

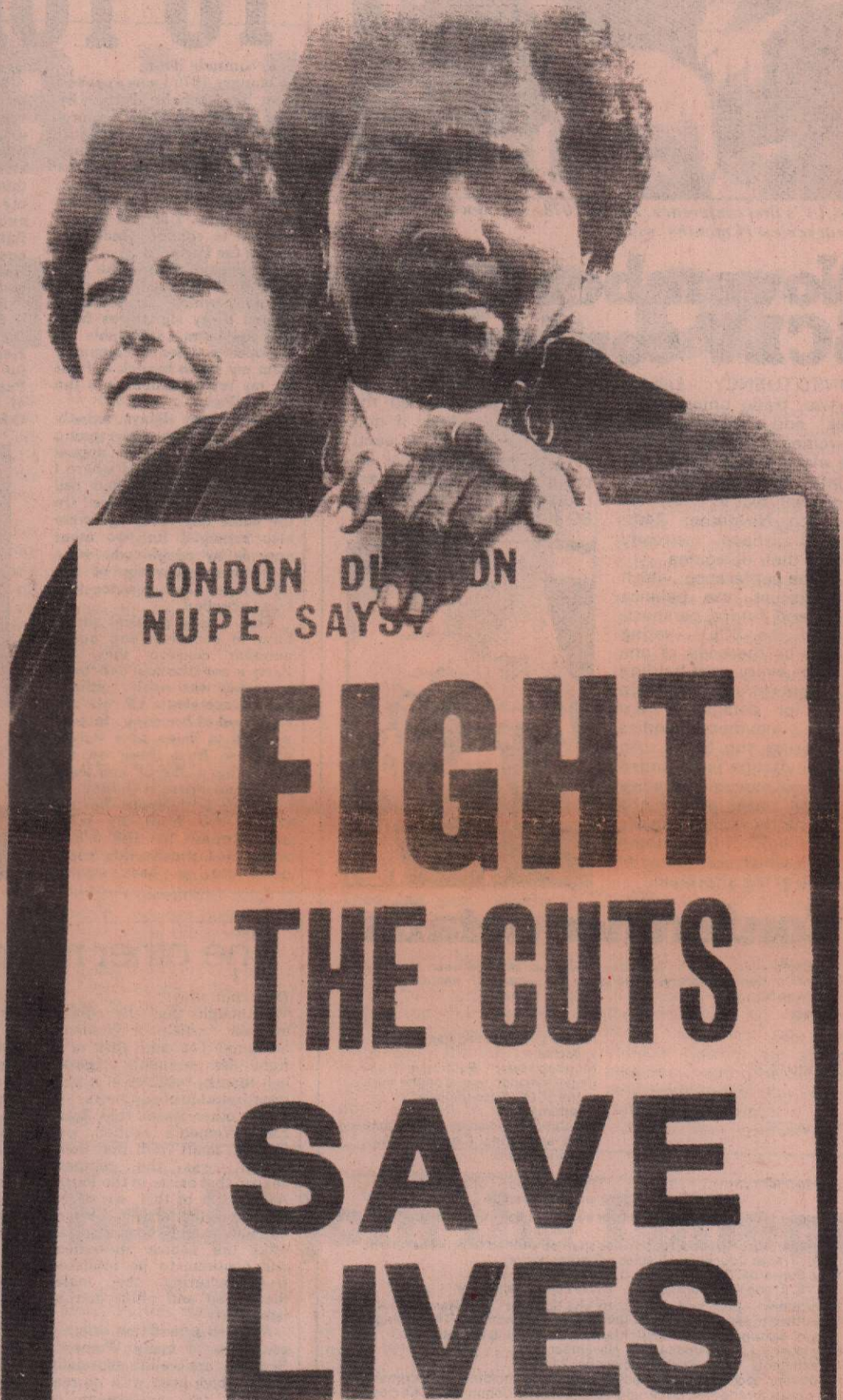
Socialist Organiser

No. 13 NOVEMBER 1979 15p

Paper of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory

Make the Tories back down

For the Tories, money spent on health, education and social services is wasted. For the working class, cuts mean wasted lives. The Tories and their system hold profit to be sacred while workers' lives and talents are expendable. So casualty units or whole hospitals close and trained doctors and nurses are sacked; schools are closed down and teachers and ancillary workers are sacked. Hardest hit are old people: they have already been exploited to the full and are no longer cost-effective. We're fighting to end this system that puts profits above lives. That's why we will be out on November 7th and 28th: marching not only against the cuts but against the whole profit system.



LONDON D... ON
NUPE SAYS

**FIGHT
THE CUTS
SAVE
LIVES**

**Support Lambeth's fight
March against the cuts, Nov. 7th & 28th**

**AXE PROFITS
NOT PEOPLE**

Inside: Labour after Brighton

Nov. 11th: Support Zimbabwe

ON SUNDAY November 11th the Zimbabwe Emergency Campaign Committee is calling a demonstration in support of the Zimbabwean liberation struggle, and in opposition to the possible decision of the Tory government to lift sanctions in the following week.

The demonstration comes at a critical stage in the Lancaster House talks over the future of Zimbabwe. The Patriotic Front has conceded a whole range of issues. They have accepted a racist constitution which reserves 20 of the 100 Parliamentary seats for whites. They have conceded that compensation will be guaranteed for expropriated land, and pensions will be promised to the racists who have been propping up the Smith regime, even if they leave the country.

In the so-called Bill of Rights, the 'Right to Life' clause gives a licence to kill in defence of private property, and a clause not unlike Britain's 'sus' laws makes the threat to commit a crime an offence in itself.

The Patriotic Front has regarded discussion of the transitional phase as more important than the constitution, and hopes to recover ground with a more favourable settlement than it achieved on the constitution.

Undoubtedly, the question of who controls the army, police force, judiciary and civil service is crucial, particularly during the election period, yet even on this the Patriotic Front puts forward weak demands, accepting the British Governor, and calling for an international 'peacekeeping' force. Britain so far refuses to bend.

Whatever solution is reached will be a compromise to protect essential imperialist interests in Southern Africa. The lifting of nominal sanctions will not have a dramatic effect in giving Rhodesia international recognition.

The demonstration, which also marks the 14th anniversary of UDI and the 4th anniversary of Angola's Independence, starts at 1.30 at Speakers' Corner and will march to a rally in Trafalgar Square.



SCLV's first conference, in July 1978. The new conference will review 16 months' work.

November 24th: SCLV conference

CONSTITUENCY Labour Parties, trade union branches and other labour movement organisations are electing delegates this month for the Socialist Organiser/SCLV conference on November 24th. Several have already chosen their delegates.

At the conference, which will discuss the balance sheet and future perspectives of the SCLV, voting will be on the basis of one vote for every card-holding SO supporter, and multiple votes for delegates from labour movement bodies sponsoring the SCLV. An open invitation is extended for labour movement bodies to send observers to the SCLV conference and to the rally in support of Lambeth Council which will follow at the end of the afternoon.

Check that your CLP or union branch has had the conference mailing; if not, contact us to get it sent. And contact your local SO group to make sure you are registered as a card-holding SO supporter.



Conference details

The Conference will be on Saturday, November 24th, between 10am and 2.30pm, at Central Library, 68 Holloway Rd, London N7 nearest tube. Holloway Rd

Agenda:

- 10 to 10.15 Registration of delegates and supporters
- 10.15 to 12.30 Morning session. Political and Organisational reports on the work of the SCLV. Resolutions and amendments.
- 1.15 to 2.30 Resolutions and amendments continued, and voting. Election of new Editorial Board.
- 3.00 to 5.00 Rally in support of Lambeth Council's fightback.

Voting: • Each Socialist Organiser supporter shall be entitled to one vote.

• Delegates from sponsoring bodies shall be entitled to votes as follows: CLPs, Trades Councils — 5 votes per organisation, Shop Stewards' Committees — 3 votes per organisation, LP, YS, Trade Union branches — 2 votes per organisation.

Resolutions: Each delegating body and Socialist Organiser group will be entitled to submit one resolution and one amendment. The closing date for sending these to the Conference Organising Secretary is: Resolutions Wednesday, November 14th, Amendments Friday, November 23rd.

In addition, each delegating body and group can nominate a maximum of five names for the new Editorial Board/Steering Committee. The closing date for nominations is Friday, November 23rd.

Conference Organising Secretary: John Bloxam, SCLV, c/o Hackney North Labour Rooms, 5 Stamford Hill, London N16.

Letters

AN OPEN LETTER TO TONY BENN

Dear comrade Benn, In January 1979 I was expelled from the Labour Party. By only 37 votes to 35 the General Committee of Oxford constituency decided that because of my support for the policies put forward by Socialist Press, paper of the Workers' Socialist League, I should not be allowed to continue membership of the Party.

I appealed against the decision and, on the basis of a petition which immediately gained thirty signatures from GC members, was able to organise a defence campaign from my union branch to fight for my reinstatement into the Labour Party.

After many delays, mostly caused by the intervening General Election, an appeal hearing was arranged where I could put my case and call witnesses in my defence. On the same day, hearings were also arranged for two other appeals by people who were refused membership of the LP for the same reasons that I was expelled.

That it is a political witch-hunt of socialists and not a genuine concern that the Party's constitution had been breached was richly confirmed: not one single LP rule was I accused of breaking. Instead we had to listen to a torrent of abuse from those on the right wing of the LP and trade union movement in Oxford.

I was a delegate on the Oxford GC from my trade union branch [ACTSS 6/833] which had consistently supported me, as have several

wards in the constituency.

The appeals are to come up before the NEC in the very near future, where it would seem to be an opportune time for the NEC to take a stand against witchhunts of this nature by recommending my re-instatement, and defending the right of those who fight for socialist policies against the anti-working class policies practised by the last Labour government.

It was while fighting for a resolution which called for the removal of the Callaghan-Healy leadership and calling for an Emergency Labour Party Conference in the event of an election last autumn, that the accusations began

to fly.

In one of the meetings you addressed at Brighton, you said, "I don't want to chase anyone out of the Labour Party. I want to bring them in, bring in their knowledge, their analysis, their dedication". And in another you said it was not "entryism" you feared, but "exitism" from the Labour Party.

If socialists are allowed to be kicked out of the Labour Party with the NEC's approval, then the constitutional reforms which were introduced at this year's conference will not be worth the paper they are written on.

Yours fraternally, Ted Heslin



Tony Benn says all left-wingers should come into the Labour Party. Will he support left-wingers who have been expelled?

The other reasons for women's sections

Dear comrades, We thought that the editing of our article, 'Women's Sections: Tea and chat or a fight for women's rights', last month, resulted in a misinterpretation of our views.

The other reason that Brent East Women's Section was formed, apart from that mentioned, was the rampant sexism that exists in the Party. As a result of this, we stated in our original article, "Women who would have a lot to offer the Labour movement will continue to be inhibited from entering the male-dominated and often patronising party".

We also agreed that existing criticisms of many Women's Sections are valid, especially those which exist with no real base in the mainstream of the Party, and that the task facing us was to build the

Women's Sections into a fighting working class women's movement, based in the Labour Party, but linked to the women's movement and Trade Union women's caucuses.

Furthermore, and we quote, 'Whilst sexual oppression exists in the labour movement, it is obvious that women are not equally represented in any way. For the most part, their role is one of supporting their partners in the home and canvassing for them in the elections. Those women that are active are predominantly single, childless or mothers of grown-up children'. The importance of creches and baby-sitting rotas would be to enable women with young children not only to attend political meetings, but also to lead active social lives.

We feel that our aim should be to use the Women's Sections as a means of raising our consciousness and to recognise our oppression as women.

Women's Sections, if used effectively, would enable us to reach working class women in the home, something which the Labour Party has so far failed to do.

We felt the need to write expressing our views and adding what we consider to be important political questions omitted from the printed article.

Yours comradely, Angela Shariff Merle Amory

All the points mentioned in this letter were kept in the article, except the emphasis on consciousness raising. EB

What's On

FRIDAY 9TH NOVEMBER. London Workers' Action meeting: Trotskyism and Nicaragua Speaker: John O'Mahony. 8pm General Picton, Caledonian Rd/Wharfedale Rd, Kings Cross.

SUNDAY 11TH NOVEMBER Victory to the freedom fighters in Zimbabwe. Demonstration called by Zimbabwe Emergency Coordinating Committee. 1.30 pm, Speakers Corner.

SUNDAY 24TH NOVEMBER SCLV Conference.

SUNDAY 25TH NOVEMBER. Demonstration against the 1971 Immigration Act and against new Tory immigration and nationality proposals. 12 noon from Speakers Corner. Organised by Campaign against Racist Laws.

WED. 28TH NOVEMBER. Demonstration against the cuts, called by the South Yorkshire Trades Councils and the Labour Party NEC.

WHAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR

- ★ No more wage curbs! No more strike-breaking by Labour! Wage rises should at the very least keep up with price increases. The same should go for state benefits, grants and pensions.
- ★ Start improving the social services rather than cutting them. Stop cutting jobs in the public sector.
- ★ End unemployment. Cut hours not jobs — share the work with no loss of pay. Start now with a 35-hour week and an end to overtime.
- ★ All firms threatening closure should be nationalised under workers' control.
- ★ Make the bosses pay, not the working class! Millions for hospitals, not a penny for 'defence'! Nationalise the banks and financial institutions without compensation. End the interest burden on council housing and other public services.
- ★ Freeze rents and rates.
- ★ Scrap all immigration controls. Race is not a problem; racism is. The labour movement must mobilise to drive the fascists off the streets.
- ★ Purge racists from positions in the labour movement. Organise full support for black self-defence.
- ★ The capitalist police are an enemy for the working class. Support all demands to weaken them as the bosses' striking force: dissolution of special squads (SPG, Special Branch, MI5, etc.), public accountability, etc.

- ★ Free abortion and contraception on demand. Women's equal right to work, and full equality for women.
- ★ The Irish people — as a whole — should have the right to determine their own future. Get the British troops out now! Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Political status for Irish republican prisoners as a matter of urgency.
- ★ The black working people of South Africa and Zimbabwe should get full support from the British labour movement for their strikes, struggles, and armed combat against the white supremacist regimes. South African goods and services should be blacked.
- ★ It is essential to achieve the fullest democracy in the labour movement. Automatic re-selection of MPs during each parliament, and the election by annual conference of party leaders. Annual election of all trade union officials, who should be paid the average for the trade.
- ★ The chaos, waste, human suffering and misery of capitalism now — in Britain and throughout the world — show the urgent need to establish rational, democratic, human control over the economy, to make the decisive sectors of industry social property, under workers' control.
- ★ The strength of the labour movement lies in the rank and file. Our perspective must be working class action to raze the capitalist system down to its foundations, and to put a working class socialist system in its place — rather than having our representatives run the system and waiting for the crumbs from the table of the bankers and bosses.

Chartist

Bi-Monthly of the Socialist Charter. Nov/Dec issue includes: Marxist theory of the state; Politics and the Media; Analysis of Modern Music Trends; Socialist-Feminist challenge to the Left; Alternative Economic Strategy; Ireland: Ten Years on; plus reviews and letters. 32 pages for 40p plus 15p p&p, from 60 Loughborough Road, London SW9.

12 pages. 15p.

WORKERS' ACTION

Revolutionary socialist weekly. Now includes magazine section. Single copies 23p inc. postage, or sub. rates on request, from PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

HAVING LOST at the Party Conference over mandatory reselection and the question of who writes the Party Manifesto, the right wing are preparing to counter-attack. As we go to press, the Parliamentary Labour Party is meeting, and Callaghan will try to get a resolution through putting pressure on the National Executive Committee to think again about the composition of the inquiry into the functioning of the Party set up on the suggestion of a number of trade union leaders.

At the Parliamentary Labour Party meeting, Norman Buchan is proposing an amendment to Callaghan's arm-twisting resolution, noting that the executive decision on the composition of the inquiry means that it will

have five general secretaries of affiliated unions, five National Executive Committee members, the treasurer of the Party, the vice-chairman, and the leader and deputy leader of the Parliamentary Party. It also notes that far from the nonsense line that MPs are being ignored, there are eight MPs out of the 14 members of the inquiry, five of them former ministers.

The inquiry could become the focus of a power struggle inside the Party. SOCIALIST ORGANISER asked REG RACE (MP for Wood Green) and JO RICHARDSON (MP for Barking) what they thought of what the right wing was doing, and what they thought the policy issues were that the left should concentrate on.



After Brighton - two Labour Parties or one



REG RACE, MP for Wood Green

THE RIGHT-WING is trying to get a confrontation between the Parliamentary Labour Party and the National Executive Committee. At the meeting later this week, there will be a resolution from the Shadow Cabinet criticising the NEC and pressing for substantial representation on the enquiry.

One thing we should watch is moves by the right wing to change the composition of the NEC. That might be their tack. They will try to break the left's grip by altering the rules for electing the NEC.

We're told that the resolution was passed unanimously by the Shadow Cabinet, but I don't think that's true. The Tribune members (Silkin, Booth and Orme), didn't necessarily agree.

At the PLP meeting there will be two amendments, one from Norman Buchan and one from the Manifesto Group. The Manifesto Group's position is that if the NEC doesn't accept a heftier representation from the PLP, then the PLP should not cooperate with the enquiry. This is going to be the right wing's major tack: they are going to try to use the PLP as a means of attacking the left in the party, as it is only the PLP that has a right wing majority.

This is in line with the threat from the NUR and APEX that they will pay the political levy in future direct to the PLP. They will remain affiliated but will cease to relate to the national Party.

What the left should do is call their bluff. We should say that if they want to split the Party, then they should come right out in the open and say which of them is going to stand by the PLP and which is going to stand

by the Party based on the unions. I think they'll back down if we charge them bluntly with trying to split the Party — after all, they're the one that are always on about unity.

So long as the inquiry is in operation, the left must make sure that it gets proper evidence before it. It must also press the issue of the election of the Party leader, so that we can win that issue at next year's conference.

As far as the real policy issues are concerned, top of the list must come economic policy, Heseltine made mincemeat of Hattersley in the Commons the other day. Of course what Hattersley is now saying is nothing like what he was saying when Labour was in power. Linked with that are questions like public expenditure and, of course, incomes policy. This winter again the question of the public sector wage claims is going to be very important.

There needs to be a clear fight for a statutory minimum wage, for a planned economy and for public ownership to control the activities of the monopolies. That's what the left must push for.



JO RICHARDSON, MP for Barking

I think the right-wing have gone mad. There's nothing they can formally do about the enquiry and the conference decisions, not now. They can pass resolutions, but... Well, there's nothing they can do to stop the enquiry, but they can boycott it.

The resolution that will go before the PLP may win a majority to urge the NEC to think again. Rumour is that a boycott is what the right-wing is planning if the NEC don't cave in to their demands. I don't know what they

are trying to achieve. They can go before the inquiry, they can give what evidence they like, they can talk their hind legs off. But they shouldn't have any special place. I hope the rest of the movement will judge the matter correctly.

Some PLP members might be tempted to set up the PLP as a separate party. But the overwhelming majority of unions will continue to pay their money to the Party that matters, that is the national Party.

The CLPs should now be calling on their MPs to give an account of themselves, to say exactly where they stand on the threatened split, and to say how they voted in the PLP meeting.

The amendment proposed by Norman Buchan is a very good initiative. It isn't a Tribune group move. Norman Buchan and Chris Price drew it up and we only met as a group afterwards, but the Tribune group supports the initiative. Of course, three members of the Shadow Cabinet are group members, and I would be very surprised if they went along without demur.

Apart from the internal

issues, I think that one of our priorities should be defence. We've not said a word about second generation nuclear weapons. What appeared in the Manifesto was a trimming version, but now with the Tories planning a second generation of Polaris submarines, we need to evolve a really detailed and firm policy on defence.

Employment, industry, education — these are all important areas. And, of course, there is the EEC issue: if Britain doesn't get her way on payments, we ought to say as a Party that we, Britain that is, should get out.



Callaghan wants the PLP to be the 'real' party

Why leftists should join the Labour party

TONY BENN has made an appeal to the left to join the Labour Party. *Socialist Organiser* endorses that appeal and we make our own special call to left wingers active in the unions, anti-racist campaigns, and the fight against Corrie, to join with us in building a firm class struggle left wing in the Labour Party.

To the comrades who reply "It is futile trying to change the Labour Party", we would point to the democratic reforms passed at the Brighton conference. With the battle opening up now to defend and extend those reforms, the left outside the Labour Party should no longer stand on the sidelines. And the left inside the party would be ill-advised to turn its back on the socialists who have yet to join the fight.

The right wing rests on the power of its connections with the ruling class, with Fleet Street and with the trade union bosses. The left must build up its strength amongst rank and file party members and supporters, union members and activists in local campaigns. This means turning local parties outwards to draw in new

militant working class recruits.

As the fight against the Tories gathers pace this can be done. Thousands of militant workers who are loyal Labour supporters but cynical about the Labour Party, open to revolutionary ideas but doubtful about the small revolutionary left organisations, can be drawn into political struggle. Inward looking election machines can be transformed.



The active role that many Labour Parties have already played in the fight against the cuts shows what can be done. Their power of mobilisation (remember the great demonstration called by NUPE and the Labour NEC in November 1976) shows why it should be done.

Labour links at every level with the trade unions give party militants the chance of unifying working class struggles in their economic and political forms. Labour's position in local government and Parliament give party members a unique opportunity of calling to account those placed in such positions who refuse to defend working class interests and of replacing them with those who are prepared to do so.

Over the next year the right wing will make major efforts to swing trade union block votes against Labour Party democracy. Just as they will attempt to block any real fight against the Tories. Already the democracy issue has become explosive enough in the AUEW for the right wing to shut down the union conference rather than allow it to vote for the democratic

reforms. All currents of the left will join the fight on this issue in the trade unions. Why not also join the fight in the Constituency Labour Parties, through trade union delegacies and through individual membership?

Many on the left believe that working in the Labour Party means being satisfied with victories on paper, and focusing on elections and resolution-mongering rather than on working class action. It need not, any more than work in the trade unions need be narrow trade-unionism.

By organising a firm left-wing based on class struggle politics and activity, we are cutting across that sort of passive Labour leftism. But militants who abstain from the fight within the Labour Party are leaving the field wide open to passive Labour leftism. They are also encouraging another sort of political passivity — passive acceptance of the existing political structures of the British labour movement as unchangeable, passive self-confinement to trade union activity.

Work in the Labour Party need not silence

criticism of the Labour leadership — it can give it more bite. It would not cut across existing valuable work in the factories, in the trade unions, and in special campaigns. On the contrary, it would help to give that work a political focus.

Some comrades counterpose the industrial struggle, as the 'real fight', to the battles inside the Labour Party. It is true that the struggle at the point of production is fundamental. But for Marxists the most important gain from industrial struggles is not so much the immediate benefits in wages and conditions as the advances made in working class organisation: trade union organisation but also political organisation.

Direct recruitment from industrial battles into the revolutionary Marxist tendencies is necessarily very limited. Recruitment from industrial battles into the fight against the right wing in the Labour Party can be immensely broader.

Moreover, socialism cannot win through industrial battles without the corresponding political leadership. The fight for political leadership — which must be

a fight against the existing leadership, within the existing movement wherever possible, and not some effort to build 'our own' new labour movement — is central.

There are tremendous opportunities if the left gets organised. The left must get organised. It must fight to defend and extend the Brighton decisions.

The internal battle in the Labour Party can only have real meaning — and the left can only draw in real forces — if the battle is closely linked to the struggle outside. The left must fight for a policy in line with the needs of the class struggle: against the cuts, for nationalisation without compensation; against unemployment, for work-sharing without loss of pay and workers' control; for wage rises keeping ahead of inflation; against Britain's military occupation of Ireland; against immigration controls and racism.

That is the sort of policy the SCLV puts forward — the sort of policy we believe the left must rally round to face up to the battle for control in the Labour Party unleashed by the Brighton conference decisions.

Hackney Labour takes stand against Zionism

ONE OF THE most scandalous features of Labour Party policy is its support for Zionism. Indeed the Poale Zion organisation — a 'left' Zionist outfit — is affiliated to the Labour Party.

Left MP's — like Ian Mikardo — are often more pro-Zionist than the right wing. Certainly the left is no friend of the Palestinians. So Hackney North and Stoke Newington GMC's pro-Palestinian stance is an important initiative. Given the fact that there is a very high Jewish vote in the area, it is also a courageous stand.

By a narrow majority, the GMC passed a resolution that "This Party declares its opposition to the Zionist state of Israel and fully supports the struggle of the Palestinian

people for the liberation of their homeland and the establishment of a non-sectarian, secular society in Palestine which will accommodate all the people presently living in the area on an equal basis."

This has provoked a strong reaction, both on the part of some Labour activists and within the community and the Party aggregate has been Labour Zionist representatives, a speaker from the anti Zionist Middle East Research and Action Group and a representative of the PLO.

Suspended for telling the truth

125 MANCHESTER COUNCIL Housing Department members of NALGO struck last week when the departmental Branch Secretary John Taylor was suspended for leaking a council document to a branch secretary in NUPE.

The document contained

details of proposed changes in the grades of NUPE members and was accepted in good faith by the NUPE branch committee. At first the housing bosses denied the existence of the document but then decided to suspend John Taylor.

Information on housing department decisions has appeared in the "New Manchester Review" and in tenants' newsletters and the housing bosses hoped to kill two birds with one stone by stopping the leaks and witchhunting union reps.

NALGO pickets were set up at all housing department offices and NUPE members refused to cross them. On Friday 19th October 200 NALGO and NUPE members marched through Manchester demanding removal of the suspension and an enquiry into the housing department by the local Labour Council. At present members' handwriting is being examined to trace the source of the leaks.

John Smith, Chairman of the Housing Committee, agreed to set up an enquiry.

Out of this action a Joint Shop Stewards' Committee

has been set up. The principle of unity in the face of bosses' action has now been established although in February NALGO members crossed NUPE picket lines.

The JSSC should demand from the City Labour Party a condemnation of the housing bosses' action and the right to make known decisions which affect tenants' and their own members' interests.

JOHN DOUGLAS

Purge in NUPE

NUPE's Scottish National Officer, Ron Curran, has ruled that two militant shop stewards in the Edinburgh South Hospitals Branch are barred from union office — indefinitely. The excuse is that they collected money for unofficial strike funds in the winter strikes. The real reason is that the branch's militancy was a headache for NUPE bureaucrats throughout the strike campaign.

Edinburgh Trades Council and the NUPE NHS Area Committee have been told that

the two stewards, Mick Napier and Paul McLean, cannot serve as delegates. But the stewards have full backing from their branch. When Paul McLean offered his resignation as branch treasurer, it was refused.

The NUPE Health Service National Committee is due to discuss the matter on November 7th. Concerned NUPE members should get the fact sheet which Mick Napier and Paul McLean have produced (*), and send in resolutions of protest to the NUPE executive.

* c/o Paul McLean, Portering Dept., Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh.

No HQ for Nazis!

A PUBLIC enquiry into the National Front HQ takes place in Hackney Town Hall on Dec. 4th-7th. This enquiry marks the end of a period in which the campaign against the Front HQ has suffered a decline, and Hackney Borough Council must shoulder a fair amount of the responsibility. Despite the fact that there

have been three racist murders; an election campaign in which the HQ was used as a base for their leading Nazi candidates; and a 15,000-strong petition calling for the removal of the HQ, the Council has steadfastly refused to mount a political campaign, and has resorted to legalistic interpretations of statutory planning policy.

Nevertheless, a campaign, led by the Trades Council and supported by local anti-racist groups, has been launched to build resistance to the Front, and to point out that the NF HQ is not a local legal problem, but a national political one. There should be no NF HQ anywhere!

PHIL EDWARDS (Chair, Hackney ANL)

DEMONSTRATE: Monday 3rd December, 7pm Shore-ditch Church.

PICKET the enquiry. Tuesday 4th December, 9am Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street.

by NIK BARSTOW

ALL THE factories and schools, the hospital and 5,000 of the 6,000 houses were destroyed in the town of Esteli during Nicaragua's civil war in June and July. In that war, workers and peasants took on the Somoza dictatorship's heavily armed National Guard — and won.

In response to the uprisings in the cities and towns, Somoza ordered National Guard planes and artillery to raze to the ground whole areas. But a massive irregular army formed itself alongside the Sandinista guerrillas to seize arms from the National Guard and to launch an all-out attack on Somoza's power.

Somoza fled the country, leaving his elite army to crumble and collapse. The Sandinista guerrillas and the militias were the only armed power. On July 20th the Sandinistas marched into the Nicaraguan capital, Managua, to be greeted by a crowd of over 100,000.

But the new government installed by the Sandinistas in July is dominated by bourgeois figures. The ruling 5-person junta includes a businessman, a leading academic, and the widow of a newspaper owner who was a member of one of the country's leading banking families. Only one member

NICARAGUA: TRYING TO STOP THE REVOLUTION

of the junta, Daniel Ortega, is a member of the Sandinista movement, which led the fighting against the overthrown dictatorship.

The ministers appointed by the government are also predominantly bourgeois.

The economic minister is a former secretary general of the Central American Common Market. The one appointment which did cause some consternation among US politicians was veteran 'Castroite' guerrilla leader Tomas Borge's, as Interior Minister.

The government in its first days carried out a series of long-promised radical measures — formally dissolving the National Guard,

nationalising all the property of the Somoza family and their immediate supporters (which amounted to 1/3 of industry and 40% of the land), and nationalising the banks. Some socialists took this as evidence that the new Nicaraguan regime was firmly on the Cuban road.

But so far at least, the revolution has stopped there. The USA and other countries have been taking the opportunity of the devastation of the country to use aid as a weapon to insist on policies suitable to their interests. And the Sandinistas, it seems, are trying to put real power into the hands of the government rather than the irregular militias.

In September plans were announced to form a regular army — an elite force only 5,000 strong — and to disarm local militias and 'Sandinista Defence Committees'. In an interview on October 25th, Tomas Borge said that the Sandinista's Defence Committees had "overstepped their powers". The powers they had assumed were only temporary and would be handed over to 'regular authorities' "as soon as practically possible".

But the explosion of militancy which formed the committees will not be easily dissipated. The creation of armed brigades of workers and peasants has a logic which goes far beyond simply forming a more demo-

cratic or less bloodthirsty and grasping government than that of the Somoza family — its logic is to do away with exploitation and imperialist domination altogether.

Even Borge, the most apparently radical member of the administration, has found it hard to persuade the armed brigades to accept their demobilisation. In mid-October he had to go to Masaya, where the people suffered much of the brunt of the fighting against Somoza, to negotiate with 500 local militiamen who refused to be disarmed.

Three other leading military figures had tried to persuade the militiamen in the Masaya barracks to hand

over their weapons, and failed. Borge had to approach the barracks with guns trained on him to make a conciliatory speech.

As the new Nicaraguan government's plans become further advanced, conciliatory speeches will not smooth over the growing rift between the class militancy of those who fought to overthrow the Somoza dictatorship, and the conservative plans of those who head the government.

The Nicaraguan workers need to set their sights on smashing capitalism and establishing the power of workers' councils. And they need a leadership that really fights for those aims.



WE CURSE THE PRESS. NOW LET'S CHANGE IT

by DENIS McSHANE [former president of the NUJ]

THIS YEAR'S TUC Congress, in the midst of its many pieties, at least found space for a major debate on the Press. It has always been curious that although trade union leaders, and rank and file and socialist activists have perpetually attacked the power of the mass media, there has been very little serious political thought given to how relationships both with the media and inside the media might be changed.

This year it was different. Several major unions had tabled long, seriously thought-out resolutions, demanding, in effect, that the TUC and the labour movement take up the issues of what kind of press we

have, who owns it, who controls it, and how measures can be introduced to make the press more diverse, more accessible, and above all more democratically accountable.

A spell-binding 8 minutes worth of rhetoric from NUPE's Alan Fisher is probably what remains in most delegates' minds. All of NUPE's anger and anguish about the disgraceful misreporting of the public sector workers' strike poured out of Fisher. The press having spat him full in the eye, he clearly felt that he was entitled to return the compliment.

Along with other members of the NUJ Delegation I applauded Fisher. The NUJ itself, in pursuit of its closed shop policy or better race reporting, has suffered from dishonest and unfair reporting too. But there was a problem with Fisher's

speech: nowhere in it did he offer the slightest hint about how things could be put right.

You can look back through the reports of TUC and Labour Party conferences for the last fifty years, and they will be studded with speeches in the Fisher tradition. But search for concrete suggestions about how the press can be changed for the better and you search in vain.

The Campaign for Press Freedom has been launched to try and change this lack of a practical programme for altering the press we currently have.

It is a broad-based labour movement campaign and the steering committee has deliberately gone out to garner support from the right and left of the Labour Party, moderate and militant trade union leaders and a wide body of journalists, academics and the rest of the 'great

and good' in the radical community.

A test of the wide-ranging concern inside the Labour Party is that both Tony Benn and Roy Hattersley have become sponsors, as have ACTT's Alan Sapper and NALGO's Geoffrey Drain.

The aims of the Campaign for Press Freedom are simple and straightforward: to challenge the myth that only private ownership of the press guarantees its freedom; to carry out research into other forms of ownership and to encourage the creation of alternative newspapers including a Labour newspaper; to encourage industrial democracy; to follow up the Minority Report of the Royal Commission on the Press; to campaign for a reformed and reconstituted Press Council; to seek the abolition of the Official Secrets Act and the introduction of a Freedom of Information

Bill.

Its launch meeting at the TUC was attended by a staggering 450 people, by far the largest attendance at a fringe meeting in the TUC's history and a measure of concern about the abuse of press power that now exists in the trade union movement.

However, one meeting, no matter how successful, does not constitute a campaign. The Campaign for Press Freedom needs to build up a broad base of membership, especially among rank and file workers in the media. Secondly it needs to engage the support of and commitment of activists in the labour movement as a whole. The question of what kind of media we should have should be a major issue on the agendas of Labour and trade union meetings, from branches to national conferences, over the next two or three years.

The Campaign for Press Freedom is deliberately not offering a pre-packaged blueprint for revolutionary change or reforming improvement.

As its first pamphlet, "Towards Press Freedom", notes in the introduction: "Inevitably one attaches different degrees of emphasis or importance to various points in the statement of aims. No single proposal presents the entire answer, but the implementation of any one of them would be a step in the direction of extending press freedom."

Campaign for Press Freedom 274/288 London Road, Hadleigh, Essex. SS7 2DE. Pamphlet "Towards Press Freedom", 30p and 10p post. Individual membership £3. Union branches, political parties, pressure groups etc. may also affiliate on a group basis.

Socialist Organiser

Paper of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory

NEIL TURNER,
Lambeth Councillor

“If ordinary people don't go out and support the council, we've no hope of forcing the government to change its policy. That's why November 7th is important.”

November 7th is important to Lambeth council's employees too. That's why vast numbers of them who wouldn't normally take action will be on the march.

The role rank and file Labour Party members played in making Lambeth take a stand should be remembered. If the rank and file hadn't started the campaign, then the council would just be making gestures and making cuts now.

What is essential after the demonstration is that there is a recall conference of the four Lambeth Labour Parties. The battle hasn't been won yet, even inside Lambeth. The real crunch will come after the rate support grant is announced for next year.

The Lambeth Labour Parties should present a united front to the Labour Group on the policies they want against cuts: to stop the councillors being able to use division among the rank and file to make a decision themselves.

I hope that other boroughs will take similar stands. This will give mutual support between councillors and the rank and file.

CHRIS SUTTON,
Secretary, Lambeth TU Council

“We fully support the action being taken by Lambeth Council in calling this march against the cuts imposed by this Tory government. We will resist a massive rate rise next year and fight for a greater degree of consultation with the community from the Council in fighting the government. November 7th will be a huge display of solidarity and resistance to the Tories. Tory cuts have already made the next phase of the Inner City Partnership a non-starter for Lambeth with many carefully prepared projects being shelved due to the axing of Department of Environment funds.”

JOHN ESTERSON,
General Secretary,
Lambeth NUT

“Lambeth Teachers Association has called on all its members to come out on Nov. 7th and join the march.”

Teachers don't see education as a special case. We are opposed to all cuts — health, housing, services for the young, aged, handicapped — so when we see a local council refusing to accept cuts and calling on Trade Unionists to join its protest march, we of course respond to that call.

We have called a public meeting on Oct 31st, “Save our Lambeth schools”, and have invited speakers from NUPE, NUSS, Lambeth Fightback and a local

parent. It is the start of our campaign to oppose cuts in Lambeth.

Given that ILEA leader Sir Ashley Bramall has threatened to resign unless he gets a 5% cut, he'll fight hard for cuts in London schools, cuts which will have a disastrous effect.

After November 7th, Lambeth Council must make a decision not to make the people of Lambeth pay for the cuts through a rate increase. It must make positive links with other areas in the country, so that a national campaign is built.

Only then will the Tory government be defeated.

JEREMY CORBYN,
NUPE official

“NUPE has circulated all its shop stewards and branch secretaries in London, about 3000 in all, to support the march on Nov. 7th. Members taking strike action for the day will receive full backing from the union.”

We expect to take the same action on a national level for Nov. 28th.

We view the November 7th march as a very important event and Alan Fisher will be speaking at the rally after the march.

Make the Tories back down

LAMBETH
MARCH AGAINST THE CUTS
WEDNESDAY 7 NOVEMBER

12 noon	Clapham Common Rally and Demonstration
1 p.m.	March via Clapham Park Road and Acre Lane to GLC/ILEA at County Hall St Thomas' Hospital
	Disperse in Lambeth Palace Road.
4.30 p.m.	TUC Rally, Westminster Central Hall

Join the big demo!

Printed and published by London Borough of Lambeth.

AXE PROFITS NOT PEOPLE

Support Lambeth's fight
March against the cuts, Nov. 7th & 28th

the area. Even before the demonstration was decided on we had an anti-cuts committee, held street meetings, and delivered leaflets all round the council estates in the area. We've recruited 300 new Labour Party members since we started.

BILL BOWRING,
Lambeth Councillor

NORWOOD LABOUR PARTY will be distributing thousands of leaflets explaining the socialist answer to the cuts on the November 7th march.

“This November 7th march has shown the great determination of all people to defend the services which are rightly theirs and to protect those people who need these services.”

The message has gone out loud and clear to the Tory government: **WE WILL RESIST EVERY CUT.** We will never give in to those who hold power and wealth and seek to keep their positions at the expense of everyone else.

The task of leading this fight has so far fallen to the Labour councillors and Health Authority members with the support of our friends in the community and the public sector unions.

LAMBETH COUNCIL has said NO to doing the Tories' dirty work for them.

ALL LABOUR COUNCILS SHOULD BE FORCED TO ADOPT THESE POSITIONS:

1. While being a councillor includes being a 'manager for the government locally — the other half of the job is to represent the wishes of local people and this has always been true.

2. That any attempt to boost private industry by cutting our public services is unacceptable.

3. Labour councils will not cut services when the Tories cut off the cash.

We believe that an increase in the rates, to offset these proposed cuts, is also a 'cut' in the wages of ordinary people in Lambeth and elsewhere. Norwood Labour Party is expecting a fight within Lambeth Council after the demonstration over the rates issue.

We must convince socialist councillors that the system of local government must be changed. The Tories naturally expect Labour authorities to raise the rates and not impose cuts. They will be trying the real squeeze next April when the crunch comes. The Tories will say: Cut services or no cash.

The Lambeth Fightback campaign is calling for a mass opposition to the cuts, but still lacks a political response to the Tories' challenge.

We are for mass opposition too, but we want to go beyond just one demonstration against the cuts. Labour can no longer just manage the system. We must break it by mass campaigning, with a political challenge to the Tories' system.

Since a conference of the local Labour Parties in July pushed the Labour group into deciding to reverse the Council's original decision to implement the Tory cuts, Lambeth has become a central focus of the anti-cuts battle.

Lambeth's no-cuts stand [unlike some wealthier councils' similar policy] means rapid confrontation with the Tories. And, also unlike other councils, Lambeth is organising for mass action. November 7's march will be the start of a long fight!

SYLVIA
INGERSON
Lambeth Councillor

“Lambeth has taken a stand ahead of other councils. If we can show them the support we'll get, they will take action too. It's important that we do get the support of other councils, and that we can show them they're not alone if they say 'no cuts'.”

This winter we've got to get home to the Tories the fact that councils will not make these cuts. We've got to make this stand clear before next year's rates are decided — and the unions will pay an important part in that.

In Lambeth all the Town Hall Unions are coming out on November 7th and they've done the organising for the march, fixing stewards, speakers etc. They're 100% with the council.

Local tenants' associations and community groups are supporting the march too. We don't know yet what the turnout will be but Ted Knight met representatives from 400 local groups last week and they gave terrific support to the council's stand.

Our local Labour Party in Norwood has done a lot in



A council which fought the Fair Rent Act faces the cuts

Bedwas and Machen Council, like Clay Cross, refused to implement the Housing Finance Act and had a commissioner sent in. Now its successor [after local government reorganisation], Rhymney Valley District Council, is discussing whether to implement the cuts the Tory government is demanding. SO interviewed Council Chairman Ron Davies.

The Tory government has said it expects local authorities to cut their spending this year by 3%. What does this mean for Rhymney Valley District Council?

■ RVDC's budget for 1979/80 is about £16¼ million. 45% goes on wages and salaries, 43% on loan charges and 12% on other goods and services. To comply with 3% cuts we will need to cut about £500,000 this year.

Where would cuts fall?

■ As you can see 2/5ths of the expenditure is interest and capital repayments. I don't think we will be allowed to cut them by 3%, in fact they may increase if interest rates increase. The Tories have made it quite clear that they expect us to cut staff to pay for the cuts, and as you can see there isn't much else to cut!

The sort of cuts we would have to make would be to reduce overtime, not fill vacancies, increase the charges for various services such as meals on wheels, Sports Centres, increase rents, reduce road cleaning and dustbin emptying.

Has RVDC frozen recruitment or is it filling vacancies as they arise?

■ We are examining and filling vacancies as they arise. The council's services obviously change with time, so a post falling vacant may mean that the work is reorganised and it is not in fact filled. But there is no freeze on recruitment.

Will Rhymney Valley Council implement the cuts?

■ The council has not yet met to decide on this, because we don't know the govern-

ment's decision on Rate Support Grant or what is happening to interest charges. When these are known we will decide. However a 3% cut in expenditure will mean unacceptable cuts being made — even if we wanted to make cuts in the first place, which we don't.

If you don't make cuts, how will you pay for the services?

■ This year we can defer the capital programme by rephasing developments. But this is only possible for a short time. In the long run this is not possible and anyway it will lead to a rundown in the Valley economy.

"Two-fifths of the expenditure is on interest and capital repayments"

What will the effects on the Valley economy be?

■ The Council is the major employer in the area, both directly and indirectly — through its employment of contractors on Council works and through its Industrial Development policy. So defending capital expenditure will lead to a rundown in the planning and development staff in the

council and actors employ RVDC does Direct Work Department b its work is s scattered up Valley, but th will suffer. M ustry in the scale and to dependent on ort and expen

So, in your year the only increase the

■ Yes.

How big an increase be?

■ About 30% will be needed. I don't know whether details policy, for ex much of the they will mee already said t it all.

Surely these will affect the work are asking more for n service.

■ Yes — but try and main expenditure a which would

A STRATEGY TO WIN

We must go out to take on the Tories

ALEX WOOD is secretary of Lothian Regional Labour Party, and will be a candidate in next year's district elections in Edinburgh

How did Lothian Regional Council come to take a 'no cuts' position?

■ The Regional Labour Group on the Council met in the autumn with the officers of the Regional Labour Party and decided on a no cuts policy for this financial year. At a Regional Labour Party meeting held about two weeks after that, the position was endorsed and a resolution was passed overwhelmingly supporting a no cuts policy.

The question now is, can we make the Council maintain this position beyond the end of the current financial year? The Regional Labour Party has already forced the Regional Labour Group to accept party policy on a com-

pletely different issue, that of transportation (putting the emphasis on public transport rather than roads in Edinburgh and the surrounding area), so on that issue we have set a precedent.

I think that if the Regional Party takes a firm commitment to a no cuts position beyond the end of this financial year, then certainly the Group on the council would feel bound to accept that policy.

How do you see a campaign being built?

■ I think the first priority for such a campaign is a cast iron commitment from the Labour councillors on the four district councils and the regional council against the cuts. I think that it's impossible for us to remain credible in the eyes of the unions, tenants' association, or any other working class organisation faced with cuts, unless we can show them quite clearly that our own local representatives are going to carry out the policy we are proposing.

Unfortunately, at this point in time, the East Lothian district Labour group

have accepted certain cuts in the housing rehabilitation programme, and the Lothian Regional Labour Group (on the only other Council we control) have not given solid commitment beyond the current financial year.

So we have to make sure that we control our own councillors. If the District Labour Party, which meets next week to discuss its position on the cuts, takes a similar position to the Regional party, and if that is paralleled throughout the region, then we have to make sure that our councillors carry out Labour Party policy in the Council chambers.

"We must make sure our councillors carry out Labour Party policy in the Council Chambers"

Support for the council and a united anti-cuts campaign has to start off in the branch Labour parties and the trade union movement in the area. We also have to win support from the tenants' groups and other groups threatened by the cuts; school students, parents and working class folk who use the facilities provided by the Local Authority, for example the laundries, which will be closed if the Tory cuts in the District are carried out.

There has been talk of raising the rates.

■ I believe that Local Authorities under the control of Labour must put forward a position of no cuts, no rate or rent rises, and this must be stated from the outset. If that leads to conflict with the Tory government or even the suspension of a Local Authority, then so much the easier for us to bring out clearly who the real criminals are: first of all the Tory government itself, then, perhaps more important, the financial interests behind the Tory government who wish to see money transferred from public expenditure to further subsidise big business.

Politically, we have to defend the social wage of working people — our schools, laundries, libraries, and transport facilities, etc. — and it must be seen clearly that our alternative is not an increase in the rates or the rents at a District Council level, thereby cutting the

LOTHIAN REGIONAL COUNCIL recently became the first local authority in Scotland to follow the example of Lambeth and refuse to make cuts in the current financial year. An anti-cuts demonstration on September 22nd, organised by Edinburgh District Labour Party, won the sponsorship of the Scottish TUC and attracted 700 marchers. The regional Labour group has decided to send an official message of support to Lambeth's November 7th demonstration.

Now the local Trades Council has called a conference against the cuts for November 3rd. But there is the danger of disunity, with the District Labour Party

actual money in working people's pockets. Otherwise it will be seen as a Tweedledum or Tweedledee situation.

I think we have to recognise that a no cuts position which includes a policy of no rate and rent rises will lead to a sharp confrontation with the Tory government. We have to bring that point out quite clearly, because otherwise it is impossible for ordinary folk to see that this is not just a battle over how Local Authorities are run in the abstract, but it is a battle between Labour Local Authorities defending working class living standards and big business and financial interests attempting to put into their own pockets cash which should be used for defending and extending public services.

Far from being afraid of that battle, I think Labour councillors ought to welcome the opportunity to join with other sections of the organised labour movement, particularly the trade union movement, in opposing in practical terms the policies of the Tory government. Our

aim has to be stated categorically: to bring down the Tory government.

We have to look forward to a period in which confrontation between the unions and the Tories, between Local Authorities and the Tories, and between whole sections of the working class and the Tories, will lead to a situation where the Tory government is completely incapable of governing.

"A position of no rate rises must be stated from the outset"

Our campaign then has to be for the election of a Labour government based on a socialist programme, one which would, first of all, wipe out the interest debts owed by local authorities. Edinburgh District Council paid back £22¼ million in the current financial year in loan charges alone. Unless these interest charges can be wiped out, by taking into public ownership the major financial institutions in this

country, then there's no way that Local Authorities can avoid cuts in the long term.

So the strategy has to be to develop an alliance between the unions and the Labour Party at a local and national level on the basis of a fighting programme to defeat the Tory government.

What liaison has there been with other Regions in Scotland?

■ The Scottish Council of the Labour Party has been asked by us to coordinate the fight against the cuts in Scotland. Unfortunately we've already seen Strathclyde cutting its budget in reply to the Tory government's threats. What is needed is a statement from all Labour councillors in Scotland that they will not carry out the wishes of the Tories.

Another aspect of this is to ensure that the District Labour Parties go into the local District elections next May with a firm no cuts policy. That really is crucial, because we can expect to take a whole series of Local Authorities back into Labour control, and if we're going to do that in any honest fashion we'll have to launch the campaign against the cuts at a Scottish-wide level.

"These interest charges must be wiped out, by taking the major finance institutions into public ownership"

We must make it clear to working folk in Scotland that when next May comes, they're not just casting a token vote, but they're casting a vote for the Labour Party on the basis that it'll fight to defend working class interests.

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W L O S A I N



WILLIE is a Lothian Councillor

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able than making the cuts.

□ What are you doing to oppose the cuts?

■ Firstly, we have protested strongly through the local authority associations. Secondly we are organising a conference locally involving the County Council (Gwent and Mid Glamorgan), the other District Councils, the Labour Party and the Welsh TUC and local Trade Unions to develop a strategy of opposition. Thirdly the Council Labour Group is producing a leaflet to go to all houses in the area outlining its policy of opposition and the effect of the cuts.

"In the end we will have to face the consequences of non-implementation"

□ In other areas there have been conflicts between the local Councils and their parties and with the local unions.

■ The local parties and the Trade Unions have been kept informed of what is going on, and we will not make any unilateral decisions.

□ What do you think will happen?

■ In the end we will have to face the consequences of non-implementation. Mid Glamorgan have said they will not implement the cuts, but they have large reserves and hope to pay from them. This can only be a short term solution.

"The only answer is to increase the rates. If we don't, the council will go bust"

Prior to reorganisation we opposed the Housing Finance Act and had a Commissioner sent in, so I am not opposed to non-implementation in principle — but if we don't raise rates the Council will go bust. The officers will have to oppose this and seek the advice of the District Auditor, who will demand cuts, or we will be surcharged and debarred from public office. With no cash we will not be able to pay our employees and the services will collapse.

I think it is unlikely we will see many Clay Crosses this time because the Government has played it differently leaving Councils without central funds to decide what to do and where to cut.



Clay Cross fought higher rents. Labour councils now face the same choice as then: to act as the blade of the Tory axe, or to take on the government

Trades Council each setting up its own anti-committee.

ist Organiser supporters have been arguing for a united campaign, drawing in delegates from unions and the Labour Parties as well as associations and other local groups. Equally important is a clear strategy to combat the Tory offensive. We asked Alex Wood, Secretary of the Regional Labour Party, and Willie Roe, a recently elected regional councillor who stood on a no cuts platform, to discuss how they saw the campaign developing.

WHY LOTHIAN SAID 'NO CUTS'



DE is
Regional

explain why
Council has
no cuts?

■ Ever since the Labour group got hold of Lothian, it's had a general policy of trying to improve services as much as possible. The standards in Lothian Region are as high as anywhere in Scotland but that's not to say that expenditure is what it should be. What we're seeing now is, almost at a stroke, the slashing back of services to the levels they were at before or much lower. For that fundamental reason the group has decided to take the strongest possible stance against the cuts.

There are areas of extreme deprivation within Lothian, and the council has a key role in maintaining services while action by the government and big business is undermining them. We see the stance of Lothian Regional Council as one way that the

labour movement can stand up to Government cuts.

We've taken a very clear position: there will be no cuts despite what government limitations may be applied.

□ Can you say how much



support there is within the Labour Group for the position of no cuts?

■ At the moment there's unanimous support within the Labour group for no cuts in spending in the current financial year and that's been reiterated at a recent meeting of the group. That's an easy stance to take though, because the money has already been rated for. We've got the money to continue services at the present level for the rest of the year and in any case there's only five months of the year left to go — by delaying and delaying it's possible to avoid making cuts in the current year.

"10% cuts would mean ... ending all school meals ... closing schools at 1pm ... ending all free transport"

So there's unanimity about no cuts in the current year. But when you raise the question about what the council's stance will be next year, then I think that it's obvious that there are certain members of the council who will not go very far in resisting Government instructions. How the balance will work out in the group it's a wee bit early to say. Some are prepared to defy the Government the whole way along the line, others are likely to back down in a situation where they might be threatened with government action: new legislation restricting rate increases, for example, or threats of surcharge or accusations of wasting public money.

So I think there is quite a struggle yet to come within the Labour group.

□ How can a campaign be built so that when the crunch comes next year there will be support behind the Council?

■ We have just got a report from the council officials about what the effects of 2½%, 5%, and 10% cuts would be. We're also going through the budget to work out our own projections of what a cut of 10% would mean for the services in the region.

The purpose of this is to take up a campaign through the labour movement, the trade unions, the schools, the tenants' associations, and the communities, to let people realise exactly what it is that the Government is asking us to do.

We can let people see that in a small primary school it would mean three teachers being cut. Overall a 10% cut would mean the ending of all school meals and reducing the school day from 9 to 4 to something like 8 to 1pm.

10% off transport would mean the ending of all free public transport.

As far as I'm concerned, the campaign has to be taken right out of the council, right out of the Party, through the movement to the public. The only way that this is going to be effective is if the Party and the labour movement are galvanised into making it very clear what the effect of cuts will be for working people. It's easy to think that a 10% cut could be made and only the frills would go. But even if a 2½% cut was made, it would not be frills. Any cuts mean no school meals, no books, redundancies, major cuts in social services.

"Links have to be developed through the Trades Council — union branch meetings — and factory gate meetings"

Unless we can make it a mass campaign now, it'll fizzle out when the crunch comes. We haven't much time. In the middle of November the Secretary of State will be announcing the rate support grant for next year. That will go through Parliament in the middle of January.

□ What about links with the public sector unions?

■ As soon as you get down to discussing the im-

port of the cuts, it's instantly obvious that the interests of the public sector unions, of the Council, and of the users of the services are exactly the same. The potential for united work here is clear, and I hope that even in cases where there have been disputes between the Council as employer and the unions in the public sector, these disputes can be set to one side so that the bigger issue can really be worked on.

Links with unions in the industrial sector have to be developed through the Trades Council, and through councillors going and speaking to union branch meetings and factory gate meetings. The Labour Group has



decided to have a meeting right away with the unions to develop this campaign.

□ Socialist Organiser supporters have been calling for a broad-based cuts committee to be set up by Lothian Regional Council, involving unions, Labour Party wards and GMCs, councillors, local tenants groups, community groups, and so on.

■ The campaign will only succeed if it is able to involve groups which are not formally part of the labour movement. The Regional Labour Party is in a strong position to launch a well-coordinated mass campaign. It must look outwards. That's the key to success.

□ Has the question of rate rises come up for discussion in the Labour Group?

■ There are several positions in the Labour Group.

Some Labour councillors are happy to raise the rates to compensate for the cuts. This would mean a rise of 30% to maintain present levels of services. Some are in favour of raising the rates to the amount they would

have been for next year anyway, but with no extra to compensate for the cuts. Others say no rate rises at all.

"A rate rise would undermine the campaign against the cuts. We must resist the cuts altogether, not find ways of robbing Peter to pay Paul"

The reality is this: if the group takes a decision to increase the rates to meet the cuts, then that represents a major undermining of the

campaign against the cuts. Having decided that, it would be very difficult to mobilise people against the cuts.

I think our stance must be one of resisting the cuts altogether, and not finding ways of robbing Peter to pay Paul.

This position of no rate rises is going to mean that in the first week of April, when the new financial year begins, the council will not have enough cash in its coffers to pay all its employees for the month of April. At that point it is essential that the Labour group and the unions in the public sector are united in their opposition to the cuts.

If the initial argument of whether to raise the rates or not is won, and the rates are not increased, then the major confrontation with the Government will happen in the first week of April. This must not be a confrontation between the Labour councillors on the one hand and the public sector unions on the other. If it is, then our campaign is pointless, and everyone will lose out.

WHAT WE THINK

THE OCTOBER Labour Councillor supplement to Labour Weekly gives the official Transport House line on fighting the cuts. "There is certainly some scope for resistance. Precisely how much remains to be seen."

At Conference, a vague anti-cuts resolution was passed in preference to a much more definite motion calling for councils to defy cuts and for no rate and rent increases. Labour Councillor quotes the motion that was

carried and says, with unconscious self-mockery, "Its precise meaning... will require careful thought and much imagination..."

BLUR

Make some show of resistance — but not too much. That's the message. And working class action against the Tories does not get mentioned once.

The carefully measured

ambiguities are designed to blur over one fact: either we fight the Tories, force them to retreat or throw them out — or services will be cut.

No amount of side-stepping, or passive 'explaining the case for public spending' will get round that fact. The cuts battle will not be won or lost by cosy chats between councillors and Ministers, or even fierce arguments.

Mass action on the streets and in the workplaces is needed. Councils must be

prepared to defy the government and organise workers and tenants in their areas to beat back Tory intervention.

AXE

Rate rises — a favoured method of side-stepping the cuts — undermine the campaign. If a council blandly passes on the cost of cuts (at least in large part) to working class tenants and householders, then it can't expect

much enthusiasm when it calls for support. Moreover, absorbing the cuts by rate rises would mean increases of 50% or even 100% every year in some boroughs — no one thinks that is a real perspective.

No resistance to the cuts can succeed within the Tory options. We have to challenge those options. Millions for hospitals, not a penny for 'defence'! Axe profits, not people! End the interest charge burden which takes

over a third of many councils' income. Nationalise the banks and finance houses without compensation.

CUTS

The November 7th demonstration is a vital first step in fighting the cuts through mass action. And mass action is the only way a real campaign against the cuts will be built.

Another AHA says 'No Cuts'

AT ITS meeting on October 24th, the Ealing, Hammer-smith and Hounslow Area Health Authority voted against the bulk of a cuts package designed to save £3½ million, voting only for items considered to be genuine economies, rather than cuts in patient services, to the tune of approximately £350,000.

These 'economies' are of course cuts which will affect staff and services, as well as involving the loss of NHS property. On top of this, the AHA voted to balance its budget by 1981, although this would only be possible by making the cuts which they substantially rejected.

Despite the contradiction and confusion surrounding these decisions, the AHA has nevertheless taken a stand against some cuts that would have seriously damaged patient services. It remains to be seen whether the government suspends it and appoints commissioners, or gives them a further deadline to make cuts. Their action, however, certainly breaks the isolation of the Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark AHA in its stand against health cuts, and it opens the way for similar moves by other AHAs.

A sustained campaign against health cuts in the area over the last few years — including the 14 month long occupation of Hounslow Hospital — was undoubtedly a factor in moving the AHA. We must now build on this important advance to face the battles that lie ahead.

PETE ROWLANDS
(secretary, Hounslow Trades Council)

NOTTS

THE TORY controlled County Council in Nottinghamshire has voted for cuts. But local unions are mounting a strong fightback.

There were 1500 trade unionists, students and nursery parents outside County Hall on October 16th when the Council took its decision on cuts. The previous month a crowd of 100 — nursery children, parents and NUPE members — had invaded a Council Social Services Committee to protest.

A local cuts conference will be held on Saturday November 17th and a Lambeth councillor will be invited to speak.

Yes, these cuts will kill

Socialist Organiser talked to DEREK PRENTICE, one of the 'sacked' members of the Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark Area Health Authority.

"WE'VE GOT confidential minutes which prove that what we said was right. All the cuts that we predicted — in kidney dialysis, heart pacemakers, liver units, open heart surgery — the Commissioners are implementing all these cuts."

"The Commissioners are doing exactly what the Government said wouldn't be done. They are stopping operations, closing hospitals, and closing wards."

"The doctors said that people would die. And that's going to happen too."

Since the Area Health Authority members were booted out by Tory Minister Patrick Jenkin for refusing to make cuts, and replaced by Commissioners, one hospital [St. John's] has been shut, and two others are due for closure. The cuts hit hardest at the very young and the old — at neonatal and geriatric facilities.

The confidential minutes showing how "the Commissioners are doing their hatchet job", will be published by the sacked AHA members at a press conference to be called to coincide with their High Court case.

"We were granted leave to proceed in the High Court on Monday (29th). We're challenging the Minister on the grounds that he was acting illegally in suspending us. The Department of Health and Social Security asked for time to prepare

their evidence, and the case will come up some time in December."

The heart of the fight against the health cuts is, however, in the communities, not in the High Court. A conference is coming up on November 10th. "I hope to see a united front once again", said Derek Prentice. "And I hope we get real support from the unions. NALGO members in the Finance Department alone could stop the cuts if they took action."

While vital services are being cut, there is extra spending in one area. Derek Prentice reported: "The Commissioners asked to be paid, and now they're being paid £200 a week, £40 a day. The Chief Commissioner, Sir Frank Hartley, is being paid £45 a day. When I met him recently, he had the arrogance to say that he was representing the people of Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham."



ISLINGTON PARTIES REBEL AGAINST CUTS

ISLINGTON Council's ruling Labour Group faces a mass rebellion of the Party membership at a meeting fixed for November 17th. On the initiative of the Local Government Committee, the rank and file of the borough's three CLPs will be meeting in open defiance of the Group leadership to discuss how to carry through the fight against the cuts.

Tension between the Labour Group and the CLPs has been growing since the right wing won the majority in the Council earlier this year. With a brutal directness which has

surpassed the best expectations of the Tory government, they set about attacking the borough's services. First in line were the voluntary organisations and the house-building programme. And now, in a cynical gesture which has outraged even the most 'moderate' Party members, they have announced a cut-back in heating for council dwellings — and taken out advertisements in the local press advising pensioners to wear woolly caps and spend the day in bed.

Islington elected a massive

Labour majority in 1976 on a platform of open government. But now the right wing are refusing to allow deputations in full council, throwing visitors out of committee meetings, shutting down citizens' advice bureaux, and threatening the Participation and Information Office.

But Party members will not be silenced — nor will the people of Islington. The three Constituency Labour Parties and the Local Government Committee supported a conference against the cuts held in early October which won the

adherence of the Trades Council, local trade union branches, and a broad cross-section of tenants' and voluntary groups.

A mass demonstration is planned outside the Town Hall on December 4th, when it is expected that the right wing will try to push through further massive cuts for 1980. Meanwhile councillors who have voted for cuts can expect pickets of their surgeries and homes as well as moves from the CLPs to force them to resign.

JAMES RYAN

COVENTRY

LABOUR PARTY activists in Coventry are planning a national lobby of Coventry Council's cuts conference on December 8th.

Coventry Council is making a show of standing against cuts by holding this conference, to which delegates from Labour councils and Labour groups nationwide are invited. In fact, the council has not itself refused to make cuts, nor built any support in the fight against cuts. All they plan is a request to the Tory government to change its mind.

Socialist Organiser supporters in NALGO are moving a resolution in the Coventry branch calling for a day of action on the 8th, and committing the branch to organising, mobilising support against and publicising the present and proposed cuts.

Socialist Organiser supporters in areas where the council is likely to send delegates to the Coventry conference are urged to lobby their councillors before the 8th, and build for the lobby on the 8th.

RICHARD PAINE

HACKNEY

"WE'VE NOT MADE any cuts and yet no one gives us any credit for it!" John Kotz, leader of Hackney's Labour council claimed at the end of October. This is mainly due to the fact that Hackney holds the record for underspending in London.

The Left in the borough fully anticipates that cuts there will be when the Tories start to put the pressure on. If for no other reason than the continued failure of Borough leaders to spend the cash they already have.

Hackney has already lost the fight to save five secondary schools under the proposed Inner London Education Authority 'reorganisation' plans and the fight to halt any more health cuts, especially the St. Leonard's Hospital facilities, is in full swing.

In preparation for the coming 'struggle', Hackney Council has called a public meeting in the Town Hall for November 13th. Hackney Trades Council secretary, Dermot McNeil, has predicted their argument: 'I can imagine what they will be saying — "This is it, folks, the Tories are cutting back the Rate Support Grant, they are forcing the cuts upon us — we must make sure they are opposed and their effects are cushioned", in other words, there's nothing we can do to stop them, just make sure Labour keeps face and vote us back in next time.'

Hackney Trades Council has called a delegate meeting for all Labour, trade union and community representatives on November 6th to plan the opposition to the expected 'cop-out' by the right-wing Labour councillors.

Following the successful one day strike against health and education cuts in September, a united left together with local trade unions and community groups is in a good position to halt the expected slide by local Labour leaders.

MARK DOUGLAS
Hackney North CLP



LEICESTER

Leicestershire's Tory County Council are passing on the cuts by:

- * not supplying comics in children's homes.
- * not supplying the Leicester Mercury in old peoples' homes
- * closing two children's homes
- * increasing meals on wheels charges
- * increasing luncheon club charges
- * supplying no more telephones for the old or handicapped
- * increasing home help charges
- * closing the Consumer Advice Centre in Leicester
- * lengthening the schools' winter holiday by one week which is being taken off the town's July fortnight when all Leicester's factories close
- * reducing all free school transport
- * not proceeding with Pelican crossings in the City, yet two major road schemes are to go ahead — the West Bridge and the Central Relief Road.

The Labour City Council have not yet said what they are going to cut but the prevalent mood is summed up by the Spinney Hill ward of the Leicester South Labour Party who, in a leaflet, said, "The City Council is trying to save money by good housekeeping, not by indiscriminate cutting on essential services to the community. Each Department of the council is to review its activities to see if there is any scope for reductions or delays in expenditure."

The Left disarmed over disarmament

AT ITS Scarborough conference in 1960, the Labour Party voted in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament by Britain.

This decision had tremendous implications for British politics, for it opened a fundamental breach in Labour-Tory foreign and 'defence' policy bipartisanship, one of the pillars on which class collaboration rests, and on which depends the possibility of orderly changes in party government at Westminster.

British unilateral nuclear disarmament implied the disruption of NATO and probably British withdrawal from the western military alliances, all of which relied on nuclear weapons. In 1960 Britain still had an empire, of sorts, claimed a 'special relationship with the USA, and in general still had some weight in the affairs of the world. The Scarborough decision committed the Labour party to challenge policies and commitments which the British ruling class considered fundamental to its interests.

The story of how the ruling class fought back, relying on its supporters in the Labour Party led by Parliamentary Labour Party leader Hugh Gaitskell, and in a matter of months whipped the Labour Party back into line with its political needs, will be of interest to those faced now with fighting to implement the recent Brighton conference decisions on party democracy. The struggle around the Scarborough decision was one of the most important and decisive political experiences for the post-war Labour left (and for the revolutionary left too).

Much of the feebleness, demoralisation and ineptness which the Tribune left displayed in the '60s and '70s can be traced to the events of 1960-61.

A great wave of alarm at the prospect of nuclear war ran through Britain and many other countries in the late '50s. People had not got used to living in a long-term nuclear stalemate, and the idea that it could continue for at least two more decades would have been considered improbable. The eruption of the cold war into nuclear holocaust seemed an imminent threat in every conflict involving the USA and the USSR.

On a number of occasions, as is now generally known, the world was in fact on the brink of World War 3 — for example when the monarchy was toppled in Iraq and the US landed troops in Lebanon in the summer of 1958.

Bevan

Of 443 resolutions at the 1957 Labour Party conference, no less than 127 were concerned with nuclear weapons or general disarmament. A resolution from Norwood Labour Party, inspired by Trotskyists, advocating unilateral nuclear disarmament, was defeated at the 1957 conference after Aneurin Bevan, the personality around whom the Labour Left had crystallised since 1951, had marked his reconciliation with the right wing with a notorious speech explaining that he, as a future British Foreign Secretary, could not "go naked into the conference chamber" denuded of British nuclear weapons.

But Bevan failed to carry the Tribune left with him. Even Jennie Lee, his close political associate and wife, explained in Tribune that she had abstained on the question.

At Easter 1958, '59, and '60, there were enormous

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament [CND] marches from the Nuclear Research Establishment at Aldermaston to London. Each year the march got bigger and bigger, reaching 100,000 by Easter 1960.

Support for unilateralism became so powerful in the trade unions, partly through the work of TGWU general secretary Frank Cousins, that by 1960 victory at Labour Party conference was in sight.

Even the Communist Party felt compelled to abandon



When the Aldermaston marchers won the Labour conference, Gaitskell [inset] had all the weapons to fight back for the ruling class

opposition to CND, and that gave unilateralism a big boost in unions like the AUEW and threw the ETU, then led by the CP, behind unilateralism. (From 1957 to around the Easter march in 1960, the CP had denounced the CND for "splitting the broad peace movement")

At Scarborough the National Executive Committee (NEC) resolution of support for the western military alliances and their nuclear weapons was defeated by 300,000 votes. A resolution from the TGWU committing the Labour Party to unilateral renunciation of nuclear weapons was carried by a majority of 43,000.

Moving the NEC resolution, Sam Watson struck the two keynotes of the campaign the right wing was to wage. Witchhunting: unilateralists should not be in the Labour Party, "we have no right to accept in our movement communists, Trotskyists, and fellow-travellers".

And demanding that unilateralists draw the logical conclusions from unilateralism: he asked them if they actually wanted to leave NATO?

In fact, all the leading Labour Party proponents of unilateralism wanted to stay in NATO! The political level of the unilateralists tended to be pacifistic and utopian. Generally they did not grasp how fundamental a challenge to the ruling class their proposal and its ramifications were. From opposite

standpoints both the Right and the Marxists in the Labour Party pointed out what the implications were.

Before the vote at Scarborough, Hugh Gaitskell boldly told the delegates what the Right would do if they lost: the Parliamentary Labour Party, would not be bound by a decision it did not agree with. The MPs supported the NEC policy. "So what do you expect them to do? Go back on the pledges they gave to the people who elected them from their constituencies?... Do you think that we can become overnight the pacifists, unilateralists and fellow-travellers

by John O'Mahony

swung squarely behind Gaitskell, organising meetings for him and his supporters. "Requests" that these meetings should also feature supporters of official Party policy were turned down. Naturally some of these meetings became rowdy and were accompanied by demonstrations against Gaitskell.

Using its majority on the NEC, the Right went on the offensive. On November 23rd, the NEC launched a witchhunt against the youth

the Congress for Cultural Freedom, which was financed by the CIA), that a conference defeat for the right wing might be to their advantage if it gave the Parliamentary Labour Party the chance to dramatically assert independence by defying Party conference, thus shifting the balance of power in the Party in favour of the PLP. After Scarborough, the Gaitskellites carried out this policy and their mixture of intransigence and aggressive action paralysed the Labour left.

To consolidate its Scarborough victory the left needed to face up to the implications of unilateralism,



that other people are?"

Even if they lost the vote, they would "fight, fight and fight again" to save the Party.

He told conference in the same speech that the leadership of the Labour Party was none of its business. "The place to decide the leadership is not here but in the Parliamentary Party".

On November 3rd, the majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party endorsed Gaitskell's revolt against Labour Party conference by re-electing him as Party leader by 166 votes to 81 (for Harold Wilson), and seven abstentions. The Parliamentary Labour Party would pursue Gaitskell's policy, not that of the Party. But what would the left MPs do?

Funds

Simultaneously the right began to organise its supporters. The Campaign for Democratic Socialism was set up as a semi-secret right wing combat organisation which sent circulars marked "Private and Confidential" to key activists, coordinating their fight to reverse the Scarborough decision. It benefited from the unanimous backing of the bourgeois press and was adequately supplied with funds whose origins were, understandably, the subject of many rumours.

The Labour Party machine

paper *Keep Left* as part of its connivance with the Parliamentary Labour Party and Gaitskell to frustrate and oppose official Party policy.

By March 1961 the supporters of the Scarborough decision in the Parliamentary Labour Party had done nothing to deny Gaitskell the right to speak for the Labour Party. So then Gaitskell expelled five members of the Parliamentary Labour Party, including Michael Foot, for daring to vote against the Tory government's Air estimates! Konni Zilliacus, a prominent left-winger, was suspended from the Labour Party for publishing an article in a Stalinist magazine. In these ways the Gaitskellites gave notice of their willingness to split the Party.

Thus unilateralism was shown to have wide implications not only for British politics, but for the Labour Party too. Victory at Scarborough brought the left smack up against the unyielding Gaitskellites, fighting to 'save' the Labour Party for class collaboration, entrenched in the Parliamentary Labour Party, using the Party machine against Conference decisions, and quite prepared to split the Party in order to "save" it.

Before the Scarborough conference, Anthony Crossland, one of Gaitskell's lieutenants, had written in the 'New Leader' (an American publication, associated with

and to organise. *Tribune*, the organ of the 'official left', at that time still had some serious influence on the rank and file, and though the organised left was quite weak (100 attended the annual meeting of the Tribune organisation *Victory for Socialism* in 1961; 50 attended the Scarborough fringe meeting of the Trotskyist-influenced Clause Four Campaign Committee) the many thousands of CND supporters and activists was a reservoir from which a mass left wing could have developed, as part of a fight for the Scarborough decisions. But a Campaign Committee for the Scarborough Decisions, organised by Russell Kerr, could still organise meetings of from 100 to 500 in many areas of the country.

Split

Facing up to the fact that unilateral nuclear disarmament could only be carried as part of a general anti-capitalist mobilisation of the working class — which is what the Marxists argued — could have given real life to a struggle for socialism in the Labour Party and linked up with activists in the trade unions to transform the Labour Party.

For that to be possible the left would have had to take its own ideas seriously. In fact the left responded to the Gaitskellites by an ignominious self-disavowal. The

Scarborough victory on unilateral nuclear disarmament was transmuted into a unilateral political disarmament by the Tribunes.

Immediately after Scarborough Michael Foot, soon to be returned to Parliament for Nye Bevan's old seat of Ebbw Vale (Bevan had died in July 1960) declared his support for the right of MPs who disagreed with the Scarborough decisions to vote in Parliament according to their conscience. The necessary response to the revolt of the MPs, a fight to kick out and replace them, was not even aired by Tribune. The executive of *Victory for Socialism* rejected a proposal by Hugh Jenkins that they should advocate the selection of new candidates where Labour MPs refused to abide by conference decisions. (So Jenkins told a VFS meeting in 1961, reported in *The Newsletter* on June 3rd 1961). Rejecting such action meant that Tribune surrendered to the PLP.

Instead of organising the fight and taking on the MPs, Tribune's leaders immediately looked for a compromise. Prominent left winger Anthony Greenwood MP said at the end of October: "I believe it would be a disaster for anybody to split the Labour Party on an issue which changes from day to day. Neither side can be too dogmatic or demanding". Which only meant that he wouldn't be 'dogmatic or demanding'.

Talk like that couldn't mollify the Gaitskellites; it could, however, not fail to dampen down the fighting spirits of those who took Greenwood seriously, and many did.

Greenwood resigned from the shadow cabinet and told Gaitskell publicly that his behaviour was 'quite incompatible with the democratic constitution and spirit of the labour movement'. Just so — but what to do about it? Certainly Tribune didn't know. 'No doubt also there must be consequential changes in the Labour Party itself. It is too early to discern their exact nature'. This was written after Gaitskell announced that the PLP would defy conference.

In fact in December Tribune simply began to shift its political focus away from unilateralism. In that month Tribune carried this astonishing piece of front page advice to Gaitskell on how to fake: "And here was a proposition (the Tory government proposal, debated in Parliament, to set up a Polaris missile base in the west of Scotland) which could be frontally opposed; not only by those who support the Scarborough decision on the Labour Party but also by the parliamentary leaders of the Labour Party who have criticised NATO's strategy on the technical grounds that it is too reliant on nuclear weapons. But Gaitskell put down a motion which could not possibly be voted for by supporters of Scarborough... implicitly accepting the nuclear strategy and specifically approving in principle the government's plan accepting Polaris..." If only Gaitskell had been Wilson!

In the following week Tribune and the left leaders like shifted their ground so that, while they remained nominally unilateralist, their specific focus became a criticism of NATO (within which they wished Britain to remain) for being too reliant on nuclear weapons. Their 'proposal' changed to the demand for a British declaration never to use

The Left disarmed over disarmament

Continued from p.9

nuclear weapons first. Should Prime Minister Macmillan and President J.F. Kennedy be 'pressed' to 'declare' that they would never use nuclear weapons first? The question 'goes to the root of the recent controversies about defence in the Labour Party', wrote Michael Foot in *Tribune* on March 3rd, 1961. Foot was looking for a compromise, or rather a ladder to climb down. But Gaitskell wasn't obliging: a few days after the article was published, Foot and the other four were thrown out of the PLP.

In February, a drafting committee of 12 from the TUC and the NEC passed by eight to four a new right wing 'defence' statement (drafted by Dennis Healey) for the next Labour Party conference. The minority (Walter Padley, Dick Crossman, Tom Driberg and Frank Cousins) produced a 'compromise' based on the idea of the pledge not to strike first: 'While we recognise that the Americans will retain nuclear weapons so long as the Russians possess them, we reject absolutely a NATO strategy based on the threat to use them first and a defence policy which compels NATO forces to rely on these weapons in the field'.

Tribune advocated the 'Crossman compromise', and thus undercut the whole unilateralist position, which it still formally adhered to. Foot wrote that it would be a major step forward if the Crossman document (or a less cynical variant of the same worked out by Frank Cousins) could 'secure the general backing of the Labour Party'.

The 'compromise' now became the left's alternative to the Healey draft, and was touted as a basis for unity.

In fact the right conceded nothing, and Gaitskell referred contemptuously to the wriggling of the Tribunites'.

Device

The 'compromise' was a transparently cynical device to get the left off the hook. Adopted by USDAW, the 'compromise' was not even moved at the Blackpool party conference. Once it had done its work of demobilising unilateralism, USDAW abandoned it.

Not surprisingly, unilateralism lost ground, and when, in May, the AUE came out against unilateralism it was clear that the Gaitskellites would win at Blackpool.

In *Tribune* on May 12, Foot recognised defeat, philosophically: "... the task of transforming British society by democratic means and securing a British government capable of playing an effective independent role in world affairs is bound to be immensely difficult. The prior task of carrying through a socialist political education of the movement as a whole cannot be avoided. ... Scarborough marked a considerable achievement, more swift than many expected. ... Given courage and energy on the left the impetus of Scarborough can be recovered'.

Another time ... another place ... other people...

At Brighton in October '61 the hard line cold war official resolution 'Policy for Peace' was carried by 4,526,000 against 1,756,000. By a majority of about one million

conference voted against Polaris bases and against the training of German NATO troops on British soil...

The issue of *Tribune* that reported Gaitskell's victory advised unilateralists in a front page headline: 'Don't stop — keep on marching'. Just like the grand old Duke of York.

The unilateralist victory at the 1960 conference was something of a windfall for which the left was unprepared and whose implications and repercussions on the terrain of major party politics many of its proponents had not understood. Almost by accident they had begun to pull down the structure of class collaboration and provoked a backlash from the ruling class agents in the labour movement that they couldn't handle. Intimidated by the right's threat of a split, the official left ran away.



Crossman sounded the retreat

The Gaitskellites had the ruling class and their state system to relate to and serve, and these in turn had a 'programme' expressing their interests. The only alternative programme, that of working class struggle, was not a common property of the unilateralists, who were often utopians.

Hence it was more than a question of the character of the lefts (Foot's record before 1960 was not contemptible) but of their left reformist politics and their characteristic failure to think things through to their conclusion and to draw the necessary conclusions in practice from political positions like unilateralism.

Before Scarborough Foot wrote in *Tribune* (in a front page article entitled: 'Don't be afraid of victory') 'Scarborough will be momentous. No one can doubt that. Either it will mark the rebirth of the party or the name will become the symbol for tragic and dismal confusion'. In fact it became a symbol for the inconsequentiality of the Labour left.

As early as December 1960 *Tribune* tried to give Gaitskell lessons in how to fake. Soon enough they got Wilson as leader, and he didn't need any lessons. Gaitskell had followed up his Blackpool victory with an anti-EEC campaign that disarmed the left. Wilson, succeeding Gaitskell at the beginning of 1963, proceeded to disarm them completely.

The Labour left counted for nothing throughout the 1960s, and well into the seventies.

No defeat is so demoralising as a craven capitulation without struggle. The tendency that suffers it must inevitably have its belief in itself sapped and undermined.

SIDESTEPPING THE BORDER

FOLLOWING THE August 12th demonstration of nearly 10,000 people in London and the support of over 400 delegates for a discussion on Ireland at the Labour Party Conference, pressure is growing in the campaign for British withdrawal from the occupied six counties.

Unfortunately, the conference called on October 27th by the 'Liberation' anti-colonialist movement tended to confuse rather than clarify the issue. Poor advertising restricted the attendance to about seventy and the structure of the discussion minimised clarity and agreement on the way forward.

Liberation's policy is decided at its annual general meetings; the last, on June 30th, agreed to a resolution that called for the following actions:

- (a) A statement by the Government expressing support for the principle of the reunification of Ireland by consent.
- (b) The opening of discussions with Mr. Jack Lynch with a view to a joint study of the present proposals he has made for the above-mentioned purpose, such discussions being in the first place exploratory.
- (c) Immediate measures of liberalisation in the govern-

ment of the six counties of Northern Ireland, in particular the repeal of emergency legislation, the restoration of the normal process of law, and the granting of political status to all prisoners who have been sentenced by courts functioning under such legislation.

(d) The repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

The AGM further expresses its hope that the necessity for these measures will be pressed upon the Government by the Labour movement in Britain.

Very little has been done, however, to further this policy. Liberation, according to the main leaflet produced by the August 12th Committee, did not sponsor the broad withdrawal demonstration. And its October conference did not discuss at all how the policy was to be implemented.

Instead, we were treated to a very interesting, but unproductive debate, provoked by delegates who asserted the right of Protestants in the North to veto British withdrawal. Another viewpoint was introduced by the Campaign for Labour Representation, who argued that the British LP should organise in the North to 'overcome sectarianism'.

The dominant force in Liber-

ation, the Communist Party, were unable to answer these tendencies effectively. Their two main speakers, C. Desmond Greaves and a trade unionist, Joe Bowers, responded with a straight pro-Republican position. This was warmly supported by the bulk of the audience. Clearly the national question remains the central issue that dominates the minds of trade unionists, Republican and Unionist alike.

The problem then became one of how to reconcile this support for Irish unity with the campaign that has been waged under the 'Better Life for All' banner for working class unity in the North as a prelude to moves towards breaking the British connection. As the pro-Unionist speakers pointed out, you cannot hope to unite with Protestant workers if you are calling for a united Ireland.

Instead of stating clearly Loyalist workers are sustained in their reactionary ideologies by the continuing British link and that the breaking of that link is the first step to breaking them from bigots like Paisley, the conference side-stepped the issue.

The audience was also treated to a series of examples of the good work done by the trade unions in the North in

defiance of sectarianism. An excellent analysis of this work, by Bill Rolston of the Belfast Workers' Research Unit, was ignored by the conference. Drawing on the recently published 'Belfast Bulletin', on this issue, he showed that the trade unions by their very nature, have been unable to effectively challenge the privileged position of Loyalist workers, for fear of alienating the majority of their membership. Similarly they have failed to consistently combat repression. It is also for this reason that all attempts to build Labour Party representation in the North fail to unite Catholic and Protestant workers. Both the 'Better Life' campaign and the Northern Ireland Labour Party barely exist in the six counties today.

It is outside of the official Labour movement that we must look for a political lead in the North. This inevitably means Republicanism. It was this step that the Liberation conference was unable to take. Hopefully the projected withdrawal campaign, following on from August 12th, will be able to go forward, rather than temporise in the face of determined Unionist opposition.

PETER CHALK

LETTER: Lambeth — not a question of power

Dear comrades,

In an article in the October 'Socialist Organiser' — 'Stand by Lambeth Council' — some supporters of the SCLV make statements which I believe need to be discussed further.

Of course it is the duty of socialists to give all possible support to the stand being taken by Lambeth Council — and any other councils — against the cuts. However, the comrades write:

"In the past Socialist Organiser has printed criticism of Lambeth Council leader Ted Knight for even contemplating any form of temporary compromise with the Tories and central government. In our view, Ted Knight underestimated his own and his supporters' strength.

"But when comrades such as those now leading Lambeth Council feel obliged, under pressure, to make concessions to the superior force of the capitalist state, it is not because they want to: it is because, to the extent that we lack the physical power enabling us to overthrow the whole system of big business, the insurance companies and the state — to that extent all of us are continuously forced to make concessions on the level of practical struggle.

"What these events mean in reality is that we are involved in a struggle for power. What the Lambeth comrades need now, therefore, is not pious

resolutions or recipes for socialism on paper — what they need is the real power which only all of us through our organisations in the mass movement can provide'.

Ted Knight did not just "contemplate" some "form of temporary compromise with the Tories and central government". Lambeth Council decided to implement the cuts and only reversed its decision under pressure from the local labour movement.

Criticism of Lambeth Council for its decision was fully justified, as is criticism of other Labour Councils — be they left or right wing — which refuse to take a stand against the cuts. [Of course, we do not agree with anyone who uses the Council's original decision to oppose support now].

The comrades seem to be making elaborate excuses for Lambeth Council's pro-cuts decision. The excuses are not only elaborate, but positively insulting. The argument is: 'There was nothing else the councillors could do. The pressure was too strong' — as if the councillors did not have the wit or willpower to do anything but passively reflect contending social pressures.

Any serious political activist tries to help create or resist social pressures, not just respond to them. Those are the standards by which the Lam-

beth councillors must be judged — and by which, as self-respecting people, they would no doubt wish to be judged.

Of course concessions have to be made 'on the level of practical struggle', but such concessions are made in struggle, when support is lacking for further struggle. For example, a council could decide to refuse to implement the cuts and be beaten back or fail to arouse sufficient support in the local labour movement.

But how could it further the struggle against the cuts, let alone the struggle for the 'overthrow of the whole system of big business', for a Council to agree from the beginning, without any attempt at mobilisation or struggle, to implement the cuts?

The comrades appear to say — in some mystified way — that the struggle against the cuts was furthered by implementing them. The comrades would not recognise this conclusion as theirs, but it is the rational thread of the bombast about 'power'.

Then the comrades turn round, after Lambeth Council has reversed its decision, to say, "we are involved in a struggle for power", "what the Lambeth comrades need now... is the real power which only all of us through our organisations in the mass movement can provide'.

Obviously the view that one decision against the cuts

means a struggle for power [apparently meaning state power] is consistent with the idea that nothing can be done until we can overthrow capitalism. However, it is hardly consistent with reality.

The struggle by councils against the cuts may develop and link up with other battles, so that they broaden into a struggle for power, and this is obviously the direction in which all revolutionaries should strive — but it is the least likely of many possibilities [retreat by the Tories, compromise, the council giving way, etc...]

Certainly we need to organise maximum support in the labour movement for Lambeth's stand against the cuts, but talk of "giving councillors the power..." can be misleading. What does this concretely mean? It means that we mobilise maximum support for the Council but leave control of the struggle in the hands of the councillors.

We would argue that support should be built, not on the basis of just depending on the councillors to lead the struggle, but independently, so as to be able to continue the struggle if the Council backs down or falters.

Mobilisation is needed in support of Lambeth's stand, on November 7th and after, but it must be done without myths and mystifications.

PETE FIRMIN

TIMES: The results of wait and see

NEXT MONTH the Times and Sunday Times will be back on the streets again. It's 11 months since the Thomson Organisation issued its ultimatum to the Times workers.

On the pretext of wanting to stop overmanning and stoppages, they attempted to axe jobs and to bring in new technology, new disputes procedures and new job specifications. The intention was clear: to smash unions' strength by taking away any rank and file control of the work organisation and doing away with demarcation lines through the use of new technology.

After 11 months, the bosses have not achieved this aim. However, they are all hoping that the present agreements will in the long term whittle away jobs and shop floor organisation.

A lot has been made of the large pay increases, longer

holidays and shorter working week. However, the shorter week has been achieved not with more new jobs but with fewer. In fact the number of jobs lost — 40% in the composing room and 10½% in the NATSOPA clerical chapels — is little short of the target set by the employers right at the beginning of the dispute.

The management also knows that inflation will quickly catch up with the new wage rates and they will very shortly again be on par with other Fleet Street newspapers.

New technology is now installed at the Times but much of it is still up for negotiation. The most worrying aspects of the agreements are those that seek to tie the hands of the rank and file in defence of their living standards.

For example, one clause states that while the agreements are being concluded, there should be continuous production, which includes

the working of overtime. In other words, management can do what they like and the workers have no right to respond.

Also, yearly wage negotiations will be carried out by the full time officials and not by the shop floor reps. This was rejected by Fleet Street workers when the management tried to achieve it through the 'Programme for Action'.

There's no doubt that the Times was one of the most important disputes that the Fleet Street unions have ever had to fight. However, for the mass of workers in Fleet Street, the Times dispute was something that they read about in the press, not something they felt involved in.

The tactic followed by the unions of placing workers in other jobs may have lessened the hardship for the Times workers, but made it almost impossible to achieve solid-

arity action by other groups of workers in Fleet Street. The strategy of the union officials was to wait and see, not to go on the offensive.

The Times Challenger brought out by the unions was never used to organise and mobilise workers, but more to explain the benefits of workers' co-operatives and to give Wedgewood Benn and other prominent Labour Party and trade union leaders a mouthpiece.

The fact that the unions foiled the management's attempts to smash their organisations by using such tactics does not prove their correctness. On the contrary, it raises the question: how much more could have been achieved if the slightest attempts had been made to actively involve other workers in Fleet Street in defence of the Times workers?

CLARE RUSSELL

'Only one way to stop it; get the troops out'

In the interviews on this page, MARY NELLIS and VIVIENNE DOHERTY describe the reality of British military occupation in Northern Ireland, as seen through the eyes of working class women in the Catholic communities.

Mary Nellis describes how she has fought for her sons in H-Block, and for the other Republican prisoners suffering terrible brutality as they try to protest the only way they can in prison for restoration of political status. Vivienne Doherty tells the story of how her brother was thrown into H-Block after a no-jury

trial, and so badly beaten by the screws that he is expected never to recover.

"Something has to be done to stop the torture and repression", she says. "The only way is to get the British troops out of Ireland. It's our country, let us decide its future".

Vivienne Doherty also describes how she and Mary Nellis were arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and harassed when they came to Scotland recently to speak at labour movement and Troops Out meetings.

HOW WE WERE HELD UNDER THE PTA

When we got to Stranraer our luggage was checked, everything was hauled out, even our handbags. We got on the train to Edinburgh and a man came into our compartment and asked everyone for identification. I didn't have any but gave my name and address.

He then told us that we were being arrested under section 10 of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and "if you like, section 5 or 6". We got our luggage off the train and were taken back to the ferry terminal where they checked our luggage again.

From there we were taken to Stranraer police station and put into separate rooms. There were two policewomen in the room with me, and a plain clothes man, whom I took to be Special Branch.

He asked me the same questions — name, address, date of birth and where I was going. I repeated the answers again and told him that I wanted a solicitor if he was going to ask any more questions. He left the room and the two policewomen asked me to take all my clothes off.

I said that I did not object to being frisked but that I was not going to take off my clothes as I thought that was a very degrading thing to have to do. Immediately the two policewomen advanced towards me and told me that they would "tear the clothes off me if necessary", which they did.

One twisted my arm up my back and I was then put on the floor where they took off my trousers, socks, shoes and underwear. I was left completely naked. They then told me to get dressed again.

When I got dressed, the Special Branch man came back in again. He said to me: "You've obviously been in a police station before, namely Castlereagh" — I didn't answer and he left the room again.

I was left sitting in the room for another while and then another plain clothes man came in. I told him I wanted to make a complaint that I'd been assaulted.

The injuries I sustained were bruising to my left arm and my back. My right hand was badly sprained and I had to have it strapped for two days. I had to go to the hospital in Stirling later on in the week as the pain in my arm was very bad.

We were in the police station till 10.30pm, then they told us we could go. We missed all the trains to Edinburgh and didn't know where to go. We had to spend the night in the terminal building, and a policeman came in and sat in the corner the whole time just watching us.

At 3.30am a lorry-driver said he'd give us a lift to Glasgow, and we got there at 5 in the morning. Eventually we got a train to Edinburgh at 6.30am.

We hadn't had anything to eat since the morning of the day before and they had refused to give us even a cup of tea in Stranraer, even after I had vomited in the police station.

The everyday terror of Britain in Ireland

I was involved in the civil rights movement from the outset, and I was a member of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). I had strong pacifist views and thought there were other ways than the military struggle.

It took my son's arrest to make me see the validity of the military struggle, because I began to see and experience police techniques. I'd heard about them, but it's quite a different thing when you actually experience them.

I resigned from the SDLP when my second son, Dennis, who was 18 years old at the time, was arrested. I had done a lot of work for John Hume and the SDLP in the elections, but when I turned to them for help, none of them would give it me — they wouldn't get mixed up in it.

I saw then that the SDLP was not a party for the people and was not pursuing a socialist role, and I was unhappy about their position on the police.

Dennis was arrested on 27th March 1976, taken to Strand Road RUC barracks and held in the interrogation centre for 6 days. He was charged with membership of the Provisional IRA and possession of a gun. I'd never encouraged my sons to become involved with the IRA because I knew what it meant: at least imprisonment and at worst, death.

Dennis eventually went on trial on 11th November '76, was convicted and was sentenced to 21 years by a special Diplock court with no jury. I began to see the police just exactly for what they were.

This was at the time when political status was removed by the Labour Government. Dennis was the second man to be sentenced and to go "on the blanket" after political status was withdrawn.

"It took my son's arrest to make me see the validity of the military struggle"

When he went into H-Block there were so few other prisoners there that he was grossly ill-treated.

The Peace People were in full swing at this time. The bishops in Ireland had declared that the bells of the Catholic cathedral in Derry were to ring in support of

the Peace People at 3.00 in the afternoon. Some of us with sons and husbands in Long Kesh went along to the cathedral and stood there wearing only blankets and carrying placards.

"The prisoners in H-Block couldn't credit that their mothers were doing all this campaigning. Women's role in Northern Ireland has changed a lot in the last four years"

To do something like that in Ireland caused quite a stir — we took photographs, released them to the press, and got a lot of publicity. We then set about organising among other relatives to do the same sort of thing. It was from this that Relatives'



Action Committees were set up all over the North of Ireland.

We marched, had hunger strikes and vigils, and handed out thousands of leaflets about the men in H-Block. We realised that as the Peace People were travelling round the world giving their version, we would have to internationalise our protests.

In September 1977 we organised a tour of the EEC countries. We held blanket protests in the Champs Elysées in Paris, in the Hague, outside the EEC headquarters in Brussels, and outside British Embassies and British Airways offices in cities all over Europe. Support groups were set up in France, Holland, and Belgium.

Dennis didn't know about all this till later on — the prisoners in H-Block couldn't credit that their mothers were doing all this campaigning, since most of them were

ordinary women who'd never left the kitchen sink in their lives before. As a result of the H-Blocks and the Relatives' Action Committees, women's role in Northern Ireland has changed quite considerable in the last ten, and especially the last four years.

When I came back from America, the police began to pay attention to the rest of my family (I have 8 sons and 1 daughter). On 1st May 1977 the Army and police came at 6.00 in the morning for my fourth son John, who was 17, and for Patrick, who was 16, and took them to the interrogation centre.

Patrick was to sit his French 'O' level the next day, and they put a 3-day order on him. I got in contact with the headmaster of his school and he managed to get Patrick out at midnight. The a my put my family under house arrest till 8 the next morning, and Patrick was taken to school to sit his exam.

John Hume then phoned me to say that Patrick would be arrested again when he'd finished his exam. There is only so much pressure you can take, so I went to the school, told one of his teachers what had happened, and took him from the school to some friends across the border. Patrick is still there and can't come home, though he hasn't done a thing.

"This doesn't just happen to the odd family. In the Catholic areas it's the story of everyone's life"

John was tried in April of this year, charged with conspiracy, doing look-out for the IRA when he was 15, membership of the Provisional IRA, and possession of a gun — he was sentenced to 46 years and is on the blanket in H-Block 4.

Then my husband, a very quiet man, got petty harassment: he's a postman and the police would force him to empty his mail sack on the ground just to keep up the pressure — the Post Office Union took up his case.

The more they harass you the more determined you get to stop the jailings and repression. This doesn't just happen to the odd family — in the Catholic areas it's the story of everyone's life.

A TWO-HOUR TRIAL, THEN SIXTEEN YEARS IN JAIL

The army raided our house at 5.20am on 20th January 1977. They immediately ran upstairs and into the very bedroom where Don slept (they knew where it was). He just had time to put on a pair of jeans before they took him downstairs with a gun to his head.

He was taken to Peggery Ridge army camp at Creggan. My father and grandfather and a couple of my uncles went straight up to the army camp but they couldn't get any information and were kept outside. We were then informed that he was handed over to the RUC at Strand Road at 8.00am.

On the Tuesday night at 10.00pm, my father and I were allowed a 3 minute visit in the presence of 2 Special Branch men. We were told beforehand that we were not to discuss his appearance or anything pertaining to his arrest. We were taken into a small room and my brother was brought out.

He had to hold on to the wall in order to stand up — his face was badly swollen, he had a black eye, his hands were cut, his hair was soaking wet and his eyes were literally rolling in his head — he seemed completely disorientated and he didn't know what day it was, what time it was or anything.

When he eventually came to trial in November 1978, the trial only lasted two hours. He was charged with causing an explosion in July 1976, possession of documents, and membership of the Provisional IRA.

The man whose shop he was supposed to have blown up stated three times that it was not my brother who had done it. The forensic people said there was absolutely no evidence connecting my brother to the explosion.

The medical report was read out to the court, outlining the injuries my brother had sustained while in custody. Despite these beatings my brother had not signed any confession.

Bomb

Three Special Branch men were called into court. One said that the bomb was transported in a thin plastic carrier bag, another said it was carried in a cardboard box, and the third said it was a green canvas bag.

The judge then summed up. He said that Don had a job and a good education and had never been in trouble before, and that therefore he saw no alternative than to sentence him to 16 years for causing an explosion, 12 years for possession of documents connecting him with the explosion (which they couldn't produce in court), 10 years for what the documents contained (no-one knows what this is), and 5 years for membership of the Provisional IRA.

My brother classed himself as a political prisoner and was taken to H-Block 3. 7 months ago he was so badly beaten by screws that he was taken to Musgrave Park military hospital — his sole crime for this vicious attack was refusing to call the screw "sir".

The family was not allowed into the hospital to see him.

On the Friday we suddenly got a telephone call to say he'd undergone an appendix operation. We constantly phoned the hospital and were told that he was fine.

On the Monday morning we got a call from the Northern Ireland Office asking the family to come immediately to the hospital as my brother was very seriously ill. I'll never forget the sight of him. They told us then that they expected him to live for only another 24 hours.

We were locked in the room with 2 Special Branch men present. Don was on a heart machine. Tubes were coming from his head and other parts of his body, there was a blood drip on one arm and a glucose drip on the other, the left side of his chest was very badly swollen and he had 38 stitches down the front of his body.

Fortunately he lived. We were later told that the operation was exploratory. Because of the severity of the kicking he'd been given, they didn't know exactly how badly he was injured, but they found out that his bowel was severely damaged.

He's now in a rehabilitation block where his eyesight has begun to deteriorate badly. He's never fully recovered from the beating and is not expected to.

Jail

In prison Don has to wear very dark glasses and we won't know whether he'll lose the sight of one eye until our GP gets the report from the prison doctor.

My brother's case is not unique. There are many people in jail like him, and their "statements" are beaten out of them.

I know many people in Derry who would never have seen the inside of a barracks or a police station had it not been for the political situation in Ireland over the past ten years.

Home life now is absolutely indescribable — every time the phone rings, you think it's something else wrong. My mother has aged ten years in the past two — my brother doesn't know, but my mother took a heart attack when she heard of my brother's beating.

I've lost count of the number of times the house has been raided and wrecked, and this happens to countless other people.

No matter what kind of religion or party you belong to, if people call themselves Christians, or even on purely humanitarian grounds, something has to be done to stop the torture and repression that is going on in the North. Every little helps, even writing to your MP.

I see the only way to stop this is to get the British troops out of Ireland, or at the very least to set a date for their withdrawal. People use the excuse that there would be a bloodbath. I would say to them, look at the past ten years in Ireland — how much blood does it take to make a bath?

It's our country, let us decide its future.

Socialist Organiser

OVER 40,000 MARCH AGAINST CORRIE BILL

On the platform [left], Wendy Savage, Len Murray and Angela Phillips of NAC [speaking]. Below, some of the 40,000 or more on the march. The papers virtually blanked it out, many not mentioning the huge march and others making up their own figures [the Daily Express said 2,000!].



Labour movement Fightback for Women's Rights

□□ What was the impulse for the campaign?

■ ■ We launched it in response to James Prior's announcement that the Employment Protection Act would be amended so that women in small firms would lose their maternity rights.

It seemed to us that we should raise a hue and cry about this. Here was a gain from the last Labour government — a small one, but a step forward all the same — that was going to be taken off us, and we shouldn't just sit back and accept it.

When you think of some of the battles over jobs — if you see this in that light — it's something we should stick at. And then we thought of all the other factors combining against a woman's right to work — the introduction of new technology, cuts in jobs in the public

Socialist Organiser talked to RACHEL LEVER of the women's rights Fightback

sector, cuts in under-5s provision and so on. If you put them together — and add the Corrie Bill, which if it goes through will mean something like 70,000 to 80,000 enforced pregnancies and unwanted children every year — it adds up to a pretty overall attack.

We also wanted to make it clear how being able to have a kid and to go on working is vital to any woman's choice, not just the woman who becomes pregnant. To have a real choice, there must be provision for a woman to take off as much time as she needs around the birth and early years of her children, and good childcare facilities on which she

can rely. She must be able to get her job back, with no loss of seniority etc. Bringing up children is a necessity for the whole of society, not just a peculiar personal quirk of women.

□ But Prior has now withdrawn that plan, and you are continuing the campaign — what's its focus now?

■ We had already decided to give the campaign a wider focus, including the other battles to be won over entitlement to maternity benefits, as well as other issues. At present, payment of maternity benefit depends on National Insurance payments, so young girls, and women who have had casual jobs or short term ones, get nothing, though it costs them just the same as anyone else who has a kid. We're also going to push for fully paid maternity and paternity leave.

Under Labour, we saw a nod in the direction of women's rights, though all the time public sector cuts were undermining that, and things like the Equal Opportunities Commission were a very bad joke. The tribunal system was set up to take the heat out of equal pay and sex discrimination struggles, and their rulings mostly make a mockery of women's rights.

But at least there was that public acknowledgement that women had a right to a better deal, and were entitled to more in their lives than childcare and housework. Now all that's gone. Patrick Jenkin, who's in charge of social services, spoke against nursery provision because it would "encourage parents to do as they like". The Tories want to strengthen the family as an authoritarian and hierarchical unit, with a male "breadwinner" as boss in "his" home.

They also want to save

money, and to help the 'shake-out': women out of work are less visible than men. Overall, it's a way to cut working class living standards. I think that why Prior went back on that particular plan was that when they did their sums, it didn't add up to all that much of a saving. Now they're looking to see what else they can do in that line, and it will quite likely turn out to be a more serious attack. One thing that's been mooted, for instance, is to put back women's retirement to 65, which will save them millions in pension money.

□ What form will this broader campaign take now?

■ Instead of going for a demonstration — which could have mobilised a lot of people if it were a simple matter of Labour's protection laws being chewed up — we think now that a conference would be more useful: as we say on the leaflet, to pool information and to bring people together.

□ How will you organise this conference?

■ We'll be asking for sponsorship from labour movement bodies, from women's groups and organisations — such as local NAC groups which may be looking for involvement in continuing to fight after the Corrie Bill — and from various cuts and other local and national campaigns which share the same fight.

At the conference itself we're hoping to have lots of workshops, lots of exchange of information, ideas and experience, and to build an organisation to co-ordinate and unite the fightback.

And we'll be asking various campaigns to contribute to the conference, and offering them a wider hearing in a milieu which perhaps they haven't been able to reach before. If we can increase the mobilising power of women in that way, I think we will have achieved something.

SOUTHALL
CALLS
FOR
SUPPORT

AT BARNET Magistrates' Court on Monday October 29th there was the first major break in the string of convictions on the police's say-so being handed down to people arrested in Southall on April 23rd, the day Blair Peach was killed.

Four young Asians from Southall were found not guilty of assaulting the police. One of them was Gurmull Brard, president of the Southall Youth Movement. Two other Asians involved in the same case were found guilty and fined £250 and £150.

But generally the court has continued as it began. At this rate, by the time all 342 defendants have been tried (the court is less than halfway through so far), 70 will have been jailed and fines, costs and expenses will be over £100,000.

The trials are being run as a racist police vendetta — while Blair Peach's murderer goes free. Last week, for example, when a defendant was granted bail because his case was going to the Crown Court, he had to give in his passport as surety for bail and promise not to attend any public meetings while on bail.

The defence campaign is calling for a big mobilisation for the demonstration on November 25th against Tory racist laws. On the morning of the 25th, from 10am to noon, there will be a picket outside Pentonville Jail, where five victims of these trials are imprisoned. After the demonstration, a public meeting is planned, with a showing of the BBC2 Open Door film on Southall.



A WORKING CONFERENCE

The conference will focus on five main areas:

- Abortion rights, and what to do after Corrie.
- Cuts in nurseries and other under-fives provision.
- Maternity leave & benefits, and paternity leave.
- Legal rights.
- Strengthening the position of women and the priority of women's rights in the labour movement.

Representatives are invited from women's groups, trade union bodies and women's caucuses of unions, Constituency Labour Parties and women's sections; and from all campaigns and organisations with similar or overlapping aims, which are also invited to contribute papers, speakers and workshops for the conference. Individuals are welcome too.

Further details of speakers, conference arrangements and agenda, etc., from: FIGHTBACK FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS, 41 Ellington St., London N.7. (01-607-5268)

to pool information and experience; to discuss and coordinate the coming struggles; and to stimulate the growth of dialogue and common work between women in the labour movement and the women's movement, and those in specialised campaigns for women's rights.

Conway Hall
Red Lion Sq WC1
Sat. Jan. 12
11am - 5pm

Initially sponsored by SOCIALIST ORGANISER