arrests and prison sentences.

In that context local labour movement leaders — such as the MP — should not content themselves with repeating police lies. They should be striving to focus the anger which erupted in Moss Side and elsewhere.

They should be establishing the facts about the riots. And they should place themselves in the front line of the resistance against the police curfew on the black community.

How Thatcher reneged on the H Block deal



Martin Hurson: how many more must die?

ON TUESDAY 7 July, Margaret Thatcher over-ruled her own government ministers, Humphrey Atkins and Michael Alison, and pronounced a death sentence on Joe McDonnell. At 5pm on Wednesday morning Joe McDonnell died, the fifth Irish political prisoner to die in the last two months.

By Geoff Bell

The full horror of what Thatcher did has come to light through two statements issued by the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace in the aftermath of McDonnell's death.

For over a month the Commission had acted as a go-between between the British government and the H Block prisoners.

By last Monday they agreed the basis of a settlement between the prisoners and Michael Alison, the minister responsible for prisons in the north of Ireland.

Twenty-four hours later the government withdrew its assent to the deal, and a new chapter in British duplicity in Ireland had been written.

Rules

The key stages in the negotiations were as follows:—

3 June. The Irish Commission for Peace and Justice issues a statement on the hunger strike. It makes three suggestions as a way of ending the deadlock: 1) All prisoners should be allowed to wear their own clothes whenever they wish. 2) There should be a relaxation in the rules governing the association of prisoners, providing there is no military training or other 'illegal activity'. 3) The question of prison work should be reviewed to ensure it is 'of the greatest cultural and educational value'.

10 June John Hume, leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party has talks with Humphrey Atkins in London. Hume is told that 'movement' by the government would be 'inevitable' providing 'the prisoners were to make clear that, if the government were to act along the lines suggested by the Commission for Justice and Peace', they would respond positively.

15 June The US Bishops' Conference join the Irish, English and Welsh bishops in commending the proposals of the Commission for Justice and Peace.

17 June The Irish Bishops' Conference call on the prisoners 'to indicate that the proposals made by the Commission... could lead to a solution of the dispute'.

18 June The H Block prisoners respond to the call of the Irish Bishops. A number of the limitations of the proposals from the Commission... are pointed out and they appreciate the efforts of the Commission to help them.

20 June The H Block prisoners... are told that the government has agreed to the proposals... and that they should accept the offer.

talks to bring about a settlement'.

19 June The Commission says the atmosphere between the British government and the prisoners is 'mellowing'. *The Times* says the Commission's proposals would not 'amount to political status', and that 'they are changes that any government could contemplate making on merit'.

22 June A member of the Commission meets a hunger striker. According to the prisoners the Commission member 'stated his belief that we were genuinely pursuing a settlement to the hunger-strike'.

23 June The Commission hold talks with Michael Alison, the government minister in charge of prisons. According to the *Irish Times* the meeting 'encouraged the belief' among Commission members that 'a resolution of the prison dispute is now possible'.

Humphrey Atkins 'welcomes' the 17 June statement of the Irish Bishops, which called on the prisoners to indicate acceptance of the Commission's proposals.

30 June The Commission holds a further meeting with Alison who then sends a letter to the Commission clarifying the government's attitude to the 3 June proposals.

Atkins issues a statement which says 'scope exists for further improvements in the prison regime'.

The Commission says that Atkins' statement and their talks with Alison give them encouragement 'to continue with their efforts to achieve a resolution of the prison dispute'.

3/4 July Two more meetings between the Commission and Alison which 'clarify' the government's attitude towards the 3 June proposals.

On 4 July the Commission visits the hunger strikers and reports to them that in light of the assurances given by Alison the government is now 'under a moral obligation to take action on the three areas suggested by us in our 3 June statement'.

The Commission tell the prisoners that the government is in broad agreement with the suggestions of 3 June and would implement the changes in prison regime... which the Commission had been told by the government.

7 July The H Block prisoners... are told that the government has agreed to the proposals... and that they should accept the offer.



This graphic is taken from *The H Blocks - An indictment of British prison policy in the North of Ireland*, an excellent new pamphlet from Information on Ireland, 1 North End Rd, London W1. Price 40p plus 25p for p&rp.

say they would not object to any prison reforms they were granted being extended to all prisoners. On association within the prison, 'we do not envisage ourselves running around the blocks as we please'; on prison 'work', the 'achievement of compatible arrangement should be available without loss of principle... that the prisoners should be allowed to wear their own clothes'.

Essentially, the statement is an endorsement of the Commission's 3 June proposals, which the Commission had been told by the government.

now accepted.

6 July In the words of a later statement issued by the Commission: 'We met Mr Alison on 6 June, and produced to him a copy of our statement. The statement contained a true summary of the essential points of prison reform which had emerged in our discussions. We informed him that the prisoners considered the points to be the formation of a resolution of the hunger strike.'

Alison says the Commission accepted their statement apart from one major point: that while the

government was committed to the clothing reform, the 'specific details of the other reforms were meant to be illustrative only'.

The Commission was later to say that they did not think that this interpretation was a correct one of previous government undertakings. Nevertheless, they felt a settlement was still likely.

All that was now needed was for the government to send in a civil servant to personally confirm what the government was now promising. Alison promises to send in such an official by, at the latest,

noon on 7 July.

7 July No official is sent in by noon. The Commission threatens to hold a press conference if a civil servant is not sent in immediately. Alison agrees to send such a person that evening. No-one is sent in.

8 July. Joe McDonnell dies. The government finally sends a civil servant to Long Kesh. But the text of the statement is radically different from that agreed by Alison on 6 July.

The Commission comment that the statement is

not a 'serious attempt' to end the H Block crisis. They say promises made to them have been 'clawed back' by the British government. They add: 'We believe Mr Alison himself acted at all times in good faith'.

On this latter point it is assumed that Alison was at the last moment over-ruled. Humphrey Atkins, his immediate superior, is understood to have been working with him throughout.

There is only one other person that could have ordered the breaking of the agreement. Her name is Margaret Thatcher.

British Army riots at funeral

By Tom Marlowe

WHEN the second hunger striker Frankie Hughes died, the Royal Ulster Constabulary seized his coffin and prevented Frankie's body from being driven through the streets of West Belfast.

It seemed impossible for the forces of 'law and order' in the North of Ireland to sink lower than that. But last Friday they managed it when the army and the RUC attacked the funeral of Joe McDonnell, the fifth political prisoner to die during the current hunger strike.

at the funeral.

He was shot in the back four times by the army. His 'crime' was that he was known by the army as the brother of Gerry Adams, vice-president of Sinn Fein.

Blunder

Martin Flannery, Sheffield Labour MP, described the troops' action at the funeral as 'blundering, dangerous and insensitive'. He has called for an inquiry into the funeral attack.

Joe McDonnell had been serving a 15 year sentence when he died. He had been convicted for being in possession of a handgun. Last week three British soldiers were also convicted of possessing firearms.

Arsenal

They were Neville Edmonston, Ivor Hirst and Gary Rozier of the Royal Green Jackets. Somewhat surprisingly the three had been found not guilty of conspiring to murder a man accused of killing the nine year old cousin of Edmonston.

The three were however, found guilty of possessing what was described as an 'arsenal of weapons', including two



The traditional salute given at the funeral of Republican volunteers. This was given to hunger striker Ray McCreesh.

sub-machine guns, ammunition, smoke grenades and thunder-flashes. But unlike Joe McDonnell the soldiers were not given a 15 years sentence.

Only Hirst was jailed — for a year — and that because he had a previous firearm conviction. The other two were given suspended sentences for

three months.

Then, on Monday there was another outstanding example of British fair play. Tens of thousands marched through

Belfast, carrying swords, pikes and other offensive weapons. The British Army did not intervene. The marchers were Orangemen.

Councillors against H Blocks

CAROL Turner, Southwark Labour councillor, has written an open letter to the British labour movement on behalf of the Belfast 34 Defence Committee, which represents those arrested two weeks ago at a Belfast rally against the H Blocks.

Carol says: 'I am most alarmed that the elected representatives of the minority in Northern Ireland are denied the right to address their constituents in the city centre.... I feel strongly that it is our responsibility in the British labour movement to protest against this blatant denial of democratic rights...'

Carol was among those arrested when the peaceful rally was broken up by the RUC. The court hearing has been adjourned until October. Statements of support and contributions to the legal costs will be very much welcomed.

Copies of the open letter are available from Socialist Challenge to take to your local Labour Party and union branches. Messages of support and donations to: Councillor John McNulty, Connolly Bookshop, Avoca Park, Andersonstown, Belfast.

Photo: AN PHOBLAIGHT

Attack

The RUC and the army launched their attack on the mourners after the traditional volley of shots had been fired over McDonnell's coffin in Andersonstown, West Belfast. Dozens of plastic bullets and rounds of live ammunition were fired by the army as they went in pursuit of the IRA firing party.

That however was only an excuse. The aim of the exercise was to intimidate all those who, by attending the funeral, had shown their solidarity with the hunger strikers.

Innocent

According to a local priest, the Rev Dan O'Rawe, soldiers and police fired 'indiscriminately' into the crowd. The one person who was seriously injured, Patrick Adams, was described by Sinn Fein as an 'innocent bystander'

New York mobilises behind the prisoners

From Tom Martin in New York City

'UNFORTUNATELY it looks as if we're once again entering a phase where the world will look on in horror and disbelief at what is happening in Ireland.

'We're here to ask the world to do more than that. We're asking the people of America, the most powerful nation in the world, to stand up on this issue.

'This is not just an Irish issue — it's one of fundamental human rights. We're asking you to show Britain that she is a leper in the world.'

Appeal

This was the appeal made by Belfast city councillor Fergus O'Hare at a press conference here on 3 July. O'Hare is here on a speaking tour organised by the New York H-Block/Armagh Committee which will take in meetings in the Catskills, Philadelphia, Boston, Syracuse, Scranton and Pittsburgh as well as a major rally in New York City. He has also been invited to address a city council meeting in Burlington, Vermont.

Hotbed

The press conference at which O'Hare spoke attracted considerable media attention, including several TV and radio stations. The conference was chaired by former New York city council president Paul O'Dwyer. Other speakers included Alice McElwee, mother of hunger striker Thomas McElwee; Oliver Hughes, brother of late hunger striker Francis Hughes; former US attorney general Ramsey Clark; and well-known anti-war activist Daniel



Speakers at the New York H Block/Armagh Committee press conference. Left to right they are Ramsey Clark, Oliver Hughes, Paul O'Dwyer, Fergus O'Hare, Alice McElwee.

Berrigan.

New York today is a hotbed of support for the hunger strikers. Some 10,000 people marched when Bobby Sands died; and hundreds still join in the daily pickets of

the British consulate. These are organised by Northern Irish Aid, which strongly identifies with the Provisionals — although its leadership plays down the Provisionals' leftward evolution to the extent of censor-

Photo Marc Lichtman (Militant).

ing out all references to socialism!

The New York H-Block/Armagh Committee was set up as an organisation open to all those willing to build support for the prisoners regardless of their views on other aspects of the struggle. Apart from participating in Northern Irish Aid activities, it has its own packed programme of activities. In recent weeks these have included pickets of the QE2, British Airways, and Republican Party headquarters (to demand that the Reagan administration breaks its links with Thatcher); public meetings, and film and theatre benefits.

Irish-Americans have traditionally tended to play a conservative role in US politics, and not so long ago O'Dwyer was attacked for comparing Britain's role in Ireland with American intervention in El Salvador. But now such links are increasingly made. A welcome feature of this has been a growing identification by black people with the struggle in Ireland.

Coalition

One of the most significant of recent developments has been the formation of an Irish-American Labour Coalition by trade union leaders representing 17 million workers. While it is likely to organise only token actions (such as the 24-hour boycott of British shipping by the International Longshoremen's Association when Bobby Sands died), it will give campaigners on the Irish issue greatly increased opportunities of getting a hearing and organising support in the unions.

Building

Reagan has so far stood by Thatcher and her policy in Northern Ireland. But a head of steam is building up here that makes it increasingly difficult for Washington to continue with that stance. And that is good news for all who support the H-Block and Armagh prisoners.

Will the next Labour government advance towards socialism?

By Phil Hearse

WORKING people had great hopes of the last Labour governments. As the LCC conference meets, the question of whether the next Labour government will advance towards socialism will be in the minds of many militants.

In 1964, Harold Wilson brought to an end the 'thirteen years of Tory misrule' and promised a transformation of Britain through the 'white heat of the technological revolution'. But Labour instead pursued years of right-wing policies, including the 1966 wage freeze and the attempted shackling of the unions through 'In Place of Strife'. The outcome was the 1970 election defeat.

In 1974, the miners' defeat of Heath brought in a Labour government pledged to 'a fundamental and irreversible shift of power and wealth to working people and their families'.

In fact, the Labour government pursued pro-capitalist policies under Wilson, Callaghan and Healey, leading to a doubling of unemployment, the debacle of the 'winter of discontent' in 1978-9, and finally Thatcher's victory in the May 1979 general election.

To deal with the problems of unemployment, de-industrialisation, collapsing social services and decaying inner cities, a Labour government would have to immediately find the resources for investment and public works on a large scale.

It would have to ensure the implementation of a socialist national plan for economic and social recovery in the interests of working people. This

would, faced with the hysterical reaction of the capitalist class, have to call on the workers to mobilise in its defence.

To prevent sabotage in both the nationalised and non-nationalised sectors of industry would require workers' supervision and control in all the major enterprises. Workers' control goes hand-in-hand with nationalisation.

How does Benn's programme match up to these tasks? To be sure, in addition to policies on the EEC, nuclear disarmament and the extension of democracy, Tony Benn argues for 'a return to full employment' and 'full restoration of the social service cuts'.

Key

But the best of intentions are useless without the means to carry them through; *nationalisation is the key task* in carrying through a socialist programme. It is a grave

Platform

These experiences have led large numbers of the rank and file of the labour movement to insist that it must not be repeated and that the next Labour government should be *accountable* to the labour movement and pledged to thorough-going socialist measures. Tony Benn is the leader of the Labour left most associated with this sentiment.

In his recent circular to the constituency parties Benn asks for support on this basis. But is Benn's five point programme — his election platform — adequate for getting a Labour government which can really push through socialist policies?

First, we have to consider the present relationship of forces inside the labour movement. Benn's campaign for the deputy leadership may have put the trade union bureaucrats and the right wing under pressure, but even if it was successful it would not automatically mean a left 'Bennite' government.

Pressure

Foot is currently the guardian of the policies of the right. A Foot-led government, with Healey and Hattersley in leading posts, would not even attempt the kind of measures of 'extending democracy' mentioned in Benn's programme.

One thing is certain, however, about the next Labour government. It will be under tremendous pressure from all the forces of right-wing reaction.

Coming to power in a period of acute economic and political crisis, the ruling class would be determined not to allow a Labour government any room for manoeuvre.

Immediately it would face attempts to force it into line — just like the Labour GLC, which has come under a massive assault since taking power.



Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

would be impossible without the immediate nationalisation of the banks and the leading monopolies.

Every socialist government is faced with capitalist sabotage. If a Labour government is elected on a socialist programme the capitalists won't for a moment allow the democratic choice of the people to be implemented without a fight.

They will use every financial weapon and their control of industry to prevent socialist change. They will refuse financing to the government. They will refuse to invest. A socialist government will have to control investment through control of the commanding heights of industry and control of the banks.

Defence

Even if a Labour government carried through nationalisation, it

weakness that Benn's programme doesn't address this issue at all.

In the heat of the fight for Benn's election as deputy leader, it is all too easy for his programme to be overlooked. But this is a dangerously short-sighted attitude.

It is vital that the next Labour government does not repeat the fiasco of the '64 and '74 governments. A wide-ranging debate should therefore be initiated in the labour movement. For such a debate to be fruitful a fatal illusion has to be dispelled — that a Labour government will have time to gradually implement a socialist policy, bit by bit. As Ken Livingstone is discovering in London, nothing could be further from the truth.

Either a Labour government acts decisively from the beginning, or it will be driven from office — or worse still, follow the familiar dreary road marked out by Wilson, Callaghan and Healey.

Laurence Scott of an occupation

'If we had any doubts about the type of boss we're fighting, we've lost them forever now!' — a Laurence Scott workers in the 12th week of their occupation against closure.

Arthur Snipe, boss of Mining Supplies, the group which owns Laurence Scott, is a boss fully in line with the philosophy and style of the Tory government. He's a favourite with the Engineering Employers Federation which has given him full support since the day he declared the closure of the Manchester engineering factory with the loss of 650 jobs.

Like most of the closures which are hitting the North West region the reason given was that the plant was making a loss. That was a lie.

Dennis Barry, now convener of Laurence Scott, explains:

'It's not a question of profitability. Our plant has contributed a third of the group's profits for the last nine years. He only quotes us as a loss maker because our work is being transferred to other plants.'

Support

This was the reason why Laurence Scott workers took the step of picketing the parent company in Doncaster last week in a bid to bring the previously intransigent Snipe to the negotiation table.

The decision to picket had the unanimous support of the occupation — the sort of support that has been a feature of the occupation from the day after the workers voted to sit-in.

Part of the reason for the fierce loyalty shown to the occupation during the course of the dispute has been class hatred against Snipe.

Joan Taylor, an APEX steward, sums up the feeling in the plant: 'Snipe has treated us like we just don't matter. The bulk of us have been here over 25 years.'

Knife

Elaine Cross, an AUEW/TASS steward, confirms it; 'He's put the knife in and he's just kept on turning it. Everybody just had enough.'

But many plants in Manchester have had employers like Snipe, many have been closed, but few have fought. Why



Elaine Cross (centre), 'Everybody just had enough.'

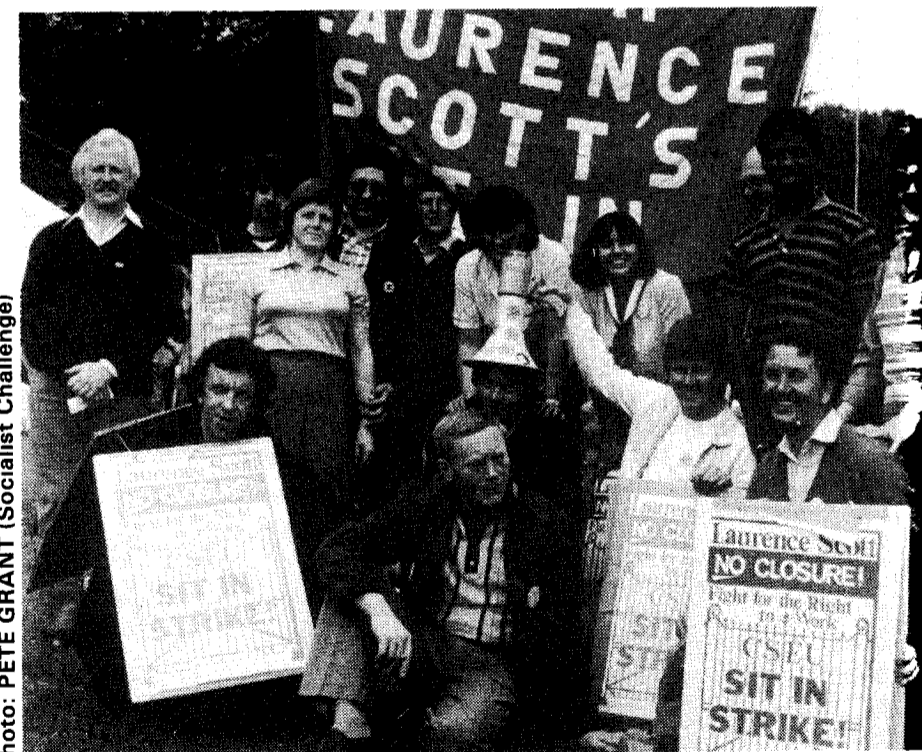


Photo: PETE GRANT (Socialist Challenge)

Dennis Barry (1st left, back row), 'Now there's nowhere to run.'

is Laurence Scott different?

Dennis Barry says: 'It's true people have generally accepted redundancy, laid down and refused to fight. But now there's nowhere to run. Once you are out of the gates you are now virtually permanently unemployed. The majority of people at Scotts realised that even for the small amount of money that they got for picketing duty which is £17, that they would only be getting £19.50 a week for something that could be permanent for the rest of their lives.'

Joan Taylor adds:

'Women workers wouldn't get a job in Manchester at the moment. Nobody could. Neither men nor women.'

Apprentice Jed McNeill at the moment at college, puts his view: 'My future is very rosy isn't it? Sitting around with the only break going out to get your dole money. I'm fighting to save my jobs and 650 others.'

Trick

But why didn't the workers fall for the redundancy money trick. It was a problem at the beginning as Dennis Barry points

out: 'Originally it was a block on the struggle. According to the procedure, workers with 12 years were guaranteed redundancy money but the ones with less were insecure. We would have got into test cases.'

But the workers had an unlikely ally on the question of redundancies... Arthur Snipe!

Mike Cordingley, an AUEW/TASS steward explains: 'Snipe began by saying that he wouldn't pay us redundancy money if we fought. The few workers that were really concerned left and we felt better off without them.'

at: Lessons on



Photo: PETE GRANT (Socialist Challenge)

no point in leaving the occupation to the closure date of 10 July, because by that time we would have been sat in an empty factory. When we occupied we took over £2.75m of stock. If we didn't have that Snipe would have just left us there.

Arrest

'We didn't think that the police would bother us. We have got the support of all the engineering workers in Manchester. If there's 650 inside and thousands outside they can't arrest all of us.'

Support from other unions is vital in occupations. Elaine explains how wide it has been.

'Support from the other unions in Manchester has been very strong. GEC Openshaw has been brilliant. They have sent us a donation of £200 every week. Gardners have helped us with support and guidance right the way through. We've already had £900 from them.'

The Laurence Scott workers have travelled far and wide raising support for their struggle. In every region of the country they visited pits, factories and other workplaces. They lobbied the miners' conference.

The response has been tremendous. But what about MPs and the trade union leaders?

Impact

Dennis Barry says: 'We've had meetings with MPs, they go away and probably do their best. They feel that once they come to talk to you and make a little impact that is their part of the thing done. You've got to do these things yourself. The same applies to the national union.'

Joan Taylor has also been disappointed: 'We haven't had as much support from Labour MPs as we should have had. They have spoken to us, but they have just accepted the answer that the Tories have given. They haven't fought. Whereas we have said we're accepting nothing.'

And that's the lesson that the Laurence Scotts workers have for the whole of the labour movement.

Mike says: 'You can't let the Tories and management walk all over you. You have got to fight them. If they carry on with shut-downs we will be back in the old days when you had to queue up for work at the gates and whoever worked for less got the jobs.'

And Jed: 'We need to get Thatcher and the Tories out. By force if necessary. By threatening them.'

'Things were immediately better with the workforce. They really had nothing left to lose. They can't lose their redundancy money because, in most cases, they've spent it.'

Justified

But many workers have drawn the line against occupation even when they have opposed closure. Do the Laurence Scott workers think that their decision to occupy was justified?

Mike again: 'Definitely. We had to do it immediately too. There was



Laurence Scott workers had a successful tour of South Wales last week



Mike Cordingley, 'You can't let the Tories walk all over you.'

'But Snipe weakened and paid it out. Our solicitor told us that we wouldn't "be considered to have accepted redundancy". So we spent it.'

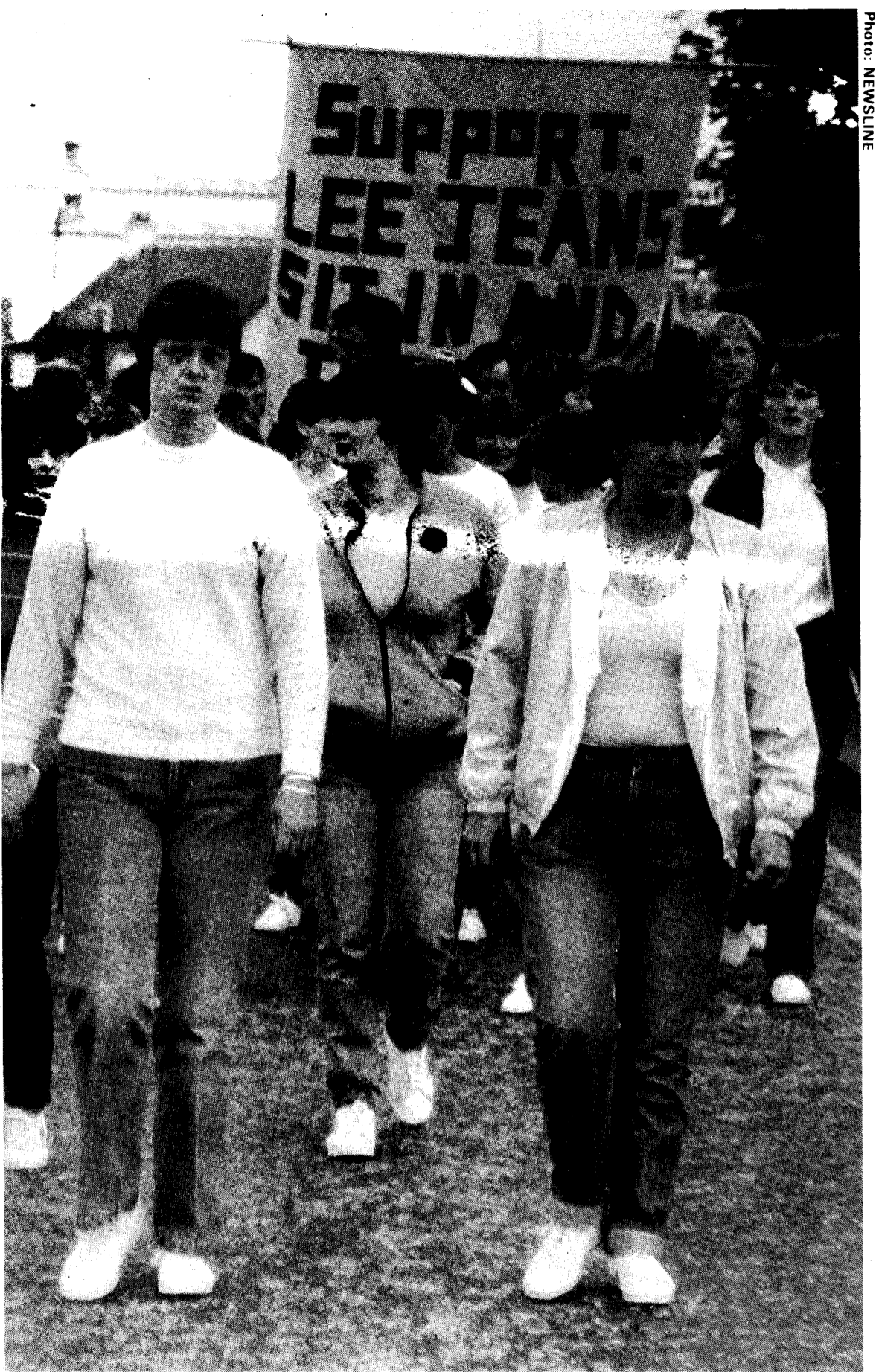


Photo: NEWSLINE

Lee Jeans workers have been an inspiration for all those fighting for their jobs and in particular for a woman's right to work.

For a woman's right to work

Model Resolution

This branch/conference/trades council notes that women are bearing the brunt of unemployment.

One of the factors affecting women and not men is the view, still all too common in the labour movement, that women's right to work is an optional extra, and that women's economic dependence is acceptable. This is an idea that should be opposed and challenged by the whole of the labour movement.

We therefore call on the leadership of the Labour and trade union movement to organise a national demonstration for a woman's right to work.

The slogans of the demonstration should stress the importance of women's independence, the need for defence and extension of services, especially childcare, the special need to defend part-timers' jobs, the fight for adequate maternity leave, and the fight against low pay and job segregation.

The demonstration should include special facilities for children, and in the localities the labour movement should be encouraged to organise creches for the day.

By Judith Arkwright

WITH unemployment amongst women rising twice as fast as that of men, it is becoming urgent that Labour movement takes up the demand for a women's right to work and puts the Tory government in its place.

Lee Jeans women, in occupying their factory against closure, have shown us the way. Their brave and determined fight show what has to be done.

And the next step should be to support the call for a demonstration on a woman's right to work in spring next year. This demonstration has to be called and supported by the leadership of the labour movement and the Labour Party so that the weight of the movement can be used to fight for women's interests. A campaign has to start now in the labour movement to get our leaders to take this up. Already the march has been sponsored by prominent individuals — Tony Benn, Michael Foot, Arthur Scargill, Jo Richardson, Joan Lester, and so on. Now let's see some action! The LCC conference should take up the call for this march and urge all its supporters to fight for the Labour Party and the TUC to do likewise.

We reprint a model resolution for use in trade union and Labour Party branches.

ICL workers fight job threat

By Rita Mitchell, Secretary Joint Union Committee, West Gorton

WORKERS from the computer multinational, ICL, came from all over Britain last week to lobby their MPs against the proposals by their new management to cut 5,200 jobs. This represents 17 per cent of the workforce.

The lobby was organised to get the backing of Labour MPs for any action taken against the redundancies and for complete nationalisation of the company.

Stan Orme, shadow industry minister, pledged that a future Labour government will not just renationalise the 25% government holding recently sold off by Thatcher, but the whole of the company.

There were delegations from the West Gorton, Ashton and Plymouth Grove factories in Manchester and most other plants including Letchworth and Kidsgrove.

The Manchester factories

will be the worst hit — 26 per cent of the workforce are threatened. In a recent company presentation Robb Wilmot, managing director of ICL, let slip that even after the present job loss we are, he claims, 4,000 jobs 'overmanned' (sic).

The three Manchester sites took one day strike action to coincide with the lobby and further industrial action is being planned.

At present the national unions represented on the ICL National Joint Union Committee have been strong on words but have come forward with no practical backing. It is only the occupation at Laurence Scott and the Gardner's victory that have forced local Manchester officials to back our campaign. But we should have the full strength of the Confed behind us.

Bernard Regan elected to NUT executive

BERNARD REGAN, well-known leader of the Socialist Teachers Alliance, has been elected to the national executive of the National Union of Teachers.

Bernard was contesting the vacancy created by the suspension from the union of Dick North, one of the officers of the Lambeth Teachers Association. They were disciplined for their association's support for the Lambeth council workers' strike. Dick was suspended for 12 months from last February.

In a single transferable vote-system election, Bernard Regan received a total of 1,826 votes. Second in the election, with 1,750, was June Fisher a member of the Communist Party.

Fisher was one of the ex-presidents of the Inner London Teachers Association whose complaint to the NUT executive led to the disciplinary actions against the Lambeth teachers. June Fisher also endorsed the disciplinary actions.

In view of her stand, Regan's election represents a considerable victory for the left in the union against the right-wing dominated executive and the Communist Party, who have lent support to the executive's red-baiting.

Bernard was able to be elected in the second round of the election because almost all those who had voted for the Rank and File candidate, Amanda Leon, switched their votes to him after she had been eliminated. Amanda Leon received around 750 first preference votes. A Maoist candidate, Julia Alterman, received around 720, and was also eliminated on the first ballot.

Laurence Scott 'We're fighting on'

By Pete Clifford

AS WE go to press, Laurence Scott workers will be taking a crucial decision as to whether or not to continue the occupation. If they do decide to fight on, it will almost certainly be in opposition to the union leadership.

Terry Duffy, engineering union leader, is recommending an agreement with Laurence Scott boss, Arthur Snipe, which won't save jobs. Instead it argues for the acceptance of redundancies, the future of the factory to be reviewed during the next three months and the unions to

offer full co-operation and flexibility. There would be an immediate return to work for three months on a two day week, with an application for temporary employment subsidy.

The redundancy money workers had received was to be handed back. The stewards overwhelmingly rejected the recommendation despite threats from union officials that strike pay and backing for the Doncaster picket would be withdrawn.

Fight

Yet it has been the picketing at Laurence Scott's parent company, Mining Supplies, at Doncaster which has forced Snipe to meet with the workers at all. A statement issued on behalf of the stewards by the new convenor, Dennis Barry, spells out why the recommendation is 'a total surrender. 650 Laurence Scott workers gave the union leaders the platform

to fight closures and redundancies; with their backing we'd have won a victory.

'As it is they have sold us down the river and capitulated at Snipe's first offer, instead of building on these proposals to achieve a meaningful settlement.'

In spite of this stab in the back from officials the stewards are determined to fight on. At the mass meeting on Tuesday 14 July, they intend to oppose the recommendation from the full time officials.

They want the agreement rejected and all levels of redundancies to be worked out before a settlement is agreed. There should be no enforced redundancies and the redundancies cheques to be accepted as ex-gratia payment for loss of wages during the dispute.

Pledge

If the stewards' position is adopted and the union leadership withdraws support, Laurence Scott workers will need all the help it can get from the labour movement. The urgency is highlighted by Snipe's intention the same day as the mass meeting to



And it is the public who pays. This year alone, the consumers will have two increases in domestic

reclaim his factory through the courts, if his proposals aren't accepted.

A Manchester wide engineering stewards meeting last Friday, discussed solidarity with Laurence Scott. TASS steward, Phil Penning, described the response as 'fantastic. The convenors from throughout the area have a collected over £1,000 for us.

'The threatened injunction has brought pledges from many convenors to block the streets around Laurence Scott.' If the workers do vote to continue the fight, such support has to be forthcoming from all over the country.

The stewards are already feeling the pressure. Last Friday the police instructed the pickets to leave the Doncaster plant, but support is there.

A victory for Laurence Scott will save jobs, show other workers threatened with redundancies and closures how to fight and will be a big defeat for Snipe and Duffy alike.

Stop press: the mass meeting voted overwhelmingly to continue the occupation. Now the workers are threatened with a writ from Snipe to reclaim the factory. There has to be a massive response from the labour movement immediately. Send messages of support and donations to LSE stewards, G Fryer, 20 Roundcroft, Romily, Cheshire.

Laurence Scott NO CLOSURE!

Save the lives of Turkish union leaders

ACCORDING to reports in the press on 26 June the prosecutor of the martial law courts in Ankara, is asking for the death sentence for 52 leaders of DISK trade union federation, currently standing trial. They have been held for nine months by the military regime. Among the 52 is DISK chairperson Abdullah Basturk.

On the same day as this announcement, two more left wing youths were hanged by

the authorities in Turkey — bringing the total to 8 since the coup last October.

DISK had about a million members before it was abolished by the military regime when they seized power. The 52 are being charged with 'advocating the domination of a social class over other social classes' under the notorious Articles 141 and 142 of the Turkish Penal Code which were borrowed directly from Musso-

lini's in the 30's.

The Turkish Solidarity Campaign is urging labour movement bodies to demand the unconditional release of the DISK leaders and to fight for action to boycott trade to and from Turkey — in particular to demand the withdrawal of the Tory government's proposed £3m free gift of military equipment to the Turkish junta. The Campaign can be contacted at BM Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX.

Denny Fitzpatrick, West End Post Office Engineering Union

BRITISH Telecoms employs a special Investigation Division (ID), whose members' identities are secret but whose operations are well known.

They lift you between 7am and 8am as you go into work and take you in for questioning. If you don't co-operate, their buddies — the Regional Crime Squad of Scotland Yard — will arrest you.

Villains

All that's needed is reasonable grounds for suspicion; and if the ID want to see you — that's reasonable. Shades of the

SUS laws!

Why has there suddenly been these activities of the ID? Well, thanks to the Daily Mail and Thames Television the public has been led to believe that the real villains in British Telecoms are the engineers. It seems we accept bribes, fiddle the system, earn thousands of pounds a week and never do a day's work. That's why you can't get a line or a phone or whatever. So a massive ID police clean up is to protect the industry.

phone rentals.

Meanwhile the Tories put cash limits on BT so that not enough can be raised to give a decent service to the public. Providing free phones for the old, laying cable to rural areas is not profitable.

Attack

The leadership of the POEU has responded badly to these attacks from the press and the ID.

Most importantly, it has not conducted a real campaign to win public support against the Tories' plans to wreck the nationalised industries.

It's now left to the gas workers to take on the Tories and to defend nationalised industries. No doubt these workers will also be subject to the same vilification campaign that the engineers have had. What is needed is a cross

sectoral campaign of industrial action to stop the Tory wreckers.

Release

For BT engineers the dawn raids are enough. In Centre Telecoms area the arrests were met with sit-ins and shut-down including the Post Office Tower. These actions secured the release of some workers and the management was forced to call off the ID.

A mass meeting of the West End branch called for a work to rule, a half day strike on 16 July, and a demonstration to the BT and ID headquarters.

This is the start of a national campaign.

Messages of support to POEU West End Branch, Marylebone ATE, Nottingham Place, London W1.



North West Carnival against the Missiles

A PUBLIC RALLY lauded the 8 August North West carnival against the missiles last week. Already the rally, launched by the local YCND, has attracted wide support.

Facilities, including the Alexandra Park in Moss Side, are being provided free by the local Labour council.

This is the first step towards putting flesh and blood on the council's decision to declare Manchester a 'nuclear free zone' — by using council resources to help mobilise people against the Tory rearmament plan.

Bill Risby, a spokesperson for Manchester City Council explained that schools and library facilities would also be opened up to CND for such activities as showings of the 'War Game', banned by the BBC.

Action

Bruce Kent, national secretary of CND, gave his full support to the carnival and welcomed the national mushrooming of CND among young people. He explained that the national demonstration in London on 24 October is expected to be the largest ever protest against nuclear weapons.

He warned against 'narrowing the base' of the anti-missile movement. According to him, the most encouraging recent event was a £3 donation

from a branch of the Young Conservatives. He said we had to take into account anti-communism and anti-Russian prejudices when presenting CND to the public.

Kerrey Wade, from Manchester Young CND set a somewhat different tone. 'If older CNDers want to talk to bishops and a few Tories, OK, but we haven't got time for that.'

'We want action because that's the only way to stop the missiles. We want hundreds of thousands on the streets. We want a carnival where hundreds of thousands of us can join the movement and enjoy ourselves as part of it.'

'We don't want a future with more Hiroshimas and Nagasakis. We want a future and we're prepared to fight for it.'

In the run-up to the carnival, Young CND groups are springing up all over Manchester. The North West carnival can lay the basis for CND establishing real roots where it matters among the youth in places like Moss Side, in the factories and the labour movement.

NICARAGUA 19 JULY 1979 — 19 JULY 1981 REVOLUTION



Anniversary Celebration Sat. 18 July 7.30
First Showing of new Films from Nicaragua...
Caribbean Rock Music from Steel and Skin...
Bar MANNING HALL, ULU, MALET ST., WC1
organised by ULU Latin American Society and the NSC

**LABOUR
CO-ORDINATING
COMMITTEE**

We can't wait till 1984

**Socialist Challenge
lunchtime
meeting**

Westminster Arms pub
Storey's Gate
(50 yards to left of
Central Hall)

Speakers:

**Dennis Barry,
Convenor
Laurence Scott**

**Elsie Broad,
Royal Pride**

**Pat Hickey,
Rover Solihull**

By Patrick Sikorski

THE Labour Co-ordinating Committee conference this weekend couldn't have come at a better time. After only two years of Thatcher's capitalist 'counter-revolution' her economic policies are in ruins and her cabinet is split.

This week's unemployment figures will register some 3 million on the dole, and the last two weeks have seen a massive rebellion by black and white youth against Thatcher's vandalism of their future.

This government has to go. We can't wait till 1984. Only the labour movement has the power to get rid of

the Tories. The mass anti-unemployment marches around the country have shown the willingness of the workers to fight back.

But the present leadership of the TUC and the Labour Party have diverted this resistance at every turn, limiting the movement to 'protest' actions and selling out the workplace struggles.

Terry Duffy and the AUEW executive have done their best to sabotage the Laurence Scott

dispute, and the leaders of the TGWU consistently failed to give backing to the fight against the Edwardes' plan to shut down Leyland.

Labour leader Michael Foot spends more time defending Denis Healey and preparing a new 'social contract' with the TUC than fighting for socialist policies.

What should come out of this LCC conference? An effective campaign to fight unemployment. This

means full support with workers in struggle like those at Laurence Scott. This means campaigning for a 35 hour week with worksharing and no loss of pay. Import controls play into the hands of the bosses.

Extend

Most of all the LCC has to consolidate and extend the gains already made inside the Labour Party by laun-

ching a campaign for democracy in the unions. This means full support for Tony Benn for deputy.

This means campaigning for the leaders of our movement to be accountable to the rank and file and to implement policies that are in the interests of the working class. A democratic labour movement will remove the obstacles to an all out fight with the Tories.

BL: 'The recommendation is defeated, the plant will close'

The campaign to defeat the management's closure plans at Rover SD1 plant, Solihull, has failed. Shop stewards were unable to convince the workforce of the need to take industrial action to save jobs in the face of massive pressure from the management and little or no leadership from the national unions.

PAT HICKEY, until last week deputy convenor at Rover SD1, has chronicled the events in BL over the last few weeks. His diary of resistance has now reached its sad finale.

Monday 6 June National conference, the final stage of procedure, in the Warwickshire countryside. Twelve pickets lobby the national officers. Gren Hawley chairs for the trade unions. His opening submission attacks the closure as economic madness and argues that SD1 is an essential part of a viable BL.

The company reply that there is substantial under-utilised capacity in BL which is a big drain on all resources. Savings from Solihull closure would be used for investment in model development. There is sufficient capacity at Cowley, Oxford and Longbridge, Birmingham, to cope with any likely improvement in the market.

Final

The afternoon brings a final refusal by the company to change its position. The trade union side meets to consider its position. All the national officers reject the closure and promise support for action.

The results of the last mass meeting at the SD1 is raised. The craft unions seek assurances from the Transport Union that the mass meeting will pledge support to their members if they refuse to assist in moving machinery.

Gren Hawley states there will be official support but SD1 must deliver the troops. So the national lead is to say they'll back us — this is readership, not leadership.

Tuesday Shop stewards meeting in the morning.

Explain national conference result which is no surprise to anyone. Go into some details on the position of the national officials.

Mass

Arrange the mass meeting for 11.30 tomorrow morning. After a long discussion on the resolution for the mass meeting, agree that it should be short and commit the plant to industrial action if the company proceeds with the closure plan.

Prepare Bulletin No 7 with the feeling that it will be the last. Argue for a fight, pointing to the fact that we can take advantage of official backing to spread the fight, black BL goods and stop Leyland. But the feeling on the floor is that we will lose the vote.

The company puts out a statement late in afternoon emphasising that the company will not change its mind, and that non-cooperation will result in loss of plant closure terms.

Wednesday Bring Bulletin No 7 into work. It is rapidly distributed.

Mass meeting 11.30am. A full turn out from TGWU and AUEW. EETPU decides to stay away.

Fight

I open the meeting, explaining the agenda and the decision that has to be taken. Sam Robinson, district secretary of the TGWU, speaks first on behalf of the national officers of the unions. He pledges full backing, and asks for a fight against the closure.



Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

BL management and the union leadership combined have been Rover's undertakers

Coolly received. Then Mick Clarke, convenor, introduces the shop stewards' resolution. Speakers from the floor. The first, who is against the resolution, attacks the 'lack of democracy' because the meeting last week should have been final.

He attacks the section meetings organised by the shop stewards after that meeting; he attacks the shop stewards. He is applauded throughout.

A speaker for, Raghib Ahsan, who explains how the struggle can be won by blacking, flying pickets and so on. He speaks well, filling in the gaps others have left.

A speaker against, a shop steward who abstained on the recommendation in the stewards' meeting. He points to past defeats, past betrayals by the unions, the danger of losing redundancy money, the impossibility of success. Well applauded.

Then two speakers for. Mick Clarke sums up. I take the vote: one third for; two thirds against.

'The recommendation is defeated; the plant will close.' I add, although I

had promised myself I would not, 'You can now join the dole queue. I hope you enjoy it.'

Then a shop stewards' meeting. Like a wake. Mick thanks the stewards. I make a statement resigning as deputy convenor. I explain this is not because we lost the vote but because I can't be part of implementing the closure agreement.

I was not resigning from the labour movement; on the contrary, I was more determined than ever to take up the fight in the TGWU on the question of the bloc vote and the deputy leadership.

Blame

In addition, the blame for this defeat lies with the past policies of our leadership and the consequent lack of confidence on the part of our members. I hoped I would be able to win many of the shop stewards and the shop floor to take up this fight before the plant closed.

I finish by thanking the shop stewards for their support. Applause, a vote of thanks.

Jean Rivers vehemently attacks the shop stewards who spoke against the recommendation at the mass meeting. At one point it looks as if she is going to physically attack him. Meeting closes.

Reports

All afternoon the press is on the phone. Repeatedly put the line that the union leadership must give a clear lead; that the membership is not to be blamed; that my resignation is on the principle of plant closure. Various reports.

In the Birmingham *Evening Mail*, it sounds as if I've said the fight in BL is over. On the local radio that I accused the membership of betraying me! A warning against making complex statements to the media.

Well, the diary has met an untimely end. They say only the young die good. I will write an assessment of the struggle before the end of our summer holidays.

In the meantime, I'm off to Ireland for some psycho-therapy from Dr Arthur Guinness.



Photo: PETE GRANT (Socialist Challenge)

Pat Hickey: 'not resigning from the labour movement — more determined than ever to take up the fight.'

Socialist Challenge

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DUNDEE: SC available from Dundee City Square outside Boots, Thur 4-5.30pm, Fri 4-5.30pm, Sat 11-4pm.
EDINBURGH: SC sold Thur 4.15-5.15pm Bus Station, St. Andrews Square and bottom of Waverly steps 4.30-5.30; Sat 11.30-2pm East End, Princes St. Also available from 1st May Books, or Better Books, Forrest Rd. More info on local activity from SC c/o Box 6, 1st May Bookshop, Candlemaker Row.
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BANGOR: Sat 10-12 town centre.
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BIRKENHEAD: SC on sale at Labour Club, Cleveland St, Thur nights; in precinct outside Littlewoods, Sat 11-12.
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BRADFORD: SC at Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.
BRISTOL: SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. More info Box 2, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpelier, Bristol 6.
BURNLEY: SC on sale every Sat morning 11.30-1pm St James St.
CHESTERFIELD: SC sold outside Boots, Marketplace, Sat 11.30am-12.30pm.
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LIVERPOOL: SC on sale from News from Nowhere, Whitechapel and Progressive Books, Berry St.
MANCHESTER: SC sold 11-1pm Sat at OLDHAM outside the Yorkshire Bank, High St; at BURY in the shopping precinct and at Metro Books; at BOLTON in the town centre; and in MANCHESTER outside the central reference library in St Peter's Square and at Grassroots and Percivals Bookshop. Tel: 061-236 4905 for further info.
NEWCASTLE: SC on sale every Sat 11-1pm outside Fenwicks. Also available at Days of Hope bookshop, Westgate Rd.
OLDHAM: SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local ac-

tivities. Tel. 061-682 5151.
OXFORD: SC sold Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.
SHEFFIELD: SC on sale Thursday, Pond St, 4.30-6pm; Saturday, Fargate 10.30-12.30pm.
STAFFORD: SC on Sale Market Sq Sat lunch-time.
STOCKPORT: SC sold every Saturday, 1pm, Mersey Way. Can be delivered weekly; phone 483 8909 (evening), 236 4905 (day).
SWINDON: SC on sale 11-1 every Sat, Regent St (Brunel Centre).
TEESSIDE: SC on sale Sat lunchtime in the Cleveland Centre, and in Newsfare, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, and outside Woolworths on Stockton High Street.
WOLVERHAMPTON: SC sales on Thur/Fri at Poly Students Union from noon-2pm and British Rail 4.30-6pm; and Saturday near Beatties, town centre from 11am-2pm.
YORK: on sale every Thursday, dole office Clifford Street, 9.30-11; University Vanburgh College 12-2; Saturday at Coney Street 11-1.

London

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

Bookshops

BANGOR: Rainbows, Hollyhead Road, Upper Bangor, Gwynedd.
BRADFORD: Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Sandgate.
BRIGHTON: The Public House, Little Preston St.
BIRMINGHAM: Other Bookshop, 137 Digbeth, Birmingham.
DURHAM: Durham City Co-op Bookshop, 85a New Elvet.
ILFORD: South Essex Bookshop, 335 Ley Street.
MILTON KEYNES: Oakleaf Books, 109 Church Street, Wolverton.
OXFORD: EOA Books, 34 Cowley Rd.
LIVERPOOL: News from Nowhere, 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool L1.
LONDON: Central Books, 37 Grays Inn Rd; Colletts, Charing Cross Rd, WC2; Paperback Books, Brixton and Charlotte St; Kilburn Bookshop, Kilburn, High Road, NW6; The Bookplace, Peckham High St, SE15; Books Plus, Lewisham; Balham Food Co-op; Housmans, 5 Caledonian Rd, N1; Compendium, Camden Town NW1; Owl, Kentish Town; New Beacon, Seven Sisters Rd, N4; Bookmarks, Seven Sisters Rd, N4; Centreprise, 126 Kingsland High St, E8; Dillons, QMC; Page One, E15; The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, N1; Reading Matters, Wood Green next to Sainsbury's.
YORK: Community Books, Walmgate.

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RATES for What's Left. 5p per word or £4 per col. incl. Deadline: noon Sat, prior to publication. Payment in advance. Phone 01-359 8180.
BOOKS for Southern Africa. Funds urgently needed — cheques, POs to Books for Southern Africa, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.
T-SHIRTS: 'Solidarnosc' symbol, red on white, 'Jobs not Bombs' red and black on white or yellow — all in small, medium and large. Women's symbol red on yellow, black on red, Fourth International symbol, red on white, red on yellow, black on red — medium and large. All above £2.99 incl. p&p. 'Fight racism' small only, red on white — only £1.50 incl. p&p. Orders to SCD T-Shirts PO Box 50, London N1. Cheques payable to 'The Week'. Bulk order prices on request.
BADGES: Make money for your organisation or branch. Huge reductions on anti-racist, Irish solidarity, women's badges and many more. Write for lists of incredibly low bulk rates — from as little as 5p. Free offers for large orders. Send to: SCD Badges, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.
SPARE BOOKS? Any books you don't want taking up valuable space on your bookshelves? Send them to The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, London N1 2XP.
LABOUR Committee on Ireland meeting, 'Labour and Ireland'. Fri 24 July 7.30pm. Manchester Town Hall, Conference Room. Speakers: Joan Maynard MP, plus local Labour councillors.
NATIONAL demonstration organised by National Committee on Ireland to support the demands of the H Block prisoners. Sat 18 July, 1.30pm All Saints, Oxford Rd, Manchester.

01-836 3028
accidental death of an anarchist
 Wyndham's Theatre
"a big hit" (Newsweek)

FILM show: 'Ireland Behind the Wire' and 'March on Washington'. Sun 12 July 7.30pm. London Film Makers Co-op Cinema, 42 Gloucester Ave, London NW1. Adm 75p (50p unwaged). Organised by Central London TOM.
VICTORY to the Hunger Strikers! Political Status Now! Mobilising meeting for National Demonstrations: Manchester 18 July; Leeds 29 July. Speakers: Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! others invited. Thurs 16 July, 7.30pm, North Library, Manor Gdns, London N7.
FILM and meeting: The British South African Nuclear connection Film: 'Follow the yellow cake road', Tue 21 July 8pm, Hackney Town Hall, Mare St, E8.

Socialist Challenge events

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE organisers' meeting postponed from 19 July to end Aug/beginning Sept. More details to follow.

IMG notices

WOMEN'S Liberation fraction now on Sun 19 July at Argyle St Community Centre.

NALGO fraction on Sat 1 August at national centre 11am-5pm.
CND national fraction Sun 26 July at Manchester centre.

Socialist Challenge News

We are the ten percenters

By Alan Freeman

ONE in every ten people in Britain is a revolutionary — and that's official! Two weeks ago the *Sunday Times* featured a survey made by the European Commission in which they asked whether Britain needed a revolutionary change. Ten percent replied 'yes'.

The European Commission was alarmed. They felt the government ought to do something about it. But what are you doing about it?

Staid 'parliamentarist' Britain — is wracked by revolt. One in every ten people in Britain is a potential reader of our paper: that means there's 5 million new readers out there waiting for the socialist message. Are you helping get it to them?

Manchester supporters organised a mass public sale in Moss Side last Saturday morning. They asked every Socialist Challenge seller in the district to be there. We should be out too, to spread the truth about the riots as widely as we can.

to reach out to it with public sales in which all our sellers participate: street sales, pub sales, estate sales and every other means of reaching the 'ten percenters'.

Over the summer we are offering our regular sellers extra papers at 10p a time to help them start new public sales. Extra copies on sale or return may also be ordered on request.

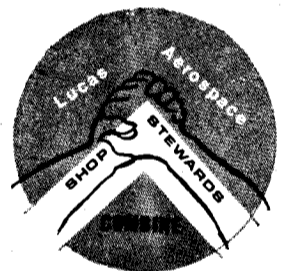
This summer is different. It is a turning point for the British working class. Be there! And be there with *Socialist Challenge*, to fight for your cause!

Popular

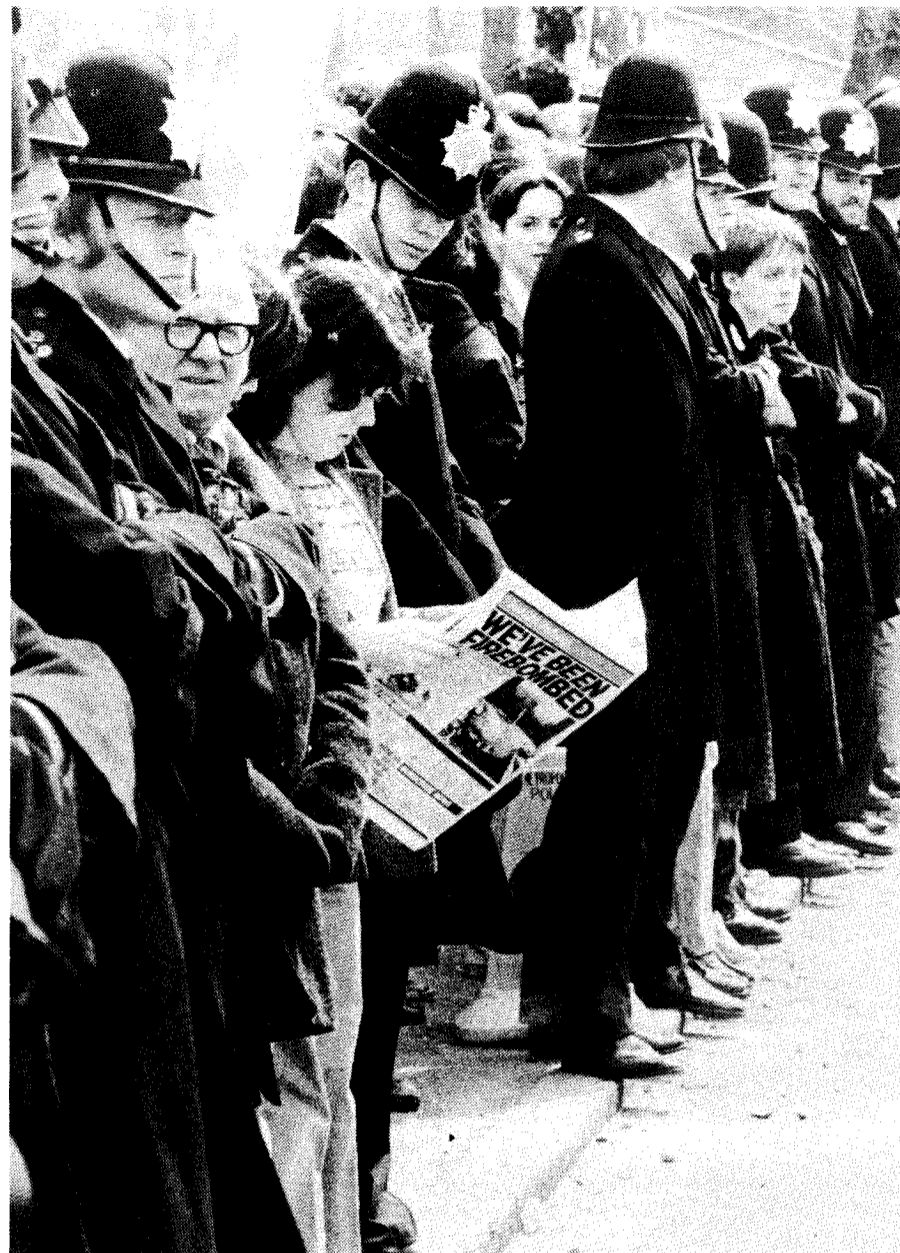
Birmingham's regular public sales on the 'ramp' outside New Street station have now reached seventy every week, and the branch has started regular pub sales in the south of the city and in Handsworth, as well as three new factory sales.

Many *Socialist Challenge* sellers have tended to concentrate in the past on selling to known 'political contacts' in their unions, Labour Party wards or campaign bodies. But to win such regular readers we have to make sure our paper is as widely known as possible, which means keeping it in the public eye.

There is an explosion of popular anti-Tory sentiment in the land. We want



LUCAS Aerospace badge in green & white. 20p each, bulk rates available. Write to: Lucas badge, PO Box 50 London N1 2XP.



Socialist Challenge breaks through the thin blue line

A SPECIAL APPEAL

In the past nine months you, our readers, have helped us to the tune of over £36,000. This support has been a source of tremendous strength and confidence for us.

But now we want to come back to you and ask for more, *quickly*: and for two very good reasons. This weekend our centre was firebombed. Two weeks before a member of staff in the bookshop was viciously attacked by fascists and her skull fractured.

This is the most serious and sustained attention we have ever received from the growing bands of right wing terrorists which the 'peaceful and civilised' British way of life has thrown up.

We urgently need money to strengthen our defences. We are embarking on a comprehensive programme of security. It's going to cost money — a lot of money. In today's Britain it's an unavoidable part of the struggle for socialism.

There's a second call we have for money. The riots have demonstrated in full public view that Thatcher, her government, and her criminal policies

should be finished off as quickly as possible. They open up a new period in British politics.

Socialist Challenge is out in the streets to meet Thatcher's challenge. We want to reach the youth with a socialist message, in the most direct possible way. We want to get out the truth about the riots, in the face of the barrage of media lies and hysteria that the Tory press barons have whipped up.

Fivers

This takes special measures. We want to organise speaking tours. We want to assist the youth paper *Revolution* to produce a special supplement.

This also takes cash: not cash for defence against fascists, but cash for a socialist offensive.

We hope the events of this week will make you think about your commitment to socialism. To cover our expenses we're going to need fivers and

tenners — but also fifties and hundreds. Have you got some cash stashed away for a rainy day. Well, the rainy day has come.

Are you saving for some luxury item — a hi-fi, or a new car? Well, defending our building against the fascists isn't a luxury: how about waiting a few months more for your hi-fi and give yourself the pleasure of wiping the grin off a fascist's face instead!

Have you just come into a small windfall — a tax rebate, or a backdated pay award? Perhaps you planned to use it to pay off all your debts? Isn't this a time when your debt to socialism should come first?

Our quarterly appeal has started well with £579.25. Our thanks this week to:

Camden	£74.00
OWL	16.00
Tower Hamlets	88.00
Wandsworth	112.00
Brighton	3.50
Huddersfield	17.00
Leeds	30.00
Manchester	35.75
Brent	189.50
Bolsover	13.00
Total	£579.25

Other Bookshop Appeal Fund

LAST weekend fascist hooligans attacked our bookshop for the second time in the last month.

On 20 June, Sheila Malone, who was working in the shop, received a fractured skull when skinheads attacked her. They left behind a recorded message threatening us and other socialists in the area with similar treatment in the future.

Last Saturday night, shortly before the Islington rally against fascist violence, a petrol bomb was thrown at our shop by skinhead fascists. Fortunately our night guards raised the alarm and no serious damage was caused.

This makes it all the more important that we raise substantial funds to reinforce the security of our bookshop and offices. With the collection made at the weekend rally in Islington the Bookshop Appeal Fund has now reached the £500 mark. The money is also intended to send Sheila Malone on a convalescent holiday.

We appeal to all our readers and supporters to dig into their own pockets and to raise funds within the labour movement for our appeal fund for Sheila and our bookshop security. Help us boost the fund to £750.

International

July issue now out!

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

Just 60p from your local Socialist Challenge seller. Socialist Challenge supporters place your orders now — bulk orders cash in advance 40p a copy.

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

Socialist Challenge Symposium

Marxism and Democracy

Wed 2 to Sun 6 September in London

Discussions, debates, forums on:

Britain, Central America, Ireland, Eastern Europe, art, cinema, music and literature

Book these dates now — 2 to 6 Sept!

Poland: party leaders counter attack

By Davy Jones

RIOTS in Poland over food prices was a short article on page 9 of Socialist Challenge on 10 July last year. One year later Poland is front page news throughout the world's press, as the Polish Communist Party meets for an emergency congress to assess the dramatic transformation of the country.

This week's Communist Party congress will disappoint those supporting the process of 'socialist renewal' in Poland. It is true that the party has undergone a massive purge. The 1,964 delegates have been elected by secret ballot for the first time and for 80 per cent of them it is their first national congress.

Almost two thirds of the outgoing party Central Committee members failed to be elected and will therefore lose their leadership position. Of the 49 new regional party secretaries only three held office at the time of the last congress in February 1980.

Abuse

Further, one tenth of the party's three million members have resigned since last August and 12,000 more have been found guilty of abuse of power or corruption. Such a shake-up of the party apparatus cannot help but have a major impact in a society where the reliability of the ruling party is crucial.

But an equally important statistic is the fate of the members of the party Politburo in recent elections for congress delegates. Only 4 out of 16 members failed to be elected. Even the unpopular 'hardliners' Grabski and Olszowski were elected after the personal intervention of party leader Kania.

The strategy of the Kania/Jaruzelski leadership team, which is reluctantly backed by the Soviet bureaucrats, is to concede reforms today, the better to co-opt Solidarity into the running of the country. That way they hope to claw back the gains made by the Polish workers in the past year. It is the most sophisticated strategy yet pursued by the Polish ruling bureaucrats after countless other failed projects.

Threat

They have tried stonewalling manoeuvres to



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Lech Walesa greets the crowd after signing last August's historic Gdansk agreement

avoid granting Solidarity's demands. For months after last August's Gdansk agreement they refused to legalise the registration of Solidarity as the umbrella independent union. The threat of a general strike forced its recognition in November.

The authorities bitterly opposed the registration of Rural Solidarity for the small farmers. After months of prevarication and industrial action by Solidarity recognition was finally granted in April.

The party leadership have tried to use the Catholic hierarchy to derail the workers' movement. Last August the late Cardinal Wyszynski appealed on television for an end to the strikes before the famous Gdansk agreement had been signed.

Martyrs

It was Catholic 'advisors' to the new independent union who inserted the 'leading role of the party' clause into Solidarity's statutes. The same people who turned last December's Gdansk mar-

tyrs' memorial rally into a religious ceremony, argue today for conciliation with the authorities.

Rebuff

The tactic of selective repression has also been tried against Solidarity. During last summer's massive strike wave many leading militants like Jacek Kuron and Jan Litynski were jailed. Last November two Solidarity members, Jan Narozniak and Piotr Sapelo, were arrested for publishing a secret document which outlined the government's plans for repressing the independent union. A general strike threat stopped the government in its tracks.

Perhaps the most serious rebuff for the repression tactic came in the Bydgoszcz affair this March. Party hardliners organised the beating up of local Solidarity activists in the northern town when party leader Kania and prime minister Jaruzelski were out of the country. Again the threat of a

general strike forced the government to back down and accede to the demands of the Bydgoszcz activists.

The last card of the Stalinist rulers is of course a Soviet invasion. It is now commonly accepted that a Soviet Politburo meeting last December only narrowly voted against such a move being proposed to the emergency Warsaw Pact summit of 5 December.

In April this year Soviet leader Brezhnev insisted that Polish party leaders had to 'roll back the events of the past months'. This message was repeated in last month's letter from the Soviet Central Committee to their Polish counterparts which argued that: 'The party must find within itself the forces to reverse the course of events.'

The Soviet leaders have so far ruled out a military solution for three main reasons. First, the human cost of the intervention, which would meet fierce resistance could be enormous. Secondly the consequences for Soviet relations with the West could

be catastrophic.

Finally this could lead to the Soviet Union being forced to take on the entire burden of the Polish economic crisis. This could cause economic difficulties throughout Eastern Europe — and it was price rises that brought about last summer's strike wave in Poland!

Without a Soviet invasion the best tactic for the Polish party leadership is to make concessions to the reformers. Already the anti-apparatus movement which held a conference of 500 delegates in Torun last April has been completely undercut.

Decline

Having tamed the party 'reformers' Kania and Jaruzelski now aim to win over a section of the leadership of Solidarity to a project of joint responsibility for dealing with the country's disastrous economic situation.

Not only is \$27 billion owed to other countries, but this year is likely to see

a staggering drop in national income by 15 per cent, to add to last year's 4 per cent drop, and a 2.3 per cent decline in 1979.

In recent weeks Walesa

and other 'moderates' within the union leadership have begun a crack-down within Solidarity against those critical of such a joint project with the government.

Several editors of local Solidarity newspapers have already been removed. This has led to the beginnings of political differentiation within Solidarity itself as it prepares for its own first national congress in August.

System

In the regional Solidarity conference in Lodz two 'tendencies' emerged in the debate. The 'independents' comprised 40 militants from different factories who presented a common programme. They beat the 'democrats' in the leadership elections.

The Polish bureaucrats and the Soviet leaders fear the process of political differentiation within Solidarity. They would love to turn back the clock to the old system of stifling bureaucratic rule and repression. Capitalism may have been overthrown in Poland but the system that has prevailed for the past 35 years has been a grotesque parody of socialism.

The significance of the heroic struggle of the Polish workers is that for the first time in Eastern Europe a serious struggle has opened up for an alternative both to capitalism and Stalinism.

Decades

The development of an alternative workers' power organised through Solidarity is the nearest thing to socialist democracy in Eastern Europe for decades.

The significance of this example to the workers of the world should not be underestimated, particularly in other Eastern European countries. It is our duty to ensure that this example continues to exist as long as possible through maximising solidarity with the Polish workers.

If Solidarity remains intact and uncorrupted for much longer the Polish party leaders' tactic of 'wearing down' Solidarity just might backfire. The workers throughout Eastern Europe may realise that Solidarity is not just a 'six month wonder', and decide to press for the same new democratic rights that have been achieved in Poland.

Photo: NEWSLINE

The workers' gains since last August's Gdansk agreement

1. Some ten million workers are organised in independent and self-governing trade unions under the umbrella of Solidarity. These unions not only have the legal right to strike but also the practical right to use it.
2. Two million small farmers are organised in an independent union, Rural Solidarity, and there has been a dramatic increase in investment in agriculture.
3. The Communist Party's monopoly of the press has been broken and Solidarity now has its own national and local papers. There is less censorship in the official press and a promise of greater access to economic information.
4. The five day working week has been won.
5. Greater academic freedom and less teaching of the Stalinist models of Marxism and history have been granted. An independent students union has been established.

US socialists' trial ends

By Tom Martin

The trial of the lawsuit brought by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) against the US government ended here on 25 June.

No one knew quite what to expect when the trial opened on 2 April. As Judge Thomas P Griesa commented, after nearly eight years in preparation it could have been little more than an 'elementary plodding through documents' proving the facts of forty years of spying and disruption by the FBI and other government agencies.

But the socialists' attorneys instead used the trial to expose the fundamental workings of the capitalist state. They forced out the way in which the powers of the president in 'national security' matters are used to ride roughshod over the constitutional guarantees which supposedly protect the right of dissent. Some of these issues, it turns out, have never before been ruled on by the courts.

The judge himself paid tribute to these efforts. In his final remarks he praised the lawyers for having 'sensed this issues with a depth and sophistication I really didn't dream of.'

Both sides now have to prepare written briefs summarising their arguments in the trial. The SWP and YSA must file theirs by 25 August; the government has three weeks to respond; and finally the socialists have a further ten days in which to rebut material in the government's brief.

The judge also indicated that he would then like to hear some oral argument from both sides. A likely date for this would be early October. Given the complexity of the issues, the judge's final opinions is therefore not expected much before the end of the year.

Even then, some or all of his rulings will almost certainly be appealed. And the government attorneys have already raised the further possibility of a motion to deny the whole case on the grounds that 'national security' prevented them from putting up a proper defence!



Washington demonstration a year ago — a warning to Reagan

Blacks under Reagan

'Ain't going to let him turn us around'

By Sophia Silj

FIVE days before Ronald Reagan was sworn in as the president of the United States a massive 100,000 blacks demonstrated in Washington, the centre of US government.

On one level, the demonstration was to commemorate the birthday of the assassinated civil rights leader Martin Luther King. But the largest demonstration of the black community in the United States since 1963 was much more than that.

The mood of the demonstrators can be seen from the speeches: 'The battle we face today is that of human need versus corporate profit,' declared William Tate, a New York carworkers' leader.

'Ain't going to let Ronald Reagan turn us around ... Ain't going to let the Ku Klux Klan turn us around,' vowed Jess Jackson, a leading member of the civil rights movement. 'We shall have our first class citizenship, or ...?', was the inscription on one of the banners.

The demonstration was a warning to the incoming Reagan administration, but, the warning has not been heeded. Many observers of the US scene are predicting a new upsurge of black militancy in the ghettos.

Subsidies

Vernon Jordan, a black leader who was recently the target of an assassination attempt, has said, 'There's an unusual amount of hysteria in the black communities.' It is not hard to understand why.

Take the example of the latest budget cuts announced by Reagan and his cohorts. Nearly two billion dollars have been sliced from the federal food stamp programme, which gives food subsidies for the very poor. Aid to families with dependent children, the most basic of all welfare programmes will be reduced by over a billion dollars.

Recipients who are unemployed will be forced to perform 'community work' in exchange for their welfare payments. Legal aid for the poor has been cut completely and housing subsidies will be cut by over a third.

On top of all that there will be huge reductions in financial benefits for the ill, the old and the very young.

The latter will be hit by a five billion cut in the subsidy given for school lunches.

It was hardly surprising then that when Reagan addressed the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, in Denver, two weeks ago, he received a cool reception. Explaining his right wing, racist philosophy Reagan said that the 'needy' have become 'too dependent on government', and he declared his intention to create 'free-enterprise zones' in the inner city areas.

After his speech the director of NAACP, Benjamin Hooks predicted that Reagan's policies will bring new 'hardship, havoc, despair, pain and suffering on blacks and other minorities'. Another black speaker complained, 'We held out hope, but he didn't give us anything. It's all been said before.'

Income

The most outlandish of Reagan's statements at the NAACP meeting was his claim that, 'We will not retreat on the nation's commitment to equal treatment of all citizens'.

A quick glance at the make-up of Reagan's own administration shows what a lie that is: of the 450 top jobs in Reagan's hand-picked government only 15 have gone to blacks.

That is a reflection of the US in general. The days of the promised 'great society' of US president Lyndon Johnson are long gone, if indeed they ever existed in the first place.

As far back as 1971, the percentage of black youth without a job broke through the 30 per cent ceiling and it has stayed there ever since. Today it is approaching 40 per cent. The average income of all black families in 1978 was \$10,880 compared to \$18,370 for whites, a gap which actually increased during the last decade.

There have been a few token advances. Black mayors have been elected in such cities as Washington, Los Angeles, Newark, Atlanta and New Orleans but only 1 per cent of all elective offices in the country are held by blacks compared to nearly 12 per cent of the population.

Even this minimal advance is now under threat for those elections which blacks have won have been due, in part, to the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which put millions of blacks on voting



rolls in the southern states and acted against racist gerrymandering.

Now, the new Republican chairperson of the US Senate Judiciary Committee, Strom Thurmond plans to scrap the Act when it comes up for renewal next year. Reagan is thought to be of the same mind.

Another reverse in the civil rights field has recently been recorded: an act of Congress, passed in 1968 and designed to outlaw discrimination in the selling of houses has been

notoriously weak, and an attempt to strengthen it failed in the Congress at the start of the year.

But it is mainstream economic issues that increasingly pre-occupy black leaders. This is not surprising. In every region of the US the ratio of black family earnings to those of whites are falling, and have done since the mid-1970s.

In the Northeast it has fallen from 71 per cent to 58, in the West from 77 per cent to 62, in the Midwest from 73

per cent to 63 and in the south from 57 per cent to 56.

Vernon Jordan of the National Urban League recently summed up the situation of blacks in the US: 'We expect 1981 to be a recession year, with all that implies for record high black unemployment and an already devastated black economy. Inflation is expected to remain high, squeezing the family budget of the majority of black people who are poor or moderate-income even harder.'

'Murderous attacks on black people in many cities continue to make headlines. The Klan, and similar racist groups, flourish in an atmosphere of revived anti-black feeling.'

Lobbying

The failure of blacks to realise the 'American dream' is partially because of the old black leadership who depended on polite lobbying and participation in the two main Democratic and Republican parties.

That tradition is now being challenged. Last year two new black organisations were formed — the National Black United Front and the National Black Independent Political Party.

The US socialist newspaper *Militant* has commented, 'Both these organisations are vanguard organisations in the black movement. They consciously reject many of the old tactics use by the traditional black leaders and openly proclaim the need for blacks to build a mass-based movement for full equality and self-determination.'

The 100,000 strong demonstration in January shows there is a growing mood in black areas in the US for such a frontal assault on Reaganism and for all that it stands for. It still needs organisation, it still needs direction, but the sentiment is there: 'We ain't going to let him turn us around.'

Spoils of patriotism

By Jenny Flintoft

THAT WEDDING is almost upon us. If anyone has any doubts about the ruling class's use of patriotism for its own ends a visit to *Germany, Pale Mother* would quickly dispel any illusions. This film by Helma Sanders-Brahms explores the complex relationship between patriotism and fascism in Nazi Germany, and its affects on the marriage of 'two nice people', Hans and Lene.

As we see the adoration which his party has for the Führer — his name used as a birthday greeting, his portrait considered the perfect finishing touch to a newlyweds' bedroom — it becomes clear how 'ordinary people' failed to protest at the forcible removal of their Jewish friends and neighbours.

rummages through the boxes in the empty shop for embroidery silks, her only emotion apparently an irritation at being unable to find the colour she wants.

Hans, like Lene, is not a Nazi. Called up at the outbreak of war, at first he weeps in horror at the shooting of 'enemies' whom he sees as people just like Lene and himself. Gradually, though, he becomes brutalised by the war, and the Nazi myth takes hold.

'We must fight on to victory, or glorious destruction!' he tells Lene when on leave in Berlin. But Lene, who has seen their home destroyed, and has walked to Berlin with little more than the clothes on her back, is not interested in glory — only in survival for herself and her child.

Criminals

The war ends. The wretchedness and disillusionment of a defeated na-



Germany, Pale Mother: explores the complex relationship between patriotism and fascism in Nazi Germany through two 'ordinary people', Hans and Lene.

tion, its leaders branded as war criminals and its glorious Nazi party as an extermination machine, are mirrored in the feelings of Hans and Lene. Lene's fight for survival has made her self-sufficient; painfully, she has carved out an identity for herself.

She finds it difficult to accept Hans' return and

impossible to accept the passive existence of a housewife. Hans becomes increasingly embittered as he sees ex-Nazis promoted over his head. Their relationship spirals downwards into ever-deepening hatred and despair.

There are unforgettable images: a Nazi ban-

ner, monstrously huge, crawling with flies; a young woman, head thrown back in defiance, facing death by firing squad on a sandy Normandy beach; Lene giving birth in agony while British planes rain down bombs around her; a child searching for his family among the rubble of

devastated Berlin ('How long have you been looking for them?' 'Six weeks'.).

Described as 'bleak' by several reviewers, this film is certainly very moving. At times, in fact, it is quite painful to watch. Nonetheless, I was glad I hadn't missed it.

Germany, Pale Mother is due to be screened at Unit One cinema in Hulme, near Manchester, from 2-9 August, and at the Ritzy in Brixton from 16-23 August. Ring Mainline Pictures (01-388 4761) for details of other future showings. (There is no 16mm print.)

Ordinary

The main focus of the film is on the changing relationship between Lene (superbly portrayed by Eva Mattes) and Hans (Ernst Jacobi), two 'ordinary people' as their daughter describes them.

Lene is perhaps typical of many people at the time. Nazism holds no illusions for her, but she will not take a stand against it. When her sister's school-friend is dragged away screaming in the middle of the night, she simply draws the curtain and returns impassively to bed.

When the proprietor of a local Jewish draper's is taken by the Gestapo, she

Down among the women

VIRAGO have published several interesting and moving accounts of the lives of working class women in Britain. The first two were written by feminists before the First World War and the third in the 1930s. **JENNY DAVENPORT** has reviewed them for **Socialist Challenge**.

'Maternity — Letters from Working Women' contains over 150 letters from working class members of the Women's Co-operative Guild, during the time it was organising a campaign for maternity benefit. These harrowing accounts of personal experiences were written as evidence for the Guild's case.

The letters show a horrifying picture — ignorance, no ante-natal care whatever, incompetent doctors and midwives, even for those who could afford such luxuries; miscarriages, stillbirths and sickly children resulting, the women felt, from their continuing heavy work throughout their pregnancies.

No wonder that many of the women seem to show a dread of sex, when what resulted was constant pregnancies and broken health. Many mention the use of 'drugs' (often very

the rest.

Accommodation is overcrowded, unhealthy and expensive. Child mortality is so high that burial insurance is a regular feature of most budgets.

Food for the whole family has to be bought out of seven or eight shillings a week, and the breadwinner must be provided

for first with whatever bits of meat and fish the family

budget will run to.

Often mother and children live on weak tea and slices of bread and marge.

'Working Class Wives' is another interesting reprint published by Virago. It is based on the results of a questionnaire compiled by the Women's Health Enquiry Committee and answered by 1250 working class women from all parts of Britain.

The study was undertaken in the middle of the 1930s, twenty years on from the earlier accounts, but the picture of women's lives which emerges is little different. As the book shows, where the family is poor, it is the wife and mother who suffers most.

Housing conditions are appalling — most families live in a couple of rooms — cramped, often airless and damp.

When husband or children are sick, the wife will care for them. They probably qualify for a doctor too through insurance schemes attached to the man's work. The wife though will neglect her own ill.

She is not entitled to any free medical aid except when she is pregnant or has recently given birth. She can't afford either to pay for a doctor or even to take to her bed and rest.

She just carries on untreated.

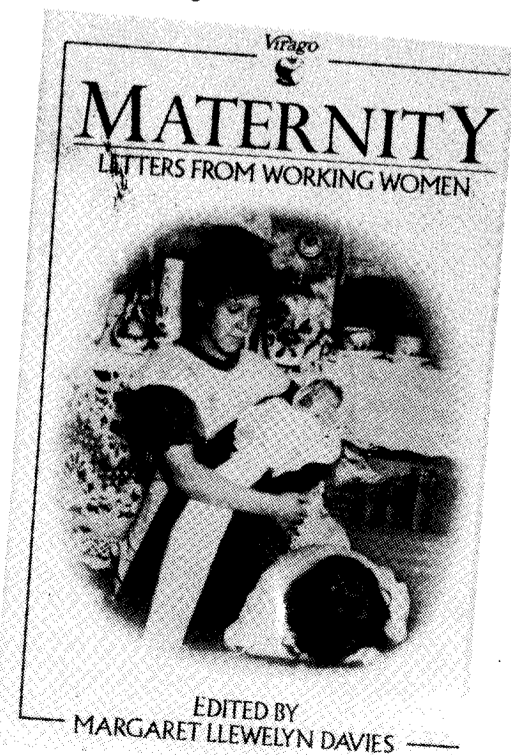
The women barely rest. Most work at least a sixteen hour day, looking after their many small children, and fighting a losing battle trying to keep their inadequate homes clean.

The conclusion of the book is to press for the kind of provisions and benefits which most of us have taken for granted since the birth of the welfare state: free medical care; family allowances; social services for children including free school milk;

decent housing at rents workers can afford.

Other suggestions they make are for adequate wages to be paid to all, and for mothers to have facilities to take holidays away from their homes and families every year. Thanks to Tory policies, their message is just as relevant now, forty-odd years later!

Maternity — Letters from Working Women — Edited by M Llewelyn Davies; Round About A Pound A Week — Edited by Maud Pember Reeves; Working Class Wives — by Margery Spring Rice



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