

Socialist Organiser

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Paper of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory

No more Labour support for Iran's butcher!



1979: Workers' Power in Iran!

by Geoff Bender

IN IRAN, a new wave of strikes has brought oil exports to a halt and reduced output to a trickle. The strike is demanding workers' control over the distribution of the oil.

Street conflicts between the anti-Shah forces and the military have approached open warfare. In Mashhad troops killed several hundred on Dec-

ember 31st.

The military want to 'shoot it out' with the mass movement. In 1963, after five bloody days in which thousands died, the anti-Shah movement was crushed by brute force. But today, the movement has come too far to be crushed in this way.

Meanwhile the Shah attempts to patch up a deal; but any politician's credibility evaporates the moment he enters any discussion with the

Shah about forming a government.

The Shah's future ultimately rests on the loyalty of the armed forces. Despite their perks, the rigid discipline and the use of special elite regiments at key points, the fact remains that some 40% of the Shah's soldiery are conscripts. Reports speak of fraternisation between troops and demonstrators in Tabriz, and mass desertions, including 300 soldiers in Zanjan.

But what kind of system will replace the Shah? Islam can provide no political programme to replace the Shah's rule.

Behind the Islamic slogans, the big merchants of the bazaar and the industrial workers of Iran have different grievances and different interests. The industrial working class is only about three million strong, but their strategic power is immense — especially for the workers concentrated in the key oil

industry and other basic industries.

The Tudeh [Communist] Party is mistrusted and aims no further than a 'broad coalition' government. Maoists have been discredited by Peking's support for the Shah. Now the working class in Iran needs to create a new, revolutionary socialist party — a party independent of the Muslim hierarchy.

Workers' councils are the only way to reorganise the economy, to ensure

supplies, to set up workers' self-defence, and lay the basis of a new revolutionary government. In Britain we must throw our full solidarity behind the Iranian workers, until they finish off the Shah and the system that created him.

STOP ARMS SALES TO IRAN!

Demonstrate, Saturday 3rd February, in London.

Called by SWP, IMG, Workers Action, Big Flame

AFTER the Government's Parliamentary defeat on pay sanctions, the General Election can be expected any month now. The SCLV must be ready to spring into full-speed action as soon as the election is announced.

We have decided to publish Socialist

Organiser monthly. But we need money to enable us to print thousands of leaflets and posters and to finance speakers and meetings. We are appealing for a donation of £5 from every sponsor, towards a total of £2,000.

The best way to support us is by giv-

ing money and selling this paper. Bundles of 10 SO can be got for £1. Send us £1 for a bundle and add a donation!

Contact: SCLV, c/o Box 127, Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1. Cheques payable to Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory.

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LABOUR MANIFESTO 1979

LOBBY the NEC to demand that the Party, not the Government, decide on the Manifesto. From 8.45am, Wednesday 24 January, Transport Ho.

See page 2

Editorial

Manifesto: the Party must decide, not the Government

1979 WILL BE a year of elections. In March come the devolution referendums, local council elections are scheduled for April and May, and the Common Market Assembly elections are to be held in June.

Without doubt there will also be a General Election in 1979. To speculate upon the date is futile. What is vital for all socialists, Labour Party members and trade unionists is the policies the election is fought on and who decides them.

Still red-faced from the Commons defeat on pay sanctions in mid-December, Callaghan and Chancellor Healey have set about renewing efforts to ensure an anti-socialist, more-of-the-same manifesto is presented to voters.

Social Contract

At the National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting on December 20th, right-wing MPs and trade union leaders came clutching copies of Into the Eighties — the joint Cabinet, NEC and TUC document which enshrined the social contract and pay controls — demanding it form the sole basis for the election manifesto.

Strangely similar letters had been sent to the NEC from Sid Weighell of the National Union of Railwaymen, Bill Sirs of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, and Roy Grantham (of Grunwick infamy), Secretary of APEX. They expressed dismay that Into the Eighties was not being adhered to.

Finally Cabinet ministers tried to persuade the NEC to drop any other proposals than those contained in this wretched document. So far these efforts have failed.

The row started long before the draft election manifesto produced by the Home Policy Committee was leaked to the Morning Star. In fact, ever since the topic of the manifesto was raised by election specula-

tion, right-wing Labour ministers have been working overtime to ensure none of the left-wing Party conference decisions or NEC statements get a look in in the final manifesto presented to electors.

Although the contents of the Home Policy Committee draft, steered through by Tony Benn, are based largely on the 1976 Labour's Programme, even these are proving too radical for Callaghan. The most progressive commitments include:

- ★ Full public ownership of oil and gas resources
- ★ A wealth tax
- ★ Public ownership of ports
- ★ Abolition of the House of Lords
- ★ Replacement of the 1971 Immigration Act by 'non-racial' controls.

But the sweeping pledges of nationalisation, restoring full employment and massive expansion of social services contained in the 1974 election manifesto are gone. Commitment to a statutory minimum wage has also been rejected.

Glaring omissions

The most glaring omissions are the Labour Party's existing policies of opposition to all pay controls and support for the 35 hour week.

These issues are the touchstone for the class struggle today. It is here that the Party is in contradiction to the Government. That the Home Policy draft fails to contain these Party policies illustrates its weakened desire to appease Callaghan rather than express the democratic wishes of conference.

Socialists must fight for the Party to decide, rather than the Government; for the NEC to stand up to the Government and to base the Manifesto on conference decisions.

Constituency Labour Parties and rank-and-file

trade unionists must have an opportunity to discuss the Home Policy Committee draft Manifesto. This means circulating it to all Labour Party affiliated organisations. If we want an end to secrecy and closed-door decision making, the whole Manifesto discussion must become the province of the members.

As the General Election draws nearer, the SCLV will attempt to amplify the outrage of the labour movement against the 5% limit and support all struggles for better wages. This must be coupled with CLP support for all struggles against social spending cuts and redundancies.

In action

The Labour Party must be seen in action to stand against the reactionary policies of the Government. If we can be seen to be championing the struggles of the women's movement for abortion and contraception on demand, against rape and sexual discrimination; of the black movement against racism and against police and fascist assaults — then Labour has the possibility of winning the votes of the newly registered and the disenchanted.

LPYS branches must have their independent voice in the election campaign, speaking out for the youth revolt manifested in the Anti Nazi League.

Whatever the outcome of the NEC-Cabinet deliberations, CLPs should be preparing election addresses which spell out such policies to defend and improve working-class living standards and promote class unity.

The Labour Government has discredited the Labour Party with Tory policies. The CLPs and prospective MPs must show that socialist policies and socialist action can keep Thatcher out and pave the way for working class power.

The right wing shut down Islington North

KEITH VENESS, as reported in the last issue of the Organiser, was expelled from the Labour Party in January 1976 for giving an interview to a community newspaper exposing some of the malpractice in Islington North CLP. After an appeal procedure lasting over 2½ years, the National Executive Committee voted to reinstate him. However, the CLP has flagrantly refused to carry out this ruling.

This has recently been the subject of a number of articles in the national press and was featured in the 'Tonight' programme on BBC television.

SINCE MY article in the pilot issue of Socialist Organiser, the lid has really come off the Islington North situation.

At its last meeting the GMC voted to suspend itself rather than accept the democratic decision of the NEC.

This has effectively meant that all Party activities have ground to a halt — no ward AGMs (due in January), no participation in the selection of candidates for the Euro-elections, and no more meetings of the GMC. This is the consequence of this disgraceful decision!

However, the NEC now has a golden opportunity to sort out the situation on a permanent basis. As the majority of active members in the CLP are aghast at this behaviour of a GMC that is quite unrepresentative of Labour views both locally and nationally, the party can now be reconstituted with the backing of those members, numbering hundreds, who do support the NEC and Party conference.

Luckily, the ball is now firmly in the court of the Party regionally and nationally. The anti-NEC group has voted itself into a 'Catch-22' situation. It cannot reconvene anything as it has suspended any constituency body capable of doing that.

The ultimate irony is that I have actually been reinstat-

ed already! The previous GMC had agreed to accept the NEC ruling, and I actually attended the December meeting of my own ward without incident. The ruling of the GMC, pushed through by the regional official put in to chair all meetings, was not accepted when its own minutes came up for verification at the next meeting, and this led to the extraordinary decision to abandon all its activities rather than accept my reinstatement.

Supporters of the NEC's decision who want the Party re-started plan to lobby the NEC meeting on 24th January from 8.45am outside Transport House. All SCLV supporters should try to be there to support them.

If you can't, please aim to get your CLP or union branch to pass a resolution calling for support for my reinstatement and for the reconstitution of Islington North CLP minus those people who have effectively removed themselves from the Party.

KEITH VENESS

Let's have rank-and-filers on Labour's NEC

by RON HEISLER

LAST AUTUMN's Labour Annual Conference dashed the high hopes of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy in two respects.

Mandatory re-selection failed, due to Hugh Scanlon's temporary amnesia, although the diluted alternative proposals of the NEC may provide a marginal improvement on the traditional position as regards local parties' rights (or lack of them) in choosing parliamentary candidates.

Whereas under the old rules the Party Leader was actually only the elected Leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, under the new rules he becomes Leader of the Party as a whole, although continuing to be elected exclusively by parliamentarians. Here one could almost detect a swing to the right. Conference opted for this rather than having the Leader elected by an electoral college or by Annual Conference itself.

Nevertheless, next to pay policy it is quite clear that the 'Party Democracy' issue — who controls the Labour machine, distant bureaucratic elites or rank-and-file? — is the most dynamic factor in Labour Movement politics currently, with a widespread appeal extending deep into the trade unions.

In explaining why both Ian Mikardo (highly compromised on re-selection) and Jack Ashley (deeply hostile to the idea) were forced off the Constituency Section of the NEC, one should note that Dennis Skinner and Neil Kinnock, who replaced them, were committed to mandatory re-selection. For the first time since CND's peak, a mass movement emanating from below and not controlled by the MPs — only a minority of Tribune MPs are even sympathetic — has called the tune in Labour politics, but this time, per-

haps, with more permanent effect.

The key question now is, where does the CLPD go from here? With the three year rule, the matter seemingly cannot be raised again at Annual Conference until 1981. In the immediate future mandatory re-selection cannot conceivably monopolise the attention of the CLPD in the way it has done over the last three years.



Lord Hughie Scanlon

The Campaign's recent Annual General Meeting has begun the task of reorientation and sorting out the other areas of democratic reform that should now be pressed to the fore. Certainly, with over 200 affiliated organisations and a higher proportion of committed activists in the provinces than previously, the CLPD is filling a strange vacuum in Labour politics — an evident desire amongst many rank-and-file to be actively associated with a major socialist campaign that has teeth and clout. Unless the issues it can engender are big and important enough in the eyes of its supporters, its mass base will wither away.

The CLPD AGM approved secondary reforms, such as the abolition of the three year rule at Annual Conference and the publishing of the record of how delegates act-

ually vote on resolutions. But generally it was conspicuous for its conservatism, caution, and some lack of imagination — probably a reflection of the middle-class bias of the retiring executive!

A working party is to be set up to investigate the structural relationships between the parliamentary party and the Party outside Parliament, between the Cabinet and the NEC, and between the Cabinet and the parliamentary party. (Why shouldn't ministers be elected, as they are in the West German SPD?)

A campaigning priority will be change in the procedure by which the election manifesto is prepared. At present it is decided by a joint committee of the NEC and the Cabinet. To make the NEC the sole body responsible for hammering out the manifesto would serve to undermine the current *de facto* veto power of the Prime Minister.

Yet a wider, more fundamental strategy for democratisation of the Labour Party has been buried. The executive has held its hand quite deliberately on the issue of reform of the composition of the NEC, partly out of fear that to take a positive position would add strength to the right-wing Manifesto group campaign to change the NEC and reduce its Leftish element. Yet the CLPD must eventually issue the challenge to the elitists of the Party, whether members of the Manifesto or Tribune groups.

The NEC has 29 members. With the exception of the YS member, all those members are either full-time trade union officers or else MPs. The Constituency Section has seven members, all MPs. Surely the time is long overdue for lay representation once again on the Party's highest body!

SCLV CANVASS HORNSEY

TWENTY-FIVE activists from the SCLV spent a day on December 10th helping Hornsey Labour Party in a registration drive.

Hornsey, a key marginal seat held by Tory 'Landlords' friend' Hugh Rossi by 782, is being fiercely contested by Hornsey Labour Party. Both the CLP and prospective candidate Ted Knight have sponsored the SCLV.

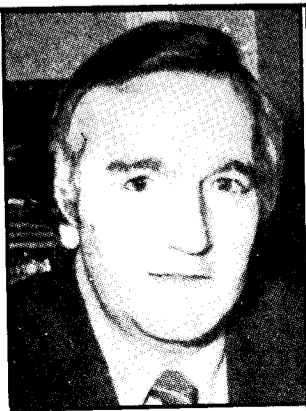
Postal votes and unregistered bed-sit voters have been key factors in the Labour defeats of the past, and on December 10th over 200 voters

were found who had been missed off by the official registration drive.

The Party is keeping up a regular leafletting campaign against cuts in public spending and against the fascists in the area.

The socialist campaigns of the Party were rewarded in the May local elections when there was a swing to Labour. There are more Labour Councillors in the Constituency than at any time in the Party's 58-year history.

JEREMY CORBYN



Hornsey's Labour candidate, Ted Knight

EAST LONDON

Stop this racist thug law!

HARDEV S. DHESI, a leader of the defence campaign for the Virk Brothers — East End Asians given long jail sentences for defending themselves against a racist attack — reviews 'BLOOD ON THE STREETS'.

THIS BOOK describes the systematic oppression and intimidation of Asians in the East End of London in precise, simple, lucid and readable language. The message is vividly illustrated by pictures. The police has rightly been attacked for not only failing in its duty to protect all citizens but also siding with racists and subtly encouraging them to

perpetuate their heinous crimes. The apathy of the police is quite evident in the following lines:

"An interpreter who often helped out the police with translation said that he personally would not be complaining about an assault on his own person, in view of the lack of activity by the police he had experienced in his work as a police interpreter".

It is worth remembering that the black community regards the interpreters as agents of the police, who are always eager to win the confidence of their pay-masters.

The anti-Asian role of the police is also quite clear in the following lines:

"We heard of numerous cases where Asians who had been attacked on the street

were themselves arrested when the police arrived. The charge against them was of threatening behaviour or of carrying offensive weapons [in several cases for holding the very bottles and lumps of wood with which they had themselves been attacked]".

Attacks on Asian adults are intolerable, but attacks on Asian children by organised gangs are beastly and cowardly: "... a primary school-teacher in Spitalfields [tried] to deal with a group of children shouting racist slogans in the school playground. When she chastised the children and said the school would not tolerate such behaviour, the mother of one of the boys concerned stormed into the Headmaster's study to protest at the school's interference in the freedom of political expression. She said she was a National Front supporter herself and had brought up her children to follow her views. The teacher was asked by the Head not to provoke trouble".

It is a well-recognised fact that within a capitalist system members of the so-called racially-inferior groups are treated as though they were not members of that society and can therefore be made to submit to practices of discrimination and exploitation which no other member of the society could be expected to tolerate. Racist attacks create conditions of exploitation. Asians have to submit to these conditions:

"The many attacks that have taken place on immigrant workers on their way to and from their jobs have had a significant effect on where and when these workers are prepared to seek employment... Jobs are refused if they are a long way from home, or if they are in a field of employment considered outside the traditional scope of the Bangalee workforce".

The local Councils are blamed for discrimination against the black people in housing them, but it is amazing to see how readily they succumb to racists.

"On 8 July the East London Advertiser reported that tenants in Nelson House, Cobden Gardens, Bethnal Green, sent a petition to the GLC say-

ing they did not want blacks on THEIR [original emphasis] estate. Slum clearance families Ali and Iqbal were rehoused on the estate. Their arrival was greeted with racist abuse and Nazi slogans. They were warned that there would be trouble if they tried to move in. The intimidation was, as usual, totally effective. The families did not move into their homes. Thug law won".

The racist atmosphere forces the Asians to live in squalor conditions.

What remedy does the pamphlet propose:

■ Get rid of the racist organisations by law.

"Britain is tolerating one of the major racist strongholds left in Europe. In Germany and Holland, for example, organisations like the British Movement and the National Front are banned. Here in the East End of London racist incitement is not only tolerated, but, incredibly, the authorities see the threat to peace and harmony as coming from not the racists but the immigrant communities and anti-racists".

■ The community as a whole should demand the eradication of racism and racist organisations.

"On balance we believe that there is little improvement to be gained from changes in the law on public order or racial incitement. What is needed is a significant shift in the political climate so that the community as a whole are actually demanding the eradication of

racism and racist organisations".

■ The black community may consider organising their self-defence, but on a peaceful, disciplined and multi-racial basis only.

"... Immigrant communities under harassment and attack in inner city areas like the East End of London will look to the organisation of their own self-defence in one form or another. We hope in East London this will continue to be peaceful, disciplined and conducted on the broadest multi-racial basis, with the involvement of the trade union movement".

Perhaps it was not in the scope of this brief paper to analyse the causes of immigration, but it does devote a few pages to describing the background of the Bangalee community. Reading that, one gets the impression that poverty-stricken simple people came to Britain on their own accord. Now Britain should live up to its generous and Christian traditions and tolerate these

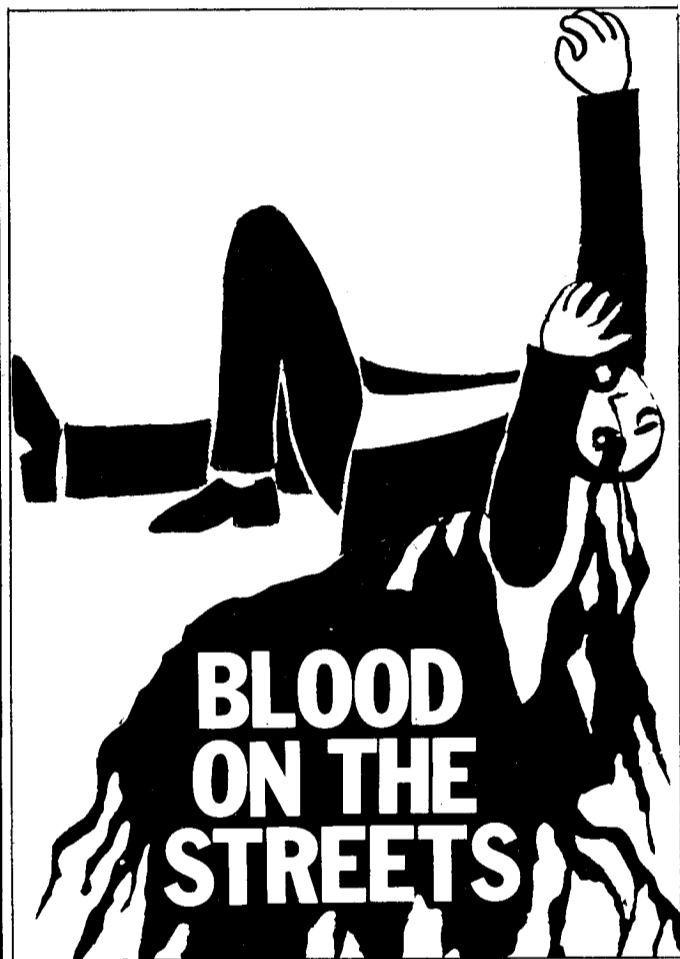
helpless people.

What it does not mention is that exploitation of British colonialism, which distorted the economy of the colonised lands, and built capital accumulation which resulted in advanced industrialised Britain.

Critical labour shortages immediately after the war were a major reason for the Government's decision to help immigration. In a highly competitive capitalist system, labour-intensive industries such as textiles and the rag trade, could be kept functioning only by employing low-paid Bangalees.

The paper also has very little to say on the discriminatory treatment meted out to black people by the courts. But it deserves the widest possible readership.

★ 'Blood on the Streets', a report by Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council on Racial Attacks in East London. £1 from 58 Watney St, E1.



London Labour Party Conference on RACISM AND POLICE POWER Saturday 15 January, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE organised by the Steering Committee of Asian Organisations FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE VIRK BROTHERS. Saturday January 13th, 10am, at Plashet Grove School, Plashet Rd, London E12. All Asian and anti-racist organisations welcome.



14 May 1978: 7000 march to Hyde Park after the racist murder of Altab Ali

ANL: unity is key to success

Anti-Nazi League National Treasurer ERNIE ROBERTS writes on how he sees the future for the ANL.

"THE FASTEST growing movement in Britain during 1978" was the ANL. That is the judgment of the press.

The success and strength of the League is based on the old, who remember fascism and the 1939-1945 War; on the young, who see fascism as a menace to their freedom, culture and future, and on the women who know the inferior position which fascism forces them to accept. The League is strong because it is non-sectarian.

It is not a political party with a programme on all social problems, but a political movement composed of a number of political party and non-political-party members with the aim of fighting fascism and racism. On this basis over 200 prominent public figures sponsored the founding statement of the

ANL.

This united effort has encouraged hundreds of thousands to demonstrate against fascism and racism all over Britain, including the two massive Carnivals in London. Five million leaflets and posters have been distributed, and 500,000 badges and tee-shirts sold. There are 50,000 members within 300 local groups, organising their own activities.

All this and much more in the ANL's first year! No single political party could have achieved such a successful movement against fascism and racism.

The press and TV could not ignore it. So they have attacked and distorted it with McCarthyite witch-hunts. But the League continues to grow, in spite of attacks, especially among young workers and students.

Support for the NF, electorally and in membership, has shrunk. Nevertheless, fascism and racism is still a menace which attacks and divides the working people and democratic organisations. Trade unionists must never forget that fascism is the enemy of working people's political parties, of immigr-

ants of all colours, and it is still anti-semitic.

Therefore, the Steering Committee, composed of Audrey Wise MP, Neil Kinnock MP, Martin Flannery MP, Dennis Skinner MP, Ernie Roberts, Peter Hain, Simon Hebditch, Bill Dunn, Nigel Harris, Miriam Karlin and Paul Holborrow, must continue their discussions with the Jewish Board of Deputies, AJEX and others to establish a working agreement against fascism and racism in Britain. The National Working Council, of representatives of ANL groups from all over the country, which has been set up, must assist the Steering Committee to prepare and organise the League's activities in the run-up to the General Election, when the NF will be putting up 300 candidates, and assist in setting up ANL sections such as Women Against the Nazis, Footballers Against the Nazis, Students Against the Nazis, etc.

The ANL Trade Union Committee, set up at the recent Trade Union conference at Congress House, is planning to build industrial groups against the Nazis, including

miners, engineers, council workers, transport workers, teachers, civil servants, etc. They have launched a campaign for financial support called 'Coppers Against the Nazis'.

A Rock Against Racism roadshow is being organised jointly by the ANL and RAR. It will visit 21 towns from 24 February to 20 March, and local groups will be asked to assist.

A National Financial Appeal is being made to assist the central organisation of the League, which is engaged in a heavy load of activity, most of it voluntary. As National Treasurer, I have arranged for an income and expenditure statement of account to be prepared and sent in January 1979 to all branches and organisations that have contributed to the League's finances.

Furthermore, after the coming General Election, the Steering Committee intends to convene a National Conference with a formal structure, and policy of the ANL can be considered. Until then let us do all we can to build a powerful, united anti-fascist and anti-racist organisation where we live.

ONLY ONE WAY TO AVOID MORE FIASCOS

NIK BARSTOW puts another point of view on the ANL

1978 WAS THE year of the ANL's rapid growth. It was also a year of more and more murderous fascist violence. And state racism became more menacing.

Five Tory MPs and five Labour (including ANL sponsor Syd Bidwell) signed a Select Committee report calling for a harsher clamp-down on immigration and immigrants. The Tories took up the report's ideas.

Labour Home Secretary Merlyn Rees replied by protesting that the existing immigration controls were being applied more strictly, and were already as tight as controls could be!

The ANL did not have an answer to the fascist violence or to the politicians' united efforts to scapegoat immigrants as a 'problem'. September 24th was the worst example. While the NF marched in East London, and a band of fascists later rampaged through Brick Lane, the ANL directed everyone to its

concert in Brockwell Park, diverting only an inadequate few to East London.

In November, ANL Press Officer Peter Hain tried to placate Lord Willis and other celebrities who quit the ANL by saying: "Modern youth uses words like fight and smash. I don't think it is anything more than their expression or a style of self-assertion". The celebrities still quit.

And socialists do mean what we say when we talk about fighting fascism and smashing the NF! On 27th November, the ANL Working Council discussed a call for an ANL special conference and rejected it by only 52 to 34.

To make sure there are no more fiascos like September 24, and that there is a real fight against fascist violence and state racism this year, a special ANL conference must be called as soon as possible. It must decide on a policy of no platform for fascists, labour movement support for black self-defence, and opposition to all immigration controls, and it must adopt a democratic structure for the Anti-Nazi League.

Labour must face the issues: Troops Out Now!

by Richard Chessum

THE LABOUR Party has abdicated all responsibility on Ireland. Conference failed once again last year to discuss it.

Two years ago the Labour Party research department produced a document arguing that Partition was right because Ireland is 'two nations'. It was rejected by the National Executive Committee as a basis for discussion.

Subsequently a working group was set up. In the early summer of 1978 it produced a document to all intents and purposes advocating complete integration of the Six Counties into the United Kingdom.

Not all of the working group agreed with the document, and the NEC decided to shelve it, some of them feeling that it closed the door to eventual Irish unity.

The party is thus left without a policy — and one suspects this is the way Roy Mason and others prefer it.

There is dissent. All but the most hard-line 'Masonites' are coming to see that the Catholic minority will never be completely beaten into submission by military force. The Provisionals have

again shown that they are capable of launching limited offensives both in Northern Ireland and in Britain; and impressive demonstrations have been organised by groups like the Relatives' Action Committees and the newly formed Trade Union Campaign against Repression. These have focused mainly on the demand for political status for Republican prisoners, but have also shown a strong feeling for getting British troops out.

Persistent pressure from the grass roots has led the middle-class Social Democratic & Labour Party to state — by near-unanimous vote the need for a British withdrawal from Ireland. The media, since the Daily Mirror's 'Troops Out' editorial, has begun to report and comment on some matters previously taboo.

The only progressive solution is a united Ireland, which will create a balance of forces unfavourable to Loyalism in the absence of a British military presence. The Labour Party must be brought face to face with this reality. A Labour government which brings catastrophe to the Irish working class will quite soon spell disaster for the British working class too.

BELOW: 15,000 march in Armagh, Sunday 26th November, to support prisoners fighting for political status.



BRITAIN'S CENSORS

by PETER CHALK

LAST YEAR TV technicians 'pulled the plugs' in protest against political censorship in Britain. In June Thames TV screens went blank for half an hour when the Independent Broadcasting Authority banned the *This Week* programme on the Amnesty International report on the RUC.

The technicians' union, ACTT, also published an article on censorship in the union journal and held a meeting.

This action gave a powerful boost to the Campaign for Free Speech on Ireland and the movement against censorship and distortion of news on the British war of repression being waged against the Irish people.

Other examples of censorship include:

■ Three films made for television but never shown. 'A Sense of Loss', by Marcel Ophuls, was commissioned by the BBC but never transmitted. 'Hang out your Brightest Colours: the Life and Death of Michael Collins', by Kenneth Griffiths, was banned by ATV in 1972. And 'World in Action: South of the Border', by Granada TV, was banned by the IBA in 1971.

■ 'Ulster: in Friendship and Forgiveness', an analysis

is of the Queen's visit to the six counties made in August 1977 by the *This Week* team, was banned by the IBA.

■ The RUC put pressure on the Chairman of the IBA to visit the North in order to 'show' how the televising of allegations of RUC brutality puts them in danger.

■ In February of this year Thames TV 'shelved' a documentary series on 'The Orange, the Green, and the Red, White and Blue'.

■ In May, many people in the media protested against the interviewing of the Thames head of programmes by the Special Branch about *This Week* director Ian Stuttard.

■ Sections of the play 'Willie: the Legion Bombing', by Carol Churchill, were cut by the BBC amid loud protests. The play described how Willie Gallagher was convicted of bombing Strabane Legion Hall on the basis of a confession which he says was forced.

The 'Information on Ireland' group, loosely associated with the United Troops Out Movement (UTOM), will soon be publishing a pamphlet covering these and other examples.

Last month, over sixty people, mostly newcomers to discussion about Ireland, heard about this censorship at a meeting (with the film *Home Soldier Home*) organised by Haringey UTOM with

the help of local SCLV and Big Flame members.

The speaker, Alistair Renwick, also showed how the 'reference-up' system (which applies only to Irish coverage) forces 'self-censorship' on programme-makers who know their work will be vetted. Many do not bother, or deliberately 'tone down' any references to the Republican movement. Nonetheless, reporters like Peter Taylor (who made the recent *World in Action* programme about H-Block) and producers such as Colin Thomas (who resigned after the cutting of parts of his BBC series 'The Irish Way') soldier on.

Renwick told the meeting about the harassment of the Belfast Provisional Sinn Fein's *Republican News*. In December 1977 the RUC raided its offices, seized an issue, and arrested fifteen people involved in its production and distribution. The 15 were soon released, but confiscated equipment has not been returned.

The raid was repeated in April. The editor has since then been arrested yet again — but the production of the paper continues, 'underground', and 20,000 copies are still sold every week.

■ ■ 'Home Soldier Home' is available c/o Information on Ireland, 1 North End Rd, London W14. The UTOM can be contacted via Box UT, 2a St Pauls Rd, London N1.

Moving to a police state

Richard Chessum

WHEN BRITISH troops were sent to the Six Counties in August 1969, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) was a small force of 3,000, defeated and demoralised after a year of demonstrations and riots. It was backed up by 8,000 B-Specials whose behaviour and reputation ensured that they created more 'disorder' than they quelled.

Today the RUC is — thanks to the British state — one of the best trained and equipped forces in Europe. Recently it has been used for the first time since the beginning of the 'Troubles' to deal with Catholics in West Belfast.

The figures show what has happened. In 1970, before the rise of the Provisionals, there were almost 10,000 British soldiers in the Six Count-

ies. The number of men and women in the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), RUC, and RUC Reserve was a little over 8,000.

By 1973, just before Labour took office, the number of British soldiers had risen to over 16,000, but the numbers in the Northern Ireland forces had also risen faster, to slightly under 16,000. By March 1978 the figures were 13,500 soldiers and 18,000 RUC, UDR, and RUC Reserves.

The RUC is now 6,000 strong — and according to the Dublin paper *Hibernia* the British Army plans to reduce its operational troop strength to 3,000 men.

The percentage of Catholics in the RUC and UDR is negligible. The ground is being prepared for a Loyalist police state to follow direct rule.

Last autumn the *Times* re-

ported that Glen Barr — one of the organisers of the UWC strike of 1974 against the power-sharing Sunningdale executive — had been sponsored by the US State Department to visit the USA. Barr was canvassing support for a plan for an independent Ulster drawn up by the UDA with his assistance. It envisaged a presidential constitution, with an executive appointed by an elected president. The plan incorporated a 'Bill of Rights', but no institutionalised Catholic participation in government.

Meanwhile, Irene Brennan of the Communist Party (which advocates a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland) has recently had talks with the UDA and claims to have seen some "hopeful signs". She is prepared to consider an independent Six County state as a 'prelude' to an eventually re-united Ireland.

More MPs for the bigots

by DON FLYNN

IT NOW seems likely that in the early new year the Labour Government, with the support of the Conservatives and the Ulster Unionists, will succeed in making the House of Commons (Redistribution of Seats) Bill law.

This Bill proposes to increase the number of British parliamentary seats from the Northern Ireland state from twelve to seventeen.

The Labour Government and its Ministers 'responsible' for the Northern Ireland set-up are attempting to pass this measure off as an increase in democracy for the people in the area. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Roy Mason, and his junior Minister, Dennis Concanon, talk about the need for parity with the levels of representation which exist in Great Britain.

On the surface this looks like an attractive argument. Many Labour supporters will no doubt be saying that more MPs must equal more democracy. But the truth is that the 'right' to send MPs to the British Imperial Parliament has only been won by the supporters of Ulster Unionism at the expense of the democratic

rights of the rest of the Irish people.

The Catholic people in the Six Counties are hostile to this Bill. Even Gerry Fitt MP pointed out, during the debate on the second reading of the Bill, that: 'The way the Bill had been introduced was coming down in support of one community against the other, and that was why it would be a total disaster'.

The Catholic community in Northern Ireland has suffered the consequences of British 'democratic' interference in the affairs of the Irish nation. They have had to endure nearly sixty years of the bigoted, undemocratic, domination of the Ulster Unionist Party. They have suffered, are still suffering, the massive presence of British security forces.

Constant patrols of Nationalist areas mean living under a state of permanent harassment and intimidation. People are 'worked over' by these security forces for the crime of being young, a Catholic, and living in a Nationalist area.

Nationalist and Republican sympathisers can be held 'on remand' — without trial — for three years and longer. Evidence of the ill-treatment and torture has been confirmed by the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, Amnesty International and the Belfast-based Association for Legal Justice.

And scores of men and several women have been given life sentences in prison by specially constituted no-jury 'Diplock' courts.

In a number of cases the only prosecution evidence was a signed confession from the defendant — a form of evidence which is specifically excluded as not being bona fide in the legal systems of England, Wales and Scotland.

The Unionists support this repression, and constantly urge the British Government to clamp down even harder. During their fifty years of domination of Northern Ireland they ran it as a 'Protestant state for a Protestant people' and a sectarian police-state for the Catholics. The new Bill means giving more influence to these right-wing bigots, in a squalid deal to buy some support from them for a few months' further survival of the Labour Government.

The Labour Government's promotion of allegedly greater democracy in Northern Ireland by increasing the number of British parliamentary seats is only a thin veneer over the brutal reality of the totally undemocratic Northern Ireland state. A precondition for promoting the cause of democracy on the other side of the Irish sea is an end to the interference in Irish affairs by the British state.



Bombs in London are a result of British troops in Northern Ireland

Money supply is the root of all evil?

by COLIN FOSTER

FOR NEARLY ten years now the advanced capitalist countries have been wallowing in stagnation. There have been only brief spurts of growth. Unemployment has crept upwards.

The present Labour leadership has no answers. They call on workers to make more and more sacrifices, and hope to muddle through.

The Tories, in contrast, pretend to have an answer. They preach a new, tough, competitive world. They say they have re-discovered the true Conservatism after 30 years and more of semi-socialism. And they hope this creed will appeal not only to the Tory middle classes but also to individualist-minded skilled workers.

Drift

The chief intellectual backing for this new Toryism comes from the monetarist economics of Milton Friedman. Since the 1930s most orthodox economists — following the Keynesian tradition — have held that the capitalist economy is not automatically self-righting. The state must boost demand above the levels set by 'free enterprise', or else the economy will drift into stagnation and unemployment.

Friedman argues that this 'Keynesian' state intervention is undesirable, unnecessary, and useless. And since 'Keynesian' policies have shown themselves pretty useless in dealing with the economic crisis of the '70s, his views have gained increasing influence.

Friedman starts off from a re-statement of the 19th century arguments on free enterprise as "the ideal economic arrangement for a free society". A "free economy... gives people what they want instead of what a particular group thinks they ought to want" — and the market will act as an "invisible hand" making public welfare the outcome of private self-interest. "The employee is protected from coercion by the employer because of other employers for whom he can work".

In short, he preaches ideas which might have had some meaning in a society of small independent producers — and applies them to a society where the problem is by no means individual employees being cheated by individual employers, but the exploitation and oppression of the entire working class by a monopolistic capitalist class.

19th century free-enterprise economists used to say economic crises were caused by sun spots. Friedman says they are caused by government bungling. The free-enterprise system is basically self-righting, but blundering government action can push it into crisis. Friedman says the Great Depression of the 1930s was caused by the Federal Reserve Bank's failure to increase the money supply sufficiently.

In principle, argues Friedman, state intervention could help to stabilise the capitalist economy. However, no-one can predict exactly what the spontaneous trends of the economy are in any given short-run, nor what the precise effects of particular types of state intervention will be. In practice, therefore, state intervention is



The Tories' new guru, Milton Friedman of Chicago University.

He argues: THAT: "History offers ample evidence that what determines the average level of prices and wages is the amount of money in the economy and not the greediness of businessmen or of workers".

THAT: "The Great Depression in the United States, far from being a sign of the inherent instability of the private enterprise system, is a testament to how much harm can be done by mistakes on the part of a few men when they wield vast powers over the monetary system of a country".

THAT: "There is one and only one social responsibility of business... making maximum profits..."

THAT: "Unions have... harmed the public at large and workers as a whole by distorting the use of labour".

more likely to be de-stabilising.

Apparently simple policy ideas follow from this analysis. State intervention should be reduced to a minimum. The money supply — the key economic factor which the state cannot avoid

'interfering' with — should be fixed by a rule which says it rises at a fixed rate, about 3% every year. Then instability will work itself out and inflation will be cured.

The monetarist recipe is not quite as simple as it seems... because the money supply, in Friedman's definition, includes not only currency but bank deposits, the amount of which the government cannot directly control.

Chile

In Chile Friedman and his friends were brought in as economic advisers after the coup. Friedman protested that he had a 'profound disagreement with the authoritarian political system of Chile', but according to evidence given to a US Senate Select Committee his friends had received CIA money to prepare a free-enterprise blueprint for Chilean military leaders before the coup.

Government economic controls were lifted. The result was a wild spiral of monopolistic price-raising and speculation. By the end of 1975 Chile had the highest rate of inflation in the world, 341%. Real national income dropped 26% in 1975, and manufacturing production 27%. In July 1976 unemployment had climbed so high that one Chilean out of four had no income and was surviving on charity hand-outs. For those who kept their jobs, average real wages declined by 8% in 1975.

Harm

Many Tory leaders, with the traditional Tory distaste for theories (even right-



The cultured friends of Milton Friedman clear the decks to implement his policies.

wing ones), dislike Friedman. In traditional Tory ideology, a careful balance is struck between the virtues of individualism (to be practised by the bourgeoisie) and the virtues of loyalty to Family and Nation (to be practised by the working class). But Friedman holds — 'logically' enough — that in a free enterprise system union leaders should be governed only by the interests of their members, not by any idea of the national interest.

In Chile, the generals had already made sure there were no unions. In Britain, the Tories conclude that they can use Friedman's ideas to help their tired speech-writers... as long as they don't take them too seriously.

The Tories will argue that a bout of unemployment does

no real harm, as it is merely part of the self-righting process of the capitalist system. They will argue that the money supply must be restrained — which means, in practice, that social services spending must be cut even further. And they will probably resort to wage controls, too.

Last-ditch

In fact, they will go further on the path already blazed by the present Labour Government. Bleating about 'moderation' (as against the Tories' supposed 'dogmatism') is no answer to them; nor is a last-ditch defence of clapped-out Keynesian economics. The principles of capitalism must be opposed by the principles of socialism.

Bahro belongs with the Marxists

by BRUCE ROBINSON

RUDOLF BAHRO's book, *The Alternative*, which earned its author an eight year jail sentence in East Germany, has just been published in English. And people who have very little in common with Bahro's indomitable revolutionary spirit are rushing to try to make Bahro 'theirs'.

In *Tribune* Ken Coates set out to show that Bahro agrees with Coates' own ideas of what socialism is and how to achieve it. Bahro's book indicts the bureaucratic regimes of the USSR and Eastern Europe, and tries to develop a Marxist analysis of bureaucracy as rooted in the division of labour. A breaking-down of the division of labour must, Bahro argues, be central in the new revolution needed in these bureaucratised states.

Coates transfers Bahro's ideas to capitalist society and uses them to argue for a reformist perspective. "Because, in all sobriety, the overcoming of the fragmentation of people in mutilating and stultifying economic roles is a task for the long

haul, life seems to be simpler if the whole process is indefinitely postponed".

Arguing that the abolition of alienated forms of labour is a task for the 'here and now', blurring over the fact that Bahro refers to post-capitalist society while he (Coates) is referring to Britain, Coates ends up claiming Bahro as authority for a concept of socialism as an exercise in moral persuasion rather than as a revolutionary political movement.

Already won

But Bahro's comments on the social democratic parties show that he has little in common with Coates. "The existence of this party is tied to the relationship of critical loyalty of certain layers of workers, employees and intellectuals to the bourgeoisie. What can its specific task be after the liquidation of the bourgeoisie as a class? Its state-monopolistic option has been taken up only too well by the formerly Communist parties in power. For the defence of the terrain already won from the bourgeoisie it can be dismissed

without any dispute.

"Its defence of democratic forms of political life — in so far as it does not mean in critical situations a counter-revolutionary class compromise which benefits the bourgeoisie — has a certain historical legitimacy in that the communists have nowhere yet finally shown their ability to positively defend democracy. But as soon as it could be politically relevant to talk of the re-founding of social democratic parties in our countries, they would already be superfluous in precisely this respect. For then precisely that socialist democracy would prevail, which the social democrat Rosa Luxemburg left to the West European CPs at their founding".

Bahro, believing that the working class in the West now has no revolutionary potential, and rejecting the equation of socialism with nationalisation, does express some sympathy for the Italian CP's strategy. But what distinguishes Bahro from many other oppositionists in Eastern Europe is his commitment to workers' democracy and to socialism as the complete emancipa-

tion of humanity from alienation, and his clear idea of how 'real existing socialism' differs from this and must be changed.

Monty Johnstone, reviewing Bahro's book in the *Morning Star*, decided that the best way to deal with these awkward questions was with a front of brass. He ticked off Bahro for not being radical enough!

New Elite

Johnstone attacked Bahro for failing to come out for a multi-party system, and for being "extremely vague", because he "takes us little further than" Marx's model of the Paris Commune as a truly democratic workers' state. And the new League of Communists advocated by Bahro would, Johnstone claims, just mean the creation of a new elite.

On the strength of the British CP's servile attachment to bourgeois Parliamentaryism, Johnstone speaks as an expert on democracy and "the pluralist concepts of Socialism so strongly advocated by Western Communist Parties, including our own".

Johnstone's hope for Eastern Europe is a movement like Dubcek's in Czechoslovakia in 1968. But Bahro is absolutely right to show that reform movements based in the Communist Party apparatuses — which above all represent the bureaucracy — cannot get to the roots of the deep problems caused by the bureaucracy's role in the economy and society.

Johnstone ends with a rather pathetic-sounding plea for publication and discussion of *The Alternative* in the 'socialist' countries. For him, the repression of the socialist opposition can be corrected by lobbying the bureaucracy to change its policy.

Changing it

Bahro analyses the structure of East European society to show why the repression is built into the system and is not just a 'mistake'. And he works out a programme for changing it. That is why, despite all his mistakes, he belongs not with Coates and Johnstone, but with the revolutionary Marxists.



Rudolf Bahro — sentenced to eight years' imprisonment and the warm appreciation of left reformists. The first because of his close relation to Marxism, the latter despite it.

The Shah's apologists say that he has modernised Iran, improving the position of women, and that the opposition represents a religious backlash.

That is not how women in Iran see it. 'Manny', an Iranian socialist feminist, told Socialist Organiser about the struggles she saw and took part in last autumn in Iran, before returning to London in October.

She started by describing the women's contingent on the great demonstration of Thursday 7th September, the day before the 'Black Friday' massacre in Tehran's Jaleh Square.

CONSIDERING THE situation in Iran, that women do not come on the street in any circumstances, except for shopping or taking their kids to school, it was very important to see women — such a large number of women, all together, united — in a massive demonstration.

They were all together there, and they had their slogans. Of course, they weren't women's slogans, they were the national slogans. It was a glimpse of the revolution.

The women were very strong. I walked with them and we chanted the same slogans. They knew what they were saying, and they were very militant. They were holding hands, in case something went wrong, and they were ready to fight.

When we passed one of the main squares, where there were masses of soldiers and tanks, they stopped, faced the soldiers, and chanted: 'Brother soldier, why are you killing your brothers?'. 'Why don't you stop supporting the Shah?'

Some of those women were carrying children. I just can't see how those women walked for 14 miles, under the heat of the sun. I have never seen such a sight in Iran. I have never seen it anywhere. I have seen demonstrations in this country, but not with that militancy!

■ ■ Do you know how the women organised themselves for that demonstration?

Organising anything in Iran is not the same as in the West, because of the repression.

The organisation is usually local. But some of the women are in touch with other women in other cities and other provinces. I was amazed that so many people had come from the provinces.

The organisation is invisible, because of the life women lead in Iran — women are invisible — but at the same time it exists and is very strong.

According to Iran's accept-

ed standards, women in the poor areas — in the southern part of Tehran — are more backward. They are more oppressed and, as workers, doubly exploited. But they were the ones who were participating in the demonstration. They were the ones who had their meetings in the mosques, and their organisation through the mosques and the localities. They had a network of information links and contacts, and organised support for single parents and prisoners' families.

Women in the northern part of the city, where the bourgeoisie and well-off people live, must have had sympathies with the movement. But in comparison they did very, very little.

Shooting

The minute the shooting started on Black Friday — I live just five minutes away from Jaleh Square — women poured into the streets. The first thing that came to everybody's mind was to start a fire, to combat the tear gas. So women rushed into their houses, brought out wood and old furniture, put them in the street and set them alight.

Later, women went round to the hospital near Jaleh Square.

Blood was needed there. Women came back to the street and told us. Many women went to the hospital to give blood. Later another group of women came and said that the blood donors had been shot at from helicopters — so if we were going to the hospital we must be very careful.

■ ■ What attitude did the men on the demonstration have to the women being there?

The attitude of the men towards the women on the demonstration was very comradely. It was perhaps the only time I have seen men comradely towards women in the street!

The streets are men's territory. Women are not supposed to be there; and when they are, especially without a *chador* [robe covering their heads] they are seen immediately as sex objects. Women in the streets are usually molested, pinched, and bothered by men.

But during the days the people were struggling, united for a political aim, the attitudes of men towards women were so comradely... it was unbelievable for me that men in Iran could see women in the street and be so friendly towards them.

There was no hostility, even from men who were not demonstrating with us. On Thursday night there were many men standing outside their houses, or on the pavement, looking at the demonstration, and chanting solidarity with the demonstration.

When the women's contingent was passing, most of the men I saw were chanting solidarity — but at the same time they were moved, they were so moved by seeing women there participating. I think that the men on the

pavement felt inferior to those women, and they were questioning themselves for a minute: everyone is there, and we are on the pavement...

It was a very moving situation. Some soldiers couldn't take it. One soldier with a machine-gun couldn't tolerate women chanting at him: 'Why do you kill your brothers? Why don't you kill those who oppress you?' I saw the tears in his eyes. He came down, left the machine-gun, and went to the van. He was very moved, and tears were running down his face.

It was a scene that I had never seen in my life, and perhaps will never see again, if there is no revolutionary movement in Iran in the future. After 25 years of constant repression, not just from the state but from their men, at home, in the family, in their area, these women are now coming out in the streets and chanting slogans against the system, because they see the system as the main reason for their oppression.

■ ■ Do you know anything about the participation of women workers in the strike movements?

The people's movement in Iran is going through stages. Now it is the stage when workers are dominating the scene. There are masses of women workers mobilising and organising in the factories. But when I was there it was shopkeepers, petty bourgeoisie, and bourgeoisie who had the leadership. I did not hear then of women factory workers going on strike to support the movement.

But one of the first groups of workers who went on strike was the telecommunications workers. I was there when the telecommunications workers went on strike for better wages, better opportunities, a better health service and better nursery facilities. A great number of people in telecommunications are women. My mother is: she went on strike too, and she brought home news about their organising, their demands, and how it progressed daily.

Teachers

Later on, one of their demands was 'End the Martial Law'. And teachers were one of the first groups of striking workers in Iran who made their main demand, 'End the Martial Law'. A great number of the teaching workforce in Iran is women.

Then the nurses came on strike. The nurses' demands were really militant, too; they had had to nurse the people who had been beaten up and smashed and bruised by the soldiers, and one of their demands was that they couldn't face any more repression.

Of course, these are not very well communicated. If you were in Iran, you wouldn't know that the nurses are on strike, because the Government doesn't publicise it and the nurses are in their workplace. They haven't got the organisation to publish or give out leaflets to inform the people.

There were strike committees among the telecommunications workers and teachers and nurses. Women were a very strong part of the strike committee among the telecommunications workers. But they hadn't the resources to publish leaflets and to inform other people. Their main aim was to keep their workplace together. They went to the workplace but they didn't work.

Nurses were the same. They had their own strike committee in the hospitals. They had their links with other hospitals. They set up information committees and people were responsible for

mullahs take to the participation of women in the struggle?

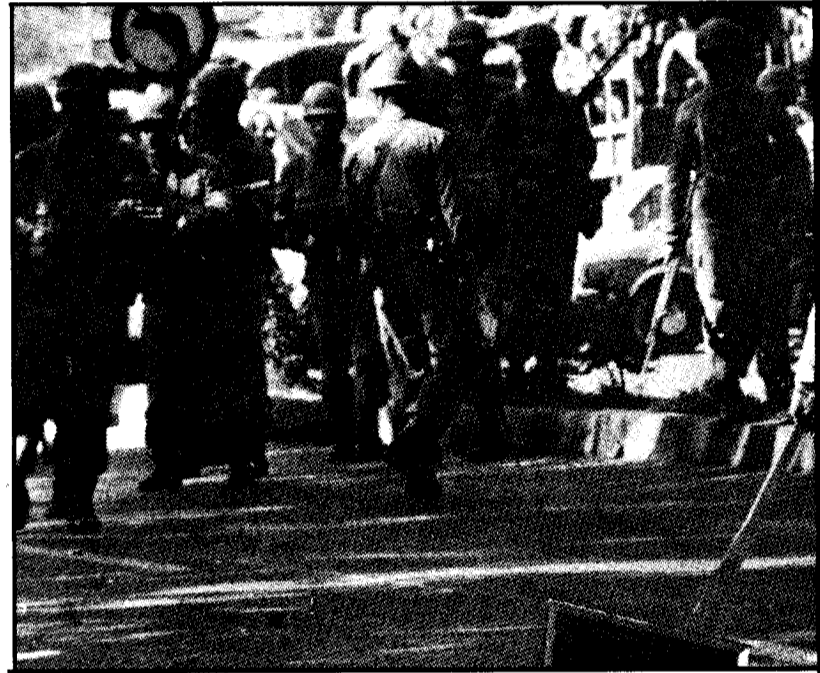
I have never seen mullahs so enlightened in Iran! The mullahs were so much against seeing women in the street, hearing women's voices — so utterly against that, all their lives — but there and then I saw them, when the women had their fists up and were chanting, left speechless. They couldn't do anything but admire the women's courage.

And when they saw the women in the streets, I think they began to think about their attitudes towards

floors.

One of the reasons I had seen how women were in the street. One woman per had both her as a result of treatment. She walk properly.

He admired the prisons with the guards and the SAVAK agents weren't demoralised by the demonstration. 'Isn't it great to see the women coming out supporting us system'. His a



getting news from other hospitals.

Many hospitals in Iran at that time had really close links, and were giving out news and information — but not in a published form, because they didn't want the police or the army to burst into the hospitals.

Teachers — not in Tehran so much, but in other towns — had very strong strike committees. Teachers I spoke to in a small town in the south of Iran were feeling very strong. They had links with the students, and most important of all they had links with the students' parents, with great support and solidarity among them.

■ ■ What attitude did the stricter Muslims and the

women. Women were there in the streets, showing the mullahs that 'we can do as much as you can, perhaps more!'

The mullahs' interpretation was that the women were coming out on the streets and demonstrating against the system because they were religious. They saw it in those terms. But I saw them changing their attitudes. Of course it takes a long time. But I think those women in the street took the first step to tell everybody that attitudes had to be changed. They were telling everybody: you can't go on in your struggle against repression while having half your human force sitting at home and scrubbing the

men demonstration they had come the mullahs against them — not women themselves against them! — but I still very progressive to what they thought men just a year

■ ■ According to reports, women on the demonstration chadors.

In the women where I participated women didn't wear robes. When women on the demonstration thinking 'shouldn't women wear robes?' women were saying 'You are our sisters, think like us, c

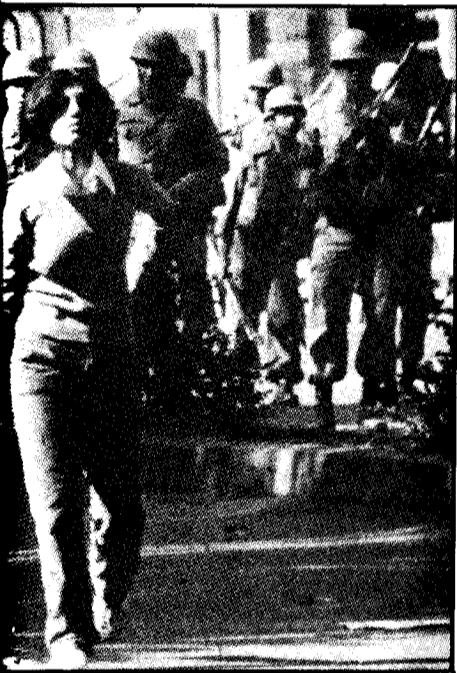


The banner says 'Women salute the martyrs of freedom'



the Shakh

— and there was no time for the women on the demonstration to support those who wore robes or those who didn't. Women on the demonstration were calling to all the bystanders, 'Come and join us' — whether they wore robes or not. I wore a *chador* just because I felt easier to be close to other women like that: but when I have a choice whether to wear a robe or not, I don't think it's repressive. It is still customary for the majority of women to wear some form of head covering. Those who don't are seen as students, middle-class,



western-type women. It is very easy to alienate women this way. Women were fighting for general national issues, to kick out the Shah — and I didn't see any argument in Iran about wearing a robe or not. We didn't have time for that petty argument. Of course, I saw the argument here (in England). I was very surprised!

Women in Iran in the streets, fighting the army, were not bothered about the veil... but some of us here, in the West, were bothered! I am not saying the issue is not important, but it is not our demand today. I am sure it will be one day. The issue of the *chador* has to be raised by women in Iran rather



Vida Hadjebi-Tabrizi, one of the many women jailed and tortured by SAVAK. Arrested in 1972, she was freed recently, but Iran's jails are still packed.

er than by us in London.

■ ■ To what extent did you find that the women involved in the struggle were beginning to raise their own demands, as women?

The telecommunications workers and the nurses are better off than any other workers in Iran because the government has made some attempt to have nurseries organised for them, in the workplace. But nurseries were not sufficient. They were not run by trained nurses.

During the strike, the women realised that it was high time the nursery was run better. They began to demand that there should be a trained nurse, that there should be a heated room with facilities and medical care.

During the nurses' strike, cleaners and cooks joined them. One of their major demands was: why couldn't they have their kids in the hospital nursery? why should it be exclusive to nurses' and doctors' kids?

My sister is a qualified nurse, and she was active among the striking nurses. She told me how nurses (who in Iran are all women) began discussing their oppression as women during the strike. They were questioning male domination in hospitals and the way it affected them.

Local nurseries are non-existent in Iran. But because of the high intensity of the situation the question of nurseries in localities was not brought up that much.

However, I talked to women in a village in the south of Iran, and they were so militant about having nurseries in that village! The government had promised them a nursery for about 30 under-fives. But the women were saying: we've got 450 kids under five in our village. How can this one government nursery, do us any good?

Equality

Today militant women workers in the oil industry, in textiles, in banks and other places are raising the issue of equal wages and opportunity in the strike committees, and making demands.

■ ■ Did you find women questioning what Islam says about the inferiority of women?

There is a very heated discussion among the women who are for an Islamic Republic and the women who are not — students, women workers, and professionals who are against Islamic rules for women.

The Muslim women say that women have always been oppressed by the system, not by men; if men are oppressing women, it's because of the system. They say that if we have an Islamic system which is based on equality and sharing, then there will be no oppression of women.

Other women bring forward the argument in the Koran; there is a long passage on women saying that women should obey their men.

Koran

Muslim women do not want to see the Koran debated. But a great number of these Muslim women are coming out on the street, participating in the demonstrations. Their whole practical life doesn't fit the Koran. The contradiction is making them think that what it says in the Koran is very good, very progressive... but not by today's standards. I heard them saying: 'The Koran is great, it says very good things, but it was written in the seventh century'.

I recently discovered a story of women in Medina sending a delegate to the prophet Mohammed with a list of demands: what sort of a prophet are you? are you a prophet just for men? They had a list of feminist demands which questioned Islam's male supremacy. That was the seventh century! If that happened in Saudi Arabia then, I think it's bound to happen among Muslim women in Iran now.

You can say almost everybody in Iran is Muslim: but who practises it? Women factory workers can't practise it, because it is in no way related to their lives. According to Islam, they should be sitting at home and not working. In the villages, women do so many jobs. I saw women right up on the roof of a house, putting a new roof on: you can't do that with a robe on! The practicality of their lives shows that we can't keep to the orthodox Muslim practice.

Most of the women in the villages don't wear robes, just something to cover their heads while they're working. When they go into town they wear robes.

When I went to the villages, I wore a robe. I don't agree with the argument some people use, that we shouldn't wear robes or Iranian customary clothing if we don't wear them usually. In Iran what bourgeois women wear is very distinct from what ordinary women wear.

Ordinary women wear very simple dress, usually a

head-covering to keep them safe from the workplace mess. The robe is part of their clothing. So if I go to the villages in Western clothes, they will see me as a bourgeois woman or some kind of tourist.

Women workers don't wear a robe in the factory, but they put one on to go to work, because they feel safer like that.

■ ■ How has the position of women changed over the last 15 years, with industrialisation?

A great number of women were brought into the factories. But the largest women's workforce in still in home craft production (like carpets).

■ ■ You read a lot in the British press about Westernisation. What does that mean in practice?

Massive introduction of consumer goods, like TVs, refrigerators, washing machines, and thousands of kinds of cosmetics. Using women as agents of consumer society, through the media and mass advertising.

Attacks on women

In a country where 90% of women are illiterate and 70% of women are housewives, during the last few years there have been scenes of semi-nude women on TV or advertising hoardings to advertise British Leyland Cars, Japanese electrical goods, cosmetics, and wall-papers... and manufactured carpets. In a country where the majority of the female labour force does craft production of carpets. There has been massive screening of foreign pornographic films, causing more prostitution, attacks on women in the streets, and rape.

The present Shah's father banned the *chador* and said to women: 'You were hidden behind the black robe. I liberated you!' The present Shah gave women the right to vote, brought women into the workforce, and made his Queen and his twin sister the patrons of women's liberation in Iran.

The 'Women's Organisation of Iran', led by the Shah's sister, has sophisticated, highly costly buildings in every major city.

I visited its headquarters a few times. It has a comprehensive library of women's literature. I was amazed to see books by Sheila Rowbotham and Juliet Mitchell, and Alix Holt's selected writings of Alexandra Kollontai! They have most western feminist writings, in French, English and German, all tucked away, completely unused. The few times I was there I saw it practically empty all the time. It was a grand show of prestige.

Show of prestige

Women's liberation is not a grand show of prestige. It is part of the development of a nation, and precisely because of this, it is such a long, painful, constant struggle. We are sick and tired of being liberated so many times by the Shah, his father, his Queen, and his sisters, according to Western values and slogans of 'take the *chador* off, get the vote'.

Our demands and programme for women's liberation must be based on the general needs of women in Iran, in relation to their social and cultural development.

NAMIBIA: WHERE APARTHEID FACES A 'MISSION IMPOSSIBLE'

BY Chenhamo C. Chimutengwende, author of the recently published book, 'South Africa: The Press and the Politics of Liberation', Barbican Books, London.

THE FUTURE of the former German colony of South West Africa [now Namibia] is clear. The one million people of Namibia will, sooner or later, rule themselves as an independent African nation.

The Namibian liberation struggle, which is being spearheaded by the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) is an unstoppable process and an integral part of the world-wide anti-colonial movement. This freedom movement has gone from strength to strength during the past four decades and has resulted in the liberation of much of Africa, Asia and other parts of the world.

As a result of South Africa's attempts to annex the territory of Namibia into a 'greater South Africa' and the application of apartheid policies in Namibia, the United Nations revoked the right of South Africa to administer Namibia on behalf of the world body in 1966. In 1971 the International Court of Justice ruled that South Africa no longer had any right to administer Namibia under international law.

South Africa remains determined to decide and control the content of the constitutional development of Namibia. Being a politically desperate, bankrupt and backward colonial power, South Africa has manufactured many schemes designed to produce a solution in Namibia which is worse than neo-colonialist in character. This is in line with the internal policies of South Africa.

For South Africa, to implement any policies or to cooperate in the implementation of any policies in Namibia which are not geared to its own racist white supremacist ideology would result in the automatic introduction of another devastating contradiction into the politics of white power in South Africa itself.

South Africa is indeed in a quandary over Namibia. As a result of the determined struggle by the people of Namibia coupled with international pressure, especially through the UN, South Africa has failed to divide up Namibia into non-viable Bantustans along ethnic lines.

This political approach, whose practical implementation is being resolutely opposed in South Africa itself, where its evil intentions have been thoroughly exposed, is proving to be a 'mission impossible' both in South Africa and in Namibia.

In a desperate move to stop the inevitable victory of the liberation forces of Namibia led by SWAPO, South Africa has recently been trying to unite local racist white groups, opportunist black groups, and conservative and traditional African chiefs under the umbrella of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA). This ethnic coalition, a creation of the government of South Africa,

is led by Dirk Mudge, an Afrikaner and former 'Governor' of the territory who is a member of the National Party, the ruling party within South Africa itself.

Under the DTA Namibia would be a racial and ethnic federation based on 'consensus' and 'power-sharing', very much the same thing the internal settlement of Ian Smith is meant to produce in Zimbabwe. But of course any solution that leaves the white minority in power or with the power to veto is no solution at all. It only prolongs the conflict.

From December 4 to 8 South Africa organised elections in Namibia which were aimed at electing a DTA-led Transitional Government and at excluding SWAPO. These elections were boycotted by almost every party outside the DTA, including SWAPO.

The UN and the international community opposed the idea of elections controlled and supervised by South Africa and outside the UN framework. Through force, threats and intimidation, 412,000 Namibians were registered as voters. It is also clear that similar methods were used to get at least 80% of the registered voters to vote for the DTA.

Just before the elections, many officers and activists of SWAPO in Namibia were detained in order to ensure that everything went according to the South African masterplan. In a 13-page document recently released to the press in London by the Namibian churches, detailed evidence was given of how the people of Namibia were coerced into voting for the DTA.

South Africa has conceded that some time in 1979 another election under UN supervision could take place. This makes the recent elections seem a pointless charade. However, South Africa insists that the UN should use the South African/DTA controlled state machinery for the proposed UN-supervised elections, so that South Africa can maintain its ability to manipulate the course of events. The negotiations between the UN, South Africa, and the Western powers are continuing on the numbers of UN administrative and military personnel and on the numbers of South African personnel and security forces that may remain in the territory during the election period.

South Africa finds that it has to co-operate or pretend to co-operate with the UN for fear of further and speedier isolation by the international community. Economic sanctions could hurt South Africa sharply enough to provoke or deepen internal contradictions within the white ruling class. There is already a crisis of confidence and direction within the ruling class, which is bedevilled by scandals like the 'Muldergate' affair.

The West too would be damaged by sanctions against South Africa. The West has significant investments and other highly profitable links with South Africa. This is why the Western countries are trying to persuade South Africa to cooperate with the UN. But the dilemma that remains for South Africa is that, whether it cooperates or not, its policies both in Namibia and within South Africa itself are increasingly becoming untenable because of the emerging internal and external opposition.



EEC chiefs: Giscard, Callaghan, Schmidt

THE COMMON MARKET: A CAPITALIST DISASTER

ALF LOMAS [Secretary, London Co-Operative Political Committee] argues that "We must send anti-market-eers to the European Assembly, demanding radical changes in the whole structure of the EEC and keeping alive the option of withdrawal".

MEMBERSHIP OF the Common Market has proved disastrous for our working people.

CAP has forced up food prices and created huge surpluses in a world where millions are starving.

Our trade deficit with the other EEC countries is running at £2,000 million per year, compared with a surplus in 1970.

We have been prevented

from giving state aid to our industries, and we now have to phase out the TES which has saved over 100,000 jobs.

The gap between rich and poor regions is widening.

We will be paying nearly £1 billion *net* into the budget by 1980.

No Socialist can support an organisation which has as one of its main principles the free movement of capital. This means investment goes where it is most profitable and not to the most socially desirable areas.

I want more socialism in Britain not less and, therefore, I have consistently opposed our membership of the Common Market and believe it would be in our best interests if we withdrew.

At the moment, however, we are a member, legislation is being passed affecting working people, elections will be held. We cannot leave it to the Tories to represent us. We must send as many anti-market-eers as possible to the European Assembly to fight for the Labour Party's policies, demanding radical

changes in the whole structure of the EEC and to keep alive the option of withdrawal.

We should insist upon the scrapping or at least fundamental reform of CAP, an end to interference in internal economic policies of member states, a new system of funding the EEC budget, the rejection of moves to monetary or economic union and perhaps most important of all to campaign for the Labour Party's objective of working "towards the creation of a wider but much looser grouping of European States — one in which each country is able to realise its own economic and social objectives under the sovereignty of its own Parliament".

I am prepared to give up 'national sovereignty' to a Socialist institution but not to the anti-socialist, pro-capitalist EEC.

Members of the European Assembly must fight for the interests of ordinary working people against the bankers and multi-nationals in whose interests the Common Market now operates.

Break out of the nationalist ambush

MARK DOUGLAS [Hackney N. CLP] asks, 'Will we be ambushed again?'

"THE UNITED Europe of the future can and must be pluralist politically. But it will not exist at all without the co-operation and inspiration of European Socialists. The Conservative Parties are incapable economically and politically of creating it, and of solving the crisis of capitalism.

"Only the Socialists can provide a new model of development and civilisation".

With these words François Mitterand launched the 'united' campaign of twelve Socialist Parties for the European Assembly elections planned for June 7th this year.

That meeting, in the Opera House in Lille, was held last November and survived the almost total absence of any British Labour delegate. That's one reason why readers of Socialist Organiser will almost certainly have never heard of it.

As far as the 'Labour

Safeguarders' are concerned, they would much prefer the whole of 'European' politics to sink into the 'English' Channel.

As local Labour Parties around the country select their prospective European MPs this month, total confusion has ensued over the vexed issue of 'Britain in Europe' once more. For the right wing of the Labour Party, the run-up to the European elections provides one more hard nail with which to bury the Labour Left.

On the Left, Dennis Skinner, an arch 'safeguarder' and newly-elected Labour Executive member, boast their failure to hold even a passport to 'foreign lands'. Norman Atkinson, Party treasurer, whines over the lack of any funds with which to fight the elections on Labour's terms, whilst adamantly refusing to soil our clean hands with money from Brussels.

Nevertheless, as the Campaign for a Socialist Europe has shown, there are increasing numbers of socialists on the Left (and not quite on the Left) who have now broken ranks with

the 'Euro-sceptics'. What is there in Europe (of which we have all been part since at least Caesar's time) which we cannot be equally 'sceptical' about in Britain? The current arguments of the 'Safeguarders' are a concoction of pure British chauvinism, laced with an uncritical regard for the traditions of British Labour.

The best opportunity for socialists to campaign against the impotent politics of 'Little England', of Britain for the 'British', of parliamentary sovereignty in Westminster (or Strasbourg for that matter) has now been presented to us.

With capitalism both in Britain and Europe becoming increasingly paralysed, the Social-Democrats' dream of a prosperous and stable Europe incorporating the working classes of nine, then twelve or more countries, will be broken. For that dream to be effectively challenged in Britain, the socialist Left must break out of the nationalist ambush, or the Social-Democrats of the German SPD and the Christian Democrats of Italy will continue to rule in Europe.

LET'S PRESS FOR SOCIALIST REFORMS IN THE E.E.C.

'Banging fists' on EEC tables is no answer, argues Donald Sassoon of the Campaign for a Socialist Europe. Socialist advances can be made more easily in a European than a 'little England' context.

A CURSORY glance at the literature distributed by the anti-market-eer body, the Safeguard Committee, suggests that their main pre-occupation is an economic one: the Common Market simply costs too much. Their statistical exercise rests on a peculiar logic: the calculation of the differences to the British economy between the cost of membership so far and what it would have cost had Britain remained outside the EEC.

At no time is there an attempt to examine how much it would actually cost us to get out of the EEC, for example, how much it would cost us to re-establish the old British system of agricultural subsidies.

It is obvious that the costing argument is a demagogic one which hides another line, namely that by entering the EEC the UK has lost some of its sovereignty to a 'foreign' body over whom

we have little control.

The concept of sovereignty embraced by the anti-market-eers is a familiar one: it rests on the liberal doctrine which identifies legal sovereignty with de facto sovereignty. The truth of the matter is that the British Parliament is sovereign only in the most limited legal sense. In reality it must act within determinate constraints which result out of the balance of political, economic and social forces within which it operates.

By trying to re-fight the referendum which they have lost, the anti-market-eers are ready to sabotage all attempts to democratise the EEC, first by resisting direct elections to the European Assembly, and then by putting forward candidates whose main task will be that of banging their fists on the table, demanding concessions and derogations which they know are unacceptable to all socialist parties in the EEC. Once these further attempts at 're-negotiations' will have failed, the anti-market-eers will conclude in mock sorrow that there is no other solution except withdrawal.

This line of action will not produce any progressive effects either in Europe or in the EEC, and this is why it can be accepted so easily by people like Enoch Powell.

What the Campaign for a

Socialist Europe suggests is a bold and imaginative approach to Europe which would abandon both the 'socialism in one country/siege economy' model offered by the anti-market-eers and the Labour centre-right self-satisfied approach that 'now that we are in Europe things will work out somehow'.

The Labour Party can and must play a positive role in the first directly elected European Assembly by working together with the other working class parties towards a transfer of power from the Commission and the Council of Ministers to the Assembly itself, for a reform of the CAP, for a transfer of resources from the rich areas to the poor ones, for a harmonisation of welfare benefits at the highest level, for a European charter of workers, for multi-national control of the multi-nationals.

The objectives of advancing towards a democratic regime of working class control over social life as a whole can be realised more easily in a European rather than in a 'little England' context. The Campaign for a Socialist Europe therefore calls upon socialists in Britain to abandon protectionist and reactionary illusions, and to begin the attempt to create a socialist advance not in an isolationist utopia, but in the reality of Europe.

Their Europe and ours

SIMON TEMPLE [Birmingham, Selly Oak CLP] argues that the issue is not 'national sovereignty', but the fight against the bosses' sovereignty, here and throughout the EEC.

MOST PEOPLE on the Left opposed Britain joining the Common Market and don't want direct elections to the European Parliament.

They rightly say that the EEC is a rich man's club: but so is British capitalism! The European Parliament is no instrument for winning socialism. But is Westminster a more likely weapon?

It is the owners of the banks and big firms who control this country, not Parliament. The objection boils down to nationalism: against direct elections, not because the EEC is capitalist, but because it's foreign!

The campaign against direct elections is purely diversionary, and makes no more sense than a campaign against Westminster elections. In or out of the EEC is not an issue for the working class; international unity in the fight against EEC bosses, British bosses, and all other bosses, is.

Unfortunately the structure set up by the National Executive Committee to organise for the EEC elections is designed to ensure that accountability does not extend to the membership of the Labour Party controlling the activities of the Euro-MPs. The selection organisations will choose the candidates and then dissolve. We need to campaign within the Party for these committees to be kept going to receive regular reports from the Euro-MPs and instruct them on what policies to pursue.

Work by committed socialists in the European Parliament would be worthwhile, provided it is based on an internationalist policy, not a nationalist one. The struggle for socialism

has to be an international one, or it will fail.

An isolated socialist state in a hostile capitalist world will either degenerate into a hideous bureaucratic caricature — such as the Soviet Union today — or, more likely, be crushed. Only the support of workers in other countries could save it and carry on the fight for a united socialist Europe.

Right now we need to build the closest possible political and trade union links between workers throughout Europe. That's the only way to stop the multi-nationals playing off workers in different countries against each other, and to carry forward the fight against the whole 'bosses' system.

Socialist Euro-MPs could play a useful — if subsidiary — role in that struggle. But if the Labour members of the European Parliament make it their business to defend the least competitive sections of British capitalism, then that will be a positive hindrance in the fight for socialism.

NATIONALISE THE BANKS AND FINANCE HOUSES - CAMPAIGN NOW!

THE PRESENT system of local government finance is considered so complex that very few people fully understand it. Because of this, it is difficult and often impossible for working-class people - even when elected as Councillors - to play a full role in the management of their affairs through local government. This in turn must mean a loss in democracy, as understood by Socialists.

There are two basic forms of local government spending: 'Revenue' and 'Capital'. Capital expenditure goes on the building of the more permanent structures, such as schools, day nurseries, roads, etc. Revenue on the whole goes to paying the day to day running costs of the Council, such as wages, debt charges, and so on.

Capital expenditure is almost entirely finance by borrowing (from Banks, Finance Houses, etc.), while Revenue is got from charges for Council services, government grant aid, and rates.

Government grant aid is mainly in the form of the Rate Support Grant (RSG) and can account for as much as two thirds of a Council's intake for revenue expenditure. The complexities of the RSG were once described by Richard Crossman as a 'tortuous administrative monstrosity'.

Projected

It is not only the complexities of the system that work against local authorities, but also the need to gain approval for specific capital projects from Whitehall. A case in point is what happened recently in the London Borough of Hackney.

We had the highest number of children in care and the least amount of day provision for under-5s.

However, the government denied us the right to borrow the money to build much-needed nurseries. This tight control over local authority spending means that if a majority of socialist councillors were voted into power, they couldn't carry out the programme they were elected on unless it met with the approval of Whitehall.

But even when loan sanction

approval to borrow - is given, working class areas like Hackney are then faced with the task of finding the money to repay these massive amounts. *Hackney alone is in debt to the tune of over £215 million. This means that we pay over £20 million each year in interest charges.*

But even this staggering amount of dues did not satisfy the City of London. They claimed that, because local authorities were such large borrowers of money, they were upsetting the money markets by too much short term borrowing. Short term borrowing is of course cheaper than long-term.

So the Treasury issued an edict last year which instructed all local authorities to move to an average loan period of seven years. For the people of Hackney this meant an extra £1½ million in interest charges.

Obscene

Hackney, which has the lowest income per family in London and which according to the Department of Health and Social Security is the most deprived area in England and Wales, will now be paying this extra money straight into the pockets of banks and finance houses. The poorest are to be squeezed even harder to make the rich even richer.

Of course the people who arrange loans for us have to have their cut. This year saw the obscene spectacle of £35,000 being voted to a firm of accountants who arranged a deal for Hackney to borrow £10 million from a consortium of banks and finance houses.

Again, this money comes from the ratepayers of Hackney. That money could have been used to build and run a nursery for one year.

It seems that rich pickings can be obtained from local government finance. We are also excellent collateral, since we cannot go broke. Services can always be cut and rents and rates put up in order to find the money to repay the debt and interest charges.

The whole system needs radically altering. The first step must be the carrying out

by Hackney councillor JOHN SWEENEY

of Labour Party policy by nationalising the Banks, Insurance Houses, and Financial Institutions, groups which hold local authorities in hock. After that, the next step must be to drastically reduce rates. The majority of money for local authorities should then come from direct government funding without interest charges (and with just enough directives to ensure it goes to those in most need).

After all, it is money that has been raised in taxes and other payments, so why should the government charge itself interest? In this way there would be a massive shift of money and resources in favour of working class people, fulfilling a Labour Party pledge. It would also mean that working-class people had more control over their lives, which again is central to

Socialist thought.

The activities of local authorities affect the lives of ordinary people far more than anything else. They range from education, housing and health to having the roads swept. It is the place where socialist policies can be enacted on behalf of working-class people.

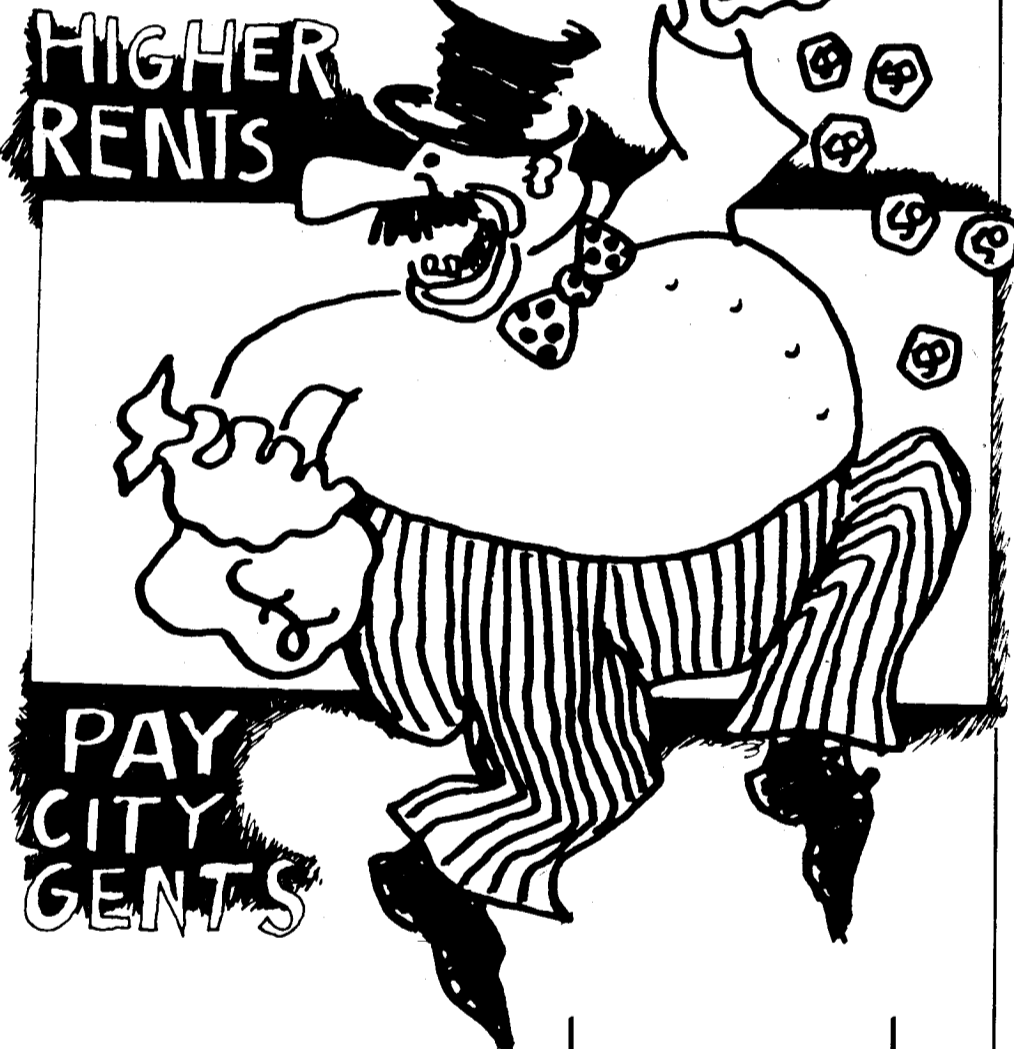
What must happen is that Labour Councillors join with the people who elected them in resisting Treasury policies which seek to penalise the working class in order to line the pockets of the rich. After all, last year's instruction to local authorities to borrow money on a long-term basis - and so pay higher interest charges - was only a request from government to adopt a code of practice. It could have been resisted.

Labour Councillors must explain to people what is going on and ask for their help in fighting these Treasury policies. Labour Councils must put forward demands

to government that are clearly in the interests of the working class and then seek the backing of the people of the Boroughs in fighting for these demands to be met.

Labour Councillors should not see themselves as - or allow themselves to become - just managers of a local authority. Too easily, chairpersons of committees see themselves as heads of that particular department, such as Housing, and so set about dividing up the often totally inadequate resources available and thereby implement central government policies, without actively seeking to change those policies.

However, the financial set-up is at the heart of the matter and until that is successfully challenged there will be no real change.



Interest Charges: the noose around our necks

THIS YEAR Labour councils will be faced with some tough decisions: to raise rents and rates; to cut services; or to mount a challenge to the whole system of local government finance, by refusing to pay interest charges to banks and finance houses, with the consequent threat of surcharges, bankruptcy, and imprisonment.

Many Labour controlled councils were elected on manifestos committing them to radical social changes: nurseries for all; crash house-building and modernisation programmes; £60 minimum wage for council employees, opposition to pay limits; massive expansion of social services, recreation and leisure facilities.

There is no shortage of resources or workers to do

these jobs. But in present-day society nothing can be done without money. And the councils face a money shortage. At root, what stands in the way is the system which robs the wealth from the workers who have created it, and produces only for profit, not for need.

Cash terms

Even in cash terms the money is available... only it is in the wrong hands. Last year Government departments underspent a total of £2,500 million, as they went all out to meet cash limits. That's about £50 per head of population, or over £10 million for a borough the size of Hackney!

But the councils don't have the money. What

by MIKE DAVIS

should they do?

John Sweeney argues for bank nationalisation, an end to interest charges, and direct central government finance. This must be made a campaign issue. Councillors must organise meetings with local tenants' associations, trade unions and community groups; demonstrations to Westminster; and city- and county-wide conferences of Labour Parties on the issue.

The Government pays out money readily enough to help capitalists in financial difficulties - Chrysler, Harland and Woolf... Let's force them to pay out for workers' needs!

But at the end of the day, all councillors will face the

problem that confronted the Clay Cross councillors: do we turn against our working class electors, or do we turn against the Government's financial rules?

Environment Secretary Peter Shore has recently announced only an 8% increase in the rate support grant - barely enough to cover inflation - and even the 'Partnership Scheme' gives the chosen boroughs little more than £5 million per year.

Already, some London boroughs are choosing to raise rates in order to maintain services. But the crucial issue of interest charges - which can absorb more than a third of any borough's expenditure - must be tackled.

Socialist councillors' first task is to mount a massive

local campaign with all working-class and community organisations to highlight this noose round their necks. A refusal to pay interest charges - by a big council or, for example, by several London boroughs - together with a big campaign of agitation, could force the government either to step in with the necessary finance or face serious industrial action from trade unionists.

If nothing else, the bureaucratic capitalist jungle of local government finance in the inner-city areas would be openly challenged, working-class people would be more aware of the stranglehold the banks and big business have on local government, and the need for a revolutionary restructuring of the system could be placed on the agenda.

Tory threat over GLC estates

THE TORY-controlled Greater London Council wants London Boroughs to take over the GLC housing estates.

The Labour council in Lambeth has put out a leaflet stating that they 'are totally opposed to the GLC transfer'.

THIS WOULD divide London up into 32 water-tight compartments and end any hope of Lambeth tenants moving to another part of London...

The financial terms offered by the GLC would place an unjustifiable burden on Lambeth ratepayers... This is because their rents are high (too high in our opinion) and their standards of maintenance much below those of the Borough Council. We could never accept two classes of tenants in properties under our management. The onus is on the GLC to raise their standards while maintaining reasonable rent levels...

As a Labour Council we are, of course, against the sale of council houses or flats... We are even more firmly opposed to the present tactics of the GLC in offering their best properties for private sale, leaving the boroughs to take over the rest that nobody wants...

Have nothing to do with their empty promises and help us to make them accept their responsibilities as landlords.

BUT THE Labour council in Islington wants to accept the GLC transfer. Cllr Valerie Veness explains why.

THE TWO crucial issues in the argument, I believe, are the material interests of thousands of working-class GLC tenants and the public ownership of housing and housing land.

There has been much rhetoric about the unity of the labour movement: a unity that produced no solution to the sale of council housing by the present Tory GLC, a unity that offered nothing to GLC tenants

A unity that stands by and allows trade unionists to be made redundant daily by the present administration at County Hall; a unity that entails doing nothing and letting the Tories have a free hand, is the unity of the graveyard.

The other arguments:

1. No-one is against the GLC playing a strategic role in new house construction, particularly in outer London, though with the present Tory GLC this may be a somewhat academic position. Whether we want the GLC to be a management agency is quite another question.

2. In Islington there can be very little doubt that the overwhelming majority of GLC tenants would rather be Islington ones. The present run-down of all management and the savage cutbacks in maintenance carried out by County Hall make it imperative to take over all these stocks...

3. The only positive value of the GLC being a housing agency is that tenants in decaying Inner London would have the chance of moving out to the suburbs. At least that is the theory.

In fact two-thirds of all GLC housing is actually in Inner London: 121,190 against 56,291 in outer London. Furthermore 24,276 of the Outer London total are in Barking and Greenwich, industrialised boroughs which are really similar to the inner areas.

So what we are left with is some 32,000 units for the whole of London, on average 1,000 per borough. Hardly a massive chance for people to move to the suburbs!

In the long run the new inter borough nomination scheme will serve us better.

4. By our stand, we have helped to stop the attempted sale of municipal property in areas like Barnsbury. As long as housing remains in the control of the Tory GLC there can be no guarantee that housing stocks will not be sold.

GERMANY 60 YEARS AGO

The bloodhounds of Social Democracy

by RAY SAUNDERS

NEW YEAR in Germany sixty years ago was not a joyous festival. The workers shot on the orders of the authorities on Christmas eve had only just been buried when a new campaign of anti-working class incitement and murder was under way.

The 'authorities' were the leaders of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD). The party of 'peace' which supported war in 1914 was now the party of 'law and order' which ordered the brutal crushing of the rising workers' movement.

At the head of the 'socialist' government were Ebert, Noske and Scheidemann. Ebert had become Chancellor when the Imperial government collapsed in November 1918.

On November 10th, the Workers' and Soldiers' Council of Berlin, the only real power in the capital, appointed him head of the government. Ebert left their meeting and within hours was secretly conspiring with the mad-dog militarists on how to crush the Berlin workers.

"I hate revolution like mortal sin", he assured the Kaiser. He furiously attacked Scheidemann for declaring that Germany was a republic.

Scheidemann was not very different. Later he completely defended the murder of the revolutionary leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. Using his son-in-law — who had offered a reward of 10,000 marks for anyone who would assassinate Liebknecht and Luxem-

burg — he was at the heart of the most reactionary conspiracies.

The third top SPD leader, Noske, boasted, on being appointed commander in chief of the German troops, "Someone has to be the bloodhound, and I will not shirk my responsibility". He personally directed the final ferocious assaults on the working class districts.

In Berlin their chief accomplice was Otto Wels, the social democratic Commandant of the capital. Wels was the founder of the 15,000-strong Republican Soldiers' Defence Corps, a counter-revolutionary shock troop directly financed by capitalist groups.

Having failed to crush the workers at Christmas, Ebert, Noske and the military commanders launched another wave of terror in early 1919.

From the newspapers loyal to the government, including the SPD's *Vorwärts*, came the first blasts of the new campaign. They demanded the sacking of the leftist Police Chief of Berlin, who had organised a workers' defence force.

The social-democratic government 'obediently' sacked him, replacing him with another social-democrat who within two years was to be a fervent supporter of the infamous right-wing Kapp Putsch. This cleared the decks for an all-out attack.

Butchered

It started with the shelling of the offices of *Vorwärts*, which had been occupied by militants... on the suggestion of an agent provocateur.



George Grosz's depiction of Free Corps savagery

In the following days, the brutal riff-raff into whose hands the SPD had thrust the banner of "Peace, Democracy, Freedom and National Defence" murdered hundreds of militants. On January 15 they butchered Liebknecht and Luxemburg. And in the next four months they succeeded in imposing on the whole of Germany the deadly order they had imposed on Berlin.

As long before as 1884 Friedrich Engels had written to the German socialist leader August Bebel: "In any case, our only opponent on the day of the crisis and on the day afterwards will be the whole reactionary mass grouped around the standard of pure democracy". How right! But what Engels could not foresee was that Bebel's own party, the SPD, would degenerate to become the standard-bearer for that reactionary mass.

Bloody face

The social democracy at home often wears the face of peaceful reformism, of routine 'progressive' adjustment to capitalism. Its bloody face is usually seen only in its colonial ventures.

The German events of sixty years ago, like the Portuguese events more recently, show that the essence of social democracy is defence of the existing order through domination of the working class. While this domination is possible by peaceful means, the social-democracy largely confines itself to those means. But when it is not, the 'socialist' leaders will follow the same road as Ebert, Scheidemann and Noske...



Friedrich Ebert



A servant of the social democracy.



Rosa Luxemburg

Defend the Huntley Street 14

by PIERS CORBYN

MILITANTS MUST not only fight against 'moves to a strong state', they must also fight the actual manifestations of it — here and now. This is the message from the first three days of the trial of the 'Huntley Street 14'.

In August 160 squatters were evicted from Huntley St, Camden, in the biggest eviction ever seen in this country, and 14 were arrested under the Criminal Trespass Law for 'resisting eviction'.

Defence Campaign leaflets explain the importance of the case for the labour movement as a whole. The State is attempting to use the trial to establish broadest possible definition of 'resistance to bailiffs' under the new Criminal Trespass Law. One of the defendants was not even present at the eviction, but like the others is charged with 'resistance' over the three week period between the issue of the possession order and the actual eviction. The implications for factory and student occupations are clear.

These new laws go hand-in-hand with an arrogant display of physical hardware and undercover methods. In Court Commander Habershon (formerly of the 'anti-terrorist' squad) admitted under cross-questioning that two police agents (Nigel Wildman and Mary McClusky) had been planted in the squat. He described the whole operation — which involved 650 police, including 100 SPG, carrying riot shields and grappling hooks, and led by bulldozers — as 'perfectly normal'.

Under-Sheriff Michael Harris, who has been in charge of dozens of mass evictions of factory occupations, squats, and student sit-ins, denied having claimed that the squatters had stockpiled an arsenal of 'bricks and pick-axe handles'.

A defendant declared: "Stories of missiles were deliberately concocted by the police and sheriff in order to justify their paramilitary attack".

Contact Huntley Street Defence Campaign at 01-701 5691, 01-267 1456, or c/o Camden Law Centre, 146 Kentish Town Road, London NW1, for leaflets, posters, film, and speakers.

THE DEFENCE CAMPAIGN DEMANDS:

- ★ Drop all charges against the Huntley St 14 (and against the five squatters arrested at evictions in Battersea in Spring). Quash all convictions under the Trespass Law.
- ★ Repeal the Trespass Law.
- ★ Curb police powers, disband the SPG.
- ★ Abolish the office of Sheriff. The carrying-out of all evictions must be made fully accountable.
- ★ A public Home Office inquiry into the Huntley St eviction. Meanwhile, the Defence Campaign is holding its own Inquiry and will report back to public meetings.
- ★ Democratise the NHS. It must be made accountable to the community and activities like this eviction and the health cuts halted. [Nos.1-9 Huntley St are owned by the Area Health Authority].
- ★ Compensation to the evicted squatters. Immediate return of any property still held by Special Branch police (who were at the eviction) and by Health Authorities.

Prison horror — courtesy of the Home Office

by BRYNLEY HEAVEN

IN JANUARY, the Director of Public Prosecutions is likely to open a case against some Hull prison officers. They face allegations arising from the Hull Prison riot, two and a quarter years ago.

Hull is a maximum security prison, standing opposite the docks. The riot there in 1976 was a watershed in British prison history. 60% of the prisoners took matters into their own hands after a provocative assault by prison staff. They demanded a public inquiry into the prison regime.

Before that, outside bodies had made the same demand. There has still been no public inquiry. But the prisoners' rights organisation PROP sponsored an investigation, with John Platt-Mills QC in the chair.

It concluded:

- "that increasing harshness of the regime" was the immediate precursor of the riot;
- that the beating of a prisoner, Martin Clifford, was the spark that ignited it;
- that, despite assurances by the Home Office's representative and by the Governor, grave and obscene

assaults were carried out on prisoners after they had surrendered;

■ that prisoners' property was destroyed or stolen, often in the most spiteful and petty fashion;

■ that Irish and black prisoners were singled out for exceptional treatment;

■ and that clear warnings of trouble at Hull, passed to the Home Office nine months before the riot, were ignored".

Testimony smuggled out by prisoners in conditions of great risk and difficulty has been published by the PROP journal and by *Irish Prisoner*.

SCREWS

Prisoner 'B': "... the morning following the surrender we were unlocked one at a time for breakfast. Prison officers lined the corridor on both sides... Prisoners were punched, kicked and dragged to the place of breakfast and then back by officers, while the superior officers stood by watching and shouting *Don't mark their faces*".

Prisoner 'D': "... but the worst thing I have ever seen is the bastard screws looting cells, burning personal letters, photos, toys made for

Christmas for the kids, laughing and reading our letters..."

Another prisoner's testimony refers to the prison files, which the prisoners gained access to. "... The part which angers me the most of all is that they had a section on it on my girl... they underlined in red, *this relationship must be ended* ... I was also shown by a prisoner [named] that on his file it said I was having a homosexual affair with him. I'd only ever spoken to him twice..."

The prisoners were obliged to resort to clandestine testimony because the official inquiry, carried out by police under the Home Office Inspector of Prisons, intoned this prior warning to all 350 prisoners interviewed: "False and malicious allegations against a prison officer are an offence under the prison rules... and may be proceeded with in the normal way as a disciplinary offence under the rules". Indeed, extra sentences through lost remission — amounting to years in some cases — were imposed by the authorities.

The people responsible for handing down non-trivial prison discipline are the Pris-

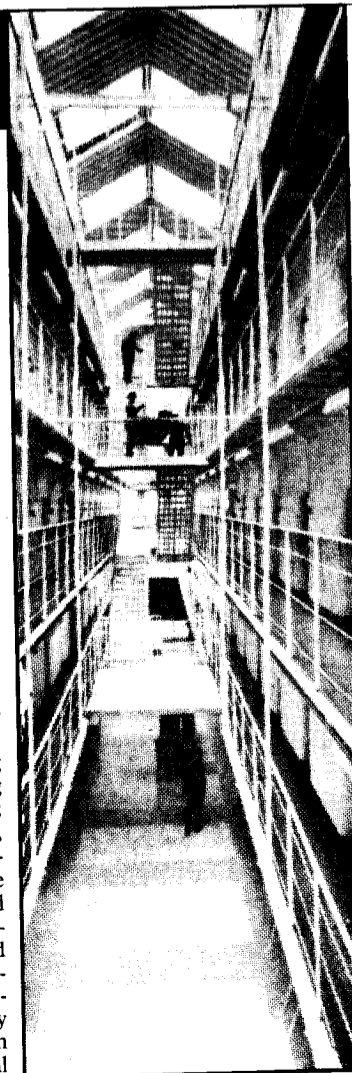
on Board of Visitors (not to be confused with honest prison visiting). They are appointed by the Home Office, the body which runs the prison system.

This Board not only dishes out the punishments, but is charged with upholding prisoners' welfare on behalf of 'society'. Prisoners are meant to turn to it for redress when aggrieved! Mr Charles Brady, chairman of Hull City Labour Party, serves on the Hull board.

SECRECY

Secrecy within a closed circle of authorities denies Britain's 40,000-plus prisoners full information or any right of redress.

The use of mind-bending and physically debilitating drugs by prison 'doctors'; the systematised violence, overcrowding, and degradation of much prison life; the increasingly sophisticated use of control unit techniques... are all protected by secrecy built into the system at every level. The forthcoming Home Office inquiry into the prison system is intended to draw the veil still further over its inner workings.



Hull Prison

THE NEW COMPUTER COPS

by KEN LIVINGSTONE
[prospective parliamentary candidate, Hampstead]

ONE OF THE major social changes in Britain over the last 30 years has been the evolution of the police force into a fully political arm of the state whose main interest is now political control rather than the more mundane and uninteresting area of petty crime.

Even Sir Robert Mark (ex-London police chief) has complained that burglary no longer attracts police attention. In contrast, the political activities of the police must be one of the main growth areas in the British economy.

The police force has changed with a massive influx of computer technology and training in methods of civilian control, and the oppression of minorities such as blacks and Irish. And for accepting these changes, the rewards have been extensive.

Whilst cabinet ministers plotted the breaking of workers' strikes and used the civil service to impose sanctions on firms not holding the wages line, Home Secretary Merlyn Rees (an ex-employee of the Police Federation, not best known for his intellectual gifts) fell over himself in order to give in to the demands of the police.

It is an interesting example of the depths to which the leadership of our party have sunk that they have massively increased pay by 40% for the police force, with its record of violence against striking workers and black youths, whilst holding down the wages of ordinary workers.

By these acts the Cabinet reveal only too clearly whose class interests they seek to serve.

Also under this government there has been the greatest ever expansion in the collection of political information. At the recent siege of Huntley St in Camden, hundreds of police smashed their way into a squatted block of flats at dawn and seized political material comprising diaries, min-

ute books, leaflets etc., all of which were taken away to be copied and passed on to Special Branch files.

Special Branch hold a special place in the heart of Mr Rees, who told Parliament on 2nd March 1978 that "Special Branch collects information on those whom I think cause problems for the state". Perhaps that is why he let them operate a spying system on the delegates at last year's TUC annual congress.

Clearly Mr Rees thinks things are getting worse, as he and other before him have encouraged the growth of the Special Branch from 200 officers in the early 1960s to 1259 today.

These characters have been very busy indeed of late, what with setting up a good spying network in the universities (unfortunately they blew their cover at Keele and at the WEA college at Blackwood) and in industry (a factory occupation at Greenwich Reinforcement Steel showed that Special Branch visited the works manager for information on trade union activists — and got it.)

Horrifying though the increase in Special Branch numbers is, it ignores the increasing amount of political work being done by the ordinary police in things like vetting applicants for education and social work jobs on the Lothian Council (amongst many others), where the talents of the new police computers make life so much easier.

The National Computer at Hendon now holds political information, despite all the protestations to the contrary. The computer has capacity for 40 million records — almost enough for every adult in the UK! On top of this the Special branch have 600,000 spaces on the Metropolitan Police computer — which must make for problems as they have files on three million people.

Soon, no doubt, the Government will decide to relax public expenditure in order to let the Special Branch have a new computer... as befits their increasing role under a Labour Government who are worried about 'those who cause problems for the state'.

Thorpe trial — holding a mirror up to society

by JAMES DAVIES

DO YOU know anyone who thinks Jeremy Thorpe is innocent? Do you know anyone who thinks he is not a homosexual and that Norman Scott has been lying all along?

"Well, there's no smoke without fire", they say. And with that sage remark — last resort of the foolish or malicious — they hope to make gawping credulity sound like caution.

Then comes the chaos of ignorance about homosexuality. "You can tell by looking at him" — the idiotic hindsight identification of male homosexuality with effemin-

acy. "And him married too!" — the simple-minded notion that all homosexuals are exclusively homosexual. This is tempered by the 'kind' "I pity his wife" — there being no other picture of a wife than a faithful one-man-worshipping woman. Then follows the warped class attitude expressed by, "All these toffs are, aren't they?"

Behind these remarks lurk ignorant assumptions — that homosexual activity is rare, exclusive, and wrong.

The media, of course, do not use the Thorpe trial and the opening of the flood-gates of anti-homosexual prejudice to educate the public. On the contrary, every idiotic prejudice is endorsed. Note, for instance, the way all the media refer to Norman

Scott as a 'male model', knowing how loaded the term 'model' is in English.

The result is, of course, that although the law now permits homosexual activity between consenting men over 21 — with some restrictions — life is made even more difficult for gays. The glaring contrast between this real incitement against gays and the meticulous decorum of bourgeois court proceedings is a model of the fakery of bourgeois justice and democracy.

Perhaps the clearest display of press morality, however, is the revelation that Andrew Newton was offered thousands of pounds by various papers for any story he could give them involving the leaders of the three main

parties. Most money was offered for a story implicating Wilson.

Underlying the whole affair is the assumption, shared by all those conducting the case in court, that firstly the revelation that an important political figure is gay would be enough to ruin that person's career, and that secondly fear of revelation would therefore be reason enough to commit murder.

Every trial puts society on trial; every court case holds up a mirror to society. Whatever the outcome of this case, the image in the mirror is clear: bourgeois society oppresses gays. Even when homosexual activity is not punishable, a subtle incitement against gays is poured out by the press.

Callaghan backs the oil bosses

AS WE WRITE, the possibility of a national tanker drivers' strike seems to be fading. The T&GWU have moved back the date that the strike was due to start from January 3rd to January 10th.

BP made £2,390 million profit before interest and tax in 1977 — a rate of 47% on net capital employed. Shell Transport and Trading made £1,710 million (38%). But from these huge profits — swollen by such operations as the ruthless exploitation of Iran's resources, hand in hand with the Shah, and sanctions-busting sales to Rhodesia — they could only with great difficulty be forced to

make any decent offer. And the Labour Government stood right behind them, organising troops to act as strike-breakers if needed.

The strike was originally called after the oil companies made an offer of as little as £3 a week, plus consolidation of previous years' wage increases into basic pay. The oil companies made even this offer subject to increases in productivity. For instance, Esso were originally demanding that in 1979 the drivers should do the same amount of work in 8 hours that they did in 8 hours 25 minutes at 1978 work speeds.

In response to the original

offers, the T&GWU called a ban on overtime which led to some petrol shortages just before Christmas. The oil companies made a slightly improved offer, and the overtime ban was called off while negotiations continued.

The T&GWU negotiating committee, after discussions with Moss Evans, recommended that the drivers accept the revised offer, though it was little better than the first and was still tied to productivity strings.

However, in a ballot last week the drivers rejected the offer by a majority of over two to one, and for a time it looked as though the strike

would take place. But the T&GWU and the oil companies are continuing negotiations and the strike has been put off for a week.

The oil companies will probably drop their demand for productivity strings, but are unlikely to make any increase on the cash offer at this stage.

The drivers are divided by separate negotiations with Esso, Shell, BP, Texaco and Mobil, so the T&GWU bureaucracy may just be able to sell some deal to the drivers as long as it is not subject to productivity strings.

JOHN COSBY

Sit-in ends but we'll fight on

TWENTY-ONE elderly patients were hurried from their beds into waiting ambulances, as workmen began to tear apart beds and equipment in the wards of Hounslow Hospital.

That raid, in October 1977, was the brutal answer of National Health Service bureaucrats to a work-in trying to stop the hospital's closure.

The occupation which followed the raid has recently ended. The Hounslow Hospital Occupation Committee explained what they tried to do, and what they will do now.

THE OCCUPATION began on 6th October 1977, in response to the infamous raid which ended the staff work-in. Our original demand for the immediate re-opening of Hounslow Hospital has not been achieved.

During our 13 months of occupation we drew up our own documented plans, which have been widely publicised, and laid the basis for a campaign to have Hounslow re-opened as a Community Hospital.

We actively involved ourselves in the general movement of opposition to cuts in public expenditure, and were instrumental in launching the Fightback campaign nationally. We also actively assisted in bringing an Area Campaign into existence to fight all local cutbacks in the health service.

To many our Occupation became a symbol of resistance. Yet the Occupation itself was only one stage in a long struggle to save our health service. Our occupation has made sure that the raid on

Hounslow Hospital will never be forgotten.

The Committee decided that no positive political gain to help our campaign would be achieved by an eviction.

Because we had proved publicly that it was possible to reconnect all services to outpatients, within hours of the ending of the occupation management were forced to begin reinstating all those services to outpatients which they had curtailed, and they have begun the redesigning of the chest clinic facilities to be housed in the hospital as part of its community facilities. To maintain pressure on management to carry out its publicly declared intentions will require an active and well-organised campaign. The Committee stands dedicated to this task.

What we are fighting for

★ No more wage curbs! No more strike-breaking by Labour!

Wage rises should at the very least keep up with price increases. The same should go for state benefits, grants and pensions. Demand immediate wage increases backdated to make up for the drop in our living standards over the last three years.

★ Start improving the social services rather than cutting them. Stop cutting jobs in the public sector.

★ End unemployment. Cut hours not jobs — share the work with no loss of pay. Start now with a 35-hour week and an end to overtime.

★ All firms threatening closure should be nationalised under workers' control.

★ Make the bosses pay, not the working class! Millions for hospitals, not a penny for 'defence'! Nationalise the banks and financial institutions without compensation. End the interest burden on council housing and other public services.

★ Freeze rents and rates.

★ Scrap all immigration controls. Race is not a problem; racism is. The labour movement must mobilise to drive the fascists off the streets.

Purge racists from positions in the labour movement. Organise full support for black self-defence.

◆◆

★ The capitalist police are an enemy for the working class. Support all demands to weaken them as the bosses' striking force: dissolution of special squads (SPG, Special Branch, MIS, etc.), public accountability, etc.

★ Free abortion and contraception on demand. Women's equal right to work, and full equality for women.

★ The Irish people — as a whole — should have the right to determine their own future. Get the British troops out now! Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Political status for Irish republican prisoners as a matter of urgency.

★ The black working people of South Africa and Zimbabwe should get full support from the British labour movement for their strikes, struggles, and armed combat against the white supremacist regimes. South African goods and services should be blacked.

◆◆

★ It is essential to achieve the fullest democracy in the labour movement. Automatic re-selection of MPs during each parliament, and the election by annual conference of party leaders. Annual election of all trade union officials, who should be paid the average for the trade.

◆◆

★ The chaos, waste, human suffering and misery of capitalism now — in Britain and throughout the world — show the urgent need to establish rational, democratic, human control over the economy, to make the decisive sectors of industry social property, under workers' control.

The strength of the labour movement lies in the rank and file. Our perspective must be working class action to raze the capitalist system down to its foundations, and to put a working class socialist system in its place — rather than having our representatives run the system and waiting for the crumbs from the table of the bankers and bosses.

WE SET UP the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory so that the left would not be foot soldiers for Callaghan in the general election campaign.

An election victory for the Tories would be a defeat for the working class. But votes for Labour on the basis of approving Callaghan's record would also represent a defeat.

Too often Labour left wings have put forward their militant (or not-so-militant) policies but shelved them when the call came: all pull together against the Tories. They have contented themselves with vague hopes that the policies they plead for will percolate through somewhere, somehow, some time.

The SCLV aims to fight for its policies, in debate within the labour movement and in action, now. We press for CLPs (four of which have sponsored our Campaign) to throw themselves actively into the class struggle. We organise local groups, meetings, leaflets, posters. We fight for the Party democratically to decide its election manifesto, and for CLPs de-

mocratically to decide their election addresses and leaflets.

This activity provides the only forthright working-class answer to the capitalist principles so aggressively preached by the Tories. And it ensures that the voice of socialism is not drowned out by Callaghanite pro-capitalist 'moderation'.

We ask for support and cooperation from those who agree with our platform — and also from those who, without accepting the full platform, are willing to campaign with us round specific issues.

Support us by selling Socialist Organiser, by joining your local SCLV group or starting a new one, by inviting SCLV speakers to your CLP, LPYS or trade union branch and getting them to sponsor the Campaign.

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END LOW PAY NOW

£60 MINIMUM FOR A 35 hr WEEK

by
JEREMY CORBYN

ON JANUARY 22nd the National Union of Public Employees is calling a national 'Day of Action' in support of a £60 minimum wage and against the 5%.

This action is the culmination of six months of 'Low Pay Campaigns' by NUPE to highlight the effect of Pay Policy, which leaves public sector manual workers even further behind their industrial brothers and sisters.

Members of NUPE are quite clear that the Government's efforts to operate the 5% policy are completely without any authority from any section of the labour movement.

CRISIS

Having been defeated at the TUC in September, the Government was told by the Blackpool Labour Party conference that:

"This Conference, whilst recognising the value of cooperation between Trades Unions and Government, totally rejects any wage restraint by whatever method, including cash limits, and specifically the Government's five per cent in the forthcoming year, as a means of solving the economic crisis facing the country".

NUPE members employed in the Health Services, Local Authorities, Water Supply, and Universities are among the lowest paid in the country. 5% on a basic wage of not much above £40 means rises of £2 per week. Many members of the Union are part time workers, such as

school cleaners and catering workers. For them rises would be only £1 or less.

In the past the Local Authority employers have been aided in keeping wages down by the lack of unity between the different trade unions in the public sector [Transport and General Workers, General & Municipal Workers, Confederation of Health Service Employees] and the lack of unity between the various parts of the public sector over coordination of the wage demands.

This time the approach has improved. The Day of Action on January 22nd is supported by the T&GWU and G&MWU, and the wage claims have a common theme: £80 minimum wage, 35 hour week, and four weeks' holiday.

The struggle will continue in various ways after the Day of Action, when the aim is to get more members to the London demonstration than the historic 60,000 who supported the 'No Cuts' lobby of Parliament on November 17th, 1976.

FORD

On the wages front the public sector workers have seen the way opened up by Ford workers and many others. The Government's policy has been shattered by the TUC and Labour Party conference decisions, and sanctions have even been defeated in Parliament.

The Labour Party Conference decision was one of historic importance. The rank and file of the Labour Party have spoken. Now it is up to the National Executive to ensure that their full support is given to the public sector pay claim,

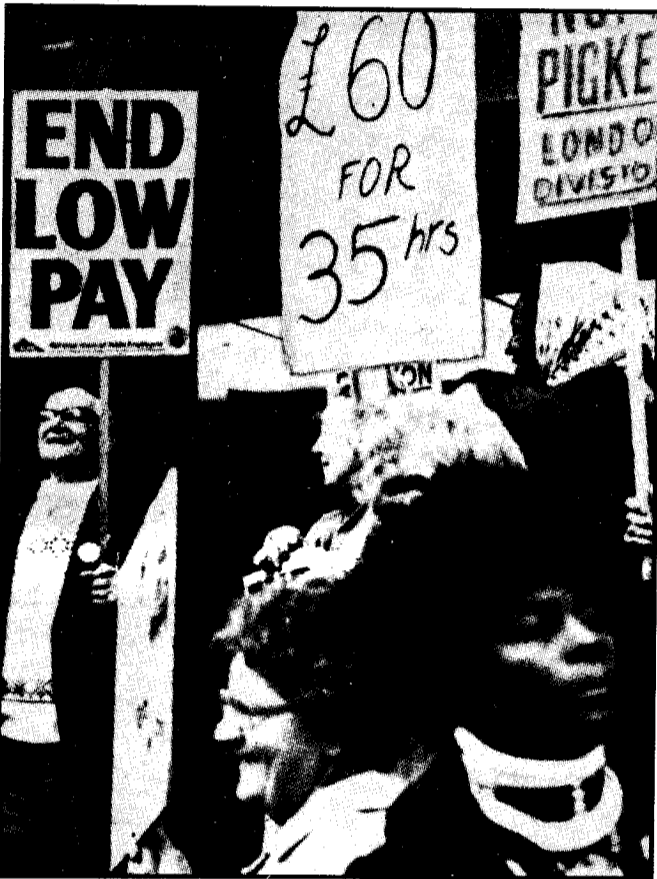
and that every Labour Party up and down the country gives the fullest possible backing to the Low Pay Campaign.

In the last 'dirty jobs' strike in 1970, an important factor was the willingness of Labour-controlled local authorities to settle locally on the joint Union demand and thus force a national settlement. This time, the local authorities have been warned that if they attempt to settle locally with manual workers' unions, the cost of this will be set against rate support grants that make up such a crucial element in local authority financing!

The wage claim present-

ed by the Unions involved in the public sector should be seen as a crucial test of the resolve of the Labour Movement to fight the 5% policy and the reactionary IMF-inspired economic policy of the Labour government.

It is the duty of the activists within the Labour Party and Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory to fight alongside the public sector workers. We must expose the fraudulent sham of the right wing in the Labour Party and the TUC, who have been desperately trying to renege on the Conference decisions by a series of sordid dinner party chats with Dennis Healey.



Sackings start at the Times

LAST WEEK six hundred workers at the *Times* finished working out their notices, and several thousands more are on their way.

It was last May that the Thomson Organisation issued their ultimatum to the unions. Either end all unofficial disputes, agree to redundancies and the introduction of new technology, or we will close the newspapers.

A co-ordinated campaign was launched in the press against the "wreckers of Fleet Street".

Under workers' control the introduction of new technology could be a great boost to the workers. It would not mean redundancies but reduced working hours, re-training, and the production of a far greater range of newspapers. As *Times* NUJ Father of the Chapel Jake Ecclestone told *Socialist Organisation*: "New technology should be used to make it easier for working men and women. *Times* management only want it to reap bigger profits. Newspapers shouldn't merely be geared towards profits".

Only the National Graphical Association (NGA) has taken a strong stand. They refused to negotiate with management under threat of closure. They will lose half their members if the bosses' plan goes ahead. NATSOPA

too will be hard hit, losing most of its members in some departments.

The proposals also spell out the right of management to hire and fire at will, to tell any worker to do any job, and to define staffing levels.

The bosses want to bypass the chapel (workplace branch) union organisation completely and to negotiate directly with the union officials.

As Jake Ecclestone says: "Management don't have any serious intention of negotiating, they only want to break the unions".

Thomsons are in a strong position for the lock-out. They have massive profits from oil. And one thing is for certain: if Thomsons get their way, then every management in Fleet Street will follow their example.

What is needed to beat Thomsons is a workers' occupation at the *Times* backed up by industrial action throughout the print.

However, the unions have organised little action. Instead they rely on putting pressure on the Labour Government to mediate between the unions and the employers. And unless action is taken soon, the pleas for mediators will just become more and more plaintive as the workforce is whittled away.

CLARE RUSSELL

SHIPYARD NATIONALISATION: No workers control but plenty of sackings

THE LATEST draft of British Shipbuilders' corporate plan calls for 12,300 jobs to be cut in merchant shipyards.

Ship repair faces a specially sharp axe. The plan strongly suggests a complete shutdown at Falmouth Shiprepairers. PETER TEBBUTT, prospective Parliamentary candidate for Falmouth and Camborne, says that this shows that nationalisation in the shipyards has had nothing in common with socialism.

SINCE STEEL nationalisation Labour governments have been notable for their complete lack of enthusiasm for public ownership of any sort, let alone under workers' control. It is a rare occasion for a Labour leader to demand the implementation of Clause IV of our constitution.

Over and over again Labour in office shows a distinct leaning towards capitalist organisations. Ministerial advisers and appointees are drawn from the ranks of the business and professional classes. Little wonder that the aspirations of the working classes never reach fulfilment.

Capitalism certainly has nothing to fear from a Labour Government, as has so often been stated by the City Editors. Workers in the aircraft, shipbuilding and ship-repair industries perhaps hoped that the past mistakes would not be repeated and a real socialist plan would be drawn up for the running of the three industries. What happened?

A long drawn out legal battle in the House of Lords by various ship repair bosses nearly killed the Bill, and to save it it was agreed to drop the ship REPAIR industry

from public ownership. The Bill then passed, taking into public ownership the aircraft and shipbuilding industry.

Then some of those self-same ship repair bosses turned around and said, 'Please nationalise us'. Now why did they do this? Because they knew that handsome cash compensation was available for their shareholders and for themselves to invest in more lucrative schemes. For some of the bosses good jobs awaited them with British Shipbuilders.

In Falmouth Docks, long neglected, with a minimal amount of investment by its owners - P&O - the old management remained, reinforced recently by a director from another shipbuilding company, Vosper Thornycroft. The only real change in management was that the Chairman, a retired naval captain, ceased 'executive responsibility' one and a half years ago, and retired as Chairman three months ago - on the payroll for 15 months doing nothing?

The workers, on the other hand, have had to face 200 redundancies. Members of the AUEW, T&GWU, EETPU, UCATT and the Boilermakers' Society have all been told to work harder or else face the sack. A recent visit from Junior Minister Les Huckfield brought no reprieve from this autocratic management, in spite of workers telling him that they had no faith in the old P&O bosses who had allowed their livelihood to be threatened by better equipped yards abroad.

It is little wonder that nationalisation is now a dirty word, when it is not run on socialist principles, but becomes merely a form of state capitalism. Socialists demand that a Labour Government introduces meaningful socialist policies which will give workers FULL control of the industries in which they work.

Road haulage: 35 hours is a must

by
SIMON TEMPLE
[TGWU]

5000 LORRY DRIVERS working for private sector road haulage firms in Scotland struck from Wednesday January 3rd. They have been joined by drivers in many areas of England.

The strike is over a claim for a basic wage of £65, a 35 hour week, a fourth week's holiday, £2 a day meal allowance, and £8.50 lodging allowance for nights away from home. It was due for settlement on January 1st.

The employers' organisation, the Road Haulage Association, has replied with a uniform offer of 5% throughout the country. Faced with this insult, the Scottish drivers voted to strike and called on colleagues in England and Wales to join them.

The T&GWU has made the strike official in Scotland, but has so far advised everyone

else to stay at work. There is no doubt that the strike combined with the lifting of Government sanctions will lead the employers to increase their offer.

But even the full claim would not put real wages back to the 1974 level, and there is a danger that the shorter hours and longer holidays will be sacrificed in negotiations. The £65 claim has been kept separate from the demand for a 35 hour week, which suggests that the 35 hours will only be used as a bargaining counter.

But with unemployment still at 1.3 million and likely to rise this year, it has to be a vital part of any claim. And in road transport it needs to be combined with a campaign against the huge amounts of overtime worked in the industry.

The first stage in that campaign has to be a united national fight for the full claim. We will need support from other trade unionists in the form of blacking all deliveries normally made by striking drivers.

STRIKING JOURNALISTS LAUNCH OWN PAPERS

POLICE ARE visiting the homes of striking members of the National Union of Journalists, a rally of chapel activists was told on January 2nd. Mike Jempson, who works for a local newspaper in Rochford, Essex, reported that there was clear evidence of collusion between management and police to victimise strikers.

To date, more than 30 journalists have been arrested on picket lines nationally since the strike began in early December. But the strikers show no signs of weakness. On its own or with the help of solidarity action from printworkers, the NUJ's first-ever national strike has shut down a large number of local newspapers in England and Wales. Papers which are still coming out are generally sickly-looking things, with hardly enough news to cover the reduced number of pages.

And in several areas the commercial product is facing a new sort of competition. For striking journalists are producing their own papers - and often enough winning the popularity battle, despite the lack of money, plant, and distribution networks.

What makes the strikers' product popular is the fact

that, besides explaining the journalists' own dispute, the 'anti-papers' often carry stories in support of other workers, too. The truth at last!

English provincial journalists are determined to keep on fighting until they win at least as much as their Scottish and Northern Irish colleagues have recently done: between 14 and 19%, which has made Callaghan's 5% guideline look silly once again. The NUJ's claim for England and Wales is £20 across the board and an hour off the day. It can be won.

Printworkers' leaders, in particular the NGA, must call upon their members to respect NUJ picket lines on the papers where production is still going on; inside the NUJ itself preparations must be made to extend the strike into areas such as Fleet Street, magazines, and books, which are not yet directly affected.

And money is urgently needed - NUJ strikers are getting nothing except discretionary hardship payments. Donations to NUJ-NS Dispute Fund, Acorn House, 314 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1X 8DP.

JAMES RYAN