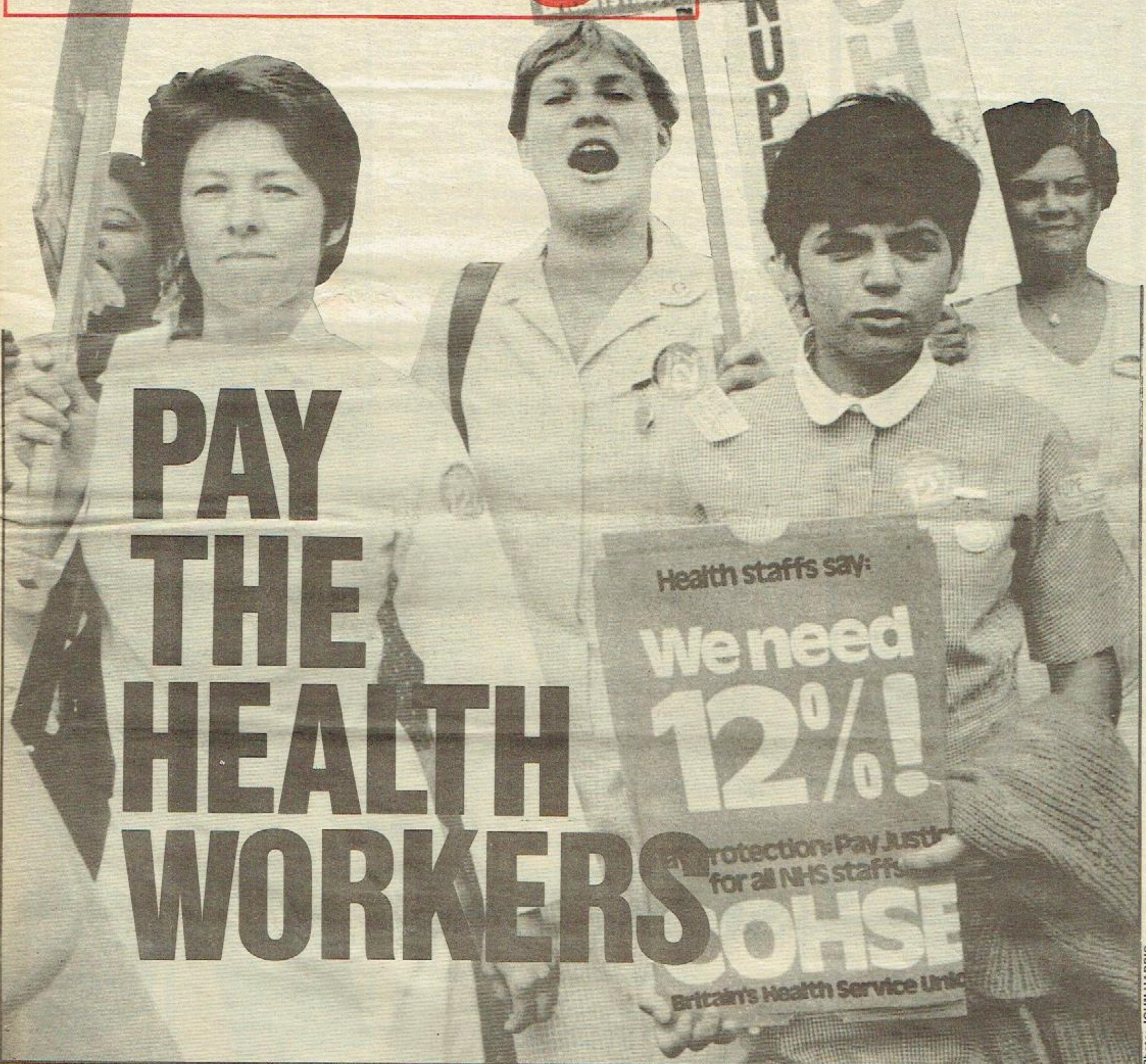


# Socialist Challenge



**PAY  
THE  
HEALTH  
WORKERS**

Health staffs say:  
**We need  
 12%!**  
 Protection: Pay Just  
 for all NHS staffs  
**OHSE**  
 Britain's Health Service Union

**KICK OUT THE TORIES**

Photo: JOHN HARRIS

## Tories out!

AFTER the Tories' derisory 'a little now and less later' offer to the health workers was rejected by the unions, the stage has been set for all-out action on 22 September.

The discussion that is going on around 22 September is raising a wider question. Should this be the first step in a campaign of industrial action to weaken the government's credibility and force it from office?

Figures for January to June 1982 show that even before the start of the ASLEF dispute and the NHS Days of Action, strikes were up 60 per cent up on the same period in 1981.

The groundswell exists for such a campaign to be led by the TUC.

The TUC Congress last week showed union leaders outdoing themselves to put themselves at the head of the movement.

So why don't they go the whole way and finish off the government?

The answer lies in the political consequences: both trade union and Labour Party leaders are desperately trying to show themselves as reliable props for a shaky capitalist order.

Secondly, they fear the consequences of such a movement in that it would give a massive boost to the fortunes of the left.

But for Thatcher the rosy glow of the Falklands is receding.

Once again the spectre of a hung parliament with the SDP/Liberal Alliance holding the balance is floating in front of Thatcher's eyes.

Unfortunately the Labour Party is not in good shape to take advantage of either the industrial situation or the Tories' political nakedness.

Michael Foot's declaration that the proposed purge of socialists will stop short of the rank and file of the *Militant* rings as hollow as the Israeli government's promise to stay out of West Beirut.

Tony Benn has now called for unity of the left, right and centre around Michael Foot up to the next election.

Bennite strategists argue that if Labour is going to lose the election anyway, then Benn must be seen to give the leadership a free run, the better to exact vengeance afterwards.

The problem is that although this may set wise heads nodding in London, the mass of rank and file supporters of Benn who voted for his candidature in hundreds of thousands are not privy to these deliberations.

For them the fact of the matter is that the Labour Party under Benn's leadership would enter the run up to a general election with more enthusiasm and élan than at any time since the Second World War.

For this reason the left must not drop its guard. The organisation of the left in the first period of the Bennite wave was one of the most positive features.

It is this aspect that needs to be asserted now: not only against the leadership's prescriptions, but also as the most effective way to set a movement rolling that can fight the Tories and the SDP, and gain a Labour government of a completely different type to that of Wilson and Callaghan. For this reason the conference against the witch-hunt called by Hackney North CLP on 30 October is vitally important.

That is why the fight against the Tories goes hand in hand with the fight against the witch-hunts and why we say:

'Fight the Tories, not the socialists'.

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# The greatest stoppage since the war

By Brian Grogan

Wednesday's day of strike action is going to see the biggest show of trade union force since the freeing of the Pentonville 5 in 1972. Health workers will be out everywhere for the day. Miners, engineers, dockers, shipyard workers and bus workers along with teachers, civil servants, local government workers will all join strike action. Despite bureaucratic backsliding, everywhere reports indicate an entirely different mood to the last day of strike action called by the TUC on 14 May 1980.

Workers from every part of the country will be making their way to London for the mass demonstration and many towns will be organising local demonstrations as well.

● In Manchester there are two trains going to London organised by the North West TUC and one organised by the health unions. These will be supplemented by more than a dozen coaches.

The call of the more militant health workers is to make the London demo the major focus. Kay Gastin representing the Greater Manchester health shop stewards committee made this clear to 1000 people at a Tribune rally with Tony Benn last Tuesday. Benn echoed her call.

Health workers have been touring the main Manchester factories and receiving massive support. The engineering workers have not waited for national directives before deciding on action. A number of the biggest factories will be out for the whole day including Fairey Engineering and Fairey Graphite as well. Massey Ferguson CPO will also be out for the whole day.

Many Manchester factories are on a week's shut down. But in at least two of these, Massey Ferguson's BDR and SEI in Heywood, every single worker has donated a £1 levy to the health workers. Most bus depots will be out for the day.

Even less well organised groups of workers are

responding to the strike call with stoppages, collections, messages of support and invitations to health workers to speak.

● Sheffield A Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Workers meeting of stewards called for a full 24 hour strike. This backed up a previous call by the Trades Council. It is estimated that 20,000 engineering workers will join 30,000 local authority workers in some form of strike action — the bulk of them for 24 hours.

Many factories, and steel plants are on shut down during this week, but the 2500 engineering and steel workers at the River Don plant will strike for the whole day. In addition to a train going to London, there will be a local Trades Council demo.

● Birmingham. This is the week of shut down. But the buses will be on a 24 hour strike. Teachers will come out for an hour and caretakers and other staff for two hours.

● Huddersfield. Bus workers will be on a 24 hour stoppage. This was won after two specially convened branch meetings and a ballot of bus crews.

● Bristol. Dockers here will be leading the action with a 24 hour strike. Lorry drivers will be out in the morning. There will be mass meetings at BAC and Lucas on the day to decide what action to take. Teachers will be out for the day Avonwide.

● South Wales. Massive support is expected. NUPE is organising two free trains and the Wales TUC one train as well as coaches. Derek Gregory, NUPE divisional officer, has called out the whole of NUPE in South Wales.

Jill Jenkins, South Glamorgan shop steward and Cardiff North delegate to the Labour Party conference, told us that NUPE will be picketing with the miners as well as filling the trains.

The GMWU leaders are not so militant. David Plant of the GMWU, who spearheaded the witch-hunt against the left at the Wales Labour Party con-

ference, is not instructing his members to come out. It's clear who's fighting the Tories in South Wales.

● Scotland. Bus drivers will be out for the day in all the major cities, following the lead of the Scottish miners. The two Wills factories in Glasgow will also be out, as will the 5000 shipyard workers in the Clyde lower reaches.

The feelings of many Scottish workers were summed up by Mick McGahey, the Scottish miners leader. Speaking at a rally in Motherwell to protest at the cutbacks in Scottish steel production he emphasised the importance of the day of action for all workers. 'The

health workers' day of action will represent the end of the retreat and the beginning of a working class offensive against the Tory government. Nothing epitomises better the nature of this government than the miserly way that they treat the health worker and the millions that they are prepared to spend on Trident and the Falklands war'.

He stressed that the miners see their pay claim in the same way. Despite the productivity and efficiency which the miners had shown, they were still being attacked on two fronts: wages and redundancies. And he hoped that as the struggle with the Tories developed over the next few months, they would enjoy the full hearted support of the Scottish people.

## Pieces of silver

LAST WEEK the *Sun* put its cards on the table. 'Foot must lead the witch-hunt' said columnist John Freeman in one of the most poisonous articles the Fleet Street gutter press has mustered. A pity Ken Livingstone isn't in the *Militant*, he explained, but never mind the niceties — kick him out anyway.

Thanks for the advice, John. You once helped lead the Bevanite revolt, but we've no doubt Rupert Murdoch pays you more. It's always good to hear from a real rat because it warns you what's coming out of the sewers.

One tiny point, however: is the *Sun* going to register? Will the NEC, in its campaign against sinister outside influences on the party enquire into the millionaire backing

for the campaign of lies and distortion that appears daily in the gutter press — directed with equal venom against ordinary, decent trade unionists and the left in the Labour Party?

## Deeds

Along with the rest of the multinationals, Murdoch's empire has been taking part in a small, rather unpublicised campaign of late: a law going through the European parliament which would require multinational firms to disclose any changes to their investment plans likely to cause job loss. So far this campaign has subverted every European government except the Greek and French ones. Strange, isn't it, how important secrecy becomes

when it concerns millionaire profits instead of millions of jobs?

We make no secret of our funds or our intentions. We are supported entirely by the donations of our readers, and we print them — every one of them. And we can't survive without them. Truth, you see, is an expensive commodity: lies cost a mere thirty pieces of silver.

What can you do to stop renegades like John Freeman and barons like Murdoch subverting your party and your unions? Help us to combat them! Help support a paper that supports your cause and puts your case, week in and week out.

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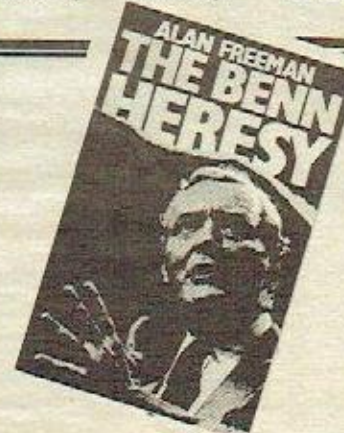
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## We need a socialist health service

'A STATE of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease.'

That's how health is defined by the World Health Organisation. And it's what is at stake in the healthworkers battle with the Tories. MARIE LOUISE IRVINE, a Glasgow doctor, explains how health can be won.

Most people associate health with hospitals, doctors, nurses and drugs but the WHO definition correctly gives weight to social and economic factors.

In Britain 90 per cent of the reduction of child deaths between 1850-1975 attributed to whooping cough, scarlet fever and measles took place before the advent of any effective immunisation or anti-biotic

housing, water supply, town planning and community health, and the NHS which was hospital centred.

The NHS took most of the resources, despite the success of public health measures in promoting health.

The reason for this disproportionate allocation was that then, as now, the medical profession had too much power in deciding

'CLASS differences in mortality are a constant feature of the human life span' — The Black Report.

therapy. This was because infection was the major cause of death until early this century. Public health measures, particularly sanitation and improved living standards were responsible for the dramatic decrease.

*Inequalities in Health: the Black Report*, demonstrated that even today a child of an unskilled worker is four or five times as likely to die before the age of one year than a child of a professional worker.

A superior social system means better health. For example, Cuba is not only in the lead of all other Latin

how resources are allocated in our health services.

The British Medical Association agreed to support Nye Bevan's NHS bill only if the medical profession rather than the elected local authorities could control it.

There was 'a bitter discussion between the medical profession who were opposed to local government control in any shape or form and the local government associations who were anxious to keep their existing powers and if possible extend them.'

The consultants won. The NHS was to be run by appointed boards,



contradiction built into the NHS. The form of the NHS is a compromise between working class and ruling class interests. It is 'socialist' in being universal, comprehensive and (still largely) free; yet it is controlled by the ruling class mainly through the channel of the medical profession.

By defending the NHS we defend the basis for and possibility of an accountable, democratic and health promoting system.

That is why it is wrong to make an artificial separation between defending the health service and fighting for a better one. The unity of the health workers and the labour movement in fighting for the 12 per cent

Table 2. Death rates per million women in age group for carcinoma of the cervix.

	1968-70	1971-73	1974-76
England and Wales	11.0	13.7	17.7
Scotland	16.1	13.9	13.9
Scotland excluding Grampian and Tayside	12.8	13.6	16.5

conditions for the health workers, cuts in service and private medicine there are opportunities for increased understanding of the nature of the health service, its deficiencies and ways of creating a better health service.

The users and workers in the NHS have to collectively develop a plan for a health service to meet our needs as women, black people, old people, disabled people and youth.

in the process of developing a Charter for Health.

Nationally we have to unite to fight the Tories' plans for dismantling the health service and the unity of the labour movement behind the health workers fight shows the way.

The next Labour government must make sure that it does not sell out on health in the way that Wilson and Callaghan did by encouraging the growth of private medicine and introducing devastating cuts in public spending.

We should demand that a Labour government would immediately;

- Reverse the public spending cuts
- Establish a legal minimum wage of £100 per week
- Abolish private medicine
- Establish out-patient clinics
- Ban race checks in the NHS
- Ban alcohol and tobacco advertising

● Strengthen health and safety at work regulations

In its first term of office a Labour government should also organise the health service to make it more democratic.

One suggestion is that the NHS should be run by bodies composed of local authority and trade union representatives as well as representatives from women's organisations and minority groups.

But it will require more than a democratic and accountable NHS to improve our health. It will involve radical measures to end unemployment, bad housing, poverty, poor diet and unsafe working conditions.

Good health will only be guaranteed when our resources are controlled by working people and the oppressed.

References: *Inequalities in Health*. The Black Report, DHSS, 1980. *Intercontinental Press*, 14 July 1980. *1980 statistics*, Greater Glasgow Health Board. *The Creation of the National Health Service*, A.J. Wilcocks.

Further reading from *The Other Bookshop*. *Socialism and Health*. Journal of the Socialist Health Association, (9 Poland Street, London W1V30G). *Condition Critical*. Communist Party pamphlet, 60p. *Going Private*. Politics of Health Group, 40p. *Health Care in Cuba*, Intercontinental Press, July 14 1980, 50p. *It Makes You Sick*. Colin Thurnhurst, Pluto Press, £2.50.

Table 1. Infant mortality (rate per 1000 live births)

Paraguay	94.3
Guatemala	80.7
Peru	72.4
Chile	63.3
Colombia	52.5
Venezuela	43.7
Cuba	19.3

American countries in relation to its infant mortality rate (19.3 deaths per 100 live births: see Table 1) but is lower than the eastern district of Glasgow (19.6).

Most medical experts now agree that changes in the way we live would significantly reduce the incidence of major diseases in Britain; particularly cardiovascular disease; chronic bronchitis; cancer; diabetes; infection; liver and gastrointestinal disease; and occupational diseases.

But the National Health Service does not reflect this understanding. When the NHS began in 1948 responsibility for health was divided between local authorities which were responsible for

dominated by the medical and allied professions, but inappropriate to our health needs.

Preventative and community medicine suffered receiving only 5-8 per cent of the health budget.

Yet it is in these areas that the future of health care lies. Table 2 clearly demonstrates that where serious cervical screening programmes are pursued as in Grampian and Tayside Regions, the death rate from cervical cancer is reduced. Once cervical cancer (a cancer of the womb) is established these is little that medical science can do.

For progress in health care we have to resolve the

'THAT improvement in health is likely to come in the future as in the past from the modification of the conditions which led to disease, rather than from intervention in the mechanism of the disease after it has occurred.'

— The Black Report.

is a model for organising a campaign of action against cuts and privatisation.

Such a campaign would not be purely 'defensive'. In raising the issues of pay and

One possible structure for all interested organisations is the Socialist Health Association which is open to all and affiliated to the Labour Party and which is

# 22 SEPTEMBER

## How they mobilised

By Brian Grogan

pathy for health workers has become a focus which the right wing leaders have found difficult to duck. Not that they haven't tried to sweep the issue under the carpet. The fact that the dispute has dragged on for four months despite the massive support is due entirely to the timidity of these leaders.

But because of the initiative of the mine workers and groups of rank and file workers like the Fleet St electricians, the right wing has so far been outmanoeuvred and overwhelming pressure is being exerted.

British Leyland, the self same workers have rapidly come out of their corner again prepared to engage in battle. Other groups of workers have not equated their leaders throwing in the towel with knock outs or defeats.

The deep well of sym-

Wednesday's day of strike action is going to be the biggest mobilisation of the labour movement for over 10 years. Every union except for rail had made some recommendation for strike action. Railworkers will be working normally to ferry workers to demonstrations on the day.

The General Council of the TUC has itself made recommendations for stoppages of one hour or more to express solidarity with the health workers. Other unions have acted on this call.

● Health unions will be striking for a full 24 hours with only emergency cover.

● Miners in Scotland, South Wales and Yorkshire will be matching this. Pits will be closed for the day.

● There will be no newspapers and TV will be blacked out in many areas during peak viewing time.

● London busworkers will stop for at least an hour.

● The Transport workers union has recommended 24 hour stoppages except in continuous processing industries.

● The Engineering union has called for a stoppage of one hour or more, and asked its members in the health service to join in the 24 hour stoppage with the rest.

● The Bakers union will be all out for the day.

● The General and Municipal workers have asked for local meetings to decide on what form action should take. Local Government workers will be doing the same.

● Civil Servants have been asked to call meetings on the day to discuss action and then recommended to take the rest of the day off.

● Postal Workers are being asked to strike for up to four hours.

● Even the National Union of Teachers has urged maximum support to the health workers. But any strike action has to get the permission of the union action committee.

Many rank and file actions at the level of the factory and plants are determined to go way beyond union recommendations.

The size and scope of the action is an indictment of the role that right wing trade union leaders have been playing. The fact that these actions are illegal under Tory laws has deterred no-one.

Clearly, the rank and file of the unions are quite prepared to go into action if they can see a possibility of victory. The decline in strikes and acceptance of massive levels of unemployment and large

scale redundancies over the past couple of years are not a sign of unwillingness to resist, let alone the preposterous idea that working people masochistically support Thatcher's policies.

The problem has been that the odds are stacked against workers at local and factory level. Even local struggles require massive solidarity from other groups of workers if they are to meet the power of the bosses, press and government — who threaten them with total closure or sackings if they don't toe the line. The national power of the unions became more and more indispensable for sure victory.

Bureaucratic leaders have taken the opposite tack and done everything in their power to prevent workers from winning solidarity from the rest of the class and tipping the relation of forces back in their favour.

So when the workers of Laurence Scott's electromotors refused to accept the closure of their plant, the engineering unions right wing leadership spent their time preventing solidarity developing.

When the traindrivers went on strike against the Rail Board, the TUC leaders refused to call for support forcing them to capitulate.

When British Leyland and Ford workers decided to strike and received pledges from other groups of workers, the leaders made deals over their heads and ordered them back.

Having themselves prevented struggles from winning, these same

leaders then explained in Alice-in-wonderland logic that the main reason for Thatcher's success was the unwillingness of rank and file workers to fight!

But pressure from the ranks for the union leaders to take action has not diminished. Even after blatant sell outs like at



Solidarity: nurses demonstrate over court threats to Sean Geraghty

## First blow against the Tories

By Celia Pugh

THOUSANDS of workers are on strike on 22nd September because they know the health workers action affects them directly. It's not just that they are patients, or that their sense of solidarity brings them to support workers without the same economic clout. They know that they too are in the firing line of the Tory assault on jobs and pay.

In the last few years their attempts to resist these attacks have floundered as trade union leaders refused to organise national solidarity and unite the labour movement in industrial action against the Tories. September 22nd is the first break in this dam of leadership treachery and workers everywhere are taking the advantage to march through it.

Soon their own fight will be on the agenda. A setback for the health-workers in the face of Tebbit and the cowardice of the TUC will be a dagger for them when their time for struggle comes.

Miners, steel, rail, water and telecommunication workers are waiting in the wings to join the health workers in a common battle against the Tory wage and job cuts.

### Claim

Last week, the National Union of Miners 31 per cent pay claim met with the insulting 6½ per cent response from the National Coal Board — the same Board which threatens to cut the industry's capacity by 12½ per cent — an equivalent of 28,000 jobs. NUM leaders plan a ballot of strike action if the board doesn't improve

this offer by the 1 November settlement date. If this strike call is clearly linked to a fight against pit closures and for recruitment and investment, and if the NUM leaders draw the lessons of last years strike rejection by organising to argue the case for a strike in the pits, then we can be sure the miners will follow close on the heels of the 22nd September strike.

In 1980 the British Rail Board announced plans to cut the workforce by 38,000 by the end of 1985. TUC scabbing on the ASLEF battle against flexible rostering has made the Board's job easier.

The British Rail Board's evidence to the Serpell Committee of Enquiry into the future of the railways called for a 20 per cent cut in passenger operation in the next four years.

### Axe

On 13 September, a 6 per cent pay increase was offered railworkers by Lord McCarthy's Railway Staff's Tribunal. This amounts to only four per cent over the whole year from the April 1982 settlement date. The Tribunal also proposed productivity strings, including driver-only freight trains and driver-only operation of the electrified Bedford to St Pancras line, with guards retained for six months to collect fares.

British Rail Board is hinting that they will not pay this paltry increase unless they first get union agreement on these job shedding productivity strings. They hope this blackmail will frighten delegates at the special NUR delegate meeting on 12/13 October in Birmingham. Another important meeting will

take place on 6 October in Sheffield. The TUC Steel Committee has taken the unprecedented step of organising a delegate conference of shop floor representatives from the eleven union in every steel plant in Britain. In the last few weeks, the redundancy axe has been wielded over steel plants in Sheffield, Motherwell, Teeside, South Wales, Hartlepool, Birmingham, Clydebridge and Glasgow. At least another 17,000 will be flung on the heap by 1984 and speculation is mounting that one of the major five bulk steel making plants could close down completely.

Clydebridge workers in Scotland and River Don and Firth Brown workers in Sheffield have already started a campaign of resistance.

The October meeting provides an opportunity never offered to the fated Corby and Consett workers for nationwide solidarity action. In Scotland a Triple Alliance of the steel, rail and mining unions has been formed to back up the Clydebridge struggle.

170,000 telecommunication workers in the POEU, SCPS and CPSCA are striking for a day in October against privatisation of British Telecom as a start of a more extensive campaign. Water workers too are poised for strike action if their pay demands are not met this year.

### Tide

So the flood waters of industrial action are building up behind the dam of TUC inaction. The breakthrough of September 22nd holds the opportunity of the Tory Government being swept away with another winter of discontent. Let's make sure the TUC leaders don't stem the tide.

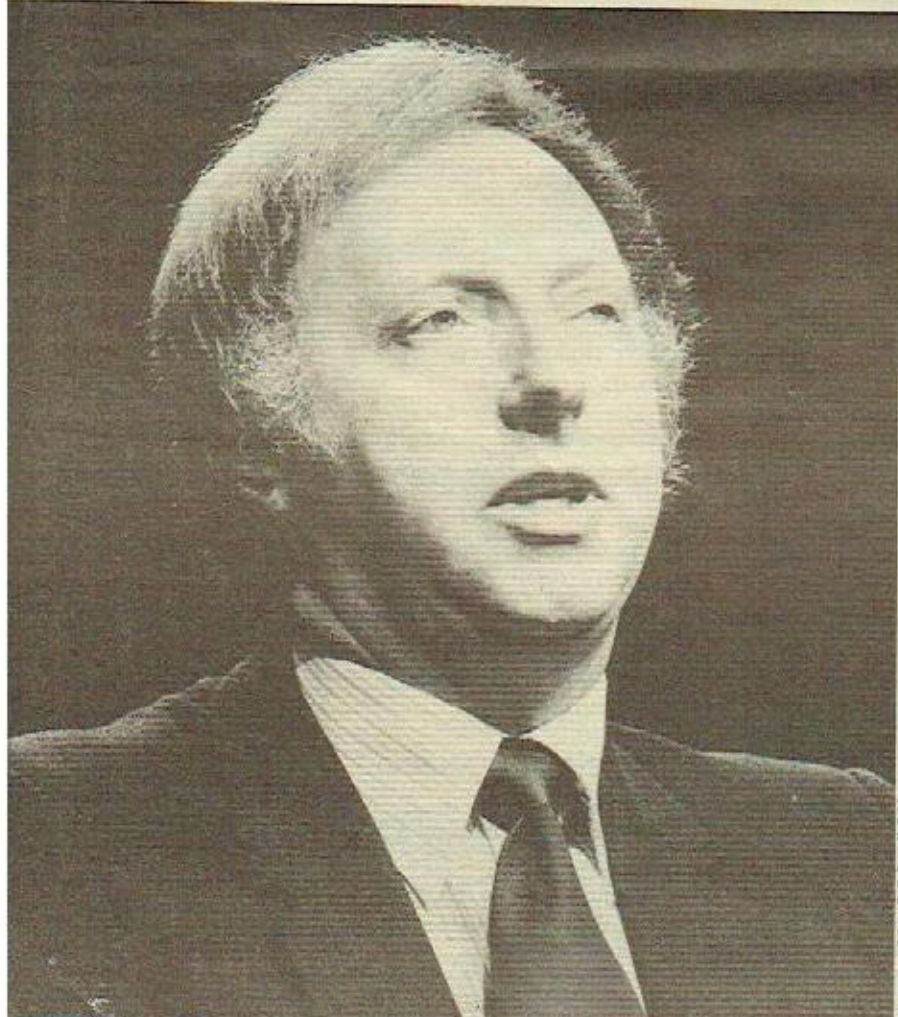


Photo: GM COOKSON

icargill: miners will be out

## What next?

Socialist Challenge interviews RON BROWN, MP and BRIDGET ELTON of Hackney North CLP.



We know that they have limitations but I did suggest to my own regional Labour Party, at a special meeting for M.P.s, that the Labour Party should develop the links with the

local trades councils developing a *Council of Action*: such things are needed in all the localities throughout Britain.

This is the way to

organise just as it was organised in 1926 against the government of that time.

We must do this again, getting back to basics. It will not be easy, there is no

magic wand, there is no short-cut to building up resistance against the Tories.

So we must learn from the past. If it was successful then the chances are that it will be successful now. The point is, of course, that we don't have much time to do it and this means that we must redouble our efforts within the working-class community so we can link up employed and unemployed, young and old — in fact all the sections that are important to us.

What do you believe that the Labour Party should be doing nationally at the moment?

The Labour Party is geared to the parliamentary process, that is understandable. We must as a party put up a challenge in Parliament. We must make it quite clear to Thatcher and her government that, in no way is it a question of the working class accepting what she is doing.

But saying something in Parliament is not enough because the Tories have got the votes and whatever we do or say they will get their policies through. That's unfortunate but it's the reality.

Recognising that we must therefore take the struggle outside Parliament into the working class, into our movement and develop all sorts of activity against the Tories.

Now that will mean that we will be very unpopular in the press. It will mean that all sorts of things will be said against us. But I think it was Keir Hardie who made the point many years ago that if ever he was praised by the capitalist press then he couldn't have been doing his job for the working class.

So we must always remember that. We will never be praised by the media if we are going to put up a fighting campaigning challenge against the capitalist system.

How do you feel the left-

wing of the Labour Party should be putting forward its case at the moment?

If the real left means business it must be increasingly involved in the struggles that are taking place. This means being on the picket lines, being at the factory gates, at the hospital gates — doing the basic work that was done when this movement was first formed.

Finally, Ron, what are your views on the witch-hunt in the Labour Party?

The witch-hunt is disastrous for the Party. It's divisive, disruptive and can only help the enemies of the Party, the Tories and big business. It will not help us put up any challenge against the capitalist system. I wonder why it's taking place because if we are saying that people on the left, be it *Militant* or whatever, are a danger then we are misleading people. We are misleading not just ourselves but many of our supporters.

As I understand it *Militant* have 3000 supporters — out of total membership of 270,000. Now if 3,000 people can take control of a party then they must have several votes each and I don't think that's allowed under the Constitution.

But if, on the other hand, the right-wing fear ideas, the arguments from the left, then that becomes much more sinister and smacks of McCarthyism.

If we're going to end up with a witch-hunt and proscribed lists then in effect we are going back to the bad old days of the 50's and 60's. If we are going to go back to those days then it's not going to help us at all.

It's not going to help us to win a General Election and it's not going to win us support in the working class because the working class are going to become more and more confused as to what is happening in the party. The people who will lap it all up will be big business and the capitalist media.

RON BROWN MP for Edinburgh-Leith is no friend of the Tories. Recently he was arrested while demonstrating against Thatcher's visit to Edinburgh. He was charged with obstruction for attempting to give Thatcher a health workers pay slip.

Here he previews the tasks which now face the movement after 22 September day of action. He spoke to Alex Baillie.

What is your opinion of the proposed action on 22 September?

Obviously I welcome it but I think a lot more can be done, must be done, because a one-day stoppage is not enough. There has to be in effect a series of stoppages building up to a General Strike. That may seem drastic but we are dealing with a vicious, a hard-line Tory government and clearly they are not going to listen to our statements and speeches.

Moderation, reason, call it what you will, has gone out of the window a long time ago, so we have got to have action.

We've got to build up support for the health workers because their fight is our fight.

I know that you feel that over the last period the trade union bureaucracy has let the labour movement down. What difference do you see now?

Now there has been a groundswell of support for the health workers from the rank-and-file of many other unions particularly in the private sector. The trade union leaders in the main have dodged the issue all along since this government came into office.

They have back-pedalled and by doing so have only encouraged the Tories to become more and more arrogant. The 'boot has gone in' repeatedly as far as the working class is concerned.

The Tories, because of the lack of fight from the union leadership, have replaced Prior with Tebbit and we have seen repeatedly the Tories picking off one group of workers after another and this has been a tragedy for

the working class.

What we needed from the beginning was a co-ordinated strategy of real opposition to the Tories because that is the only way we are going to stop them — with industrial action — using the strength of the working class.

In recent history in 1974 we stopped Heath and I do believe we can stop Thatcher if we use our movement.

Do you believe then that the working class will still see the Labour Party as the main avenue in the fight or do you believe that certain sections of the working class will look outside the Labour Party in the struggles that lie ahead?

It's natural that certain workers may be a bit disillusioned with the leadership of the Labour Party but, in the main, I believe that the advanced sections of the working class will still regard the Labour Party as their party — despite its faults, despite its lack of leadership.

The point is of course that the Labour Party — the activists within it anyway — must develop links with the advanced sections of the working class in industry, in the public sector.

This is essential to build up real leadership so that we can effectively challenge the government. It's a question of taking politics into the working class to arm them for the struggles ahead.

How do you think resistance to Tory attacks should be organised at this time?

We have a situation up and down the country where Trades Councils in particular have a role to play.

## 30 October Conference against witch-hunt

ON 30 OCTOBER a conference has been called against the witch-hunt by fifteen Constituency Labour Parties, in County Hall, London.

The first move was taken by Hackney North Labour Party, who circulated other constituencies informing them that Hackney would not co-operate the Labour Party National Executive Committee's proposed register of affiliated organisations, and asking them to join Hackney in co-ordinating resistance.

We interviewed BRIDGET ELTON, who is Hackney's Press secretary and a member of the Post Office Engineering Union, about the conference and its aims.

Michael Foot has recently said that expulsions should be limited to leading *Militant* supporters. How do you view this?

It's not acceptable. It's still a witch-hunt, and it obviously isn't going to stop there. He's clearly a bit frightened by the fight-

back that there has been. But he'll do the first few now and then do the rest later.

The right wing is on the offensive and have been since Benn's Deputy leadership campaign, and they want to get rid of any active left in the party. We say that all socialists have the right to be in the Labour Party.

There was a very successful rally organised largely by *Militant* last weekend. Do you think this has helped?

Yes. We sent delegates from Hackney North, and we thought it was an extremely good initiative, and was obviously very successful. I think the problem now is what will happen next? There's a bit of a vacuum after this rally: now what?

It's also obviously important to involve people other than *Militant* in any campaign. We see our conference, which has been called by rank and file constituency parties, as the next step to building a

broad united front.

Can you tell us what will be happening on 30 October?

Yes. At our planning meeting there were fifteen sponsoring parties and eleven who sent observers, which was very encouraging given the short notice and the fact that we could only afford to circulate London parties.

We agreed to call the conference proposed by Hackney North at the end of October, and to invite delegates from CLPs, unions, LPYSs and other affiliated organisations.

Hackney North was concerned that CLPs should be able to express their opposition separately. People felt that when it comes down to it, it will be the CLPs that are told 'expel this person', and we want them not to co-operate with this. So we think it is important that they have a separate vote that will clearly commit them to this kind of resistance.

But we also think the trade union aspect is very

important, so that — for example — we think that affiliated union branches should be approached to commit themselves to continue supporting their local party if it is disaffiliated. This will prevent the NEC setting up 'rump' parties.

What do you think constituency parties should do if it faces expulsion of some of its members, and what do you think should be done now?

We feel that there should be no co-operation at all with the NEC report. We want to put the onus on the NEC. If they are prepared to break up the party and lose us the next election, they must take responsibility for it. If they say 'you must expel this person', then we say 'no'. Then the ball is in their court. Its up to them to decide what to do next. We believe that if enough parties take such a stand, and if they back each other up, the NEC will not be able to impose the register and we can defeat this witch-hunt.

What other things can CLPs do now?

There were a number of ideas put forward at our planning meeting. Some parties are trying to get regional meetings to secure pledges of non co-operation.

I think another good move is from CLPs who have written to all affiliated organisations, asking them to take a speaker outlining the party's position. This is very important: my own union, for example, has circulated all branches with a copy of the *Solidarity* pamphlet on the *Militant*. On receipt of this my party wrote to all affiliated POEU branches saying 'do you know about this, and can we come and speak to you about it?'

Lambeth and Norwood Parties, and several others, have called rallies against the witch-hunt in which they have also invited local union speakers, linking the issue to the fight against the Tories.

# Issues facing the Lab

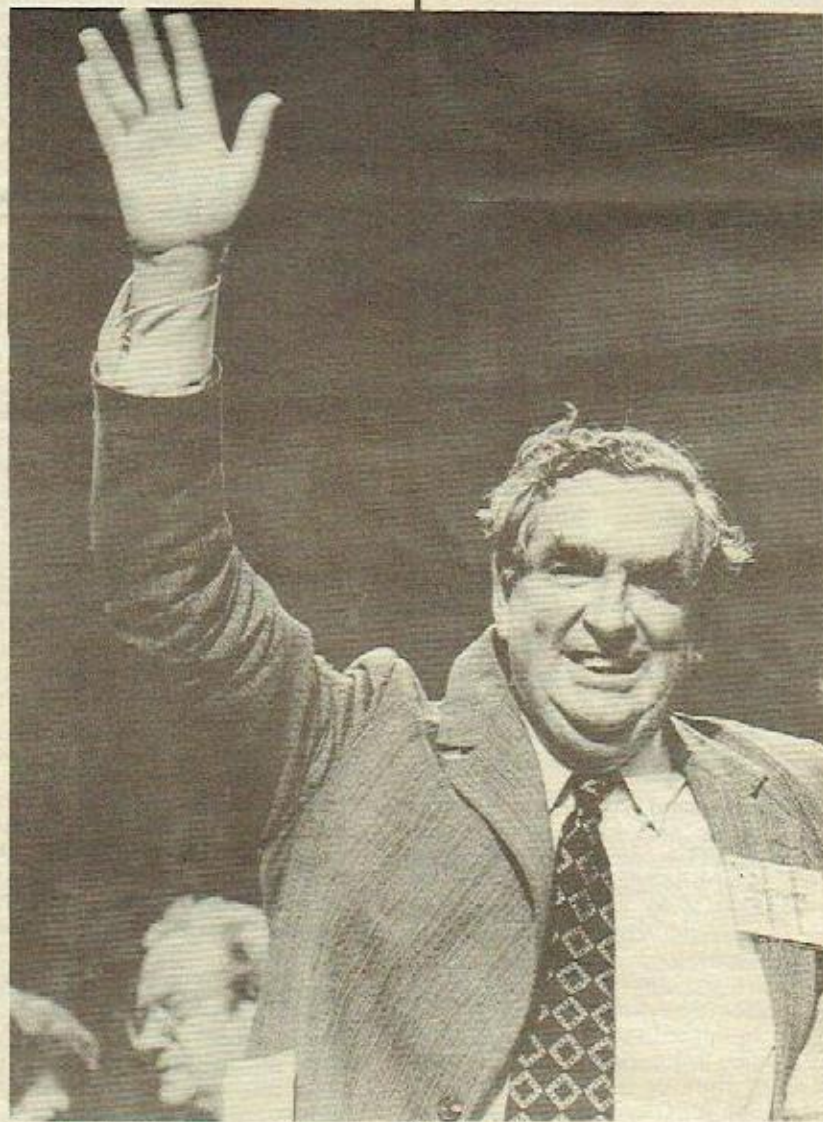
## 1. The Register and the Witch-hunt

**THE OVERWHELMINGLY most important issue facing the conference is the attempt by the parliamentary leadership to introduce a register of organisations inside the party. A huge number of resolutions opposing the witch-hunt and defending the Militant tendency have been received. This issue above all others will determine the outcome of the conference.**

Foot is determined to appease the right wing by giving them the scalps of the *Militant* parliamentary candidates and a few *Militant* leaders. But this idea of a 'compromise' on the witch-hunt is unworkable — once they have tasted blood the right wing will go for broke. That's why it's necessary to make no compromise on this witch-hunt.

Among the most important resolutions are one from Brent South CLP which calls for the rejection of the Register, defends the right of organisation inside the party and calls for the re-affirmation of the right of Constituency Parties to decide on membership and choose their own parliamentary candidates.

Similar points are made in the amendment to the ACTT resolution attacking the witch-hunt, submitted by Hackney North CLP. The amendment rejects both the register and expulsions. A determined effort will be necessary to defeat the register. At the present time it seems likely that the trade union leaders will force it through conference. Then the fight will go on to prevent its implementation in practice.



## 2. Women in the Party

As we report extensively on page 10 a number of resolutions will be going forward to ensure the representation of women inside the party. In particular resolutions from Harlow, Acton, Dulwich, Tooting and Kensington, Lambeth Central, Islington Central, Hemel Hempstead and Peckham argue for five resolutions from Women's Conference to automatically go to the annual conference of the whole party.

## 3. Nuclear Disarmament and Arms Sales

Once again a large number of resolutions have been submitted on nuclear disarmament. Most of the resolutions oppose Cruise and Trident, call for the removal of all nuclear bases from British soil and link unilateral disarmament to the creation of a nuclear free zone in Europe.

Two contentious issues are covered by the resolutions. First, nearly all demand an unequivocal commitment to nuclear disarmament in the election manifesto. Foot has given a public commitment that as Prime Minister he would send back Cruise missiles. But he is certain to oppose a definite commitment to unilateral disarmament in the manifesto.

The resolutions from Brent North and Henley CLP differs from many others in positively including the demand for withdrawal from NATO. This is eminently sensible.

NATO is an alliance based on nuclear weapons. British nuclear disarmament within the NATO alliance is absurd double-think. Those, among whom Tony Benn is unfortunately counted, who want nuclear disarmament within NATO, do so because they believe the myth that the Soviet Union poses a threat to workers in the West. But this is precisely the main argument of the multilateralists and the right wing.

More than six million trade unionists are affiliated to CND as a result of their conference decisions. CND is nearly as big an organisation as the Labour Party.

The demand for a definite commitment to unilateralism in the manifesto must be hammered home.

A new feature of the resolutions this year is the concern with arms sales. Socialist Challenge supports the resolutions from Sutton and Cheam CLP and Sheffield Brightside which calls for a ban on all arms sales. Other resolutions try to define, mainly wrongly, the type of country where arms could be legitimately sold! For example the resolution from Merthyr Tydfil specifies countries in NATO and the Commonwealth as those where arms should be sold!

Britain today is an imperialist country. Its arms sales reflect that and should be stopped. A socialist Britain would give arms to the rebels in El Salvador, to revolutionary Nicaragua and national liberation and socialist movements all over the world.

The use of the term 'undemocratic' and 'totalitarian' in many of the resolutions is confusing because it obliterates the class question — we are not opposed to workers states and liberation movements having arms. We are opposed to arming reactionary regimes.

A further positive feature of the resolutions this year are those pointing to the need for 'reconversion' — plans for the alternative use of productive facilities away from arms production towards production for use.

## 4. Incomes Policy

After the rejection of incomes policy at the TUC there is bound to be a heated debate on incomes policy. A resolution from the Colliery Deputies all but calls for the next Labour government to implement incomes policy, but an amendment from UCATT turns it in to its opposite.

Dudley West CLP put forward a resolution for a 'socialist incomes policy' within the framework of the AES. But in this resolution the AES and the appellation 'socialist' are just a face-saving gloss. This resolution and that from Esher CLP should be rejected.

TASS's resolution, recognising that incomes policy under capitalism inevitably holds back workers living standards is exactly right.

Of course in a socialist society planned incomes growth would be part of an overall economic package. But a new social contract does not add up to socialism.

Before we get to socialism, we should reject all attempts to construct another Jack Jones style package — which will end up just as the '74-9 social contract did.

## 5. Unemployment

Coventry South CLP provide the way forward to combat unemployment. Their resolution calls for a 35-hour week, work sharing with no loss of pay, the nationalisation of any firm causing redundancy, a massive programme of public works — together with the demand for YOPs workers to have full trade union rights and union rates of pay.

This excellent resolution backs up these points with the call for industrial action and demonstrations to win these demands. A similar resolution is put forward by Mansfield CLP.



# our Party conference

## 6. Ireland

For a number of years there have been attempts by successive Conference Arrangement Committees to prevent the issue of Ireland being adequately discussed. We can be sure of similar attempts this year. Nonetheless resolutions from Nottingham East CLP and from Hackney North CLP call for British withdrawal and for self-determination for the Irish people.

The Hackney resolution in particular opposes both the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Diplock courts in Northern Ireland. The issue of Ireland is one which successive Labour leaderships have preferred to ignore, or alternatively to simply pursue a bi-partisan policy with the Tories — following the traditional policy of allowing the Unionists in the North to keep control of the sectarian six-county state.

Hackney and Nottingham East provide a head-on challenge to this tradition. The fight to win the Labour Party to self-determination for the Irish people and troop withdrawal will doubtless be a long one. But it cannot even be started without ensuring that conference repeatedly has this issue out before it.



## 7. Poland

Basingstoke CLP have put forward a comprehensive resolution calling for the lifting of martial law in Poland and the freeing of detainees, together with the restoration of trade union rights to the Polish workers.

This resolution, excellent in its intentions suffers from one major flaw however — the demand for the workers movement to break all links with the Communist Parties and official trade unions in Eastern Europe. Not only is this wrong in itself, but it is a surefire way to divide the support for Solidarnosc in the conference.

The resolution from Stepney and Poplar CLP contains one excellent call — the organising of a national demonstration of solidarity with Solidarnosc.

The Stepney resolution has the merit of distinguishing labour movement support for the Polish workers from the fraudulent crocodile tears of Reagan and Thatcher who have simply used the Polish events for crude anti-communist propaganda.

But this situation calls for a stepped up labour movement campaign of solidarity with the Polish workers. The NEC must give a lead here.

The opportunity still exists to call a major demonstration on the anniversary of the Jaruzelski coup — this December. Let's hope this call gets taken up.



## 8. El Salvador

The bloody regime in El Salvador has just been celebrating its 'national day' with a big military parade in the sports stadium in San Salvador. On display was the military hardware so generously donated by the United States.

Everyone in the labour movement should oppose the bloody butchers who rule El Salvador, just as the labour movement has so consistently supported the fight against the dictator Pinochet in Chile.

Alas, only one resolution on El Salvador has been put forward, by Banbury CLP. It is moderately worded, but makes the essential points. This is one resolution which should be carried without a vote against.

## 9. The missing resolution ...

Resolutions 75 to 131 deal with the attack on the Health Service.

Many demand the restoration of all cuts, in abolition of the private sector in health, the takeover of the drug companies. But only the resolution from Braintree CLP mentions 'full support for the National Health Service workers in their struggle against the Tories.'

Naturally, the resolutions were submitted before the current battle with the government. But if the debate at Conference is to mean anything at all it will have to turn around the struggles currently in progress.

The TUC was correctly dominated with this issue. Labour's electoral fortunes stand lower in the polls today than they did the last time public service workers led the winter of discontent. There remains a real political nettle to be grasped by Labour's Conference in the new 'winter of discontent'. The debate on the Health Service can start that process.

So far the pressure from the ranks has forced Labour leaders to tailend the fight. But the likes of Foot and Callaghan explain events like September 22 as trade union battles aimed solely at a fair deal for health workers, completely ignoring the reason why thousands are taking action; to break Thatcher's back.

Labour's only chance is to grasp the nettle and put itself in the leadership of this political struggle against the Government. If Labour is to win back the good faith of millions of workers, as speaker after speaker will attempt to outdo each other in anti-Tory rhetoric, then the simple question must be answered — if this government is such a disaster for the working class why doesn't Labour lead the fight to kick it out? The message that must come from Conference is that Labour is prepared to do exactly that.

We need an emergency resolution for the NHS debate. It should read:

'Conference fully supports the health workers in their battle for a living wage. Conference notes with pride that this struggle has become the centre for a massive battle with the Tories. Conference believes that the Labour Party must give a lead to this struggle by calling for mass industrial action in support of the health workers and to kick out the Tories. The mobilisation of every unit of the Party behind this struggle. The opening up of a massive political campaign of demonstrations, pickets and rallies of solidarity in support of the health workers and against the government.'

These and other measures can turn Labour's standing in the working class completely round. But of course they depend on a leadership; and ours is presently engaged in a witch-hunt and fighting for a new incomes policy ...

## Special note...

**SATURDAY 26 SEPTEMBER.**  
11am Labour CND march. Assembly in forecourt of Butlins Metropole Hotel, Princess Parade, North Promenade.  
12:30pm Rally on beach opposite Manchester Square. 1.45pm CLPD rally. Plant room, Winter Gardens. 7:30pm. London Labour Briefing rally at Claremont Hotel, North Promenade. 7pm. International Rally. Speakers from El Salvador FDR, PLO, Southern Africa. Plus Benn, Huckfield, Hart et al. Renaissance Room, Winter Gardens.

**MONDAY 27 SEPTEMBER.** London Herald public meeting. Spanish Hall, Winter Gardens. Benn, Scargill, Maynard, Livingstone, Knight etc. 8pm. East European Solidarity Campaign, Zbigniew Kowalewski (regional leader of Lodz Solidarnosc), Piotr Kozlowski (Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group), Eric Hefner, Ron Keating, Reg Race.

**TUESDAY 28 September.** 7.15pm. Labour Committee on Ireland. Guest House Association, 87A Coronation St., Blackpool. Don Flynn, Geoff Bell, Pat Byrne.

## LABOUR PARTIES AGAINST THE WITCH-HUNT

Conference of delegates from CLPs, unions, LPs, branches, LP branches, women's sections

30 October  
Country Hall, London

Contact: Labour Parties against the witch-hunt  
107 Nevill Rd, London N16.  
(Note change of address)

Thursday 30 September  
7.30pm  
Lobster Pot Restaurant  
Market Street  
BLACKPOOL

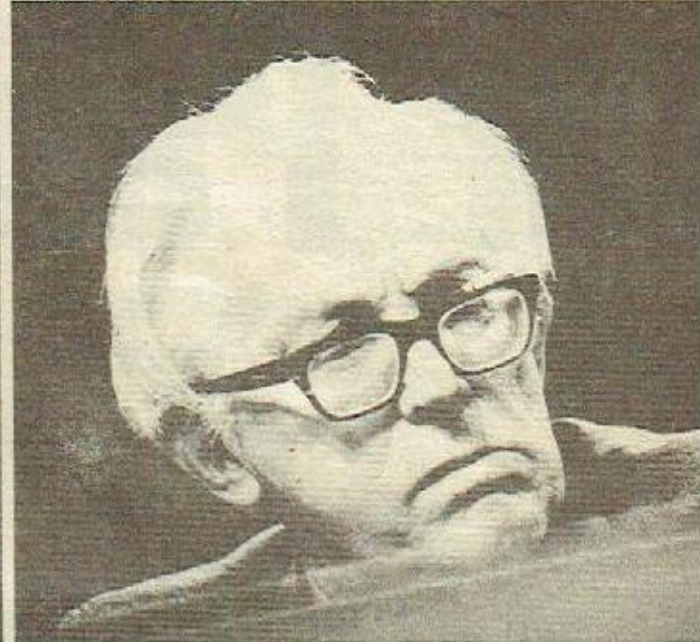




Photo: GM COOKSON



Photo: JEREMY NICHOLL



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

— Michael Foot on the decision of the Socialist League to dissolve in 1937 to avoid expulsion.

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

— Michael Foot on the expulsion of Stafford Cripps in 1938.

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

— Michael Foot against the proscription in 1954

**DELEGATES TO Labour's Blackpool conference face a nasty prospect: a direct attack on them adopted by conference itself.**

Constituency Parties then face an awkward choice: should they implement the register? Should they accept expulsions? Or should they refuse and disobey conference?

The problem is acute because the democracy campaign has rightly insisted that MPs should obey conference. True, the campaign has not been fully successful. But can the left apply one standard to MPs and another to itself?

Worse still, Labour Party members will probably now confront a right wing NEC and policy reversals on important issues, imposed by the block vote. Should they abide by these policies and obey the NEC?

This brings the democracy campaign to a new stage. For the first time since 1979 the left faces *disobeying conference*.

Yet this situation is not new; in many ways it is normal. Throughout the sixties and seventies the Labour Party opposed unilateral nuclear disarmament while its members took to the streets to support it. In 1979 the 'winter of discontent' pitted workers against their own government. And throughout the fifties the Bevanite left was a minority on the NEC and in the PLP, often losing conference battles but continuing to fight on its own policies.

The dilemma is simple: The Party is dominated by a leadership which manipulates conference and which jettisons working people's interests to save its own skin. Yet no alternative mass party has been created, and

every attempt to do so has failed.

The left has reacted in one of two ways: either it has set up separate organisations outside the Labour Party, or it has stayed in the Labour Party and wound up its organisations.

The first course was followed by the early British Socialist Party, by the Communist Party after 1929, by the Independent Labour Party, and now by groups such as the Socialist Workers' Party. The second course was followed by Stafford Cripps' Socialist League in the late thirties and by Bevanites in the fifties.

British Socialist Party, which walked out of its own accord in 1901, affiliated again after the war.

The unique character of the British Labour Party, which is based on its claims to represent *all* working class currents within its ranks, prompted Lenin and the Third International to advise the Communists to apply for affiliation in Britain — as distinct from every other country.

The application was not rejected on constitutional grounds but on hotly disputed *political* grounds. Therefore both the Labour Party con-

## Socialists, Democracy and

# DON'T MOURN

By Alan Freeman

but then, they have no recognisable principles at all.

Moreover the union leaders, who

blocked by the Labour right.

The experience of the National Left Wing movement in the 1950s shows exactly how this problem is to be met. The National Left Wing was formed, when the Labour Party tried to expel the Communist Party, as counterpart of the minority movement in the unions which organised nearly three quarters of a million trade unionists for militant action against the Tories and employers.

It fought for socialist policies against expulsions. At one stage a hundred and fifty CLPs took part in the National Left Wing Movement which numbered many disaffiliated parties in its ranks. It did two things:

- Through its links with the Minority Movement and the Communist Party, it endorsed extraparliamentary direct action for policies which were blocked by the Labour right.

- It *neither* walked out of the Labour Party, *nor* disbanded under threat from the leadership. It *neither* walked away from a fight, *nor* capitulated. Disaffiliated parties continued in existence, promoted candidates, and fought for admission to the Party. This prevented the Labour leader from bypassing the local labour movement by setting up rump 'official' parties.

The tragedy of the National Left Wing was that in 1928 the Communist Party changed its line and called for the Labour Party to form a new party.

The vast majority could not be kept and went back with their hands between their legs. Two years later Ramsay MacDonald committed a crime against the membership by forming a coalition government. If the NLWM had remained in existence as a militant fighting body, it could have spearheaded the struggle against betrayal and against MacDonald's austerity policies, serving as focus for a left-wing revival in the Labour Party.

It did not do so: and the decade saw mass unemployment, poverty and eventually war, on a background of gigantic Labour Party defeats.

Could such an experience be repeated? Could the left wing in the unions and the left in the party line through extraparliamentary action defy the leadership and so advance

TRIBUNE 14 NOVEMBER 1982

## WHO STILL BELIEVES IN FREEDOM?

by Michael Foot

DOES THE LABOUR Party believe in democracy or ...

... counting heads applies to the com- Herbert Morrison and attacking

Yet there is a third way. This is to *stay in the Labour Party* (and, if one is threatened with expulsion, fight to stay in) *but also to organise*.

Moreover, whatever Roy Hattersley says, this is *not* against Labour's constitution and practice. The Labour Party was founded as a *federation* of affiliated organisations, including political parties. The Independent Labour Party and the British Socialist Party were in the Labour Representation Committee with members on its executive. The

stitution and the Labour left have, at various times, accepted that a 'party within a party' is a perfectly acceptable form of organisation. What is really in question is the *politics* of groups being asked to register: the ILP stayed in and the Communists were thrown out.

The Labour Party's provisions have been tightened up since the 1930s, and new affiliations ended forty years ago. But the underlying basis of a federal structure is still there. The Labour Party still claims to represent all shades of working class opinion.

The register is a *political* witch-hunt, and will be used to give the leadership a blank cheque to expel people who threaten it politically, not because of the way they organise.

Indeed the *Parliamentary Labour Party itself is a party within a party*, and has been since 1909, when it was agreed that 'Conference shall establish general policy principles, and the PLP shall determine its own tactics.'

If one applies the register to the PLP, its members should be expelled on almost every count.

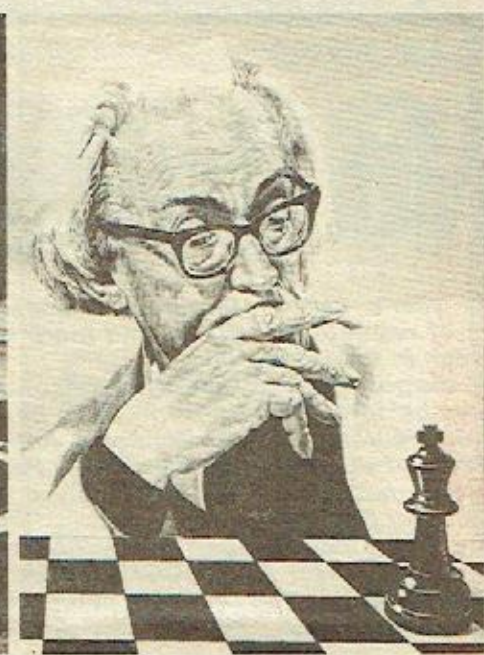
They have their own constitution — the standing orders of the PLP. They have their own international affiliations, with governments and states throughout the world — not to mention the International Monetary Fund. They choose their own candidates and have waged war to prevent reselections. The only thing they haven't got is their own principles —



**'Since the militants tended to be "extremists", a constitution was needed which maintained their enthusiasm by apparently creating a full party democracy while excluding them from effective power. Hence the concession in principle of sovereign powers to the delegates at the Annual Conference, and the removal of this sovereignty through the trade union block vote on the one hand, and the complete independence of the Parliamentary Labour Party on the other.'**

— Richard Crossman





and free con- be stamped

'There will be no witch-hunts' — Michael Foot speaking at Tribune rally in 1981

'Many Militant sellers make a good contribution to the party. I don't want to kick them out.'

— Michael Foot, World This Weekend, BBC television, 12 September 1982

1983 ...?

Socialist Outlook

# the Labour Party

# RN-ORGANISE

socialist policies? Or would the Labour leadership throw out such a movement and consolidate a new period of right wing control?

Alternately can the left, as some in the Labour Party think, deal with the witch-hunt by laying low and digging in for a long, underground fight?

The answer to this question depends on another vital question: why does the working class see the Labour Party as its mass party? Why is it loyal to Labour? There are two broad views on this.

The first says that the unique feature of the Labour Party is its *socialist character*. It is argued that the Labour Party's unique record of achievement stands out above all others; that given time it can be turned into a genuinely socialist party; and that workers adhere to it because of their unbounded devotion to its cause and trust in its future.

The facts hardly bear this out. The Labour Party's record in 1945 is held up as a beacon, but it was a policy largely agreed by *all* parties. Most of the benefits were reaped later, under the Tories, and the greatest rise in working class prosperity was between 1953 and 1963.

The Labour Party's record in 1974-79 is nothing short of disgusting; but the same percentage voted for it in 1974 and in 1979. Nor is there any real cause for most sane working people to think the Labour Party will ever become genuinely socialist, and at least half its supporters would stop voting for it if they thought otherwise, since only half Labour's voters consider themselves socialist.

The Labour Party's achievements do not stand comparison with those of reform parties in other countries, or even of Britain's *own* capitalists when seized with reforming zeal or struck by urgent necessity. Labour hasn't even got as far as De Gaulle who nationalised the major French banks in 1945.

What stands out about the Labour Party is that because it confines itself almost exclusively to parliamentary action, it has a uniquely federal relation to the working class.

All bodies of the labour movement, *all* points of view are represented in the Labour Party so that the working class regards the Labour Party as 'its' party in the sense of *representing all components*

of it.

If the Labour leaders excluded a mass current of opinion they would

Labour's reforms have been financed from overseas plunder, and its leaders have been trained by the Treasury to understand this fact as surely as Barbara Woodhouse trains a snapping poodle.

● When the chips are down it refuses to touch the unaccountable centres of power such as Whitehall, the monarchy, or even the House of Lords which constitute and safeguard the British state. After sixty years of *social* reforms, Labour has not even attempted a single serious *democratic* reform. We are now paying a severe

from becoming a majority?

How can we fight? Again, we find two broad trends of thought, corresponding to the two analyses of the Labour Party. One trend bases itself on the hope that the Labour Party can be won to socialism and its leadership can be captured by the working class. This leads to a constant tendency to unnecessary compromise on *today's* burning issues in the futile hope of a *future* reckoning. Moreover it leads to a concentration on the 'resolutionary' struggle for a more and more

struggles, trade union action, and which promotes in the Labour Party those policies which will advance those struggles. Such a left wing could be very broad in character because it could organise around a very small number of very important demands, many of which are already Labour movement policy, and fight to involve the Labour Party — particularly the youth — around actions in support of them. This is the policy which Socialist Challenge promotes.

However, one further point remains. If such a campaigning left wing cannot subordinate its aims to capturing the Labour Party leadership, if Labour's leaders will split the party rather than see this happen, how can a genuine socialist party be constructed? The answer is that in the process of fighting the present leaders, a new socialist party has to be prepared.

If the fault of the present leadership lies in its failure to confront unaccountable power, then the only way to construct a new leadership is to assemble, in a single united organisation *within* the Labour Party, all those who *do* want to confront these unaccountable powers, who *do* want to confront Britain's overseas role, and who *do* want to promote mass action to win our most urgent demands. As well as promoting a fighting left wing, Socialist Challenge also promotes this second task.

Those who organise around this task should *not* see it as an alternative to the Labour Party as a whole and should fight tooth and nail against any attempt at expulsions, or any proposal to walk out on a fight in the Labour Party. The job is to prepare an alternative leadership through the process of constructing a campaigning left wing.

The Labour leaders say there should be no 'party within a party'. But *they* have a 'party within a party' — the *party of capitalists in the Labour Party*. We say Labour's socialists should build another 'party within a party' — the *Party of Labour*.

*The ban on "Socialist Outlook"*

## I CALL THIS AN OUTRAGE

by MICHAEL FOOT

FOR THE FIRST time in history, so far as I am aware, the leaders of the Labour Party have taken steps to suppress a newspaper.

That is the only meaning which can be attached to the latest decree circulated by Mr. Morgan Phillips, Secretary of the Labour Party.

"I am directed to inform you," he says in a letter sent to trade unions, constituency and local parties, women's sections and Leagues of Youth, "that the National Executive Committee at its last meeting decided to ban the publication of Socialist Outlook from the Party Conference and that the Executive should also organise meetings to press his

split the party. This is why Bennism will not be defeated just by a witch-hunt. Its wellsprings lie in the movement of millions of working people who are demanding a future free from fear of Cruise Missiles, fear of unemployment, fear of sickness and want, and whose insistent demands for a better life find expression in a new demand in postwar British politics: the demand for democracy.

Bennism expresses the aspirations of those people who are *struggling* around these issues, and who confront the unaccountable power of the state, the multinationals and banks and want this power to be curtailed. Only if these struggles are thoroughly and completely defeated will the Labour left be minoritised and smashed.

However, what the right wing can do and are doing is to prevent this movement capturing the *leadership* of the Party.

They are driven to do this by a contradiction at the heart of the Party: its leadership is root and branch opposed to any serious challenge to capitalism. Its own interests depend on capitalism. This shows up in two vital facts:

● It always supports the foreign policy objectives of British capital.

price as all the gains of the last sixty years are wiped out using these very institutions.

The connection between these two stands is obvious: we live under an imperial state, dependent on overseas investments. If it is defeated either at home or abroad, Labour's leaders would be unable to use it for their reforms.

British capital has let Labour take office provided it stays behind these two essential safety fences. The Labour Party, though based on the working class, thus balances the interests of *two classes*.

But the balancing act is getting harder. Overseas income can no longer finance social reform, and the Labour Party is running slap bang up against the unaccountable powers it has left intact for sixty years. Class conflict therefore provokes clashes inside the party which become more and more acute if class conflict grows.

The purpose of the witch-hunt is to root out those in the Labour Party who express the most burning needs of its supporters. It aims to stop the right wing losing control to the members of the party. It aims to stop those who are serious about fighting for reforms our rulers no longer wish to grant, who are now a minority,

advanced parliamentary policy at the expense of mass action.

The *Militant* group, which has carried this to extremes, puts its entire energy into passing resolutions for the nationalisation of 250 companies through parliament. This is a completely impractical policy, because it ignores the real source of the left's strength in the Labour Party — the struggles and actions of its supporters.

Thus the most critical policy issue facing the Labour Party is without doubt unilateral disarmament. 6,000,000 union members are now affiliated to CND. If the Labour leadership attempts — as it will — to duck this issue, there will be head on confrontation. Yet *Militant*, who could help bring this confrontation to a head, have turned their backs on CND as a 'petty bourgeois pacifist' organisation, to concentrate instead on resolution-passing.

Imagine how the witch-hunt argument in the unions would be transformed if *Militant's* parliamentary candidates were leading CND activists and campaigned against expulsions on this basis!

The alternative view is to try and construct a left in the Party which is rooted in mass campaigns, mass

Black and white on red background 25p plus p&p; orders over 50, 15p post free. Send your orders in now to PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Cheques and-POs to Brent Readers Group.

## 'No policies without power'

**At this year's Labour Party conference a number of resolutions will demand more say for women in the Labour Party.**

**With the possibility of a large number of the delegates being women, it promises to be an important conference. The Women's Action Committee of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy has been heavily involved in organising for this.**

**Many of the issues raised are highly controversial — JUDITH ARKWRIGHT spoke to VIVIAN PETTIFOR, the action committee secretary, about them.**

### What the women's conference decided

**LAST JUNE'S Labour women's conference was twice the size of the previous year's.**

The Newcastle conference voted to:

- call for the withdrawal of the British fleet from the South Atlantic and to condemn the Labour leadership for not opposing the war
- vote for withdrawal from NATO
- support the struggle of workers in El Salvador and Poland
- endorse, against the majority of the platform, the Labour Party Young Socialists campaign on youth unemployment.

The conference went on to vote for women to have a more effective voice in the party.

In particular a motion was passed that five resolutions should go automatically from the

women's conference to the Labour Party conference, again against the view of the platform majority.

Delegates also voted for direct election from the women's conference to the NEC of the Labour Party, and that the women's conference should be allowed to elect its own national committee.

The greatly increased representation of the unions at the conference pointed to the way in which women's organisation inside the unions could aid the struggle for a policy which reached out to a mass of women and at the same time increased the impact of women inside the labour movement as a whole.

### WHAT THE UNIONS DECIDED

**EQUAL RIGHTS motions were aimed as much at improving facilities for women's involvement in their unions as at work.**

**ASTMS** instructed the executive to prepare a report for next year's conference on the position of women in the union.

**USDAW** are to adopt positive discrimination as a means of getting more women involved in the union.

The **GMWU** are to set up creches at schools, conferences and courses run by the union to assist male and female members to attend.

The **NUT** is to hold a special delegate conference on its equal opportunities policy and to adopt positive action in the curriculum and in the union's own organisation to counter discrimination.

The **CPSA** voted to campaign for a programme of positive action to enable women workers to continue working; to improve women's promotion prospects and to expand the range of work available for women.

**APEX** is to mount an inquiry into indirect discrimination against women.

The **TUC Congress** heard a speech from Ken Hill on behalf of the Equal Rights Committee which declared:

'If any one doubted

women as trade unionists, their fight back in recent times proves their capacity and solidarity. Lee Jeans, Plessey, and now the struggle in the health service. Women have been at the forefront of these battles.

'Some steps have been made, but look around Congress, our own house is not in order. The structures of too many unions prevent women achieving their potential, too few women hold union office. Attitudes within some unions — and in some journals — are often not helpful in fostering sex equality.

'Trade unions must be in the forefront of women's fight for equality — and must be seen so.'

Congress went on to pass policy welcoming positive action programmes including measures to encourage women to take up 'non-traditional' jobs and called for a locally based day of action sponsored by the TUC through trade union branches and TUC Regional Councils to highlight ways of increasing women's participation in the trade union movement.

Information on union conferences from Labour Research).

**JA:** What are the main issues on women's role in the party which will be coming up?

**AP:** Well, we have five basic demands; firstly, that women's conference be allowed to send five resolutions automatically to annual Labour Party conference; secondly, that the women's section of the NEC be elected by annual conference; thirdly, that there be at least one woman on all shortlists; fourthly, that women's conference elect its own executive; and fifthly, that the women's organisation should be run by women.

The first of these demands has a good chance of getting through but I think the demands about women electing their own executive and places on the NEC are the most important.

It's all very well getting resolutions passed but we cannot go out and fight and campaign for them in the Labour movement if the women's conference itself is powerless and ignored.

**How do you see the women's organisation of the party developing? What kind of organisation should it become?**

I would like it to be like the Women's Labour League from 1906 to 1918 when it was dynamic and campaigning and run by women.

In 1918 the Party came in and took it over because women had just got the vote and they saw the electoral opportunity — that's when they started to appoint the women's executive etc.

Initially, I think the purpose is to transform the Labour Party into an organisation in which



Photo: PETE GRANT

women can fully participate.

**But what about the Labour Party role as a campaigning organisation — to reach out to other women?**

Yes, this is very important but it has to be run by women to achieve this and it has to have power.

**But I do disagree here. Surely, at last year's conference the platform of conference was composed of women — but they didn't agree with us.**

Yes because they accept the role that's been thrust upon them I think — some are quite happy with the idea that women's sections should just make tea.

You know, women's sections are drawn up

along polling districts, rather than on the same lines as Labour Party branches and I'm sure that this is because they were used in election times to write envelopes and so on.

**But political differences exist between women — not just the structures.**

But we can't have any policies without power — we don't just want to talk to ourselves.

**Why do you think there is so much resistance to the demands you are putting forward in the Labour Party?**

I think men feel threatened. Even a leading left-winger I spoke to said he thought the demands would reduce the chance for men and give women more chance on the shortlists etc.

I think men feel threatened. Even a leading left-winger I spoke to said he thought the demands would reduce the chance for men and give women more chance on the shortlists etc.

**Do you see it as part of the left/right struggle inside the party? Surely they're also threatened by the fact that Labour Party women's conference passed left wing motions on issues like the Falklands? I think we could see a witch-hunt towards women's organisation because of that.**

Yes, possibly. I think that some women on the right also regard the treatment of women in the party as unjust.

I think many understand that the conference of Labour women was radical because of what's happening to women

under Thatcher. I think many on all sides of the political divide are more sympathetic to the plight of women.

**If the resolution to ensure that five resolutions go from Labour Party women's conference to Labour Party conference is passed what issues would you like to see prioritised?**

I think the main priority would be women's unemployment and the division of labour between men and women in the workforce that allows women to be shed from the workforce more easily.

Secondly, would come the role of women inside the trade union movement and fighting to increase that.

Thirdly, the disarmament question and finally the issue of the welfare state and the health service in particular, these priorities I would set.

The Women's Labour League took up issues like the poor law, education of boys and girls and they had a very effective campaign around school dinners.

**How far does the Labour Party programme which is being voted on at this year's conference cover these issues?**

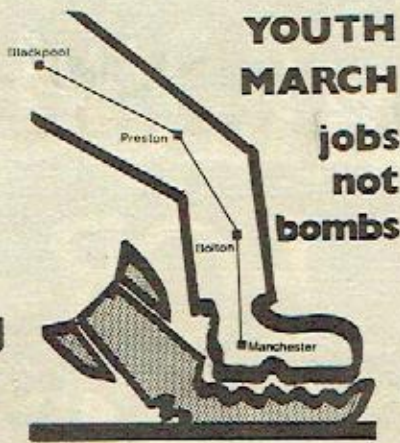
Well it's a big step forward because women are mentioned in all areas of the programme, but there are still things left out — for example the statutory minimum wage is not mentioned.

People argue that you couldn't enforce it and that there's no point in having a law — but the point is we have to create the political will to fight for these things — women have to be organised to fight.

At present women are denied that powerful political pressure.



# 'Jobs not bombs' marchers hit the road



**Manchester**  
sept 23  
**> Blackpool**  
sept 26.

Youth CND's 'Jobs not Bombs' march leaves Manchester this Thursday with the support of the North West TUC, the Manchester City Labour Party, 30 Labour MPs, hundreds of trade union, CND and LPYS branches.

All along the route local labour movement bodies have organised meetings and receptions for the march.

**Prestwich:** Thursday lunchtime the march is being met by a delegation from a local hospital.

**Bolton:** the Labour Party and Trades Council have organised a reception on the steps of the Town Hall.  
**Horwich:** the shop stewards at the British Rail

and Engineering Limited are coming out to meet marchers and feed them in the works canteen.

**Chorley:** local supporters of CND have organised a lunch and a short reception.

**Leyland:** workers at the BL plant are coming out to greet marchers.

**Preston:** the North West Trades Councils Association and the local Labour Party have organised a reception and are putting marchers up for night.

**Blackpool:** the North West CND are coming to meet marchers and have a meeting. On Sunday Tony Benn has agreed to greet the march at 9.30am outside the Imperial Hotel. From there the march goes on to the Labour CND march which will move off at 10.30 led by the Youth March, and on Monday we lobby the Labour Party Conference — Jobs not Bombs.

In the countdown to the start of the Youth CND march to Labour Party conference at Blackpool union branches all over the north west have been responding with financial and other support.

A number of engineering factories have taken shop floor collections. At Parkinson Cowan in Trafford Park £70 was raised for the march. Fimons Engineering, Stockport, have also sponsored a marcher.

Eddie, a shop floor worker in the Ferranti's Cairo Mill, ran in the Manchester Marathon in aid of the march, raising more than £80.

**Kerry is a member of Manchester Youth CND**

On this march we don't just want to pay lip service to women, we are going to make positive action a real thing.

A lot of people have asked what positive action is. Well I think it's recognising that for women who want to get involved in things like CND or the Labour Party, we have to smash down all the sexist barriers that are put up by society.

It's all right for blokes. They don't have the kids round their necks 24 hours a day. Men don't have to face abusive comments about their bodies and risk getting beaten up and raped when they walk down the streets.

It does put you off going to a meeting when you are not sure you'll get home in one piece.

That's why we want a women's day on the march. A lot of young women are involved in YCND and it's about time they had a chance to speak and be recognised.

We want a day when it's women that lead the march and the meeting in the evening to have all women on the platform, not just to talk about sexism but all the attacks of the Tory government.

One day on a march isn't going to change the world; it won't stop the Tories' attacks; it won't stop blokes being sexist — but it will show that women are going to fight and won't be kept in the home cooking and looking after the kids.



**Rob is 24 and unemployed. He is a member of the LPYS, the AUEW and Youth CND.**

I'M GOING on the march because this government is obviously mad.

The system we live in cannot afford to pay the health workers or give young people jobs and yet it's prepared to risk millions of lives and spend billions of pounds on megadeath weapons.

The Malvinas war showed that the Tories don't just rattle their sabres — they use them to kill people.

I think CND is great and we should have more marches like this, and stop sucking up to the churches and the Tories.

A lot of activists I know write off the Labour Party, but we have to keep the pressure on all the time. We aren't campaigning for a Labour Party with good intentions, we want a party with a cast iron manifesto commitment that they can't back down from, like they have in other years.

MP's and trade union leaders are not important on their own.

It's the movement behind them — us. There are hundreds of thousands of arms workers in this country — I used to be one. I got paid £80 a week for making guns that would kill people.

It tears you apart depending on the death of other people to keep you alive from week to week.

I knew where those guns went as well, I wouldn't mind so much if they had gone to people fighting for their liberation, like the fighters in El Salvador and Nicaragua. But they didn't. They went to NATO and the Americans.

It's hard to convince people that there is an alternative and that we can change the rotten society that we live in, and that's why I'm going on this march.

We can change things through action now.

One marcher, a member of the NUR and Oldham YCND, has collected more than £50 from his union branch and work mates and this only represents a small sample of the support coming in.

The works committee at Horwich Rail Works will be greeting the march, as will the shop stewards from BL Leyland. In particular the march will be giving a warm welcome to delegations from hospitals passed along the route, starting from a delegation from Prestwich Hospital.

The launching social on Wednesday 22 September will now be held in aid of the health workers.

Below we speak to some of the marchers.



**Phil Penning is a member of the AUEW and YCND.**

While I was on strike with Laurence Scott, I was once asked by a guy from CND;

'Why should I support you when you make motors for Polaris submarines?'

For a time I was stumped. But then the answer came clearly. 'Whose fault was it?'

Do we blame workers who have no interest in a nuclear war or do we blame the Tories who want to win one.

It's the Tories who support the death squads in El Salvador and take action against workers in Nicaragua, Grenada and Cuba.

That's why I think it's important to make a call on the Labour Party and Labour Party Young Socialists to put an end to Tory madness by fighting Thatcher to the death.

That's why I support this youth march.



**Dave is a member of York LPYS**

THE TORIES spent £1 million pounds a day during the war over the Malvinas.

They spend £16 a week per head of the population on nuclear weapons, and they say they cannot afford to pay the health workers a living wage.

That's why I think that 'Jobs not Bombs' is the sort of thing we should be fighting for now.

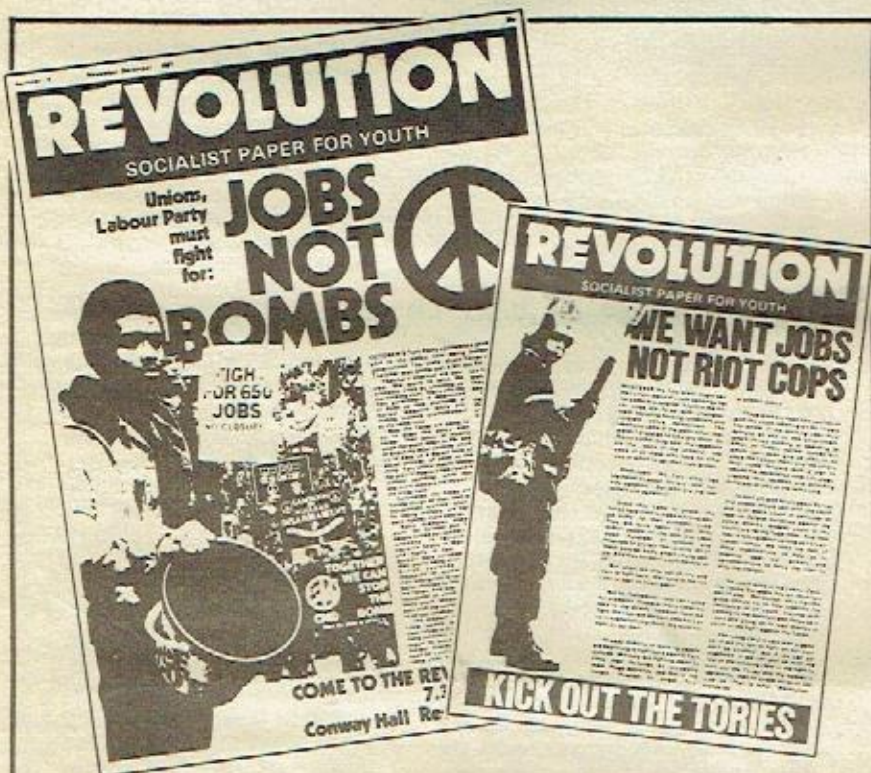
I'm going on the march because I think that we need to make sure that the Labour Party actually sticks to its policy of nuclear disarmament.

All we are being offered by the Tories is the dole queue, YOP's and the prospect of death from a nuclear war.

The situation is too desperate for us to allow any backsliding by the Labour leaders. This is what the youth march is trying to get across and why I'm going on it.

I'm not a pacifist though, I support the people of El Salvador in their fight against the Americans. We must fight injustice home and abroad.

Join the march and make your voice heard!



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## CELEBRATE THE DAY OF ACTION SEND OFF THE MARCHERS

**Grand Benefit for the health-workers**

With: the Chameleons; Tut-Tut; Disco; Late Bar.

Wednesday 22 September. 8.00pm  
UMIST Students Union.

Sponsored by Greater Manchester Health Shop Stewards Committee. Organised by YCND March Committee



# CND, Campaign for Nuclear Direct Action?

'Crunch time for anti-missiles movement'

In two articles in previous issues of *Socialist Challenge* (re-arming the disarmament movement, and disarmament and imperialism) we described the emergence of a 'direct action' current in CND — a product of the decline in Labour's fortunes at the polls, and the content the Communist Party gave to 'a labour movement orientation'. Brian Heron looks at the resolutions for the forthcoming CND conference which underline these problems.

**"THIS CONFERENCE considers it essential that CND's major effort next year, in particular, should be directed against the Cruise Missile programme, and that non violent 'direct action' and 'civil disobedience' tactics should be seriously considered with respect to Cruise Missile sites...". So begins the composite resolution on direct action for debate at this year's CND conference.**

In case they should be misunderstood, the proposers say in point 4 'Conference believes that NVDA (non violent direct action) must always be peaceful, and that any CND member or group planning to use or found by CND Council to have used violence in pursuance of the Campaign shall have their membership revoked.'

Direct Action, (category B, resolution 2 on Conference Agenda) is the centre piece of a debate which will reach its crescendo at the November Conference.

From the outset the 'second wave' of the nuclear disarmament had grappled with the problem of why the 'first wave' of the movement in the '50s and '60s failed.

Glancing nervously over their shoulders, CND organisers began to construct the political direction of the campaign. Immediately there were two central problems.

## Labour

The first (which is still far from being resolved in the minds of some of the movements' leaders) was — who are our allies?

In the 50's and 60's this was a real problem. Particularly after the defeat of unilateralism at Labour's 1961 Conference it seemed that the only course open was civil disobedience. Inspired by the Gandhi movement for Indian independence, mass civil disobedience in the form of sit-down demonstrations were undertaken designed to morally shock the nation into disarmament. The police often reacted violently.

This time round the problem was solved in real life. Despite all the grandiose plans of the early days to construct Tory, Liberal, Church, etc. sec-

tions of the movement, the reality of radical politics in crisis torn Britain rapidly broke through this tangle.

EP Thompson's vision of the 'people' united against nuclear weapons (as they had been in the great popular front against Hitler in the war) was quickly dispelled.

All radical policy or action found its natural home in the labour movement and its natural enemies in the Tories. It was in the labour movement that the gains for unilateralism could be made. No other force in society either embraced the campaign (it was treated with virtually unanimous and cold hostility in ruling class circles) or had one ounce of the power of the labour movement.

## Government

CND notched up gains in the labour movement with astonishing rapidity. Major unions passed resolutions for unilateral disarmament with overwhelming majorities.

And yet there were problems. The labour movement was noticeably absent from the national demonstrations called by CND.

But still it seemed that the course was set for a Labour Government with a conference policy for unilateralism, which could be forced to implement its policy through a mass action campaign. This perspective for a government which would throw out the missiles and close down the basis seemed very credible.

Over the last year things began to go wrong. The polls showed Labour trailing the Tories. This position dramatically worsened around the Falklands war. The prospect of a Labour Government began to diminish. A radical re-think started in CND about a line for the new situation.

There were two basic alternatives. The first was to get stuck into the battle being waged in the labour movement. But here sections of the CND leadership — particularly that wing under the political control of the Communist Party was thoroughly compromised. Their reaction to the Benn/Foot divide in the Labour Party was to heal the breach.

And yet this division was fundamental to the struggle of thousands at the base of the labour movement to change their organisations in such a way as to win back the confidence of the workers movement as a whole, and thereby defeat Thatcher.

Insofar as Benn found himself opposed to the vast majority to the bureaucratic leaders of the trade unions and their shadows in the Parliamentary Labour Party — so CND delicately balanced its national

platforms to appear 'above the fray'.

Meanwhile as mass demonstration followed mass demonstration there was growing fear that the movement would run out of breath. And so conditions were laid for the emergence of the second alternative. If it looked less likely that the labour movement would stop the missiles — we could stop them ourselves.

Direct action is not presented as the sole political focus for the campaign. Resolution 2 argues in point 3 'Conference believes that NVDA is merely one, but important tactic in our campaigning work, and that it must go alongside other tactics which involve everyone in the movement.'

The second central problem is the youth question. Conference agenda shows that this issue will bite again. 'This conference recognises the importance of Youth CND as the fastest growing section of the campaign and believes that: i) Youth CND conference shall be the sovereign body of Youth CND within the Constitution of the overall campaign ii) a Youth CND representative shall sit on all CND National Committees.'

## Youth

The significance of this resolution is that it is proposed by Youth CND, together with Middlesborough CND. Last year the concern for Youth CND's conference sovereignty was voiced only by a handful of socialists. The experience of the youth campaign subsequently — its leading role in the fight against Thatcher's Falkland war, the Jobs not Bombs march to the Labour Party Conference in Blackpool — these and other experiences have convinced Youth CND that the way to win youth is to have the right to control your own actions and campaigns.

A mass movement begins with the mass movement of youth. And from the outset it was the youth that put the backbone into the mass action perspective of CND. They remain the campaign's most valuable asset.

But for the youth too there are attractions in the direct action line. Always the first to fight, if it comes to a struggle with the authorities then the youth around the campaign will be in the front line.

The second to last resolution in the conference agenda is a composite of twelve resolutions. Its starting point is the opposite to resolution 2. 'Conference reaffirms the centrality of our work in the labour and trade union movement if we are to mobilise those forces which can ultimately win the battle for unilateral nuclear disarmament.'

The resolution goes on to spell out in eight points a policy for the labour movement. Its last point reads 'campaigning actively for a TUC/LP industrial and political day of action in 1983, including a national demonstration in London, co-ordinated if possible with an International Day of Action in other European cities.'

This resolution is a perspective for mass political action by the labour movement. It proposes a series of specific measures including the building up of workplace CND groups, winning concrete commitment to industrial action (official and unofficial) and the establishing of Labour and Trade Union CND's at the level of every CND branch.

## Bitter

Many delegates will ask why the resolutions on the labour movement orientation and the motion on direct action are contradictory. Perhaps a section of the movement is flunking out on a confrontation with the authorities? Perhaps it prefers the rhythms and rituals of 'revolutionary socialism' to action on the streets?

On the contrary, the concern about the direct action orientation comes in the main from that section of the movement who have continually warned of the absolutely inevitable confrontation with our own ruling class over nuclear weapons.

Against those who believe in the power of rational argument to illuminate the minds of Tory ministers, the socialists have argued the necessity to prepare for the most bitter struggle and confrontation to force the relinquishing of Britain's nuclear arsenal.

And at each stage it is the power of the incredibly large mass actions and mobilisations which has forced the issue of unilateral nuclear disarmament into the front ranks of the political struggle in the labour movement.

It was these actions which have forced Foot to come the closest he ever has to promising action on

Labour's commitment to dismantle Britain's nuclear war machine.

Direct action in the context of mass action can often act as an aid to the impact of the campaign. Direct action as a strategy — outside the framework of a mass action labour movement approach — is a recipe for small, politically isolated, actions which can demoralise. It is a real retreat from the difficulties which the campaign faces. And this conference must sound the warning...

Amendments to resolution must reach CND national office by 4 October. CND groups have the opportunity to harden out the positive direction of the resolutions on youth and labour movement action.

Already some groups are discussing the necessity for a recall of the CND Labour Movement Conference. In the context of the bureaucracies spectacular sell out of the ASLEF struggle there is an obvious premium on organising at the base of the movement to give some muscle to the official positions adopted in the unions and the Labour Party.

In particular resolutions should be in front of next year's labour movement conferences supporting the idea of industrial action to protest against and prevent the stationing of Cruise Missiles.

## Focus

Equally, the international day of action, mentioned at the end of the Labour Movement resolution needs preparation. CND and Youth CND should sponsor an international conference of all European youth organisations committed to unilateralism in their respective countries to prepare for a huge European action.

These measures are essential to give a practical focus for the work of the groups over the coming year, making concrete the mass action labour movement orientation which is the greatest political gain of the campaign so far. Socialist and labour movement activists must make their voice heard at CND's conference.

## The Unions and CND

CND has six million affiliated trade union members, and unions representing a further two million have passed motions supporting unilateral disarmament. Newly affiliated unions include:

- AUEW Founary section
  - CPSA
  - ISTC
  - IRSF
  - NAAAW, before its merger with the TGWU
  - NATFHE
  - NATTKE
  - POEU
  - UCATT
  - USDAW
- But the centre-right block of union leaders in the Labour Party, which

include unions such as the POEU, have been manoeuvring with Foot to ensure that Unilateralism will not go in Labour's manifesto. Unilateralism needs two thirds of Labour's conference on a card vote to go in the manifesto: last year it didn't get this — on which Foot was seen rubbing his hands exclaiming 'it worked, it worked'.

## Falklands tragedy - Labour's disgrace

By Phil Hearse

AT THE HEIGHT of the summer of 1982 a Tory government, responsible for more than three million unemployed, and the virtual collapse of whole sections of British industry polled over 50 per cent in the opinion polls. Labour's popularity and that of the Social Democratic Party collapsed.

This bizarre situation was brought about by the Falklands war. When Thatcher went to war in defence of British 'sovereignty' she struck at the heart of the political weakness of the Labour Party leadership.

Tragically, Michael Foot walked straight into Thatcher's trap. It was a turning point in British politics. The labour movement is still reaping the whirlwind.

This tragedy need not have happened. But once the Labour leadership had set out on its course, despite the opposition of a minority led by Benn and Judith Hart, it was inevitable.

The Falklands, referred to by everyone else in the world as the Malvinas, were invaded by the Argentinians on 2 April.

Since Britain seized the islands in 1832, they have been claimed by Argentina. The islanders are a transplanted population, put there to give Britain's possession of the islands legitimacy.

When the Commons assembled in a state of shock on 3 April, Michael Foot tried to outdo Thatcher in moral indignation over the Argentinian take-over: 'The people of the Falkland islands have the absolute right to look to us at this moment of their plight, just as they have looked to us over 150 years. They are faced with an act of naked, unqualified aggression, carried out in the most shameful and disreputable circumstances. Any guarantee from this invading force is utterly worthless...'

Further he argued that 'it was necessary to uphold the rights of our country throughout the world and the claim of our country to be a defender of people's freedom throughout the world, especially those who look to us for special protection, as do the people of the Falkland islands... there is a longer term interest to ensure that foul and brutal aggression does not succeed in the world. If it does, there will be danger not merely to the Falkland islands but to people all over this dangerous planet.'

Foot even went on to draw a parallel with the Spanish civil war — as if Thatcher's Britain could be equated with the anti-fascist forces in Spain!

After Foot spoke, Edward du Cann leading Tory backbencher and spokesperson of the interests of the City of London, jumped up to congratulate Foot who, he said, 'spoke for us all'.

Foot's intervention had created the basis for a national political consensus around the Malvinas adventure. The tragedy was that before the meeting of Parliament on that fateful Saturday, such a consensus did not exist.

Even those newspapers who supported the sending of the Task Force thought that it was inconceivable that a real fighting war should take place.

Sections of the Tory party were hesitant. Many on the Labour benches had not fully made up their minds. If Foot had launched a huge attack on the whole enterprise of sending the Task Force, no possibility of a national consensus would have existed.

Public opinion, as the first polls showed, was dubious about losing the lives of British soldiers to defend an island thousands of miles away, with less than two thousands inhabitants.

The last time such a massive imperial venture was engaged upon, during the Suez crisis of 1956, Labour broke with the Tories and mobilised massive demonstrations against the joint French-British-Israeli invasion of Egypt.

That opposition, together with the hostility of the United States, forced British withdrawal within a week.

But in the summer of 1982, once

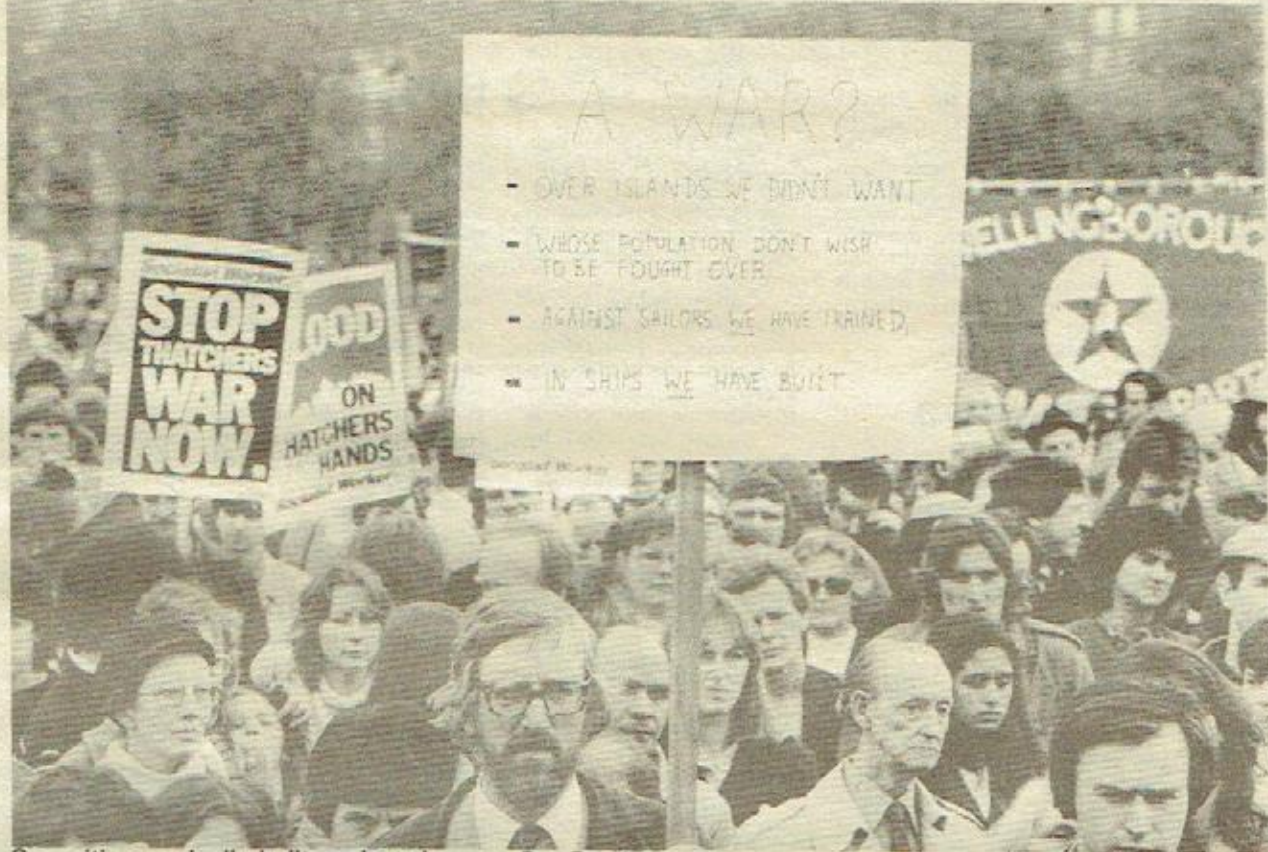


Photo: JOHN HARRIS

Opposition gradually built against the war. But Foot's stand ensured that the labour movement would be split.

Foot had spoken, once a Labour/Tory/Alliance consensus had been established, there was little possibility of breaking the national consensus.

When the Task Force sailed, the opinion polls showed mounting support for the enterprise. The Tories reached their highest level of popular support since they came to power in May '79.

In the ensuing war the Argentinians lost at least 1800 dead, missing and wounded, while on the British side there 256 killed, together with three Falklanders. The war cost Britain at least £2,000m.

In order to determine what attitude socialists should have taken towards the war it is necessary to look at why Galtieri invaded and why Thatcher responded as she did.

On Galtieri's side, the reasoning was simple. Argentina, once one of the 'showcase' economies of the third world, is in deep financial trouble. All the third world economies, especially those which have undergone a certain degree of 'dependent' industrialisation — controlled and financed by the multinational corporations — have suffered disproportionately from the world economic recession.

For Argentina's military rulers, this economic crisis is compounded by the mounting opposition of the workers movement. Just a week before the invasion there were massive demonstrations against austerity, led by the Peronist union federation the CGT.

The Generals are split on how to deal with the crisis — some favour a move towards liberalisation, while others want to maintain their tight dictatorial grip.

But Galtieri saw the possibility of diverting attention from this crisis, creating a new national unity around a struggle for the Malvinas. There is no doubt about the popularity of Argentina's claim to the Malvinas among the ordinary people of that country. Argentina is one of the countries of Latin America which has been long penetrated by British capital and even invaded by British forces. For the people of Argentina and Latin America as a whole the fight for the

Malvinas was a symbolic fight — against the oppressors, against imperialism.

Our understanding of the crude, manipulative and cynical reasoning behind Galtieri's decision to invade should not fudge our judgement to the legitimacy of Argentina's claim.

The uninhabited islands have been claimed by Argentina long before the British invasion of 1832. The 'Falklands' were indeed an outpost of British imperialism.

The logic of geography also suggests that the most rational solution to the problems of the people who live on the Falklands would be to be part of Argentina. Before Galtieri's invasion the Falklanders relied on the Argentinians for their post, for health care and for education. Even basic supplies of food and the other necessities of life had to be brought from the mainland.

The lack of interest in the fate of the islanders by successive British governments is now notorious. The islanders were bereft of basic facilities; the island was dominated by the Falkland Trading Company whose employees are even evicted from their houses when they retire — many of them are forced to go off to New Zealand or back to Britain.

For years the Foreign Office had been trying to find a face-saving formula to give the islands back to the Argentinians — indeed, until the government intervened, the islands were nearly bought back in 1977, through a deal in which Argentinian firms would have bought the Falkland

Trading Company.

Thatcher's actions in launching a military assault on an island which the Foreign Office had been trying to give away for years was more complex than Galtieri's.

At the most simple level, she had to respond sharply. When the Argentinian invasion was launched on 2 April the government looked foolish and was in severe trouble. The invasion took place early in the morning but she would not confirm it until late evening. The Tories were open to the charge of negligence from their own back benches and even from James Callaghan, who faced with a similar potential threat had sent several gunboats.

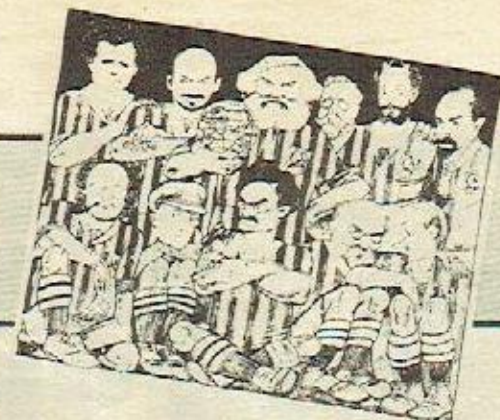
Thatcher managed to turn fiasco into triumph by exploiting the latent jingoism and pro-imperialism in the Labour movement, ably assisted by Foot. But there was a deeper issue at stake.

Argentina, despite its relative urbanisation and industrialisation remains a dependent country, ultimately subservient to the interests of international imperialism. It is not an independent centre of national capital accumulation which could rival the dominant imperialist powers.

But here was a trumped up Latin country, (the BBC referred to the Argentinians as 'sort of Latin American Italians') with their tin pot dictator and second-hand British battleships, attempting to tweek the imperialists nose for their own self interest!



# What is Trotskyism?



# Colonial revolution

In the last issue John Ross examined the class character of semi-colonial regimes such as Nasser's in Egypt. Here he shows how the regime inevitably remained loyal to its class interests, despite taking some far-reaching anti-imperialist measures.

The end of the Second World War was accompanied and followed by a tremendous uprising of the Arab people against imperialism. In Egypt major riots took place in 1945 against British occupation.

In 1951 guerrilla attacks on the British bases in the Suez canal zones started. On 26 January 1952 Cairo was shaken by a semi-insurrection in which British property was burned and fifty Egyptian police killed in attempting to defend it. This directly led to the overthrow of the pro-British regime of King Farouk and its replacement by the Free Officer's movement of which the leading figure was to become Nasser.

On 8 May 1945 a mass uprising against the French started at Setif in Algeria. The French army replied by massacring 10,000 people in five days and broke all illusions in their rule. It was the direct prelude to the great Algerian War of independence which was to start nine years later and end in victory against the French in 1962.

It was out of this background that emerged the figure of Nasser. Pro-

elled by this rising movement Nasser's regime took real and major anti-imperialist measures. It refused to enter the United States organised anti-Soviet Baghdad Pact in 1955. It nationalised the Suez canal the following year and fought a direct war with Israel and British and French imperialism.

In 1957 it nationalised almost all foreign investments in Egypt. In 1961 most big Egyptian industrial and financial

capital was nationalised. It is these actions which explained the incredible popularity and prestige of Nasser among the Egyptian and Arab people.

Only near the end of his life, when in July 1970 he accepted the United States Rogers Plan to recognise Israel, did Nasser openly come out in favour of imperialist interests. His successor Sadat completed the process by carrying through the Camp David accords and opening up the Egyptian economy to imperialist capital.

## Workers

Yet all the seeds of the last developments were prepared by Nasser's own actions and policies. While struggles were engaged in with imperialism, the Nasser regime, true to its capitalist nature, sought to repress and control the movement of the Egyptian workers and peasants.

One of Nasser's first actions on coming to power in 1952 was to execute the well known Egyptian Labour leader Mustapha Khamis. He violently suppressed the strike in the same year at the major Kafr Ed Dawwar factory.

In 1959 the regime jailed the leaders of the Egyptian Communist Party. The massive working class and student movements of 1968 were crushed by the army.

Corresponding to its class goals the Egyptian bourgeoisie, represented by Nasser, was prepared to accept working class mobilisation only provided it was controlled by them.

Systematic repression of the working class and peasant organisations was not a 'contradictory' aspect of Nasser's policies but absolutely integral to them.

Nasserism was prepared to engage in anti-imperialist action but only

if it simultaneously crushed working class organisation. In both these aspects 'Nasserism' corresponded totally to its capitalist class character.

## Rogers

By these measures however Nasser ensured the victories of imperialism and the regime of Sadat which followed.

By crushing the working class and peasant organisations and leaders, Nasser struck at the most consistent anti-imperialist force in the country: the only ones prepared to carry through the struggle to the end. By weakening those classes he prepared the dismantling of the anti-imperialist gains which had been made.

Nasser's acceptance of the Rogers Plan in July 1970 was followed by the opening up of Egypt to foreign capital and a vast wave of denationalisations. The World Bank, in

return for loans, was given the right to supervise the operations of the Suez Canal Company.

The limited land reform was reversed to allow eviction of tenants, increases in rent, and the seizure of land by landlords.

Finally Israel was recognised at Camp David. All this was prepared through the repression of the Egyptian working class and peasants.

## Support

The correct attitude for revolutionaries was to support Nasser's anti-imperialist measures.

No matter what his repression against the working class, when Nasser fought Israel in 1956 and 1967 every single revolutionary had to support Egypt. The massive nationalisations of 1961 were to be totally applauded — and far more



Nasser

nationalisations demanded.

But support for these particular measures had to be in the framework of understanding that on the most fundamental questions Nasserism would not fight imperialism. Above all it served imperialism's interests in attacking and repressing the Egyptian working class and peasants. While particular measures had to be enthusiastically supported and defended against imperialism, revolutionaries had to oppose the regime as a whole.

Next week we will look at Khomeni's Iran.

# Robbing the rich

ALAN FREEMAN reviews Richard Minns' new book *Take Over the City*.

HOW DO you get control over twenty per cent of Britain's industry? Answer: take over Britain's banks. Richard Minns' new book *Take Over the City* puts a convincing case for the public owner-

ship of financial institutions in Britain, which take up a gigantic and growing slice of the economy and yet, because of their investment priorities, in many ways contribute most to its decline.

Minns' book is the first in a new popular series entitled *Arguments for Socialism* published by Pluto. Others so far include Jenny Beale's *Getting it Together* about women and the unions, *More Than We Can Chew*, on the economics and politics of food by Charlie Clutterbuck and Tim Lang, and *It Makes You Sick* by Colin Thunhurst, which outlines a socialist health policy. All sell at £2.50.

Minns' book relates directly to the discussion on bank nationalisation in the Labour Party. This year the NEC propose the nationalisation of 'one or more banks' and a National Investment Bank.

But as Minns explains, eleven years ago the

Labour Party was already discussing the nationalisation of 'all the banks, insurance companies and building societies'.

This was shoved under the table when Labour took office even though the 1976 conference voted to nationalise all the banks.

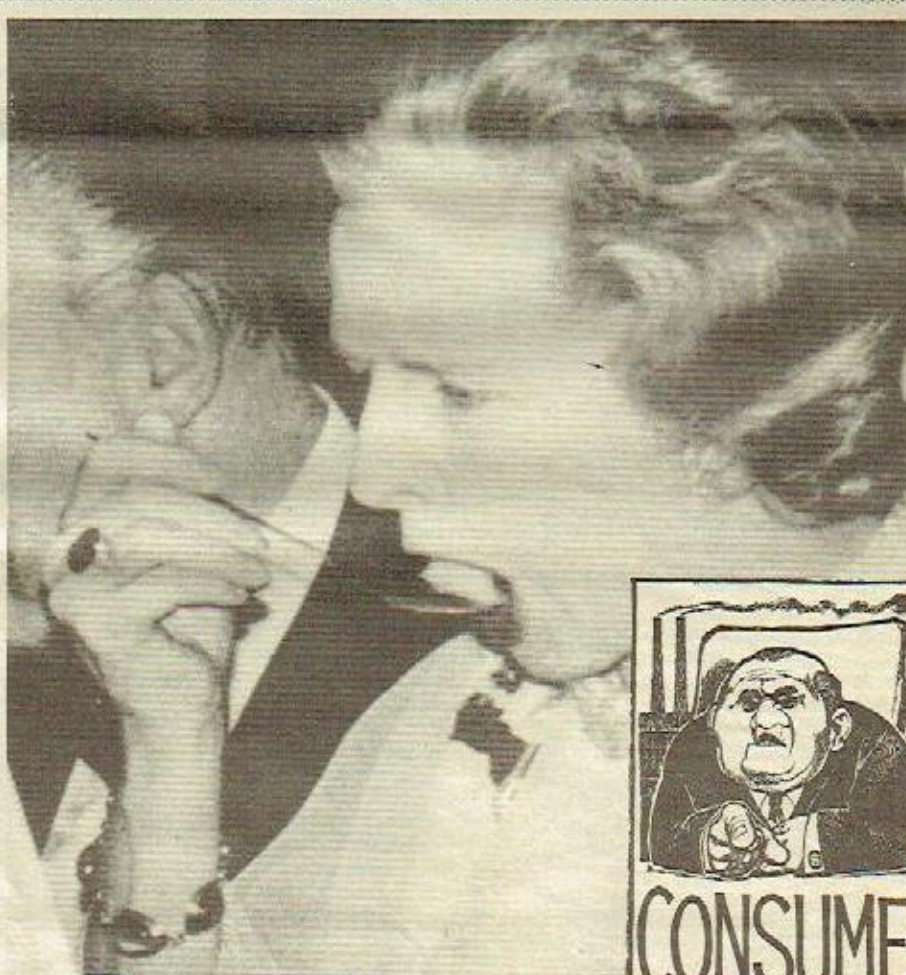
The book is a good read. I would take issue, however, with Minns' treatment of pension fund wealth as just 'other people's money'. Financial wealth does not just come from workers' hard-grubbed savings. It comes mainly from capitalist profits which they get in high salaries, fringe benefits, tax-avoidance pension fiddles and straight unearned income — otherwise known as daylight robbery.

Eighty per cent of us don't save any interest-bearing wealth at all. The others are living off our work.

Take two families of two adults and two kids, one taking in £100 a week and the other £250 a week. In 1980 the first spent on average £2.21 on pensions. The other spent sixteen times as much. Minns implies that only top managers will oppose bank nationalisation and then only because they will lose personal power.

But all wealth, even corporate wealth, is ultimately owned by people — mainly stinking rich people. They will claim that if we redirect investment priority, the 'old ladies' savings' will be hit.

Already Labour has decided to compensate shareholders in privatised companies — in case 'pensioners suffer'. But Labour should have fought to re-establish universal state social insurance, abolish all private pensions and use the principle of need, not wealth,



to decide compensation.

Minns also says, as he has done elsewhere, that profit is 'ideological'. 'The ideology of maximum return does not produce the return' he says on page 90. No, but the returns don't half help produce the ideology. Twenty per cent profit on a hundred pounds is two red notes and five per cent is five green ones, and if you are offered a choice between the two, your decision will depend not on 'ideology' but plain old boring greed.

I can see them now: the city gents driving from ideological mansions in Surbiton in their

ideological Rolls and Mercedes to take ideological champagne expense-account lunches in the Golden Triangle. Give us workers a bit more ideology, say I.

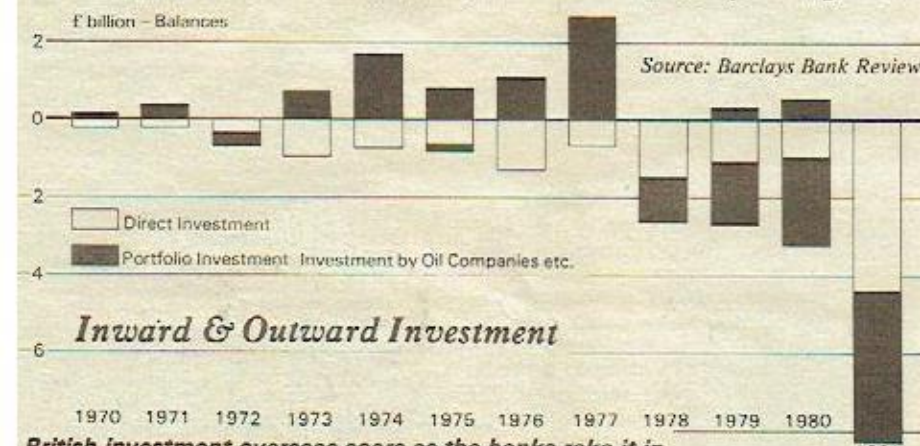
A similar problem affects Minns' arguments about overseas investment, which as he rightly points out has contributed massively to British industry's decline. But it happens because Britain is an imperialist power and finds overseas investment more profitable, while Britain's workers have not yet been smashed.

You have to attack the militarism which sustains our overseas investors, if you want to stop this.

Moreover if you try to re-orient financial priorities to suit workers' needs, you will hurt the rich and there ain't no way round it. We aren't just fighting corporate power but greed: the depravity of Britain's degenerate upper classes, grown fat on centuries of plunder and exploitation. This lies behind Thatcher's viciousness and Labour's cowardice.

Yes, let's take over the City. But don't imagine there won't be a fight, or we'll have as much chance as Robin Hood with rubber arrows.

*'Take Over the City' by Richard Minns, Pluto, £2.50p*



## International Viewpoint

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THE EUROPEAN WORKERS MOVEMENT AFTER POLAND  
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# Socialist Challenge

Lebanon massacre

## Genocide

THE MURDER of over 1000 Palestinians in the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps on Friday is the work of Israel. No one should be confused by the fake 'shock and surprise' of Begin. Israeli troops stood guard around the camps as the Christian militias — whether Phalangists or those of Major Haddad matters little — did their dirty work.

It is inconceivable that Israeli troops a quarter of a mile from the camps did not know that over 1000 people were being killed and, to quote an Israeli officer 'heard nothing'.

According to last Sunday's *Observer* 'authoritative' Israeli sources acknowledged last night that the entry of Phalangist forces into the camps had been co-ordinated with the Israelis who jointly planned the operation.

This barbarism was deliberate. It is part and parcel of the overall plan of Begin and Sharon to throw the whole Palestinian community out of Lebanon.

And to do just that they are using the time-honoured Zionist methods, the very same methods that were used when the state of Israel was set up — massacre, butchery, genocide. The message from Israel to the Palestinians is 'this is what awaits you — unless you get out!'

The scale and horror of the massacre is difficult to comprehend. Women and children were shot out of hand as they ate their supper. No one was spared. Babies were riddled with bullets.

The Israelis claimed they were going into West Beirut to preserve 'order'. Now we know what Israel order looks like. It means the military crushing of the Lebanese left. It means a free hand for the assassins in the fascist Phalange.

Reagan has been quick to condemn the massacres as well as the entry of Israeli troops into West Beirut. The hypocrisy of such condemnation is breath-taking. Everything which has happened in Lebanon — the killing of civilians during the Israeli invasion, the destruction of Beirut, the Israeli move against the left wing militias, and now this massacre were completely foreseeable.

Once Israel committed all its military might to this struggle everything followed. Reagan and the United States government knew of the planned assault on Lebanon weeks before it took place. If Socialist Challenge predicted it six weeks before it occurred then it was certainly known to the White House.

The United States has armed Israel to the teeth. It has exercised no effective pressure against Israel at all. Reagan's crocodile tears will not be matched with effective action against Israel, precisely because Israel is the most effective ally of the United States in the region.

The Israeli invasion of West Beirut and the refugee camp massacre come in the wake of the assassination of the Phalangist leader and president elect Bashir Gemayel last week.

No socialist will lament the passing of Bashir Gemayel in the explosion at his party's headquarters in Beirut. Gemayel despite all the claptrap talked in the Western press about his moves toward 'reconciliation', was fascist thug.

### A policy for Labour victory

# JOBS NOT BOMBS

THE COST of the Falklands war will continue to rise. That was the conclusion of the Shackleton Report published last week. British tax-payers will have to pour another £40 million pounds into the islands' economy on top of the £1,800 million pounds already spent on the war.

At the same time there are an estimated one million young people out of work — many of whom, particularly black youth, are resigned to a life without a job.

The Labour Party conference has a golden opportunity to ride the crest of the widespread opposition to the Tories brutal treatment of the healthworkers and to put out a call that can rally a mass movement to sweep the Tories out of office.

In many respects the Labour Party already has policies that can form the basis of such a mass movement; what is missing is the will and determination on the part of the Labour leadership to stop witch-hunting the socialists and start attacking the Tories and their SDP/Liberal allies — the real enemies.

The following policies command broad support in the labour movement:

- \* **End mass unemployment!** Introduce a 35 hour week without loss of pay. Start a crash programme of public works to meet social need and employ the jobless. Ensure women, blacks and youth are employed through positive action. Re-nationalise all concerns 'privatised' by the Tories.
- \* **Defend living standards!** No to wage restraint. Freeze prices and rents. Increase benefit and introduce a minimum wage. Sharply increase wealth tax.
- \* **Stop the Bomb!** Scrap all nuclear weapons systems. Tell the US bases to get out. Withdraw from

NATO and our colonial policing role particularly in Ireland and the South Atlantic.

- \* **Defend and extend basic rights!** Repeal all racist laws, particularly the Immigration Acts. For community veto over the police and the disbanding of SPG-type bodies. For a women's right to choose, through 24 hour nursery provisions and the right to free abortion on demand.

However these types of policies cannot be won through the institutional reform of capitalism as conceived by the TUC-Labour Party plan.

The banks and the big monopolies will resist them to the end. For these reasons the labour movement should take the first steps to break down this resistance now.

The demand for the opening of the books of the great corporate institutions can be the basis for the drawing up of trade union and Labour Party plans for the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy under workers control.

But above all it means that the present block to labour movement advance — the Tories — have to be tackled by joint trade union and Labour Party action; through the labour movement building around the current wave of support for the healthworkers to a mighty effort to force the Tories from office.

Only this can open the road to a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

