

THE ENEMY IS AT HOME!

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Labour
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Socialist Organiser

Against all bans and proscriptions!



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ON THE STREETS AGAINST THIS WAR!

BY THE time this Socialist Organiser reaches readers, a full-scale British invasion of the Falkland Islands may well be in progress, backed up by bombardment of mainland Argentinian airfields.

What both sides want above all is a military victory — not in the service of any great cause, but for the sake of the self-promotion of each of the rival governments.

From the start, in fact, this war has been a reactionary war, a clash between two right-wing governments both striving for self-assertion and prestige. In this cause, hundreds of Argentine conscripts, British 'economic conscripts', and civilians caught in the cross-fire may now be slaughtered.

A victory for Britain in this war — that is, for the British ruling class — will be nothing but a defeat for the British working class.

It will leave the Tories cock-a-hoop. It will strengthen their hand to stifle class struggle and rally workers behind the flag of British imperialism. The dockers' decision to cancel their strike on jobs, and the seamen's union vote to support an invasion of the Falklands, show that.

A victory for the British fleet will strengthen militarism, enabling Thatcher to step up her arms drive. It will assert Britain as a major world military power, ready and willing to back up its world-exploiting economic operations with brute force.

So in this war our enemy is at home. Our war is class war against the war of self-assertion by the British ruling class. Our war effort must be an effort to weaken, undermine, forestall and defeat the attempts of Thatcher and the military commanders to throw their weight around in the South Atlantic.

An international working class policy to stop such wars as this must start with a fight by each working class to paralyse the bloody armed fist of its own ruling class.

We must challenge and call to account the labour leaders who have supported Thatcher's war. We must campaign for blacking of all military supplies and all work for Thatcher's war effort. And we must mobilise tens of thousands on the streets to demand: withdraw the fleet now!

**Withdraw the Fleet! Demonstration,
Sunday May 23, 2pm from Hyde Park
to Trafalgar Square. Organised by Ad
Hoc Committee on the Falklands.**

BLOODY MARGARET
YOU ARE WRONG

GLC: THE GRUMBLING OF THE LEFT

Charlie Rossi, vice-chairman of the GLC, gives Socialist Organiser "a view from the dais"

Labour came to power in May of last year at County Hall with a strong working majority both in the Greater London Council and in the Inner London Education Authority. Am I right in believing that a substantial majority of comrades "affiliated" or associated themselves with Briefing before and immediately after the election?

Yes, at a guess there must have been 35 or so at the initial Briefing caucus immediately after our victory... and that included Andrew Mackintosh, the former Leader. Or at least he had attended two Briefing meetings prior to the election — to the best of my knowledge.

How many members of the Group now regard themselves as belonging to Briefing, one year after the election, one year into office?

I think there are now only 20 paid up members at present. I think you'll have to ask the Secretary of the Briefing group, Andy

Harris, for the precise figures. Many comrades in the constituencies and Transport Unions cannot understand why the comrades have abandoned the policy which Ken called for, defying the law.

Well, I certainly voted for it. I came down from the Dais — you know I am Vice-Chairman of the Council — to vote with the Left comrades, consistently all the way to the Budget.

How many members of the Group supported the Party Manifesto in opposing the doubling of the London Transport fares?

18. Did it include Ken?

No.

Why?

Ask him!

Why did all the comrades including the 'hard left' [sometimes jokingly called the 'loony left'] — Dave Wetzell, Steve Bundred, Valerie Wise, and Andy Harris — eventually support the Budget, that included the LT fares structure which meant acquiescing in the doubling of fares — as it were under duress?

In order to get the Budget through. We all had to do it in the end. People may have taken the view that the alternative was that they would have lost their powerbase. This is not my view, I am not wholly

against Majority Opposition.

There appears to be no great enthusiasm on the part of the unions at County Hall for this left wing administration. Why is that?

It's true. They don't seem to be getting anywhere. Nothing has been done for the manual workers, but the chairman of the Staff Committee seems to be afraid of NALGO. Blue collar workers seem to be getting nowhere very fast.

A good example of this is the messenger service, who have found all their overtime cut, and their wages depleted while the security services seem to be getting everything and being strengthened in their staffing complement.

Many comrades on the GMCs and in the trade union branches have been frankly shocked by the enormous salaries that have been assigned to new posts created by the new left Labour administration. Figures in the neighbourhood of £35,000 have been quoted and paid to a new Chief Officer in the Enterprise Board.

Do these exorbitant salaries play right into the hands of the Tories who needlessly to say exploit this to their own advantage? Has not Valerie



Wise complained about it?

Many of us are very concerned about the high salaries offered for these new appointments, when the lower ranks are not being attended to. How do the leading comrades justify it?

They say the old officers would look down on the new officers, and take them as second class citizens unless they were placed on the same salary grades or levels.

What would you do then?

Get rid of the old officers and appoint new officers at reasonable salaries. I think that's what Ken told Briefing he would do! What about the Inner London Education Authority.

How do you explain the fact that our school meals reduction policy has been sunk without trace?

Don't blame me! A number of us also voted against the recent ILEA cut of £11 million on the Budget. The whole group voted with the Tories against our proposed reinstatement of the cuts with the exception of Keith Veness, Andy Harris, Steve Bundred and myself.

We're always being told of the threat of the SDP, that if we push too hard, people like Mair Garside will be pushed to them. Mair Garside seems to have a monopoly on abstention! What advice would you give to those comrades on the GMCs, in the trade union branches and women's sections who want to see our Manifesto policies carried out instead of being pushed to the side?

To come and visit County Hall and have a Special Conference with the comrades of the Group, not with just one or two policy committee members who all pull together, but to help the various comrades in our Group to come forward with their fears.

Women in particular have a wonderful opportunity with the formation of the Women's Committee whose chairperson is Valerie Wise.

And finally would you like to state where you stand now vis-a-vis the left and the Briefing comrades?

My loyalty to the comrades of the left will never diminish, but my loyalty to some plastic members of the Left will have to be considered very, very carefully. My vote is no longer to be taken for granted.

I will be consulting with my friends in Briefing before my hand goes up again, if there is anything about which I have reservations. I realise I have only 18 true socialist friends of the left, and their names are safely locked in my cupboard!



Charlie Rossi

REPLYING TO KEN

'In Lambeth, Labour... would have had a comfortable majority... had it not been for the defeat of five Labour candidates in the traditional Labour area of Vauxhall, where supporters of Socialist Organiser circulated election material condemning Ted Knight and the policies of the Labour Council' — Ken Livingstone, Labour Herald.

Cheung Siu Ming, SO supporter and a Labour candidate in Princes ward, Vauxhall, replies:

I would like to draw the following points to the attention of Labour Herald readers.

1) The Alliance first won two seats "in the traditional Labour area of Vauxhall" in the Bishop's ward by-election in 1981. There was a borough-wide protest against Lambeth Council's £50 supplementary rate levy.

There were no Socialist Organiser supporters in Bishop's ward. It was continued high rate rises which eroded Labour's support.

2) Socialist Organiser issued no election literature in Vauxhall. Official election literature from Vauxhall Labour Party wards put the case against rent and rate rises and against cuts, arguing for a fight against the Tory government.

This is Vauxhall GMC policy. Socialist Organiser agrees with this policy.

The "confusion" in fact has been sown by Ken Livingstone who appears to want to criticise Vauxhall CLP election material by witch-hunting SO supporters.

3) Neil Turner, one of the defeated Vauxhall candidates, successfully reversed the proposed cuts at Kennington Old People's Day Centre and Lunch Club; he had to fight to get the rest of the Labour

Group to think again. This item was headlined "Victory for Pensioners" in Vauxhall CLP newsletter "Herald" (April/May, Princes edition).

Is this what Ken means by "condemning Ted Knight and the policies of the Labour Council"? If not, what else is he talking about?

4) The article's strong implication is that Labour would have held the Vauxhall seats if the Labour candidates had not been Socialist Organiser supporters or supporters of the "no cuts, no rent and rate rise" policy. This is nonsense. In fact, SO supporters standing as Labour candidates in Camden and other parts of London have not lost any Labour-held seats.

In Lambeth, candidates with a clear record in support of the "no cuts, no rent and rate rise" policy won in Angell Ward, while others not in agreement with such a policy lost 5 Labour-held seats in Gipsy Hill and Clapham Park.

Last year, with a London-wide swing to Labour the Tories held on to the GLC seat at Norwood with a comfortable majority.

5) It is clear that the SDP concentrated their forces around Princes and Bishop's wards in Vauxhall in support of John Medway and Roger Liddle, both prominent figures in the SDP's national organisation. The Labour Party in Vauxhall narrowly failed to defeat this attack, handicapped crucially by Lambeth Council's disastrous policy of high rate rises and cuts.

If Ken had not bothered to read election literature before making serious allegations, then he should apologise to Vauxhall CLP. If he has read the literature, then his comments are utterly deplorable and belong to the worst sectarian traditions of newspapers such as the News-line.

HOW WE OUSTED ISLINGTON SDP

by NADINE FINCH [chair, Islington Labour Party LGC]

THE recent local election results have been a severe set-back for the hopes of the SDP-Liberal Alliance as the party that claimed to be able to transcend class differences and find a middle way to solve the present crisis.

The results showed a polarisation: a rallying to Thatcher's radical right-wing policies, and a strong vote for the radical left wing manifesto of Islington Labour Party as opposed to the compromised Labour Party position of, for instance, Birmingham.

The vote in Islington dislodged a sitting SDP

council made up of well known local politicians and gave a strong mandate to a young and committed Labour council.

This victory had not, unlike the SDP, been created overnight. It was the result of a long and sustained campaign to change the direction and structure of the local Labour Party.

In the 70s, younger Labour politicians had made an impression on policy, especially in the housing field. But the tight coalition of seasoned right wing councillors, especially in North Islington with the local Cooper-

ative Party and some trade union delegates, was a perpetual threat.

To achieve policy it became increasingly necessary to weigh up objective strengths and weaknesses and take the best option. This ultimately led to half-implemented policy and an electorate who kept a cynical distance.

Then in the late 70s there was an influx of new members who came from a wider political tradition.

There were women who came from a feminist tradition that gave validity to the importance of subjective experience. Then there were those with years of community experience, who had progressed from indignant protest to a realisation that more political action was necessary.

They joined a number of more traditional, middle and working class, younger Labour members in a challenge to a style of Labour Council which concentrated knowledge and control in the hands of a small group of councillors.

The question of whether Labour councillors should see themselves as managers of the state was also raised. And this dilemma became increasingly

relevant as Thatcher's administration began to dismantle welfare provision.

As the new members gained credibility in Islington by active and visible support of different working class struggles in the borough, they began to draw more people in. As numbers increased, they had to face up to the problems of practising full accountability and consultation.

Some of the lessons have been learnt and should help the new council respond to Islington residents.

The ethnic minority communities also began to show a renewed interest in a Labour Party that campaigned against racism and the Nationality Act.

The manifesto made a firm commitment to oppose racial harassment and discrimination.

This group are already raising a definite voice within the Labour Party. But there are many more of their communities waiting to see if Labour does carry out its pledges.

And the achievability of the manifesto will be crucial in maintaining and increasing Labour's great gains in Islington.



A 40 page pamphlet published by London Labour Briefing, edited by Nigel Williamson, with a foreword by Tony Benn and articles by Norman Atkinson, Reg Race, etc.

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Out now BRIEFING ON THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

LABOUR AND THE WAR

RED FLAG OR UNION JACK?



Shore: backing the Tories four-square

THROUGHOUT the Falklands crisis, the main Labour leaders have been flag-wavers not for the Red Flag but for the Union Jack.

Many of them collaborate with the Tories daily. But on issues inside Britain they usually make at least some show of hostility, some gestures towards standing for working class interests against the Tories and their class.

But in war — and indeed in international conflicts generally — if the first casualty is truth, then the second casualty is these leaders' sense of shame.

For decades the Parliamentary Labour leadership has gone hand-in-hand with the Tories on Ireland, bar a few occasional and minor reservations. And likewise on the Falklands.

Flicker

In all the speeches from the Labour front-bench since April 3, there is not a flicker of the idea that the workers of Britain and of Argentina have a thousand times more in common than either have with their rulers. It is not argued, but merely assumed, that Labour should stand in the same camp as the British ruling class — maybe advising, maybe criticising, but joining in "Britain's" common effort.

In the first Parliamentary debate after Galtieri's invasion, John Silkin (titled Labour's "disarmament" spokesperson!) criticised the Tories... for running down the Navy in favour of Trident! Douglas Jay echoed him: "I trust that this event will put paid to the policy of unilateral disarmament of the Royal Navy".

And the whole Labour front bench, including Michael Foot, has backed the Tories, only quibbling occasionally.

Avoid

But in different ways and to different degrees, some have dissociated.

"Avoid military action" is the weakest variant. On May 4, 73 Labour MPs called for an immediate ceasefire. This, the Labour Weekly editorial of May 7 said, would "allow a breathing space for negotiations".

The April Labour NEC



John Silkin — the 'disarmer' who beats the drum for a bigger Navy!

said that the government should use the UN and "avoid military action". The TUC General Council passed a similar motion. The Labour MPs in the European Parliament supported a motion from the cross-EEC Socialist Group for halting the fleet and simultaneous withdrawal by Britain and Argentina.

In other words, all these wanted peace — merely by appealing for it.

In Tribune in the early weeks of the crisis Richard Clements proposed a more consistent line of reliance on the UN. "What Labour should now propose is that the UN itself establish a peace-keeping operation on the Falkland Islands. It would not need to be large in number and the Royal Navy could be used to supply it and ensure its safety".

Fantasy

Behind the talk of peace-keeping, this is nothing but a proposal for war by Britain and a number of allied nations, rather than war by Britain alone!

When Chris Mullin took over the editorship on May 7, Tribune's line changed sharply, crossing the political divide to active campaigning against the war.

But still not on a clear basis. The May 7 issue of Tribune showed that a section of the Labour Left — after some weeks of self-effacement and uncertainty — had hit on an idea to square their circles.

The fleet should be

is that the Fleet should be withdrawn" — then bolder and bolder. Though favouring reference to the UN, he has not taken up the call for economic sanctions.

Benn's attitude, it seems, is the closest to the rank and file. Labour Weekly reports that the overwhelming majority of the letters sent to it have been for withdrawal of the fleet.

"Most Labour Party activists here were immediately alarmed at the apparent gung-ho nationalism of Michael Foot in the emergency debate. The last thing the Labour Party ought to welcome now is being tied to the outraged imperialism of Tory backbenchers" (David Spilbury, April 16).

Honest

Most of the letters published also said the islands should go to Argentina. The argument was simply that "the Falkland Islands are lost" (Chris Johnson); that "the sooner Britain returns these colonies to the nations that they are part of, the sooner Britain can play an honest role in world affairs" (Nigel Knowles); or that "these islands... are as much a part of the national territory of the Argentine as Rockall

withdrawn, Mullin argued, Britain should use economic sanctions against Argentina, and the islands should be ceded to the UN.

The beauty of this line seemed to be that it opposed war while also proposing firm action by "Britain" against the Galtieri junta. And it could be made to sound anti-capitalist. Michael Meacher criticised the banks' lack of patriotism, shown by the loopholes in the economic sanctions. "Business interests must be safeguarded even if it means selling the country short".

But it is all fantasy politics. Since when has the international banking system been a clean, socialist method of international action, in contrast to the squalor of war?

The reference to the UN is also a clutching at false solutions. The much-vaunted 'Third World' majority in the UN may often prevent it from acting, but when it does act decisively it acts as the agent of the associated big capitalist powers.

Its hands are no cleaner than Britain's.

And — crucially — the whole argument is still within the terms of a search for lines of action by "Britain", rather than action by the working class.

Silent

Tony Benn, though silent in Parliament on April 3, came out for withdrawal of the Fleet much earlier than Tribune. At first he was half-hearted — "My advice, for what it is worth,

Island is of Britain" (Alex Wood).

Virtue

The more elaborate arguments look very much as if they are making a virtue out of what is perceived as necessity. These comrades oppose sending the British fleet, they do not go in for the clever schemes about economic sanctions, and so (they think) there is nothing for it but to let Galtieri have the islands. The islanders can be deported and compensated.

There are a few letters in Labour Weekly from people who clearly are not Silkin-type jingos but can't accept the anti-war line.

Denis Jones asks why we should presume a rule "that islands should belong to the geographically nearest power".

State

And Juan Moreno finds "disgusting" the idea that because the islanders are a small group on the other side of the world, they "have less than our human rights. They can be occupied by a regime under which one person disappears every four hours, and we should do nothing" (April 30).

On the rights of the

islanders, surely Juan Moreno is right. But the comrades who denounce Thatcher's "war of petty prestige and the crudest chauvinism" are also right.

Supporting rights does not mean supporting every action that is supposed to defend those rights. By the very nature of the British state, Thatcher's fleet acts in the interests of Tory and British ruling class prestige. Any benefit to the islanders is doubtful and strictly incidental.

Class war

Therefore we must oppose — indeed, wage class war against — Thatcher's war. And (though if this war were to change into one where the issue were Argentina's national rights against British domination, we would have to side with Argentina, even under Galtieri), that does not mean supporting Galtieri in this conflict.

An international working class policy offers a third alternative: class action for the defeat of both sides.

This policy can set the workers of both Britain and Argentina on course to combat the reactionary self-promotion of their

rulers, and to use the war crisis to hasten the overthrow of those rulers.

It promises no miraculous immediate results; but surely nothing is more fatal for socialists than to turn away from mapping an independent policy for the working class to illusions of quicker results through manipulation of other forces, or resigned acceptance of the alternatives posed by the existing reactionary powers.

On one score, however, immediate results are called for. A labour movement that passively allows its leaders to herd it behind an imperialist power's war effort is cutting its own throat. Scattered demonstrations, rallies and protests have shown sections of the British labour movement beginning to reassert its independence — but they have been too few.

As the horrors of war escalate, we need an urgent drive to get the labour movement out on the streets against this war.

The basis for uniting local committees and demonstrations should be the simple slogan: Withdraw the Fleet. And our slogans from Socialist Organiser should be: Black military supplies! The enemy is at home!

THE juggernaut is rolling out of control. The last feeble whiffs of debate have been sent flying into the ditch. The feeble struggle to control the charge of the press is broken.

The BBC's capitulation illustrates this as well as anything. The Corporation made bellicose statements against Tory back bench witch-hunts — but it has made sure that its witches have been gagged.

Proudly the Corporation reported that audience surveys opposed by a majority of 2-1 demands for the BBC to convert itself to a kind of Sun of the air, complete with references to 'our lads'.

But the film from Argentina which had provided the only alternative to jingoism has virtually dried up since the attack started. The Argentine claims are now hardly mentioned. Although the evasions of the Ministry of Defence continue to be revealed, the BBC has dropped its questioning of their validity. The list of planes and helicopters which meet with various accidents reported weeks after the event goes unchallenged.

Panorama is typical. Its programme on May 10 was

the target of the main Tory fire. It was not in fact a programme which reflected any true anti-war feeling in Britain. It combined film from Argentina with an interview with a maverick Tory who represented nothing except the self-doubt of capital.

It was still a programme which, of course, expressed itself on the side of Thatcher. It had, however, some criticisms.

When it came under assault the BBC verbally defended itself and suspended presenter Robert Kee, who criticised the programme in a letter to the Times.

Kee is a celebrated and sophisticated apologist for imperialism, as anyone who remembers his series on Ireland will know. Having talked tough, Panorama ate humble pie. The programme on May 17 showed a "debate" between Winston Churchill and an Argentine Minister in Denmark, during which hardly a glimpse of the Argentine speech was shown. The opinion polls which appear to show an avalanche of support for Thatcher are the barometer of a sustained campaign which has been answered by nobody.

Balance, whatever that is, is provided by the virtually invisible differences put forward by the Labour front bench.

Daring alternatives are offered in the form of a feeble Judith Hart who appears frightened and defensive.

Differences between the Sun and the Sun's critics are now entirely secondary. The underlying message is the same.

It may be a good advertisement for "press freedom" that the Mirror carried a front page lead headlined 'Charles Backs the BBC', but in practice the Mirror and the BBC do a more efficient job of advocating British imperialism's case than does the Sun.

Virtually only the Financial Times protests with any vehemence the gagging of the press and it can afford to do so since its readership amongst the masses is still low.

It alone reported that censors on the fleet refused to allow reports of the attack on HMS Sheffield to be filed. Journalists with the fleet went along with this suppression only to hear over the World Service that the attack had been announced in London.

All the media complied with the "request" not to name a second ship which allegedly had a miracle escape when a bomb went through the deck but failed to explode.

A photograph naming the ship as HMS Glasgow had been sent to all newspaper offices, but was spiked.

No news media protested when the Ministry of Defence casually announced the loss of two helicopters on South Georgia — allegedly several weeks ago and allegedly in an accident and allegedly without any casualties. Operational reasons was good enough reason for suppression.

The capitulation is complete, at least at home. But one report suggested that the Marines on the fleet are tiring of the jingoism served up to them every morning.

Perhaps it is not unrelated that the Ministry of Defence has arranged to put out copies of the soft porn best selling video 'Electric Blue'. After all, the job of the media is to dupe the folks back home. Those being prepared for the slaughter are not supposed to have to put up with rubbish like that.



World News

A NEW INVASION OF ANGOLA?

NAMIBIA is arguably the most embarrassing and hushed topic in imperialist diplomatic circles at the moment.

While liberals have presented the issue in a deceptive way as 'Africa's last decolonisation', 'the black majority fighting for political liberty against the white settlers and South Africa's 100,000 strong army of occupation', 'the national liberation movement, SWAPO, having to court Moscow to get support for the armed struggle to force the racists to let go', etc., etc., in reality a complex array of forces is at play, many of which were revealed in the course of a fast moving series of events over the last month.

Cranley Onslow (a British intelligence agent in the 1950s and appointed a month ago to be Britain's new Minister responsible for African affairs) and the Foreign Office's number one henchman for setting up neo-colonial regimes in Africa, Sir Leonard Allinson, last week attended secret talks in Paris with their counterparts from the US, France, West Germany and Canada.

Control

The key problem is how to adequately control an incoming SWAPO government once the UN election plan of 1978 is implemented. A glance at Mugabe's Zimbabwe would lead one to think this a relatively easy job for imperialism.

But hark, the imperialist strategy of 1978, lead then by David Owen and Andy Young, forgot some elementary politics (something the gasping liberals

also forget). That is, unlike Zimbabwe, Namibia in 1978 had a classic colonial state apparatus run from Pretoria, and not a Rhodesian-style machine of violence run by the settlers themselves.

Although the 1978 plan drawn up by Owen and Young allowed South Africa to effectively annex Namibia's only port of any consequence, Walvis Bay, thus giving Pretoria a mighty good whipping stick against the 'independent' Namibia, the bulk of South Africa's armed bodies of men would have to be withdrawn.

Proletarian

In the 'decolonisation' of Africa in the 1960s this was not much of a problem for imperialism. The Kenyattas, Kaundas and Nyereres having their reformist nationalist movements grafted onto new neo-colonial structures financed by the world boom.

But in Namibia today the nationalist movement is not only based on a highly proletarianised black population with an extremely high migrant labour element linking it well with the peasantry and an exceptionally small black petty bourgeois business class proper, but an armed struggle well advanced and a nationalism assuming revolutionary overtones.

What is more, because Namibia has been run as a fifth province by South Africa's white supremacist state, Pretoria's Nationalist Party is threatened with further right split-offs should it "sell-out" to SWAPO, apart from the boost such an

While Tory and Labour shout about 'international law' to back the Malvinas reconquest, they have openly flouted 'international law' for ten years in Namibia. Below a member of the

Namibia Support Committee writes about some of the main contradictions British imperialism finds itself in over Africa's current hot point.



After SWAPO's latest military successes, these three young SWAPO fighters, Josef Sagarias, Theofilus Jasen and Lucius Malambo, are on show trial in Windhoek this week. Death sentences will be used to show the white settlers that Pretoria can maintain 'law and order'. Most captured SWAPO fighters are simply interrogated and shot.

apparent military defeat would give to South Africa's own black struggle.

In Paris, the 'Gang of Five' have therefore been conducting an 'organised delay' - on the one hand to give Pretoria time to build the necessary state apparatus in Namibia to fill what Pretoria calls the 'vacuum' arising from SADF withdrawal and, on the other hand, to amend the original 1978 UN plan to restrict and limit a SWAPO electoral victory (taken for

granted now).

Pretoria has been socialising the whites for changes. But the whole process has ground, over the last month, to deadlock. Firstly, SWAPO rejected not only the Gang of Five's double vote count formula (unprecedented in African colonial history and doubling the chances of a South African electoral fraud), but, more ominously, rejected the Five's long drawn out negotiating procedure itself (one piece of paper in ten months).



when the main puppet party, the tribally-based DTA, split. Now with the local white settlers rejecting it and threatening a mass exodus south, Pretoria is trying to build another non-tribal Muzorewa-type party, the NDP, so as to get the necessary one-third in the UN 'constituent assembly' to block SWAPO.

But the main white party (AKTUR), the DTA and the NDP are totally dependent on South African finance and military backing - what happens if the latter goes, as it should under the 1978 plan?

The Five are now proposing changes in the military arrangements for the UN plan, first to keep some semblance of a local army intact and secondly to get a prominent NATO role in the UN 'peacekeeping' force.

Thirdly, South Africa's attempts to humiliate SWAPO militarily took a mighty blow over the past month. Two massive invasions of southern Angola last year, and the extension of the South African occupation into southern Angola, prompted SADF Generals to declare that they had 'broken SWAPO's military backbone'.

But starting on the Easter weekend, SWAPO fighters scored some spectacular victories against the racists deep inside Namibia. Over two dozen South

African troops died trying to track down SWAPO fighters who had mined the rich cattle ranching Mangetti bloc, around Tsumeb and Grootfontein.

In one incident SWAPO used rockets to instantly destroy a RATEL tank-like troop carrier, killing 7 soldiers. SWAPO held off helicopter gunship skirmishes and even managed to simultaneously hit police and SADF targets in the northern Bantustan areas and derail a military supply train near the capital, Windhoek.

Both the white settlers (most have vacated their farms where they are not turned into military fortresses) and the press in South Africa accused the SADF of incompetence. Politicians were rushed to the area to quell the outrage since nearly a third of Namibia's whites have left over the past 7 years.

No defeat

In a few weeks white South Africans could see that, short of exterminating a large slice of Namibia's 1.25 million blacks, SWAPO's small guerrilla force could not be militarily defeated, even by what the local papers call "the world's greatest military occupation" (one soldier to 5 adults) in land very unsuited to guerrilla warfare (low population density and extremely poor vegetation cover).

It seems certain now that the Gang of Five will sanction another invasion further into Angola - the troop build up has started - and may try to legitimise another bogus South African-controlled election. But this only makes SWAPO a more difficult fish to catch for imperialism's longer term interests in the sub-region.

With about 100 Namibians and Angolans dying per week, almost all civilians, the population is learning through the barrels of imperialist-supplied guns where their interests lie.

The NSC is holding a conference on Saturday 22 May (11-5) in London's County Hall with workshops and speakers from SWAPO, PLO, ANC, and the British black community, Amrit Wilson, Lionel Jeffreys. Films, creche, food. Details from NSC, 53 Leverton St., London NW5. Tel: 267 1941/2.

Blacking needed to back SAAWU

THREE black leaders of the workers' movement in South Africa have been brought to trial by the bosses' apartheid state. Thozamile Gqweta, Fisa Njikelana and Sam Kikine, leaders of the militant SAAWU have been charged with three other activists under the vicious Terrorism Act.

They have already been held in detention for months by the brutal security police. Now they face massive jail sentences. In the eyes of the bosses' state they have com-

mitted the crime of fighting for workers' needs. In the eyes of the working class they have committed no crime at all.

Last week the Anti-Apartheid Movement organised a protest outside the South African embassy joined by ASTMS leader Clive Jenkins. The Tobacco Workers Union has condemned the arrests and trials.

These moves reflect the widespread solidarity in the British labour movement with working people in South Africa. Now is the time to take forward that feeling of solidarity and build the most effective working class mobilisation and action in defence of the SAAWU leaders and in support of the workers' movement in South Africa.

The week of action will end with a demonstration in York, site of the headquarters and biggest plant of the Rowntrees empire. Other meetings and demonstrations will be held in the same period to mark the sixth anniversary of the uprising of the black working class that began in Soweto.

Weapon

A week of protest blacking action of all goods to and from South Africa would be massively powerful and effective. Blacking is a weapon already in the hands of the labour movement. It would do more to defend the workers organisations and SAAWU than all the resolutions and condemnations put together could ever do.

It has taken the AAM leadership more than two years to take even the first steps to raise solidarity with the Rowntree workers in the British labour movement. And they took these steps only under pressure

from AAM militants. The pressure of union militants was needed before the AUEW Executive declared its support for the call from Rowntrees crafts shop stewards for a conference of all shop stewards in the combine to discuss solidarity action in support of the South African strikers.

The call has now been conveniently 'lost' between the AUEW Executive and the TUC International Committee.

With the week of action and demonstration now only weeks away the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the labour movement leaders have not campaigned to publicise the actions and mobilise support in workplaces, unions, or Labour Party wards.

No lead

Even less are there any signs by the leadership to develop the week into a week of blacking action. There is still time to make sure that the AAM

and Labour leadership do not again produce a solidarity damp squib. There are millions of workers with strong anti-apartheid feelings, ready to show this if they are given a lead.

We must immediately fight in trade union and Labour Party branches for support for blacking action, for large contingents on the York demonstration and for delegations to the Rowntrees shop stewards conference. The following model resolution should be put wherever possible.

- "This branch/ward:
- 1) condemns the arrest of the SAAWU leaders and their trial with three other militants under the Terrorism Act.
 - 2) Expresses its total support for the workers' movement in South Africa and calls for the unconditional release of all workers and militants jailed for opposing the South African government and employers.
 - 3) Agrees to mobilise the largest possible contingent for the June 26 demonstration in York.



THOUSANDS SUPPORT SOLIDARNOSC PROTEST

by Harry Sloan



WORKERS in factories all over Poland last Thursday responded to a call from the clandestine leadership of Solidarnosc for token strike action against Jaruzelski's Stalinist regime.

Thousands took to the streets in demonstrations which were attacked by riot police — bringing over 600 arrests.

The events were a further confirmation of the popular support for the 10-million strong trade union whose activities were banned under the martial law restrictions introduced on December 13.

They followed on major demonstrations which rocked Warsaw and other major cities over the May Day weekend.

The May 13 action to mark 5 months of martial law, had been called by four Solidarnosc leaders — Zbigniew Bujak (Warsaw); Wladyslaw Frasnynik (Lower Silesia); Wladyslaw

Hardek (Krakow) and Bogdan Lis (Gdansk).

But it had been opposed not only by extensive state intimidation — riot police had been on the prowl at least 48 hours in advance — but also by Church leaders.

In repeated sermons, Archbishop Glemp had warned young people in particular against demonstrating and clashes with the police.

Warnings

His attitude to the resistance — combined with warnings that Solidarnosc must function only as a trade union and avoid taking political positions — flows from the search of the Catholic hierarchy for a new form of 'peaceful coexistence' with Jaruzelski and the Stalinist bureaucracy.

The Catholic leaders argue that the working class in Poland must tailor

their demands to an acceptance of the country's "geo-political reality".

But of course there are other currents within the Church: those who see the Solidarnosc movement as a lever to further the interests of the Church, and those less elevated priests and bishops who have responded to the movement at rank and file level.

The dialogue between a military commissar and workers at Polish radio and TV from which we published extracts in last week's Socialist Organiser, shows that the Stalinist bureaucracy itself is aware of such divisions of opinion.

The Commissar points out:

"In the hierarchy of the Church, there are differences of opinion. The most, shall I say, docile is Glemp (The Primate), who is in favour of certain talks with the government and who, generally speaking, has accepted the necessity of the introduction of the state

16 members and advisers of the National Committee of Solidarnosc began a hunger strike last Thursday, May 13.

They include Jacek Kuron. The indefinite hunger strike was announced in advance in the underground press of Solidarnosc.

It comes in the absence of any word from the imprisoned Lech Walesa or any hints as to his possible release. The British labour movement must add urgency to its solidarity with these internees and their struggle against repression.

of war in considering that it conforms to the law.

But Glemp does not accept all the consequences: the internments, the suspension of Solidarity, and he even says that the Church can guarantee that Solidarity will behave as a trade union and not as a political organisation.

Macharski (Cardinal of Krakow) represents a more radical position, but not extreme. As for, what's his name, Gulbinowicz (Bishop of Wroclaw), he's of the extreme.

That extreme is made up of the oldest generation in the Episcopate. It's

no coincidence that those three men went together to see the Pope (in early February). The delegation was probably made up to represent the factions so as to make it easier to reach a common position. As for the activity of the simple clergy, in most cases it is directed against the state."

Experience has shown that the section of the Solidarnosc leadership most influenced by the Church — the grouping around Lech Walesa — has been the most "moderate" in its attempts to arrive at a deal with the bureaucracy.

As the same time the ferment of debate in the growing Solidarnosc movement brought the emergence of currents which tend rather towards revolutionary socialism — calling more or less openly for the development of workers' control of the nationalised economy and mass action to oust the bureaucracy.

It is in part their shared fear of this current within the Polish workers' movement which brings both the Church leaders and the state bureaucracy into a common position favouring the martial law crackdown, and seeking long-term restraints on Solidarnosc.

But their action has also produced a deepening of the debate on programme and perspective in the ranks of Solidarnosc. Illusions of the peaceful and gradual transformation of the Polish state under the impact of Solidarnosc have been shattered, and there are signs that militants have been forced to turn their attention to explicitly revolutionary solutions.

At the same time the way in which the bureaucracy was able to seize upon a pause in the struggle brought about by a hesitation of the Solidarnosc leaders to impose its martial law has pointed to the necessity to build upon the growing struggles of the rank and file and to respond to each and every challenge to the gains won by workers in struggle.

The recent weeks of confrontation show that Solidarnosc is far from dead — as the Stalinists and their allies would have us believe. And the material problems and grievances which drove Polish workers into battle in 1980-81 remain very much alive, as production continues to slump and the economy plunges from bad to worse.

The next period must include political preparation to ensure that future rounds of mass struggle are carried through to the political overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy whose parasitic mismanagement is the greatest threat to the nationalised economy.

Adopt a Polish prisoner

AS THE attention of the British left shifts understandably towards campaigning against the Falklands war, it is important to remember the need for solidarity with the Polish labour movement. Struggles across the May Day weekend meant that the 1,000 internees released by Jaruzelski's Stalinist junta were swiftly replaced by over 1300 fresh arrests.

Posed

International support for the Solidarnosc leaders in jail or victimised out of their jobs, and material aid for their families is crucial to their struggle.

The Solidarity Trade Union Working Group has been actively promoting a campaign for union branches and Labour Parties to 'adopt' a prisoner. So far around 100 out of a list of 2000 have been adopted — including five Polish miners adopted by South Wales NUM lodges following a successful speaking tour.

Draft

Meanwhile the Working Group continues its activity without any significant assistance from the leaders of the British labour movement.

Readers should campaign both for their own branch organisations to adopt a prisoner, and for resolutions to Regional and National Executives demanding full scale support for the Working Group.

Further details — from STUWG, 64 Philbeach Gardens, London SW5.

Cocaine generals fear Bolivian workers

by Santiago Fortin

IN THE second week of April Leopoldo Galtieri received a call from his friend Celso Torrelío making a direct offer to send Bolivian troops to aid the defence of the Malvinas.

The Bolivian dictator was the only Latin American president to manifest such generosity, but he received a polite refusal since Galtieri is only too well aware that his Bolivian colleagues need every man they can

muster to sustain a regime that has been in constant crisis since the Garcia Meza coup of July 1980 and now shows signs of complete disintegration.

Indeed, Galtieri himself has twice visited La Paz to put resolve into the generals and arbitrate in their disputes over the spoils from the cocaine trade.

For Torrelío, the virtual unanimity of Bolivian poli-

tical opinion in support of the invasion of the islands proffered an unexpected opportunity to cash in second-hand with a threadbare propaganda diversion. Apparently he hardly gave a thought to the fact that this might prejudice all-important support from Washington.

In the event the State Department kept quiet, for it cannot afford any further disasters in the hemisphere, and imperialist control in Bolivia is now increasingly vulnerable.

Washington's price for overlooking the cocaine trade and recognising the regime consisted in the traditional demands to bow to the wishes of the IMF and introduce a harsh deflationary economic package. Only then would progress be made in negotiating Bolivia's massive 4 billion dollar debt.

Technocrats

As a result, Torrelío's technocrats proceeded with measures that pushed inflation up to 70%, increased unemployment by 15%

and altered the exchange rate from 40 pesos to 118 pesos to the dollar.

Food is not just extraordinarily expensive, it is very scarce; Bolivia is in the worst economic crisis it has suffered in the last 30 years. The regime continues to be under threat of a coup from the ultra-right in the military, but this is much less because of the uncertain future of the cocaine trade than because Torrelío is feared to be too weak to confront the mass mobilisation that is growing apace as a result of his government of national destruction.

Give way

The military was forced to give way first in the November and December strikes in the mines which won the freedom of arrested union leaders. Since then the execution of six demonstrators in Cochabamba and the introduction of the economic measures have led to two 48-hour general strikes. The backing for these has been remarkable given that the paramilitary forces funded

by the cocaine interests continue to assassinate and persecute with impunity and the full backing of the regime.

The generals are gravely concerned by the revival of the working class and the authority of the clandestine trade unions; they are equally worried by the expansion of worker-peasant pacts organised by the unions. These pacts signify the erosion of the armed forces' control over the rural masses and a renewal of peasant militancy.

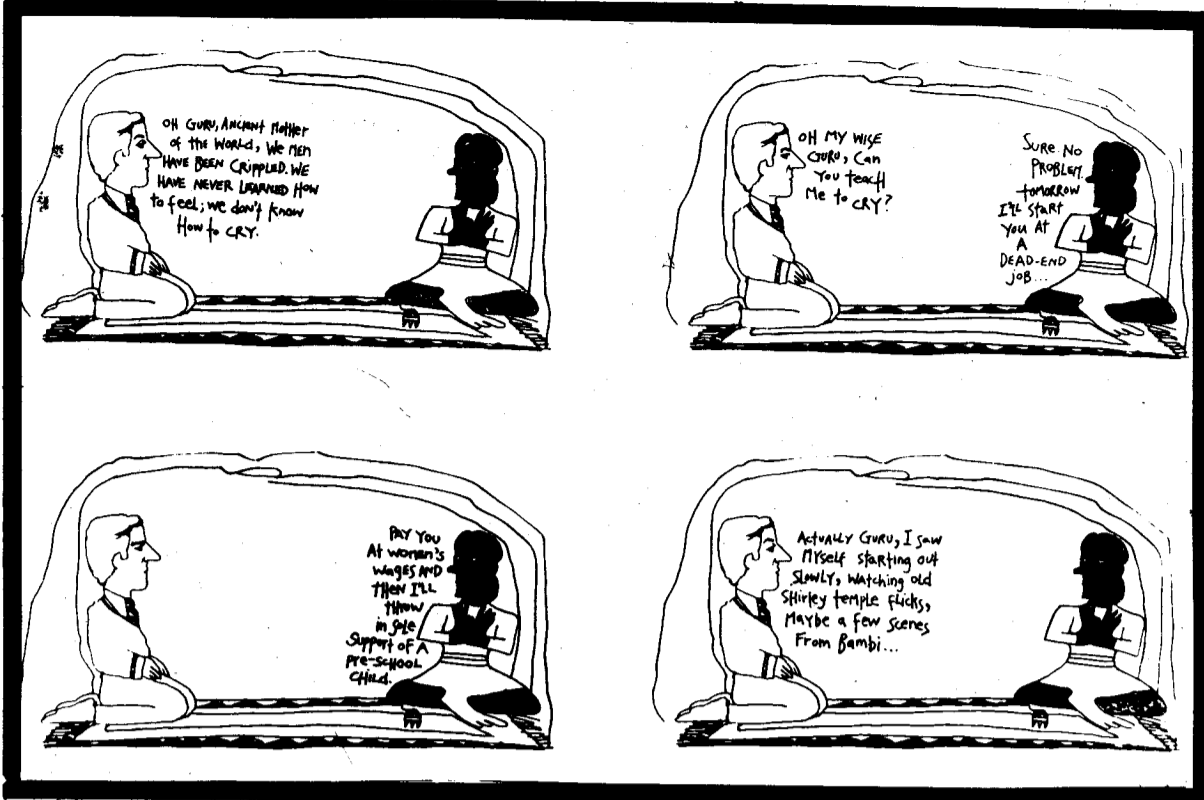
For three months the dictatorship has maintained a tenuous hold on power while the working class recuperates. However, the food shortages are so severe that the crisis is sure to come to a head before long.

The Bolivian masses are at a critical crossroads and more than ever dependent upon a leadership that has been schooled in the heart of the resistance. With political control in the entire region in considerable doubt its revolutionary direction will be of decisive importance.



Torrelío

Solidarnosc



The hardest job in the world

This week Martin Thomas introduces 'Housewife' by Ann Oakley

"I'M NOT married to a house. I hate the word 'housewife'. They say 'what are you?' and you say, 'I've got a baby... I'm a mother and a wife', and they say, 'Oh just a housewife'."

"Just a housewife! The hardest job in the world. You're never just a housewife. Into that category comes everything..."

Something like one third of all working hours in Britain are housework. And the housewife who told Ann Oakley that it is "the hardest job" could cite a lot of evidence.

Socialist Bookshelf

Books and pamphlets that you should read

Average hours of housework are reckoned at about 70 a week — but in fact the housewife is never off duty. Despite labour-saving devices and despite the fact that more and more housewives (about one in two today) also do another job, there is no sure evidence that these hours are decreasing.

Into the job, as Ann Oakley was told, "comes everything" — at least in one sense. The housewife faces a wearying variety of tasks and can never say: 'That's not my job!' An insurance company recently estimated the 'value' of this variety of tasks at £200 a week.

No variety

But in another sense there is no variety. The routine of childcare, cleaning, cooking, shopping and washing is monotonous. There is never a new product, never the prospect of progressing to a 'better job'.

In one way housework is less alienated, more human, than wage labour. It is a sort of 'work' which merges without a sharp frontier into 'life'. It is also said to give the individual more freedom in how the work is done — though Ann Oakley cites a survey which suggests that this is only half-true. Housewives, it found, feel pressured by working to time limits even more than assembly-line workers do.

Maybe 'work' merges into 'life' — but 'life' is also drowned in 'work'.

Housework in any case is extremely isolated and isolating work — in contrast to wage labour which generally slots the individual into a huge cooperative effort. Millions of housewives carry out similar work each day, side by side, but rarely with any cooperation.

This isolation, it seems, is a major factor in the depression which hits housewives — especially housewives who do not also have wage-jobs — much more than other people.

For many housewives it is worse than that. Isolation can mean being the isolated victim of a brutal, drunken or resentful man. 25 per cent of all reported crimes of violence are wife-beating.

When housewives do get a job outside the home, it is very often one where the work is much like domestic labour — cleaning, laundry, nursing, teaching... And it is usually low-paid. Women's role in housework also dominates their role in wage-work.

Most oppressed

Housewives, then, have a fair claim to be the most oppressed workers in the working class. But these workers have no trade union, no shop steward. They do not even have any wages. After all her labour the woman houseworker is usually left dependent on what a male wage-worker

chooses to give her. Back in the early 1970s, some feminists proposed what seemed an obvious answer: wages for housework. But most feminists and socialists have rejected this.

In the sink

The demand would leave women with their arms still in the sink, only being paid for it. It would divert from campaigns for nurseries, for women's equal right to jobs, for access by women to the jobs which are still male preserves. And anyway it is unclear: who would pay the wages? The state?

The job is not to 'elevate' housework to the status of wage labour, but to abolish the system of wage-labour-and-domestic-labour, replacing it with a new division of labour, a new control by women and men over their work and its products, and a new relation between work and life.

Conclusions

Ann Oakley's book only briefly covers the 'wages for housework' debate, and not at all the even longer debate on the economic theory of housework which has concerned Marxists and feminists since the early '70s. But her political conclusions are clear.

"The housewife role must be abolished. The family must be abolished. Gender roles must be abolished". On the economic level we must socialise housework, on the legal level we must enable people to live in whatever groupings they choose, on the ideological level we must break down stereotypes of women's roles and men's roles.

Ann Oakley backs up these conclusions with a thorough demolition of the idea that women's present role is natural and unchangeable. Some societies, she shows, have only a very slight division of labour by sex. And the separation off of housework as women's job in the home, placed outside the world of social production, is a specific product of capitalism.

Specific

Women's oppression dates back over thousands of years — but its specific form today is the result of the combination of pre-existing male domination with an economic system which makes wage-labour (in society) and housework (in the home) two opposed but interdependent poles.

Ann Oakley's concluding chapter quotes Lenin: "No nation can be free when half the population is enslaved in the kitchen". By the same token, no working class struggle can be socialist unless together with the fight against wage-slavery it includes a women's movement rebelling against domestic slavery.

ARE YOU BUILDING FOR JUNE 5 MARCH?

Coventry is...

THE Coventry Committee for a Woman's Right to Work which is campaigning in support of both the demonstration and the festival on June 5, has registered some important successes.

Regular meetings of the committee have been held for some time, with an average attendance of 20.

Delegates and/or sponsorships so far have come from the Labour Party (District Women's Council, SE Constituency Labour Party, the NW, SW and SE Women's Sections, Radford, Upper Stoke, Earlsdon and Whorley ward Labour Parties.

From the trades unions support has come from

the trades council, UCW, ASTMS, NUPE Hospitals, NUPE Schools, APEX GEC, CPSA Coventry and Warwick MSC Branch, Civil Servants' Area Executive, and from women's groups including the Coventry Women's Group, and Coventry Women's Fightback as well as from the Coventry Federation of Tenants.

Local organisations have been asked to sponsor coach seats at £5 a time and this has so far raised over £200.

The idea is to allow free seats on the five coaches so far booked for low waged people who want to take part in the June 5 activities.

Three attractive leaflets

Women in struggle



have been produced so far and a large proportion of the cost of this was raised last Saturday at a successful fund-raising social.

A week of action has been organised for May 22-29 during which the main shopping area in the city will be leafleted.

A local alternative register of women who are unemployed but cannot sign on is being compiled and a questionnaire on women's experiences in job seeking is also being used.

On Friday 21st, the week of action will be launched at a public meeting with speakers from Kigass in Leamington, the Women's Right to an Income Campaign, local NHS workers and the Committee itself.

The success achieved in Coventry shows just what can be done. The key is

DEMONSTRATE



MARCH

JUNE 5th 10-30 FROM COUNTY HALL TO BATTERSEA PARK AND

JOIN IN THE CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL WOMEN'S FESTIVAL & RALLY

consistent work and big thinking.

It's better to book eight coaches, work to fill them and readjust your size

down to five as we have done, rather than start with one coach and end up with a minibus.

COVENTRY WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK

Leicester is...

WE SET up the Leicester Mobilising Committee for the June 5 Women's Right to Work march following a call put out by Leicester South Labour Party women's section. Through the efforts of Women's Fightback it was taken up in several other Labour Party branches in Leicester.

We've had quite a good response from the local trade unions and the Trades Council, particularly NALGO and TGWU (welfare). We're hoping to get a coach sponsored by NALGO on June 5, and altogether three or four coaches from Leicester.

We held a public meeting on Saturday May 15 with

Pat Hewitt (Labour PPC for Leicester East) speaking, and Judy Watson from the Action Committee for a Woman's Right to Work. There were about 30 people there, and it was a very hot afternoon!

Now we're trying to get more women to go who are not part of the traditional labour movement. We're leafletting housing estates and discos twice a week now in the run-up to June 5.

The Leicester group has also been in contact with the women at Kigass in Leamington Spa, on strike for seven weeks for union recognition. We're hoping for a big contingent from the strike to come with us.

and the North-West

THE NORTH-West Action Committee for a Woman's Right to Work was set up as a result of a Women's Fightback dayschool in January of this year.

The group has since then gone from strength to strength, with women being delegated to it from a number of trade unions and Labour Parties, mainly in the Greater Manchester area.

International Women's Day was celebrated with a torchlight demonstration and a rally in Manchester Free Trade Hall, with a number of speakers from the National Abortion Camp-

aign, Women's Right to Work, and the US mineworkers' union.

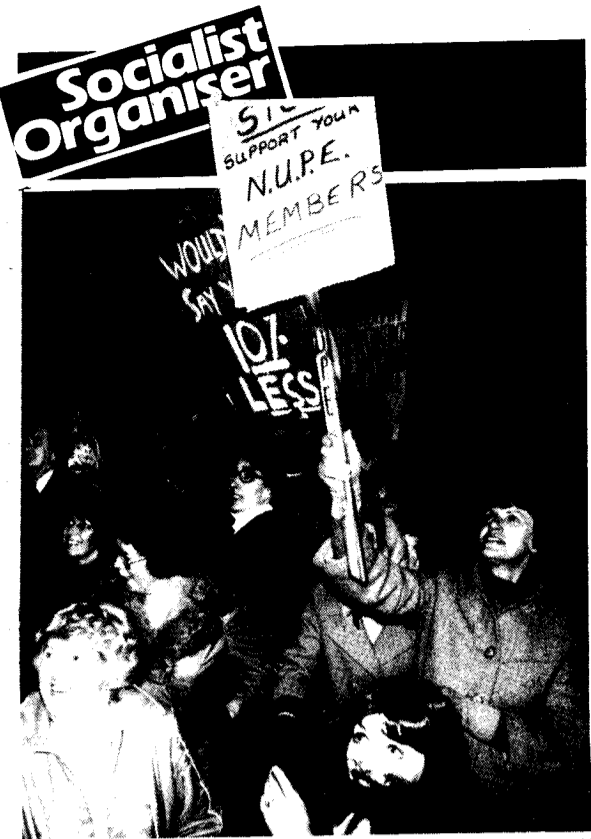
Organising

The last two months have been spent organising support in the labour movement for both the June 5 demonstration and a North West demonstration, to be held in the autumn. This North-West event is sponsored by Salford Trades Council, Bury NALGO, a number of ASTMS and CPSA branches, and women's sections, women's councils, and constituency Lab-

our Parties in the area. Anyone in the North West who wishes to become involved should write to: North-West Action Committee for a Woman's Right to Work, 61 Bloom St, Manchester 1, or ring 061 636 0350 (ask for Kath) between 10 and 5 any weekday.

Train tickets for June 5 are priced £10 for adults and £5 for children. The train leaves Manchester at 7.40, and you can return either Saturday or, if you wish to stay for the CND demo, Sunday.

KATH CAULFIELD



ALL OUT ON NHS PAY!

NUPE SPECIAL

GUINEA PIGS FOR TEBBIT?

by Wendy Mustill

IF Tebbit's Employment Bill were law now, much if not all of the NHS action to win the full 12% claim could be unlawful. And the effectiveness of a co-ordinated national campaign could be undermined by the clauses allowing bosses to selectively sack groups of workers.

The government decreed its second successive de facto pay policy for the public sector back in September. This 4% 'guideline' was an overt political attack on the public sector — part and parcel of job cuts, privatisation and Heseltine's local government policies.

Any action taken even in pursuit of a wage claim under these circumstances — where a strike poses a direct and immediate challenge to government policies — could under Tebbit be interpreted by a court as 'not wholly or mainly connected' with a trades dispute, despite being about pay.

Leaflets

Any leaflets, protest, etc criticising the 4% guideline could be deemed partly political, and any industrial action would therefore be outside the protection of the law.

The threat of massive fines or jail would hang over those refusing to stop the action, if ordered to do so by a court. Not only employers but irate patients could sue, as could contractors or suppliers whose trade had suffered.

The unions would be liable if they had supported the action. They have already shown a remarkable reticence to organise all-out action. They would be doubly reluctant to make it official if their funds were

in jeopardy.

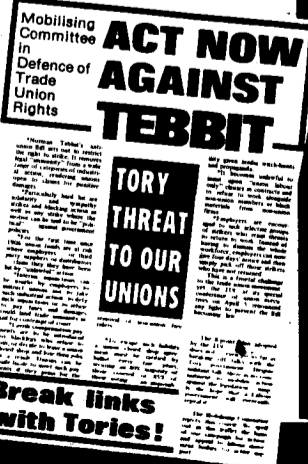
The new law also makes it easier for bosses to get rid of troublesome militant sectors.

A dispute such as in the NHS provides a field-day for divide-and-rule tactics. Under the law, groups of strikers up and down the country, taking part in the same dispute, could be sacked, while others could be kept on. The screws would be on right from the start.

The threat of such blatantly unfair discrimination (the existing law permits sackings but says all strikers must be treated the same) could seriously threaten the solidarity of a national strike in the health service and undermine its success before it even started.

Attempts could be made by union officials to use the law to frustrate and bridle the more militant hospitals. Nurses, who enjoy a relative degree of public sympathy, might be kept on whereas hospital porters or administrators could be sacked. Even those not on strike but taking part in other forms of action could be sacked.

No-one sacked would have recourse to unfair dismissal hearings.



NUPE SAYS

SUPPORT YOUR HOSPITAL WORKERS

NUPE SAYS

SUPPORT YOUR HOSPITAL WORKERS



THE big debate at conference this year will be pay. The current wave of stoppages will see to that despite the fact that it is lined up to be a reorganisation conference. A record number of resolutions have already been submitted on the question of pay and no doubt many of the emergency resolutions will relate directly to the current pay campaign.

It promises to be a very lively debate because for the last three years the leadership has managed to avoid being tied to an effective pay campaign.

Arbitration

The attempt to defuse the fight by using arbitration fell flat after the

government refused point blank, although Alan Fisher is still causing some rumblings about it.

The slowness of the national leadership to give a lead has delayed things a little but it is not too late for a successful campaign on pay. The members have the guts to fight as the results of the NUPE ballot have shown.

In response to the insulting offer made by the government, most Area Health Authorities have been affected by government action, with 3-day stoppages in some areas, workers to rules and over-tensions.

Some Authorities have been reduced to accident and emergency services already.

The fight is spreading throughout the health service already and support has been pouring in from other workers.

Miners at the South Wales Area Conference voted unanimously for industrial action, passing the following resolution:

"This Conference of the South Wales Area of the NUM declares its support for the nurses and all the NHS workers in their justified pay claim. Being aware of their traditional loyalty and dedication to their patients, which prevents them from taking strike action, and as a token of solidarity, this conference recommends a one-day strike by all NUM members in South Wales at a date to be agreed with the

nurses and NHS workers."

Seamen in Cardiff have also voted for strike action and at the NUS Biennial Conference this week in Tenby, an emergency resolution will be put calling for solidarity strike action throughout the merchant navy.

With this kind of support the Executive Committee is going to have a hard job holding back the members. The prospect of one million workers linked to other powerful sections of the working class in a united struggle against the 4% would terrify the government but it will be up to Conference to make that prospect a reality.

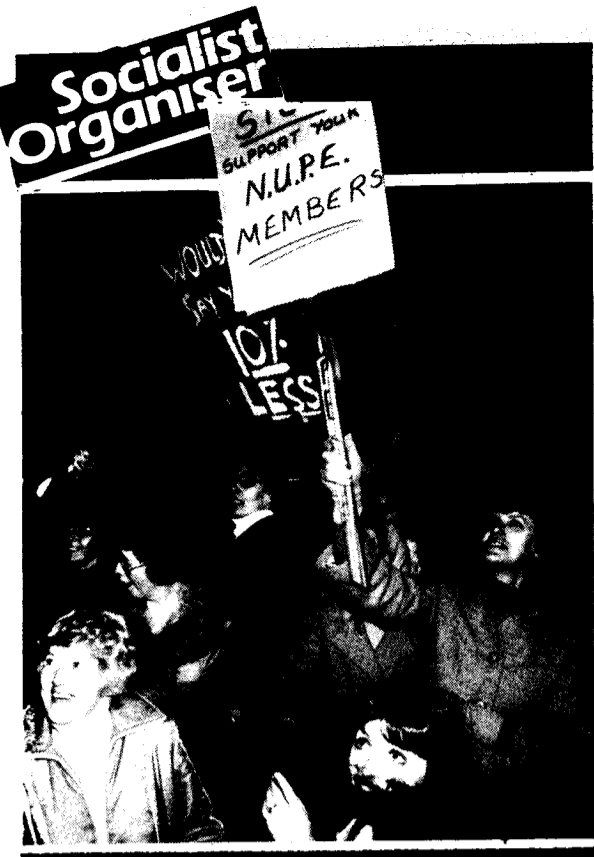
How can we achieve this? The answer is clear. Con-

ference must support the call for all-out co-ordinated industrial action to win the claim with emergency cover under workers' control.

We must force our union leadership to fight for this on the TUC Health Services Committee and for solidarity action from the other TUC-affiliated unions.

If the leadership fails to take up these demands the campaign could fail and prove that health service trade unionism cannot deliver the goods and that NHS workers are destined to poverty wages.

by Geoff Williams
NUPE convenor,
University Hospital, Cardiff.



NUPE SPECIAL

Martin Barclay [branch secretary, Cardiff Royal Infirmary NUPE] gives his personal assessment of issues at stake at this year's conference.

THIS YEAR'S conference presents NUPE members with a golden opportunity to bring greater democracy and accountability to the union.

only discusses amendments to the rulebook. But this year we will have the chance to comment on and amend an Executive Council report on NUPE structure.

The Executive issued a discussion document last year as a review of the progress made since the radical reorganisation of the union in 1975. The report before this conference brings together some comments on this document, Executive recommendations, and the amendments put forward by branches.

In the words of the report, "The union's ability to defend our members' jobs, pay and the public

Chance for NUPE members to seize control!

services against the Government's vicious attacks depends on the strength of our organisation and structure. It is now more essential than ever to ensure that NUPE structure encourages members to be involved in and committed to the union, provides a democratic method of expressing members' views, and can be used effectively to mobilise members in support of policies based on those views."

Since 1975, the union has grown tremendously. The reorganisation in that year was itself a product of the growth in membership in the early '70s. This was especially the case in the NHS.

1972 saw the first ever official strike over NHS pay. By 1975 virtually all grades of hospital staff had taken

action in pursuit of wage claims.

The years after 1975 were characterised by vicious wage controls and the Dennis Healey Social Contract. But it was in the 'winter of discontent', 1978-9, that the union came of age, with mass national action by NHS and local government workers.

That winter, like this summer, was notable for the totally inadequate leadership of the trade union officials and their willingness to sell out and undermine struggles. Since 1974 that leadership has overseen a decline in pay in the NHS in real terms from 66 per cent to less than 50 per cent of the average wage.

This leading from behind has crippled the ability of the rank and file in the

union to launch a consistent challenge to successive governments intent on using NHS and local government workers as the backbone of their wage-cutting policies.

It is against this background that we have to look at the structure of the union and the very cosy advice that the EC has got in store for us at this conference.

NUPE is one of the few unions to make any kind of progress towards positive — who make up two thirds of its membership. The 1975 reorganisation created five women's seats on the Exec of 26. Since then women have been elected onto the general Executive seats for the first time; the number of female stewards has gone up from 28 per cent to 42 per cent.

Unfortunately this has not changed the sexist attitudes of most of the officials. The Women's Working Party set up at last year's conference has still not reported, and neither has a national women's organiser been appointed as mandated last year.

The overwhelming majority of the full-time organisers are male, and above branch level little progress has been made in getting women elected as lay officials. School meals staff, nurses and home helps are particularly under-represented at all levels in the union.

The EC's answer to this is to ask branches and district committees to 'consider ways of making their meetings more accessible to women'. Unfortunately, all the good advice about payments for baby-sitting expenses, timing of meetings, and education, will not radically change the situation.

Putting some of these suggestions in the rulebook and making them instruc-



tions would be a start. But there are no suggested rule changes from the Exec.

Conference policy is usually way ahead of the Exec's thinking — it should be carried out, and not put in a drawer and forgotten.

The rest of the document is a step-by-step examination of the union's structure from branch level through district, area and divisional committees to the national executive and full-time officers.

The only point of contact with the union for the majority of members is the branch organisation. The report recognises that, as part-time and women workers make up two thirds of the union, the problems they face are the problems of the union as a whole."

Generally, this problem is defined as "non-involvement by the rank and file".

As with the section on women, the ball is hit very firmly back to the branches. The only rule change proposed is to officially recognise the appointment of convenors in the rulebook.

it is the Executive itself that should be issuing guidelines and discussion documents, setting up working parties and ensuring that stewards are provided with proper education. The fact that none of these are being done is a symptom of a wider failure of leadership in NUPE.

The problem is one of full-timers selected by the Executive who have left-wing credentials and who come from the best labour colleges, but who will not give a public political lead on the issues that affect the membership.

This is a part of the history of the union. The Municipal Employees' Association, NUPE's forerunner, was involved in big strikes in 1911 and 1926. General Secretary Jack Wills boasted, "We were more successful than any other union in getting our members back to work".

In 1979 Alan Fisher described the Executive's rejection of the nine per cent pay offer as "a personal tragedy".

This year the leadership has been scandalously inactive on NHS pay, waiting for CoHSE to take action on the pretext of calling a ballot on whether to strike. Fisher admitted being surprised at the overwhelming vote in favour of action; nobody who actually works in the Health Service could possibly be surprised.

On two issues that vitally affect NUPE members, pay and the cuts, the story is one of betrayals and sell-outs. And the Executive wonders why it can't get members along to meetings, and stewards to committees! The answer is not fines for non-attendance, as proposed by some branches in amendments, but to build a fighting union where members feel that their views will be heard and acted on.

TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND! SUPPORT COMPOSITE 14!

FOR nearly 13 years now, the British Army has been on the streets of Northern Ireland, during what has become known as "the troubles".

The cause of "the troubles" goes back hundreds of years, to the start of British rule in Ireland and the fight of the Irish people to rule themselves.

In 1920 26 counties gained independence, while 6 of the 9 counties of Ulster remained under British rule. This was opposed by the labour movement of the time; Belfast Trades Council voted against partition, realising that the proposed six county state would lead to greater divisions inside the northern Irish working class.

The British Labour Party of 1921 stated that it was "prepared to allow Ireland to assume whatever form of self determination the great mass of the Irish people desire."

What has happened since 1920 is that the Northern Irish working class has been divided, not by religion but on the basis of religion, which in turn reflects whether one is a loyalist or a nationalist. In Britain the labour movement mostly quietly forgot about the six counties until 1969 when the troops were sent in.

So what is the basis of the division in the Northern Irish working class? Is it just that the Catholic community want to be part of Eire and the Protestants want to be part of Britain? No, it is deeper than that.

In the 1960s an agitation started to campaign for civil rights against the discrimination experienced by Catholics. Like the blacks in the USA, they wanted equal opportunities — with the Protestants.

To understand the nature of discrimination you have to realise that your name, your school and your address in Northern Ireland are all indications of which community you belong to.

For example, if your name of O'Hara and you

live on the White Rock Road, and went to school at St. Paul's, then you are a catholic. Also if you say haitch instead of aitch, then you are a Catholic.

You don't need to be black to be noticed and discriminated against, if people are aware of these guides.

The levels of discrimination are best illustrated by the fact that throughout the whole of the six counties, the 1971 census showed that in every District Council area, Catholic unemployment rates were higher than Protestants, from the industrial areas of Belfast to the agricultural areas of Fermanagh.

No surprise when the official ideology was voiced by Lord Brookeborough, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland in the 1930s.

The Civil Rights marches of the 1960s were met with a violent response from Orangemen and from the RUC, whose members are overwhelmingly Protestant, as they were seen as an attack on the privileges of the Protestant community.

Most famous was the attack on the Belfast to Derry march organised by People's Democracy starting out on January 1, 1969. When they came to Burntollet Bridge, just outside Derry "a force of

some hundreds marshalled by members of the B Specials and watched passively by our escort of more than 100 police, attacked with nailed clubs, stones and bicycle chains.

From then on the struggle between the Catholic community and the statelet of Northern Ireland moved away from just being about equal rights and an end to discrimination. It came to be about the struggle for a reunited Ireland as the precondition for ending discrimination.

NUPE at the moment has no policy on the question of Northern Ireland, and abstained at last year's Labour Party conference when the question was debated. This is despite the fact that NUPE organises Protestants and Catholics in the six counties, on a 50/50 basis.

As trade unionists, we should see it as fundamental to fight against discrimination. Therefore we argue that NUPE takes up the Irish question, organises more of the day schools and weekend schools like the one organised by the East Midlands Division at the beginning of April.

We propose that it also commits itself to the principle of unconditional British withdrawal and a united Ireland, as the only solution to the troubles, and affiliates to the Labour Committee on Ireland.

Delegates should support and vote for composite 14.

CHARLIE SARELL
NUPE steward
Leicester Hospitals branch



Alan Fisher — used media to get his way over the head of elected union committees

Education

We are told that we must sit down and review the work of stewards, education for stewards, timing of meetings, and participation of ethnic minorities.

This is all very important, of course. But the real problem is one of leadership.

The Executive is throwing the burden of the problem onto the branches, when

Mergers

The problems that affect branches are reflected in poor organisation and lack of coordination at district committee level. The Executive's answer is to merge the workplace branches into massive district branches with thousands of members.

Over 50% of district committees now consist of a single branch, compared to 40% in 1977.

This is done in the name of efficiency and unity, but the only thing it has made





NATIONAL UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

efficient is the control of the full-timers over such elderly branches. With many small hospitals, people's homes and jobs to cover, NUPE obviously cannot have a branch in every workplace, the super-branches have become remote from the membership.

For district committees to play a real role, the most important thing would be to take the power to make action official, as proposed in amendments to the Act.

As we climb further up the union structure, the sphere becomes thinner and all but the hardest bureaucrats are overcome and fall away. Above the district committees stand area committees, and above that the eleven divisional councils.

The report has less to say about these bodies, from the familiar about each of them doing its work etc etc. Branches have rather to say.

For the area committees, the range from abolition to increased delegate representation from the district committees.

Area committees do have to say, but they need to be set up and made more accountable. Delegates support the Tower House amendment, which would increase representation from the district committees, with half the seats reserved for women.

Direct

Divisional councils are elected from the area committees, with two extra members elected from a national conference. They propose a number of amendments; among them direct election of all or all of the council members from the branches, and councils the authority to take strike action off and setting up youth group committees in each area.

The section of the report that draws most critical comments is one of the best: that on "the role of full-time officer".

It was ironic in the campaign for reelection of MPs that it supported by full-union officials who themselves remained unaccountable and unaccountable. Full officials are supposed to be accountable to the

Executive, the body that appoints them (not directly, but through the General Secretary). The report is quite brazen in its argument for retaining the present system, despite the fact that most NUPE officials will privately admit that election will come sooner or later.

The argument is two-faced. It is claimed that "a system of election might encourage to cultivate only the big branches with large votes, rather than concentrating on areas where union organisation is weak". The same officials are trying their hardest to eliminate the small branches! You can't have it both ways, brothers and sisters!

Another little gem is the argument that if officials are elected "once every three years at most", there is no opportunity for continually reviewing their work. As if that happens at the moment!

The last argument put forward is the claim that an elected officer would rise like a Bonaparte above the union committees, pointing to his/her electoral base as a justification for pursuing different policies from these committees.

The spectacle of Alan Fisher urging acceptance of

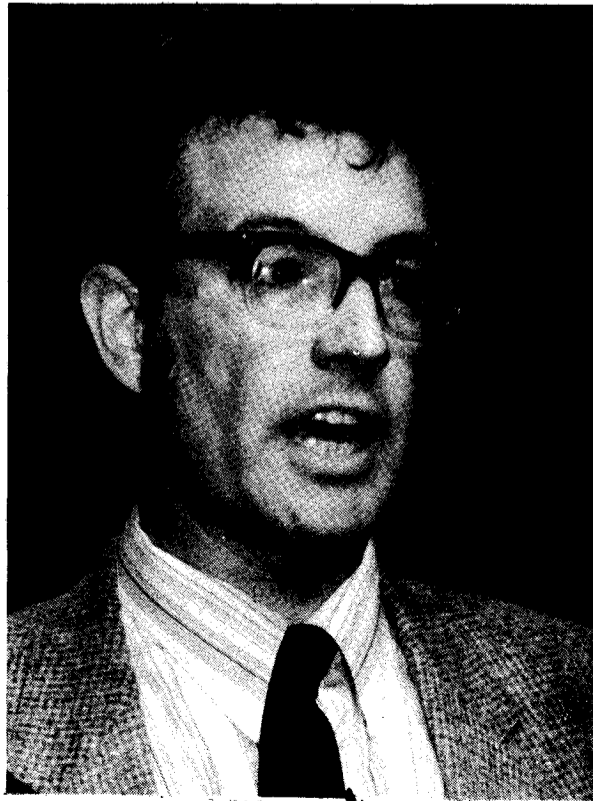
the 9% pay offer in the winter of discontent, against the decision of the Executive, is enough to expose this argument.

The union full-timers already have tremendous power. They have control over the apparatus of the union — over its offices, assets, equipment... They control the circuits of information inside the union, and become the official spokespeople for the union to press and TV.

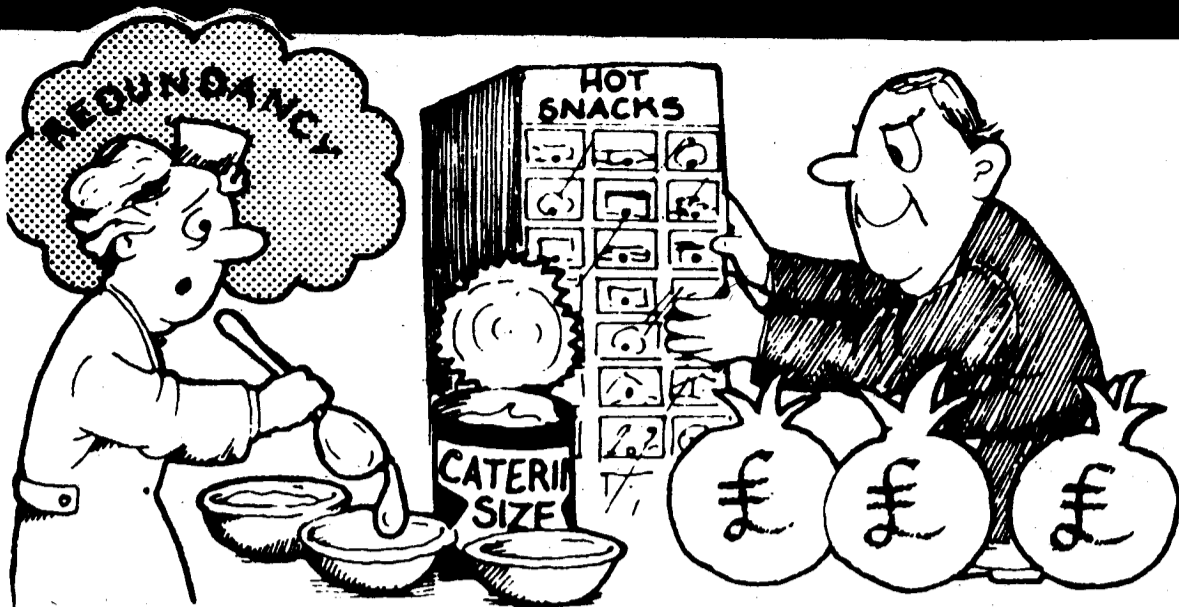
This access to the media enables someone like Alan Fisher to go outside the structure of the union to get the kind of decisions he wants. Initiatives and policies are decided at the regular officers' meetings rather than at the committees.

The feeling of the branches is clear from the amendments: we want to elect our officials on a regular basis, and make them accountable to the membership. The best option would be the election of all full-timers, from general secretary to area officers, once every three years, with provision for recall.

That is the first step in taking power away from the officials, putting it in the hands of the members, and building a fighting union.



Rodney Bickerstaffe — appointed NUPE's new general secretary for life without most members even having heard of him.



School meals: strike back at sackings

Mary Ann Todd looks at the industry where 300,000 jobs are under threat

IN THE 1970s we saw the first massive cuts in the school meals service with both Tory and Labour governments jacking up prices, cutting quantity and quality of the food and hours and jobs of school meals staff.

Labour had planned drastic further cuts in school meals if they had been re-elected in 1979 (one point that Denis Healey assiduously avoided mentioning in his Deputy Leadership election address to NUPE voters and which the NUPE Executive failed to point out to its members).

Neil Kinnock (Shadow Education Secretary) says categorically that he cannot and will not commit himself to a full restoration of the school meals service if a Labour government is returned.

It is the Tory government, however, that has really done the job on school meals, aided and abetted by the many Labour councils who have carried out their policies.

Carlisle's 1981 Education Act made it a free-for-all for all local authorities to pick on school meals as an easy option for cuts.

There have been many variations on the same theme — from bumping up prices to phasing the service out altogether.

Lincolnshire, Gloucestershire and Dorset announced cuts in school meals immediately after the Act became law. Others were emboldened by their lead. Norfolk dispensed with 1,200 of their staff. Bromley, Kent, voted in November 1980 to provide no hot or cooked meals; 400 out of the 750 staff were to go and the few that remained would dish up rolls, yoghurt and maybe soup.

They are now proposing introducing new contracts for their kitchen staff. They propose to pay them for only 195 days each year and do away with school holiday retainer fees, with the County Council retaining the right to give them whatever catering jobs they want done, including work on Saturdays. They will lose all sick pay and other benefits from their temporary contracts, with a resulting pay reduction of 23%.

Sack

Devon County Council has just announced that they wish to sack their entire school meals staff, taking

them on again as casual staff after the school holidays.

In a recent Local Government News, Ron Keating, Assistant Secretary, reported that employers on the National Joint Council for Local Authority Services proposed that the question of arrangements during school closure periods i.e. retainer fees, should not be part of national agreements but should be subject to local determination. Yet another free-for-all.

But if the recent history of school meals has been pretty grim, the prospects for the future look even worse.

So what can be done to save the school meals service?

Part time

School meals staff are usually part-time women workers, often with little previous trade union experience. They need strong trade union organisation and they need encouragement, guidance and leadership.

Like any other members of the working class, if they have a clear, positive course of action proposed to them and they are convinced of the effectiveness of that action, and that they have got the necessary support and backing from their union, then they will fight.

But in his letter to the Prime Minister on the Kent proposals, Alan Fisher talks of the Tories picking on women who are least likely to and would be least effective if they took strike action.

In fact, in every meeting of NUPE that I've been to the leadership have claimed that the problem with school meals is that our membership won't fight.

The strike in Coventry of school meals workers, cleaners, etc., shows categorically that the members are able and willing to fight and that their action can be effective.

The Executive Council of NUPE states often that it will "fully support" any opposition to cuts by their membership. But they never spell out clearly and simply

what kind of effective action school meals staff could take.

We have had masses of full colour brochures and leaflets explaining how to change public opinion by using the local media. We've had school meals workers lobbying Parliament. The membership knows that publicity alone has not and will not save school meals.

In Devon it is probably argued that if school meals staff strike they will be playing into the Council's hands, saving them money and having no impact as they would just be sacked anyway.

Is it being argued that what they are doing to school meals staff today, they could well be doing to caretakers and cleaners tomorrow and teachers the next day?

The teachers are not in NUPE but caretakers are.

They could close all the schools in Devon and make an enormous fight of it, affecting every family and putting enormous pressure on the County Council to back down.

NUPE has advocated a policy of backing local responses to cuts but has refused to give a national lead or call for any form of national strike action.

'Undemocratic'

The Executive argues that to do so is undemocratic and imposing their will on members. The membership has to decide, they say.

Of course the members have to decide, but they need a national lead — a clear coordinated campaign showing why they must all strike together to prevent a further decimation of the service.

Instead it is left up to each area to take action so that the staff are left unaware of the full strength that NUPE has since they are left isolated. They need to be shown how to flex their trade union muscles.

They need to have explained to them the relevance of NUPE's policies on, for example, no cover, so that union members refuse to take over cooking meals

from a kitchen that has been closed with the loss of jobs.

If such action leads to victimisation, then other NUPE members should be immediately called out in their defence.

The local authorities would like to whip up a dog eat dog attitude among school meals workers. Take the meals from this kitchen and your numbers will go up and your job will be saved.

We have to stamp this out and replace it with trade union consciousness — a class consciousness that we are up against the bosses and not against one another.

The best way of doing this is through action — blacking, strikes — but these actions are never proposed.

It is even argued that if such action is proposed it will put the members off and drive them out of the union.

If it is union membership they are worried about, then the loss arising from the cuts and the destruction of jobs will itself be massive.

In the light of the April 27 Joint National Council and School Meals decision, the time is ripe now for a national strike to be called to protect school meals.

The call should go out for all NUPE members in schools so that all schools are closed and picket lines organised.

If parents cannot send their children to school it will bring the country to a halt just as effectively as any transport or power workers strike.

We must act and through our action show the rest of the trade union movement what is at stake, and why they must join with us to defeat this government and its anti-working class policies.

NOW YOU SEE THEM.

The Lancashire School Meals Campaign

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NUPE SPECIAL

United fight in Sheffield

THINGS SEEM to be moving fast in Sheffield. NUPE and CoHSE members have been working closely together, and on the two-hour strike called by CoHSE hospital workers from all the unions joined in an impressive lobby of Westbrook House, where the Health Authority was meeting. Leaflets to the general public and patients explaining the dispute and asking for support have been distributed. A letter has been sent to the local labour movement asking for support in any way possible.

One of the larger hospitals - Northern General - has 70% of its NUPE members prepared to take all-out strike action. Middlewood Hospital is also prepared to do this.

If the mood in Sheffield matches the rest of the country, we will be out indefinitely if there is no improved offer after Wednesday.

ELLEN TAYLOR

Cardiff plans march

NHS trade unionists in South Glamorgan have shown overwhelming enthusiasm for the one-day strike on Wednesday 19th.

All the major hospitals in the area have voted to come out. The joint shop stewards' committees in Cardiff Royal Infirmary and the Heath and St David's Hospitals put out a call for a demonstration on the Wednesday morning through Cardiff, and this was taken up through South and Mid Glamorgan to such an extent that the NUPE office lent us the divisional banner to save face.

In Cardiff Royal Infirmary, management cancelled all non-emergency admissions, all out-patient clinics, and all routine surgery and X-Ray work. They have also given an undertaking that no volunteers will be used under any circumstances, and even the WRVS, who run tea-stalls and sweet trolleys, will close for the day.

Emergency cover is being organised by the joint shop stewards' committee itself. We are organising our own duty rotas, and told management who would be coming in to provide cover, for how long, and exactly what work would be done.

By organising this cover, as well as the picket rotas, we have involved virtually everyone in the organising of the strike, and gained some valuable experience. The feeling now is for further strikes, one-day and more if necessary, to get the full claim.

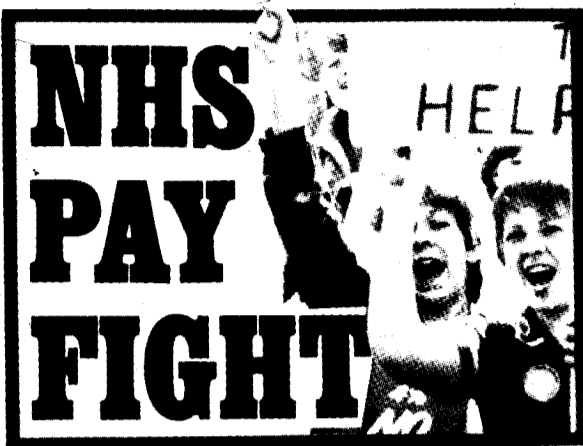
MARTIN BARCLAY
(Branch Secretary, Cardiff
Royal Infirmary)

Ready for all out action

IN LINE with recommendations from the TUC Health Services Committee Health Service unions will be striking for 24 hours on

Wednesday 19 May.

There has been a strong response to the call from the membership of the major unions.



Leicester: management using threats

Management in Leicester hospitals have followed up their discussion paper on measures to take against strikers (see last week's SO) with threatening letters to all staff.

The letters warn that work to rule action is regarded as a breach of contract and will result in reduced pay

packets. But whether management will carry out their threat is yet to be proved.

Meanwhile all is set for a strong response to the May 19 one-day strike, with a coach bringing strikers from the outlying Carlton Hayes hospital into a rally where they will join strikers from other Leicester hospitals.

In Scotland, all COHSE members will take action - with local demonstrations in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen. In

the rest of the country over half of COHSE branches will be involved, with major stoppages in London, Hampshire, Brighton, Maidstone, Bristol, Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Leeds, Hull, the North West, Blackpool, Preston, Sunderland and Birmingham.

NUPE members have been taking action locally to build up support for the 24 hour stoppage. 60 hospitals in London have voted to come out. In the West Midlands, 2,000 ancillaries and 640 nurses are on a work to rule.

In Rugby Health District, there have been 2-hour stoppages as in many other areas as part of the gradual 'escalation' planned by the union leaders.

But many health workers are already threatening to go way beyond the gradual approach taken by the officials.

Laundry workers in the North East are planning on going on indefinite strike till the claim is met. Alderney Hospital NUPE members struck from Monday to Wednesday - rather longer than 2 hours!

While the 24 hour strike action must be welcomed as a step forward, workers in the hospitals know that a good deal more than a one-off 24 hour strike with a few more 2 hour stoppages will be needed to win the 12%.

The membership has shown through the ballot on the offer that they are more than willing to fight the pathetic 4%.

All-out strike action, with emergency cover under workers' control, is the way to win.

Oxford: unions unite

Staff at all of Oxford's major hospitals will be participating in the May 19 day of action.

The local COHSE branch, which has already given a lead with a one-day stoppage early on in the campaign, will be out at Littlemore and Warneford Hospitals as well as the AHA supplies and Rivermead.

NUPE will join in for the first time, with strikes planned at the John Radcliffe, Churchill, Nuffield, and Slade hospital. ASTMS and NALGO too have recommended their members to take strike action, and the Regional computer unit will be closed down.

Don't forget the majority!

by Mary-Ann Todd

NUPE is the union for the women in our society who are doing for pay an extension of their jobs in the home - the public paid carers, wipers and moppers. If anything was to be an emblem or symbol for the majority of women in our union it would be a mop and bucket.

They need a union that will note and understand their particular problems in

getting well organised and playing an active part in the union, working in isolated, often small sections, with members have to rush home after work to pick up children.

How does NUPE match up? NUPE does not.

Dinner

You ask, can you come to the branch meeting next week? and so often the reply is, 'Who's going to cook the

dinner, look after the kids? How will I get there, you'll not get my husband to drive me, he doesn't want me getting involved anyway. Well, I'll do me best.'

And so often when they do 'do their best' and after a great deal or organising women turn up and find either the meeting goes on over their heads, has very little relevance to them and, the burning issues which have driven them to come along are evaded, talked off the agenda, ruled out of order (14 days' notice needed, dear). No advice is offered about what can be done to fight the attacks of the local council or area health authority, no concrete plans suggested by the 'experts' in the union (who after all if anyone should know, he should), the union officials, the branch officers. But all these good officers seemed to spend their time doing is moaning how terrible Maggie Thatcher is, how management don't care about the sick, old, the very young.

Then, if a member should dare to say 'I haven't come all this way to hear what I know already. What's the union doing about it?' The experts the branch officers have the reply; the same reply that every official downwards from Brother Fisher (now Bickerstaffe) uses.

"Love"

'Well, dear (or 'love' or even the occasional 'sister'), we understand what you're

getting at but we're not the union. It's the members out there that are, the same members who haven't bothered to turn up to this meeting.

'We can't do anything if they don't want to fight.'

Plausible

It sounds so plausible, so unanswerable, especially when it's linked to other old chestnuts that come from the bureaucrats' handbooks like 'we haven't got the industrial muscle of the members', 'the only people we hurt if we strike are the old and sick'.

And so the women who have made such an effort to get to the union meeting think to themselves 'What's the going in coming', get totally demoralised, end up bitter and frustrated.

However, all is not lost by any means for Nupe women. Many women have been driven to fight, to ignore the defeatism of the leadership in Nupe. They know what's at stake if they don't fight, they don't stand a hope in hell of another job part time and they know what long term suffering will be caused if the services for those they care for are slashed.

And so they occupy threatened closures, in everything from swimming baths in Fulham to the geriatric hospitals like St. Mary's and St. Benedicts'

Many health workers are completely aware that there is no way they will win even the inadequate 12% they're

asking, without strike action and are discovering how to do this with an essential service maintained, discussing the whole question of 'emergency cover' and how to implement it. But, nowhere, will you discover Nupe officials working out the best way to encourage the membership to take the fullest possible strike action.

What is needed is for women to organise to get rid of the present leadership at every level and to replace it with union leaders that will not make excuses and start fighting. Leaders who

instead of attacking women for not coming along to branch meetings understand their problems in doing so and make every effort to assist them in getting there by having meetings in worktime, by helping pay for babysitters or organising transport and by keeping in touch with them regularly, ensuring they know what's going on in their union. A leadership that will give women encouragement and confidence in taking on the employers and fighting the government with clear plans for what can be and needs to be done.

Socialist Organiser Alliance

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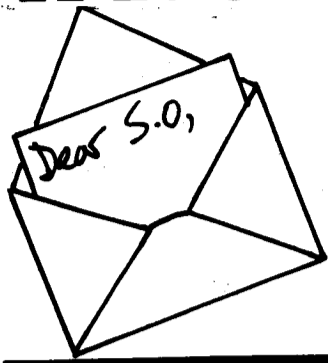
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We invite readers to send us their letters, up to a usual maximum length of 400 words. Send to 'Writeback', Socialist Organiser, c/o 28, Middle Lane, London N8.

Don't back Galtieri!

SOCIALISTS who are calling for the victory of the Argentine Junta have as you point out (SO81) got lost in their desire to create a nice, straightforward anti-imperialist schema. Twist and turn as they may, these people cannot escape the clear logic: a victory for Argentina in the short, medium or any other term of interest to socialists, will not give a mighty impulse to national and democratic consciousness and lead to the overthrow of

the Galtieri dictatorship. On the contrary it will intensify reactionary ideology in the Argentine proletariat and bind them closer to the military capitalists who delivered the goods after 150 years of waiting. Of course, a victory for Thatcher will similarly set back the working class struggle in the UK and provide a tremendous impetus for right wing policies, militarism and racism. Our main axis therefore,

has to be 'Stop the War' not 'Victory to Argentina'; 'Don't play their deadly capitalist game' not 'Boots-boys for Buenos Aires'.

The Falkland Islands have never been part of the Argentine nation, a nation that was forged with the big European settlements of the latter part of the nineteenth century. Argentina's claim is purely a territorial claim. It has nothing to do with self-determination. Britain never dispossessed



Galtieri an Argentine population of the Falklands (which is why

Laurens Otter's parallel with the six counties is an erroneous one). As a territorial claim it is extremely dubious, the flag of the former Republic of Buenos Aires having flown over the Malvinas for some part of the years 1822-33. Its successful accomplishment could well spark off further military adventures against Chile, Brazil, Uruguay, etc, against whom Argentina also has territorial claims.

The Falkland Islanders do not oppress the Argentine nation, nor are they acting as the agents of a colonial power. For Britain the issue is one of how and when, not whether to de-colonise.

The Islanders are of course no more a nation than the six county Protestants. But as a non-oppressive settler community they should have group rights to decide their own future.

Those who support the flagrant violation of those rights by armed force are doing a disservice to our goals of freedom, justice and autonomy, stimulating the reactionary use of violence and dragging the name of socialism through the mud.

An invasion such as that undertaken by the Junta cannot be supported. This would be so even if Argentina was a bourgeois democracy or even a deformed workers' state.

But we are told Britain is an imperialist power, Argentina a dependent country. We always support the Argentinas of this world against the Britains.

This is schematic nonsense. If the Mexican government invaded the USA tomorrow to reclaim Texas would we support them on the grounds that such an invasion would aid the progress of world revolution? The latter is the criterion on which we should base our support. All other schemas are contingent — helpful secondary guides sometimes.

We should oppose the Argentine invasion for the same reasons as we oppose the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

I have stressed the position of Argentina to correct the wrong positions taken by certain groups. But of course our main tasks and our main enemy are here at home.

Whilst the key to our slogan 'Stop the War' is unity between British and Argentine workers, the first step towards this is the blacking of all military suppliers.

Many resolutions going forward condemning Thatcher's war effort miss this central point.

C. Fosco Manchester

MARXISM UP FOR GRABS?

THE method of Socialist Organiser has been made crystal clear by the issues raised in the Argentine/British war.

All your assessments and conclusions can be found rooted in the simple idea that revolutionaries can never give any support to any action of the junta. This premise forces you to demonstrate that only the bourgeoisie can benefit from the invasion of the Malvinas.

From this perspective the invasions cannot be assessed as a blow to imperialism, and Galtieri has to be pin-pointed as the only beneficiary in Argentina.

Holding loyally onto this

logic SO maintains that there are no strategic or mineral interests in the South Atlantic! This in turn leads you to explain that Margaret Thatcher is only using the war in order to boost the Tories at the next election!

Is it really necessary for the bourgeoisie to risk a war just to avoid the SDP, Foot or Healey?

The facts contradict your conclusions. Britain has avoided handing over sovereignty and the seas around the South Atlantic are increasingly strategic because they are the only alternative to the Panama Canal.

Seeing the bourgeoisie as the only beneficiary of

the invasion in Argentina, leads SO to conclude that Argentina has no just claim to sovereignty of the Malvinas. This, in turn, leads to two conclusions — firstly that Argentina's actions are imperialist (mini-colonial gambit'), and, secondly to a denial of the importance of any geographical or economic factors in the determination of the extent of sovereignty.

Unpleasant

The conclusions that SO is not ready to publicise are very unpleasant for socialists, and go far beyond the need to call for

an immediate Argentinian withdrawal.

Up for grabs is the theory of permanent revolution! For this is clearly outdated if a neo-colonial country like Argentina has really broken from its dependence — to the extent of developing a competing imperialism! Revolutionaries in a whole string of similar countries (Mexico? India? South Korea? . . .) must therefore change their strategies towards fighting a home based imperialism. Revolutionaries in the remaining neo-colonies must also make major reassessments of the potential of their own national bourgeoisies to effect reform.

Marx's materialism is also dumped by SO's analysis of what is being fought for — a group of islands that are so useless that the British have been trying to unload them for years? A strange imperialism this Argentinian brand! And then the right of the Orange areas of Belfast to self-determination has always been known to socialists hasn't it?

Refusal

All this just because SO makes a blanket refusal to support any action by any neo-colonial government.

Just because SO is concerned more with the

purity of the actor's motives than with the action itself.

The only criteria that socialists start from is the interests of the world working class. However Thatcher's defeat comes about it will smash jingoism in Britain, demoralise imperialism, increase the demands put on Galtieri, and enormously encourage all liberation forces world-wide. The stakes are unquantifiable, even the Malvinas Islanders have no objective interest in remaining an imperialist outpost.

Yours fraternally, LESHARTOP Coventry

No analogy with 1938

I WISH to criticise most strongly the IWL statement on the Falklands/Malvinas war (SO83). Nothing does more harm to Marxism than the wrenching of quotations from their historical context in order to make a superficial analogy with present events — a practice Trotsky himself deplored.

There is no comparison whatsoever between the government of Getulio Vargas in the Brazil of 1938 and the government of Galtieri in the Argentina of 1982. Vargas' regime may indeed be described as 'semi-fascist' but it was certainly not a Fascist

state on the model of Hitler's Germany or Mussolini's Italy, as Trotsky realised by his important qualification of "semi".

Vargas was in fact threatened by an attempted coup by Salgado and his Brazilian Nazis. Although the trades unions were incorporated into the state, opposition was suppressed and the Communist party outlawed, Vargas did not wage class war on the horrific scale carried out by the Argentinian junta over the last six years.

Vargas' style of government and the historical conditions which gave rise

to it bear more relation to Peronism than to the military regimes of Argentina, Chile, El Salvador etc., today. Peronism was and remains based very much on the working class. It is also to a limited extent anti-imperialistic.

Perhaps socialists could take a defencist position if the Junta shared some of these characteristics. But it does not, and a careful reading of the quotation used by the IWL shows what Trotsky's true stance would have been in today's situation.

Trotsky warns against the "double chains" which a victorious imperialism

would impose on Brazil in the form of an even worse fascist dictatorship. These "double chains" have already been forged around the peoples of South America by imperialism which has armed, trained and assisted the rise to power of military juntas throughout the continent in order to protect the interests of imperialism.

Because one of the watchdogs of imperialism has turned against its masters (like Idi Amin did, remember) we must not elevate it to an act of anti-imperialist principle.

Objectively it is a symp-

tom of the break-up of imperialism but this does not mean we should support the junta. The only socialist and internationalist position is a defeatist one. We must call for the political overthrow of our own governments. The struggle against the war in Britain is an essential part of that struggle to defeat the Tory government. Argentinian socialists have the responsibility to carry on their heroic and already costly struggle against the Junta.

It cannot be postponed. Argentinian claims to the Falkland/Malvinas are historically and geograph-

ically justified, but they cannot be resolved by war between bourgeois powers. The question of sovereignty will only be settled when a British socialist government hands over the islands unconditionally to a democratic Argentina.

Any support for the Junta does not help the working class of the respective countries achieve this — in fact I would go so far as to call it a betrayal of Trotskyism.

Socialist greetings, Alan Brooke, Colne Valley CLP

MILKING PROFITS

By George McLean

IN the Science column of SO no. 70, Davy Jones highlighted the dangers to the health of babies who are bottle fed rather than breast-fed. Especially in the Third World infants are suffering and dying from malnutrition, and from infection while multinationals are raking in the profits. Nestle, for example, had total sales worth £7 billion in 1980, of which £170 million was from baby foods.

The formula for the multis is easy.

*Take a picture of a bonny (preferably white) baby sucking at a bottle with your firm's name on it, put it in a glossy magazine, and give it to mothers in the Third World as an 'educational aid'.

*Give hospitals and clinics posters, literature, and plenty of free samples of milk substitute empha-

sising how modern and Western bottle-feeding is.

*Dress your salespersons up as nurses and doctors and send them out to local villages (but don't mention the cost of the products).

These high-pressure sales techniques shocked and disgusted many people in Europe and the US. So loud was the protest that the World Health Assembly in May 1981 overwhelmingly approved an international code of marketing, calling for bans on direct advertising to the public, on distribution of free samples, and on use of health care facilities to promote breast-milk substitutes.

Nestle responded that their marketing policies already conformed to the 'aims and principles' of the code. However, the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) and War on Want have

hounded the company mercilessly over its sales practices. For example, IBFAN exposed thousands of violations throughout the world, including Britain, and through the action in North America where millions of people have been boycotting Nestle products for four years.

The company felt its corporate image had been tarnished and so recently appointed Mr Helmut Maucher, "a marketing wizard", as Managing Director. On March 16 this year, shortly after he arrived, Nestle announced their intention to implement the code and laid down guidelines for use by marketing personnel. They offered to rewrite and re-design product labels and 'educational materials', and to alter many of their sales techniques. It remains to be seen whether these instructions are a

serious attempt to show responsibility to mothers, or whether they are tactical concessions in the face of public outrage.

Indeed, Nestle's 32-page pamphlet is worth reading as an exercise in studying the fine print. For example, they crawl through a loophole in the code which prohibits "advertising" but allows "informal material". They interpret this to mean that "information of a general educational nature" (such as breast-feeding charts and vaccination cards) must not mention a product by name but may mention the corporation . . . e.g. Nestle.

And throughout their document they conflate 'information' and 'education' with 'advertisement' and 'promotion'.

Further, Nestle arbitrarily and inappropriately restrict the code's scope to food for babies up to four months old, so allowing

SCIENCE



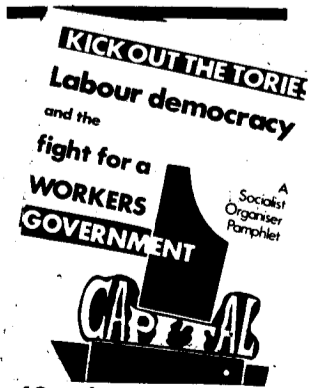
advertising and promotion of many other bottle-feed products.

Finally, Nestle still support the practice of giving free samples and even free gifts to the medical profession as inducements to use and promote their products. This is a sales pitch wholly contrary to the code and all efforts to promote breast-feeding.

The US-based International Boycott Committee invited Maucher to a meeting on April 7 (World Health Day) to discuss the implications of Nestle's latest instructions and

the means of independently monitoring their implementation, so as to come to a possible agreement on ending the boycott. Nestle failed to respond to this, saying that they would only meet with "serious and responsible" people (like Church leaders).

Some critics would say that the charges against these multinationals are extremely serious, and that Nestle and others are in this way responsible for the continued tragedy we see in the Third World.



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



Taft-Hartley: THE THE US UNIONS

A NEW labour movement was forged in the 1930s. The previous decade had been one of stagnation and retreat for the American Federation of Labour. By 1929 the proportion of organised workers had dropped to 10% of the labour force — half the 1919 figure.

The movement of Samuel Gompers, going for "more" through purely economic methods, ignoring politics, refusing to recruit the unskilled and semi-skilled, obsessed with the differentials of the shrinking craft workers, had exhausted its impetus.

In the heavy production industries — metals, rubber, leather, petroleum, chemicals — and in communications and public utilities, unions were non-existent or limited to the tiny skilled strata. As America woke up to depression, the AFL stood idly by as workers stood in soup lines, starving strikers were herded off the picket lines, and protesting workers were savagely beaten by state cops and company goons.

The inauguration of Roosevelt as President in March 1933, initiated a new era. His mission was the revival of US capital. His adventurous method was to increase consumption by expanding purchasing power, partly by wage regulation, partly by stimulating the growth of trade unionism.

Stirrings

This strategy coincided with the first stirrings of the millions of forgotten workers and their insurgent movement that was to find its embodiment in the Committee of Industrial Unions.

Roosevelt's first piece of legislation, the National Recovery Act, gave workers a right to organise and bargain collectively and prohibited any interference by employers and also contained minimum wage clauses. A National Labour Relations Board was established, to administer elections and arbitrate disputes.

The British Tory government looked on with envy as US President Reagan confronted and smashed the air controllers' union PATCO last summer. Now Norman Tebbit is at work pressing home new laws to shackle the British unions. JOHN McILROY looks at the background to the present legal restraints on the American workers' movement.



John L. Lewis

This basic structure, developed in the 1935 Wagner Act which outlawed "non-union" contracts and listed other unfair employer practices, represented a break from the "voluntarist" tradition in which the state had kept out of labour relations and the AFL had actively rejected any support or sustenance from government.

It undoubtedly encouraged union organisation. It also created a framework through which to channel the upsurge, and a legal base which could later be built upon through straight anti-union law.

In the mid-30s, the famous strikes in Toledo, Minneapolis and the San Francisco waterfront started a movement initially confined by the conservatism of the AFL. Indeed, by 1936 union membership was barely back to its 1920 level.

Reacting to the thwarted militancy, the leaders of the new unionism — Lewis, Murray, Hillman and Dubinsky — saw their

own opportunity, and established the CIO within the AFL.

In 1937 militant strikes unionised the steel industry, sit-downs in auto forced General Motors and Chrysler to sign agreements, and picketing workers shut down the clothing industry, quintupling union membership. That one year made 3 million new members.

The continued conservatism of the AFL led the CIO to formally break from it.

Yet, the new movement had crucial weaknesses. Like the new unionists in the UK 50 years before, the CIO leaders looked to the state. And they looked not to independent labour representation but to Roosevelt and the Democratic Party.

Lewis, Murray and Hillman, representatives of the post-1880s immigration, found the AFL's 'anti-politics' stance rugged individualism, antiquated and ineffective. But they retained a deep belief in the capitalist system.

They were not militants or union democrats. Socialism was unacceptable, revolution unthinkable.

The movement they supported for their own institutional reasons was, however, built up from the base by socialists. Entering the CIO with the most experienced and numerous political cadre, the Stalinists reaped the benefits.

Their politics further helped to derail the movement. As the US entered the war, Roosevelt was able to secure a 'no-strike' pledge and acceptance of rigorous wartime controls



Cops escort scab coal during 1978 miners' strike

from AFL and CIO leaders — and from the CP.

Patriotic strike-breaking and witch-hunting of miners' leader John L. Lewis who (using isolationist arguments) opposed the war, was the CP policy. This alienated them from the militants and paved the way for their later destruction.

The true revolutionaries of the Socialist Workers Party, despite inspired leadership in Minneapolis and Toledo were few in number and able to exercise only a small influence. As James Cannon himself said, "Except in a few localities we let the great movement of the CIO pass over our heads."

Nemesis

After the war 15 million Americans held union cards. The high point — and the nemesis — of the "great movement" was at hand. 1945 produced a great wave of radicalisation in the world working class.

The USA experienced the greatest strike movement in its history. The scale of struggles dwarfed "the red decade" of the 30s. In 1935-9 the average working days lost was 17 million. In 1945 this leapt to 36 million. In 1946 it was

116 million.

With the ending of war production, 2 million workers were dumped out of jobs, overtime was cut, prices continued to rise. Truman, Roosevelt's successor, told a working class looking for rewards for the depression and wartime sacrifice, "... we cannot hope with a reduced work week to maintain now the same take home pay for labour generally that it has had during the war. There will have to be a drop."

Fearing a return to the 30s, the workers marched with their feet. A series of bitter wage disputes exploded.

In November 1945, a quarter of a million General Motors workers struck at 92 plants in 50 cities. In a bitter 113 day stoppage, the slogans, 'open the books' and, 'wage increases without price increases' resounded from the picket lines to be taken up by Auto Workers leaders like Walter Reuther.

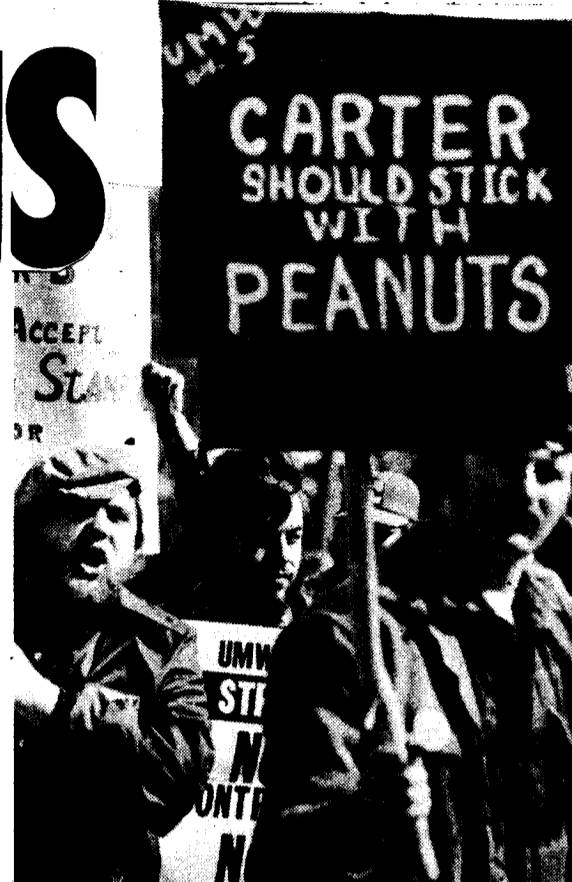
'Disaster'

In January 1946, as a national steel strike began, 2 million workers in the basic industries were on strike. Two weeks after the victorious General Motors settlement, half a million miners led by Lewis, walked out of the pits in what Truman called 'a national disaster'.

They went back with what the Miners Journal called "... the greatest economic and social gains registered by the UMWA in a single wage agreement since the birth of the union in 1890."

In May the railworkers came out. In September 1946, every part of the country was paralysed by the biggest maritime strike in US history. In November, the mineworkers were out again.

The militancy of the striking workers was, unfortunately, not matched by their leaders. There was no unified, co-ordinated strategy. Workers struck and returned according to their own bargaining timetable and settlements



Miners protest at Taft-Hartley injunction handed down by Jimmy Carter. They defied it — and won!

without regard for their brothers and sisters. The movement remained one of economic militancy.

Even the demand for a Labour Party failed to break through to wider layers.

Nonetheless, the force of the turmoil led even a hardened bureaucrat like CIO President Phillip Murray to comment, "... if private enterprise fails to give workers jobs at good wages, turning out things we all need, the people will recognise the failure of private capital."

Paved

As oil, glass, and transport workers joined in the strike wave, Truman reached for the law. The price was now to be paid for legal support in the 30s. Wagner would soon be seen to have paved the way for an all-out legal onslaught on the unions.

The wartime Smith-Connally Act was due to expire shortly. However, as the miners struck for the second time in 12 months in November 1946, Truman successfully sought an injunction under the Act against the strike.

The court order was defied by the whole union membership. On November 27 Lewis was brought before the court for contempt. He was commanded to withdraw the strike call.

For all his inadequacies, Lewis had more spunk than the whole of today's TUC General Council put together. He refused.



Walter Reuther

On December 4 the Union was fined \$10,000 for his personal contempt. Under hysterical attack from government and media, fearing the Union would be bankrupted, and with little support from other union leaders, Lewis backed down. He appealed to the Supreme Court and called off the strike until March 1947 when the appeal would be heard.

Truman had earlier demanded draconian legal powers to replace Smith-Connally. He wanted to be allowed to draft all strikers into the army. His bill was put aside by the senate however, in favour of the Case Labour Disputes Bill.

Truman, now faced with mid-term elections, changed his tune. He felt the unions represented too important a block of Democratic Party support to ignore and vetoed the Republican Bill which had been passed by both Houses.

In the elections, in late 1946, the Republicans captured both Houses of Congress and a majority of state governments from the Democrats. Fresh anti-union legislation was inevitable. It took shape as the Taft-Hartley Bill, a comprehensive measure which took the Wagner Act structure and filled it with a profoundly anti-union content.

The Bill, introduced on 3 January 1947, had the same concerns as the Bill of Norman Tebbit now progressing through Parliament. It was intended to halt solidarity strikes, restrict blacking and picketing and smash up the closed shop. Its aim was to weaken union bargaining power and reduce membership.

Demarcation disputes and restrictive practices were banned. To use the Labour Relations Board, unions had to register with the Secretary of State for Labour. Union recognition would depend on state-supervised secret ballots. The government could seek 80 days cooling off periods in strikes which 'imperil the nation's health or safety'. The employers'



Fire workers, 1937

LAWS THAT SHACKLED

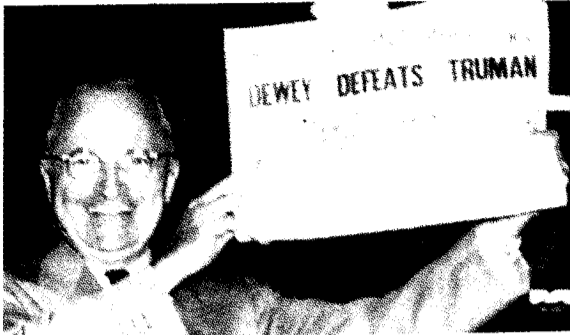
final offer could then be put to the secret ballot before a stoppage would be allowed.

Union funds were to be accessible for unofficial acts. All union officials were required to file a statement that they were not members of the Communist Party.

Where state law was more stringent than Taft-Hartley, it was to override it. (By the time the Act came into force, 34 states had already enacted their own laws to restrict in one way or another, the right to strike, picket, organise closed shops and conduct union affairs without state supervision).

What was the unions' response to this attempt to halt the strike movement in its tracks and use the law to undermine all the gains of the last decade and a half? In a word, inadequate.

By the end of 1946, AFL and CIO membership was over 17 million. Militancy had never been greater. The Stalinists had a membership of 100,000. They controlled unions involving about a quarter of CIO membership — vital organisations — the United



Truman gloats over his election victory overturning press predictions. But the trade unionists whose leaders backed Truman had nothing to celebrate.

Electrical Workers, the National Maritime Workers, the Longshoremen.

They had powerful factions in others, such as the UAW.

The unions were potentially in a powerful position to resist the legislation. The leaders' stance however, was to rely on the Democrats and the Presidential veto, ignore Truman's role of broker for Taft-Hartley, and firmly oppose industrial action. Some suggested Labour should draft its own anti-strike laws, others blamed it all on Lewis' "megalomania" and "dictatorship complex".

The Stalinists equally gave no lead. They gave precedence to manoeuvring to maintain their own position as the cold war got under way. Their wartime strike-breaking was now followed by blatant opportunism.

Reuther was able, with some justification (if exaggeration) to describe the separate settlement made by their CP controlled UAW union, while the Auto Workers were still out, as "an act of treachery, unparalleled in the history of the labour movement". When in November 1946 the CIO passed a declaration rejecting "efforts of

the CP or other political partners and their adherents to interfere in the affairs of the CIO" three well-known Stalinist union leaders were part of the drafting committee.

Such acts of "statesmanship" were legion. On December 15, Merrill, President of the CIO United Office Workers and himself a Stalinist supporter, stated that "any effort to impose the viewpoint of outside organisation on the union will be met by the firmest exercise of union discipline."

Demands for a fight against Taft-Hartley came from the ranks.

In February 1947 Joint Action Committees of AFL-CIO sprang up in various cities. On April 16 20,000 Chicago packing-house workers staged a one-day strike and demonstrated. In Iowa on April 22 100,000 workers went on a one-day strike whilst the Flint CIO initiated a proposal for a national 24 hour stoppage.

Taken up by other bodies, it was opposed by Green and Murray of the AFL.

Their line was clear:

prayers, petitions and post-cards. They even opposed protest, denouncing a Los Angeles to Washington motorcade.

On the day the Bill became law — Truman's veto being overridden by Congress — there was no national strike action. But a stoppage of 200,000 miners showed what could have been done.

Filled with illusions in Truman and the Democrats, the union leaders pinned everything on the 1948 elections. The President asked Congress for complete repeal of Taft-Hartley. In the crucial vote he was short of 5 supporters in the Senate. 14 in the house. Poetic justice for the man who had paved the way for Senator Taft.

When all the bluster was over, the union leaders accepted Taft-Hartley with no fight. In the words of Lewis, they "ran like cravens before the Taft-Hartley law".

The first year of the Taft-Hartley saw the issue of 12 anti-strike injunctions. By that time every international union, bar the mine-workers and the typo-



Bowing the knee since 1948... Lane Kirkland (left) now follows George Meany at the head of the AFL-CIO

graphical union, had bent the knee.

British trade unionists, facing the Tories' legal attack, must ponder on the way a powerful movement which had gone from 3 million in 1933 to 17 million in 1946, a movement that had just reached a high tide of militancy, was tamed and house broken.

We should think of Taft-Hartley when we think of Tebbit. We should think of

the futility of protest and parliamentary manoeuvres. We should ponder the refusal of the union leaders to use the strength that was there. We should scrutinise the inability of the CP to provide leadership.

Once more lions are going into battle, led by Assbit. If the fight against it must be made part of a wider fight for new leadership and new policies in our movement.

Outlaw male shortlists!

THIS YEAR the CLPD Women's Action Committee is pushing three resolutions for the National Conference of Labour Women. These demand that all-male shortlists should be disallowed, that the Women's Conference should have the right to submit five resolutions to Annual Labour Party Conference as of right and that the Women's Section of the NEC should be elected by the National Conference of Labour Women.

Of the three proposals, the greatest support from Women's Sections. The least controversial one would seem to be that the Women's Conference should have the right to table five resolutions to Annual Conference. The other two however are proving to be highly controversial.

In the case of the 'Women on shortlists' resolution, most of the opposition (though not all) comes from male comrades who resent potential competition for seats from women.

In the case of both topics

This week's CLPD column is from Heather Gaebler of the CLPD Women's Action Committee.

however, it is clear that the message has not yet got through that these demands are a central and inextricable part of any program to carry on with the democratisation of the Labour Party. They are essential if the majority of women are not to continue to be excluded from participation in politics.

Misunderstood

Yet the aims and motives which underlie these proposals are frequently misunderstood and misrepresented. WAC is campaigning for legislative changes because the formal equality which exists at present is totally unacceptable and inadequate. Furthermore, despite arguments to the contrary, attitudes tend to follow structural changes (as

has been shown by positive discrimination initiatives in the United States).

What many on the left ignore is that these measures would strengthen the left inside the Labour Party as a whole.

Counter-arguments tend to centre on the dredging up of women like Shirley Williams and Margaret Thatcher as being 'typical' — typical of what happens if you let women get involved in politics.

But what is left out, is the fact that some of these women got where they are because they were prepared to accept the male domination which exists in the political, social and economic hierarchy. They represent no threat to the status quo. It is this that enabled them to reach positions of political power.

In relation to this point, it is no accident that several of the women in politics who are 'successful' tend to deny that they have been discriminated against. No wonder. Quite a few of them come from financially and educationally advantageous backgrounds with few obstacles to realising their ambitions. But this is far from the case for most women.

And this is what makes these 'successful' women the exceptions rather than the rule.

Oblivious

It is important to recognise this because some on the left appear oblivious to the fact that the movement towards positive discrimination (rapidly gaining momentum) within the Labour Party, does not, for the most part, come from such women. Most of those participating in the campaign see their demands as part of a wider programme for real left-wing democratic changes.

Campaign for Labour Party Democracy

Of course there will always be opportunists who will try to use the gains achieved to further their own careers. But this should not blind us to the fact that the credibility of the left will increasingly rest on its ability to provide a socialist alternative which ensures that women do not remain subservient.

Encouraging

It is encouraging that a number of men are beginning to realise this.

The demand for the election of the NEC's Women's Section by the Women's Conference highlights this point: if this system were in operation now, there would be little difficulty in finding women who are both left-wing and committed to positive discrimination for women. At present this is proving to be a problem. But this situation is symptomatic of the women's dissatisfaction with male conceptions of what is 'left-wing'.

Win

It is further demonstrated by the fact that many women at present are saying that they would rather support no one,

Send him packing!

Ronald Reagan, leader of the biggest arms drive in history outside wartime, and main prop and support of the El Salvador military butcher, visits his loyal ally Margaret Thatcher in June. Join the protests: Sunday 6 June, 12.30 at Hyde Park; Monday June 7, 5.30 at Grosvenor Square; Tuesday June 8, 1pm, lobby of Parliament.

Contact: Reagan Reception Committee, PO Box 51, London SW10.



Reagan's other red carpet

DEMONSTRATE AT EMBASSY GROSVENOR SQUARE JUNE 7 5.30pm LOBBY PARLIAMENT JUNE 8 1pm

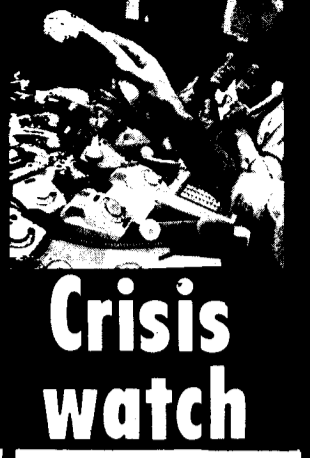
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ALL OUT FOR THE FULL CLAIM!

Women's Fightback special on the NHS pay fight. 10p [5p for strikers] plus postage from Women's Fightback, 41 Ellington St, London N7.

HELP US TO HELP YOU

WOMEN'S FIGHT TO WORK



Crisis watch

The big lemon

ACCORDING to the Financial Times last Saturday, it was Braniff Airways, 'the Big Orange', that coined the phrase 'When you've got it, flaunt it'.

It commissioned Pucci to design its staff uniforms, and an artist to paint two of its aircraft.

But last week all it was flaunting was bankruptcy. It had lost money solidly since 1978, and despite screwing its workforce to cut costs by 14% it still lost \$40 million in the first quarter of this year.

Other US airlines could follow Braniff. Altogether US airlines lost \$500 million on scheduled flights in the first three months of this year, and over \$400 million last year. They have not made a profit since 1979.

About the worst-hit is Pan Am, which lost \$100 million last year and is still making losses despite the wage cuts it has imposed on its workers.

Ironically the scale of the slump is what saves some of the worst-off airlines from being pushed into bankruptcy by their creditors straight away. Their assets are mainly aircraft, and second-hand aircraft are a drug on the market right now. So bankers reckon that it is better to hang on, and hope to get their money back later, than to press for payment now and end up with fleets of unsaleable aircraft on their hands.

A similar quirk has protected International Harvester, which looks like the next candidate for the knacker's yard. Its debts total \$7.6 billion, while its assets, at the most generous reckoning, are \$1 billion. But who wants a job-lot of remaindered farm machinery?

Bankruptcies in the US are however running at the highest rate since 1933. The latest big victim was the office machinery firm AM.

Airlines are particularly hit because they expanded and invested in the '70s on the basis of growing passenger numbers and cosy price-fixing rings. In 1978 Jimmy Carter pushed through laws making price-fixing more difficult, and with the recession passenger numbers have been falling despite reduced fares.

The only bright spot for the industry is the fact that the only way out is in the fight for an economy planned for human need.



Industrial News

Solidarity with Rulecan

RATTLES broke the union at Kingsland, said Rulecan shop steward Sandra O'Connor. "And he has tried the same with us. But we have fought back".

Sandra was speaking last Sunday, 16th, at a well-attended meeting called by Socialist Organiser supporters in solidarity with the NUTGW members on strike at Rulecan.

"The union has let us down badly", said Sandra. "OK, so they made it official. But they refused to confront the government and its anti-union laws".

She was very critical of the area official, Tom Evans, who at one meeting said that the union was weak because of its 89% women membership. "In my view it is the leadership which is weak".

Sandra said she had very little trust in the offer made by Rulecan boss Rattles last week - that is, if pickets were lifted, he would open up new premises in Runcorn and re-employ the remaining 45 strikers on a £55 fall-back rate, giving them full union rights.

This was negotiated through Alec Smith, the union general secretary, and Mr Rattles, over the phone.

'Mistake'

The offer was revealed when the Rulecan stewards forced a meeting between the Executive Board member for the North-West and shop stewards in the Liverpool branch, to explain the Executive decision to lift the blacking at the catalogue warehouses.

After admitting that it was 'a mistake' to lift the blacking, the Executive Board member threw in this surprise offer by Rattles.

A further clause in the offer was that the local union official involved in the dispute should no longer be allowed to represent

the women in the new premises. This was agreed by the general secretary but opposed by the strikers.

Sandra also told the meeting that the strikers had been to an industrial tribunal and the verdict would be given in two weeks. But the women are not waiting for the result, and are renewing their demand for the Executive Board to restore blacking.

Goods should be blacked not only from Rulecan but also from Kingsland Models - which is part of one and the same company, though Rattles claims it is separate.

The Executive's excuse for lifting the blacking was that it might be unlawful under the Prior Bill. But the strike has shown that the law and the police are weapons of the bosses.

"I realise now", said Sandra, "that the police are not an impartial force. They've been provoking

arguments on the picket line.

"They actually went to one woman's house, arrested her in front of her children, and charged her with assault on a scab!"

Women's Fightback supporter Sue Arnall spoke about the position of women in society, the attacks being made on us - and the women in the health service who are in the forefront of the fightback.

The chairperson summed up by saying that the struggle at Rulecan was a political struggle, not just some women fighting for pin money but a group of trade unionists fighting for the right to be represented by the union in a grossly exploited industry.

The struggle against the Prior Bill is a question for all trade unionists, and we now face an even greater threat in the new Tebbit Bill.

All unions should raise

NALGO setback

THE result of the recent ballot of NALGO members on Labour Party affiliation was 7 to 1 against on a high 60% poll.

The defeat was, of course, to be expected, but the margin was disappointing for the many NALGO

activists and Labour Party members who worked hard at building a campaign in a difficult period.

There are two main reasons for the poor ballot result. Firstly, the lack of any real fight back by Labour councils has led to increasing cynicism among rank and file union activists, not surprising when you realise that two-thirds of NALGO's 750,000 membership work in local government.

If, in a union like NALGO with very little Labour tradition and a very high Tory vote amongst its membership, the affiliation campaign is to be successful, then it must be based on joint action between the union and Labour councils in defending jobs and services and where possible improving working conditions.

Secondly, very little national leadership was forthcoming from the two pro-affiliation groups. The Campaign for NALGO Affiliation to the Labour Party [CNALP] was responsible for winning the right for the ballot to take place by pressing for a decision at 1981 National Conference, against the wishes of the NEC.

When the right to ballot was won, the reaction of Militant supporters who initiated CNALP, was such that one might have

thought we had just voted for the revolution. It was disappointing to find that the CNALP campaign was low-key and really only pitched at regional leaderships, with their propaganda relying too much on the historic Labour Party and trade union links and not enough on the need for joint action to defend jobs and services now.

The second group, FLAG [For Labour Affiliation Group] was made up of NEC members, the leading lights being Scottish District Communist Party members. This group's activity, to my knowledge, was confined to a few adverts in the national broadsheet, Public Service.

The way forward now must be to get away from sterile campaigning around ballots and be aimed at involving the rank and file of the union in joint action with local Labour Parties.

This could best be done by forming workplace Labour Party branches in every local authority, giving NALGO members and other local authority trade unionists a voice on GMCs and Local Government Committees, and opening up opportunities for joint campaigning and action on jobs and services.

BILL HAMILTON
Assistant Branch Secretary
Newham NALGO

support for these women; all work from Rattles must be blacked, whether at C&A, Grattons, or Kayes.

There must be a drive within the union for accountability of all officials and Executive Board members. They are not freelancers. We pay their wages.

Throw

If the leaders won't lead, we must throw them out and get people in who will.

The meeting agreed to produce a joint shop stewards/Women's Fightback leaflet to be distributed throughout the union and Labour Party branches.

Support the picket line at 7 am Monday and Tuesday Picow Farm Lane, Runcorn and send financial donations to NUTGW, Room 46, 62 Dale Street, Liverpool 1.

WINNIE MURPHY

Fighting the privateers

WANDSWORTH refuse collectors have been on all-out strike for five weeks now against the Tory council's plans to privatise the refuse collection, parks, mechanical workshops and some of the Town Hall services.

Street cleaning, which has already been hived off to Pritchards, presents a grim picture of what privatisation means. Complaints about unswept streets before the strike were coming in at the rate of 500 a week and pritchards have been fined £2,800 for work not done.

So ratepayers, and especially tenants on the

estates, are paying for the dubious savings in filthy streets.

For the employees the picture is even bleaker. In the 3 months since they've had the contract, Pritchards have sacked more workers than they now have working for them - some for trying to join a union, some for protesting at compulsory overtime and appalling working conditions.

When the service was run by the council, they employed several disabled workers, who face even more difficulty than other workers in finding jobs in a recession. Pritchards does

not employ disabled people.

In the last couple of weeks, the strike has suffered two blows: the return of a Tory council in the borough elections and the decision of NALGO workers in the Town Hall to call off their supporting action, under threats from management.

Socialist Organiser talked to strike committee secretary, Dennis English, about how the strikers see the strike progressing. What do you feel about the NALGO vote?

Well, at least we know where to expect our support from. The vote doesn't

reflect the feelings of a lot of NALGO members. The day after the vote, we had a lot of NALGO members down on our picket line at the central depot and promises of continuing support.

We've also had pledges of financial support from other NALGO branches - £250 from Croydon NALGO and £250 from Lambeth NALGO.

So it would be wrong to say we haven't still got support from NALGO.

What about the Tory election victory?

The only thing you can conclude is that we need to step up the action. We've

already escalated it. We got 650 out on strike now as against 200 at the beginning.

That's the mechanical workshops, fitters, stores, laundries and parks, from all 3 unions?

What has been the effect of the strike?

We estimate that the scabs are costing the council between £85,000 and £100,000 a week. We've been told they're paying £350 per vehicle per day.

But we've got to look to stepping up the fight within the borough and spreading it to other boroughs. We've had pledges of financial support and people down on the picket lines from outside the borough.

We haven't asked for industrial action yet. But the main thing is making it effective in Wandsworth. We need to bring the council to a standstill.

I can't tell you detailed plans till the members have discussed it, but we're certainly planning to escalate the action.

Have you had any trouble with the police?

Five dustmen have just been arrested - one charged with threatening criminal damage in connection with five scab dustcarts being set on fire and the other four with conspiracy to cause criminal damage. They're out on unconditional bail at the moment and there's a committal hearing on Thursday. They're getting legal backing from the union.

Messages of support and donations should be sent to: The London Borough of Wandsworth Manual Workers Strike Committee, c/o GMWU Offices, 347 Garratt Lane, London SW18.

	May	2	9	16	23	30
S	3	10	17	24	31	
M	4	11	18	25		
T	5	12	19	26		
W	6	13	20	27		
T	7	14	21	28		
F	8	15	22	29		

WHAT'S ON

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

US Hands off El Salvador! Demonstrate against Reagan's visit. Sunday June 6 12.30 at Hyde Park. Members: June 5 11am at US Embassy, Grosvenor Gardens and Embassy of the US. Contact: Reagan Reception Committee, PO Box 51, London SW10.

LUTTE OUVRIERE fete: international festival of revolutionary socialism. Saturday to Monday, May 29 to 31, at Presles, Val d'Oise, France. A delegation of SO supporters will be going over to the fete: all comrades interested, please write to SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

POLAND
Contact: Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group, 64 Philbeach Gardens, London SW5. 01-373 3492.
Glasgow Polish Solidarity Campaign. Ian McCalman, 18 Mossiel Rd., Glasgow G43. 041-63e2 1839.
Edinburgh PSC. C/o Edinburgh Trades Council, 12 Picardy Place.
Oxford Labour Committee on Poland. 468 Banbury Rd. Oxford. 0865 58238.
Glasgow PSC. 100 Queen St.
Edinburgh PSC. 110 Leman St. London E1.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER MEETINGS & FORUMS

SHEFFIELD. Every other Wednesday, at the Brown Cow, The Wicker. Business social in support of the FMLN/FDR. Saturday May 22, at Hulme Labour Club: entrance £2 (£1.50 unemployed).

LEICESTER: Sundays 7.30 at the Socialist Centre, High St. May 16: Palestine. Speakers: Barry Turner, John Nelson. With slide show on recent events in West Bank. May 23: The fight against the Thatcher/Reagan war drive. Speakers: Judith Bonner [executive, Youth CND], Peter Flack [NC, Socialist Teachers' Alliance], and local CND speaker. Also business session to discuss motions for SO conference.

For details of venue, write to PO Box 135, London N1.

SOLIDARITY with Chile, Central America and the Caribbean. National conference, Saturday-Sunday May 22-23, starts 11am, Sheffield University. Sponsors include Sheffield and Rotherham Trades Councils. More details: Cath, 0742 588052.

EL SALVADOR Solidarity Campaign [Manchester] social in support of the FMLN/FDR. Saturday May 22, at Hulme Labour Club: entrance £2 (£1.50 unemployed).

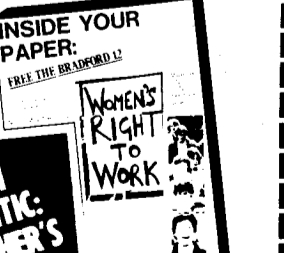


Class Fighter, paper of the National Left Wing Youth Movement of the LPYS. NEW ISSUE OUT NOW! 10p plus postage from BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX.

oyed]. With 'Harlem Spirit' plus support.

KILL THE Tebbit Bill: speaker Steve Longshawe [Laurence Scotts]. Tuesday May 25, 8pm, in Durham [phone 0385 780287 for venue].

STOP BRITAIN'S bloody hand in Namibia: Namibia Support Committee day school, Saturday May 22, 11am to 5pm at County Hall, London SE1. Entrance 50p.



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

ASLEF tough stance

WITH the ASLEF conference voting to reject the McCarthy report on flexible rostering, the scene is set for an industrial showdown on the railways.

British Rail bosses had already announced, before McCarthy's report gave qualified backing to their demands, that they would impose flexible rostering this summer come what may. And the ASLEF executive, under strong pressure from the rank and file, has always insisted that the eight-hour day is an unbreakable principle for the train drivers.

The drivers' job is already a taxing one, often involving shifts at all hours of the clock. The eight-hour day, the drivers feel, is a minimum line of protection. If it is given up, then BR's demands for manning cuts will only increase.

NUR leader Sid Weighell is already talking militant about BR's plans to shut down rail workshops. NUR militants should be demanding that their union leadership repudiates its support for flexible rostering, and unites its struggle with ASLEF in a common front against the cuts.

And in ASLEF militants need to strengthen local branch and area committees so that they can provide a challenge and if necessary an alternative to any wavering by the executive in the coming confrontation.

JUNE 10 FOCUS ON TEBBIT BILL

WITH the dockers' strike planned for that day, June 10 is now the major focus for action against Tebbit.

Industrial action alongside the dockers and health workers will be the most powerful blow against the Tories. But every other possible way of building the campaign should be used, too — demonstrations, rallies, meetings.

Despite the Falklands war, pressure for a fight against Tebbit is growing. The National Society of Metal Mechanics conference has called for a 24-hour strike against the Bill. And National Union of Seamen general secretary Jim Slater has raised the same call, linking it to the day when the Bill becomes law.

All-out

The Mobilising Committee for the Defence of Trade Union Rights has been campaigning for a 24-hour strike for nearly two months now. It sees this call as the first step to all-out strike action which would stop the Bill becoming law.

The Mobilising Committee's other call is for the labour movement to withdraw from the NEDC and tripartite committees, and to break all links with the Tories. A particular effort is being made in the TGWU

to push resolutions to the June General Executive meeting making this call and proposing a special recall union conference to decide on strike action against Tebbit.

Progress

From London, WENDY MUSTILL reports on the progress of the Mobilising Committee there:

"Affiliations so far include Camden NUPE [who have distributed 500 copies of the factsheet], ASLEF Kings Cross, and the NUPE ILEA District Committee [who have made a £10 donation].

Lambeth NUT have also taken 500 copies of the factsheet.

A statement for Labour councillors expressing opposition to the Bill and refusal to enact its clauses when passed [particularly the ban on Labour councils awarding contracts on a 'union labour only' basis] is being prepared and will be available next week. So will 25,000 leaflets for mobilising on June 10, focusing on the lead given by the dockers to coordinate strike action with opposition to Tebbit's Bill.

Scores of workshops on the Bill are being organised by the TUC regionally in June. Mobilising Committee supporters should use

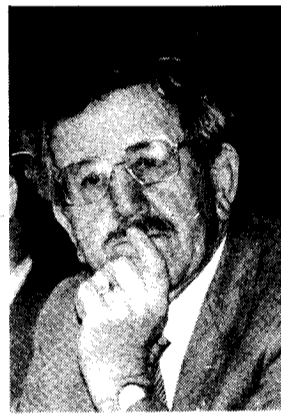
these to raise the arguments for action as widely and loudly as possible."

Wendy Mustill also reports on the 'Women Against Tebbit' campaigning.

"The Women's Fight-back leaflet outlining the Bill's implications for women is being reprinted. Tebbit's law is inextricably linked to organising and unionising women around the Women's Right to Work campaign.

The links should be explained when organising delegations for the June 5 demonstration."

Other recent affiliations and donations to the Mobilising Committee come from POEU External



Slater: call for one-day strike

Branch, Edinburgh, UCW Basingstoke, and Plasnewydd Labour Party branch, Cardiff.

To affiliate or order material from the Mobilising Committee, write to 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL. Or phone 01-609 3071.

Tebbit

Union leaders must **BREAK LINKS WITH TORIES NOW!**



CALL 1-DAY STRIKE!

Tatchell slams Tebbit scheme

"Young people should boycott the new youth training scheme and the Labour and trade union movement should give official backing to a boycott. Trade unions should give full support to young people who refuse to participate in the scheme and to take industrial action to make it inoperable."

Peter Tatchell, Labour's non-endorsed candidate for Bermondsey, condemned Tebbit's new scheme at a public meeting on Monday 17 May called by the Walthamstow and Leyton Unemployed Action Group.

Peter Tatchell criticised Norman Tebbit's new youth training scheme for the

unemployed. He said the wages of £15 a week for school leavers were below the supplementary benefit poverty line of £18.60. "The new scheme has transformed the Youth Opportunities Programme into something more akin to the Hitler Youth."

He accused the government of working in collusion with employers to exploit the plight of the young unemployed and boost business profits: "Young people are being dragged into working as cheap labour for starvation wages. I fear that this will force many youngsters to turn to crime to make ends meet. Nobody can live on

£15 a week. "Many workers in the Third World are paid better wages. The proposal to deny unemployment benefit to those who refuse to join the scheme is tantamount to industrial conscription."

Trident

Peter Tatchell called on the government to scrap the £8,000 million Trident nuclear missile programme and divert the funds to ensure that every YOP trainee receives £55 for a 35 hour week with 5 weeks paid holiday a year and a guaranteed job at the end of the scheme.

CPSA: after the landslide

by Stephen Corbishley

CPSA Conference delegates were stunned as outgoing President Kate Losinska read out name after name of successful Broad Left candidates for the CPSA NEC.

Kevin Roddy beat the right wing by about 2,000 votes to become the first Broad Left President of CPSA.

He is also a Militant supporter.

The Broad Left majority of 24 to 4 includes 8 Militant supporters and three members of the Communist Party. The remainder are Tribunites and other Labour Party members more to the left.

The right wing were not united behind their own candidate; they were demoralised by the Tory attacks on the union; and the drop of 19,000 in the number of members voting, compared with elections held earlier this year, also indicates that their supporters were also somewhat demoralised.

Meanwhile the Broad Left electoral machine is powerful enough to unite the various Left factions, and in a period of strong anti-Toryism it has captured the enthusiasm of the activists in the branches.

In the membership there is a growing bitter hatred of the Tories — a desire for a showdown with the Government, and for a leadership prepared to have that showdown.

This reflects a current running through all the Civil Service trade unions. In the same week as CPSA held its conference, the Inland Revenue Staff Association organised their first Broad Left group; the Society of Civil and Public Servants joined with CPSA in rejecting the new interim agreement on New Technology; and even the First Division Association (the union that organises the top Civil Service bureaucrats) came out against the Tebbit Bill.

The following week the conservative and professionally inclined Institute of Professional Civil Servants agreed not only to a programme of action against cuts, but also to an increase in subs to put the union on a war footing for next year's pay battle.

In CPSA, the victory on New Technology in the Civil Service part of the conference was the main advance on policy. Conference quickly kicked out the interim agreement, and instructed the incoming NEC to re-open negotiations on a shorter working week and no job loss. If this fails, the NEC must prepare for industrial action this year.

Award

On pay, though the Conference was resigned to the imposition of this year's arbitration award, it immediately gave instructions to prepare for a full scale offensive in 1983.

A special pay conference

will be held in November/December 1982 to prepare the claim; then work will be set in train for building links at local level with other unions. The campaign in 1983 will be on an all-out basis, with DE/DHSS local offices totally involved.

The future of pay bargaining in the Civil Service is currently under scrutiny by the Megaw Inquiry. Conference agreed to reject the evidence submitted by CPSA to this body on the restructuring of the clerical grades in the Civil Service, and that any conclusion arising from Megaw must be voted on at a full delegate conference.

Setback

The major set-back was on the cuts.

A Militant-sponsored motion carried by Conference was accurately described by the right wing General Secretary as "the current executive policy dressed up in more belligerent language."

The motion sets out arbitrary and (primarily) financial limits on any anti-cuts campaign; it confines initiatives to the Secretary and it seems to see producing more and more leaflets as the magic answer for mobilising the members.

This weakness was compounded when a motion to negotiate for an "enhanced redundancy agreement" was carried.

But in the second part of the Conference there were

major advances.

A motion to campaign for affiliation to the Labour Party (moved by an SO supporter) was passed by 101,000 to 93,000 votes.

A censure on the right wing NEC for refusing to affiliate to CND was passed overwhelmingly.

With only 7 votes against the CPSA is committed to a campaign against Trident; and with only 2 votes against to a campaign to defend Ministry of Defence jobs by fighting for alternative work.

A weak pro-TUC motion was however passed on the Tebbit Bill.

CPSA formally now has all the apparatus and trappings of a militant,

politically-formed union. But this coming year will be a test.

The CPSA bureaucrats are planning a disruptive operation against the Broad Left, trying to use anti-Militant feeling to dupe some members of the new EC. With the aid of the CP and Tribunites they hope to create a newer, more compliant 'left' bloc in the union.

So the fight is now on to defend the democracy of CPSA (new electoral system, election of full time officials); to defend the openness and accountability of the Broad Left; and to strike out independently towards building of the roots of a real rank and file movement.

1982 Conference



Gallery

APEX

The right-wing leadership has won out on three issues at the APEX conference.

The conference endorsed incomes policy. It backed talks for amalgamation — or perhaps a loose link-up short of amalgamation — with the G&M and/or EETPU, building up a solid right-wing bloc in the TUC.

And it voted to support Thatcher's war.

NUS

THE NATIONAL Union of Seamen has voted for an emergency resolution from the union executive supporting a British invasion of the Falklands.

There was opposition from left-wingers, including the Liverpool branch which had submitted a resolution opposing the war. But the executive steam-rolled over this, just as it had previously opposed the union's Felixstowe Port Committee, which advised union members to refuse to sail on requisitioned ships to the South Atlantic.

The NUS has many members working in the South Atlantic fleet, and a decision by it to black the war effort could have been a real blow against Thatcher. But the NUS executive justified its stance on the spurious 'trade union' grounds that a quick invasion would be better for its members' safety than a long blockade.

Tory message to health workers:

Socialist Organiser

WANT A PAY RISE? BECOME A JUDGE!

THERE'S nobody like Thatcher for adding insult to injury.

With health workers smarting at their poverty-line wages and preparing for their first-ever national strike, she got up in Parliament to announce huge pay-rises for — judges and admirals!

Two thirds of all health workers earn below the government's official "poverty" level of £82 for a married person with two children. Pay packets of under £50 per week are commonplace for ancillary workers, porters and nurses.

Inflation is running at 12% — further cutting their pitiful living standards. Yet the Tory government's offer to health workers is an insult — ranging from nothing at all for young technicians through 4% to ancillaries, 5% to ambulance crews and a miserable 6.4% to nurses.

Air Vice Marshalls however get exactly double

the nurses' offer — 12.8%. Vice Admirals do even better — their 15% deal brings them to £30,000 a year. Lord Denning, destroyer of London Transport's cheap fares, gets a £7,000 increase to reach £48,000. And High Court judges cart off a thumping 21% increase!

The selective "justice" of Tory pay awards can also be seen in the 13.2% back-hander to their flunkies in the police force, to prepare them for another year of harassing pickets and attacking angry and desperate youth thrown on the scrapheap by Thatcher's policies.

But health workers this year have shown their willingness to fight back.

Scores of unofficial strikes, militant demonstrations and the 99% NUPE ballot in favour of industrial action shows in no uncertain terms that the members have the guts for a serious struggle for the 12% claim. If only the union leaders had half the

determination of the members they are supposed to represent.

Those workers who lobbied the TUC Health Services Committee saw in practice that if there is one thing our leaders fear it's their own angry members demanding leadership.

The one day strike has the potential to lead up to all-out action but could very well be a one-off event unless we keep up the pressure.

The TUC Health Services Committee has called for two-hour stoppages every week after the 19th. Let's be clear: there is no way the Tories will be defeated by two-hour strikes.

It may be that we can only build for two-hour stoppages at the moment, but if so, we must make these as militant as possible by holding pickets, demonstrations, visiting factories, etc., and we must link them to a perspective of pushing for all-out action.

Similarly, selective strikes, work-to-rules, overtime bans and other partial actions can be useful for keeping the issue alive, but we must be honest with our members — we will not win by these tactics alone.

Most importantly, we should focus on June 10 (which the TUC has designated 'Union Day'), to mobilise opposition to the Tebbit Bill. Hospital workers could be the first victims of the Tebbit Bill which will give the green light to victimisation and harassment (such as the arrest of three Oldham hospital workers on 10 May).

We need to link our struggle with the fight against the Tories' vicious anti-union laws and turn this day into a militant expression in defence of our unions and of support from our pay claim.

Stop the war!

COMRADES in Leeds have shown what can be done by bold campaigning against the war.

An ad hoc committee was set up some weeks ago on the initiative of local Labour councillor and SO supporter Garth Frankland. Under the slogans 'Stop the war, withdraw the fleet', it has brought together Socialist Organiser, SWP, IMG, CP and the local Latin American solidarity group.

Its rally on Tuesday 11th brought 350 people to hear exile Argentine trade unionist Rafael Runco. And it is calling a demonstration on Saturday (11.30, Town Hall steps) with Bob Cryer MP billed to speak.

In Glasgow too there will probably be a local demonstration on Saturday 22nd (11am, Blythwood Square). The Trades Council is expected to sponsor it on the slogan 'Withdraw the Fleet', following support won by SO supporter Ian McCalman for the proposal at a 150-strong public meeting last Friday 14th called by the local CP.

Birmingham and Nottingham also have local demos on Saturday. In Leamington 150 attended a Labour Party anti-war meeting, in Coventry 65 a meeting called by St Michael's ward Labour Left.

Oxford has an anti-war public meeting next Wednesday (7.30, Town Hall).

CPSA conference last week had an emergency resolution for withdrawing the fleet from the British Library branch, but the platform refused to take it. Moves are also afoot to get emergency resolutions for withdrawal of the fleet and blacking of war work for the Post Office Engineering Union conference.



Hands off Lebanon

WHILE THE British press reverberates with news of the Falklands war, equally sinister military preparations are being made by the Zionist regime in Israel.

30,000 Zionist troops massed on their northern border were put on full alert over the weekend in what appeared to be the first moves to an invasion of Lebanon.

For several weeks now the Begin government has been openly threatening such an invasion, urging that it is the only way they can crush the forces of the Palestine Liberation Organisation encamped in Southern Lebanon.

In reality the prospect of a new military offensive has been utilised by Begin to weather a series of threats to his wafer-thin governmental majority, and to divert attention from the potentially traumatic dispersal of Zionist settlements in the West Bank.

It is also likely that Begin and Zionist commanders have an anxious eye on the Iran/Iraq war, and are calculating the effects of a now probable Iranian victory on the unstable politics of the Middle East.

The threat of a Zionist invasion of Lebanon is in particular a challenge to the Syrian regime of President Assad, one of the few Arab leaders to side with the Khomeini regime against Iraq.

Syrian troops were last week moving tanks and anti-aircraft guns into a fortified defence bulwark in Lebanon just 19 miles from the Israeli frontier.

Once again the struggles of the dispossessed workers and peasants of Palestine against the racist state of Israel emerges as the central factor in Middle Eastern politics.

It is a struggle the British labour movement must support.

WOMEN at the Greenham Common Peace Camp have been ordered to leave by a High Court Judge. Newbury District Council won their case. 25 people, mostly women, were arrested from the noisy picket outside the court — as judges were being disturbed!

But the women at the peace camp are carrying on. They're building a tree-house, so when the bailiffs come, it won't be so easy to drag them away.

The women had costs awarded against them, so send donations and messages of support to CND, 11 Goodwin Street, London N4.



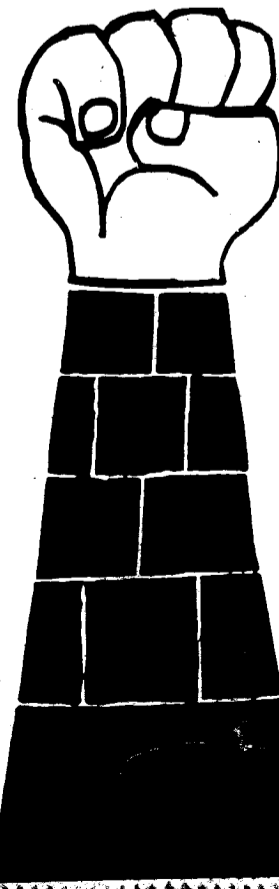
Send cash!

£5 from Stoke, £2 from Hull, £11 from Hyndburn, £2 from Leigh and £3.50 from Hounslow, bring the total of supporters' contributions and donations so far this month for the regular fund to £85.90.

has a prior claim on, before the Special Fund, is the monthly donations from supporters. And there are still a lot of groups where these are not collected regularly.

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

£6000 fund



THIS week's post included £5 from Stoke Socialist Organiser Group; £20 from Mark Starr, Oldham; £5 from Steve Hall, Leigh; £3 from Andy Dixon, Stockport; and £50 from Bob Fine, London.

Our total towards the £6,000 is thus £1778.80. It is shown by the red patch below.

Send donations to Socialist organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL. Cheques payable to Socialist Organiser.