

Socialist Challenge

Witch-hunt

Fight the Tories not the left

'THE REAL question is how can we get a united Labour Party putting forward the programme to get full employment, to get peace, to get out of the Common Market, and to get rid of nuclear weapons?' Tony Benn, speaking out

against the new witch-hunt in the Labour Party, hit the nail on the head. Just as the unions have launched a wave of struggles against the Tories Labour's right wing has chosen to attack the Labour left.

At a time when some of the most significant battles against the Tories have been unleashed Labour has an historic chance to reverse its electoral fortune by leading the battle to bring the Tories down. Instead of leading that battle the Labour leadership is attacking the mass movement and those who are fighting for Labour's policies.

That is the meaning of the witch-hunt — it is aimed at those who are fighting for the policies which are vital for defeating the Tories.

Ted Knight, himself a victim of previous witch-hunts, described the inquiry into the *Militant* tendency as a 'nark's charter'. It will rely on secret information from unnamed party members to Head Office about the political views of their fellow party members.

The report itself has been compiled in the same fashion, with considerable assistance from Labour Solidarity members, the main right wing group in the party which is not being investigated despite its acknowledged links with anti-working class organisations.

If the attack on *Militant* is successful it will give the green light to Solidarity supporters like Healey, Hattersley and Shore to give the boot to the rest of the left, particularly Tony Benn's supporters.

National Executive Committee members have only received the conclusions of the report. They have not been shown the evidence. The right wing on the NEC will insist on endorsing the findings, waiting for the eve of annual conference to implement the recommendations: to boot out *Militant* supporters.

The right wing is not interested in unity. Still less do they want a party that will develop a programme that can bring the Tories to their knees and put Labour into office.

Such a party and a Labour government committed to socialist policies would finally expose these class traitors who have cynically used the party for their own ends. That is the cleansing we need in the Labour Party.

Arthur Scargill summed it up at the South Yorkshire miners' gala last Saturday when he declared that unity can only be achieved by attacking the Tories, not socialists.

He condemned the Weighells and Hattersleys of this world as the same kind of traitors as the SDP defectors. To loud cheering he pledged the NUM's opposition to the witch-hunt of the *Militant*.

We need the biggest ever campaign to defend *Militant* — and anyone else under attack. Currents like the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and *London Labour Briefing* have already stated that they will refuse to comply with the witch-hunt register. Local Labour parties and trade union branches should rush resolutions to the NEC condemning the witch-hunt report and refusing to implement its recommendations.

Defeating the witch-hunt means linking up with rail workers, health workers and all those struggling against the Tories. Public meetings should be organised to defend *Militant* with health and rail workers.

There can be no defence of the witch-hunt register. The Labour Party must be united against it. The Labour Party must be united against it. The Labour Party must be united against it.

Witch-hunts: not the first time pages 8 & 9

Health and railworkers

Make war on Tories



Photo: P. GRANT (Socialist Challenge)

Health and rail workers Make war on Tories
AS THE Royal Baby is born, health workers are fighting for a miserable 12 per cent wage increase. As Prince Charles arrives in a chauffeur-driven limousine, rail workers prepare to strike against vicious attacks on their jobs and working conditions.

Whatever Thatcher hoped to achieve at home by her war in the South Atlantic, workers have declared war on her and her government.

Make no mistake, the Tories are looking for a confrontation. Riding high on a wave of jingoism, they have made another totally unacceptable offer to the hospital workers, despite the massive show of support in defiance of the Tories' picketing laws, from significant sections of the working class.

The railworkers will take the brunt of Thatcher's thuggery. There has even been talk of the Tories using the confrontation to win a snap general election.

The entire labour movement should throw everything behind these struggles. Now, more than ever before, the Triple Alliance of rail, coal and steel workers should be used to stop everything that moves on the railways.

The Tories plan to close another 30 pits and 25,000 steel jobs are on the line. Miners' leader, Arthur Scargill and steel workers' leader, Bill Sirs, have pledged resistance to these attacks.

The best way they can defend their own members' jobs is to give full and unconditional backing to the rail workers now including bringing their own members out in defence of jobs.

The Tories are confident of taking on the unions after the Falklands War. The labour movement should respond by preparing its own war. Let's beat Thatcher at her own game.

Health workers and railworkers in struggle pages 2, 3, 4 & 5



Photo: J. HARRIS

Editorial

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The war has just begun

EVERYTHING is now settled in the South Atlantic, say the media. The war is over, the islands are British, and democracy is being restored in Argentina. Let us now think of the good things in life: the future king, the World Cup, smashing up the railworkers, and looking forward to a Tory election victory.

The election might be sooner than Michael Foot expects. The temptation for Thatcher must be very great; Foot has handed her public support on a plate; he now seems determined to finish his destruction job by launching Labour's biggest witch-hunt since the 1950s.

Will the new prince become a king? Will Thatcher win the elections? That depends on whether we settle accounts with Foot. But two things are sure: democracy has not been restored in Argentina, and the war is not over.

Ask a simple question: what would a democratic Argentinian government do about the war? According to our dictionary, democracy means the rule of the people. What do the people want? Satisfaction of their just claim to the territory and resources of the Malvinas Islands!

How can there be a democracy in Argentina if the new government drops this just claim? Only the most vicious and repressive government could silence the Argentinian people now that it has been given a voice.

Fortunately the Argentine rulers are at present too divided and weak to impose a repressive solution: not because of the war, but because of the bankruptcy of the capitalist system they defend. The conclusion is simple. A lasting settlement cannot be produced if the Argentinian people's claim is rejected.

Thatcher is dragging us, slowly but surely, into war with the Latin American people. She will be driven to strengthen alliances with rulers like Chile's Pinochet. She will be driven to further aggression; she will line up more solidly with Reagan's world crusade against revolution.

Only a battle is over: the war has just begun.

Trade Unions

Save Snowdown

ARTHUR SCARGILL was greeted with loud cheers when he committed the miners union nationally to action to defend the threatened closure of the Snowdown colliery in Kent, at the Yorkshire miners' gala in Doncaster last Saturday.

In February 1981, the spontaneous all out strike action of miners had forced the government to withdraw a 'hit list' of mines that it wished to close.

The government had reneged on its commitment to keep the pits open Scargill said and Snowdown was in the frontline. He appealed 'If one pit is selected as a target, I ask you to take industrial action to save the pits, to save jobs and to save the industry'.

The threat to Snowdown takes on great importance as it is likely to be the flashpoint between the miners and the Tories. Brian Grogan spoke to Jack Collins, area secretary of the Kent National Union of Mineworkers about the background to the present closure threats.

THE SNOWDOWN colliery in Kent is potentially an extremely productive pit. Below the present workings there is an eight foot seam covering a very large area containing at least 75 million tonnes of reserves. Yet the Tories are intent on closing it down.

'Snowdown is a prime example of how much store can be put by statements of Tory Ministers,' Jack Collins explained. 'Even after we forced the climb down in February 1981 when the 'hit list' of threatened pits was withdrawn — Snowdown amongst them — local management continued to insist on unacceptable conditions before they would agree to our proposals to open new seams'.

Local officials demanded the reduction of the workforce through redundancies and transfers of miners to other pits. 'We are not prepared to agree on any redundancies. If they wanted early retirement, great — so long as they took on new young miners and paid decent pension.' The Kent area agreed to some transfers but were highly suspicious of the numbers demanded by the Board and their stonewalling.

In June 1981, the local NCB officials formally agreed to the NUM proposals for making the pits viable. But nothing happened. 'They kept stalling — all the while complaining that Snowdown was losing money. Of course it was! There was no planning or new investment going on.'

Meanwhile, the Board was backtracking even on some of the formal agreements. Their commitment to recruit youngsters a year was rescinded and they framed their investigations into the potential of the new seams in such a way that they would prove the NUM proposals 'unworkable'.

'Then at the end of the negotiations they demanded that we agree to the

reduction of the workforce as a supposedly temporary measure. They were talking about cutting 500 from only 800 in toto. We weren't falling for that old trick: make vague promises, get rid of most of the men, then move in for the kill when we would be in no position to resist. In the face of this, we decided to act', he continued.

'We decided to stop work on 2 June. We used that day of action to fan out into all the other coalfields to alert the rest of the miners that we intended a total stoppage to save the pit on 19 June, explain the issues involved and win their support and solidarity. The reaction was uniformly positive. Whatever the formal political complexion of the leadership in the various areas, we got commitment for support from every place we went.'

They lobbied the NEC which carried a motion unanimously supporting the Kent area in its fight to keep Snowdown open. In view of this and on request from the national leadership, they decided to postpone their plans for all-out strike.

'Snowdown's future will now be discussed as a matter of urgency at a meeting between the union and the NCB on 24 June. There will then be a full report to the annual conference starting 5 July. If there is no positive response from the Board, then there will be all-out action for jobs called from then'.

workers are presently engaged in battle against the Tories, what was the potential of joint action? 'Should Ray Buckton of the drivers' union make a call,' promised Jack, 'the miners will respond. There will be no question of the miners allowing coal to be handled by blackleg labour.'

'We are also doing what we can to help the healthworkers. Obviously we have to reserve our strength for our own battle, but we have sent delegations on all the



Kent miners successfully lobby their national leadership for full backing in their fight against closure



Jack Collins, general secretary, Kent NUM

demonstrations. On 23 June day of action we will send a delegation to join the healthworkers demonstration in Lewisham in South London.'

He didn't think that the chauvinism generated over the Falkland-Malvinas war would undermine the fight against the Tories 'Now

the shooting is over, workers can see that its our living standards that are at stake. The government would be extremely unwise to fight us head-on'.

Scargill pledges NUM to fight the witch-hunt

By Alex Mateo

SEVERAL thousand miners and their families were joined by contingents of health workers at the annual miners gala at Doncaster on Saturday.

Despite the rain, a large crowd assembled at the rally to hear speakers Michael Foot and NUM President Arthur Scargill.

Foot spoke of the grave threat posed by the Tebbit Bill, offering as a solution the need for miners' co-operation in returning a Labour government committed to repealing the Bill. This he said was necessary for the good of the nation; he also talked about Tories immorality concerning mass unemployment.

In the same vein, Foot dismissed Britain's policy in the South Atlantic as a distraction, concluding with characteristic perception that 'the world is a dangerous place'.

Arthur Scargill, made



clear his opposition to the Tory war: 'I am opposed to Britain trying to hang onto its imperialist and colonialist past', he said. In the presence of Foot, Scargill went on to denounce the witch-hunt by pointing out that unity can only be achieved by attacking the Tories not socialists.

He condemned the Weighells and the Hattersleys of this world as the same kind of traitors as the SDP defectors and pledged the NUM's opposition to the witch-hunt of the Militant tendency. This statement was greeted with loud cheering.

The action of the miners in supporting the health workers was part of the fight against Tebbit, Scargill said. He then reiterated the demand for a four day week, retirement at 55 and a minimum wage of £110 per week. In continuing this theme, he warned against pit closure, stating that, 'If one pit is selected as a target, I ask you to take industrial action to save the pits, to save jobs and to save the industry'.

Enthusiastic applause and loud cheering confirmed the miners' willingness to oblige.



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All out with the health workers

SUPPORT for the healthworkers 12 per cent claim dramatically increased on the 23 June TUC-called Day of Action. Miners in Scotland and Derbyshire led the way but water, gas and electricity workers also gave support. Thousands of council workers and local government workers in NUPE and NALGO also backed up their hospital colleagues. These actions were a

tremendous encouragement to health workers to stick out for their full claim despite the new offer made by the Tories. But these actions were also one in the eye for the 1980 Employment Act which expressly forbade such solidarity action. Yet trade union action is so determined that the Tories dare not use the Act. Len Murray, please note.

South Wales miners score goal for health workers

By Celia Pugh

FIFTEEN thousand health workers, miners, seafarers, building workers, civil servants and engineers united in a tremendous demonstration on Wednesday 16 June, the day that 36 Welsh pits took strike action in support of health workers.

As the multi-coloured lodge banners, representing the 24,000 striking miners swung into Cardiff's Sophia Gardens for a rally, thousands of uniformed nurses, domestics and auxiliaries cheered, clapped and chanted. One miner, moved by the electric atmosphere, remarked, 'It feels like scoring a goal in the World Cup!'

Magic

This was a truly magic day for the Wales labour movement. As the rally's organisers reported to the cheering crowd, this was the biggest demonstration so far in the UK-wide campaign of the health workers.

South Wales NUM President Emlyn Williams greeted the rally. 'Today's miners strike is our expression of solidarity. When we talk about assistance this is what the South Wales miners mean. 90 per cent of the lodges submitted emergency resolutions demanding that the NUM leadership stand up to be counted, not just in this demonstration but in the general fight. The miners were in the gutter until the

1970s. Then we stood up to be counted. After the 1972 strike they have to think twice about closing us. Last year we stood up to them again'.

Power

To cheers he warned 'Attempts will be made to buy some of you off, to divide and annihilate you. Don't let them do it. Stay together, be united and we can win.'

In contrast to TUC representative Charlie Donnet, who opposed all-out strike action in his speech, Emlyn Williams drew tumultuous applause when he said 'If I have to be critical, it is that no member of the public services should be at work today.'

Derek Gregory, NUPE Divisional Officer echoed this militant response 'The government don't understand the power of argument, so we have to use the argument of power. The support and action of the miners has given confidence to health service workers all over Britain. Some accuse us of taking action to bring down the government, that this is a political strike.



Health workers 'clap-on' miners in S Wales last week

'If we bring down the government over this pay dispute so much the better, we'll be doing the country a service. Today it's the miners who are coming out to support the health workers. Tomorrow the

miners will call on us to support their struggle against pit closures. We have to aid that struggle.'

This tremendous day of solidarity received an added boost when international speakers were invited to greet the crowd. A delegate from the Swedish Municipal Workers Union brought a solidarity message from Swedish health workers.

Solidarnosc miner Stefan Palka was warmly received when he declared 'I bring greetings for your just struggle. Polish workers are involved in a solidarity struggle too under difficult conditions and martial law. The Stalinist bureaucracy is

trying to take back all that Solidarity has won. The bourgeoisie in the west is taking away the rights of the workers too. I thank the miners for the solidarity they have shown us and I wish you victory.'

'Healthworkers need our support'

RICH PALSER spoke to John Chambers from Markham Main Colliery, Stewart Berthwick from Yorkshire Main Colliery and Michele Oliver, Loversall school of nursing at the Yorkshire miners gala, about miners and health workers.

JOHN: A lot of miners agree with the health workers dispute but not a lot is being done. The thing about the miners in 1972 and 1974 was that we could not have done it on our own. We needed the support of the engineers then, and the healthworkers need our support now.

STEWART: You can guarantee that any day of the week some miner is going to need medical treatment. Last week the ambulance was out four days in five, despite the fact that some miners did cross the picket line that the nurses put up at the pits. But they didn't work because they were too few.

MICHELE: All in all there was a good reaction when we were on the picket line at the pits. It could have been better organised. Nothing was ever said by the unions about putting out pickets. That was done by the local stewards, it was us that decided to do it. I got a letter from COHSE telling us to stop serving out meals because our job is just to feed the patients. The trou-

ble is that that doesn't really hurt management, the waitresses just have to do twice the work. The consultant decides who is an emergency case and therefore what cover we operate.

One day strikes just mean that the dishes pile up till the next day when the domestics go on and have to clean them all up. I think it should be all-out action.

JOHN: It's clear to me that the nurses have the support but one day actions are just not going to be enough. We have got to be all-out with the nurses. To me there has not been sufficient lead from above, from the TUC.

STEWART: The thing is miners are not going to be on all-out if the health workers are not on all-out. There's a lot of divisions among the health workers because the government creates divisions among them by offering some more pay than the others.

MICHELE: That way you are fighting each other rather than the government.

STEWART: I think the TUC should say *one out all out*. We haven't been asked to come out on the 23 June. I don't know why. I think we ought to have been out again.

JOHN: I agreed with what Arthur Scargill had to say at the gala. He's in touch with the miners. He'll go round campaigning and talking to miners.

STEWART: This is the opposite of what Gormley did. The House of Lords is the best place for him.

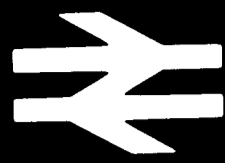
JOHN: Scargill gets up and says something whether its controversial or not. He cuts through all the waffle. He was right when he said we weren't just striking for the nurses, we were striking against the Tebbit Bill because when that comes in what we're doing would be illegal. The Bill is trying to make it so that you can't show solidarity with other workers.

STEWART: The only thing I would add to Scargill is that it's not just a matter of every miner striking. It's not just if one miner is jailed under the Tebbit Bill: We should all be out on strike if *any* worker is jailed.



Health workers demonstrate on their 'day of action'

All Photos: J. HARRIS

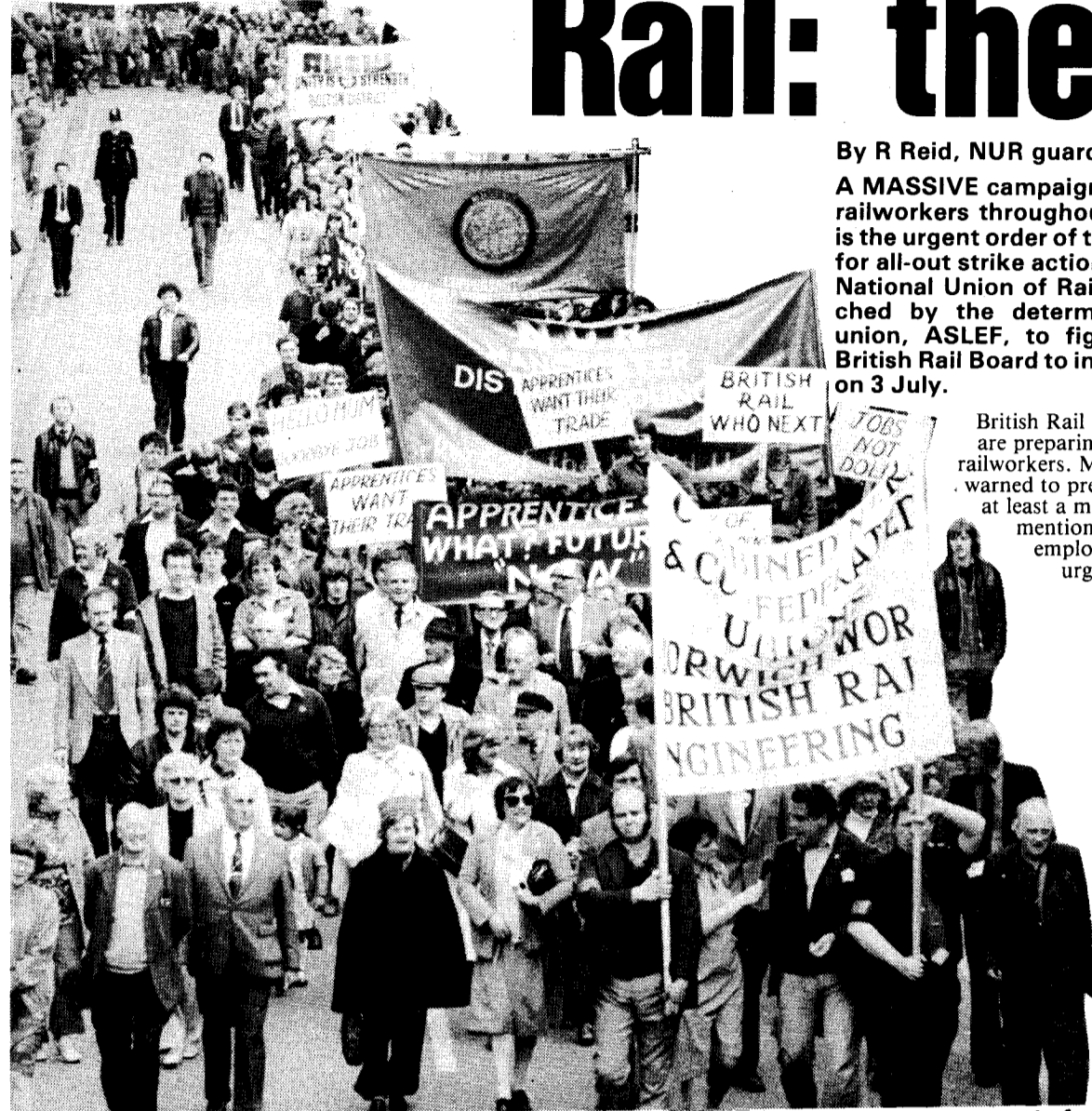


RAILWORKERS IN FRO

Rail: the battle is on

By R Reid, NUR guard

A MASSIVE campaign to mobilise support for railworkers throughout the labour movement is the urgent order of the day. The excellent call for all-out strike action by the executive of the National Union of Railwaymen has been matched by the determination of the drivers' union, ASLEF, to fight the decision of the British Rail Board to impose the flexible rosters on 3 July.



Horwich workers demonstrating against closure threats to railway workshops. This is the sort of militancy BR face

British Rail supported by the government, are preparing a major showdown with the railworkers. Major BR customers have been warned to prepare for a total shutdown for at least a month. Newspaper articles have mentioned a four month strike. Local employment bureaux are advertising urgent vacancies for heavy goods vehicle drivers to establish alternative transport. Power stations have been stockpiling coal for several weeks.

The British Rail Board hopes that a prolonged strike will undermine the ability of the rail unions to stand in the way of halting sweeping productivity measures which will shed 40,000 jobs. If these measures get through, the remaining workers in the industry will face a worsening of job conditions and a five month wage freeze followed by a pay settlement which doesn't even start to match inflation. Nothing less than 12 per cent without strings will do!

So we're in for a long fight, and we'll need every bit of support we can

muster to win. The time has come to turn the Triple Alliance into a reality. Steel workers are still facing massive job losses and the Tories are out to decimate the coal industry. The pit closure proposed at Snowdown in Kent is only the start. The health workers are battling on and the magnificent solidarity shown by rank and file workers from other sectors will count a great deal in any advances they make. Their struggle has shown the willingness of rank and file workers to extend active support.

Joint action by the Triple Alliance could stop the vicious attacks on industrial workers and could bury Tebbit at the same time.

But none of this will be achieved unless there is full and active backing from rank and file railworkers themselves. Many in the industry are not fully aware of the deadly implications of the Board's proposals. Most NUR members are sceptical that the strike will go ahead. Sidney Weighell has rung too many false alarms in the past and then has conceded vital principles to the Board without a fight.

Railworkers are quite capable of mounting a strong, united fightback. But that will be under-

mined unless the leadership breaks from its sorry record and becomes responsive to the deep-felt sentiment of the membership to maintain and improve our conditions and to save our jobs.

The main task of organising the membership will rest on the local strike committees. In the Kings Cross area, a joint strike committee has already been set up, involving several depots to co-ordinate the movements of pickets to trouble spots, as well as to discuss possible secondary targets.

One strike bulletin has already been put out by the committee, and a second is due this week. Mass meetings are being planned in every depot before 28 June. Once the action starts, weekly mass meetings, following a pre-arranged mass picket, will be held on the day that strike pay is paid out.

If this kind of lead is followed, and if every worker in the industry — whether they be guards, drivers, workshop engineers or platform staff — sees that we're in this together, and that we stand or fall together, then we'll not only win our own struggle, but we'll inspire others to follow our example.

Tube workers fight back

ANY rail strike will be immeasurably strengthened by support from tube workers. During the train drivers' series of day strikes earlier this year, southern region commuters took to driving to the start of the underground and circumventing the effects of the strike that way. At this time, NUR members on the tubes are taking action in support of their own demands. This is an excellent basis for forging joint action. PATRICK SIDALL, a worker on the underground and a member of the NUR reports.

London Transport tube workers took strike action from last Monday against management's attempts to unilaterally impose new timetables.

By the beginning of the Monday rush hour it was clear that despite LT's claims of limited services on some lines, the strike was 90 per

cent effective.

These new timetables are being put forward by management as a direct result of the Tory law lords decision earlier this year to wreck the Labour GLC's cheap fares policy.

If accepted, the new timetables would mean a less frequent service for the passengers, and less turns for train crews during their shifts. Although this would probably not lead to compulsory redundancies, it would create, in

the short term, a much larger pool of spare train crews whose numbers would then be cut back through natural wastage. LT have already announced that they want 500 train crew jobs to go.

Wage levels would also be affected. Later starting times, and earlier finishing times would both erode overtime earnings and also speed moves towards the removal of the night shift. These moves would affect

all LT Underground workers.

The new timetables are just the thin end of the wedge of wide ranging and deep going productivity measures that LT management want to introduce. These include:

- One person operated trains
- Automatic fare collection
- Automatic barriers
- The closure of sections of track and 'less used stations'.

But the action so far has been mounted despite the lack of a clear lead from the union head office. Unity House

refuse to issue a clear statement, specifically opposing the introduction of the new timetables — relying instead on a previous statement calling for general non-cooperation with any measures flowing from the House of Lords decision.

Section council representing train crews did send out specific instructions, but right up until Sunday night many were waiting to see what happened next morning. There have been no depot meetings and picketing has been patchy. Station staff are still

working instead of coming out in support.

As we go to press, the NUR London District Council will be meeting. This needs to make it clear to the whole of the LT membership that the strike continues until the new timetables and other cuts are all unconditionally withdrawn.

Secondly, that all NUR should be out on strike. Finally LT must be forced to make a wage offer free of all productivity strings or face united action by train and bus workers across London.

A reply to Sir Peter Parker

By R Brookes, NUR guard

LAST WEEK Peter Parker spent an estimated £34,000 just so that each and every railworker would have the unwanted pleasure of receiving a personal message from him through our letter boxes. Letters from management to workers' homes are becoming more and more familiar. Sir Michael Edwardes has regularly found enormous sums of money to send his views to British Leyland workers, especially when they were preparing for action to defend their jobs.

What did Sir Peter have to say? First of all, he explained that 'On 28 May, the Board made the following offer: to increase rates of pay by five per cent from 6 September, provided that negotiations on all the six items of productivity have been completed by 30 July 1982. If agreement on the productivity items is not reached by 30 July 1982, the pay offer will be withdrawn'.

What an insult this offer is! It's well below what other public sector workers have been offered for a start. And in reality, it is on-

ly a three per cent offer — a mere £2.43. Our pay rise should have been backdated to 19 April, a year after the last pay award. Instead, we're supposed to wait till September — six months late — and agree to productivity.

The NUR hasn't even seen fit to give a firm figure. The minimum we should be going for is 12 per cent. After all, inflation is running at 9.5 per cent.

And what about the 'productivity items'? They mean only one thing — loss of jobs, loss of pay and worse conditions. Take the

Board's demand for no guards on the St Pancras to Bedford line. One hundred and fifty guards will lose their jobs immediately if this goes through! And it means the Board will be able to press ahead to remove guards from all the electric suburban trains.

The trains used on these lines were custom built so they can be readily converted to 'one man operation'. So once the so-called pilot scheme at St Pancras is agreed, the job of every guard on these trains will be under threat.

As if that's not enough, the Board wants to withdraw guards from freight trains as well. So much for the safety of passengers, train crews and other railworkers. Most rail travellers don't realise that it's the guards who are responsible for safety in case of fires on trains, breakdowns in unlit tunnels, derailments or other mishaps.

Furthermore, it's not just guards who'll lose their jobs. One of the productivity items, the 'open station' concept, means fewer platform staff and the certainty of the dole queue for grades like signalmen when services are cut back in future. The Board makes no secret of its target to axe 40,000 jobs in the next five years. Nobody's jobs are safe!

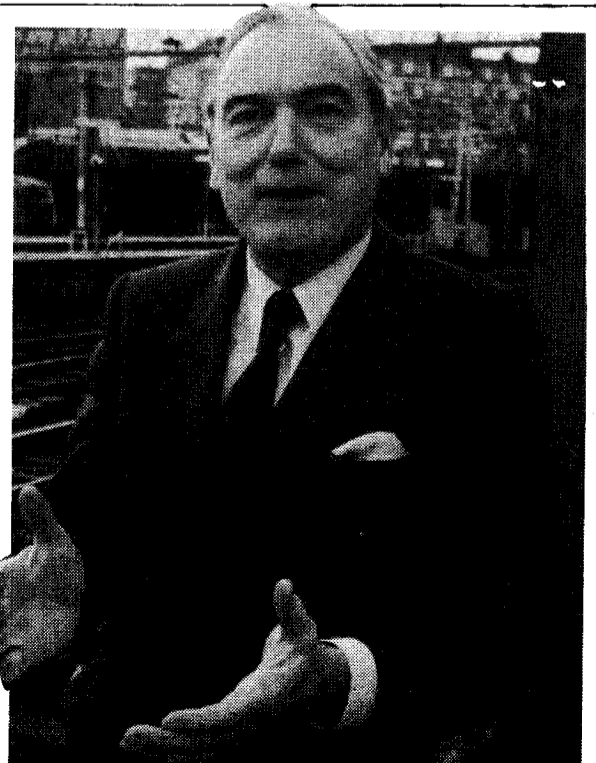
Already 15,500 jobs disappeared between April 1980 and April 1982. The railways are being smashed apart. Enough is enough!

Sir Peter Parker also says that 'No one who has examined our proposals for flexible rostering objectively has been able to fault them'. What rubbish! Does this mean that all the drivers in ASLEF, and the NUR drivers and guards who both passed resolutions against flexible rostering at their recent grades and conferences are all incapable of seeing flexible rostering for what it is — a cost-cutting scheme

to get more work for less pay.

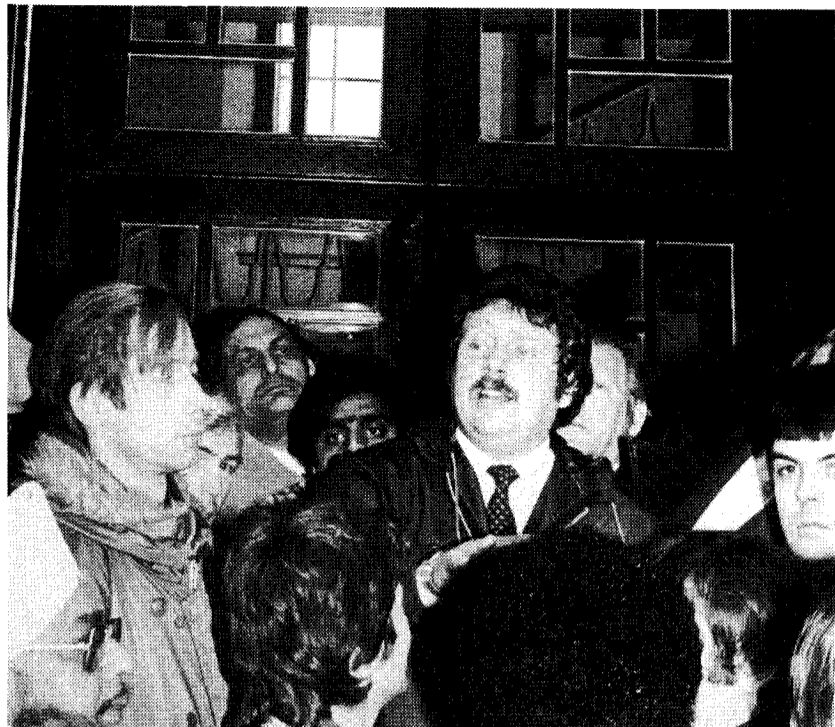
Train crews who are working these rosters are working nine hour shifts and are losing overtime working which we're forced to do to make up for our disastrously low basic rate. Besides, the job is quite flexible enough as it is. We have a different starting time each day — with two hours 'flexibility' either side of our signing on times. Our shifts start at all hours of the night and day. We already work unsocial hours so that the 9am-5pm commuters can get to and work on time. While the world sleeps or people enjoy themselves at the pub, train crews are at work.

Sir Peter Parker says we shouldn't support our union's strike call. But unless strike action is taken Sir Peter Parker will continue on his merry way — and his way is the biggest threat of all to the industry and our jobs.



BR boss, Sir Peter Parker

FRONT LINE



London guards protest outside union headquarters against flexible rostering



Shildon workers demonstrating against closure of railway workshops

Thatcher's war at home

By Pat Hickey

MARGARET THATCHER is riding high these days. She says she spent the fantastic sum of £1.5 billion to defend 'our' national interests. And now she's determined to defend 'our' national interest at home. This time there won't be the tragedy of wasted lives of working people, but she'll use the same single mindedness to destroy her new enemy — not the Argentinians, but the rail unions.

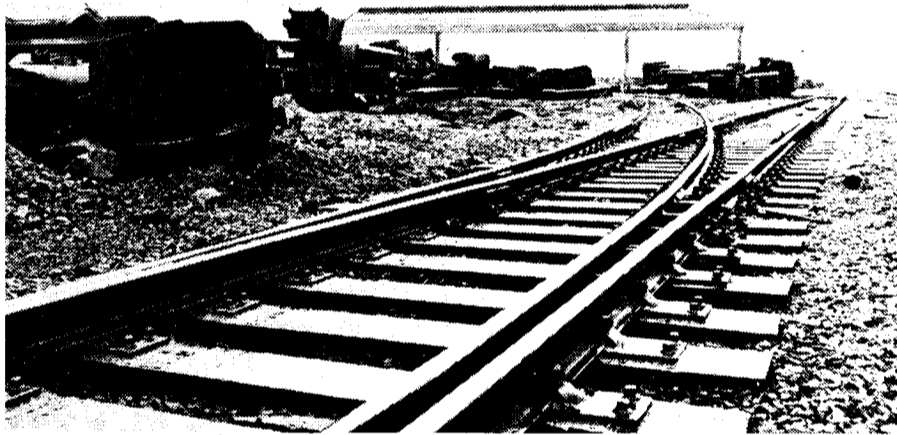
Rail workers have rejected an offer of five per cent. Even that is chicken feed. But the five per cent is not going to be paid until September — after a five month wage freeze. So really, the offer is nothing more than three per cent.

And this grand sum of three per cent is tied to a six-point productivity package. Thousands of jobs are at stake. The British Rail Board and the Tories are determined to take on the rail workers and force through their plans to make railworkers pay for the crisis.

The train drivers' union ASLEF forced the Board to retreat over flexible rostering. But now everything is geared up for

an all-out war. The stakes are high. The Tories want to build on the gains they made in public opinion over the Malvinas/Falklands war. Now they want the gains to stick by defeating an important section of the labour movement.

If they defeat the railworkers they can prepare a fresh round of attacks on the working class. They can even consider an early general election. A test of strength between the railworkers and the British Rail Board is a test of strength between the Tories and the labour movement. It's a fight which the working class must win.



Rail — crucial to the movement of coal and steel

Sid Weighell was quick to give his 'full support' to the army in the South Atlantic. He's a bit more lukewarm about a fight with the BRB. There's no doubt he'll be trying his usual eleventh hour sell-out. But he's got little room for manoeuvre in the face of the Tories' determination to crush the rail workers and his members' resistance to any more sell-out deals like flexible rostering.

Miners, steel workers and transport workers have given magnificent support to the health workers. They have showed the potential for defeating this Tory government. Widespread blacking and solidarity action will be vital if the rail strike is going to succeed.

The railways are vital to the economy. With effective picketing, large sections of industry can be

stopped. And if the mines, steel and other sectors black the use of alternative freight transport, the Tories will go down to the biggest defeat since the miners forced them to do a U-turn on pit closures.

If that happens, a general election will be a very different kind of election than the one being planned by Thatcher, the SDP, and the Labour rights!

Strike for our interests, not Weighell's

By D Ellis, NUR guard

THE STRIKE call by the NUR executive should be welcomed by railworkers because nothing less than all-out action will put a halt to the attacks on the rail industry and the attempts by the British Rail Board — with Thatcher four-square behind it — to get us to work harder for less money.

The last thing Sidney Weighell wants is this strike. In fact, his contempt for the membership was yet again obvious when he sold us right down the river over flexible rostering. Some guards say they are losing over £20 a week as a result of this disaster. Remember how Weighell told us it would put money in our pockets?

And Weighell was quite ready to do the same over the Board's measly three per cent pay offer, with its productivity strings. In the executive meeting last week, he argued that talks should continue with the Board. And no wonder! He feels happier in the posh offices of the Board working out compromises against our interests, than he

does in mounting the fight that will be necessary to maintain our wages and conditions.

Give

The strike call for 28 June came because other members of the Executive out-voted Sidney Weighell. Weighell was in a minority! But Sir Sidney doesn't give in easily as we know. The very next day, he called another Executive meeting and argued — and no doubt insulted the Executive — to get the decision to stop the talks reversed. That's why the NUR is back around the table with the Board.

But one thing Weighell

couldn't do was to reverse the strike call. He'll keep trying to find some way to sell us out right up to the very last minutes. A strike call could even cost him his knighthood, after all.

If the strike is called off, it won't be the railworkers who'll end up ahead. It'll be the British Rail Board and the Executive, who always wanted us to join hands with Sir Peter Parker to put the railways straight. No strike means one big compromise with people who aren't even interested in providing a decent service, let alone caring about our conditions and wages.

Of course the majority of the Executive which is today calling for strike action yesterday signed and sealed the flexible rostering deal. Maybe they are getting worried about the resolutions going to the NUR's Annual General Meeting on 28 June. They know there are strong feelings behind the resolu-

tions which call for more democracy in our union and more accountability of our executive.

Support

But whatever is moving them into action against Weighell's wishes today, the fact is their call for action is the only thing that is going to stop the destruction of the industry and the Board's plans to drive us into poverty. Today we need to put our full support behind the Executive's call to action not because we back their record, but because we know that nothing short of a battle fought by us is really going to change things. If we get the Board to back down this time, they'll find it harder next year to shove more productivity deals down our throats.

And we'll also be in a stronger position to tell



Sidney Weighell

Sidney Weighell that only the united action of the membership, not his behind-the-scenes deals with Sir Peter Parker, are the way forward for our union. A successful strike, whatever the hardships we'll have to put up with, will put us in a better position to fight for a more democratic union and one which starts to meet our needs and interests.

Six good reasons why you should support the railworkers

By P McDermott

● **BECAUSE** the Tories want to use a defeat of the railworkers in the wake of the Falklands war to call a general election. A defeat for the railworkers will make it easier for Thatcher to return to office — and then we'll have another five years of attacks on jobs and living standards.

● **BECAUSE** the railworkers are in the front lines of the fight against Thatcher. If they win, the door will be opened for other workers to win back some of what we have lost under the Tories.

● **BECAUSE** support for the railworkers is the best way of telling boot-boy Tebbit where to put his anti-union laws.

● **BECAUSE** support for the railworkers will also give the right-wing 'leaders' — including Weighell — the loud message that the Tories will be defeated by struggle, not by SDP-type policies.

● **BECAUSE** support for the struggle is the best way of defeating the witch-hunt in the Labour Party which is an attack by the right-wing on the movement as a whole.

● **BECAUSE** the Tories are ruining our rail system, cutting jobs, cutting services, refusing to restock and modernise, at the same time as they are selling off the profitable sections so their friends in the City can make big profits, and we are left to pay higher prices.

THE national press, the telly, and the radio have started to launch their campaign to support the Tories to defeat the railworkers. *Socialist Challenge* is out to do just the opposite. We're pulling out all stops to defeat this disastrous Tory government.

Our supporters in the rail industry, in other workplaces and in the Labour Party and the Labour Party Young Socialists will be working flat out to win this fight. Week by week our paper will be giving the real facts, discussing the tactics in the fight, and we will be ready to expose any sell-out manoeuvres.

We want other workers to join us in the struggle for a workers' solution to the crisis, and help us to sell *Socialist Challenge*. So why don't you —

* Start now to sell our paper weekly at your local rail depot and at British Rail Social Clubs.

* Get your Labour Party or LPYS branch to pledge full support to the railworkers by:

1. Contacting local strike committees
2. Organising solidarity tours to win support
3. Calling public meetings with speakers from the rail unions and other industries
4. Demanding your MP gives full public support
5. Passing resolutions calling on the NEC to back the railworkers

* Get your trade union branch, shop stewards committee, Trades Council to send messages of support, circulate collection sheets, and help on the picket lines.

Struggle in the Lebanon

Interview with a member of the RCG, Lebanese section of Fourth International

Why did the Israelis choose this moment to attack? What were their strategic objectives?

The first aim is to follow up the Camp David solution, which had broken down, and either renew it or take new steps in the same vein. The essence of the Camp David agreement was mutual recognition, between Egypt and Israel, trying to deal with the Palestinian question by giving them some self-rule — 'autonomy' — and trying to find an alternative leadership to the PLO — and all this to be done of course without taking into account the wishes and demands of the Palestinian people.

the situation wasn't very good for the PLO inside Lebanon. In the past few years there have been growing anti-PLO sentiments which have been exploited by Israel and have been exacerbated by the Phalangists.

The growth of sectarianism within Lebanon in the last few years has been exploited by the state. This is why you've seen organisations like Amal for instance taking a more anti-PLO stance — Amal is the militia of the Shi'ite fundamentalists.

All these groups — Suni and Shi'ite Muslim groups — support the idea of a strong Lebanese state and a strong Lebanese army as well.

Israel is of course in favour of this because the new Lebanese army



Destruction in the streets of Beirut

the Lebanese left. Are they crushed or will they be able to resist?

It's true that the Palestinian and the progressive Lebanese forces have lost some important strategic bases, but they have by no means been completely defeated. They are still able to move around quite freely as far as we can tell.

Do you think Israel will go for the option for establishing a strong Lebanese state controlled by the Maronites — above all the Phalangists?

Israel would like to establish a Phalangist-controlled state for sure, but that doesn't correspond exactly with the project of US imperialism which is to incorporate

other bourgeois Lebanese leaderships into restructuring the state.

So what Israel is probably going to do is try to establish a state headed by the Phalangists but in which other bourgeois leaderships have a part. This would include setting up a strong Lebanese army, armed by the Americans. This kind of solution would be more acceptable to the United Nations and reactionary Arab rulers than a simple Phalangist state.

The other bourgeois groups involved would be the other old traditionalist, confessionalist groups on the Muslim side, including Jumblatt's Lebanese National Movement, which is ultimately a bourgeois nationalist group despite its alliance with the PLO, and would have to be taken into con-

sideration.

How do you assess the performance of the Syrians in this conflict?

If Syria confronted Israel it was only because it was obliged to do so. Considering that Israel said from the very start it wasn't interested in fighting Israel or the Lebanese, but just the Palestinians, Syria responded to that very well from the Israeli point of view.

Since 1975 Israel has been sending reconnaissance planes over Lebanon and the most sophisticated Syrian weapons have not been used against them. To protect its image Syria would from time to time send old planes over Lebanon which it knew would be shot down.

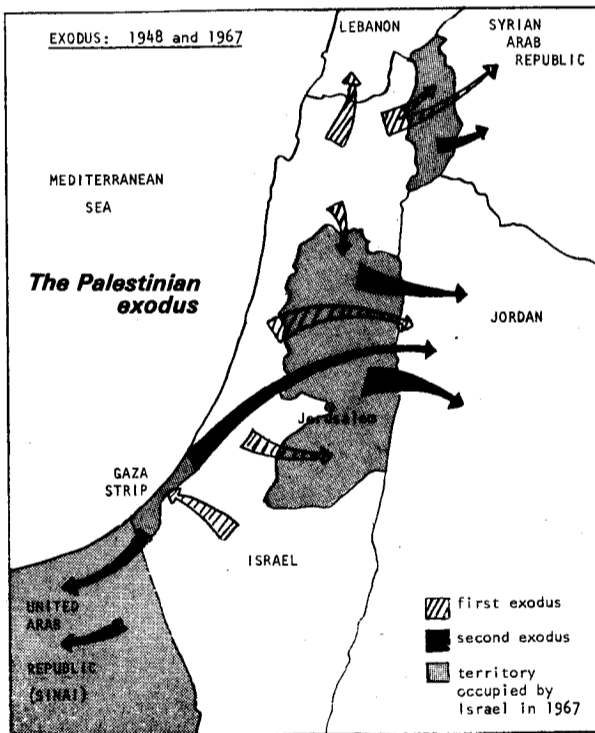
It is impossible to forget the action of the Syrians in 1976, which wasn't unlike that of the Israelis now, and which prevented the Lebanese left and the Palestinians scoring a military victory over the Phalangists.

When the Phalangists butchered the Palestinians in the refugee camp at Tel-Al-Zatar the Syrians kept the Palestinians pinned down in the hills and even joined in the bombardment of the camp.

What will be the repercussion of the Israeli attack for Syria and the rest of the Arab world?

We are entering a new phase with the ending of the Camp David project and the death of the present Lebanese regime. Syria wants a solution which at one and the same time pays lip service to the national aspirations of the Palestinians but also conforms to the interests of the pro-imperialist regime.

To this end it is applying pressure on Israel and the Americans, which



istence is by constantly establishing around it a 'security belt', which consists of stretches of land which are 'de-militarised' and where the PLO cannot carry out any military operations.

They have already done this in Sinai and the West Bank and now they want to do it with South Lebanon. They tried to do this first in 1978 by establishing Haddad's state — 'Free Lebanon' — and also by making sure that United Nations forces policed that area.

But the 1978 solution didn't work because the PLO had weapons which enabled them to reach into Israel. The Israeli's call the operation 'Security for Galilee' — the area where all the settlements are.

The political developments in the Arab world were favourable at this moment for the Israeli invasion. Egypt has already been 'neutralised' by the bi-lateral agreement. Syria has a lot of internal problems and there is a lot of anti-Syrian feeling inside Lebanon.

Jordan as we know is an imperialist agent. Also

could be in control of the south, which corresponds to the wishes of these groups — who are supported by a majority of the population.

Isn't the Israeli attack also a response to the rising unrest against their rule of the occupied territories and in particular the West Bank? In other words, didn't they hope to inflict a moral defeat on all Palestinians and demobilise them by defeating the Palestinian militias?

I don't think that it's just a response to what has been happening on the West Bank — it's more complex than that. But obviously the failure of Israel to create an alternative Palestinian leadership to that of the PLO — one which would collaborate — and the failure of the collaborationist Village Leagues was one factor.

What is your estimate of the defeat of the Palestinian militias and



Palestinian fighters defend the positions

Israeli pilots refuse orders

By Ros Kaplan

ACCORDING to reports from our comrades in Jerusalem, several Israeli pilots have been jailed for refusing to bomb civilian areas in the Lebanon.

The resistance is part of a broader revulsion in the Israeli army against the genocide in Lebanon. It is more widespread in the reserve army, which is made up of people who have fought in past wars.

We were told the ferocity of the invasion has come as a great shock to the majority of Israelis. Many are against the war — even if they now have no confidence to speak out.

The general mood is horror at what is rightly seen as unprovoked aggression on the government's part, and a campaign of genocide against the Palestinians.

'People are just not believing anything the government is saying now,' said one woman. 'The invasion is going to change a lot of things in Israel — this could be a turning point.'

A campaign has been launched against the war by Israeli women militants. A demonstration on 13 June in Jerusalem, organised by 'Women Against the War' and the Bir Zeit Solidarity Committee was supported by 500 people, the largest protest against the invasion in the Middle East by that date.

'Women Against the War' are planning a further demonstration on 23 June and they expect many more people to support it. They have also been sending petitions to the Israeli papers.

The press in this country remain silent on what is happening inside Israel and the growing discontent with the Israeli government.

Our solidarity goes to the heroic Palestinians and Lebanese in their struggle against the Israeli genocidal invasion; and also to all those inside Israel who speak out against it.

takes the form of a presence in the Lebanon.

But Syria doesn't want to make a bi-lateral agreement with Israel like Egypt, so its only option is to try to mobilise all the Arab nations for a global agreement with Israel which consists of the recognition of Israel in the end and the protection of all these regimes in the area.

It is quite clear that the Arab regimes are not sincere for their support for the Palestinian liberation struggle. But at the moment they cannot afford to demand anything less than an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank.

The price they would be prepared to pay for an independent mini-state on the West Bank would be recognition of Israel — in effect selling out the national rights of the Palestinians.

Interview by Phil Hearse

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A socialist foreign policy to defeat the Tories

THE WITCH-HUNT in the Labour Party is directed against the socialist policies conquered by the left since Thatcher came to office.

Socialist Challenge thinks that the left's starting point should be a socialist foreign policy.

That is why we think the newly formed Labour Committee for Withdrawal from the South Atlantic represents a vital component of the fight that has to be waged in the labour movement against Foot's treacherous leadership.

We urge all our readers to pass resolutions in their trade union and Labour Party branches supporting the committee's aims and affiliating to it.

In these extracts from a longer article printed in *London Labour Briefing*, ALAN FREEMAN explains the need for a fresh look at foreign policy by the Labour left.

THE FALKLANDS/MALVINAS crisis has proved one thing: foreign policy is Labour's blind spot. The adventure has unpleasant lessons for the left; but we may yet emerge stronger if we take them to heart.

It is time to question the myth that Labour's safest strategy is to concentrate on domestic issues like unemployment at the expense of 'cranky' foreign policy issues.

This unwritten canvasser's rule is deeply engraved in Labour thinking. Foreign policy is

always an 'added extra' in the manifesto, made up of embarrassing moralistic commitments to be sacrificed to expediency as soon as possible.

The approach is anything but practical. Fifty per cent of British investment lies overseas. How can we fight Thatcher and her cronies without a socialist foreign policy, when their main strength lies abroad?

It isn't even electorally sound. Foot's disastrous performance has finally proved that you can't win votes by pretending the rest of the world doesn't exist. Voters are perhaps not as stupid as the front bench would have us

think; they are certainly not as stupid as the front bench. Our socialism needs a new foundation: a socialist foreign policy.

33 MPs have made a promising start by voting to oppose the government's war effort. Foot's final treachery has obscured an important fact, which is that the so-called 'hard left' have actually gained from their stand.

What other issue could have split the front bench and sent Andrew Faulds into the voting lobby with Tony Benn? Constituency feeling — and substantial union support — is with those who opposed the front bench.

The left's best course is therefore to take the war to the heart of the debate in the party. Conference should settle accounts with the front bench and endorse the actions of those MPs who opposed them — in conference resolutions and in voting for NEC and leadership positions.

But what positive policies should replace the present ones? The front bench's stand does have a foundation in present party policy. I want to argue for a new policy: complete withdrawal from the South Atlantic, renunciation of any British interest in the Falklands and full backing for the Argentinian opposition in its fight against the junta.

There is a basic flaw in the whole idea that socialists can promote their aims by deploying capitalist armed forces abroad. The alternative is not pacifism but a socialist

fight against the dictators, through an alliance with the people they oppress.

The Tory pretence that 'our boys' are out there protecting the free is a shallow one, not supported by the record. In Malaysia, for example, a twenty-year anti-guerrilla war has entrenched a vicious government now trying to hang 64 people for alleged terrorism, drawing protests from 154 British MPs, the French and Dutch socialist parties and the Belgian government.

The vital clause justifying Malaysia's emergency legislation, under which its atrocities are committed, attacks any who endanger 'the government, property or foreign investment'. And this is what the anti-guerrilla war was really about — defending a vicious dictatorship in order to guarantee the safety of British foreign investors.

In short the dictators are created — not overthrown — by the holy alliance of overseas investors and overseas forces.

But this doesn't happen everywhere, we are told. In Belize 'our boys' might have to protect a small country against vicious dictators like the Guatemalans. But who is fighting the dictators now? The Nicaraguan, Cuban and Grenadan dictators were overthrown by freedom fighters; the Salvadorean and Guatemalan dictators are next in line.

'Our boys' aren't exactly weighing in behind the guerrillas. In the last

two months they have been engaged in naval exercises with the USA which involved 40 ships, 80 aircraft, a mock invasion of Grenada and a landing on Cuba.

If Thatcher establishes a precedent by intervening successfully in the Malvinas, Reagan will have a green light to go into El Salvador — with Thatcher's blessing and the backing of 'our boys' in Belize.

The alternative is more cost-effective, and it works: bring the boys home and give their guns to the guerrillas.

But the same principles apply in Argentina. It is not only preposterous when the Tories say they will station 10,000 troops in the South Atlantic to oppose dictatorship: it is a lie. The Argentinian people will revolt against the junta; in the streets they shout 'Malvinas, yes: junta, no'. But they won't find the British troops on their side; nor will they win support from American, West German or United Nations troops.

Such forces will obstruct socialism in Argentina; and thereby obstruct the road to the only really free future for the Falkland islanders, which is to live with — and associate with — a free, socialist Argentina.

The alternative is very simple: get Britain out of the islands now, and start giving real internationalist assistance to those who can get rid of the junta — the Argentinian working class.

Socialist Challenge FUND DRIVE '82

THE right wing of the labour movement is summoning its courage for an attack on the gains of the whole labour movement over the past few years.

Instead of using its power to tackle the Tories and the SDP, Foot and Healey are choosing to attack those who have fought for the socialist policies which have gained such wide support in the trade unions and constituency parties — policies like unilateral disarmament, withdrawal from the EEC, an end to incomes policies and for the reduction of the working week to give work to the jobless.

Socialist Challenge has fought for these policies with increasing success over the years as well as being the most outstanding fighter in the Labour Party for a principled internationalist position against British imperialism's adventure in the South Atlantic.

For this we and the rest of the left of the Labour Party are under threat from the right; it is not just the far left — *Militant, Socialist Organiser and ourselves* — under threat, but the whole of the left wing in a desperate attempt to make the Labour Party again a party fit to defend the capitalist order from the rank and file of the working class.

The right wing do not choose to attack us for the policies which we have fought for instead they attack us on such questions as the source of our money.

This is an open secret indeed. Every week in this column we tell our readers of our financial problems; our mounting debts, the quadrupling of the rent of our offices.

We explain that we have none of the resources of the Fleet Street press with their millionaire backer who bail them out with the vast profits from their property empires.

The only support that we get is from you, our readers, through our regular fund drive and through our emergency 'Weeks Wages for Socialist Challenge' campaign. And what great support you have given us. In five weeks nearly eight and a half thousand pounds have come in to our office.

The right wing cannot understand this type of commitment. They look for sinister backers, 'Moscow gold' and the like.

They fail to understand that our readers, youth, trade unionists, Labour Party members are willing to make considerable sacrifices to support a paper that keeps alive the voice of the international working class when Michael Foot offers his 'great congratulations' for Thatcher's slaughter in the South Atlantic.

The right wing will never understand because they lack the political principles which lie at the basis of such commitment.

We appeal to our readers to defend Socialist Challenge against the right. Not just by encouraging the whole left in the Labour Party to buy and demonstratively sell the left press, but to support in the other battle against rising costs and rent.

Please rally round to fight!

Area	Last week	This week
West London	674.00	674.00
East London	533.00	583.00
North London	465.00	465.00
South London	400.00	530.00
Brent	1140.00	1140.00
Birmingham & West Midlands	637.00	647.00
Manchester and N.W.	907.55	1247.55
South Wales	625.00	625.00
South West	217.00	217.00
Oxford	180.00	180.00
Scotland	411.30	528.30
North East	205.00	205.00
Yorkshire	250.00	286.00
East Midlands	270.00	270.00
Individuals	770.00	780.00
Total	7664.85	8430.85



Labour Committee for Withdrawal from the South Atlantic

THE NEWLY established Labour Committee for Withdrawal from the South Atlantic held its first public meeting last Saturday, during the *London Labour Briefing* conference. Over 50 people heard Ken Livingstone, GLC Labour leader, denounce Thatcher for cynically killing hundreds, if not thousands of Argentinian and British troops, to remain in power.

He went on to say that the basis for the committee, of which he was a

sponsor, was the bare minimum we should be demanding. 'Those islands

are part of the continental land shelf of South America,' explained Ken Livingstone. For the British to say that they had the right to 'free' Argentinian workers from the junta was the height of paternalism and racism. If on the first day, the Labour front bench had opposed Thatcher,

there would have been no military adventure.

Tessa van Gelderen, from Socialist Challenge had earlier taken up the same theme and argued that activists in the Labour Party had to 'settle accounts with Labour's front bench at conference'. That was why the Labour Committee had

been set up so that the Labour party could give a lead in opposition to Thatcher's warmongering.

It was this 'adventure' in the South Atlantic that gave the green light to Reagan's policies in South America and which had allowed Begin to claim if Thatcher could invade the Falklands he could invade

Lebanon.

The overwhelming majority of the meeting agreed with the necessity of such a committee to take right into the heart of the labour movement.

There was some discussion as to whether the basis should be broadened to include the right of Argentina to the islands but the

general feeling seemed to be that the committee should be as broadly based as possible, without avoiding the necessity of confronting Labour's leaders.

For further information about the activities of the Labour Committee for Withdrawal from the South Atlantic contact 23 Legation Road, London NW10.

THE LABOUR right's attack on the *Militant* tendency is only its most recent attempt to rid itself of the left at the risk of destroying the party.

In the 1920s the Communist Party was banned and a mass campaign organised in its defence. Hundreds of thousands of Labour Party members, from constituencies disaffiliated because of their refusal to implement the ban, threw their weight behind the National Left Wing Movement.

It was only when the Communist Party itself made an ultraleft turn away from the Labour Party that the movement collapsed and the right gained the upper hand.

In 1938 Stafford Cripps was expelled and his Socialist League disbanded. And after World War II Aneurin Bevan formed an oppositional parliamentary group — the 'Bevanites' which included Michael Foot and Harold Wilson and was witch-hunted out of existence.



Bevan developed huge mass support. His group was persecuted in language that is becoming familiar again — for being a 'party within a party'.

But Bevan could not develop a valid socialist alternative faced with the Cold War and the collapse of union militancy during the early years of the postwar boom. In 1957 he capitulated, turned on his supporters, and renounced unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Tessa van Gelderen looks at two of these episodes and argues that the left today, faced with a new onslaught, should learn that it must fight every inch of the way: whichever section of the left is under immediate attack, the real target is the whole of the left.

At the same time these past experiences have shown how important it is to turn towards the unions and to extraparlimentary working class struggle.

By Brian Heron

THE sickening unanimity which extended from the Archbishop of Canterbury and the *Sun* to craven leaders of Labour's front bench over the Malvinas war will be renewed this week. The target? *Militant*. It's open season for witches in the Labour Party again.

With due pomp and ceremony, Michael Foot, erstwhile champion of peace and socialists in the Labour Party, will sound the hunting horn.

He will explain that it is not the ideas of these people which are the problem. We know what support Foot has in the labour movement at the moment as registered in the polls. Rather it is the fact

that these people have the cheek to organise to present and defend them in the Labour Party. As one heckler at a Callaghan rally in Birmingham at the last election put it when threatened with removal 'yes...who let these socialists in?' The platform clapped.

The hypocrisy of the Foot leadership is indicated by the lopsided application of his anti-organisation principle. We eagerly await the clamp down on the Committee for Transatlantic Understanding, not to mention Callaghan's new inner party to reverse unilateralism.

The biggest affront of all is that Foot is the leader of a real 'party

within the party'. His party is composed of Labour's front bench, the majority of the PLP and the majority of the barons of the trade union movement. They wage daily war in the party of constituency activists, millions of rank and file affiliated members, the LPYS and Party Conference. They use the machinery built up by the labour movement over generations of sacrifice to destroy its democratic policies, campaigns and decisions.

Last week a quarter of a million marched against missiles. Today thousands of health workers, rail workers and miners are going into battle with the Tories. Now is the

chance for the labour leadership to reverse the terrible effects of its popularity created by its appalling stand on Thatcher's bloody little war.

Foot can put Labour in the winner's enclosure by leading joint Labour/trade union action to bring this wretched government down. In the event these mobilisations and trade union battles will be sufficient to stop the right organising any decisive policy reversals at this year's Labour conference. But Foot will do his best to put the party outside this vast upsurge of anger against the government.

Instead he will use the relative isolation of the left created by his

FIGHTING WITC

WITCH-HUNTS

THE LABOUR PARTY did not always keep Communists out. When it was set up it had an affiliated structure and all working class organisations could take part. In constituencies like Battersea the Communist Party not only affiliated but put up parliamentary candidates who were elected and returned to parliament.

The right wing could not tolerate this and by 1925 had rammed through conference the first of a series of resolutions against the communists — in this case preventing them from being individual members of the Party.

Nearly 100 divisional and borough Labour parties refused to operate this decision. Labour's headquarters started to disaffiliate those bodies that refused to implement the ban on communists.

In December 1925 the National Left Wing Movement (NLWM) was founded to defend the left. Present were leading members from the Labour Party, the Independent Labour Party and the Communist Party. Its aim was 'not to supersede the Labour Party but to "remould it nearer to the heart's desire" of the rank and file'. Both the attacks from the right wing in the party and the betrayals of the union leaders, particular in the General Strike in May 1926, gave an impetus to its formation.

'Many were to regret that decision in later years when the left in the party, robbed by their own act of any effective organisation, found themselves hopelessly pitted against the Executive machine.'

Michael Foot writing on the decision of the Socialist League to dissolve in 1937 to avoid expulsion in his biography of Bevan.

At its September 1926 conference the mood was to 'cleanse the Labour Party of the agents of capitalism'. The right wing's offensive continued with the aid of the union block vote. The communist-led Minority Movement in the trade unions continued to grow. In 1926 it had nearly one million members — a quarter of the total trade union membership.

Its leadership, its programme and its outlook linked it to the National Left Wing, which in 1927 increased in both organisational and political strength. Trade union support grew for the right of the Communist Party to affiliate, and at the NLWM's second annual conference in September 1927, 150,000 individual members were represented.

More and more Labour Party members were disgusted at both the policy and the leadership of the party.



National Left Wing Movement

They wanted to change the party in a more militant, socialist direction. Conference declared: 'The Left Wing Movement consists of sympathetic Labour Parties and left wing groups who are pledged to work for a left wing programme. It is not part of the objects of the left wing to create splits with the Labour Party nor is it under the domination of any political party.' It opposed 'watering down' Labour policy to accommodate capitalism, or the expulsion of any section of the working class from the Labour Party.

The NLWM was composed of hundreds of thousands of independent socialists: but its history is very much the history of the Communist Party, founded in 1920. Right from the beginning it considered affiliation to the Labour Party, though not without dissent from leading communists. In fact Lenin, Trotsky and the whole Comintern leadership had to argue against its early sectarianism.

At its founding conference most spoke against affiliation, against advice from Moscow — although the vote was narrowly passed in favour. The first application was phased to invite rejection. When rejection was the answer the *Communist* of 16 September wrote: 'So be it. It's their funeral, not ours.'

But one week later, under pressure from the Comintern the same paper argued that 'it is the duty of the communists to work where the masses are.' A well-worded reply to the Labour leaders was published rebutting its accusations of subversions, and arguing that the Labour Party should adopt revolutionary methods to achieve its ends.

Over the next two years the CPGB made a serious effort to break from its sectarian past. They agreed to endorse united front tactics with T A Jackson's famous call to 'take the Labour leaders by the hand in order to later take them by the throat.'

By August 1922 the CPGB withdrew all candidates it had been planning to stand against Labour. The party's new attitude was explained thus: 'The Communist Party cannot oppose the Labour Party insofar as it is the party of the workers any more than it can oppose the trade unions as such; but it can, as it does with the trade unions, fight the reactionary junta and seek to transform the Labour Party into an instrument of revolutionary progress.'

Support for Communist Party affiliation to the Labour Party grew among trades councils and certain unions, in particular the Miners Federation.

1927 was a year of transition for the CPGB. The trade union bureaucracy was campaigning against the activities of the Communist Party and the Minority Movement in the trade unions; at the same time the influence of the left wing movement in the Labour Party increased. Membership of the CPGB was declining, after an all time high, and the party leadership had acceded to the demands of the TUC that trades councils, on threat of expulsion, should disaffiliate from the Minority Movement.

Things reached a head at the Ninth Plenum of the Communist International. A majority of the British Communist Party argued that because of the party's activities with the Left Wing Movement, things were now extremely favourable to them. As historian L J Macfarlane explained, 'A genuine mass left wing opposition in the Labour Party was possible in the near future if the Communist Party continued with its policy of working within the Labour Party.'

'It was the most ambitious bid by the British left throughout the whole period of the thirties to break the stultifying rigidity of Party alignment. The overwhelming bulk of both Conservative and Labour Parties believed that party loyalty must take precedence over all other virtues ... Aneurin Bevan was one of the few members of Parliament who were not prepared to accept tamely this paralysing dispensation.'
Michael Foot writing on the Unity Campaign of January 1937 in his biography of Bevan.

But alas this was not to be. Instead the position put forward by a minority in the CPGB, led by Harry Pollitt and Palme Dutt was adopted. For them it was a period of 'increasing division between the mass of the workers and the reformist leadership expressed in the leftward advance of the workers and the rightward consolidation of the reformist leadership'.

Instead of fighting for a return of a Labour government 'in order to help the workers by their own experience to convince themselves of the worthlessness of reformism' as the majority argued, the Communist Party was to stand a maximum number of candidates in open opposition to Labour. The final resolution paid no heed to the role of the left wing inside the Labour Party with disastrous consequences.

WITCH-HUNTS THIS TIME ROUND

stand on the Malvinas war to launch his own 'bloody little war' in the Party. He will move against *Militant*.

The ultimate aim of Labour's right wing is to throw back Labour's policy gains and disorganise and break-up the socialist left. The blow struck against *Militant* is a blow aimed at the gains of the mass movement against the Tories.

Behind the action against *Militant* is the build up to strike at Benn and the current he leads in the Party and the unions. And it is this current, above all others, whose organisation and activity guarantees Labour and trade

union policy of opposition to the EEC, incomes policy and the missiles. Defence of *Militant* is the defence of the whole of the Labour left and its support in the unions, AND the policy gains so vital to Labour's election prospects.

● *Take a resolution through all sections of the party and all affiliated organisations condemning the Militant report, rejecting the implementation of any action either locally or nationally on its basis.*

● *Organise local rallies, speakers from the YS, unions and activists under attack. Get speakers along*

to mobilise support for the current trade union battles. The theme of these meetings should be 'Fight the Tories and their allies in the labour movement.' For it is only the strength of the mass movement which will throw Foot's challenge back in his face.

● *Build the national YS demonstration against Tebbit 16 October in Liverpool. This demonstration links the present trade union battles and defence of the YS against the effects of the witch-hunt.*

At the heart of our policy to defeat the witch-hunt is the desperate need to link the struggle to the real battles now going on to

defeat the Tories. These battles have the power to defeat Thatcher and blow Foot's offensive to smithereens.

The witch-hunt, in the final analysis, is a product of the fear of Labour's right that they will not be able to offer the ruling class a stable and reliable government, and therefore be forced to rely on a left inclined labour movement for their political fortune. Their attack on *Militant* is a sign of their good intentions. Look, they are saying, a Labour government will not bend to the pressure for radical solutions to the crisis. We can put our house in (capitalist) order.

But at the same time as the

right try to reverse Labour's radical policies, or move against the socialists they break up what chance there is to mobilise in the working class for a Labour victory. The labour movement have had enough of Callaghan and Healey to last them a life time.

Foot and Healey have already made their choice. The left must make theirs. The right have made it clear that they are prepared to turn the party over to the inquisition rather than fight the Tories. The left must organise to stop them. Tony Benn must stand against Foot as the first step in organising the ranks in the fight for socialist policies.

NOT THE FIRST TIME

'The argument seemed to be that a minority had no right to advocate its views or at least to organise in an effort to become the majority ... party loyalty reigned supreme in the Labour Party.'

Michael Foot on the expulsion of Stafford Cripps in his biography of Bevan.

The third annual conference of the National Left Wing Movement in September 29 1928 agreed, in effect, to support communist candidates against Labour candidates. A few days after, the Labour Party conference took further measures against the communists. These measures debarred affiliated organisations from supporting non Labour candidates; and denied the right of Labour Parties inviting platform speakers from organisations not eligible for affiliation to the Labour Party.

This decision gave the CPGB the excuse it was looking for to wrap up the National Left Wing Movement although its demise was to drag on for several months. The National Left Wing Movement had been built in the heyday of the CPGB. In October 1926 it had 10,730 members but by December 1929 this had fallen to 3,200.

The CPGB was a revolutionary party with mass support, particularly in the unions. That was why it could successfully build the NLWM and the Minority Movement and why important sections of the labour movement were prepared to defend them. But as Macfarlane points out: 'The National Left Wing Movement was a valuable tool for carrying out the earlier Communist policy of changing the Labour Party from within. When this policy came to be seen as neither desirable nor possible, the National Left Wing became an encumbrance.'

The Communist Party had thrown away a historic opportunity. Hundreds of thousands of militants were prepared to risk disaffiliation rather than sacrifice their class principles. Over time these class instincts would have led them to revolutionary socialism, which was proving itself by the leadership it had given in both the NLWM and the Minority Movement.

But these militants still saw the Labour Party, even with its treacherous leadership, as the only vehicle for reaching their fellow workers and forming a government. They were not willing to follow the Communists into the wilderness.

THE BATTLE for the Labour Party took a different course in the '50s. The mid-twenties had been a high point in working class struggle, culminating in the General Strike in 1926. The fifties saw an economic boom in the wake of the Korean War. McCarthyism was finding a foothold in the British labour movement.

Tribune in 1948 had supported the ban on communists holding office in the transport Union, but one year later had changed its position. The paper attacked the TGWU general secretary, Arthur Deakin, who had demanded the outlawing of the Communist Party and the suppression of the CP's *Daily Worker*. There was an upturn in the class struggle; the wage freeze had all but broken down.

But the biggest issue facing the Labour Party leadership was the Korean War. The 1951 budget cut made cuts in the health service as a direct consequence of the arms programme necessitated by the war and demanded by the United States.

Trotskyists inside the Labour Party were organised within the Socialist Fellowship, which produced a paper, *Socialist Outlook*. Its modest successes in organising anti-war rallies put it on the list of proscribed organisations. It was the same national executive that banned Socialist Fellowship that voted for Gaitskell's budget of cuts. Three days later Aneurin Bevan, John Freeman and Harold Wilson resigned from the Cabinet.

'We cannot allow this to go on and free controversy and free newspapers to be stamped out of existence ...'

Michael Foot speaking at a protest meeting against the proscribing of *Socialist Outlook* 1954.

The next two years saw an intensification in rank and file opposition to right wing leaders of the party and unions. The Parliamentary Labour Party banned the Bevanite group on 23 October 1952. The parliamentary group disintegrated after the ban but mass work and propaganda flourished. Bevan had hoped to deflect the right wing by winding his group up; but the witch-hunt now got worse. 1954 saw the proscribing of *Socialist Outlook* and the expulsions of Trotskyists. The issue of the rights of all tendencies to put their views in the party had become a vital one for the movement.

Michael Foot denounced the ban against the Bevanites in *Tribune* and the 'new tinpot Torquemadas' who were leading the witch-hunt. As the class struggle gained momentum, as trade unionists, led by the dockers, attempted to deal with their own leaders, so the witch-hunt intensified.

The dockers had formed a breakaway union from the TGWU, the blue collar NASD union. It was



Wilson, Bevan and Mikardo — 1951

Bevan and Bevanism

the general secretary of the TGWU, Arthur Deakin, who was determined to rid the Labour Party of Bevan and the Bevanites.

Mark Jenkins, in his book 'Bevanism, Labour's High Tide' argues that 'The mass movement and more precisely the dockers were asserting the course and tempo of the Bevanites' struggle. The docks dispute of 1954 is the very essence of the Bevanites' struggle against party and union bureaucracy the right of trade unionists and party members to assert control over their unions, their party, their leaders.' (emphasis in original). Dockers, engineers, busworkers and railworkers were all in dispute in 1954.

In this growing mood of militancy the right intensified its attack. The TUC expelled the blue collar dockers union and within hours the national executive of the Labour Party passed a motion of censure on *Tribune*, which had supported NASD. It sent a threatening letter to editorial board members, including Michael Foot, asking 'how do you reconcile your attacks on the leadership of the TGWU with your membership of the Party?' *Tribune* made a spirited defence and the NEC climbed down.

But these struggles marked the tailend of postwar militancy. Bevan was more and more limited to inner-party manoeuvres whose limits were set by his acceptance of the original NEC disbandment of his group.

The right continued its witch-

hunt. In March 1955 there was even an attempt to expel Bevan from the party. The pretext was his abstention on an opposition amendment to the Defence White Paper. That it was a pretext is shown by the fact that the other 62 Labour MPs who abstained were not threatened with expulsion or had the whip withdrawn. More significantly the Parliamentary Labour Party, at the time of the expulsion campaign, adopted a position only slightly different from Bevan's.

The issue was on the necessity of holding summit talks between the great powers. In the end this was the real problem of Bevan — whatever the Bevanites might have wanted, Bevan himself was unable to break out of cold war politics. He was unable to find a 'third way' between Russia and the United States and finally came down on the side of imperialism. The right wing clearly saw Bevan as a bigger enemy than the Tories.

Deakin and the other right wing leaders wanted to expel Bevan in the full knowledge that a split might ensue. Just before the NEC meeting that backed down from expelling Bevan, Deakin confided in Gaitskell that in the event of any wavering on the question of expulsion, the unions 'might have to consider their relations with the party.'

Bevanism is often extolled as a parallel of Bennism. The left wing of the Labour Party sing Bevan's praises and do not ask themselves why he —

and his successors — capitulated. But many Marxists make the opposite mistake of pointing to his capitulation and ignoring the huge mass working class movement that supported him.

'To the leaders, opposition meant a more or less sedate presentation of their case in the House of Commons, coupled with the development of a practical programme to be offered at the next election ... A great gulf seemed to be fixed between the politics of the streets and the politics of the Westminster committee rooms. Bevan's whole striving in the thirties was to find a bridge between the two.'

Michael Foot in his biography of Bevan.

In reality, Bevan was organising in an entirely different context to today. The working class was able to advance without a life-or-death struggle, because the postwar boom — and imperialist profits — could finance an expanding welfare state.

The only basis on which Bevan could have forged an independent working class movement, given the lack of political militancy to which this gives rise, was by striking out with an independent foreign policy. The tremendous successes of the CND in the 1960s, in changing the climate within the Labour Party, demonstrated this.

But Bevan was unable to establish an independent foreign policy because he knew that American economic support, and Britain's world role, depended on staying in the Western Alliance. Unable to see any alternative than straightforward incorporation into the Russian camp — unable, in fact, to chart a revolutionary foreign policy — he could not defeat the right wing.

Further reading

Communism in Britain
By Woodhouse and Pearce
pb New Park £2

Bevanism: Labour's High Tide
By Mark Jenkins
pb Spokeman £4.95

The British Communist Party
By L J Macfarlane
out of print

Aneurin Bevan Vols 1 & 2
By Michael Foot
pb Paladin £2.95

Labour women move left

THE LABOUR WOMEN'S conference this year was a major victory for the left in the Labour Party. As we reported last week it was attended by over 600 delegates — more than double last year — and passed resolutions against Britain's role in the Falklands and NATO, and for positive action in favour of women, often voting against the platform. It thus took policy positions in advance of any other official national Labour Party body — including the National Executive Committee and even the LPYS.

This week we assess the conference in more detail. Three closely-linked issues dominated it: the policy debates, democracy and the role of women in the labour movement, and relation of the trade unions to the Party. The connection is clear: without the means to implement policy decision, resolutions are meaningless. ANN HENDERSON and JUDE WOODWARD discuss the issues, and we reprint the views of some of the delegates.

How can women win?

WOMEN have been leading current struggles against the Tory government; so it is hardly surprising that the women's conference emerged in the vanguard of the struggle for socialist policies in the Labour Party.

The media chose to concentrate on 'incidents' in which women left children on the platform because there was no proper childcare. This vital issue has been ignored for too long by the labour movement, but the press emphasis obscured the debates at the forefront of conference: delegates' disgust at Foot's backing for Thatcher's war; their defiance of the witch-hunt; and their demand for a say in the Labour Party and unions.

The relation between the unions and the Labour Party delegates ran as a theme throughout the discussion. Yet what was really at stake was this: how can women secure implementation of the policies they won? Women need control over their own organisations and representatives — as women — in labour movement bodies. But democracy can only be effective if it mobilises the

collective strength of women and the labour movement.

The mood of conference was for action. It welcomed a speaker from the NHS, and COHSE and NUPE delegates emphasised that their pay battle was of vital concern for women. The debate on Tebbit's legislation brought to light the importance of solidarity action; Tebbit would outlaw the very type of action which women workers need to secure their demands.

But the general desire for action did not find a focus in the resolutions, which did not put forward clear campaigning priorities.

Part of the reason is to be found in the support of many delegates for the Alternative Economic Strategy, which was passed by conference, and in particular the concentration by some on the left on a search for a 'feminist incomes policy' in the AES framework. Believing that the 'redistribution of wealth within the family' takes priority over other struggles for women's and class rights, they try and achieve this demand in a framework that relies on government and state action — instead of mass action by the labour movement and by women.



Ann Pettifor, CLPD women's action committee

I was distressed by the false divisions and was angered by the platform's lack of sympathy for mothers in the hall — though I don't necessarily think they went about it in the 'time honoured way' of LP conference. Divisions arose in conference because some wanted to discuss vital issues like Tebbit and employment, and some couldn't

because they had to worry about their children.

This is how many of the divisions arose. The fact that many of the resolutions were carried, some by 280 votes, shows the support and unanimity there was at conference. But the platform tried to reinforce the idea that extremists were using aggressive tactics and we were all lumped in together. Everyone was interested in the debate; only the mothers weren't allowed to be.

Estella Clarke, SOGAT and Secretary of Edgbaston Women's Council

This is my third Labour Party women's conference and there have always been motions trying to get the women's organisation changed. This year's conference has been a big success; more people are becoming aware about the issues and the number of delegates is growing.

SOGAT voted against the Falklands resolution because our delegation objected to the attack on the labour leadership contained within it and also the call for the unconditional withdrawal of the task force. My union conference passed quite a good resolution but it did not include these clauses.

On composite 20, on democracy and for more involvement of women — SOGAT objected to paragraph 'e' because it interpreted the TUC Charter for Equality within the unions in such a way that it said trade unions had to send women delegates to conference in proportion to female members. This was seen as dictating to the unions. We voted for positive action and abortion. This is our union policy.

I personally agreed with Composite 20 although I think we have to be careful about telling unions how to organise. I think there needs to be greater understanding between the trade union section and the CLP/Women's section of the conference. I'm as active in my union as I am in the Labour Party.

I think a lot of members of the Labour Party are in the sort of jobs where being in a union isn't very important. It's different in the manual unions where you are constantly fighting against low pay, closures and redundancies so that the wider issues — democracy in the party for instance — have to be put into second place, not because they're not important but because there are other things that demand attention. I would agree that some union delegates are right-wing. I can only speak for my own union however. We've come out in support of left-wing policies, we nominated Benn for deputy leader.

On any delegation you're going to get right-wingers. Most unions vote according to their policies or abstain. On the question of democracy and the women's conference it had not been discussed beforehand; people don't think it's important. I think some of the unions felt alienated in the democracy debate. They saw the changes as being an attack on the unions because they saw it as taking away their power. It's never really been thought out.

COHSE delegate

I've been asked to give the vote of thanks at this conference — I'm pleased about that — but I'm not sure what I'm going to say. I didn't support the platform all the time; I think that what the younger women at this conference want is good but we've got to get the trade unions to agree as well.

Hazel Macpherson, NUR

I am in favour of mandates; as a trade union delegate to the conference I voted according to mandates throughout, because it's part of the process of accountability. What concerns me is the process by which union policy is arrived at in the first place, and the lack of involvement of women in the union in that process.

I'm in favour of a more democratic annual general meeting within the union, also I'm in favour of the NUR executive proposal to organise a national conference of NUR women — although I think this has to go hand in hand with special structures throughout the union.

I think the system of a block vote based on female membership only

would mean firstly that the mandate would mean something to delegates and secondly that the conference itself would become much more important. The block vote would provide a focus for discussion inside the union.

The democracy debate at conference was very important, and parallels the debate taking place in the unions. But it was unfortunate that this debate wasn't linked to policy — it became abstract. I think that's why the Trade Union delegations responded as they did to the democracy debate, after having voted consistently to the left on questions like positive action and international issues.

Democracy: how to implement policies

DEMOCRACY was the hottest debate at conference. Among proposals passed were:

- Five resolutions to go from the women's conference to the Labour Party conference
- Five delegates to go from the women's conference to the NEC — with discussion around trade union representation
- The women's office to be fully resourced and given no additional work by the Labour Party
- Seven out of eight members of the incoming Standing Orders Committee are supporters of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy
- A proposal for the women's executive to be elected by conference was defeated, but last year's conference decision — for executive election from the regional conferences — stands

The trade unions were seen by some as an obstacle to democracy, and even as irreversibly right-wing.

But as Steph Grant, a delegate from Birmingham Soho and a TGWU member pointed out, 'The Labour Party should be ashamed of itself for being so far behind the unions in taking up the demand for positive action.' The unions, everyone must realise, are the backbone of any effective fight for women's rights; and democracy in the Labour Party can only be conquered alongside democracy in the unions.

Trade union delegates spoke against women's conference electing its own NEC representatives because they feared it would carve out trade union women. The answer

women will be mobilised behind the left's policies; but that is why the right-wing will try to defeat the gains of this conference.

The next step is to build really solid support in the unions for its decisions.

All women's sections and women's councils should be out campaigning in support of the health workers, setting up Labour Party public meetings and organising collections. Trade union delegates should be encouraged to participate in women's councils, and the left should champion factory branches.

Joint Labour Party and trade union schools on issues like positive action were proposed in one of the motions. These could be used to work out a common strategy; it is not enough for Labour Party members as individuals to be active in their trade unions. The labour left should organise around their policies inside the unions.

Labour party women are showing the way forward to the rest of the movement — this is the way to fight the witch-hunt; this is the way to mobilise women on the streets against this Tory government.

Trade Union delegates to the conference were as follows:

APEX	TGWU
ASTMS	Tailor and Garment Workers
COHSE	Blind/Disabled
NUPE	AUEW
AUEW (TASS)	UCW
GMWU	ACTT
NUR	FBU
NAAAW	POEU
Bakers, Food and Allied Trades	APEX
USDAW	NUPE
	EETPU

Most trade union delegates are elected in their regions. Why not find out about your union and get your delegates involved in the discussion inside the Labour Party? Make sure they give reports back to union and Labour Party branches, and that your union is involved in Regional Labour Party Women's Conference!

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Bradford 12 freed!

By Chris Guthrie, Paul Hutchinson and Christine Jacobs

AS PEOPLE leave court 2 in Leeds Town Hall they cry, embrace and cheer as the tension of eleven months of struggle and suffering is released. It is Wednesday 16 June. The jury has just returned a not guilty verdict on the remaining eleven defendants in the Bradford Twelve trial, on charges of making explosives with intent to endanger life or property, and of conspiracy to make explosives for an unlawful purpose. As they leave the court for the last time, jurors are greeted with cheers and applause from the defendants and the packed public gallery.

The acquitted verdict is a massive victory, not just for the twelve but for the whole black community in Britain. When the jury said 'not guilty', they said self-defence is no offence, they said black people have the right to defend themselves against racist attacks. They said the Bradford police had been unconcerned about violent attacks on black people, preferring to spend their time harassing black activists. And they said the police had attempted to frame these twelve black youths.

The petrol bombs were said to have been made for a 'copycat' riot, against police and buildings. Tarlochan Gata-Aura, the only defendant to be cross-examined, denied these charges. The bombs were made when he was told that coachloads of skinheads were coming up the motorway to attack black people in Bradford. They were for use only as a last resort, in self-defence. The idea was to 'erect a shield of fire to deter any attackers from coming into black areas.'

When the prosecutor attempted to pour scorn on this, Tarlochan said, 'Maybe you don't know what it is to be black in this racist society. In such a situation the only thing you can think of is measures you might make to defend yourself.'

For seven weeks the defence used the trial to show what it meant to be a black in a racist society. Witnesses were called to describe the fascist invasion of Southall on 3 July last year, and the fire-bombing of the Khan



family in Walthamstow which killed a woman and her three children.

Two Asian bus drivers in Bradford described how they had been victim of racist attacks last year. Both had to have several weeks off work; no police action was taken.

This police indifference was highlighted time and time again.

Police witnesses either denied any knowledge of racist attacks or claimed that they were not significant.

They had not bothered to check up the parts of the defendants' statements which referred to the skinhead threat. 'I was more concerned with the riots,' said Detective Constable Irvin.

The defence also showed the trial was political, designed to intimidate and criminalise black activists. Most of the twelve were members and sympathisers of the United Black Youth League, a militant black organisation. Some had been involved in campaigns such as Anwar Ditta's fight to be united with her children, and support for

George Lindo, a black worker from Bradford, who had been jailed on a false police statement.

It emerged that the Special Branch had been involved, briefing officers before homes were raided. Detective superintendent Holland explained: 'It was their job to take care of the political aspects of the case.'

It was not just legal defence which freed the twelve. A campaign of mass action organised by support groups up and down the country, played a crucial role. This campaign organised demonstrations and pickets outside the court, and took the case into the black community, black organisations, trade unions and the Labour Party. It produced bulletins explaining the politics of the case and why it affected, not just black people but white workers.

Blow

It was an outstanding example of how a defence campaign should be run.

This trial, like the use of CS gas and rubber bullets, was an attempt to intimidate black youth in the wake of last year's riots; but the youth fought back and dealt a stinging blow to the Bradford police and the racist state. The result can only increase the confidence of black activists and make the police and the fascists think twice before they again choose to harass black people.

We have to build on this victory, to continue the struggle against racism. As a first step the Bradford Twelve campaign is supporting a demonstration against deportations in Bradford on 10 July.

Bombs

The case arose from the discovery of a cache of 38 petrol bombs on waste ground in Bradford following minor disturbances on 11 July last year. In the next few weeks the twelve were picked up. Denied access to solicitors and treated very badly during questioning, they made 'voluntary' statements which became the lynch-pin of the prosecution case.

Murdered feminist scandal

A MAN who killed his feminist companion was acquitted of murder at Winchester Crown Court last Thursday, and merely sentenced to six years imprisonment for 'manslaughter'.

The man, thirty year old Peter Woods, was allegedly 'provoked' to kill 36 year old Mary Bristow because she refused to have a monogamous relationship with him.

Mary Bristow was an active member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and of the Winchester women's liberation group. Woods killed her by clubbing, strangling and then smothering her in her own bedroom.

Woods fetched a meat-tenderiser mallet from the kitchen and wrapped it round with two socks 'to minimise the suffering' claimed the defence.

The judge, summing up the case, said: 'If you play with sex you are playing with fire. It may be that conventions that surround sex are to prevent people from burning themselves.'

In other words, if you are a woman and refuse to have a monogamous relationship with a man, then it's your own look out if you get murdered. The implications of the judge's remarks couldn't have been clearer.

Much was made by the defence counsel of Mary Bristow's feminism and political convictions. He said: 'Romantic love was childish to her. Mary was in a stage of rebellion, an idealist and devotee of many different causes.' Implication: being a feminist and a peace campaigner, she got what was coming to her.

The Winchester case shows precisely how much women can rely on the law. It comes in the wake of the case in which the judge said that a raped woman hitch hiker was guilty of 'contributory negligence', and the decision in the private prosecution rape case in Scotland in which the judge said that rape couldn't be proved unless resistance could be proved. He went on to make it explicit that if a woman was drunk or asleep, then she couldn't resist and thus rape couldn't be proved.

In other words, the law might defend you against rape and murder provided that you're monogamous, apolitical, non-feminist and don't drink or sleep. And provided that you're not a woman either.

Holland Anti-nuke soldiers face frame up charge

Three members of the Dutch soldiers union, the VVDM, were arrested last Thursday and Friday and charged with stealing Dutch nuclear secrets. They are Steef Boot, Peter Van Wijk and Oskar Van Rijswijk. Two are national leaders of the VVDM and the other is a branch leader. No details of the

atomic secrets charge have been given.

The VVDM union has between 10,000 and 15,000 members in the Dutch armed forces.

Members of the VVDM in the 'Soldiers Against Nuclear Weapons' committee have participated in uniform in anti-nuclear demonstrations. Moreover, they have been organising among soldiers against Dutch military personnel being responsible for guarding nuclear sites.

Oskar Van Rijswijk, a member of the IKB, the Dutch section of the Fourth International, is responsible for organising

this work among the soldiers.

The Dutch Ministry of Defence has presented no serious evidence in support of the charges. Either there is no evidence or the anti-nuke soldiers have discovered new plans to site nuclear missiles in Holland which the state wishes to keep secret.

The three face up to 15

years in prison if the charges are found proved.

Socialist Challenge appeals to all its supporters to get resolutions through their local CND, Labour Party and trade union branches to protest against the victimisation of these anti-nuclear soldiers, whose activity is much more in the interests of defending the people of

Holland from nuclear extinction than that of the Dutch 'Ministry of Defence.'

Send telegrams to: Dutch Ministry of Defence, Plein no 4, The Hague, Netherlands. Copies to VVDM, Hojelkazerne, Croesalaan 39, Utrecht, Netherlands and copies to Socialist Challenge.

Decriminalise abortion

By Ann Potter

OVER 80 per cent of both Tory and Labour voters, according to a recent Gallop Poll, think that choice over whether or not to continue with a pregnancy should be left up to the woman in consultation with her doctor.

This is not the situation, however, in which most women find themselves. At the recent Labour Party Festival for Women's Rights, the National Abortion Campaign stall was told of a woman who didn't want any more children and certainly couldn't afford any more. Yet when she became pregnant and requested an abortion, her doctor refused. She then had to obtain her own abortion at the cost of £150. It is still the individual

doctors who decide whether or not a woman can get an abortion. But apart from the law being against a woman's choice, facilities to carry out the provisions of the present Act are totally inadequate.

In 1979, 32 per cent of women had to travel outside their Area Health Authority to obtain an abortion. At the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign annual meeting this Saturday a campaign to decriminalise abortion and to improve facilities will be proposed. So, too, will be 'Facilities Forum' which would publicise the uneven and inadequate facilities which exist throughout the country.

LARC AGM
26 June
Lambeth Town Hall
11am - 4pm



Exterminism and the cold war

Brian Heron reviews a new book from New Left Books

SOME socialists reacted to the parallel between the monstrous inhumanity of Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia in the 1930s by inventing a new stage of human society — the managerial revolution. Today EP Thompson has coined a new term to deal with the awesome power of the nuclear arsenals on both sides of the Iron Curtain, the new determining world system of exterminism.

The theory of the managerial revolution was crushed in the mud and ice around Stalingrad when the real underlying social antagonisms between the international capitalist system and the Russian workers' state, however deformed, led to the bloody climax of the Second World War. Hopefully Thompson's theory won't need to face a modern Stalingrad. NLB's new book marks a more peaceful end to the theory of exterminism, in a compilation of articles from socialists on Thompson's theory.

Exterminism was a notion of a mutually reinforcing system of military and technical elites in the US and USSR whose drive towards nuclear superiority increasingly determined the whole social and political system of their respective countries, and consequently of the main divisions in world politics. Exterminism identifies the main enemy of the anti-missile movement as NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Of course the colonial revolution, with its centre today in the struggle in El Salvador, does not structure every aspect of world

anti-imperialist and anti-Stalinist dimension. Much however depends on resisting the attraction of 'exterminism'.

Struggle

The pivot of the book is the struggle between Marxism and exterminism. And after some interesting contributions from the East German Marxist Rudolf Bahro and the Medvedevs from Russia, Thompson rounds his fire in a concluding article on the 'orthodox Marxists' Mike Davis and Fred Halliday from New Left Review.

Comparing the Davis article to Palme Dutt's 'Notes of the Month' in *Labour Monthly*, Thompson says: 'I am wary of the way in which Davis offers to tidy up thirty years of history, and package it into categories which, on inspection, are rhetorical or descriptive rather than analytical. "The dominant level of world politics," he assures us with confidence "is the process of permanent revolution arising out of the uneven and combined development of world capitalism." I wonder what this means?' asks the innocent Thompson.

Leaving aside Thompson's presumed ignorance of Trotsky, it means that we should discard Thompson's self-fullfilling system of exterminism with its complete and empty abstractions, justified neither by evidence or analysis. Instead we

should investigate the real struggles in concrete societies since the arrival of the bomb, and analyse the responses of the dominant capitalist countries and ruling classes.

Instead of the vision of the mad scientist (much loved in the '30s as the explanation of poison gas or high explosives) and now bedecked by Thompson with military regalia, we find perfectly explicable policies operated by a system whose existence and interests are under threat.

First, a large sector of the globe has been taken out of the capitalist market. Nuclear superiority is necessary not for deterrence, but to keep open the historical option of restoring those sectors of the world market, and preventing the spread of socialised property into new areas. Nuclear superiority allows greater freedom for a massive build up of conventional operations aimed at the revolutions increasing in number and rate, in the colonial and semi-colonial world.

From the basic interests of humanity of course imperialism is barbaric and irrational. Imperialism plunged the world into two wars involving the bloody destruction of millions, but it is explicable. And the bedrock of that explanation is the evolving and antagonistic interests of classes.



Nationalist hysteria triumphs in World Cup

By Geoff Bell and Davy Jones

'DUKE OF WELLINGTON, Lord Nelson, Winston Churchill, Henry Cooper, Lady Diana Spencer ... Margaret Thatcher, Margaret Thatcher, are you listening? Your boys just took one hell of a beating.'

How distant seem those good old days, when the Norwegian commentator celebrated his country's 2-1 victory over England. The days when England's footballing imperialism knew its place. But that was last year before The War and The Baby — oh yes and before Don Howe arrived to help genial Ron Greenwood give the English more 'backbone' — ie more fouling.

God

So now the England XI have apparently only to appear on the football pitch and victory will be theirs, or at least so the pundits are suggesting. And God help anyone who doubts that, and God help any foreigner, especially any non-white foreigner who dares to stand in the way of an English triumph. After all, didn't we teach football to the world, and aren't we doing it again?

Well not exactly. England will not win the

World Cup. They will be outclassed and outplayed by Germany, Brazil, Argentina, the Soviet Union or someone else. We will then be treated to English fans rioting and the Spanish police effectively dispatching the conga-dancing, anthem-singing, 'We hate Argies' thugs to the gutter from where they crawled.

And that will be one of the most pleasing sights of the World Cup. There have been others: the Hondurans, Cameroon and Algeria striking goals and blows for anti-racism: and the French goal against England which was the best of the tournament so far, but because it was against England was not listed in ITVs 'Goal of the Week' competition.

Women

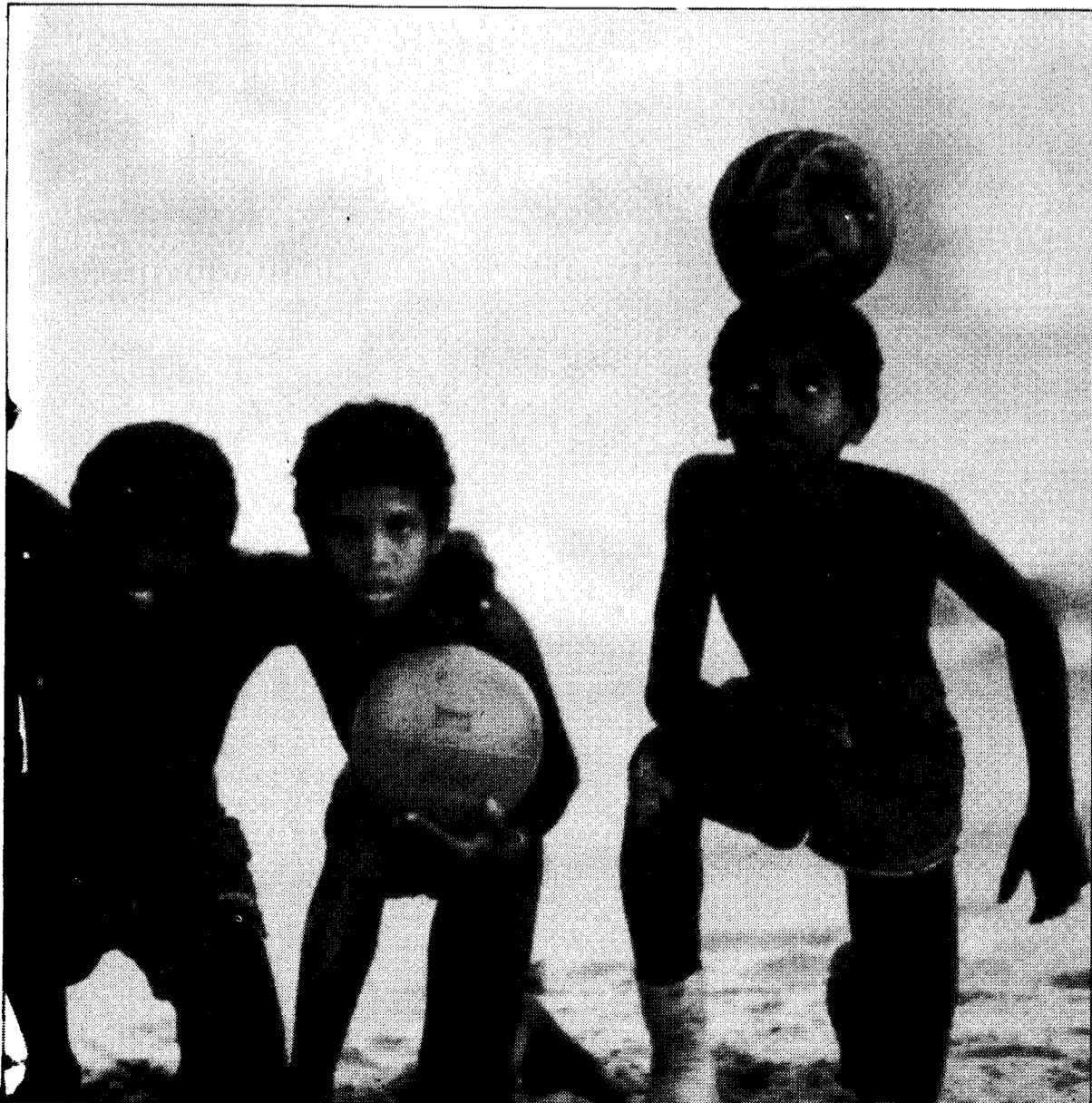
It is the monstrous national egotism of the English fans and studio experts which has dwarfed all other political angles to the World Cup — in-



cluding the exclusion of women from every aspect of the tournament, and the arranging of results so as to please the public — brilliantly exposed by the Kuwaiti Football President Sheikh Fahd Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, following the France-Kuwait walk-off incidents.

Labour Party member Brian Clough has been one of the worst — insisting from the start that England would win just as he insisted eight years ago that a 'clown' of a Polish goalkeeper would ensure English passage to the 1974 World Cup. Well he was wrong then, and hopefully he will be wrong again.

We can only hope that Latin America has the chance to avenge the Malvinas by Argentina or Brazil lifting the trophy in a crushing defeat of the English infidels.



The 1994 Brazilian World Cup squad

THE INVASION of the Malvinas by the Argentinian generals was premised on an attempt to create a national consensus around the military government — without having recourse to civilian participation in the government. The fiasco of the military's attempts to take the islands has resulted in a tremendous crisis both of immediate governmental power and long-term military rule.

The prestige of the military is at an all-time low; the popular movements and in particular the trade union federation, the CGT, are regrouping and strengthening.

The government which will emerge from the present wrangles among the military is certain to be a short-lived affair. The resignation of Galtieri means a new head of the army and a new President. But that is not being decided on the basis of different policy options, but on the basis of seniority. The new President will be Alfredo St Jean, the brother of the governor of Buenos Aires.

St Jean, by the standards of the Argentinian military, has a reputation for being 'soft'. He succeeds to the presidency by virtue of being the Interior Minister, the second rank in the government.

Prisoners

During the worst years of the anti-left repression St Jean had jurisdiction over political prisoners in the Buenos Aires area. Unlike other senior officers he refused to allow the secret police to enter the prisons and carry out assassinations and torture. He established good relations with the Catholic bishops on this basis.

In recent weeks he attended a meeting of the 'multipartidaria' — the broad front of five opposition parties — in order to refurbish his 'liberal im-

age'. But this by no means amounts to support for a process of democratisation of the political system as a whole.

Among competitors for the post of interim president are Lami Dozo, commander of the airforce. Dozo is enjoying a period of unprecedented popularity, given the performance of the airforce, which unlike the other forces in the war with Britain fought heroically and inflicted some serious losses on the enemy.

Power

But the airforce is far too small and wields far too little power internally, compared with the army and navy, to be able to enjoy the support of the whole of the military.

The new commander of the armed forces will be Cristino Nicolaides, a fanatic right-winger and a n t i - c o m m u n i s t. Nicolaides has a reputation of being one of the most ferocious of the generals who participated in the bloody repression which followed the 1976 coup. Nicolaides made a speech several weeks ago in which he sincerely assured his audience that Communism had been trying to subvert the world

Argentina after the deluge

By Phil Hearse



Peronists demonstrate in Buenos Aires

since the year 500 BC!

Even as commander of the army, Nicolaides will have just a temporary rule. His views are too bizarre and correspond too little with present day needs to hold even this post for any length of time.

The candidate for President being pushed by the United States is Alessandro Orsilla, whose

middle name, appropriately enough, is 'Washington'. Orsilla is General Secretary of the Organisation of American states, a career diplomat who has held this post for more than a decade, including in the pre-coup era.

Orsilla for the United States has important qualifications which could make him the ideal person

to begin a period of political transition towards a limited democratic opening in the country.

A big landowner and exporter of wine, he has an international reputation among the Latin American diplomatic corps. He has good relations with the right-wing of the Justicialist (Peronist) party

and with the opposition Radical Party, while maintaining some support in the army.

An operation to put Orsilla in power would exploit the crucial contradiction in the multipartidaria coalition — which includes the Peronists, the Radicals and the Christian Democracy.

The divide between left

and right goes down the middle of each party, not between the parties. Thus Orsilla could bring into a transitional government right-wing representatives of several parties.

The final major candidate for President is Italo Luder, former speaker of the Assembly, and a right-wing Peronist. Making him President would be the most bold of all the possible options implying an immediate transition from military rule.

The precise outcome of the internal struggles of the military is impossible to predict. But in the intermediate term it is now impossible to stem the tide of the reconstruction of the political organisations and the trade union federation, the CGT. The prospect opened up is therefore one of at least limited democratisation, with civilian participation in government, if not a completely civilian government. This will inevitably open up a democratic space for a resurgence of all the currents in Peronism and the workers movement. It will imply a return of political exiles.

Stable

The model for this partial democratisation under the watchful eye of the military is what has happened during the last few years in Brazil.

But the Argentinian political situation is infinitely less stable than in Brazil, and the economic framework more precarious than that which existed in Brazil at the start of the democratisation process. After the generals, it is time for the Argentinian workers to have their say.

El Salvador The peasants: target of reaction

By Charles-Andre Udry

IN THE SHADOW of the British imperialist aggression against the Malvinas, the combined forces of the Salvadorean dictatorship and of Washington are strengthening their military offensives against the forces of national liberation.

On 31 March 1982, Reagan said the 28 March Salvador elections 'showed that there was a real desire for democracy' (US News and World Report, 12 April 1982) A Salvadorean worker, quoted in the same magazine, has a clearer idea as to the future: 'This will be the same dictatorship as before. They're going to begin by liquidating all the reforms and the people will revolt again'.

This prediction is a little bit more accurate than the analyses made by the chroniclers of our own press!

No honest person could doubt that the 28 March saw a farce, televised the world over. These were elections made by reaction for reaction. Elections in which anyone who abstained is a 'suspect'. And to be a suspect in El Salvador is a synonym for being already dead.

A study published by the Central American University in San Salvador proves what a farce it was. Professor Thomas Sheehan of the Catholic University of Chicago (Loyola University) denounces the electoral trickery carried out by the government.

Fraud

He reveals that D Hinton, the American ambassador, concocted an agreement between parties so there should be no public discussion or confrontation of the electoral fraud (The Guardian 4 June 1982)!

But, it is true that elections and reforms are only tactical means subordinate to a single goal: inflicting a military defeat on the FMLN.

The policy of the United States in El Salvador is war. 1000 soldiers and 500 officers

trained in the United States — without counting those who take 'courses' in Panamanian bases — are the cornerstone of American strategy. The number of cadres in the 23,000 strong army will thus be doubled.

Elite

In June '82 according to a US official 'the army will be able to change the situation'. Since May, attacks by the elite killers have increased in the regions of Morazan, Usulután, Chaletenango, Labanas, and so on.

While there is great pressure against the FMLN units, nevertheless, these offensives are far from being crowned with success.

This growth of direct military intervention takes place in the context of a growing regional intervention; a growing support for the Honduran armed forces and those of Guatemala, and assistance to paramilitary operations against the Nicaraguan revolution.

As to the social content of the politics of President Mangana, installed by the United States, it could not be

clearer. In order to reduce the social base of the revolutionaries in 1979, a caricature of an agrarian reform was initiated.

Profit

Co-operatives were set up on land belonging to latifundists. Agricultural workers 'profited' from it. But the co-operatives fell to the far right!

The second phase of this alleged reform should have made it possible for farmers to buy the portion of land which they are cultivating. On 18 May, the Constituent Assembly suspended this law. Out of 172,860 families with the legal possibility of acquiring a patch of land only 34,000 have used this right.

Their demands are suppressed by means of terror. In fact, according to the moderate Popular Democratic Union more than 12,000 families have been expelled from newly acquired land in the last two months (Internacional Herald Tribune 31 May 1982).

Officially, in the Salvadorean countryside 55.4 per cent of the population lives in extreme poverty.

Finally, to complete the result of these elections before opening a 'door to democracy', the terror and torture have increased.

Peasants

In a small town near San Salvador 'six peasants aged from 19 to 30 years, were thrown out of their house during the night, and then led to El Playon where they were beheaded.' (IHT 2 June 1982)

Since 12 May twelve militants of the Christian Democrats — which legitimated the elections and the power of the military — were assassinated. Among



Victims of the repression

them were four mayors.

'Last Friday, two hours after having been nominated mayor of San Francisco Chinameca, Evangelino Gracia Lopez was killed in his kitchen with his 18-year old daughter, by a commando group of eleven men (IHT 2 June 1982).

A representative of the government said: 'Recent killings appear characteristically to be assassinations carried out by the right wing and security forces'. For Thomas Enders who planned the American bombing of Cam-

bodia and for Reagan these are only 'incidents'. They call for 'patience and comprehension' by American senators who 'ask questions' and who above all fear that his policy will only dig imperialism's grave in El Salvador.

It is against this dirty counter-revolutionary war that solidarity with the FMLN must be mobilised and extended.

Reproduced from La Breche, paper of the Socialist Workers Party, Swiss section of the Fourth International.

FMLN capture Defence Minister

RADIO VENCEREMOS, the clandestine radio of the Salvadorean guerrillas has announced the capture of Colonel Adolfo Castillo, Undersecretary of Defence in the new Salvadorean government.

Castillo was shot down in a helicopter flying over Morazan province last Saturday. Together with him was Colonel Beltran Luna, another high ranking

Salvadorean military figure, and their bodyguards. The capture of Castillo is indicative of the growing strength of the FMLN and their ability to defend the liberated zones from aerial attack.

Steadman Fagoth, referred to in our interview with Philip Agee two weeks ago, reactionary leader of the anti-FSLN Miskito forces in Honduras has been injured by shrapnel in a grenade attack. It is not known whether the Sandinistas are responsible for the attack.

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BRENT: SC sold Willesden Junction Thur 4.30pm.
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Socialist Challenge Events

LONDON Transport fraction: Sun 27 June 11-3, national centre.
BRENT Socialist Challenge/Briefing discussion on 'Revolutionaries and the Labour Party' Wed 7 July, 7.30pm Anson Hall, Anson Rd, NW2. Speaker from London Labour Briefing, Graham Bash, editor, plus Socialist Challenge speaker.
BRENT Socialist Challenge social: 'Back Grenada in the back garden' — garden party with slide show of Grenada. Entrance 50p, food and drink available. Tel Pam 359-8288 for details of venue.

WOMEN IN TELECOMS SOCIAL on Fri 25 June 6.30pm at Baronial Hall, River Plat House, South Place, EC2. £2.50 includes buffet supper and Spare Tyre Theatre Group.

OTHER BOOKSHOP RAFFLE winners: 1) Paula Frampton; 2) J Saville; 3) Kate Bainbridge.

CONFERENCE OF SOCIALIST ECONOMISTS: Socialist Action for the Eighties annual conference, Bradford University, 16-18 July. Free creche. Details from J MacDonald, 20 Stanley Road, Ormskirk, Lancs L39 2DM.

LONDON Immigration Campaign meeting to discuss co-ordination. Organised by Reggie and Felicia Campaign, Najat Chaffee, Maria and Fenilla Campaigns. Camden Law Centre, 146 Kentish Town Rd at 3.30 Sat 26 June.

CAMDEN Socialist Challenge forum Wed 30 June: Grenada, Revolution in Caribbean, with Pat Kane just back from Grenada. 8pm, Malden Rd, Neighbourhood Advisory Centre on corner of Malden Rd and Prince of Wales Rd.

Home News

Irish prisoners in English jails

By Piers Mostyn

June 3rd marked the eighth anniversary of Michael Gaughan's death in Parkhurst prison. He died as a result of force feeding after 23 days on a hunger strike. He wanted to serve his sentence nearer home, in Ireland.

Unsurprisingly, this has not been recorded in the gutter press, whose pages after all have been filled with important debates about the decor of Sophia Loren's Italian prison cell. Meanwhile hundreds of Argentine Prisoners of War have been subject to appalling conditions in Britain's sheep-shed prison camps on the Malvinas.

The British penal system is a vicious form of class oppression, especially reserved for those who stand up to the imperialist state: particularly the Irish nationalist prisoners, of which Michael Gaughan was one.

Due to last year's hunger strike, the whole world learnt of the dreadful conditions suffered by Republican prisoners in the H Blocks and Armagh. But in many ways the conditions are worse for those kept in English jails.

From the outset the odds are stacked against them. After their arrest the prisoners face a massive campaign of media lies. And the wall of 'security' surrounding the trials guarantees the prisoners little chance of being found not guilty. Little evidence is produced against them, and they often face charges such as conspiracy, with biased judges, police and juries — the type of conditions now being copied in trials of black nationalists, such as the Bradford 12.

Every one of the 100 Irish political prisoners in England is classified 'Category A' high security, an extraordinary 25 per cent of all such prisoners

in Britain. No one could claim that 25 per cent of 'serious violent crime' in this country consists of IRA campaigns.

The prisoners receive constant verbal abuse and threats of physical violence from warders. This year Owen Carron MP toured ten English jails visiting Irish prisoners. Paul Norney told him that he had been beaten up in every prison he had been transferred to because he refused to accept that he was a criminal.

The denial of adequate medical treatment is also a cause of great concern. Marion and Dolores Price (on hunger strike with Gaughan), although successfully repatriated, were released prematurely because of their acute state of ill health engendered by force feeding and criminal negligence by the prison doctors.

Giuseppe Conlon and Sean O'Connell died shortly after being released, due to diseases that the authorities refused to treat. And Noel Jenkinson met an unexplained death in 1976 in Leicester prison. On grounds of 'security' his wife was refused an independent autopsy.

Another grievance concerns visiting conditions. After saving to make the journey to England and being subject to Special Branch vetting, relatives face strip searches, harassment and arrest under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

But worst of all, the prisoners are constantly moved from jail to jail by



George Lennox, outside Wandsworth jail in 1975, was framed after exposing Army torture in Northern Ireland.

the authorities with no warning.

Ray McLaughlin, for example, was moved the day before his brother arrived all the way from Australia for a visit. And there's Paul Hill: held in 10 different prisons between 1975 and 1977.

The other main instrument of repression is solitary confinement, imposed for up to a year and

more in whitewashed and soundproofed cells for even minor breaches of discipline. Out of 6½ years served by Liam Baker, 4 have been spent in solitary.

Naturally the prisoners' main demand is for the right to be transferred to jails in Ireland: repatriation. Over 100 years ago Marx said of a previous generation of Irish

political prisoners in England, that they were held 'as hostages for the good behaviour of the people outside'. This tactic backfired, as it only led to increased agitation and massive protests that Marx himself was involved in leading.

No such situation exists today. Owen Carron has pointed out that, while refusing to transfer the Irish prisoners to jails in Ireland, the government has readily transferred 74 British soldiers to British jails, who have committed offences (including rape and murder) in Northern Ireland.

Carron summarised the prison situation in Britain as being 'without question, inhuman as far as Irish P.O.W.'s are concerned'. But he also emphasised that spirits were high. These prisoners have always practised resistance. Pat Hackett — missing an arm and a leg — has refused to wear a uniform for 2½ years and at least one other is known to be 'on the blanket'.

Irish republicans have been to the fore in every major act of prison resistance in English jails (especially Hull in 1976 and Gartree in 1978). The escape of Gerry Tuite from Brixton in December 1980, aided by two ordinary prisoners was a graphic illustration of the increased solidarity from other prisoners.

With a new Tory law and order offensive at home and war mongering abroad, the oppressive penal system will play an increasingly important role in clamping down on those who resist. The defence of these prisoners is an essential first task for socialists and trade unionists in backing that resistance.

Solidarnosc miner tours coalfields

By Barry Wilkins and Malcolm Jones

THE 15 JUNE visit by Stefan Palka, Polish miner and Solidarnosc leader, to the South Wales coalfield made another big step forward in building support amongst South Wales miners.

The tour was supported by the recently formed South Wales Labour Movement Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Poland. Stefan strengthened links already established during earlier visits by Piotr Kozlowski with miners at Tower, Penrhwiwceiber and Brynllw pits, and with the Aberdare and Rhondda joint lodges committee.

In addition a number of new links were established. Stefan visited Cynheidre pit and addressed the lodge committee who promised to consider adopting imprisoned Solidarnosc miners. At a meeting at Tass Merthyr and Deep Navigation joint lodges committee Stefan

was asked what he thought of Reagan and Thatcher's 'support' for Solidarnosc.

He won support for his condemnation of their attacks on trade unionists in their own countries and his insistence that Solidarnosc seeks support from workers and trade unionists and not from these governments. Money and the adoption of internees was promised at the meeting.

Stefan was also invited to address the area leadership of the South Wales NUM on 15 June. Given their previous refusal to meet Piotr Kozlowski this was an important breakthrough, and will enable still more support to be won from South



Stefan Palka backed miners' action in supporting health workers

Wales miners. At the Aberdare and Rhondda joint lodges committee Stefan stressed the need for international solidarity in the struggle for workers' rights.

This solidarity was shown in practice at the

Wednesday rally of several thousand miners and healthworkers in Cardiff. Stefan was invited onto the platform and to warm applause gave greetings from Solidarnosc and support for the healthworkers' struggle.

POLISH miner Stefan Palka concluded a three day visit as a guest of the Nottinghamshire miners on Monday 14 June.

During his stay he met branch officials from Nottinghamshire as well as Belgian miners' leaders and members of the Scottish Area Executive. He also met Michael Foot and traindrivers' leader Ray Buckton.

Stefan got a warm welcome when he visited Nottingham's Ollerton and Blidworth pits, and Markham colliery in North Derbyshire. Here he recounted the Polish miners' problems in militarised pits. Many he spoke to asked about health and safety issues; and Stefan explained what Solidarnosc really stood for in answer to fears raised by the praise that Thatcher and Reagan have heaped on it.

A more extensive tour is to be organised in the autumn.

Trade Unions

5-1 for strike action at GEC Preston

By Ray Duckworth
Boilermakers, GEC Traction strike

FOLLOWING the acceptance of a 141% pay increase by GEC supremo, Lord Weinstock, GEC shop floor at the Traction plant in Preston voted by a five to one majority in favour of all out strike action. Their rejection of a stewards' committee recommendation in favour of a 5% offer linked to the introduction of the three shift surprised GEC management who had singled out the plant for an attack on union conditions and demarcation lines.

Despite appalling weather the workers are maintaining a 24 hour round the clock picket on the plant and have won support for the dispute from staff at Preston and the GEC Traction works committees in Sheffield and Manchester. The pickets are being stepped up to include local subcontract firms and other GEC plants.

Works convenor, Keith Hastings explained that the workers recognise

their opponents and are settling in for a long and bitter dispute.

So soon after the June 10 Day of Action against the Tebbit legislation local workers are finding the need to defend union rights is at the centre of the fight to defend wages. Secondary picketing and mass support at factory gates is the instinctive response.

On 22 June a mass CSEU picket is planned at Millbrook Engineering.

Lockout in Lancashire

By John Shutt

WORKERS at the engineering firm of Millbrook, Central Lancashire New Town have been locked out since 25 May. Management has refused to recognise the trade unions (engineers, boilermakers and sheet metal workers) and has attempted to underpay workers and disregard health and safety regulations.

The workforce were locked out after negotiations broke down over the implementation of a bonus scheme. Since then a mass picket has been organised and plans to start blacking are

underway. The company, which has operated a seven day week, with overtime on three nights since it moved to the area last December, has organised scab labour from the office staff.

Picket Neil Tirebuck explained that the Factory Inspectorate would not pass a lot of the stuff in the factory. 'Cranes are not properly installed, oxygen bottles not stored in cages. Since the dispute broke, the boss's 12 year old son has been working the power press.'

Donations and messages of support to Millbrook Dispute Committee, c/o AUEW, 9/10 Cross St, Preston, Lancs.

Hoover women still unequal

By Helen Szymovics,
Plasnewydd Women's Section

'WE ARE not being treated equal to the men', Socialist Challenge was told by Pat Goode, of Hoovers in Merthyr Tydfil.

The Equal Opportunities Commission will probably have to be called in for the second time this year to deal with discrimination at the plant.

About thirty women have been made permanent in the canteen after being transferred from other sections on a temporary basis. 19 of these women come from the bagging machine section; at least five were moved instead of the men. This section is due for closure as work is being sent to Cambuslang in Scotland. Management's desire to speed up the transfers have resulted in this decision to get the women into the canteen and keep them there.

So far only one woman in the whole plant is permanently on the assembly line.

By making the women permanent in the canteen, management can close down the bagging department more quickly than before.

Pat Goode told us 'Our section should never have accepted this agreement. Men will be taking on the jobs of the women who have been transferred permanently to the canteen. Now men can go on the line, women are stuck in the canteen, and management can run down the section as fast as it likes.'

On 4 September the Wales march against women's unemployment will be demonstrating against just this kind of discrimination which leads to job loss for women. It will march from Pontypridd to Cardiff; further information from Wales women's rights committee, Treharris 410484 or Barry 741136.

Sandhar and Kang — divisions weaken workforce

BY 14 VOTES to 13 the mainly Asian workforce at Sandhar and Kang in Birmingham have accepted management's offer and returned to work.

They won a pay rise and union recognition, but failed to re-instate two key militants: Baljinder and Diane have not been reinstated.

Baljinder Singh told Valerie Coultas 'We put all our demands to the management and they were saying yes, recognition, yes, re-instate everyone. But first Baljinder must do a packing job.' Baljinder is disabled and could not take this job. Management offered him £3500: 'But even if you offered me £100,000 I

wouldn't take it,' he told them. 'My principles are not for sale.'

The workforce met and voted 22-7 against accepting any sackings — at first. 'Then someone asked for a secret ballot and the vote was 14-13. But we agreed to respect the majority view.'

The strikers would have been stronger if they had had regular strikers' meetings; and if they had not been prevented from speaking to Labour Party and other trade union meetings by John Partridge, the local TGWU official. Such moves would not only have raised money, but confidence on the picket lines.

ANGRY BLACKS HALT UNION CONFERENCE

By Bob Woods
(Ealing branch
NALGO delegate)

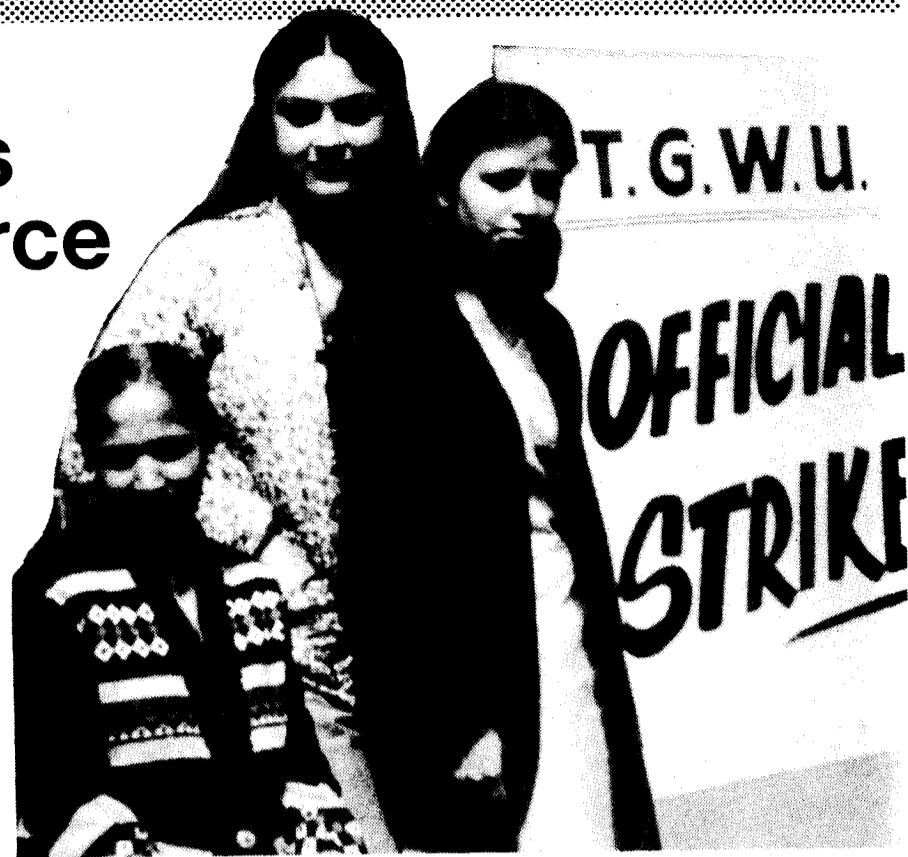
A GROUP of angry black workers invaded the annual conference of local government officers, NALGO, last week and brought proceedings to a halt.

The Black Workers Group of NALGO's Metropolitan (London) District Committee had organised a lobby in support of a motion from Ealing Branch calling for positive action by the union at all levels to combat

personal and institutional racism.

Incensed by the action of the President, John Allan, who manipulated the rules in order to deny a card vote on the Ealing motion, the black workers left the gallery where they had been listening to the debate and went down on to the conference floor to express their disgust.

The National Executive Council was particularly worried by two clauses in the Ealing motion. One of these suggested that rules should be



Caplan recognition fight

SEVEN workers from Caplan cash and carry in Manchester have been on strike for the last six weeks. Two were victimised for joining the TGWU; the other five walked out in support.

Caplan is a typical small employer. Pay is poor for a long working week including Saturday mornings. Working conditions are terrible. Toilet facilities were inadequate; there is no hot water and the building is freezing in winter.

Some of the workforce decided to join a union — the result was immediate sacking and a walkout.

The strike is now official. Lorries have been turned away. But some, such as Kellogs, regularly break the picket; hire vans are also being used.

Donations and messages of support: Dave Jones, 24 Broomfields Drive, Manchester 8, 061-795 4086.

Birmingham Socialist Challenge Forum



Tory boot goes in

Speakers from Laurence Scott plus video and from S & K strike
Thursday 1 July 7.30pm
Birmingham's Other Bookshop
137 Digbeth (2 mins from Bullring)

THE PEOPLE are like volcanoes: no one sets fire to them, they explode alone. And Central America is a volcanic region. Fidel Castro, July 1980



DEFENCE of the revolutions in Cuba, Grenada and Nicaragua and support for the revolutions in progress throughout the region are the twin themes of this new pamphlet.

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LEBANON

ZIONIST BUTCHERS MASSACRE CIVILIANS

By Phil Hearse

TIME magazine summed it up graphically. Its latest edition reports how at the Meome'h Palestinian refugee camp near Sidon, Sihan Mahmud was preparing dinner for her family. Then the Israeli air and sea attack began.

The family went into an air raid shelter. 'About 50 of us were cramped in the shelter' said Umm Mahmud. 'The one next to ours was hit. There were hands and heads — pieces of people — flying everywhere. When that happened I couldn't stand it any more, so we just ran'. In the confusion she was separated from her husband and daughter and knows nothing of their fate.

You wouldn't know it from the television reports, which talk calmly about 'clashes' and 'Israelis encountering further resistance' — as if what was happening in Lebanon was a conflict between two conventional armies. But in the course of their operation to 'defend Galilee and 'mop up the PLO' the Israelis have massacred ten thousand civilians.

Can you imagine what the press and TV publicity

would be like if the Russian army had just invaded a neighbouring country and killed ten thousand civilians? To say the least, a little bit more condemnation would be called for. It might even push the royal baby off the front pages.

But the death of a few thousand Arabs here and there hardly evokes a word of condemnation from the British media. The attitude of the BBC was admirably summed up when an aid agency withdrew from

negotiations for a TV appeal for help to the civilians because the BBC was being 'obstructive'.

This nicely parallels the attitude of the Israelis themselves who are refusing to allow ships with medical and food aid for civilians to dock in the Lebanon.

The sheer scale of the destruction wrought in the Lebanon is difficult to imagine. Perhaps one and a half million people have been displaced from their homes by the Israeli invasion. Hundreds of houses and flats in working class areas have been destroyed by the Zionist blitzkrieg.

As we go to press we are on the verge of an even greater tragedy. Israeli premier Begin has promised that his soldiers will not invade Muslim West Beirut. This almost certainly means that an invasion is imminent.

Throughout the temporary ceasefires arranged

by American intermediary Habib, the Israelis have continued their shelling of West Beirut.

Begin and his War Minister Sharon will be unable to resist the temptation to try to slaughter the Palestinians — militias and civilians alike. The repeated attempts to deal with the Palestinian problem militarily is leading to its ultimate conclusion: genocide. A veritable 'final solution' to the Palestinian problem.

The hypocrisy of the Israelis was well summed up by Sharon when asked whether Israel had a guilty conscience about the civilian deaths. 'Of course we have' said Sharon 'that's what distinguishes us from the PLO' (!)

The Israeli invasion of the Lebanon came in the wake of the rising tide of anti-Israeli demonstrations in the occupied territories and the failure of the Israeli-Egyptian Camp

David agreement.

The Camp David agreement had three components. First the recognition of the Zionist state by Egypt, and then hopefully the other Arab states.

Second, the parties to the agreement would work for the replacement of the PLO as the main leadership of the Palestinians. Thirdly, a Palestinian mini-state would be set up on the West Bank of the Jordan where the becalmed and defeated Palestinians could be cooped up.

The failure of the Camp David 'peace process' occurred because the Palestinian masses refused to play ball. The PLO retained the support of the overwhelming majority of the Palestinian population and continued to resist the Israelis in the occupied territories.

For the Israelis the attempt to crush the PLO militia is more than an effort to 'secure' its fron-

tiers. It is an attempt to demoralise and crush the whole Palestinian population. But after each previous military setback, like the one suffered in Jordan in September 1970 the Palestinian people have refused to lie down.

Moreover the Palestinians are part of the broader nation — that of the Arab people as a whole. The Arab nationalist regimes that have refused to give any effective

assistance to the Palestinians are going to be called to order by their own people.

Begin and Sharon are perpetuating the tragedy of the Palestinians. But they are storing up an even bigger tragedy for the future. They have made Israel an outcast among nations. Even with the support of US imperialism, the Zionist stronghold will not last forever.



ISRAEL OUT OF LEBANON!

RALLY: Fri 25 June 7pm

Chelsea Town Hall

Speakers include Ken Livingstone

DEMONSTRATION: Sat 26 June

Assemble 10am

Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park

Organised by Palestinian and Lebanese communities in Britain.

Daddy's gone a-hunting

'IT WAS the simple act of struggling to wrap a sports car seat belt across the second in line to the throne that somehow summed up Princess Diana's dilemma yesterday.' — *Daily Mirror* 16 June. And this before the baby was born!

'The second in line to the throne' has now arrived — and don't we know it! But the world of the allegedly future king is a million miles away from the world of you and me.

Lady Diana, the carrier of the 'second in line to the throne' has had her baby in the middle of a fight by hospital workers for a miserable 12 per cent wage increase. But that won't affect the Royal family as they produce another parasite on the British tax payer. Nor will Di and Charles worry about the huge cuts in health service facilities.

St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road, is part of

the same hospital where Di is having her baby in a private wing costing a minimum of £126 a day — and where the workers have been struggling for many months to prevent its closure. Even the closure of Buckingham Palace's nearest hospital, St George's at Hyde Park Corner did not see members of the Royal family out picketing. They don't, after all, have to rely on an ambulance service that is over stretched and under resourced — although all private patients use NHS equipment in hospitals.

As families in this country are struggling to

pay the bills, never mind give their children much in a way of luxury, this Royal baby will receive thousands of presents, as the Royal couple did on their marriage. What a sick joke.

At a time when jingoism is running high, after Thatcher's bloody war in the South Atlantic, the press will zoom in on this baby for every tear it can wrench from its readers. Little will be said for the struggle of hospital and rail workers in their fight for a decent standard of living.

Little will be said for Thatcher's tacit support for Begin's genocidal role in the Lebanon. Britain is about to launch itself into a frenzy of nationalism. All we need now is for England to win the World Cup.

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