

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

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CLAIMANTS AND STRIKERS 10p

The issues at Labour Conference

THE RANK and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy is campaigning right up to the crucial votes at the Blackpool Labour Party conference: 900 at the rally in Birmingham, 700 in London, 600 in Manchester, dozens of other meetings.

And whatever the final arithmetic of the votes at Blackpool, one thing is clear from the last few months.

The great majority of the rank and file activists of the Labour Party are solidly for democratic reform. Enough of them are willing to organise and campaign to make sure the fight will continue until that majority is reflected in conference votes.

The right wing are not to be underestimated. By manoeuvring with the block votes, they may be able to stop some reforms this year. They may be able to shift the balance of the Labour Party National Executive (NEC) and open a campaign to split and witch-hunt the left.

Purges

If the Left relaxes its effort or loses its nerve, they can bury Labour activists in a welter of undemocratic devices: indirect elections and councillors' seats for the NEC, purges, aggregate membership meetings to decide important Party issues

BY JOHN BLOXAM

by who is best at busing in paper members.

Last time Labour conference took a decision threatening the Labour leaders' role as safe, conservative, consensus politicians — on nuclear disarmament, in 1960 — William Rodgers and his friends used all the tricks they knew to get that decision flouted and reversed. This year Labour conference may vote not only for rejecting Cruise missiles and (perhaps) for unilateral nuclear disarmament again, but also for measures to make sure that conference decision binds a future Labour government.

The right wing's fury will be doubled — all the more so since the stakes are much higher, with world capitalism wallowing in a slump and a big military build-up under way.

Control

But if the Left stays organised, united, vigilant, and on the offensive, then the Right can't win. Because they can't dissolve the Party membership and elect a new one. They can't dissolve Labour's working-class base and replace it with a new army of

enthusiasts for the mixed economy, Cruise missiles, and wage controls.

Five major democratic demands have been defined by the Rank and File Mobilising Committee:

- Defence of mandatory re-selection as decided by the 1979 Labour conference.
- Democratic election of the Labour Party leader.
- NEC control of the Manifesto.
- Make the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) accountable.
- Defend the NEC against right-wing attempts at restructuring.

The right wing has given up for now on its plans to re-

snap the NEC. On mandatory re-selection, only a technical amendment is necessary at Blackpool to square last year's decision — though probably the right wing will try to seize the chance to re-open the whole issue.

On election of the leader and control of the manifesto, the votes seem finely balanced.

Accountability of the PLP is being raised seriously for the first time this year.

One other issue at Conference will be crucial for democracy: several union leaders will be trying to reintroduce

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by CHEUNG SIU MING

"CUTTING CASH to boroughs like Lambeth may satisfy the Minister's quest for revenge against councillors who dare to disagree with him", declared Lambeth Labour Council leader Ted Knight. "But the only people who suffer in the end are the people who live and work here. It is an act of sheer vindictiveness, announced by Mr Heseltine before Parliament has even given him the legal powers to carry it through".

In order to clamp down on so-called 'over-spending' councils, the Tories "put at risk our services for the elderly, the mentally and physically handicapped, and our children", added Knight.

Ken Livingstone, a Labour councillor from another penal-

Lambeth calls Nov.1 conference to organise

Strike to

ised borough, Camden, told SO: "If Camden was to do what Heseltine wants, then there would be a cut in staff and services of 15%".

As well as chopping £21 million from 14 selected councils, Tory minister Heseltine has also cut £200 million across the board.

But there is more to these cuts than Tory arrogance and

THE SORT of rate increases required to meet Heseltine's cuts would be so large as to be virtually out of the question. Similarly, the cuts which would have to be made would be far from cosmetic, and would hit home helps and meals on wheels.

The best chance of defeating Heseltine comes from the industrial strength of the trade unions. The November 1st conference provides us with the best opportunity to launch such a fight.

But the unions are more likely to take a stand if they can see that the local councils are also willing to state that they will take a stand on no rent increases, no supplementary rate increases and no cuts, and no reduction in recruitment or manpower levels in the council.

It appears that in fact there is no problem about accumulating a deficit until next April, and no problem about borrowing money until then either. So it is possible to put the crunch off until then.

But if industrial action is not mobilised on a large scale by then, the same dilemmas as last year will face Labour-controlled councils, only they'll be ten times more difficult as rates increases and cuts will have to be very much more drastic.

It is essential that Labour councils don't do the Tories' dirty work for them, and that whatever tactics seem locally applicable are used to make it as difficult as possible for the Tories to make any cuts, be they in services or living standards.

NEIL TURNER,
Lambeth Labour councillor

stop the cuts

meanness. They are a deliberate attempt to beat down any Labour council that shows any sign at all of resisting the cuts.

The penalised councils will need huge rate increases if they try to make good the penalty that way. And if they continue, then they will be penalised again and again, until (very soon) further rate

Camden has been hit the worst of all the boroughs. We have no spare money. It means a cut of £5 million or more, or a supplementary rate increase of something like £1 a week.

If Camden was to do what Heseltine wants, then there would be a cut in staff and services of 15%.

As I said at the London Labour Briefing conference in July, it's quite obvious that Heseltine is isolating a few Labour-controlled boroughs to smash them. And he's only been able to do this because all the other councils controlled by Labour have gone along with him and he's been able to concentrate his fire on just three or four.

Since we're in line in Camden for surcharges on the housing budget which will be overspent by £9 million, for a rent freeze that we've had for the past

rises are just impossible. Heseltine is telling the Labour Councils: be local axemen for the Tories, or be crushed.

The November 1st anti-cuts conference called by the labour movement in Lambeth is now more crucial than ever. Many council Labour groups have already backed the conference, and delegates are now coming in from Labour Parties and trade unions.

The conference must call for a bold decision by every section of the labour movement to break cooperation with the Tories, and plan all-out industrial and political action to stop the Tory blitz.

★ More on the
November 1st conference: page 4

three years, and for the money we've paid to the manual council workers, I think we might as well go for the whole lot.

The conference called by Ted Knight on November 1st is very important, as it's there that we'll appeal to the trade unions for industrial action to fight Heseltine. We must put that to the delegates at that conference.

The trouble is that very few of the councils that have been singled out have strong leaderships. At the moment they're just keeping their heads down until they think of something to do that won't rock the boat too much.

If we can get the support and commitment from the unions, then I think that industrial action will force Heseltine to back down.

KEN LIVINGSTONE,
Camden and GLC Labour councillor



Where we stand

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

Branch, MI5, etc.), public accountability, etc.

- ... Free abortion and contraception on demand. Women's equal right to work, and full equality for women.
- ... Against attacks on gays by the State: abolish all laws which discriminate against lesbians and gay men; for the right of the gay community to organise and to affirm their stance publicly.
- ... 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 should get full support from the British labour movement for their strikes, struggles and armed combat against the white supremacist regime. South African goods and services should be blacked.
- ... It is essential to achieve the fullest democracy in the labour movement. Automatic reselection 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.

Socialist Organiser aims to help build a class-struggle left wing in the trade unions and Labour Party, based on a revolutionary socialist platform. Socialist Organiser supporters' groups are being organised in many towns and cities.

Socialist Organiser is sponsored by the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory.

NAMIBIA THE GREAT URANIUM ROBBERY

by MANDY WILLIAMS

ON SATURDAY 27th September Preston Trades Council and the Lancashire Association of Trades Councils are calling a conference to 'Stop the British robbery of Namibian uranium'.

Most of the uranium imported from Namibia is unloaded and processed in the Preston area. The conference will be addressed by a member of the National Union of Seamen and by the SWAPO Secretary for Labour, John Ya Otto.

On November 8th, a national demonstration in Preston will raise the same demand. It is also important that the issue of uranium imports from Namibia is raised in relevant unions (the Campaign against the Namibian Uranium Contract can supply model resolutions) and in all Labour Party branches.

In 1966 the United Nations withdrew South Africa's mandate to govern Namibia; but the apartheid state still rules there. The issue is due to arise again at the UN soon.

But South Africa's consolidation of its illegal occupation has been given substantial if tacit support by the major capitalist powers.

The largest investor in Namibia is Britain — particularly in the Rossing uranium mine, which supplies nearly half Britain's needs. The workers, subject to all the horrors of the apartheid and contract labour systems imposed by South Africa, live and work in appalling conditions.

Although strikes are illegal for Africans, and are met with

vicious repression by guards and security police, workers continue to strike all over the country.

The liberation movement SWAPO and the National Union of Namibian Workers (which is closely associated with it) call on "our brothers and sisters in the labour movement internationally to step up solidarity action in support of the struggle of the people of Namibia, for an end to the illegal occupation of our country by racist South Africa". They call for blacking of South African goods and ships.

In 1973 and 1976, Labour Party annual conference voted unanimously for an end to the contract with Rio Tinto Zinc for Namibian uranium. In 1974, Callaghan, remarking that he considered the South African occupation 'unlawful but not illegal', justified his government's contract in these words: "South Africa remains the de facto administering authority [and] we do not accept any obligation to take active measures... to stop commercial or industrial relations".

The contract between the UK Atomic Energy Authority and RTZ was originally authorised by Benn as Minister of Technology in 1968. The Labour Cabinet in 1976 rejected cancellation of the contract, and again agreed to renew it, despite the clear Labour Party policy.

* Model resolution: from CANUC, c/o 188 North Gower St, London NW1 [01-388 5539]. Conference: 10-4, AUEW House, Preston. Demo: Assemble 12 noon, Polytechnic Car Park, Fylde Rd, Preston.

by ANDREW HORNUNG

Iran/Iraq war explodes

THE SIMMERING conflict between Iran and Iraq has exploded into full-scale war. The Iraqis have crossed into the oil-producing region of Khuzestan and have bombed Teheran airport, while the Iranians have made bombing raids on a number of Iraqi towns.

Iran and Iraq have traditionally been rivals in the area. Since the overthrow of the Shah 18 months ago, hostility has increased. The Iraqi rulers, part of a minority of Sunni Arabs in the country made up mainly of Shi'ites and Kurds, feared the impact Khomeini's militant Shi'ite regime in Iran would have on their own power. The Arab regions of Iran have been protesting against Persian domination.

And the Iraqis have given aid to the Kurds in Iran, who are fighting the Iranian



government (while at the same time repressing the Kurds within their own borders).

Until recently Iran was the main prop for American influence in the region, while Iraq had close relations with the USSR. The Iraqis are now moving away from their links with the USSR (while still maintaining their treaties), and are seeking to take over

the role of pro-American policeman in the area played by Iran before the fall of the Shah.

The Americans have begun to supply the Iraqi navy, while the Iraqis have gone out of their way to convince the USA of their friendship (for example, by increasing oil production in 1979 by 40% to make up for the cut in production by Iran).

The Iraqi attack on Iran was doubtless planned with one eye on American reactions.

Whoever wins the war, the losers will include the large national minorities in both Iran and Iraq, particularly

the Kurds. They will be given no chance to decide their own future, but will be pawns in any settlement (as the Kurds were in 1975 when the Shah came to the last agreement with the Iraqi regime).

Neither Khomeini nor the Iraqi rulers are willing to grant the basic right of self-determination to the national minorities in the area.

So far both Carter and the Russian leadership have proclaimed their neutrality in the war, but the importance of the region (both strategically and because of its vital role in supplying the West's oil) makes it possible that they could step in if the war looked like seriously destabilising the area.

Socialists must fight to ensure that this war does not become an excuse for either the USA or the Soviet Union to intervene militarily.

The war between Iran and Iraq is a war between two reactionary nationalist regimes. The outcome can only be further misery for the masses and the national minorities in both countries.

explanation is that the Moscow bureaucrats are seriously considering military intervention, in the immediate period, as perhaps the only certain way of crushing the Polish workers' struggle against their Stalinist overlords.

For the Polish bureaucracy, despite the significant concessions it has been forced to give to the workers, has not managed to pacify their anger and sense of new-found freedom. In any case, it is scarcely possible that they could live with an independent working class movement. The ruling bureaucracy is a privileged social formation whose position in society depends on a monopoly of political power and social initiative.

Strikes continue unabated, the new free trade unions are recruiting fast despite the many difficulties and obstructions which the bureaucrats are putting in their path, and continual appeals to increased work discipline and order are ignored. So are the threats of reprisals from Kania, the new General Secretary of the Polish Communist Party.

Have the Russian bureaucrats lost faith in their Polish clones to control the situation? If so, military intervention may not be so far off.

RUSSIA: HANDS OFF POLAND!

by ALEXIS CARRAS

ACCORDING TO news reports, there have been unusual troop movements in the eastern and western border regions of Poland.

These troop movements have, it seems, nothing to do with the current Warsaw Pact manoeuvres.

At the same time, the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, in an editorial in Pravda, has abruptly ended its two-week silence on events in Poland, and has ominously warned of Western influence and infiltration within Poland, supposedly trying to strengthen the 'anti-socialist' opposition in the country.

Given that imperialist activity in Poland is negligible, that the working class has

struck fear over the last three months not only in the bureaucrats of the Eastern bloc, but also among the most astute sections of the capitalist ruling class in the West, this means, of course, that for Moscow the 'anti-socialist elements' and 'imperialists' are the Polish working class itself.

This propaganda barrage, the accusations, the labelling of the Polish rebels and dissidents, and the linking of them with talk of imperialist intervention, is all ominously like the propaganda put out in preparation for the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. It is also exactly like the (lying) explanation used to justify the occupation of Afghanistan last December.

The propaganda framework is already set for invasion. The fact that the Polish people and even the Polish army would almost certainly

fight the invaders may yet make them draw back.

But a very worrying aspect of the Russian statement is the claim that the West is trying to 're-draw the map of Europe'. For the Russians this is simply another way of saying that the imperialists are not respecting the agreement made towards the end of the Second World War which resulted in the division of Europe into Eastern and Western blocs. The West, the Moscow bureaucrats imply, is threatening the buffer zone which the Russians consider as the cornerstone of their foreign policy.

In fact there is not the slightest shred of evidence for such a claim. The Western ruling class views the possibility of a violation of this most fundamental carve-up of territories and people with as much fear and uncertainty as the bureaucrats. The only

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OCTOBER 10 DEMONSTRATE!



FIGHT THE TORIES!

Picket of Tory Party Conference called by the 'Defend Our Unions' Committee and the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions

Coaches/trains:
Liverpool: 11.30pm 9th October, Pierhead.
Cardiff: 6.30am Central Station.
Birmingham: 8am, Hall of Memory.
London: train leaves Victoria Station 10am.
£3 return tickets from Right to Work Campaign 265a Seven Sisters Rd, London N4.

SATURDAY 25 OCTOBER. Labour CND & National Organisation of Labour Students. Briefing Conference on peace, 10-6, Imperial College Union, Prince Consort Rd, London SW7. Registration £1 c/o 17 Elm Grove, London SW13.

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SOCIALIST ORGANISER

'A left wing that really fights'

WITH ISSUE no.24, at the beginning of September, Socialist Organiser went fortnightly and launched a campaign to build Socialist Organiser groups as local activist organisations of the Marxist left in the labour movement.

In most areas there was already a nucleus of comrades — Workers' Action supporters and others — regularly selling Socialist Organiser

and organising in the labour movement. At the very least, the new drive to set up SO groups has meant regularising meetings, extending activity, and drawing in a few extra comrades.

In many areas, the idea has caught the imagination much more widely, multiplying the effective forces round SO two, five, or ten times over, organising leftingers in the labour

movement much more coherently than ever before.

After Labour Party conference the need for a vigorous Marxist left will be clearer than ever. The SO groups will stand or fall on whether they expand their membership and activity to fill that need.

These are some of the first reports we got from round the country on the launching of the new SO groups.

What we're about

ROSE DALE — secretary of the Mayfield Tenants' Association, on Islington's largest estate, a long-standing Labour Party member, and treasurer of the local anti-cuts campaign — explained why she joined the Islington Socialist Organiser group.

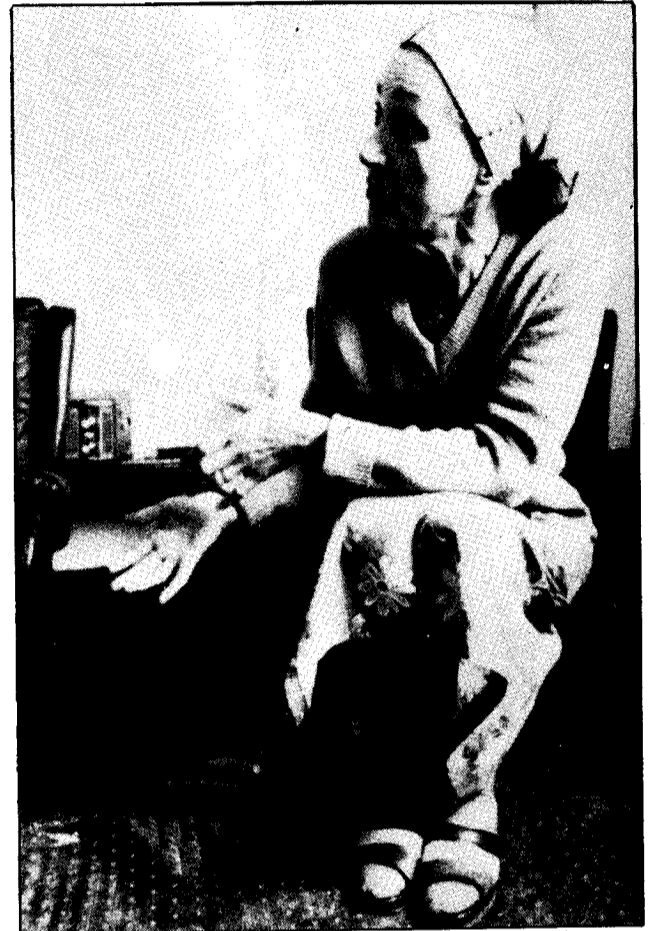
'You're always hearing how we've got all these left-wing councillors in Islington — but how left wing are they really?'

When the cuts campaign had a march recently, only two councillors turned up to give us their support. How do they think we're going to get true socialism — better housing, decent services, hospitals, and so on — if they won't come out and really fight?'

The Tories and the other side in the Labour Party, the right wingers, are walking all over the people of this borough.

If the councillors who call themselves left wing aren't going to come out from under their blankets and fight along with the cuts campaign, then we'll have to put them out and elect a real left wing.'

It was the same when we set up the women's section. This councillor said



she'd 'had children and managed perfectly well' — but she went to Cambridge, she's got a degree, and she's got money. If you're an ordinary working mum it's a different story. There's no real equality for women. And that's what we're about — setting up a real left wing which is fighting for these things.'

SUCCESS IN STOKE

15 PEOPLE agreed to join the Stoke Socialist Organiser group at an initial meeting on Wednesday 17th September.

Paul Cooper, introducing the discussion, said that both *Militant* and SWP were sectarian in how they related to the labour movement — the SWP in refusing to work in the Labour Party and combat reformism, the *Militant* by refusing to recognise any working class action outside the Labour Party and the official trade union structure.

The Socialist Organiser group would give a practical alternative to both sorts of sectarianism: while focusing on the struggle at the point of production as fundamental, it would also take the fight

into the Labour Party and work to turn the Labour Party outwards.

Some women comrades who had been in Women's Voice were specially concerned about the problem of sectarianism, and asked how we would stop it arising in the SO group. Arthur Bough replied that the Workers' Action comrades would be throwing all their resources into building the SO group on a non-sectarian basis, channelling all their day-to-day activity into that framework.

Jason Hill of the League for Socialist Action said he totally agreed with the perspectives put forward, and would be able to sell more than the minimum 6 copies

of each SO.

A public meeting was set for Friday 3rd October, to launch the SO group publicly, and everyone agreed to see three or four contacts to invite them to that meeting. Lambeth councillor Neil Turner will be speaking.

Detailed plans for future activity have been left to a future meeting, but some possibilities were discussed: industrial bulletins, an unemployed bulletin, work in CND and the anti-fascist committee, and of course work in the Labour Party.

Everyone was enthusiastic about the success of this venture in organising the left in Stoke. As several comrades commented: 'We've got to make it work'.



THE CRUCIAL ISSUES

ALAN MARSHALL, chairman of the Plessey TASS office committee, will be joining the Nottingham Socialist Organiser group:

'I would say that there are three issues which are crucial to be taken up by Socialist Organiser. The first is youth unemployment, because if we

don't catch them they will join the fascists.

Then there is nuclear disarmament.

And, finally — the Employment Act, because the Labour Party leadership is so much at odds with the membership on this issue

BUILDING IN THE WORKPLACES

BASINGSTOKE's Socialist Organiser group is determined to build real roots in the town's workplaces. The group's ten members, who include two union convenors in local factories, have had two meetings devoted to a detailed discussion on how to organise the left in the unions and fight the bureaucracy.

The Socialist Organiser group will now produce a regular bulletin at Basingstoke's largest factory — Lansing Bagnalls — taking over the work of the long-

established Workers' Action bulletin. In addition, the group will take charge of the Socialist Organiser Labour Party constituency bulletin.

The group decided also that political education must form an important part of all the meetings, preparing members to argue the issues in the Labour Party and the unions.

Group members have made a total financial commitment to the paper of some £20 a month.

Welcome changes

MIKE BROWN, a NALGO shop steward at Lothian Regional Council, has joined the Edinburgh Socialist Organiser group:

'Over the last two years I've been drawn more and more to the politics of Socialist Organiser.

It's vital that our class doesn't repeat the mistakes of 1970-74, when we got rid of the Tories only to be defeated by the election of the pro-capitalist Callaghan Government.

On the other hand, I don't believe a left-wing Labour Government can

implement socialism, as some contributors to Socialist Organiser seem to imply.

Another problem with Socialist Organiser in the past is that it has been biased towards Labour Party work, whereas even for immediate aims such as democratising the Labour party you can't get anywhere without a strong rank and file movement in the unions.

I welcome the change of Socialist Organiser in this direction.'

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To make **Socialist Organiser** a real campaigning paper that can organise the left in the movement, it needs its own organised activist support — and money.

Local supporters' groups are being established in most major towns to build a real base for the paper.

Supporters are being asked to undertake to sell a minimum of 6 papers an issue and to contribute at least £1 a month (20p for unwaged). So becoming a supporter helps build our circulation and gives the paper a firmer financial base.

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CLP

Trade Union

THEY TOOK down their picketing hut over the weekend' (20th September), said the depressed voice on the phone. 'It's all over, really'.

Once the Area Health Authority had succeeded — with the help of masses of police, oxy-acetylene cutters, a crane and scab ambulances screaming at top speed through the picket lines — in forcibly removing patients to other hospitals, the staff at St Benedict's and their supporters had to concede defeat in their ten-month battle to keep the hospital open.



Staff had occupied St Benedict's geriatric hospital in Tooting last November after Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth AHA announced plans to close it and disperse patients to other hospitals.

They decided to occupy not just to save their own jobs (the AHA had promised alternative, though not always suitable, jobs to the staff). They wanted to halt the run-down of hospital services to the local community, and they feared the effect of any move on the patients.

'Patients will die', they said. 'Some of them are in their nineties and St Ben's is the only home some of them have known for 30 years'.

But what are the deaths of a few old people or the distress of fragile patients being parted from those who have cared for them for years and the surroundings they have come to call home? How can this weigh, in the minds of health service administrators and the Tory government who support the closure, against a supposed £1.5 million saving?

The callousness of the AHA can best be gauged by the way they extracted agreement for the move from patients' relatives. They were given the ultimatum: either agree to the move, or we'll send the patients home and you can look after them yourselves.

But many of the relatives

Dumping the old to balance the books

are themselves elderly and in no position to look after another very old and sick person.

It's all over, the gates are clear, the access unimpeded. It's a far cry from last week's scene of noise and chaos, with pickets milling round or being carried off bodily by police, abuse and rotten eggs flying at the scab ambulances, and a barricade of masonry, broken machinery and old wheelchairs behind the hospital gates.

It was Tuesday 9th September that the AHA chose to begin the confrontation in earnest. The London Ambulance Service was refusing to cooperate in the removal of patients to other hospitals. So the AHA brought in a private ambulance firm, Junesco, to bust through the picket line and forcibly carry off six sick old ladies.

The Occupation Committee responded by stepping up the pickets and padlocking the gates. The AHA sought and got injunctions against seven of the workers inside, preventing the removal of patients or taking part in the picketing. The picket line became a battle line in earnest.

Over the next ten days, 23 pickets were arrested, ambulances had their windows smashed and tyres slashed, and the barricade of rubble behind the gates grew ever more monumental. A smashed-up car appeared, to block the way.

On one occasion a crane had to be brought in to remove concrete blocks piled up

in the night, and oxyacetylene cutters to break the chains on the gate.

There were unintentional flashes of comedy amidst the shouting and scuffling. The sight of John Lusby, hospital administrator, grim-faced in shirt-sleeves, personally sawing through the chains on the gate and, assisted by police, heaving aside lumps of masonry, was bizarrely re-

miniscent of a garden fete opening. Or there was the time a fire engine drew up and the pickets edged closer, fearing it had come to smash through the gates, only to be presented with a donation to the occupation fund and offers of support.

But despite the solidarity, the goodwill of local residents, the spirit of militancy and fierce resistance of the pickets, the AHA achieved their aim of moving most of the patients out. May they get some grim satisfaction from the extra £1.5 million. Let them go fawning to their Tory paymasters. 'Didn't we do well!'



The frail elderly people whose welfare they so callously disregarded may never recover from the shock of it. The bitterness of hospital workers, relatives, and local people will not be easily forgotten.

Let the magnificent example of their militancy and their concern for the weakest and most helpless victims of these savage cuts be a spur to the whole labour movement to settle accounts with the people who make the cuts. And quickly. Lives depend on it.



Pickets at St Benedict's try to stop a private ambulance

NO SQUARE LEGS IN LOTHIAN

LOTHIAN regional councillors have put themselves on the firing line by instructing regional officials not to take part in 'Exercise Square Leg', the Civil Defence part of the massive NATO mobilisation, Crusader 80.

Amid cries of protest from the *Evening News* and *Scotsman*, the Labour group decided that Lothian should not be a 'war zone HQ', and Mr Robert Peggie, the chief executive, has been instructed not to act as 'home defence controller' for the exercise, due to start on Saturday 20th.

At a meeting on Friday 19th, the Labour group maintained its position even though judges had granted Tory councillors an interim interdict outlawing the decision.

The councillors' stand followed a decision by the regional Labour Party to support local initiatives for unilateral nuclear disarmament, to mobilise for the October 26th demonstration against nuclear weapons, and to investigate the emergency provisions for local government in the event of nuclear attack.

The resolution was originally proposed by SO supporters in Edinburgh Pentlands CLP, and Pentlands has also recently passed an emergency resolution for a campaign to support the Region's stand and to spread their action to other Labour councils.

Pentlands and Edinburgh Central CLPs will be sending delegates to a coordinating meeting called by the local 'Lothian Against the War Drive' campaign. But the Edinburgh District Party has refused.

We must argue for local campaigns to root themselves firmly in the labour movement — and for the labour movement to actively involve itself in their development. The District and Regional Labour Parties should be organising their branches in mass leafletting and activity against the war drive.

JOHN McDONALD

Lothian Labour group stated:

'The Labour group are very conscious of the lessons learnt in the 1930s and persuaded that preparation for war increased the likelihood of war. They support wholeheartedly the policy of the Labour Party conference in opposing increased spending on arms and weapons of war.'

'They see participation in any way in Crusader 80 as falling into the category of war preparations, one of whose objectives is to produce in the public consciousness an acceptability of militarism in response to threats real or imagined.'

'The Labour group found it ironic that at a time when the Secretary of State for Scotland is poised to impose further cuts on personal services such as education, social work, transport, services for the elderly... the Government has embarked on a programme of vastly increased public expenditure on the armed services and armaments generally.'

LAMBETH CONFERENCE Preparing a General Strike against the cuts

A LAMBETH labour movement committee has worked out a draft statement to be put to the anti-cuts conference on November 1st. Amendments to the statement can be discussed at the conference, but must be submitted by October 17th.

After surveying the Tory onslaught, the statement declares that rate increases 'can no longer fill the gap between the funds necessary and the reduced rate support grant... The impact on the working class cannot be ignored. At a time when unemployment stands at two million, repeated rate increases are more than many working class families can afford'.

And a rate rise policy 'will not necessarily prevent cuts, because it will be effectively ruled out by penalty clauses in the Local Government Bill... [and] it will not save jobs in direct labour and architect departments'.

The statement discusses the policy of no cuts and no rate increases: '... councils would face bankruptcy, prompted by an early withdrawal of short term loans... appointed receivers would make cuts. This tactic, to have any success, would require a similar decision by a number of Labour councils throughout the country with the full support of local authority trade unions'.

It also considers the tactic of resignation. 'This is a decision

by Labour councils not to make any cuts and to resign in protest. What then happens is open to debate, but in itself resignation does not stop the cuts being made'. The statement calls for 'joint action between councillors and trade unionists with the objective of bringing local government to a halt until the government either agrees to provide the money that is needed, or resigns'.

Labour councils will be asked to take a stand by undertaking: 'no cuts in services and jobs; no rent and supplementary rate rises this financial year; no sale of council houses or housing land; no running down of direct labour'.

Town hall unions will be asked to 'consider the following course of action. Branches and shop stewards' committees will prepare their members by bulletins and workplace meetings to take industrial action in January 1981, including strikes and occupations of workplaces, and invite the support of other public and private sector unions'. Unions are also asked to refuse to cooperate with cuts.

Socialist Organiser supporters and other activists in the movement who have consistently argued against rate rises and for preparing confrontation against the Tories have now seen their views confirmed by the turn of events. Only last year, the poli-

cy of no cuts and no rate rises was dismissed as suicidal by a large majority of councillors in Lambeth, yet now the statement questions only the details of timing and of the number of councils necessary to have a fighting chance of success.

But there is a hitch. The statement hinges the whole cuts fight on a general strike by council workers in January 1981. The unvoiced let-out clause is that if the unions do not meet this arbitrary deadline, then the Labour councils will go ahead, include cuts and rate rises in next spring's budget — and claim they have no alternative!

Last summer Lambeth Council tried to impose cuts, backing down only after strong protest from the local Labour Parties. This spring the Council pushed through rent rises and more big rate rises.

All that would be old history — if Lambeth Council were now really proposing to go all out against the Tories, with no second thoughts and escape clauses. But as it is, many trade unionists must suspect that Lambeth Council is 'doing a Gormley' — making an all-or-nothing call to action which provides excuses for all Labour councils to back down later on. (In 1972-3 miners' president Joe Gormley avoided a miners' strike by declaring that only a general strike would be

worthwhile).

And at the same time as the statement goes out, calling on all Labour councils to refuse to sell council houses, Lambeth Council leaders are floating the idea of a 'slow' cave-in on this very issue!

This can only reduce the weight and credibility of the statement's call for industrial action.

If the Labour councils call on council workers to strike — as they should — then the council workers must be able to call on the Labour councillors to put themselves on the line, too.

We need an all-out offensive against the Tories, with every section of the movement throwing in its full weight. Socialist Organiser supporters in Lambeth have worked out amendments to the draft statement in that spirit. We hope many Labour Parties and union branches will sponsor these amendments.

Cheung Siu Ming

THE AMENDMENT suggested by Lambeth Socialist Organiser supporters would add the following call to action:

'This conference calls on trade union organisations at all levels [from the TUC General Council to branches and shop steward committees] to pledge themselves to and campaign for all-out strikes and occupations of workplaces as soon as any Labour council faces receivers or commissioners, or is surchar-

ged, for taking a stand against the cuts.'

'The fightback may centre around the public sector unions at first, but conference calls on other workers, especially the strong sections like the miners and engineers, to join this fight to force the Tory government to back down on the cuts or get out.'

'Conference also calls on Labour councils and Labour Parties, in cooperation with local anti-cuts committees and tenants' associations, to campaign for rent and rate strikes as soon as any Labour council is removed or surcharged for taking a stand against the cuts'.

They also add the following to the appeal for trade union action:

'A policy of no cover for vacancies and a campaign against voluntary redundancies and 'natural wastage'. Create and defend jobs by stopping overtime and fighting for a shorter working week'.

And they insist: 'A national fightback is necessary to force the Tories to back down, but this should not mean staking everything on a pre-determined date, or holding back immediate local action. Conference calls on all activists to campaign for complete non-cooperation with the Tory cuts, for full Labour Party and union support for local anti-cuts fights, and for Labour MPs to assist the fight against the Tories by filibustering and obstructing the Tories' work in Parliament'.

For the full text of the suggested amendments, write to Cheung Siu Ming, c/o Socialist Organiser, 5 Stamford Hill, London N16.

Reselection in practice

In the Greater London Council elections next May Labour will have a very good chance of winning back control from the Tories (who have been in power in London since 1977). Selection of Labour candidates is now about half-way through — and the left has been making a big push. KEN LIVINGSTONE, who has played a leading role on the left in the present GLC Labour Group, reports.

THE 48 GREATER London Council (GLC) Labour candidates so far selected are shown in order of how safe for Labour the seats are (based on 1979 General Election results). The total number of GLC seats is 92, and at the 1973 election Labour gained 57, including all those listed above. So far three sitting members have been defeated and 16 reselected.

Five ex-members from the 1973 administration have failed in their attempts to be selected again, and five have succeeded.

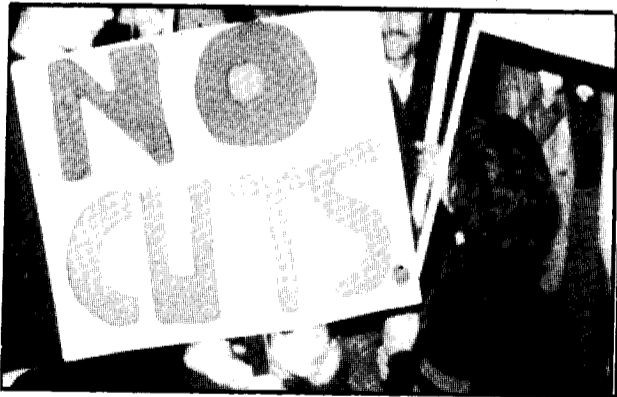
Given that the outcome in the remaining seats does not differ greatly from those selected already in terms of left and right, then the next Labour Group will represent a complete break with the past at County Hall. Of those candidates already selected, 50% are broadly on the left, 25% in the centre, and 25% on the right. In the 1973 Group this left-right balance was almost exactly reversed.

The shift within the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) Labour group should be even more marked. With the 8 borough council representatives on ILEA backing the present leadership, it had not been expected that the new GLC members on ILEA would alter the balance within the group, but against all the odds the bulk of left gains have been in inner London, and it is now almost certain that the left will have a majority of 2 or 3 within the new group.

The decision of the ILEA to cut the education budget by 4.2% has clearly played a part in this shift, as five of those defeated at selection meetings had voted for the cuts and 3 others were only narrowly re-selected.

The debate on accountability within the Party has also had an impact, and a majority of those selected have a firm commitment to implement the manifesto which conference will vote on, on the 17th and 18th of October.

They will need the support of the whole movement if that commitment to the manifesto is to overcome the opposition of the government, chief officers, and the CLV supporters within our own Labour Group.



Left gains for GLC

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| *Newham S: Tom Jenkinson | *Holborn... Charlie Rossi |
| *Stepney... John Branagan | **Hayes & Harlington... John McDonnell |
| **Bermondsey: G. Nicholson | Wood Green... Mike Ward |
| *Newham NW... A. Edwards | Feltham & Heston... P. Pitt |
| *Peckham... Harvey Hinds | **Erith & Crayford... Elgar Handy |
| **Hackney C... John Carr | Brent S... Iltyd Harrington |
| *Woolwich E: Mair Garside | *Hackney S... M. Morgan |
| *Bethnal Green: A. Bramall | *Tottenham: A. McIntosh |
| *Newham NE... John Wilson | Battersea N: Gladys Dimson |
| Battersea S: Deirdre Wood | *Deptford... Alex McKay |
| *Lambeth C... Paul Moore | *Southall... Yvonne Sieve |
| *Dagenham... Harry Kay | *Barking... John Ward |
| *St Pancras N... Anne Sofer | *Vauxhall... Bryn Davies |
| *Islington S: Frances Morrell | *Brent E... Norman Howard |
| *Islington C: Simon Turney | **Tooting... Tony Banks |
| **Leyton... Denise Luinberg | Walthamstow: Paul Boateng |
| Hammersmith N... D. Wetzell | |
- **= previous member defeated; *= previous member re-selected.



Prentice, Taverner... who will be next?

Labour's 'exit'-ists

by DAVE RUSSELL

RECENT MEDIA reports have made great play about the involvement of "groups and tendencies" within the Labour Party. Little has been said though about the activities of the Social Democratic Alliance, the self-proclaimed "moderate" organisation in our ranks.

The SDA was founded in the summer of 1975 and claimed direct descent from Gaitskell's 'Campaign for Democratic Socialism'. Founding members include Douglas Eden (treasurer), Stephen Haseler (secretary), Peter Stephenson (chair), and Roger Fox and John O'Grady (vice chair). The organisation's newspaper was the now-defunct *Socialist Commentary*.

The Alliance was welcomed and supported by Reginald Prentice, Roy Jenkins, Neville Sanderson and other right wing MPs. Other Labour Party members who have given support to the SDA were leading members of the last Labour GLC including Sir Reg Goodwin (who signed Haseler's round robin letter supporting Prentice against Newham CLP).

In Southwark, the SDA has recruited, apart from John O'Grady, Leader of Southwark Borough Council, the Chief Whip of Southwark Borough Council, Frank Breen; ex-Councillor Alan Pickett; and Councillor Pat McSorley (Chairman of Southwark General Purpose and Finance Committee), plus others who would not allow their names to be published. Councillor Joy Lee (Deputy Whip) has supported the Alliance.



At the 1975 Labour Party Conference in Blackpool the SDA circulated a document criticising the activities of members of the NEC and claiming that many of them were communists. This included, of all people, Edward Short. The accusation was further made in September 1975 in *The Times* and the *Telegraph*. Here Judith Hart, Michael Foot and Joan Maynard were condemned for writing articles in the *Morning Star*. However, SDA members such as Haseler and Eden have regularly written anti-Labour propaganda for the

Telegraph and the *Mail*. The SDA has attacked Frank Allaun, Lena Jeger, Sidney Weighell (NUR), Danny McGarvey (Boilermakers) and Joan Maynard for writing in *Labour Monthly*, a CP magazine.

The *Telegraph* statement of 1975 concluded by saying that 11 members of the NEC were communists.

In February of this year the SDA announced its intention of fielding its own candidates against 11 members of the NEC. In other words, standing members against the Labour Party. At the same time it has published a manifesto called 'Statement of Aims' for that purpose.

In May last year the SDA started to complain about certain Labour candidates in the Euro-elections. In certain areas it publicly advocated to the electorate that they should not vote Labour in the Euro-election. In South London, Richard Balfe was refused support by a South London CLP when he became candidate for London South Inner.

Before these activities, Peter Stephenson, former SDA chairperson, resigned. It has been reported that he "found it necessary to resign because SDA publications were issued behind his back and he was unable to find out where it was get-

ing its money."

The Labour Party has acted accordingly with this anti-Labour movement body. Roger Fox has been expelled as Leader of the Kensington and Chelsea Labour Group. More recently, both Fox and Haseler have been expelled by Kensington CLP. Similarly, Eden has been expelled by Hornsey CLP.

However, when Ted Heslin was readmitted to the Oxford LP by the NEC recently, Fox, Haseler and Eden were also granted readmittance to their CLPs. It is difficult to see though how they can retain Labour Party membership under the Constitution if they continue along the political path of the SDA.

Before this, both Haseler and Eden were expelled from the GLC Labour Group for their anti-Labour Party activity, although both claim they resigned.

Labour Party members have to consider very carefully what this organisation is up to. An organisation with its own manifesto standing candidates against Labour candidates, an organisation building the much-publicised proposed "new third force" in British Politics.

Reprinted with additions from Peckham Labour News April 1980.

Noble and manly

by TOM CASHMAN

ON Saturday 20th, Johnny Owens was injured so badly in a world bantamweight boxing match in California that latest news, at the time of writing, is that he may well die.

Once again there will be a call to outlaw prizefighting. The case for this will be that it is barbaric for two men to beat each other for the entertainment of others.

Being punched about the head can cause brain damage; and being repeatedly punched about the head over a period of years by men who have devoted their lives to perfecting this art is almost certain to cause damage.

The boxing establishment will reply with promises of an investigation of 'what went wrong' and promises to tighten up in future.

Should the referee have stopped the fight? Maybe. Owen lost his grip during the 9th and never came back.

But what would the reaction of the British sporting public have been?

29 years ago almost to the day, Ruby Goldstein stopped the Turpin-Robinson title fight to save Turpin from further injury — and the British fight fans shouted fix. Goldstein became the dirty cheat who robbed our boy of his chance.

He was condemned — because he allowed his judgment to be influenced by Georgie Flores becoming the third man in 18 months to die in Madison Square Gardens, only a fortnight before.

Prize-fighting has been legal for less than 100 years. The major changes in the rules in that period have all increased the possibility of serious injury to the fighter.

Wrestling has been taken out of the game, even holding has been outlawed. The 30-second break after a knockdown under London Prize Ring rules (actually under those rules more likely to be a throw or a deliberate drop for a rest) was replaced by a count of ten and out.

Gloves protect the brittle bones in the hand against the punishment of being hammered against the skull, and make possible the 15-rounders of modern championship fights. The use of stimulants and coagulants by corner men make it possible to send back a fighter who at one time would have thrown the towel in.

The pro-fight lobby emphasise the physical culture aspect of the game. How anyone who has seen such punchy ex-boxers, prematurely aged, with their twisted hands and deformed faces, doing their roadwork for the chance that still may come, can put this argument, is a mystery.

Those who defend prize-fighting as one of the few ways for a poor boy to make money and get famous would do well to compare their attitude on the opportunities open to poor girls to make their fortune in prostitution and allied trades.

The hypocrisy of the establishment was shown up most clearly by Sugar Ray Robinson.

In 1947 he beat Jimmy Doyle to death in the ring during a welterweight title fight. At the inquest the coroner asked, "Did you intend to get Doyle in trouble?"

Robinson answered: "Mister, it's my business to get him in trouble".

20p

MOBILISE FOR LABOUR DEMOCRACY

The last Labour Government defied the labour movement and made huge cuts in social services and cut living standards. Capitalist chaos take its toll and unemployment rises well above a million.

NEVER AGAIN!

Bulk orders: 20 for £2 plus £1 p&cp.

'SHIRLEY WILLIAMS is right about one thing, perhaps only one thing,' said Eric Heffer last week: 'that this year's conference is the most important in the history of the Labour Party.'

That was the only concession made to the 'Gang of Three' at the London Rally of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy, attended by over 700 people, on Monday 15th.

Heffer explained that there is no split between the fight for democracy in the Party and the fight for socialism against the Tories. It is not a question of constitutional change *versus* political change. The same people who are in the forefront of the fight against the Tories are also calling for the constitutional changes in the Party.

Indeed, Eric Heffer reckoned, it is the moderates in the Party who have landed us with the Tories. 'We had a good moderate Labour Government last time... we fought the last election with a very good moderate manifesto... and what happened? We lost thousands of votes and the very people who lost those thousands of votes themselves *still* tell us we have to carry on being moderate...'

Pointing out that we lose votes when people see that there is no difference between a Labour Government and the Tories that we're supposed to be fighting, Heffer declared that we must have a Labour Government that is seen to be following its policies with the same vigour as the Tories follow theirs. The key to fighting the Tories is the extension of democracy in the Labour

LABOUR DEMOCRACY:

Win or lose at Blackpool The fight goes on!

Party, and even if we don't get it this year, sooner or later we will.

Labour has done many things, he said, but it has not got rid of the capitalist system. This year's Party conference must be the first step towards that. Heffer got his loudest applause when he called for support for the dockers.

by JO THWAITES

Ron Todd, National Organiser of the T&GWU, spoke next (in his personal capacity). We need to show the millions of workers in the labour movement that Labour doesn't just print its policies, but really means what it says. And the only way to show that is to commit Labour Governments to carrying out the policies of the Party.

Frances Morrell spoke for the Rank and File Mobilising Committee. She explained that the RFMC is an alliance of many groups on the left in the Labour Party, noting that the credit for initiating it must go to the SCLV. 'Power is concentrated in the hands of a small Parliamentary elite and this small elite is opposed to the

principles and the policies for which the Party stands. There is no alternative for us but to fight.'

Callaghan is weeping crocodile tears over unemployment, but his own government deliberately made cuts and increased unemployment. This sort of hypocrisy cannot be allowed to go on.

'In 1974 the Labour Party fought an election with a radical manifesto and won; then in 1979, not having implemented a single one of the radical proposals, fought the next election with a right wing manifesto... and lost. But the right wing still keep telling us that we should be moderate!'

To the clicking of TV cameras, Tony Benn spoke next. The campaign for democracy will go on, he said, and will continue until it is 100% successful. For us it is not a question of an arid constitutional wrangle — any more than the struggles of the Chartists or the Suffragettes were constitutional wrangles.

The Polish strikers are fighting for democracy, and no-one denounces them as wrangling over constitutional issues!

Benn continued: 'Democ-



John Bloxam spoke at the RFMC's TUC meeting

racy is the key issue for us all'. We can't tackle the Tories if we don't do what we say we will. The integrity of the Labour Party is at stake. Working people have lost confidence in the Party and that's why we lost the

last election.

Before the last election, he and Eric Heffer had attended a meeting drawing up the manifesto — only to be told that the Parliamentary leadership would impose a veto. Constitutionally,

every policy that has received a two-thirds majority at conference should go in. No single man or woman in the Party should have the right to set aside what we decide at Party conference.

The Prime Minister's powers of patronage must be ended. It takes forty million electors to elect the House of Commons, but it takes only one Prime Minister to appoint 253 peers to the House of Lords (as happened during the last Labour Government).

It is quite clear from the 2400 pieces of evidence submitted to the Commission of Enquiry that the debate and discussion has gone on inside the Party, and that the Party is in favour of the reforms. The movement knows what it wants to do, and if the leadership of the trade unions stands in its way then it is betraying its own rank and file members.

Benn hoped that the Mobilising Committee would continue after Blackpool. We need a strong and united left.

Bob Wright of the AUEW said that he wished he could stop speaking in a personal capacity and speak for his union. The fight for reform in the Labour Party goes hand in hand with the fight for reform in the trade unions.

The message was loud and clear: no matter whether we win or lose at Brighton, the fight for democracy in the labour movement will go on.

200 copies of the current Mobilising Committee pamphlet 'Never Again' were sold, and around 100 copies of *Socialist Organiser* and *Women's Fightback*.

600
at
Mancl
Rally

A MILITANT at the only way you them... one Socialist Organiser Mobilising Com in Manchester 18th.

The 600-stro including many bers, took Bob V about the link be democracy and t the unions to h collection raised Mobilising Com was a speaker f Henry's Bakery mittee.

Someone in shouted for ano for the strike. It r

While Tony B was a major o Audrey Wise's s ation of the ne women more d Labour Party and ment, and draw democracy figh some of the loud

John Bloxam, ialist Campaign Victory, drew o ons for the wide movement faces Tories we need that is organised just as 'extras' t play-acting of L in Parliament'. And people who keen to find ou was taken on the rally, and ov Organisers were sellers.

The issues at Labour Conference

continued from p.1

the 'three year rule'. This would stop Labour's rank and file re-raising any structural issues for another three years (and in fact for longer), while the Party leaders would be free to manoeuvre.

Whatever the details, the battle within the Labour Party will remain in the balance after Blackpool. And the next step for the Left must be to organise in the rank and file of the trade unions.

All indications are that rank and file trade union activists think the same about Labour democracy as Labour Party activists. They have the same class interests, the same ideals... often they are the same people.

The right wing relies on union block votes. But they dare not appeal to the trade union activists. They fix up deals with bureaucratic union

leaders who mis-use their members' votes — and their public appeal is to the great anonymous mass of Labour voters, who have no voice, no organisation... and no chance of answering back when their name is mis-used. (For, by a curious catch-22, as soon as any Labour voter does take part in debate and the life of the movement, s/he becomes an activist and therefore... not 'representative'!)

No AUEW activist can be blind to the links between Duffy and Boyd's hostility to Labour democracy and their crawling before the bosses and Tories. If the AUEW delegation at this Labour conference were just the members elected by the branches — without the seven Executive members on it ex officio — it would have a solid pro-democracy majority.

The same basic picture goes for other unions.

Winning a solid majority

for Labour Party democracy and winning trade union democracy are closely linked. And trade union democracy is also necessary to give life and substance to Labour democracy.

Democratic control of the Labour Manifesto is empty unless trade unionists know, understand, and control what their representatives vote for to go in the Manifesto — and are willing to fight for it to be implemented. Democratic election of the Leader is no use unless trade unionists have sufficient awareness and control of their block votes.

Mandatory re-selection of MPs demands that trade union delegates to Labour Party GMCs constantly call sitting MPs to account and report back regularly to their union branches.

The struggle for Labour democracy is the struggle for a government accountable to the labour movement.

Past Labour governments have made themselves 'accountable' to the bankers, the top civil servants, and the armed forces chiefs. They have based themselves on the capitalist state — *against* the labour movement.

When the labour movement demands its leaders be accountable, we demand that they break with the bosses' state. We promise we will replace leaders who collaborate with the bosses. We demand a government which is not hypnotised by the ceremony of Westminster and Whitehall, but bases itself on the working class in struggle against the bosses.

The assaults of the Labour right wing and the Fleet Street press on Labour democracy now are the mildest foretaste of the violent resistance which wealth and privilege will organise against such a government.

In face of such resistance,

the formalities of Labour democracy will not be enough. We will need mass mobilisation, mass involvement, full democracy throughout the whole labour movement, so that every worker knows the issues at state and is in the battle, heart and soul.

Win, lose or draw at Blackpool, the fight for that democracy must go on — for the only alternative is a murderous future of ever more rapacious Tory governments, with perhaps a few Labour Governments of the Wilson/Callaghan as stand-in operations between them.

The Rank and File Mobilising Committee must continue as an active united front. And, beginning with the Labour trade unionists' conference called by the LCC for November 1st, the struggle for democracy must be taken deeper and deeper into the rank and file of the unions.

Three year rule: Never Again!

THE T&GWU has decided to vote for reimposing the 'three year rule' at this year's Labour Party conference. Writing for the Rank and File Mobilising Committee in July, PETE WILLSMAN explained why this rule is so dangerous and undemocratic.

ANY constitutional proposals discussed this year would be ruled out of order if re-submitted by affiliated organisations prior to 1983.

If re-submitted in 1983, they will immediately fall foul of the one-year rule, which results from a decision of the 1968 annual conference.

Under this ruling, the constitutional amendments are not debated in the year they are submitted, but in the subsequent year, in the light of an NEC report.

If, as usual, the NEC recommends rejection, a sentence or two along these lines will appear in the NEC Report to the 1984 Conference.

When the Chairman is

whipping th Report at the ence, the mo constitutional ment, if he/ and catches man's eye, v about five move it.

But mover lucky... Sinc union delegat discussed the vote against endment is de

Any simi tional amen then ruled ou a further thre which the w bureaucratic is repeated.

The three therefore re ed organisati ly without po the constituti on the other remain at libe constitutional ments when

We canno power and NEC, even NEC. Such a ard is unde totally unacc

Organising at Rolls Royce

JOHN WICKES is the APEX Staff Rep and Safety Rep in the no.3 shop of the East Works of Rolls Royce, five miles from the centre of Bristol. Talking to Socialist Organiser, he outlined some shop floor responses to the idea of a Labour Party factory branch on site.

THE SENIOR rep for APEX on site is also a Labour Party member

and other prominent trade union activists have expressed interest in the idea of a Rolls Royce factory branch of the Labour Party.

On the other hand there are leading trade unionists who are so wrapped up in union business that they feel they have 'no time' for the Labour Party. Also, we in APEX have Roy Grantham, our General Secretary, saying things like 'only Labour Party members should talk about Party demo-

cracy; it's of no concern to anybody else'.

Now, one thing a factory branch of the Labour Party could do would be to bring workers of different unions together. In fact, unions on site at Rolls Royce this year for the first time worked together to submit a single joint pay claim. As expected, the management refused to accept this approach, and subsequently one or two union convenors back-tracked under pressure,

but a precedent has been set.

Anything like a factory branch of the Labour Party, which brings workers together and helps break down inter-union rivalry, has got to be a good thing. On the other hand, where inter-union communication already takes place through established channels, there are fears that a factory branch of the Party would sidestep these channels and make them redundant.

All these fears and reserva-

tions, which exist to a greater or lesser extent throughout the plant, have got to be sorted out in the process of setting up a Party branch in the factory.

At the moment I'm still at the stage of sounding out responses to a draft letter on the subject which I'm writing. I'd be pleased to hear, through the pages of Socialist Organiser, of any experiences other workers have had in setting up Party branches in their factory.

Warsaw, which is the best choice for peace?'

Bob Wright emphasised the link between the fight for accountability in the trade unions and the fight for accountability in the Labour Party, but the most telling contribution was made by Audrey Wise, who

stressed the need to continue whatever happens at Blackpool. She pointed out that despite the right wing's hullabaloo about unity against the Tories, 'the people who fight the Tories are also the people who fight Tory ideas in our movement'.

SIMON TEMPLE

900 AT
B'HAM
RALLY

MORE THAN 900 people packed Digbeth Civic Hall for Birmingham's rally for Labour Democracy.

They were told that the fight for socialist policies is inseparable from the fight for Party democracy, by a platform of speakers including Tony Benn

and Bob Wright. If the 'socialist' solutions proposed were often wrong or inadequate, the central thrust of their speeches was very much to the point. Referring to the Tories' cold war policies, Benn asked the meeting: 'Free trade unions in Poland, or Cruise missiles aimed at

IRELAND UNFREE



Blessings for Paisley?

BRUCE ROBINSON reports on the fortnight in Ireland

LAST FRIDAY's Daily Mail had a front page article revealing what they claimed was a plan drawn up by civil servants in the Foreign and Northern Ireland Offices to hand over an independent Six Counties to Ian Paisley, on the assumption that once Britain withdraws Paisley will come to an arrangement with Charles Haughey, the prime minister in the South.

This plan would be a remarkable turn in the Tories' policy, which until now has been based on asserting that Northern Ireland is and will remain part of Britain. Only recently they unveiled a plan to hand back to the North its own local assembly, though with fewer powers than the old Stormont. Tory Northern Ireland minister Humphrey Atkins, denying the Mail's story, pointed this out and argued that devolution was his aim.

Yet the two schemes are not as contradictory as they appear. Atkins has already described a restoration of local responsibility as 'worthy of Heath Robinson'. Yet before Paisley can be granted 'independence', he needs some credentials as representing the majority in the Six Counties.

An assembly election now would provide him with those credentials, even if, as seemed likely from the start, it could not lead to any sort of political solution acceptable to both Paisley and the SDLP.

The Mail points out indications that Haughey is angling for some sort of a deal, mentioning "the favourable flow of references in Dublin to Mr Paisley himself, including those from journalists regarded as close to Mr Haughey".

Paisley himself, in a recent speech, said that he would only favour further links with the South if Haughey introduced extradition — and repealed the claim of the Southern government, in its Constitution, to rule all 32 counties of Ireland.

At the moment Paisley holds all the cards in his hand. If he plays them well, it would mean a return to the sectarian state that existed before 1972 — with the blessing of the nominally 'Republican' capitalist politicians of the South, like Haughey.

The Right to Work

Part 2 of a series by JOHN BLOXAM

THE FIRST big post-war wave of struggles against unemployment came in the mid-50s. The new nightmare word was 'automation'. Tens of thousands of workers were sacked as the new technology was installed in the motor and other industries.

The biggest struggles of the first round were at Norton Motors and Standard Triumph in Coventry, and APVs at Crawley, in 1956. Unlike the battles of the National Unemployed Workers Movement before the war, these were fought by workers trying to keep their jobs, not by those who had already lost their jobs.

In his 1956 pamphlet, *The Fight Against Redundancy*, Harry Finch, the then Trotskyist convenor of Norton Motors, wrote: "300 shop stewards of the motor and allied trades met in Oxford at a conference called by the 'Big Six' Motor Committee. This committee was set up in the spring of 1955 to represent a rank and file movement covering the main motor firms and ancillary trades".

The conference unanimously agreed, "that we would not allow automation to drive workers out of work, that we would oppose all sackings, and that we would fight for a 40 hour week without loss of pay, to be progressively shortened to prevent mass sackings due to new techniques, and that where automation did displace people, they should be retained and retrained by the company on full wages".

The conference delegates pledged support to any group of workers in the industry who might strike to keep their jobs. They also called for the nationalisation of the industry. The National Committee of the AEU (now AUEW) pledged their support too.

This policy was reaffirmed at another big conference in April 1956.

It did not take long for these pledges to be tested. Only four days later, at the end of April, 11,000 struck at Standard against the sacking of 3,000 workers as a consequence of the introduction of £4 million worth of new tractor manufacturing plant. And four days after that again, 400 Norton workers struck against the sacking of 26 people on the alleged grounds of the Tory government's credit squeeze.

At the same time the APV workers were out on strike. The APV stewards kept in close touch with the Midlands motor stewards.

Fright

The trade unions leaders, of course, took fright at this militancy. At Standard, after only two weeks, the executives of the unions (led by the TGWU) urged the strikers back to work, to await the result of weeks of long-winded negotiations. Having given up the strike weapon, the Standard workers had lost the initiative entirely, and a few weeks later all 3,000 whom the firm planned to sack were thrown out of work... with a princely £15 each as compensation.

The Norton strike lasted much longer, though conditions were more difficult, as the toolroom kept working and the AEU refused at first to call them out and make the strike official. Even when, after a month, the executive declared the strike official, it did not call for blacking action. That took another fortnight.

Before long, however, the AEU called off the action and agreed to settle on the basis of an 'adequate com-

penation' deal. Those with more than 10 years' service got £16, those with between three and ten years got £8, and those with less than three years got nothing at all!

But the APV strikers won their claim. The agreement called for 'consultation' — a very common demand — and went on to say: 'If this fails and redundancy is still insisted upon, then redundant workers shall be retained on the payroll of the company until such time as they have found suitable alternative employment'.

These struggles, of course, differed radically from the battles of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement between the two world wars, for now the resistance came from workers still in employment. The 'Big Six' put far more emphasis on the idea of a *sliding scale of hours with no loss of pay* (what the NUWM's Charter had called 'the shorter working week regulated by the requirements of industry') and insisted that Work or Full Pay did not mean that the employers could sack you as long as they paid for the privilege.

Their stress was on the 'progressively shortened' working week — which they coupled with the demand for a 40-hour week right away — and the right of redundant workers to stay on the payroll.

Vivid

The horror of the inter-war depression, with its destitution and demoralisation, was still too vivid for the boom-time workers of the 'Big Six' to be prepared to see their mates go down the road. They knew it was the quick route to disintegration of working class organisation and breaking their spirit.

They had also learnt from the campaign in the United States for 'Thirty for Forty' — thirty hours' work

for 40 hours pay. But the trade union leaders had done their homework too. They saw that the American 'Guaranteed Annual Wage' agreement could provide a formula for selling out militant resistance to lay-offs. As Harry Finch pointed out, "This agreement, which was originally to be one year's full pay for laid-off workers, turned out to be 26 weeks at a make-up of dole pay to 60% of the basic wage".

of 'voluntary redundancy'. So long as finding work was fairly easy (or at least was widely thought to be) and the pay-out relatively big, workers often queued up for redundancy. In the areas where this was not so, in the more isolated industrial valleys of South Wales or steel towns like Consett, there was virtually no resistance to redundancy at all in the '50s and '60s. Thus for a whole period, the



Redundant carworkers, 1957

Certainly the Standard and Norton sell-outs were cheap by comparison with the blood-money of the American motor industry. But soon 'adequate compensation' or 'severance pay' was to replace the simple formula of 'Last in, first out' which had prevailed for so long. And with it came the concept — grotesque to anyone who had fought through the '30-

fight for the Right to Work was absent from the scene. 'Work or Full Pay' soon seemed a meaningless slogan anyway to people who were sure they would get work in a few weeks yet were being offered redundancy money equivalent to a few years' wages: it appeared that *work and more than full pay* were on offer, by agreement with management! With voluntary re-

dundancy increasingly being accepted with enthusiasm, militants trying to build up a movement against closure, rationalisation, or shake-out often felt as if they were trying to blow up a football with a fist-sized hole in the other side.

Desperately, some proposed barring people who had accepted voluntary redundancy from trade unions or from job opportunities. A more level-headed approach was to work out a well-organised *no cover* policy. This tactic is specially effective in assembly line work, but it can be effective in all sorts of industries from teaching (where it is national policy for the NUT) to textiles.

Speed-up

Sarah Cox and Robert Golden describe the effect of a no cover policy against speed-up, flexibility, non-replacement and 'shake-out'. "In car factories where the line has been speeded up or the number of workers cut by, say, one sixth in the door hanging section, it is not unknown for one car in six to come off the line without doors.

"In 1975 the workers in a Merseyside printing factory had successfully resisted the threat of a hundred redundancies and kept the workforce intact. Then the management brought in more machines and redeployed the workforce to rationalise production. In one department this meant that machines which had formerly been worked by five women were to be worked by three.

"With confidence gained from their previous victory, the women employed a tactic which the Mother of the Chapel described as 'organised chaos' to prove that three women could not do the work. Plastic containers were spraying out of the machines onto the floor because there were no boxes ready for them. The containers had to be scrapped and fed back through the extruder, and production fell drastically".

There was nothing the management could do in this situation, if it wanted to avoid a full-scale shutdown or lock-out, but make up the workforce to the right number.

Fewer

This refusal to cooperate with the bosses' special version of work-sharing — sharing out more work between fewer and fewer workers — has in it the seeds of the direct action struggle for workers' control and with it the replacement of the logic of capitalism's insatiable quest for profits by the logic of the workers' need for work and decent wages.

But it was not until the early '70s, with the struggles at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders in Scotland and at the Lip watch-works at Besançon in south-eastern France, that this revolutionary potential was clearly expressed in action.

The twenties and thirties saw huge battles for improved provision for the unemployed. In the fifties, there were the first big struggles against redundancy by employed workers. The seventies saw the first real struggles linking the fight for the right to work with the fight against capitalism for workers' control. It was the day of the factory occupation.

Next issue: The seventies and the workers' takeover — factory occupations in Britain and France.

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Resigning and resisting

by **BILL BOWRING**

JOHN SWEENEY's arguments, which pose resignation by councillors as a tactic for immediate implementation, are thrown into sharp relief by Heseltine's announcements of last week.

Ted Knight, leader of Lambeth Council, has said: "... in Lambeth, we lose £2.1 million as a direct penalty; a further £1.4 million as a result of his removing £200 m from the rate support grant; and we lose a further £10 million as a result of his cutting the urban aid programme."

"What Heseltine has done is take his revenge on those authorities which have refused to reduce the social wage of working-class families in their boroughs".



Heseltine: moved faster than most councils feared, catching out even those who thought they were being 'responsible'

In addition, Heseltine has refused to allow any further money to be spent on the Brixton Recreation Centre project — a large construction site being built by a direct labour force whose future must now be in doubt.

A number of Labour local authorities are therefore facing immediate decisions as to whether to cut, or levy supplementary rates — a 25p rise would be required in Lambeth. This new situation has arisen before Heseltine's Local Government Act has even reached the statute book.

John Sweeney is quite correct when he says that local councils should not carry out these savagely anti working class measures. His article shows that he recognises that the probable result of a successfully re-elected Labour council defying the

government would be the appointment of commissioners or receivers. This would happen to any council, re-elected or not, taking such a step.

The question is whether the tactic of resignation and re-election before such a confrontation would significantly improve the prospects of defeating the government.

What is quite clear is that there will be a real and bitter fight within our movement to achieve a confrontation at all, since a confrontation will mean breaking the law. The Labour Party's official line is that Councils should try, within the law, to mitigate the effects of Tory policies, and wait for the next General Election.

Take, for instance, the forced sale of council houses. The Party's 1979 Conference resolution on housing 'urged' Labour councils 'to actively oppose' the Tory legislation 'in whatever lawful ways they can'. At a conference called by the National Executive Committee in Sheffield on 6th September, only N.E. Derbyshire and Lambeth, out of 70 Councils attending, spoke in favour of an outright (and illegal) refusal to operate the 'right to buy' provisions in the new Housing Act.

Lambeth's officers are now arguing in favour of 'slow implementation' of the Act, and warning of the dire consequences — surcharges or even prison — or anything more militant. The Act is drafted in such a way that even slow implementation would be pretty rapid. There will therefore be great pressure to capitulate, by selling council houses, by cutting either directly through redundancies and cuts in services — or indirectly, through rate or rent increases.

In the view of *Lambeth Labour Left*, which I support, it is and would be impermissible for Labour councillors to be the agency through which Tory crisis measures are imposed on the working class. Just as the shop floor representative, in accepting a position of leadership, accepts also the possible consequences in victimisation, loss of livelihood, or worse, so the councillors should face up to the possible consequences of illegality.

Where John Sweeney's argument is correct is that those Labour councillors unwilling or unable to take such a stand should be able to resign — to allow others to take their places.

He is also right when he says that there must be a campaign — as he said in an interview in the January 1980 *SO*, "getting out of the council chamber". However, I cannot agree that the alternative is to get onto the doorstep in the election campaign which would follow mass resignations.

It is quite clear that the Tories' policies can only be fought by a campaign which either forces a radical change of policy towards local government — as well as in the Health Service, education, etc. — or brings about the downfall of the government itself. *Such a campaign will not arise out of by-election campaigns, or even localised rent and rate strikes. It will*

LOCAL AUTHORITIES are in a state of crisis. They are being forced to dismantle essential services on which large numbers of working class people depend; and at the same time to destroy jobs and enforce redundancies that will result in even more people being unemployed.

With the advent of the new local government act the last vestiges of local autonomy will disappear and local councils will be in the full control of central government, who will then use them as instruments for enacting Tory policies.

It will be an end to the hopes of many radical socialists who saw their presence on local councils as a means of capturing part of the

by **JOHN SWEENEY**

in areas of immediate and desperate need — such as much-needed nurseries or old people's homes — the council must first get permission to spend the money. The only real freedom councils have is deciding the colour schemes for the building the government allows them to put up.

Cuts

Of course this analysis oversimplifies the situation, since there are very important areas, such as the funding of law centres and community nurseries, where the council can act independently. But in times of government cuts — and this is when these kinds of services are most needed — these are the very projects most threatened.

The real issue is whether or not the gains in the provision of a few fringe services is worth the loss of having to impose cuts over a wide range of services and impose rent and rate rises in times of falling living standards.

The extra restrictions and implied penalties for non-conforming councils in the forthcoming Local Government Act have brought many of these issues to a head. The government is demanding a reduction in council spending, but nearly all local authorities are going to be overspent because of high interest charges and inflation — both of which have been brought about by government policies. Even though the extra spending is not the 'fault' of councils, the government refuses to help them, and is insisting that any overspending this year must be repaid next year in the form of extra cuts.

For many councils these extra cuts must take the form of enforced redundancies, since wages and salaries account for about 60% of most councils' spending on revenue. Also, these cuts are on top of those imposed last year, so there are no areas left of 'surplus fat' that can be conveniently 'trimmed'.

By next March the Tories will have fully prepared their plans for local government and councils will be expected to implement the real heart of Tory policy: to make massive cuts in the community provision of services — and in consequence to make large numbers of people redundant who work in the public sector.

While enforcing their political philosophy the Tories appear to have little regard for the truth. They maintain that a disproportionate amount of the GDP is being spent by local government and thereby restricting the amount available to private enterprise. But the facts are that for the past five years the figure has been falling. In 1976 the proportion of the GDP spent by local authorities was 15%, and this year, 1980-1, if the Tories' target is met, it will be as low as 12.6%.

Rather than carry out these savagely anti-working class measures — which most councils will be forced to enact over the next few months and then again next spring — councils should resign and seek immediate re-election on a platform of no cuts and no rent and rate in-

creases. If councils are then removed from office because they won't implement government policies and the commissioners are put in — as a recent report in *Time Out* magazine suggests — then local resistance, possibly in the form of rent and rate strikes, should be organised.

This will cause a constitutional crisis, but it will put into clear perspective those who are really making the cuts and why.

The tactic of resigning could be criticised as handing things over to the Tories — especially in those areas where there is a sizeable minority of Tory councillors who could presumably run the council in the absence of Labour members. However, the time scale from resignation to re-election would average out at about six weeks, and I would contend that there is very little that a makeshift Tory administration could do in so short a time. And even if certain measures were rushed through, the returning Labour councillors could rescind them.

For many local authorities there are inconsequential amounts of Tories — in Hackney there is only one — and so the question of a Tory takeover doesn't arise. It could be that the strategy of resignation is best suited to a small number of authorities where there is no chance of letting the Tories in; but even if only four or five London boroughs were to resign they would confront the government with re-elected councillors representing over a million people.

It could cause the kind of confrontation that would force a general election that would — as happened with the miners — sweep the Tories from power.

Say

In order to ensure that local authorities can never again be used in such a cynical fashion by central government, the Labour movement must demand the restructuring of local authorities, based on socialist principles, that will give a greater say for council workers and the local community to manage themselves. There must also be an end to the present system of local government finance, whereby the meeting of needs of individuals within a local authority rests on the whim of central government in deciding whether or not to make funds available through the Rate Support Grant. We must fight for national standards, so no matter where a person lives they have a right to expect decent housing, the provision of serviceded for the elderly, for children, and the many other forms of community care.

What is essential is that the present crisis in local government is not 'managed' by Labour councils. They must not act as a buffer between the local communities and the government.

The blame for the dismantling of public services — on which many working people rely — must be placed fairly and squarely on the Thatcher government, and Labour councils must not act as Tory henchmen.

IN THIS Socialist Organiser, Hackney Labour councillor JOHN SWEENEY and Lambeth councillor BILL BOWRING continue a debate opened in the January 1980 Socialist Organiser: would it strengthen the fight against the Tories if Labour councils resigned and went for re-election on a 'no cuts' platform?

The debate was opened in a Socialist Organiser interview with Sweeney and another Hackney councillor, Patrick Kodikara. Sweeney argued:

"I'd like to see the council resign. If four or five councils resigned and went for re-election on a platform of no cuts, and if we came back with, say, a doubled majority, then we'd have a platform. We could say: we were elected by the people of this borough to make no cuts; and we'd have some force behind us".

Kodikara: "I don't agree with you on that. We were elected on a manifesto to increase and improve the services in this area. We can't do that because of what the government is imposing on us. We should be campaigning; we shouldn't cop out now and say we'll go back and contest again".

Sweeney: "If you did resign, it would force you onto the doorstep. It would force the Labour parties to debate their position. That's why I saw resignation as a tactic for getting the issue out of the council chamber, into the borough".

Kodikara: "The whole focus of the struggle would be directed towards an election campaign, away from the actual fight against the cuts. We have been elected on a programme, I don't see why we should have to seek another mandate. The Thatcher programme is a direct assault on working class living standards. We should defend the working class people who elected us, and if we're going to do that we've got to fight".

require the mobilisation of the trade unions and of the working class community as it is organised in tenants', residents', and interest group organisations.

In that sense, the November 1st conference at Camden Town Hall, called by Lambeth Labour group and sponsored by the local authority unions, is a vital and revolutionary step forward. A commitment to strike action in January 1981 must be fought for, with the perspective of bringing local government to a halt. Action sufficient to change Tory policy may very probably be that which will bring them down.

But in my view such a call from Labour councillors and party members will have no credibility if Labour councils are prepared to cut or rate or sell their way out of the immediate crisis. That is why councillors must be held to a principled position of no cuts, no rate increases, and no sales: which means confrontation.

In the context of mobilising the sort of campaign that is then required, John Sweeney's argument for mass resignations, with the few weeks' respite and electioneering which would ensure, do not seem to me at all convincing.

machinery of government and making it work for the benefit of working people. Of course it may be that even the pre-Heseltine structures of local government were not suitable vehicles for carrying out a socialist programme, and so when organising against the present round of cuts the Labour movement should be debating what kind of changes need to be made, and what kind of organisations we want to see come into being.

The real control over councils by central government is through the control of their finances. At present local authorities rely for two-thirds of their money on central government. This means that a council's policy must accord with government guidelines or else funds are withheld.

Banks

The prime example is housing, where local councils are forced to put the rents up in order to obtain subsidies. Even when councils raise the money themselves, by borrowing from banks, they must first get government approval for the project.

This approval for councils to spend their own money is called loan sanction. So even

Socialist Organiser Labour Party Conference Fringe Meeting

5.30 Tuesday 30 Sep.

NEEDED TO FIGHT THE TORIES: LABOUR DEMOCRACY AND TRADE UNION DEMOCRACY

Speakers: Reg Race MP, Stephen Corbishley (CPSA, Brixton dole campaign committee, in personal capacity). Chair: Jonathan Hammond (NUJ NEC, in personal capacity).

At: Hotel & Guest House Association, 87a Coronation Street, Blackpool.



Socialist Organiser will be producing a daily conference Briefing at Blackpool, as we have for the last 2 years.

Let's have comrades, not bulldozers!

NEIL TURNER continues the discussion on Peter Hain's pamphlet, 'Reviving the Labour Party'.

WHILE NOT expecting to agree with every aspect of Peter Hain's political position, I read with interest his pamphlet on creating a mass membership of the Labour Party. It contains a number of practical suggestions which, while not being strikingly novel, deserve widespread discussion within the Party.

Mass working class membership of the Labour Party can only ever be a pious hope without a major increase in political awareness throughout society. This increased awareness can only come through participation in some form of struggle for a goal which has some direct relevance to the individual concerned, be it increased pay for a trade unionist or better conditions for a council tenant.

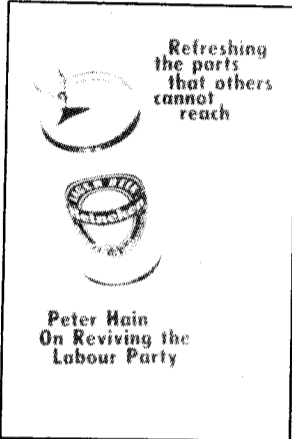
Through such struggles people come to realise for themselves the true relationships of power in our society, and they stop relying on the *Sun* to form their opinions.

Support

It is important that the Labour Party is seen as having a contribution to make to these struggles, or people will look elsewhere for the support they need. However,

the main point on which I want to focus is how the Party relates to its new members and their awakening political consciousness. The key to this is the ward branches, which are the first formal contact with the Party for almost all new members.

If we are serious about revitalising membership, it is here that we must focus our attention.



I don't pretend to have worked-out detailed answers, but can it be right that the Party meeting which most ordinary members attend cannot form policy for itself, but must await the decision of the GMC to endorse or reject its resolutions? In my own Party, branches are not allowed to publish any leaflets or other propaganda without the approval of the officers of the constituency party, and some members of the executive have suggested that a branch could not be trusted to write letters of congratulation to comrades

overseas.

The Party must draw in, welcome, and involve new political activists if membership is to be expanded. Excluding them from policy-making is not the best way to do this.

It has been suggested that it is somehow weakening to have wards with publicly stated policies which differ from those of the constituency, yet we frequently have constituencies in the same borough with different policies both from each other and the Labour Group on the Borough Council.

In addition to the frequent use of jargon and initials, there are other factors which can also serve to alienate new members. One is the question of the style of leading figures in the Party. A prime example of this is Denis Healey's 'silly billy' oversimplifications of economic arguments, which at the same time manage to be patronising while telling the listeners to leave such complicated subjects to their superiors.

Many left wingers also practice this superior style. Although they may be unaware of it, such a style only serves to encourage working people to opt out of politics, and confine their political activities to being 'voting fodder' for the self-proclaimed experts.

On a more local level, I know of a number of councillors and committee chairpersons who lecture ward meetings and public meetings. This has exactly the same result.

Another practice which over the years has succeeded in driving away many a new member, and forced others to remain passive listeners, is the use of political intimidation as an argument of debate. Even if the person put down is experienced and has the hide of a rhino, we should show respect for their opinions while disagreeing. To do otherwise could result in less articulate or new members holding back from speaking for fear of being exposed to similar treatment.

Jibe

We must not allow ourselves to use the easy jibe or jeer to win an argument, and we must stamp it out from use by both our political allies and opponents within the Party. One form of this is the many Party hacks who love nothing better than to dismiss arguments by dismissing a 'comrade' for being middle class.

On the other hand, we must ensure that debates, particularly in ward branches, are not dominated by articulate 'professionals'. Perhaps the best way to achieve this is positive discrimination by the chair in favour of the less articulate, particularly if they are women or working class.

All of these thoughts are admittedly fairly random and could be criticised for being peripheral, but it cannot be denied that when we get new members we should cherish them, and encourage them to become more involved, not drive them away. We should make ourselves aware, and eradicate the various things which might make this more difficult.

BOUND TO BE READ

'B.Traven' was the pen-name of an anarchist militant who took part in the German Revolution of 1918-19 and later fled to Mexico. Or probably it was: no-one knows for sure. But in the '30s and '40s Traven wrote many vivid novels and short stories of revolt against capitalism, mostly set in Mexico.

Allison and Busby are republishing Traven's books, mostly long out of print. LOL DUFFY reviews one of the first batch: 'Government'.

THIS BOOK is the first in a series of six, under the general heading of 'the jungle novels', about the oppression and rebellion of the Mexican Indians in the earlier part of this century. *Government* whets your appetite and leaves you wondering, if like me you know little or nothing about the history of Mexico, what is going to unfold in the next novel.

Government sets the scene

that must inevitably bring the State and the Indians into conflict. It is set during the dictatorship of Presidente Don Porfirio, a man who lives well at the expense of the majority of the Mexican people. His regime is one which exists by means of the armed forces and the setting up in lower positions in government of Don Porfirio's relatives and friends and their relatives and friends.

The regime is totally corrupt. The multinational companies also lend great support to Don Porfirio, and he in turn supports the multinationals with cheap labour which is rounded up like cattle.

Mexicans sell themselves into wage slavery in order to pay off debts built up to farm owners, shop owners, secretaries, etc. Those sold into this situation end up paying their debts with their lives.

Government is a book which stirs in you feelings of indignation, and the obviousness of the exploitation makes you see clearer your own more subtle ex-

ploitation.

This book gives you an insight into a system which in appearance is so different from Britain today, but is in essence the same. The difference lies in degree and the relative strengths of those being exploited.

Government is a book well worth reading. Although it doesn't come to any conclusions about the need for socialism, the reader should — unless you're only interested in a quiet life with no hassle. The Indians in this novel were also interested in living their own quiet lives, and you can read where it got them.

★ Allison & Busby have also published *The White Rose* and two collections of stories: *The Kidnapped Saint* and *The Cotton Pickers*. *March to Monteria is due later this year*. *The Death Ship* and *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* are available in *Panther paperback*; *Rebellion of the Hanged* used to be in Penguin but is out of print; some of Traven's other novels, also out of print, can be found in libraries.

One tenth of the income for two thirds of the work

WRITE BACK

OVER THE last couple of issues, the magazine *New Internationalist* has run articles documenting the plight of women workers the whole world over. Published by a company owned jointly by Oxfam and Christian Aid, and appealing to 'liberal sensibilities', it does not necessarily draw the same conclusions as we would on ending world poverty.

However, it has provided some useful information.

Women are over 50% of the world's population, do two-thirds of the world's work hours, receive 10% of the world's income, and own less than 1% of world property.

In the advanced capitalist countries now, 50% or more of women go out to work. That should be good news, but the effect of the 'double burden' of paid employment and household chores has meant an average working week for women of 80 hours — twice as long as men.

In poor countries the situation is generally much worse. Women get relatively few wage-earning jobs. But the burden on them is even greater.

Eighty per cent of the poor households in India, for example, are supported by women. Yet job opportunities for women are declining in India — from 33% of the workforce at the beginning of the century to 20% now.

In Haryana state, for example, in most cases it is the

women who does the farm work, assisted by the man.

In the case of younger women, workloads of, on average, 15½ and 16 hours a day (in Haryana) are combined with frequent pregnancy, childbirth, and breast-feeding — exhausting processes for any woman's body, but particularly so when the women have inadequate food and long hours of back-breaking work in the fields.

To take another example: In Bukaba, Tanzania, the men work an average of 1800 hours a year in agriculture and then their work is done. The women, on the other hand, work an average of 2600 hours a year in the field — and their work has only just begun. In the local language, the word 'to marry' literally means 'the man gets a hoe'.

In Africa overall — it is estimated — 60 to 80% of all agricultural work is done by women.

Everywhere women's wages are lower than men's: in Great Britain an average of 25% less, in the USA 40% less — this despite 'equal pay' legislation — and worldwide about 40 to 60% less.

As a result of this inequality, women have more than their share of poverty. In Britain at least 600,000 families are now headed by single mothers, and their number grows by 6% a year. But the assumption that women work merely to supplement their husband's wages has been used to justify

every kind of discrimination — that it doesn't matter when they're laid off, or that women's education is not so important because their career is one of wife and mother.

In the advanced capitalist countries, militant women have focused on the question of economic independence — needing to work, wanting to work, and realising that it is a woman's right to work. But in the third world the influx of women into the 'formal' job market and the introduction of modern technology has not necessarily benefited women. Even when the material deprivation is greatest, women have discovered that it takes more than economic growth to gain equality.

All over the world women are oppressed, sometimes crushed, by domestic 'duties' and child care. A socialist answer is needed here.

It is not enough to demand that men realise that they must take on their share of the domestic chores, although this is long overdue. It is the whole nature of how we work, what we produce, and for whose benefit we produce it, that must be changed.

Women's oppression cannot be ended by changing man's attitudes alone. It can only be achieved by dismantling the system which created the conditions for that oppression to exist.

CARLA JAMISON

Is racism growing?

OVER THE past month or so I have noticed a marked increase in racism at my workplace (Haringey Direct Labour department).

As yet this has not taken the form of an increase of open racist abuse of black workers (which to my knowledge is not very common), nor are workers just 'blaming the blacks' for the crisis.

But they are expressing the idea that white workers

are 'second class citizens'. In their eyes the state's attempt to bureaucratically manage the black population is aimed against them. Prejudices like 'the blacks don't have to wait for council houses, why do we have to wait for years?', have been fuelled by the racist press, and seem to be coming to the surface now.

Many workers see no contradiction between this

racism and a general anti-Toryism, but the racist ideas must weaken and poison action against the Tories.

I would be interested to know if other *Socialist Organiser* readers have noticed a similar growth of racism, and what they feel can be done about it.

MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN, London N6

A CONFERENCE FOR Labour Women

A one-day conference for women in the Labour Party called by Fightback for Women's Rights with Islington Central Labour Party Women's Section

Delegates are invited from women's sections and councils, CLPs, ward branches, student Labour Clubs, etc. Individuals welcome too.

AGENDA

■ A programme of democratic reforms for women in the party is being discussed by the Women's Action Committee of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, with the support of Fightback for Women's Rights and the women's committee of NOLS (Labour Students). How can we publicise these demands and organise to win them?

■ There is scant attention to women's needs either in the draft Manifesto of the NEC, or on this year's conference agenda. What sort of policies do we want the party to adopt? How can we put women's needs at the top of Labour's agenda? Campaigns and groups fighting for women's rights are being invited to suggest what they would most like to see incorporated into Labour policy and Manifesto.

■ Can the party Women's Organisation be transformed? Can it lead women in a fight against the Tories? Can it go on the offensive in the party, against sexism and for women's rights? What can rank and file women do to win these things?

The conference will be held on Saturday 22nd November 1980 at Central Library, Holloway Road, London N7 [corner of Fieldway Crescent, a short walk from Highbury & Islington tube] 11am to 4.30pm Creche Lunch Registration fee £1

Name

Address

Phone

Party/Ward/women's section

Please return to: Women's Fightback, 41 Ellington Street, London N7 (01-607-9052), together with £1 registration and foolscap s.a.e. for background material, credentials, map etc.

Docks: Rebuild the shop stewards' committee

THE DOCKERS have won a total victory over the employers this time round. 180 dockworkers due to be put on the Temporary Unattached Register (TUR) in Liverpool will be reallocated to port employers, and the employers have reaffirmed their promise not to use the TUR except for dockers awaiting disciplinary hearings.

The bosses were quick to retreat after dockers called for a national strike. Even before that, the Government's quick promise to lend the port employers £1.8 million had confirmed that the bosses were not keen for a confront-

ation. But the issue has only been postponed.

The roots of the dispute go back to 1972, when the dockers struck to protect jobs then being threatened by the rapid growth of 'containerisation'. That struggle nearly led to a general strike against the Heath Government.

Jack Jones, then general secretary of the TGWU, made a deal to end the struggle. The so-called Jones-Aldington agreement boosted severance pay and abandoned the use of the TUR except for disciplinary purposes. Previously, the TUR — the pool

by **STEPHEN CORBISHLEY**

of dockers attached to a port but not currently hired by any port employer — was growing rapidly, as a halfway stage to the dole.

The big severance pay-outs encouraged thousands of dockers to quit the docks. The number of dockers' jobs has slumped dramatically. There were 47,000 registered dockworkers in 1970; there are 24,000 now. Over 600 jobs have gone in Liverpool docks in the first six months of 1980.

The productivity gain has been 30% since 1978 alone. Yet the bosses want even more blood out of the dockworkers. With modernisation and the slump in world trade, British ports have an excess capacity of roughly 60%.

The profits of many of the small stevedoring companies are rapidly disappearing, and they want to see the burden carried by the dockers. The real long term aim of the employers, now as in the early 1970s, is to smash the powerful control over employment the dockers have with the National and local Dock Labour Boards (set up in 1947).

In 1972 the dockers demanded a shorter working week, decasualisation, and nationalisation of the ports without compensation. These were the only demands that could have settled the issue in 1972 once and for all. But the dockers' official leaders were more keen on getting a deal to smooth over the problems.

Preparations should begin now to re-build the militancy and organisation of the National Port Shop Stewards' Committee and link up with the drivers whose jobs are also under threat from the

impact of containerisation. The employers are still pressing ahead with the sacking of 40 registered dockers in Grimsby and at Bowaters Mill in Ellesmere Port. And 40 clerical workers, members of TGWU-ACTSS, are threatened with the sack in Liverpool, as a result of the closure of T & J Harrison Ltd, due on September 30th.

The clerical workers have received solid support from the Liverpool docks shop stewards' committee, and are prepared to take industrial action to defend their branch policy of no compulsory redundancies.

Sacked for wanting a pay rise

by **JIM DENHAM**

700 WORKERS at Birmetals Ltd, Birmingham, have been sacked since June for simply attempting to negotiate their annual pay claim. They have been denied redundancy payments, unemployment pay, or (initially) social security because they are 'in dispute' with the company — although they have all been given their cards!

In August 1979 Birmetals workers accepted an interim six months wage agreement, to be re-opened in February 1980, by which time they were promised that the company would have a complete 're-investment programme' and would be in a position to offer improved wages. When February came around, the Birmetals stewards were told that the re-investment programme had been cancelled and that the pay offer was... nothing!

Officials of the unions involved (TGWU, AUEW, G&M and EETPU) advised against a strike, and the workers decided on limited action — refusing to load finished products.

On June 12th 1980, all 700 workers were sacked for breaking their contracts. The stewards wanted to call a picket of the factory — but were persuaded not to by AUEW officials. However, a mass meeting voted against the officials' advice, and a 24 hour picket has been mounted since June.

The company desperately wants to get work out of the factory in order to close it — they have even tried to use private vehicles belonging to white collar staff to move products. Last month, 300 workers occupied the loading bays — but again the officials advised them to climb down after they were served with an injunction by the company.

The Birmetals workers have received a tremendous boost now that 400 mainly black workers at the die-cast plant in Smethwick have voted overwhelmingly to reject the closure of this plant (and redundancy pay) and join in the fight against redundancies in the Birmid-Quacast group, of which Birmetals is a part.

A demonstration has been called to support the workers on Friday October 17th, starting from Snow Hill station, Birmingham, at 10am.

Donations, messages of support etc, to Bro J A Glasford, secretary, dispute committee, 78 Longbridge Lane, Birmingham B31 2TW.



ANDERTON'S FINGERS IN THE PIE

THE WORKERS at King Henry's Pies, Manchester, have been on strike for union recognition for 12 weeks. Picketing and blacking have really begun to hit King Henry's, who have been trying to carry on production with scab labour.

The strikers have had more than the bosses to contend with. They've got James Anderton's bully boys and the Tactical Aid Group (Manchester's SPG) as well.

13 strikers and pickets have already been arrested, mainly young women. When one picket complained of rough treatment from the police, she was told: that'll teach you to picket.

Bakers' Union NC member Val Dunn was told to stop singing at the mass picket last Friday, or she would be arrested for incitement to riot! When the other 200 workers on the picket line took up the singing, the police weren't quite so

cocky. Some of the strikers feel that the Bakers' Union should be taking a more effective lead nationally. They should organise a one-day strike of all the bakeries in the area.

The Bakers' Union executive is meeting this week to discuss this and other proposals. Meanwhile, it is vital that effective picketing is kept up.

Local trade union and Labour Party branches should be send-

ing delegations to all mass pickets, as well as sending money to the strike fund.

- Donations: Bakers' Union, Room 4, George House, 30 Dudley Rd, Manchester 14.
- Mass picket: 6.30am, October 3rd, at Rowan Oak Ave, Levenshulme (nr Stockport Rd.)
- Picket of magistrates' court: 9.30am, Monday 29th September.

PETE KEENLYSIDE

AT A MASS meeting of the Confed in the Cammell Laird shipbuilding yard, Birkenhead, on Monday 8th September, the workers heard about the serious situation facing them.

On Tuesday 4 September the yard had been visited by the new chairman of British Shipbuilders, Robert Atkinson, who seems to be from the same mould as Leyland's Michael Edwards. Atkinson told a meeting of Confed and staff representatives that as far as he was concerned Cammell Laird had to stand on its own two feet.

He informed the representatives that the tender for oil rigs to the American-based KCA International was £5 million above the lowest tenders, and too many hours' work were allowed for in the tender. His attitude was: you either make your yard 'viable', or you go to the wall. Laird's days of merchant shipbuilding were over, he said.

The mass meeting on Monday 8th was told about Atkinson's attitude, and it decided to set up a fighting fund with the money left over from a lobby of Parliament earlier this year.

What the chairman of the meeting failed to tell the workers was the fact that the Confed shop stewards' committee had already passed resolutions calling for a recall of the national lay delegates' conference and the

Shipyards: a chance of a fightback

by **Lol Duffy**

setting up of a port workers' committee in Merseyside to discuss how to stop the threatened redundancies and closures.

Frank Field, MP for Birkenhead, and Barry Williams, the Boilermakers' district delegate, also spoke at the meeting. Frank Field reported on how impressed everybody in Westminster had been with our lobby! It may have been a good lobby for Frank Field, but it in no way helped the workers at Cammell Lairds.

Barry Williams stressed the need for a campaign which did not rely on trips to Parliament, but on shop floor

strength. This was well received because workers in the yard have learnt to their regret how ineffective talking to Government is.

Now that the situation is being brought home to the workers in the yard, there is a real chance of a fightback, not just in Lairds but throughout British shipbuilders and the rest of Merseyside.

The nationalist demands such as 'British ships for British yards' are being peddled but have not become policy. Demands to see how tenders for work are made up, which in effect means opening the books, are going

forward from the Boilermakers' stewards' committee and will hopefully gain support in the Confed committee.

The management is attempting to keep everybody in the dark about the real order situation, to win flexibility deals and more redundancies. Cammell Lairds workers now appear to be saying: it's time to call a halt.

What can socialists do to help fight the drastic rundown of jobs in shipbuilding?

If you are in the Confed, you can support the call for the lay delegates' conference to be recalled to discuss and decide on what action to take to halt the government's attack on jobs and conditions.

You can push for policies to be adopted by your stewards' committees, branches, and trades councils, which would mean an effective fightback against redundancy and closure, such as:

- Plans for occupation of workplaces threatened with closure,
- Reducing the working week, starting with factory or area reductions to 35 hours now with no loss of pay.
- Work sharing on full pay
- Open the books — no business secrecy.

Supporters of *Socialist Organiser* will be fighting for these demands to be adopted in Lairds and throughout the labour movement.

Council should back Camden builders

WORKERS at Taylor Powell, Camden Town, have been on strike since 15th September over the implementation of national working rule agreements.

They had suffered continual knock-backs by the bosses over health and safety standards, canteen and toilet facilities, and negotiating a proper bonus agreement.

The bosses' attitude was coupled with attempts to split the workers' organisation on site. They introduced a non bona fide sub-contractor, E J Thatcher, which is neither registered as a limited company nor contributes to the holiday stamp and pension scheme.

A large police presence met pickets from the start. When a mass picket was called on Monday 22nd, 200 police, including two van-loads of SPG, turned up.

The police only allowed three pickets on the main gate and two on the back gate.

The site is owned by Labour-controlled Camden Council. Council officers had revoked normal agreements about only employing bona fide contractors. The Council now has a clear duty to discipline those council officers who have gone against council policy, and to support the strikers.

■ Mass picket: Taylor Powell site, St Pancras Way, 7.30am, Monday 29th.

MICK O'SULLIVAN

Labour Coordinating Committee

TRADE UNIONISTS' CONFERENCE

co-sponsored by SCLV, ILP, and Clause 4.

Saturday 1 November, 10.30-5.45, at Leeds University.

Speakers include: Bernard Connolly, Roger Griffiths, Pat Longman, Stuart Holland, Ken Ternent, Eddie Loyden, Colin Lindsay, Audrey Wise, Tony Banks, Phil Holt, Stephen Corbishley, Anne Cesek, Peter Hain.

Fee: £1.25/free for short time workers and non-waged. Credentials from LCC, 9 Poland St, W1.

HAVE YOU noticed how kind the press is being these days to BL?

No more stories about incompetent managers, strike-happy shop stewards, and sleeping workers. Now it's all sweetness and light under the wonderful leadership of that dynamic little Mr Edwardes.

Even the news that BL lost £181 million in the first six months of this year (compared with £20 million profit in the same period last year), was passed over with little more than a shrug of the shoulders and a few philosophical comments about 'extraordinary expenses' (i.e. closing down factories), the collapse of the car market, and the uncompetitive £.

In most papers these rather boring financial trivia were completely eclipsed by the carefully-leaked news that the new Mini Metro will do no less than 80 mpg — 'Michael's Metro Miser', said the *Daily Star*. Even if you don't drive at a continuous 30 mph on empty roads without ever changing gear, you'll still get about 40 mpg out of it.

Dealers were said to have had tears in their eyes when the Metro was unveiled to them on a boat trip round the Isle of Man. We weren't told whether the emotional outbursts were brought on by the Metro itself or by other causes, but dealers were represented as saying things like "Sir Michael's got it right this time" (or at least, "Shir Miles gorrit rithish time").

What you haven't been told is that to date there are less than 100 Metros completed for sale — and the car is due to be launched in mid-October. Workers at Longbridge have been surprised to read stories about one Metro every 40 seconds coming off the production line. As one Longbridge Metro worker commented:

Metro: world-beater or shambles?

"Why stop at one car every 40 seconds? We could have a car every 20 seconds and people throwing components and bits of trim at the empty body shells as they whizz past".

The truth is that the company are in big trouble with the Metro. There are 4,000 body shells in various stages of completion, waiting for rectification, strewn all around the Longbridge plant. Because of the partial closure of the Kings Norton Seat Building factory, there are not enough seats to go round. Every single drive shaft is having to be changed and major rewelding is being done on completed and painted body shells. But the main problem is that on the Metro line itself the job timings imposed without negotiation from theoretical times drawn up by industrial engineers, are completely

unrealistic. Workers are falling over each other as they attempt to complete their job within the time and track space allocated to them. As a result most Metros require considerable rectification and "retrospective fitting" of missing components at the end of the line. Instead of negotiating more workable timings, the company have been insisting their times should be rigidly adhered to as a matter of principle.

Thus one whole Allegro track has had to be closed down (despite relatively high demand for that model), and transferred onto Metro rectification and retrospective fitting. Enormous hours of overtime are being worked (with the cooperation of the Works Committee) as the company flounder around trying to cobble together enough cars for the launch. If everything went according to plan, there would be 6,500

ment in trading."

Metros ready for October — a small enough figure given that there are 2,000 BL dealers in Britain. And even that figure isn't going to be met.

The bosses can't blame the unions or the workforce this time. The Works Committee at Longbridge have been bending over backwards to cooperate with the Metro at every stage. Twice the national agreed level of overtime is being allowed and for the first time dispensation has been granted for overtime on the weekend before the September holiday (against the recommendation of the Confed). When workers on System 3 finishing track threatened a work to rule over the intolerable conditions and timings being expected of them, the Works Committee instructed them to be 'flexible'. And when the women in the sewing room voted to reject the company's demand for "two weeks about" night work, the Works Committee pleaded with them to cooperate. The attitude of the union leadership at Longbridge is summed up by the following bulletin issued by the Works Committee on 28th August:

"The Works Committee consider that the launch of the Metro in October offers both a tremendous challenge and great opportunities for our members at Longbridge. The importance of this car being built to exceptional standards cannot be over-emphasised and that is the purpose of this bulletin... We encourage all the workforce at Longbridge to recognise the challenge, grasp the opportunities and prove to the world at large the skills and expertise of our membership."

So even with very low production targets and total union cooperation, the bosses have still made a dog's dinner of the Metro launch. Small wonder that many Longbridge workers are asking themselves just who these well-heeled pin-striped "managers" are, and what purpose do they serve? Assuming that the world really does need yet another 3-door hatchback car, there can be no doubt that workers at Longbridge could have 'managed' the launch of the Metro considerably more competently than Michael Edwardes and his henchmen.

BL WORKERS: NO MORE WAGE CUTS

"CYNICS will doubtless argue that the company is trying to adopt as conservative accounting approach as possible ahead of the Metro launch", commented the *Guardian* on September 12th, suggesting that BL's announcement of £181.5m loss in the first six months of 1980 was at least partly motivated by the need to be able to show improved figures for the second half — after the Metro launch. That may well be true but BL have

an even stronger reason to make their financial position look as bad as possible at the moment — to defuse the £17 a week pay claim due on November 1st. When the union negotiators met the company last Friday to press their claim the bosses made no reply but handed each negotiator a copy of the half-year results and told them to study it over the September holidays. The statement ends with the words, "We see no hope of an early improve-

ment in trading."

BL workers have been fobbed off with wage rises well below the rate of inflation for the last three years — last year it was only 5% for most people. We cannot afford to let the company blackmail us into accepting another real wage cut this year with their tired old 'viability' argument. There is no doubt that BL (along with most other motor companies in the world) is in big trouble. But it would be use-

ful to force the company to open their books to union inspection just to see where the money is really going.

Increasingly BL workers are regaining their confidence and are unwilling to accept either another wage cut or more redundancies. (the last few years have seen plenty of both) even if that means a confrontation with not just Edwardes but also with the Tory government.

SCOTTISH TUC:

We need more than rituals

by IAN McLEISH

"THE Scottish TUC won't even take up the fight to defend basic trade union rights", said Ronnie Munroe, yard convenor at Hunterston, speaking at the Glasgow cuts campaign conference on 13th September. "We've lost our jobs to protect the Health and Safety Act. We've come into contact with the terror tactics of the state — there's been hundreds of police down at our picket, with 48 of us arrested."

"We're in confrontation with the bosses, our union leaders, and the STUC. The STUC has run away from the fight. We're asking people here to come out in support and we're calling on

the STUC to come out and support us".

But STUC General Council member Bob Gillespie, from the platform, could only reply: "Yes well, the lads at Hunterston do have a problem. The only way it will be settled is for those involved to sit down and talk about it. This is a cuts meeting and it's unfair to use this meeting for anything else".

Earlier he had said that it was impossible to separate the cuts from unemployment.

The cuts conference was billed as a 'Fightback against the Cuts and Unemployment'. But despite the obvious willingness of the Glasgow labour movement to fight back — 280 turned out for the conference — there was no lead given by the traditional 'leaders' of the Scot-

tish labour movement. And as long as the STUC traitors continue to hold this position of 'leadership' there never will be.

Bob Gillespie claimed that "the STUC has the policies and has been giving the lead which we should be proud of". But the labour movement needs more than a ritual declaration against cuts. We need to work out a fighting strategy for industrial action and for kicking the Tories out. But STUC leaders, dominating the platform, made sure there was no commitment from the conference other than a vague 'no cuts' resolution drafted by the Trades Council.

The cuts campaign, however, agreed at a meeting on Tuesday 16th to send a message of support to the Hunterston strikers.

Being 'sad' is not enough

by PETE KNIGHT
(shop steward,
NALGO Lothian
Health Branch)

ON THE 16th September a delegate conference of Health Service administrative and clerical NALGO members voted against the advice of the union negotiators, rejecting a motion calling for industrial action in pursuit of the union's pay claim and instead accepting the employers' offer of 14%.

It was presented as an 'interim measure' to save face; but the size of the card vote against industrial action, 47,521 to 29,711, means there is little chance of winning extra pay above the Government's 14% cash limit.

While NALGO's national officer for health was quoted as being 'very, very sad' at this decision, union activists and socialists may better use their time considering a number of important issues raised by the claim itself.

For the past twenty years

the administrative and clerical staff pay settlements have been linked to agreements reached by civil service staff. As a result the rank and file NALGO members have had very little influence over their own pay claims. The annual delegate conference which approves the following year's claim takes place ten months before the claim is submitted to the employers.

This year, however, the civil service unions had accepted a deal which included accepting job losses to finance wage rises above 14%. This meant that despite NALGO's 'no cuts' policy, the second largest section of the union were apparently bound to pursue a claim which included staff cuts.

Instead of realising the danger and calling a delegate conference to draft a new independent claim, the National Health Committee began a campaign to secure the Civil Service deal. Union negotiators were arguing that staff costs had already

been reduced and would continue to fall as a result of public expenditure cuts. So much for a no cuts policy.

A leaflet circulated by NALGO summed up the approach of the negotiators: "NALGO, it is stressed, is not arguing about the cash limits, inflation, or what other staff have received, be they doctors, dentists or nurses, but merely that the links which have been established and proven fair for over 20 years should be maintained".

Another sentence highlights the attitude of the union establishment. "If the links (with the Civil Service) are broken, we shall return to the jungle, where we must fight each year for the pay rises we get".

The negotiators prefer to use the Civil Service's Pay Research Unit comparison with private sector wages as a begging bowl with which to crawl to the employers. Such was the National Health Committee's reluctance to gauge the mood of the mem-

bership in this 'jungle' that the claim was already five months overdue before the membership were finally consulted.

Many clerical workers in the NHS are very low paid, and a general campaign for decent wages is long overdue. Such a campaign can turn this normally passive workforce into one willing not only to fight on pay issues but also willing to join the other health unions in fighting the cuts.

The difficulty in involving the lower paid members, the absence of workplace organisation, and the national Whitley Council system designed to discourage militant action by isolating the rank and file from union negotiations on pay and conditions, are all obstacles in building such a campaign.

Perhaps the breaking of links to civil service pay could be an opportunity to overcome these obstacles and to build a new, effective, and democratic approach for future pay negotiations.

'I know how the bosses feel'

by JOHN WILDE

KEN BAKER of the GMWU has declared his 'understanding of the company's frustration'. But 900 members of his union and of the Boilermakers Society at the oil rig construction yard in Hunterston are battling for their jobs.

The dispute began over safety conditions, but the workers have faced attacks from bosses, police, and union leaders.

On 28th August, 110 men working on an oil platform at the Ayrshire Marine Construction Yard refused to work under the suspended section (weighing over 100 tons) until it was made safe. The bosses (the US Chicago Bridge Co. and the Weir Group) docked two hours' wages. After initial talks with shop stewards, in which the bosses refused to budge, a yard meeting was called of the 900 workers on site.

They unanimously agreed to walk out in support of their brothers, and to stay out until the bosses both paid up and made the working conditions safe.

On Wednesday 10th September the pickets were confronted with about 200 police who demanded they disperse. The excuse was that they were on private ground.

The pickets held their ground and police moved in,

arresting 70 pickets. They were held at Largs police station for five hours, questioned twice, photographed and had their names run through the computers. 48 were charged with breach of the peace.

But the pickets got not much support from their own unions or from the Scottish TUC General Council. A delegation from the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee went to the General Council of the STUC to put their case and ask for support.

The General Council representatives, Jimmy Milne, John Pollock, Hugh Wyper, and others, gave assurance of support. The next day the strikers read in the Press a statement by Milne (the general secretary of the STUC) advising them to return to work and warning them that the threat by Phillips to tow away the half-finished platform should be taken seriously. In other words, they should cave in to the bosses' threats.

Since then the bosses have dismissed the 900 strikers and closed the yard (though the threat to tow the platform away seems rather empty: it would involve a giant operation with scab labour).

Messages of support and donations to: JSSC [Hunterston dispute], Irving TUC club, Ardrossan Road, Irving, Ayrshire.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

by ALEXIS CARRAS

A SIGH OF relief has gone up in all quarters of the Turkish and the international capitalist class since the military takeover in Turkey on September 12th.

In the United States and Western Europe, political leaders have expressed their 'understanding' of the necessity for this military coup and their confidence in the Turkish military. Regret and sorrow for the dismemberment of 'Turkish democracy' was added on as an afterthought.

There seems to be no doubt that there was a great deal of very close liaison between the Turkish military and NATO in bringing about this coup d'etat. Newspaper reports have approvingly remarked on the scenes of jubilation and relief witnessed at the headquarters of NATO's east Mediterranean operations in Izmir. As one NATO officer put it, "The prospect of worsening strife had us worried. Something had to be done."

At the time of the military coup, the NATO forces were engaged in a large military operation in the Western Thrace region of Turkey. They still are. Only Belgium has pulled out of the operation.

Spying

There is no question of the EEC suspending its relations with Turkey and indefinitely postponing negotiations on Turkish entry to the Common Market, as happened with Greece in 1967 when the Colonels took power.

Since 1967 the political climate in Europe and the rest of the world has changed. The imperialists are preparing for another Cold War. Rearming and bellicose sabre-rattling have become the order of the day.

A quick glance at the map will show how crucial Turkey is for the imperialists. Stretching from the Aegean to the East where it borders on Iran, it also shares a 1,000 mile border with the Soviet Union. On its soil are some of NATO's most sophisticated spying and surveillance installations.

NATO guns against Turkish workers

Three electronic spying installations supply the United States with about 25% of its information concerning the siting of Soviet missile bases. The three bases at Sinope, Belbasi and Diyarbakir furnish invaluable material for the Atlantic alliance, on Soviet military movements, underground nuclear testings and satellite movements.

Turkey also has a very extensive coast line on the Black Sea and controls the narrow straits linking the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. The military base at Karamursel on the Sea of Marmara controls the passage of all Soviet ships entering the straits. All of the Soviet Union's southern naval installations are found in the Black Sea, and thus could be effectively neutralised by NATO closing the straits to Soviet ships and submarines.

Similarly, in the event of war, Russian ships in the Mediterranean would (in the words of General Kaplan, NATO's deputy military commander in Turkey) "be a sitting duck" for NATO's forces.

This crucial geographical position has become more important since the fall of the Shah in Iran. Under the Shah, Iran played an extremely important policing role for the West in the turbulent Middle East and Gulf region.

Since the overthrow of that regime and the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union, Turkey has been designated as the power to fill the gap.

With a combined military might of 566,000 men under arms, Turkey is well placed to fill this role.

However, for this perspective to become totally safe for imperialism, certain quite major problems had to be cleared out of the way.

Firstly, the arms embargo

which the United States Congress had placed on Turkey after its invasion and the partition of Cyprus in 1974, had to be lifted. This was done earlier this summer by Carter, and now the process of monitoring and updating Turkey's antiquated military equipment and hardware has begun.

Secondly, the serious rift between Turkey and neighbouring Greece, which emerged after the Cyprus invasion, which led to the

political turmoil in Turkey over the last few years, had to be stamped out.

Debt

The salvaging of the collapsing Turkish economy by the extension of massive loans and the rescheduling of Turkey's debt (by now running into many billions of dollars) had to be extracted at a price, dictated by the IMF: massive devaluation,



departure of the right wing Greek government under Karamanlis from the military organisation of NATO and seriously weakened NATO's southern flank, has also to be overcome. The failure of the Greek government to condemn the coup in Turkey is probably motivated by some hope that the new Turkish military rulers will come to some mutually acceptable agreement, which the previous civilian governments of Ecevit and Demirel seemed incapable of doing.

Stamp

Thirdly, and most importantly, the resistance of the Turkish workers, and the

army.

Workers' demonstrations and May Day celebrations were banned. Worker militants and trade unionists were kidnapped and their bodies found abandoned by some roadside, horribly mutilated. The lucky ones were arrested and imprisoned by the military governors ruling by martial law in over 19 provinces.

Killings were averaging five a day. In the last two years, over 5,500 people were killed the majority the victims of neo-fascist paramilitary gangs.

The failure of the leadership of the Turkish working class to offer a revolutionary solution to the crisis of Turkish capitalism and to break decisively the back of the far-right groups (whose actions were deliberately calculated to provoke the imposition of military rule), the splintering of the workers' resistance

of social strife which the junta will be unable to control?

Already assassinations of leading police and authorities and military personnel have been reported and in the Southern city of Adana, there was a large-scale armed resistance against the army only hours after the takeover.

If Evren and his cronies are incapable of crushing the workers, waiting in the wings are the military far-right, politically aligned to the neo-fascist leader Alparslan Turkes. Turkes was the only major political leader in the country forewarned of the impending coup and thus able to avoid immediate arrest; probably he was tipped off by some highly-placed military sympathiser. The influence of his reactionary movement is known to be extensive in many levels of the army, the police and the civil service.

It is the duty of socialists in Britain to launch a solidarity campaign with the workers of Turkey, to expose the lies of the bosses' press here, to expose the intrigues of NATO in preparing for the coup with the Turkish generals, to actively black arms shipments and all economic aid to the Junta, and to campaign for the restoration of full democratic trade union, political and national rights for the Turkish masses.

As part of this campaign, Socialist Organiser supporters and the Turkish Solidarity Campaign are calling for placards and banners denouncing the Turkish coup and NATO's role on the CND demonstration in Blackpool on Sunday 28th September, on the eve of the Labour Party conference.

Socialist Organiser supporters will also be trying to get Turkey on the Conference agenda as an emergency resolution. We call on all rank and file delegates to the conference to sign a petition which will be circulating, asking Standing Orders Committee to allocate speaking time.

into small groups, some of which took the road of desperate individual terrorism, meant that the military coup was a matter of 'when' rather than 'if'. It was only a matter of time before the military would spread its already extensive martial control of huge areas of the country to the entire expanse of Turkey and demolish the few remaining democratic rights.

The question that now remains is whether General Evren and his junta will be able to smash the Turkish workers. Have years of fruitless struggle and sacrifice managed to demoralise the workers, so that they will accept the military's will? Or will there be another round

sweeping price rises in all basic commodities, rationalisation of many industries previously shielded from foreign competition by the state, the de-nationalisation of many industries, and more freedom for foreign investment.

For the working class this spell even more misery, as wages were cut to (literally) starvation level and unemployment, already over 20% according to official figures, climbed even further. The huge shanty towns outside the major cities kept growing, industry ground to a halt, power cuts were a daily feature of life, medical services were non-existent and strikes were brutally smashed by the gendarmes and the

2,000 march to stop Cruise

"IF WE can make sure that workers won't build the sites, then we won't have to sit down in front of the gates".

In over an hour of speeches, this comment from UCATT official Derek Shepherd drew the loudest and longest applause from about 2,000 people who had marched from Newbury to Greenham Common in opposition to the siting of 96 Tomahawk Cruise missiles at the currently little-used American air base.

This demonstration brought together for the first time many of the rapidly growing anti-nuclear weapons campaign groups in the South.

Also driven home by several speakers was the shift in NATO strategy, away from primary reliance on aiming at civilian targets for a 'second strike' following a supposed

attack by Soviet missiles, to 'first strike' Cruise and Trident missiles which — it is openly argued — will be aimed at military targets and used to pre-empt Soviet action.

In simple terms, this means that NATO leaders are now admitting that the job of Western nuclear missiles is to start a war, abandoning the thin claim that NATO is defensively orientated to deter possible attack.

Feeling in the South against the missiles is strong. A single ward branch of Basingstoke CLP drew over 70 people to a public meeting on the issue the previous week. After the constituency's positions against Cruise and Trident, for unilateral nuclear disarmament, and for Britain out of NATO now, had been outlined, eight new recruits were made on the spot.

MARCH AGAINST NUCLEAR WEAPONS
Called by CND, supported by the Labour Party. Sunday 26th October, 11am, Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park, London

Socialist Organiser has produced a leaflet to mobilise for October 26th, with the slogans: Britain out of NATO, unilateral nuclear disarmament. Order: £5 per 1,000 from SO, 5 Stamford Hill, London N16

In the same week, Basingstoke schoolchildren were asked by US airforce representatives to search for pieces of the Hornet aircraft which scattered large pieces of its engines across Basingstoke town centre before crashing some miles away. One NUT member told SO: "It's disgraceful the way they are using the kids. If I find anything I'll send it to the Russian Embassy".

The campaigns are going from strength to strength. The next event in Basingstoke is a day-school on October 11th, at which the suppressed film *The War Game* will be shown.

WE WON'T DIE FOR THATCHER

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MARCH AGAINST MISSILES
Called by CND supported by the Labour Party
Sunday 26th October
11am
Speakers' Corner
Hyde Park
London
P.P. Socialist Organiser, 5 Stamford Hill, London N16

Nothing to worry about... but

LAST WEEK, on a site near Damascus, Arkansas, a Titan II missile, capable of exploding with the force of 450 Hiroshimas, was launched by mistake. It went 300 yards into the air, travelled 200 yards and then fell into a nearby wood.

The Pentagon was quick to assure everyone that there could have been no nuclear explosion. It still killed one person and injured 22. 1,400 people were evacuated from a five mile radius (although many were not aware that an explosion had taken place), and the airspace for 15 miles around was closed.

A maintenance worker had dropped a spanner which fractured one of the fuel tanks. It began to leak. Eight hours later it went on fire and the fire must have launched the missile.

While it is difficult to set off a nuclear bomb by accident, the missile was still dangerous. These Titan type missiles have had

125 accidents since 1963. They are powered with liquid fuel, which is extremely dangerous and volatile.

If the Titan had broken up, as it easily could have done if it had come down on a built up area, massive and deadly radiation leaks would have occurred. It was sheer luck that did not happen.

Official statements on these accidents in America are always angled to reassure the public, but even less information is forthcoming when events take a nasty turn in Britain. As the *Guardian* pointed out on September 20th, there are around 30,000 nuclear weapons around the world. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, there have been about three dozen major accidents and well over 100 incidents involving nuclear weapons recently.

But the British authorities will not reveal how their record compares with this average.