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back Palestinian
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Red Youth

SUPPLEMENT



Russian troops at the ready

BREZHNEV'S LETTER: NOTICE OF INVASION?

"Put your house in order—or we'll knock it down for you". This was the blunt warning lurking beneath the diplomatic wording of a letter sent by the Soviet Communist Party to its Polish sister party last week.

The 7-page letter was effectively a call on pro-Moscow hardliners within the Polish Communist Party to oust the present Party leader Stanislaw Kania and to implement an immediate crackdown on political opposition both inside and outside the Party.

If no such crackdown took place, the letter tacitly suggested, then there would be no alternative but an invasion.

Compromise

But Kania stood his ground against this attack. While himself promising to launch a crackdown on political opposition, he defended his own approach of seeking to defuse Solidarity's demands through reform and compromise.

And his stand won the backing of the most influential forces on the Polish Central Committee. The Moscow line succeeded in enlisting the support primarily of the disgruntled and isolated Stalinist old guard, almost all of whom have already been stripped of

their positions and rejected by those party members they are supposed to represent.

In what amounted to two separate votes of confidence in the Kania leadership, the pro-Moscow faction secured the backing of little more than 20 out of the 120 CC members at the meeting.

Rebuff

Kania's support came largely from the provincial parties, factory representatives and the military—those still holding office and feeling it necessary to respond to the feelings of the rank and file.

This rebuff to an unusually open move by Moscow to influence the Polish Party poses Brezhnev with a major headache as the date for the Polish CP congress looms ever closer.

His initial letter had been prompted by the growing recognition in the Kremlin that the pressure of the working class is now placing a question mark over the reliability of the Polish Communist Party itself.

Defeated

Seasoned Stalinist stalwarts are finding themselves defeated by militant opponents in the elections of delegates to next month's party congress.

Already over one-third of the Polish CP's 3 million members have joined the



Happier times: Kania with Brezhnev

independent union Solidarity—leaving the old "official" unions nothing but an empty shell.

150,000 Party members have resigned in disgust at their leaders' opposition to Solidarity.

But others have taken the fight into the Party itself—often with devastating results for the old bureaucratic Party chiefs.

Party meetings are beginning to seethe with political debate as sections of workers begin to raise demands for democratic reforms and accountability of their leaders.

Hopes of either drawing the Solidarity leaders into the apparatus of the state or seeking through an influx of party members to exert some control over Solidarity have been dashed.

The militancy of the working class keeps Solidarity leaders under constant

pressure while the same militancy within the working class membership of the Communist Party has helped bring about the purge of over 70,000 party bureaucrats since the mass struggles began last August.

Small wonder therefore that it is the crumbling control of the leadership over the Party which is the major focal point of the criticisms and threats in Brezhnev's letter. It complains for instance that:

"In the past period the situation inside the PUWP [Communist Party] itself has become a subject of particular concern. Little more than a month remains before the Party congress. Despite this, it is the forces hostile to socialism who are more and more setting the pace in the campaign for the election of delegates and of the leadership bodies."

It is this analysis which underlies the repeated assertion in Brezhnev's letter that "anti-socialist", "anti-communist" and "anti-Soviet" forces are gaining the upper hand in Poland:

"They are carrying out a struggle for power and are already winning it."

There is an open call for the reimposition of full-scale censorship:

"We called particular attention to the fact that the enemy had gained control of the mass information media which, for the greater part, had become instruments of anti-socialist activities and which were being used to undermine socialism and disorganise the party."

The letter complains that Polish leaders Kania and Jaruzelski, even after verbally agreeing with Moscow's criticisms, had done nothing to change their "policy of concessions and compromise":

"One position after another was surrendered without taking into account the documents of the last Central Committee plenum, drawing attention to the counter revolutionary threat."

The fact that the same Kania and Jaruzelski have now secured a substantial vote of confidence from the Central Committee poses problems both in Warsaw

and in Moscow.

The Warsaw leaders now have to make good some of the pledges they have just made to crack down on political dissidents and reimpose censorship.

They have talked of tightening restrictions on the possession and use of private duplicators and on unofficial publications.

Situation bleak

They have announced plans to get industry working six days a week by the introduction of shift work—a move likely to be resisted by many militants.

But for Moscow the new situation is also bleak. They have not simply failed to oust Party leaders they find unacceptably weak: they have in the process demonstrated for all to see how weak is the popular base of their most loyal followers.

The letter may have attracted a group of Polish Stalinists prepared to endorse an invasion: but the isolation of these leaders from the masses also confirms the huge scale of popular opposition such an invasion would confront.

But it would be wrong to conclude that their political weakness in Poland will force the Moscow leaders to take no action.

On the contrary, the more tenuous bureaucratic control becomes in Poland, the more the Moscow leaders

are forced to contemplate desperate military measures to crush the forward movement of the Polish masses.

The fact is that—just like the Polish bureaucrats—the power and privileges of the Kremlin leaders rest not on their ownership of factories or other means of production but on their ability to retain their control over those means of production through police terror and repression of all forms of political opposition.

This is why the Kremlin bureaucrats look with horror at the emergence of Solidarity as the organised expression of the demands and self-confidence of the Polish working class; and why they look with dismay at the success of Solidarity's challenges to the power of the state.

They fear that the momentum of the struggles in Poland will permanently undermine the power of the Polish Stalinist leadership—and spread across Poland's borders into other deformed workers' states and into the USSR itself.

In Poland alone it is estimated that some 750,000 of the 3 million-strong CP occupy full-time party posts carrying varying degrees of power and material privilege. The numbers of such bureau-

Cont'd p.2, col 5.

Debray to act as Mitterand's calling-card in South America

One of the most interesting of the political appointments made by Francois Mitterand has been that of Regis Debray as the chief of his secretariat for foreign affairs.

The appointment has generated a storm of criticism and calumny in the capitalist press around the world, with accusations flying against Mitterand of having brought in a 'revolutionary'.

Debray's 'revolutionary' credentials, such as they are, are based on his period with Che Guevara among the Bolivian guerrillas in 1967, and before that in the Venezuelan Castroite movement.

In this sense, Debray embodies a great deal of the experience of the petit bourgeois revolutionists in the period since the Cuban revolution and the containment of that revolutionary impulse by Stalinism.

Debray was one of tens of thousands of revolutionaries who was led by the Cuban revolution to believe in the possibility of the guerrilla method as a means of overthrowing capitalism.

For a long period this view was predominant, especially in Latin America. Its long term effects have been nothing but disastrous for the workers and peasants of Latin America.

All the energies of the



Mitterand

revolutionaries came to be channelled into military activities and the problems of building the revolutionary party in the towns and cities were neglected.

The wave of guerrillaism eventually broke against the rock of US military support and technique.

Debray himself was cap-

tured and suffered three years' imprisonment in the notorious Camiri prison, despite an enormous international campaign for his release.

In 1970 he was released by General Juan Jose Torres, and took refuge in Allende's Chile. There he became a friend and adviser of Allende

and saw the collapse of that regime.

On his return to France he wrote a 'self criticism', rejecting his earlier views on armed struggle, and after a period of sympathy for the Althusserian current in the French Communist Party, eventually joined the Parti Socialiste in 1974.

Mitterand was quick to make use of Debray's intellectual abilities in various party commissions, and also as his 'calling card' in tours of Mexico, Cuba, Venezuela and Costa Rica.

In 1977 Debray was awarded the literary prize Prix Femina for his novel 'La neige brule', (The Snow Burns) and donated the money to the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, the French section of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

By July 1979 his 'revolutionary' credentials still seemed to hold good, as he was one of the first visitors to the victorious Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

A taste of Debray's present politics can be obtained from his most recent published interview, just two weeks before his appointment to Mitterand's secretariat, given to the Danish journal, 'Information'.

In his view, the election of Mitterand is an event of global significance, because:

"The election of Francois Mitterand could promote the development of many decision making centres

around the world, putting an end to the present bipolarity of international politics and giving a new weight to the nations taking their positions between Washington and Moscow."

This of course is no more than the old style 'third worldism' of the 1960s dressed up in modern clothes. However, Debray thinks that things are actually even better than that:

"The election of a socialist president of France is undeniably going to contribute to preventing a drift to cold war which has been visible in recent years, but a Soviet military adventure in Poland would bring an end to détente."

He is of course careful to add that he thinks such an hypothesis 'improbable'.

There are indications of a slide towards anti-communism in Debray's interview. He believes that the French Communist Party cannot play any important part in French political life because of the desertion of the party by its intellectuals. This is a flimsy excuse indeed for denying ministerial positions to communists while grant-

ing them to the MRG and to Jobert.

There is no doubt that Debray will be of enormous value to Mitterand in Latin America, where there exist enormous markets for French high technology exports—particularly in telecommunications and nuclear power.

As a representative of the 'revolutionary' generation of the 1960s, Debray will have an automatic entree with any new left wing government of any complexion in Latin America, and will give French exports a massive competitive lead over the USA.

It is also likely that he will be put to work reconstructing relations with the states of francophone Africa. Mitterand's support for de Gaulle in the Algerian war is still vividly recalled, and stands as a barrier to his present "socialist" credibility.

Some such figure as Debray is therefore urgently needed if France is to take full advantage of the growing fear of Gaddafi's interventions in other North African states.

Left wing boost for French fascists

By Ernie Stubbins

Every political movement must carry with it all the burdens of its own history.

For the extreme right wing, at least in Europe, the record of Hitler's atrocities before and during the Second World War stands as a massive obstacle to the building of any credible mass movement.

More recently the world has witnessed the appearance of a singularly distasteful movement dignifying itself with the title of 'historical revisionism', the main tenet of which is that the entire history of the Second World War has been falsified by Zionists and Bolsheviks.

ponents of this view spend a great deal of time in attempts to prove that there

was no genocide practiced by the Nazis against the Jews and others.

It would seem to be a hopeless task, given the enormous volume of documentary evidence that exists, but there now exists a small group of fanatical 'historians' dedicated to publishing refutations of everything that is known about the holocaust.

Most of them are grouped together under the umbrella of the 'Institute for Historical Review'.

One of the most recent writers to contribute to the 'no holocaust' propaganda is one Robert Faurisson, a 52 year old lecturer who has been engaged in a spirited written polemic with more realistic historians over his repeated assertion that there were no gas chambers. He has gone so far as to accuse his opponents of 'manipulation' and 'falsification of texts'.

During the first few days of this month several groups involved in anti-racist and anti-fascist work, together with associations representing former members of the Resistance and their families and families of war dead, came together to bring a civil case against Monsieur Faurisson accusing him of willful falsification of history.

Such cases are not unique in France. A similar case was brought against Paul Rassinier. The unique feature of the Faurisson case is that the publishers of Faurisson's tracts are an

obscure left wing group called Vieille Taupe (Old Mole).

It appears that Vieille Taupe supports Faurisson not simply from a 'free speech' position, but from a basis of actually agreeing with his assessment of the historical evidence.

They view as beneficial any attempts to demolish 'myths'.

This may be the first occasion when the 'revisionist' virus has shown itself to be capable of infecting parts of the left wing, and it should stand as a serious warning to anti-fascists around the world.

In Britain groups such as the British Movement and the League of St. George are making increasing use of material produced by the 'historical revisionists', particularly in the BM papers aimed at school students.

The verdict of the trial, together with the result of a counter-case brought by Faurisson against one of his critics, will be announced later this month.

The whole bizarre affair leaves the impression of the complete inability of the legal system to deal with the revival of the far right, even in the newly 'socialist' France.

The closing moments of the trial were marked by an unanswered outcry from one of the accusing lawyers:

"Where are our families Monsieur Faurisson? Where are our parents? Are they hiding somewhere and living under false names like the Nazis?"

NO SOLUTION TO ITALIAN CRISIS

The question remains the same: who can govern Italy?

But the answer last week became more elusive than ever.

That is because the answer has, if possible, to

POLAND

From front page

crats in the Soviet Union and in other states of Eastern Europe are larger.

It is these people who—in defence of their own positions—are warning of the danger to "socialism" represented by Solidarity, and called for measures to crush the Polish mass movement.

As the Kania leadership in Poland—its prestige temporarily enhanced by its stand against the Moscow ultimatum—prepares for the political test of next month's Party congress, the Kremlin leadership will be considering their next steps.

In 1968, under cover of opposing "anti-soviet" forces, Khrushchev sent Russian troops into Czechoslovakia on the eve of the Czech Party conference once it became clear that the established leadership was losing control of the Party.

The defence of the gains made in Poland since the strikes began last August demands not simply the development of a conscious revolutionary leadership in the Polish working class, but also the fight for solidarity action by workers in the USSR and other East European states to oppose any moves to an invasion and mobilise mass opposition to bureaucratic rule.

satisfy two conditions: the first is that the Prime Minister cannot be a Christian Democrat.

That seemed to be proved last week when outgoing Premier Arnaldo Forlani abandoned his efforts to form a new centre-left coalition.

Corruption

This is because his party, the majority party of the Italian bourgeoisie, is now more steeped than ever in the stench of corruption and scandal—after a long list of its senior members were implicated in Licio Gelli's notorious masonic lodge, known as P2.

If non-membership of the Christian Democrats were the only condition for forming an Italian government there would be few problems.

There are plenty of willing candidates for the Premiership, in particular Bettino Craxi, the Socialist Party leader.

Second condition

The trouble is that there is a second condition: that the Premier cannot be anything other than a Christian Democrat, because the Christian Democrats are unwilling to relinquish government leadership which they have monopolised since 1945.

If these two conditions are absolutely rigid then logically minded readers will rightly conclude that it is impossible to form any government at all.

The same conclusion will

sooner or later be reached by the less logically minded Italian political establishment and the Socialist Party President Sandro Pertini will therefore have to call new general elections.

Italian politicians, however, are so terrified of submitting their besmirched record to the electorate it may just be that one or other of the conditions prove less than absolute.

At present the leader of the tiny bourgeois Republican Party, Giovanni Spadolini is now attempting to break the second condition by forming the first post war government led by a non-Christian Democrat.

Same trick

Spadolini's predecessor, Ugo La Malfa who tried the same trick two years ago, failed to form a government and died shortly afterwards.

Even if Spadolini succeeds in the lesser miracle of forming a government it is hard to believe him capable of the greater miracle of keeping in office for more than a few weeks.

Elections now look almost inevitable. But there is little that they can solve for the bourgeoisie.

Their most likely result at present would be the strengthening of the Communist Party which has been relatively untainted by the recent scandals.

It is now very unlikely that any major step will be taken until the parties receive a sign from the results of the local elections on June 21.

NEW!

Socialist Press pamphlet on South Africa
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Fascists mount Coventry murder campaign: labour movement must act!

Fascists in Coventry are continuing to pursue their organised campaign of terror.

The change in the last two weeks is that they are carefully planning their attacks and selecting their victims. Further the attacks are now made with the intent to kill.

The operation is being followed at top level: photo-

graphs of fascists at the May 23 demonstration identify no less than five senior fascist leaders from the NF, NNI and BM.

The application by the NNI to march through the predominantly black Foleshill area on June 20 the same day as an anti-fascist rock festival is part of the same strategy to wind up the pressure in Coventry.

The fascists know that if they were to march without massive police protection, they would not get one yard.

But they are acting boldly in the knowledge that the cowardice and treachery of the right wing leadership of the labour movement will allow them to win a propaganda victory.

Already the screams of these traitors alongside those of the Tory press and race relations industry, for a ban on the march has given their laughable threat a credibility it does not deserve.

The fascists know that if the march goes ahead, the many thousands of police needed to protect them will allow the Tory press to attack not only the anti-fascists and the labour movement but also the bourgeois democratic right to demonstrate.

If the march is banned besides boosting their credi-

bility, it will also ban all labour movement and anti-fascist activity thereby giving the fascists a breathing space in which to launch more terror attacks.

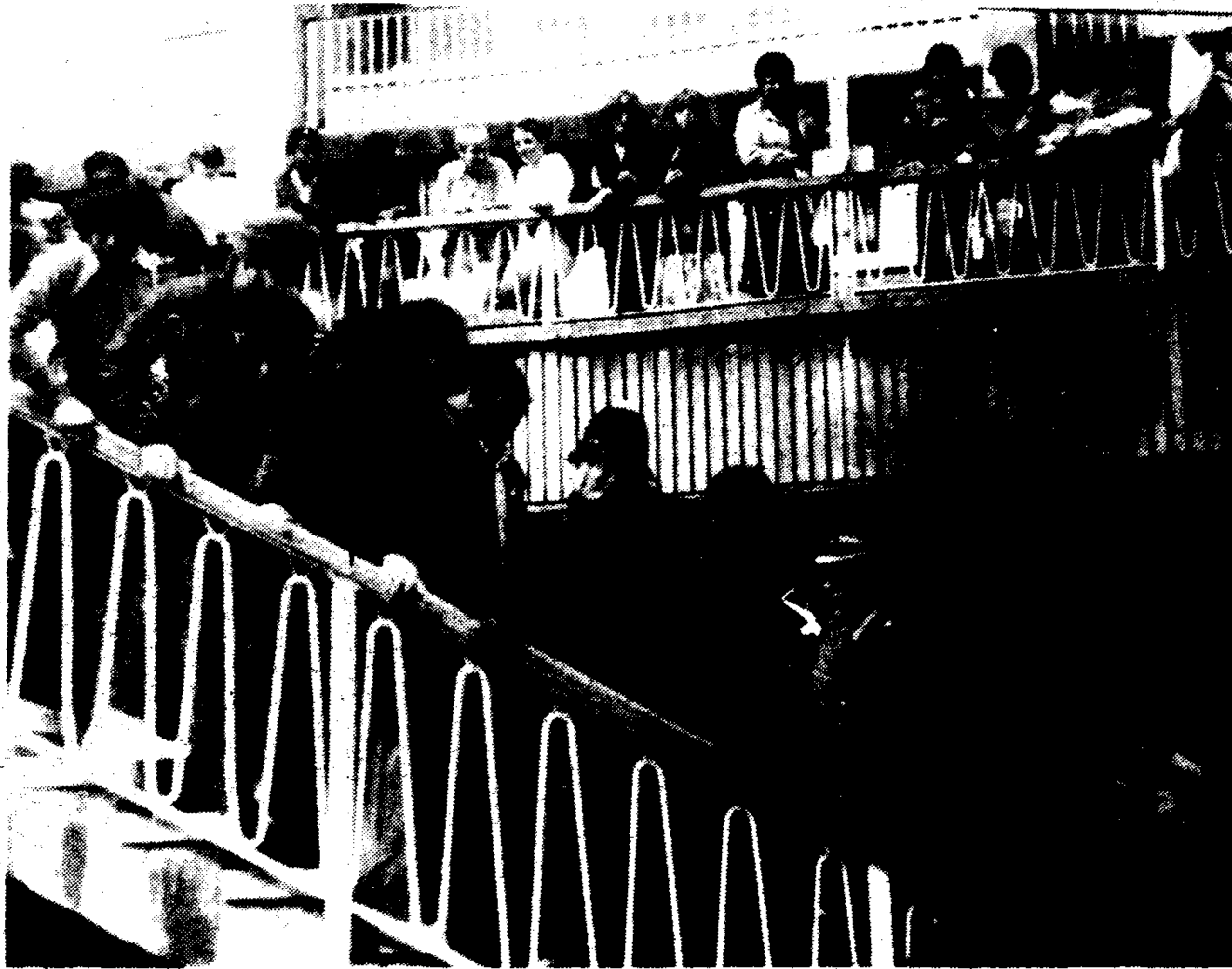
Socialist Press has consistently argued that the individual bravery of black youth and militants of the labour movement will be sacrificed for nothing, if the struggle is not at the same time launched against those labour movement traitors who consistently block the fight to crush the fascists.

Political lead

The duty of all serious militants, within the labour movement must be to give the necessary political lead at the same time as building the immediate defence of those under racist attack.

Those like the RCT who try to build themselves on the frustration of the youth, not through political direction but shameful stunt politics, cannot be too strongly condemned.

Declaring themselves as "Coventry's workers' self defence squad" (all half a dozen of them), they then have the nerve to take the *Tory* press on a "vigilante patrol" to show how they are "protecting" the black



The first anti-fascist mobilisation in Coventry's precinct

community.

They then disclaim all responsibility when every attempt by the black and white labour movement to build a real workers' anti-fascist defence is labelled in the press as being the work of a London-based vigilante group.

Lighting the labour movement traitors in every branch and ward is not the simple matter of proposing motions and having them rejected; nor does it entail making deals with

reformists and 'lefts' which fizzle to nothing under a right wing majority.

A basis exists for a real fight inside the labour movement for workers' solutions to the fascist threat.

The May 23 demonstration of 12,000 people represented a truly massive mobilisation for a city of the size of Coventry. Further the genuine fear and confusion of the left reformist leadership provides enormous opportunities for the build-

ing of anti-racist defence in

the labour movement. The left can easily be made to fight through a mobilisation of support for workers' self defence—because they have nowhere else to turn.

Militants while totally opposing all forms of state bans on the fascists must counter-propose the demand on the labour movement leadership for facilities for anti-racist defence. We must demand offices, telephones, printing facilities, trans-

port and finance as a first step.

In every workplace where workers are exposed to danger from the fascists, the bosses must be made to finance labour movement protection.

Blacking action must be taken up by unions against fascists in schools, colleges and factories.

Enquiry

An organised labour movement enquiry must be set up in the West Midlands to investigate the fascists in every town, and to report regularly as to their movements, membership and activities.

Such an enquiry should be linked to a campaign to drive the fascists out of all labour organisations.

Every inch that the right wing are forced to concede will allow the possibility of bringing new layers into the organisations of the labour movement, with fresh energy to defeat the class traitors.

*No to police/state bans on the fascists!

*For labour movement organisation and finance of anti-fascist defence!

*Build black and white labour movement defence squads!

*Build unemployed workers unions to organise the unemployed!

*Drive the fascists off the streets of Coventry!

*Blame the bosses not the blacks—smash their race attacks!

Sacked —for being gay

Susan Shell is the latest victim of anti-gay prejudice in employment.

Susan was sacked on May 13 from her job in a home for adolescent girls run by the London Borough of Barking.

When the Director of Residential Care discovered that Susan Shell was a lesbian she was asked to resign and, when she refused, was summarily dismissed.

This case follows others in recent months in which workers have been sacked for being gay. The most publicised have been the cases of Gordon Wiseman, a lecturer in Salford and John Saunders, a maintenance worker at a Scottish youth camp.

The legal decisions which have followed these sackings have now established that the employment law of Britain asserts that it is "reasonable" for an employer to dismiss a worker for being gay if their work involves any contact at all with young people.

This puts tens of thousands of gay people (especially in education and social services) in danger of losing their jobs and forced to live their sexual lives in secrecy and dominated by fear.

This is a major issue for the whole labour movement. Susan Shell needs immediate support from all labour movement bodies.

But her defence must also be seen as part of a campaign to repeal the present discriminatory legislation and end the scandal of anti-gay discrimination at work.

Socialist Press readers are urged to put a motion to their union or Labour Party branch on the following lines:

"This branch condemns the action of the London Borough of Barking in sacking Susan Shell because she is a lesbian. It demands her immediate and unconditional reinstatement."

Copies of these motions and/or equivalently worded petitions should be sent to Gay Rights at Work, 7, Pickwick Court, London SE9 4SA.

Irish car workers win important victory on jobs

After three months of industrial action, workers at the Talbot plant in Dublin have defeated an attempt to make 90 car assembly workers redundant.

Rumours started in January that the company was going to phase-out car assembly. The workers responded by a one-day sit-in and picket of the plant.

On March 23 90 redundancies were announced and the entire workforce went into occupation.

Management responded with legal action against the workers and on March 25 they were threatened with jail sentences unless they ended the occupation.

After initial resistance the workers ended the occupation but continued with strike action and a picket of the plant.

Sit-in

At the beginning of June a group of workers staged another sit-in defying the court ruling.

On June 10 all 90 workers threatened with redundancy were offered alternative employment in light engineering with no loss of pay or benefits. They were also offered opportunities of retraining.

The 90 car assembly jobs



Dublin workers march against tax increases

are going to the Dunlop plant in Cork, creating new jobs for workers in the area.

The Talbot workers have agreed to accept this offer but are retaining a picket until the agreement is signed.

Meanwhile a strike over pay and working conditions by 120 ASTMS members at the Educational Building Society has now entered its sixth week.

Strike

And on June 4 porters and boilermen at the Lays Rotunda Hospital in Dublin began an unofficial strike.

Ancillary workers at all the Dublin Voluntary Services Board hospitals withdrew a threat of selective industrial action in pursuit of a pay claim earlier this year, while they awaited the outcome of a Labour Court Enquiry. On June 9 the Enquiry rejected the workers' claim for higher wages.

The porters and boilermen at the Rotunda Hospital have given a lead to all the Dublin workers by taking the first step towards a victory.

Sackings in the six counties

In the six counties on 8 June 200 redundancies were announced at the Goodyear factory at Craigmavon.

This follows the sacking of 72 workers in the transport department last week and the announcement that a further 210 clerical workers at the factory will lose their jobs by the beginning of July.

The trade union leaders, rather than giving a lead to the workforce in a fight to save the jobs have instead appealed to the company to come clean about its future plans which they predict will be the closure of the entire factory.

On June 10, 630 workers were sacked at Courtaulds in Campsie, Derry. This follows the sacking of the entire workforce at the Carrickfergus factory in February of this year with the loss of 306 jobs.

The Campsie factory has only been in operation for 5 years and received £20 million in government funds.

The Goodyear factory which has received £6

million in government subsidies made an average profit of £1.7 million in the first nine years of its operation.

The company says that they lost £1.5 million in 1980.

There are no indications that trade union leaders at either factory are prepared to wage a struggle against multinational companies who come to Ireland, attracted by the possibilities of fat profits at the expense of the workers, only to withdraw once those profits are threatened.

Workers at the Eurowald plant in East Belfast gave a lead to the workers in the six counties by going into occupation in February of this year at the announcement of the closure of their factory—owned by PX O'Neill of America.

Workers throughout the 32 counties are continually demonstrating their willingness to fight attacks by employers on their jobs, wages and working conditions.

The firemen, workers in Dublin Corporation's Direct Works department and

employees of the Western Regional Fisheries Board are all threatening all-out strike action in the immediate future.

While workers are willing to fight they are shackled by a leadership which acts at every step to hold back and isolate struggles, and gives no policies for action to defend against the attacks of the employers and their state.

Every resistance against the employers and the government has been built by workers themselves against the obstacle of the union leadership.

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Foot sells Healey line to GMWU

Conference report by John Lister

Michael Foot had most of them eating out of his hand in Brighton last week.

And he was feeding them on a diet of Dennis Healey campaign propaganda.

Half his speech was in opposition to democracy in the Labour Party and the other half peddling Foot's confused line on multilateral nuclear disarmament.

Snide references to those backing Tony Benn and the struggle for democracy within the Labour Party drew spontaneous applause.

Tiny

But then Foot was not addressing just any trade union conference. He was speaking to the 452 delegates attending the GMWU annual congress, held in the gloom of Brighton's Dome pavilion.

The union—despite losses brought by the recession—has over 900,000 members. The conference is therefore tiny in proportion to most union delegate conferences.

But the size is only one aspect of the lack of democracy in the GMWU.

Delegates at the conference are selected and resolutions moved on the floor of the Congress not from branches but from Regional Councils. Many branches are not even represented on their own Regional Councils.

Through such a mechanism, the anger of rank and file militants is as far as possible filtered out long before it disturbs the routine tranquility of the annual congress.

"Moderate"

A succession of mandated "moderate" speakers can therefore be conjured up at a moment's notice on the platform to endorse the Basnett leadership's line with lengthy, monotonous and laboriously-prepared contributions.

Most craven of all were the succession of tired old hacks wheeled out from "around the regions" to back up the GMWU leadership's "Special Motion" setting out a so-called "Campaign for Full Employment", after the various opposing resolutions had been moved.

One after another they droned on about the "realism" and "firmness" of the motion which specifically avoided any commitment to action in defence of jobs.

Gesture

Instead it called simply for priority to be given to "minimising the effects" of bosses' plans for redundancy, natural wastage, cuts and closures; threw in a gesture of support for a shorter working week and cuts in overtime; and called vaguely for "control" over new technology.

Alternative composite motions—one calling for automatic support to industrial action taken in defence of jobs, and the other calling for "industrial and political action to resist Tory policies and drive the Tories from office"—were vigorously opposed by Basnett and heavily defeated.

But even in this carefully-controlled environment



Foot

things did not go all the right wing's way.

True, Basnett steam-rolled through a mandate to cast the union's 650,000 Labour Party votes against the electoral college formula adopted at the Wembley Conference.

But, somewhat surprisingly, the platform made no attempt to tie the same votes to support for Dennis Healey in the deputy leadership elections—adopting a rather surprisingly cautious "wait and see" stance that will leave the decision in the hands of the union's Executive.

Attempts to establish a process of consultation in the union to govern the casting of block votes were defeated; but the right wing suffered a setback when conference voted against the platform to submit GMWU MPs to periodic review. This decision followed on the defection of one of their sponsored MPs to the Social Democrats—to the evident embarrassment of the union

leadership.

Also carried against the platform was the decision to endorse a policy of unconditional withdrawal from the Common Market. And earlier the left came within 40 votes of defeating the leadership's new multilateralist stance on nuclear disarmament in favour of a unilateralist position.

Absent

But it is hard to imagine a union conference in 1981 that is less typical of the political ferment now running through the entire workers' movement.

Though Basnett threw in a few perfunctory witch-hunting references to left groupings within the Labour Party, the seige atmosphere which dogs the right wing bureaucracy in other unions—from the EETPU to the CPSA—was significantly absent from the proceedings in the Dome.

Lumbered

Roy Jenkins, slower off the mark, found himself lumbered with an unwinnable campaign in a seat a good 100 miles north of his usual gastronomic haunts.

A preliminary check-out of the winnability of seats on the SDP's computer showed Warrington 555th out of 630. But computers can be wrong—and with Jenkins as their public face, this over-optimistic rating should obviously be revised downwards!

* Meanwhile there were screams of amazed outrage last week as the right wing Fabian Society voted by a narrow majority to bar SDP members from full membership.

SDP uses block vote

The bizarre ideas of "democracy" peddled by the Social Democratic Party were exposed to more public scrutiny last week.

On the one hand the undemocratic "block vote" of the Gang of Four proved decisive in the appointment of a leading businessman as the Party's Chief Executive.

The post, which carries a salary of £20,000, was open only to top managers.

Hefty losses

But the successful applicant, Mr Bernard Doyle, must be hoping that revenues from the SDP's credit card operations prove more healthy than those of his old firm Booker McConnell, where as chairman he presided over the transition from healthy profit to hefty loss.

On the other hand the SDP's procedures for selection of parliamentary candidates also emerged as strikingly unorthodox.

The contest was not

Press Gang



'Real bullets and she would not stand a chance'—that was one of the more lucid headlines amongst the jumbo sized hysteria of the Sunday papers.

The six blank shots fired by the young failed Marine commando at the Queen while she was trooping the colour gave the media an opportunity to cover a Royal assassination—only with less blood.

In fact the only blood on display came from the youth himself who was dragged by the hair over a security fence by one of Her Majesty's heroes.

This was a heaven-sent opportunity. The scope to whip up support for novel and draconian legislation is now virtually infinite—and it is a distinct advantage for the bourgeoisie that they have not actually had to lose their figure-head to reach such a position.

In fact a whole new cult in 'nearly' assassinations

seems to have emerged and it is by no means beyond the bounds of possibility that some sections of the British bourgeoisie have found it convenient to carry out a sham attempt.

Certainly Marcus Sarjeant has a pedigree suitable for such a role.

His grandmother told the *Sunday Mirror*:

"First he wanted to join the Army, then changed his mind and tried the Marines. He went off to train with them for a few weeks but gave up."

He said it was far too hard. Then he decided on the RAF but nothing seems to have come of that."

Well something did clearly—if they got the right bloke—even if only a love of high explosive.

The *Sunday People*, in what seems to be a ludicrous compilation of evidence discovered that a Folkstone bus (the home town of Sarjeant) had had a message scrawled on the back of a seat naming the day the Queen would be

shot. A double decker bus was later reported to be under arrest!

A Kent police spokesman said: "The bus has been removed from service and the seat in question has been taken from it. We have thoroughly checked the bus and we are now inspecting the seat."

This clear conspiracy by this bus seat (What colour was it? Red? Take that down constable!) has given a whole new twist to the trooping the colour.

Composure

A steady supply of heroes and heroines is essential for the ruling class.

According to the *People* "The whole nation was still marvelling at the Queen's amazing composure."

The truth is that whether by accident or design the whole working class will shortly be marvelling at the crackdown to come.



The Queen (right)

TV review

The Silent Majority

By Peter MacIntyre

"If you work on the ward, you have to be the person who says at some point 'go and amuse yourselves' and then goes and has a cup of tea".

Those were the words of a former placement nurse at Broughcourt Hospital for the mentally handicapped in Reading.

He was trying to show that the callous scenes appearing on our TV screens were not the result of callousness but were an inevitable result of the way the hospital was run and in particular the staffing levels.

Three nurses, facing a 12 hour shift, had just spent hours struggling to dress and feed more than 20 heavily dependent men. The result was to turn them loose into a fenced grassy compound.

The film which focussed on the plight of the mentally handicapped at both Broughcourt and St. Lawrence's, Surrey, (the old South London Asylum) has

come under attack.

Health officials have claimed that the film at Reading was obtained by deceit and that it has been taken out of context.

But the film had an evident integrity which those attacks did nothing to impute.

Warehouses

Large hospitals for the mentally handicapped—quite distinct from psychiatric hospitals which are for the mentally ill—have long been known to be warehouses.

What Nigel Evans' sensitive film did was bring to a wider audience the humanity of the mentally handicapped and the inhumanity of society towards them.

One patient staggered down the hall, arms outstretched and with dracula teeth sticking out of his mouth while another told the camera:

"Some of us are not half so mental as we are

supposed to be and we can take the mickey out of ourselves".

The most powerful sequence showed a young lad, Nicky, pulling tablecloths to the floor and overturning chairs in a desperate attempt to gain attention.

But as he looked around for help, the hard pressed nurses only had time to right the chairs or straighten the cloths.

Their final solution was to tie Nicky to a pillar where he struggled and wept against his bonds.

The isolation unit at St. Lawrence's contained one man who had been in solitary confinement (even the nurses called it a slammer).

The programme showed a circular from the Oxford Regional Health Authority saying that nobody should be in isolation for more than half an hour.

Criticism of the programme also claimed that it had been unfair to nurses. That was not so; it stressed that the nurses were the

victims of the system. The former placement worker said:

"It would be absurd to suppose you can provide care. It would be absurd to begin... (These nurses) are the best and most caring people around. That's why they responded to those wonderful adverts".

Greater tragedy

The weakness of the programme was that it failed to explain why these hospitals still exist so understaffed. Behind the tragedy on the screen lies the greater tragedy—the cuts of the Tory and Labour governments—and the callous indifference of the Thatcher government to what in many cases are already victims of inadequate health care.

It is the health unions which will not take up a real fight against these cuts and for decent social services who ought next to be investigated.

Why British workers should back Palestinian struggle

IAN SWINDALE reviews the pamphlet "Palestine: Our Struggle" by Roy Stoves and Barry Turner, published by the Bradford Labour Movement Campaign for Palestinian Solidarity.

Palestine, like Ireland, has been an area of struggle that has proved difficult to raise within the British labour movement in recent years.

The Zionist lobby here has been very successful, particularly within the Parliamentary Labour Party. So much so that, for example, the then acting Labour Party Chairman Ian Mikardo felt free at a Zionist anniversary officials at the Foreign Office as "public school-boys who share with the Arabs a common tendency towards homosexuality, romanticism and enthusiasm for horses".

The publication of the pamphlet *Palestine: Our Struggle* by the Bradford Labour Movement Campaign for Palestinian Solidarity is therefore very welcome.

It fills a gap by providing a very necessary short account of the Palestinian case backed by an economic use of important statistics and the very effective use of quotations from the Zionist leaders in Israel whose blunt speaking over the years has done much to confirm the claims made by Palestinians about the nature of the Israeli state.

The pamphlet begins with a brief account of the history and ideology of Zionism.

The authors show how Zionism emerged as the response of a minority of the Jewish middle class to a new wave of anti-semitism which was itself rooted in the decay of feudalism and the ongoing decline of capitalism.

Rejecting socialist internationalism, the Zionists retreated in the face of anti-semitism into another form of racialism.

Believing that it was impossible to eradicate anti-semitism in the non-Jewish communities, the Zionists argued that the only solution was the creation of a "safe haven" for Jewry.

However to achieve this meant driving other people from their homeland.



Palestinian militants revolt, 1936

Zionism developed at a period of history when European colonialism was at its height. In this context, the idea of dispossessing another people of their country was quite acceptable in European middle class circles.

Once Palestine was selected as the country, the Zionists began buying land from absentee Arab landlords and evicting the Arab peasant tenant farmers. A fund was established—the Jewish National Fund—which purchased land for Jewish settlers on condition that the land was never resold to Arabs.

But this process was too slow for the Zionists who under cover of British army suppression of Arab revolts in the 1920s and 1930s began military training.

By 1948—when the Israeli state was created—the Zionists already had 120,000 armed and trained fighters out of a total Jewish population of 589,000.

The UN plan for partition involved handing over 57% of the land area of Palestine to Israel. The new country would contain 510,000 Arabs and 500,000 Jews, while the Arab state would contain 809,000 Arabs and 89,000 Jews.

The Palestinians opposed the plan but they were never consulted. The Western capitalist powers backed the plan and so did Stalin.

When the British withdrew from Palestine in 1948 war immediately erupted.

The Israelis seized the opportunity presented by the war to expand their territory (to 77% of the land area of Palestine) and at the same time drove the Palestinian Arabs across the border, thus creating a majority of Jews within the new state.

Refugees

This they did, quite simply, by the use of mass terror. Massacres of villagers like that at Deir Yassin (carried out by Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin's Irgun terrorist group) were common; and of 500 Palestinian villages, 350 were completely destroyed.

900,000 Palestinian refugees were created by the war.

The pamphlet then goes on to discuss the 1967 war using quotes from Zionist military leaders to establish that Israel was not in danger of Arab invasion when the

Israelis launched their "pre-emptive" six-day war.

The authors then proceed to discuss the question "Is Israel Socialist?" by looking at two institutions that apologists for Zionism point to as evidence of Israeli "socialism"—the Kibbutzim and the Histadrut.

The Kibbutzim, far from being socialist cooperatives, are racially exclusive, based on previously destroyed Palestinian villages, and closely linked to the army.

36% of army officers are kibbutz members who in turn make up only 3% of the population.

Massacres

As for the Histadrut—the Zionist "trade union federation"—the authors point out that it was also racially exclusive until 1966; that its armed wing up to 1948—the Haganah—participated in massacres of Palestinians; and that the Histadrut is in fact the second largest employer in the country!

The racist nature of the Israeli state is clearly established in the pamphlet. The Law of Return and the Nationality Law of 1952 give Jews throughout the world the right to 'return' to Israel and to immediate Israeli citizenship. This law does not apply to non-Jews.

In practice this means that a Russian or British Jew can immediately move to Israel while a Palestinian who was born there and fled in 1948 is barred from returning.

Racial discrimination extends to work, housing and the health service. This section concludes with a statement made by David Hacoen, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Department of the Knesset to a visiting group of British MPs in 1973:

"But they are not human

beings, they are not people, they are Arabs".

The pamphlet goes on to discuss other aspects of the Middle East crisis—in particular the response of the Arab bourgeois regimes.

After their humiliating defeat in the 1967 war, the Arab leaders backed the PLO which had been formed by Nasser several years previously.

Their motive was to divert attention and disillusionment from their own failings.

El Fatch, the largest of the Palestinian guerrilla groups assumed the leadership of the PLO and created in Jordan (where most of the Palestinian refugees lived) a virtual state within a state for the Palestinian people.

This lasted until "Black September" in 1970 when King Hussein sent his army against the Palestinian guerrillas, crushing their resistance and ending their capacity to launch cross border raids into Israel.

The politics of the PLO are dealt with briefly as the authors point out the weakness of their purely nationalist programme for "a progressive, democratic and non-sectarian Palestine in which Christian, Moslem and Jew will worship, work, live peacefully and enjoy democratic rights".

Transfer

This is followed by sections on Israel's links with imperialism and recent developments in the area, including Lebanon.

The pamphlet concludes with a section on the support for Zionism in the British Labour Party.

"Palestine is a case . . . for the transfer of population. Let the Arabs be encouraged to move out as the Jews move in . . . The Arabs have very wide terri-



Begin with sponsor

tories of their own."

This quote is taken from the Labour Party's NEC report for 1944 and the political position contained within it is the result of long years of collaboration between Zionists and the British Labour Party.

At the end of the last century the struggle in many Jewish communities took the form of a conflict between socialism and Zionism. One consequence of this was the emergence of Labour Zionism, combining the ideas of Zionism and reformist social democracy.

In 1902 Poale Zion (Zionist Workers) groups were set up in England and began to attract support within the Labour Party for their Zionist goals.

Extreme right

In 1920 Poale Zion affiliated to the Labour Party. It remains affiliated to this day despite the fact that, for example, it constitutes part of the Zionist Federation of Great Britain which is controlled by supporters of the extreme right wing Herut Movement of Menachem Begin.

Such has been the support for Zionism within the Labour Party that within the Labour Cabinet Ministers in the 1945 Labour government actually supported and assisted the Zionists in their struggle at a time when the Zionists were fighting British troops in Palestine!

In the 1960s Poale Zion formed a front organisation "Labour Friends of Israel" which has received support from among others Peter Shore, Eric Heffer, Greville Janner, Ian Mikardo, Joe Gormley and Tony Benn.

But the biggest supporter of Zionism was Harold Wilson, who in return for his unwavering support for Israel received financial backing from leading capitalists to establish his "kitchen cabinet" in the aftermath of his 1970 electoral defeat.

On the other hand a group set up in 1969 called the Labour Middle East Council was for years prevented from affiliating

to the Labour Party despite the fact that it had the support of a number of Labour MPs.

It called for Israeli withdrawal from territory occupied in 1967 and supported the right of Palestinians to return to their homeland.

Deplorable

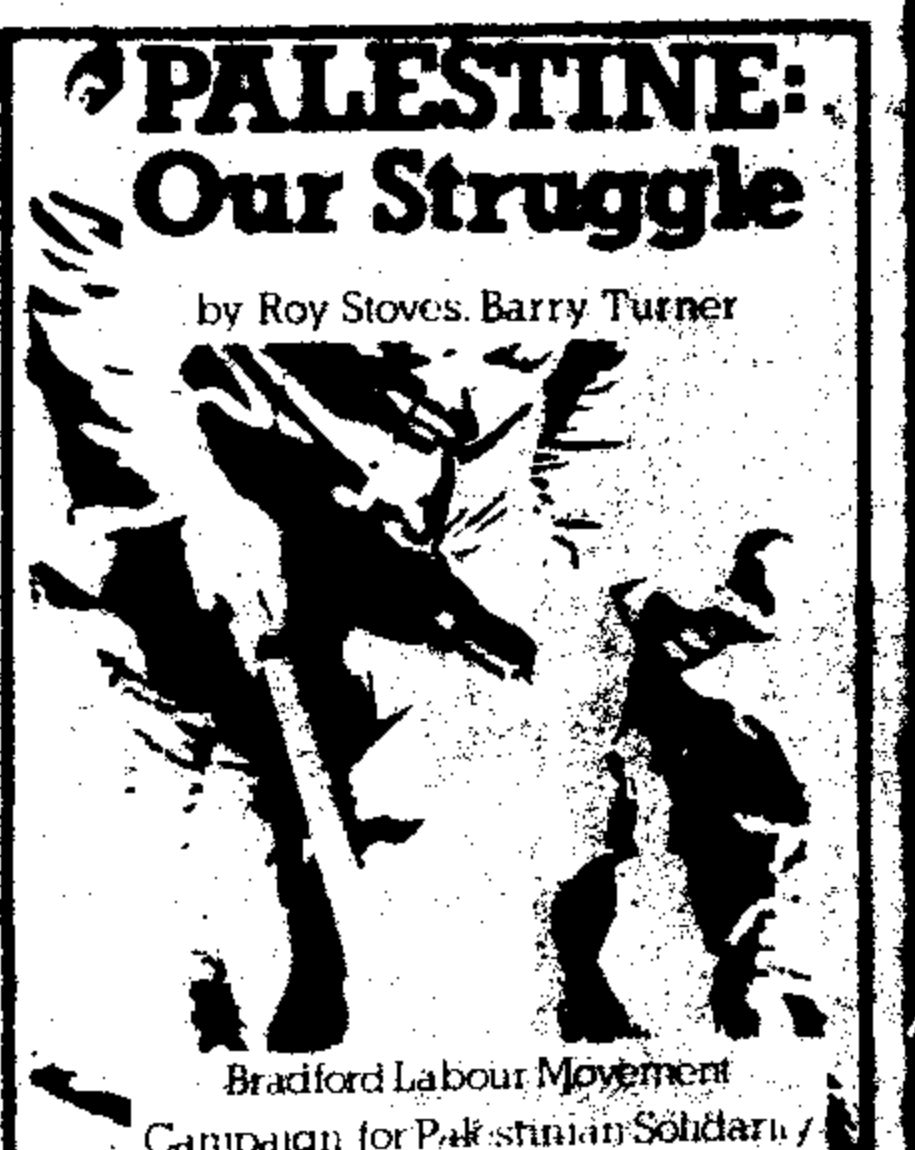
Clearly the record of the Labour Party on Palestine—as on most international questions, is deplorable.

But it has been possible through patient work to increasingly isolate those in the Labour Party who argue that support for the H Block hunger strikers equals support for "IRA bombings of innocent civilians".

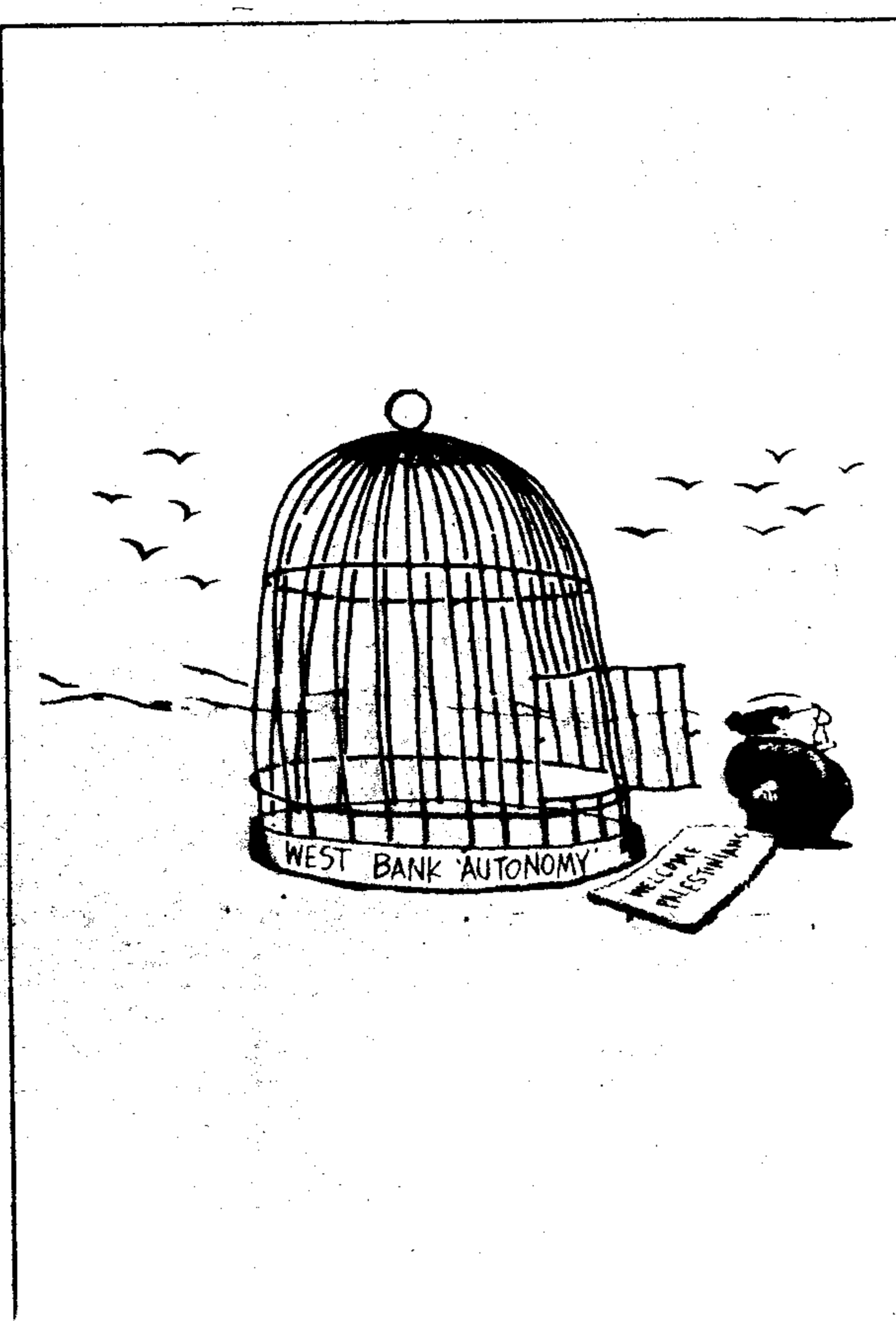
It is equally necessary that socialists turn their attention to the question of Palestine and create a similar shift in opinion.

The view that anti-Zionism and support for the Palestinian cause is the same as anti-semitism must not be allowed to go unchallenged.

This pamphlet—a mine of useful information—will assist every socialist in the labour movement prepared to take up that fight.



Available from Bradford Labour Movement Campaign for Palestinian Solidarity, Flat 3, 40 St Paul's Road, Bradford, price 85p including postage.



Mandate TGWU to vote for Benn!

By Alan Thornett, delegate to TGWU Biennial Delegate Conference

Next week's TGWU biennial delegate conference must mandate the union's delegation to this year's Labour Party Conference to vote for Tony Benn for Deputy Leader of the Party.

But this will not be the case if our union's General Executive Council has its way.

At its meeting last week the Executive decided to overturn the stance the union has taken since Tony Benn decided to stand: that his decision was wrong and divisive and should be reversed.

This had been the line taken and argued on behalf of the union by Alex Kitson, Deputy General Secretary and Chairman of the Labour Party ever since Benn decided to stand. It had been endorsed by the union's Finance and General Purposes Committee.

"Every right"

But the Executive's new decision declared instead that Tony Benn had "every right" to stand in the contest for Deputy Leader.

But whilst the overturning of Kitson's right wing positions (and he has

declared firmly that the decision has not changed his view) may seem very progressive, it has a very nasty sting in its tail.

The Executive went on unanimously to take no decision as to which candidate the union will support in October and to urge that no decision be taken at the BDC.

Deferred

The decision on which candidate would receive the union's 1.25 million votes would, they decided, be deferred until September 27, the day before the vote at the Labour Party conference.

And it would be taken by the union's 45-strong delegation. The Executive would meet beforehand and make a recommendation.

This move seems to have been borrowed from Clive Jenkins at the ASTMS conference: but Jenkins lost the vote. Maybe Benn should not have criticised Moss Evans for being elected for life!

The decision would be crucial. Everyone knows that the TGWU vote is the biggest single vote at the Labour Party conference.

They also know that if Benn gets the backing of the TGWU it will have time to affect the decisions of other

unions. Constitutionally, the Executive does not have the power to stop the BDC taking a vote on Benn: the conference is the highest body of the union.

But they can recommend and they can obstruct the procedure. If emergency resolutions are refused, the platform may well face a move to refer back the agenda.

If this took place it would reverse their decision and probably lead to a pro-Benn vote.

The Cowley 5/293 Branch of the union has tabled an amendment to the Executive's motion on the Labour Party, calling for a vote for Benn.

This has been accepted as a legitimate amendment on the agenda and it could be difficult to avoid taking this even if emergency motions are blocked.

But the attitude of the Broad Left could be crucial. The *Morning Star* has supported the Executive's move to defer a decision.

The *Morning Star* on June 5 commented:

"The feeling among left-wingers [i.e. among the CP] is that there is little to be gained in pushing for an early decision on the Deputy Leadership and that the time could well be used to get more debate around the fundamental issues of policy



Kitson chatting to Callaghan during last year's Labour Party Conference

raised by Mr Benn's contest."

Of course, the *Morning Star* knows very well that the time will be used not to build support for Benn, but to witch-hunt him.

Opinion is already being whipped up against him not least inside the TGWU.

Silkin's decision to stand is also very important in the TGWU. Silkin is not only a TGWU sponsored MP, but also Chairman of the TGWU Parliamentary Group. Tony Benn is a TGWU member but not a sponsored MP.

Great play is being made of this. Already lots of [very doubtful] praise for Silkin's record in support

of TGWU policy in Parliament is being peddled by the right to give him credibility.

It is the first time I have ever heard praise for Silkin in the union.

But Silkin is not even a genuine candidate. His chances of selection are zero. His campaign is just a cynical manoeuvre to split the Benn vote and give the Deputy Leadership to the right wing.

BDC delegates should not be taken in. Tony Benn cannot be given uncritical support. But because of his stand on democracy in the Labour Party—a stand which our union supported—he

should get the vote for Deputy Leader. For Healey to win would be a major setback for that campaign.

Special statement

The Executive is also trying to short-circuit discussion on another important issue—Ireland. They have decided to "make a special statement" to the conference—a move which is usually accompanied by a recommendation that all motions on the subject are remitted to the Executive.

The statement, which delegates will not see in advance of the conference,

will be presented as a "contribution to a new approach by Labour". In reality it will be a device to stifle any discussion on the real issues of Ireland which are having an increasing impact on the labour movement.

Despite having 130,000 members in Region 11 [which covers the Six Counties], the TGWU leadership have a long record of suppressing such discussion.

My mandate is to fight for my branch resolution—which supports the demand of the hunger strikers and calls for immediate withdrawal from the Six Counties.

Tory anguish as occupation brings Victory in nursery fight!

After 11 weeks of occupation, parents and supporters of Beal Street Play Centre have won a major victory in their bid to keep the play centre open.

Following Labour gains in the local elections, the newly-constituted Social Services Committee has agreed to re-open Beal Street as from September 1 for a trial period of six months.

Two staff will be employed to run the centre, which will remain open after the six month period if it is

by then running with its full quota of 25 children.

Meanwhile parents are maintaining the occupation until discussions with social services are satisfactorily concluded on continuing the playgroup over the next two months.

It seems certain that Social Services will release a member of staff to run the playgroup started during the occupation.

Involvement

The resolution passed at the committee meeting last

Wednesday provides for parental involvement in the running of the play centre.

Parents see this as crucial to keeping some control over how the centre is developed.

They have continually asserted that the centre has been deliberately run down over the last two years and are convinced that it could become once again a thriving centre for the under fives.

The occupation has caught the imagination and attention of widespread layers in the community in Leicester, and has stood as a beacon in the fight against the cuts.

It is for this reason that the *Leicester Mercury* which has generally given good publicity to the campaign, ran an article two days after the decision to re-open headlined "Victory a defeat for democracy".

The article claimed to wholeheartedly support the aims of the parents and applauded their determination: "They showed a purposefulness which must be admired. Week after week they never flinched from their aim and they succeeded in getting a good deal of public sympathy." But it strongly condemned the method used:

"It means that the present trend for coercion has paid off yet again. Militant action has proved more effective than the ballot box. For by occupying the premises they have, in effect, used force—doubtless convincing themselves that the end justifies the means."

Obviously the *Mercury* would prefer us to have merely made empty protests about the closure.

Springboard

But there have been massive protests, mobilising millions of people in demonstrations against Tory cuts over the last two years.

Protest by itself has not brought about any change in Tory policy nor did it in this case.

Their concern is of course that a successful occupation like this could be a springboard for workers and other oppressed sections of the community to take similar action:

"But what if all council decisions were challenged in this way by groups of people who objected strongly to them. Politics by pressure would be the order of the day."

It is a trend already in existence. Workers who dislike management moves readily occupy factories or disrupt lawful business activities."

The "democracy" discussed in this article gives the Tories the "right" to destroy services, jobs and rights fought and paid for by the working class.

The right of workers to defend their jobs and services is described as "coercion" and likened to "soccer hooliganism".

The Tories on the outgoing council who made the decision to close Beal Street were elected four years ago when the Labour government had begun its own attacks on public spending.

The massive swing to Labour in the recent election resulting in a hung council was a vote of opposition to cuts in services.

The whole question of democracy and accountability now raging in the labour movement is a direct response to these attacks.

Faint-hearted liberals may well take heed of the warnings in the article: but class conscious workers can only gain strength from the victory achieved by the occupation.

Royal Pride strikers need support

After 3½ months the workers at Royal Pride furniture factory in Salford are still fighting for union recognition.

At the end of last year all the production workers (27 at that time) joined FTAT when their demands for a 10% wage increase were met with an offer of a 20% cut in wages.

Novak, the manager, bought off some of the men with promises of putting up their wages to full union rates if they left the union.

On February 26 nine workers walked out on strike and set up picket lines.

Novak couldn't maintain production without the

skilled workers, mostly women, who were on the picket line, so he sacked the scabs, closed the factory and wrote to the strikers dismissing them all.

On March 17 the pickets entered the factory and occupied it. Novak took out an injunction. Then the union officials stepped in and persuaded the strikers to leave the factory after a two day occupation—hence putting the strikers in a much weaker position.

For the last fortnight Novak has not been seen and the factory has an estate agent's board outside proclaiming it for sale or let.

The plant is near the centre of Manchester and is a valuable site. It is rumoured that after selling Novak would set up in the Salford "Enterprise Zone" thus evading local rates and planning controls.

In spite of being let down by their officials, the women are determined not to let Novak dismantle the factory. So they are maintaining their picket outside.

They receive only £15 a week strike pay and desperately need support and finance.

Messages of support and money should be sent to: Royal Pride Strike Fund, FTAT, 37 Anson Road, Victoria Park, Manchester 14.

National conference

WE'VE HAD THE MARCH—NOW LET'S ORGANISE!

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Social events on both nights

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NALGO Conference backs CND

In a surprise defeat for their executive, Britain's fourth largest union, NALGO, voted last week to ballot members on affiliation to the Labour Party.

NALGO's treasured role as a 'non-political' union in which management rub shoulders with workers has taken a hammering as a result of successive rounds of government spending cuts.

While there is no prospect of a reversal of the cuts under the Tories, a fight is also necessary to press home

demands of public sector workers should a Labour government be returned.

NALGO's present stance outside the Labour Party hampers that fight.

But there were other important setbacks inflicted on the union's Executive. A resolution was carried pledging support for members taking action in defence of jobs and services—even if this action was strictly speaking illegal.

As one executive spokesman said:

"If you have a branch mandate to break the law,

then please do so. But think carefully."

The resolution gives official support "to members taking industrial action in accordance with industrial action procedures, in support of their employing authority's stand against the government."

The Executive was also defeated in its attempts to prevent the adoption of a policy of unilateral disarmament. The union's 782,000 votes will now join those of other unions already committed to this policy in this year's TUC Congress.

And the union also voted to support members and branches who refuse to be involved in civil defence exercises such as Operation Square Leg.

The shift towards greater political awareness and towards the left in NALGO is a reflection of the moves taking place among other white collar unions and the working class.

The task of socialists in the forthcoming cuts struggles is to turn NALGO's general policies into tangible action both against axe-wielding Tory and Labour councils and against the Thatcher government.

Ansells: call for inquiry in TGWU

It's a crushing defeat, that's what you have to say if you're going to be honest—that was shop steward Dickie Murphy's comment on the outcome of the 21-week strike at Ansells Brewery, Birmingham.

"But don't blame the members," he continued, they were solid from start to finish."

Another Ansells steward, Alan Harrison, added "We were sold out by the officials at Regional and Divisional level, but we're keeping our branch together and staying in the union, because the TGWU is more than the officials—it's all of us."

Cosy deals

Despite everything, the TGWU is a working class organisation, and it's our job to make sure that it fights for the working class, and to stop the officials who want cosy deals with the gaffers instead of a fight for working class interests."

The dispute, which began on January 14, was initially to stop the company imposing a Michael Edwards-style package of conditions at the Ansells brewery. When Allied Breweries (the owners) announced the

closure of Ansells, the battle became one to force the reopening of the brewery and to save all 1,000 jobs.

'Compromises'

TGWU Regional Secretary Brian Mathers, Divisional Officer Doug Fairburn and other full time officials very soon made it clear that they didn't think the fight could be won. Throughout the dispute, they tried to foist management's 'compromise' deals on the workforce and actively undermined attempts to spread the dispute to other Allied breweries.

Finally, Mathers made use of company facilities to send out a secret ballot over the heads of the Ansells stewards and their branch officers.

The two 'choices' offered by Mathers were: 1) "I fully understand that the brewery will not reopen, but wish to continue the dispute with the company and accept that as a result the compensation which had been offered will be withdrawn."

2) "I have reconsidered my position and accept that negotiations should commence for the reopening of Aldridge and Gravelly Park distribution depots, coupled with the acceptance of the offer of compensatory

By Jim Denham



Mathers

payment to those who are not reemployed."

The choice of wording alone makes it clear what outcome Mathers wanted to see!

Settlement

Even then, a mass meeting of strikers voted to continue the dispute until a "satisfactory negotiated settlement" was reached, and pickets were mounted on the gates of the depots to stop workers who had been

offered re-employment breaking ranks.

But Mathers' sabotage finally broke down the determination of the strikers. At a meeting on Thursday 4 June they reluctantly voted to call off the strike and allow 300 workers to take the depot jobs.

But the workers are not going to allow the comradeship and solidarity built up over 21 weeks of struggle to go to waste. They voted to keep their branch—the 5/377—together for the re-employed 300 and the unemployed 700, and to use this to ensure that all vacancies in Ansells are filled by branch members on a fair basis.

Protect interests

Shop steward Barry Blinco told us how he saw the role of the branch in future:

"We're keeping the branch together to protect the interests of all the members, and to ensure that the unemployed members can call on the re-employed ones if Ansells start recruiting from outside."

But more important, we're going to use our resources and experience in the best interests of the rest of the movement—especially workers fighting similar struggles over closure and redundancy.

Rover is the immediate one now. We'll do all we can for them, and I hope they learn some lessons from our defeat. Strike fast, hit hard, and don't depend on officials, councillors or 'public opinion'—only on your own strength and the support of other rank and file workers."

Control leaders

Barry Blinco added that he hoped the 5/377 would be in the forefront of a renewed campaign for the regular election of all TGWU officials, "so that the rank and file control the 'leaders', and we can make sure that no group of workers ever get let down like we were, ever again."

The mass meeting on Thursday 4 June had already voted unanimously to demand an investigation into the conduct of Mathers and Fairburn, and branch chairman Ken Bradley will be raising the matter at the union's forthcoming Biennial Delegate Conference.

Winsford Guardian

15p

FOUNDED 1869

THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 1981

A PUBLIC SHAMBLES!

Left-wing attack 'kills' jobs talks

A public meeting to discuss the unemployment problem collapsed in chaos on Friday as MP Sir Nicholas Bonsor came under a savage left-wing attack.



Teenage trio blast MP

Three teenage boys took to the streets on the night of the meeting to blast the MP.



Hell hath no fury like a Tory paper rallying to the aid of a beleaguered right-winger. Here we see Cheshire's 'Winsford Guardian' in full cry against Socialist Press supporter Dave Murphy. His crime? Attacking Tory MP Sir Nicholas Bonsor, who had the gall to attend a public meeting called to discuss unemployment!

© Book members... Sir Nicholas Bonsor... Dave Murphy... Winsford Guardian... No. 11/20/1

Black workers fight S. African bosses' attacks

In the continuing struggles of black workers against the bosses' apartheid state in South Africa, the need for class solidarity action is sharply raised.

Solidarity action by workers in Britain can add great strength to the cause of South African workers—particularly in the many battles that erupt against managements of companies owned by British capitalists.

Two major struggles of this kind are currently being waged by workers at the subsidiaries of BL and Rowntree-MacKintosh.

The latest information available to Socialist Press is that the BL workers are maintaining the strike against huge odds. Management has launched a massive propaganda campaign while unions and working class organisations in the community have built support for the strikers.

Some strikers have returned to work and some new labour has been recruited but management claims of a return to normal have been denied by the workers who have said that no important production is taking place.

On 21 May ICFTU leaders called on BL to reinstate the strikers, and claimed to have had discussions with TUC leaders over what action could be taken to pressure BL management.

Workers in BL and in the British labour movement as a whole must demand of TUC leaders that they organise concrete class action.

It is the same story with the Rowntree struggle. 500 black workers have been sacked by Wilson-Rowntree and are fighting for reinstatement.

Their union called for support from the TUC. But workers at Rowntrees plants in Britain have heard little or nothing since then of any moves to mobilise supporting action.

Messages of support to the British Leyland strikers should be sent to NUMARW, (WPMAWU), 2 Goodhope Street, Bellville South, Cape Town.

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DON'T BREAK OUR STRIKE

There are still vacancies. Apply to: Gate 1, Wembley Racecourse, Wembley, Middlesex, or Epping Avenue, Waltham Cross, Herts.

Leyland drives ahead

Strikers have been reprinting Leyland vacancy adverts overprinted with slogans appealing for solidarity against the employer. Attempts to recruit scabs have been only partially successful.



Strikers at Leyland's Blackheath plant



JOIN THE WSL!

Please send me more details about the Workers Socialist League.

Name

Address

Send to: WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX.

SOCIALIST PRESS ★

VOTES PROVE SUPPORT FOR H BLOCK PRISONERS

PUBLIC SECTOR ANGER ON PAY

Ambulance crews in various parts of the country have now added their unofficial strikes to the tally of public sector stoppages on pay.

Militant walkouts by ambulance drivers have begun well in Scotland and London ahead of the official one-day stoppage on Wednesday.

They represent an advance warning to the government that Britain's 17,000 ambulance staff do not intend to accept a pay increase which is more than 10% lower than that of the fire service and the police.

The willingness of the crews to take all-out action, with no emergency cover, is plainly the outcome of their bitter experiences of being manipulated by management and scabbed upon by the army during their last pay dispute.

In many cases manning levels are so depleted that the service is already down to virtually "emergency cover" only.

Meanwhile 530,000 civil servants, whose selective strikes have been paralysing all kinds of things—from airports to passport offices; from VAT collection to radar detection—are completing a process of mass meetings to vote on the next stage of their 15-week old dispute.

The three options on

offer from their leaders are:

*An all-out strike without strike pay—which would block all dole and benefit payments;

*Continue with selective action, financed by an increased levy; or

*Capitulate to the government's 7% offer.

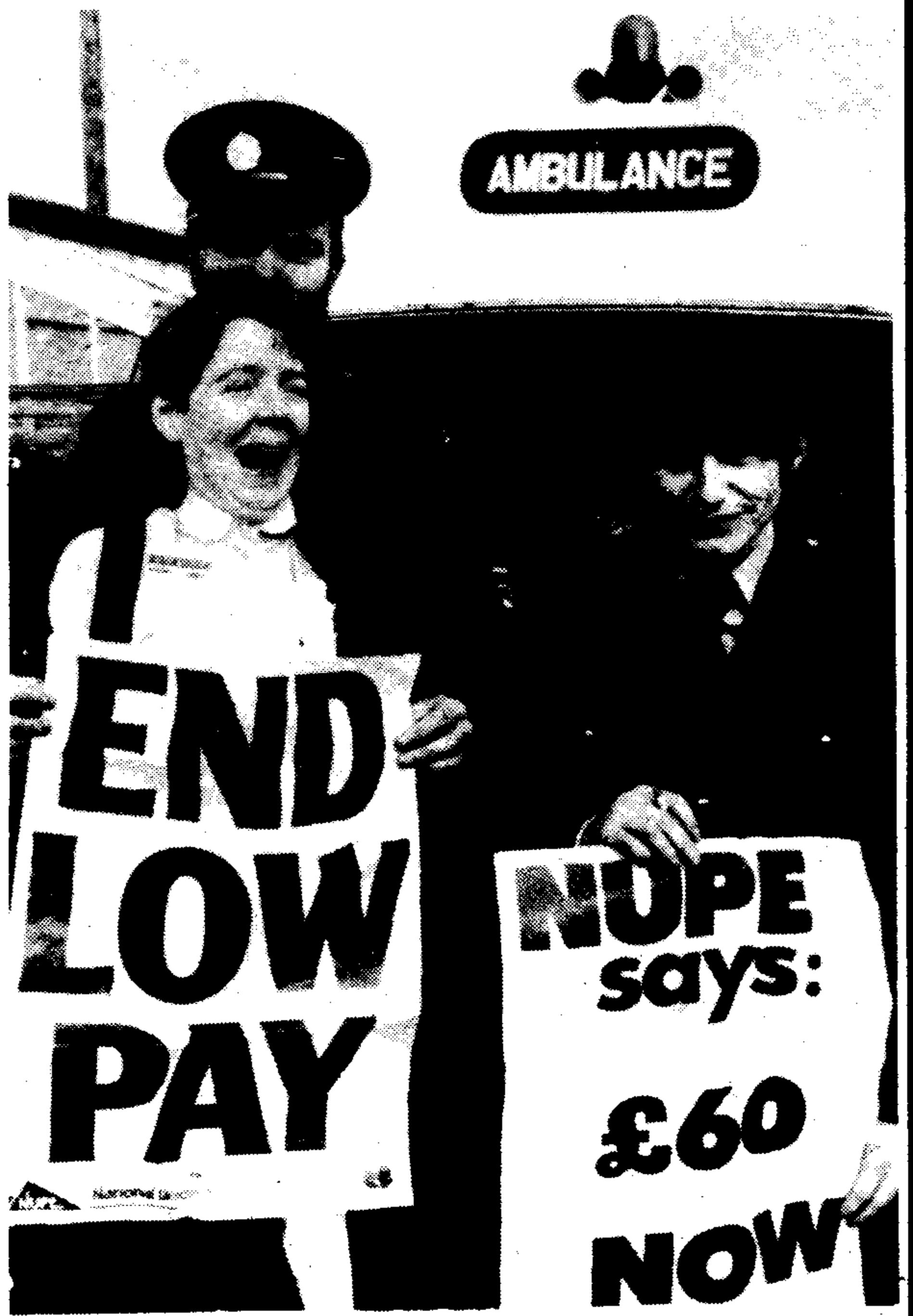
All nine unions are recommending that their members reject the final option—while officials plainly favour an extension of the partial strikes rather than mobilise an all-out stoppage.

The fact is that only an all-out strike—with a corresponding demand for solidarity blacking action and skilful positioning of flying pickets—can bring this dispute to a favourable and speedy outcome.

Such strike action should however be organised in such a way as to keep functioning the key computer centres which handle the automatic payment of giro cheques to claimants.

Unemployed workers who see civil servants taking steps to protect them, and leading a determined fight against the Tories are more likely to rally to the struggle for meaningful TUC support.

The civil service unions are at the crossroads. To pull back now from all-out action could lead to a major setback to the self-confidence of the membership and even to their shopfloor organisation.



Ambulance crews during the low pay struggles of 1979

The election of two H-Block republican prisoners to the Irish Parliament is another decisive nail in the coffin of the hoary old lie that republicans have no popular support.

Paddy Agnew was elected to one of the five seats in Louth, and hunger striker Kieran Docherty elected for Cavan Monaghan.

15 per cent

Despite a press campaign designed to portray republican candidates as hopeless outsiders, the prisoners polled nearly 15% of the first preference votes in the four border areas where they stood.

This show of support, following on the 30,000 votes cast for Bobby Sands in April, confirms the strength of nationalist feeling on both sides of the border.

It is for this reason that the Thatcher government is attempting to rush through a gerrymandering 'Representation of the People Bill' to exclude the possibility of imprisoned people—whether

they be republicans, trade unionists or other political activists—standing for election.

In other words, while denouncing republicans for failing to use the ballot box, the Tories—with the vocal backing of many right wing Labour MPs—are taking dictatorial powers to prevent certain people from standing and thus restrict the choice of the electorate!

This position has produced the first substantial breach in the "bi-partisan" policy which commits the PLP to support Tory policies on Ireland.

Meanwhile in London a demonstration some 3,000 strong joined a 3 hour march last Saturday in support of the hunger strikers and their demands.

This was larger than some recent Irish solidarity marches, but again underlines the fact that the British labour movement remains pitifully slow to respond to the Irish struggle.

Deadlock

*The Irish election has produced a deadlock, in which neither the ruling Fianna Fail party of Charles

Haughey, nor Garret Fitzgerald's Fine Gael have sufficient parliamentary support to form a stable government.

The Labour Party, which lost support and saw its leader Frank Cluskey defeated at the polls, appears once again ready to talk of coalition with the reactionary Fine Gael.

Nothing to offer

Republicans were claiming that electoral support for the prisoner candidates came from former Labour voters.

But just as the Labour leaders have nothing to offer workers who regard the fight for a united Ireland as crucial, so the H Block campaigners have failed to address the other issues confronting the Irish working class—unemployment, living standards, social services, etc.

As the two main bourgeois parties squabble over who should rule and the Labour careerists seek a cosy niche for themselves, the task of building a principled leadership for the Irish masses, north and south, remains unresolved.

ZIONISTS' TERROR RAID

The Israeli bombing raid on Iraq's Osirah nuclear power plant was no act of self defence.

It was a calculated act of terrorism, designed to intimidate the dispossessed Palestinian masses and cow the rulers of surrounding Arab states.

The Zionists know full well that the Iraqi government—unlike Israel—is a signatory of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, and that its installation at Tamuz is subject—unlike Israel's own nuclear research establishments—to regular international inspection.

They know, too, that there is no way that nuclear weapons, even if the Iraqis possessed them, could be used in a war against Israel, since this would inevitably involve the deaths of tens of thousands of Palestinian and Arab people within the borders of the settler state.

Dual purpose

The raid however served a dual purpose: it reminded Israel's opponents that Zionism is a ruthless and vicious adversary; and it further boosted the hopes of Menachem Begin's right wing Likud Party in the general election, scheduled for two week's time.

Begin has had to set about reconstructing his

dwindling popular support. He carefully arranged a confrontation with the Syrians over the "Lebanese missiles crisis" in order to stir once again the flames of patriotic fervour amongst the Jewish population.

And having made US envoy Philip Habib appear as an impotent imbecile in his aimless bid to shuttle diplomacy Begin has gone on to tweak the nose of his main international sponsors—the USA.

Flouted

By using modern F-15 and F-16 combat planes for the raid on Iraq, he quite deliberately flouted the condition on which the aircraft were nominally sold—that they be used for defensive purposes only.

Begin thus engages in a public exercise designed to display himself as the courageous lone defender of the interests of the Jewish people of Israel.

He can only do this because he recognises that neither the US imperialists, nor any other imperialist nation, nor the Soviet leadership is prepared to take any retaliatory action that might jeopardise the security of the Zionist state.

Reagan may mouth empty condemnation and hold up delivery of a few military aircraft; Thatcher, seeking to butter up the



Zionist bombing raids take a heavy toll of Lebanese and Palestinian civilians

Saudi Arabians and other Arab bourgeois leaders, may verbally condemn the raid and Moscow condemn it (correctly) as "terrorism"; but Begin knows that they would all sooner see the Zionist state upheld than risk the upsurge of class struggle which would follow its collapse.

The Israeli budget—and in particular its huge arms

bill—is entirely dependent upon US aid. But Begin knows as well as Reagan that such aid cannot be cut off without dire consequences for imperialism.

It is precisely the progressive implications of the struggle of the Palestinian and Arab peoples which make it necessary for workers to support that fight—both by lending solidarity

to the organisations of the oppressed, and by seeking avenues to cut off the supplies of cash and material aid to the Zionist rulers.

Only the destruction of the racist, Zionist state can open the door for a democratic solution to the problem of the national oppression of the Palestinian people.

FUND

Well, we're half way through the month and so far we only have £280.75 towards our target of £850. That means the fund this month has got off to a slower start than usual. So there isn't a minute to lose in pulling back the situation.

Our thanks to the anonymous reader from Abingdon, Oxfordshire, who stuck a fiver in an envelope for the fund. If every reader of Socialist Press were to do the same, we would have to raise our fund target!

Meanwhile, let's just make sure that we manage to achieve the existing one. Send your donation to:

Socialist Press Fund
BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX