

Workers' ACTION

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Labour Inquiry reports

They want a carve-up



WE WANT DEMOCRACY

THE LABOUR Party Committee of Inquiry met over the weekend of 14th-15th to discuss the hundreds of submissions made to it from trade unions, Constituency Parties, and affiliated organisations. But its conclusions bore little relation to the majority of these submissions, or the decisions of last year's Labour conference.

On Sunday 22nd thousands will be marching on an official Labour Party demonstration to demand no Cruise missiles and no successor to Polaris. At the same time, the Labour front bench in Parliament backs Cruise and a successor to Polaris, and the last Labour Government secretly spent £1,000 million on updating Polaris.

The rank and file of the labour movement wants to

control its leaders, and stop them acting as servants of the bosses' interests. The Inquiry proposals would allow the leaders to go on defying the movement — though with more difficulty than before the 1979 Brighton Labour conference.

The Committee of Inquiry accepted mandatory re-selection for MPs. They could hardly avoid that. 90% of the submissions to the Inquiry from Constituency Labour Parties and affiliated organisations supported it, and it was voted in by annual conference last year.

On NEC control of the Manifesto (also approved by last year's conference), the Committee of Inquiry will recommend that there be an 'electoral college' to 'endorse' the Manifesto drawn up by the NEC and

the Shadow Cabinet. This electoral college will also elect the Leader of the Party.

But it will be an electoral college dominated by MPs: they will have 50% of the places in it, trade unions 25%, and constituencies and other affiliated organisations 25%.

The battle is far from over, though. Before going to Conference, these proposals go to the National Executive. The NEC can still refuse to endorse the Committee of Inquiry's proposals and put forward its own.

It should do that. But rank and file activists in the Labour Party and the unions should not just wait and hope the NEC does the right thing — especially as the NEC may well not do the right thing unless

there is very strong organised pressure from the left. Remember the Mikardo compromise in 1978, when the NEC tried to take the guts out of mandatory re-selection!

Between now and the Labour conference in October, and especially between now and the NEC's meeting on the Inquiry report, on July 23rd, we must go all out to build a huge movement behind the Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy and its five demands:

- ★ Defend mandatory re-selection
- ★ Defend the NEC
- ★ NEC must decide the manifesto
- ★ The Party must elect the Leader
- ★ Make the Parliamentary Labour Party accountable.

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by ANDREW
HORNUNG

WEST BANK:

Zionist Right on the offensive

TWO OF THE West Bank's most outspoken figures, Bassam Shaka, Mayor of Nablus, and Karim Khalaf, Mayor of Ramallah, were maimed by booby-trap bombs on the morning of June 2.

Mayor Shaka's legs were blown off and Mayor Khalaf had his left foot blown off and may lose his right. A third mayor, Ibrahim Taweel of El-Bireh, hearing a report of the bomb horror, called bomb disposal experts before using his car. When an Israeli soldier opened the mayor's garage a third booby-trap was detonated and the soldier lost both eyes.

Mayor Shaka was recently at the centre of a storm of protest over a deportation order imposed on him because, in a private conversation with an Israeli military governor, he rightly pointed out that the attacks on Israel by the Palestinians was the result of the Zionist occupation of their land.

The June 2 bomb outrage occurred just one month after six people were shot in the West Bank town of Hebron. The victims were mainly members of the religious right-wing grouping Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful), some 5,000 of whom live in the fortified settlement of Kiryat Arba on the outskirts of Hebron.

They were shot as they were taking food and other supplies to 50 of their group, all women and children, who were occupying two buildings in central Hebron. One, the Hadassah building, had been empty since a massacre of Jews by Arabs in the town in the 1920's; the other was an Arab school until the Gush fanatics occupied it.

The occupation is intended as a provocation — both to the Palestinians and to the Israeli government. To the Palestinian Arabs, the Gush Emunim is making it clear that they regard the West Bank as Jewish and the Palestinians as intruders who must either put up or get out. To the government — which by calling the West Bank "Judea and Samaria" shows that it shares the Gush's basic attitude — it is saying, "Forget Camp David. Give us more settlements now."

There has been no let-up on the establishment of new settlements since the "Sadat

peace initiative" that led to the Camp David talks, but the government has had moments when, under diplomatic pressure, it felt that it had to restrain its own and the even more blatant colonising policy of the Gush and ease the grip of the martial law imposed on the Palestinian population.

On many occasions, however, the army has shown its true colours, and sided with the Gush openly. For instance, although the Hebron occupations were clearly illegal — and the military authorities didn't deny it — soldiers helped keep them going with food supplies and by offering military protection. To this end, they have blown up many surrounding Arab houses and shops.

Given the diplomatic pressures on the government, the West Bank's Arab population took the opportunity to voice its oppo-



Zionist terror gang leader
Kahane

sition to the Sadat sell-out and the Israeli occupation more boldly. Predictably, the Israeli military authorities hit back with a series of attacks and martial law measures which, after the brief relaxation, outraged the Palestinian population more than ever.

For instance, schools and colleges have been closed

down where students have taken part in recent demonstrations. Israeli helicopters have sprayed some Arab fields with crop-killing chemicals; the military authorities have imposed a ban on exports from Hebron to Jordan and outspoken mayors like those of Hebron and Halhoul have been deported.

The deportations, illegal according to Israeli law, of mayors Fahed Qawassmeh and Mohammed Milhem and of Sheikh Rajah Tamimi, the Islamic judge of Hebron, was on the pretext of their having "created an atmosphere" in which the May 2nd ambush in Hebron took place. The three were hustled out of their homes and bundled over the Lebanese border; later when they tried to reenter from Jordan they were denied entry. General strikes in protest at the deportations took place in Nablus, Jenin and Ramallah.

The military occupation authorities also closed down two Arab papers circulating on the West Bank, Al-Sha'ab and Al-Fajr. (though these have now been reopened) and they have warned the publisher of the very conservative Jordanian paper, El Quds, that it will be banned if it doesn't moderate its tone. An Arabic paper linked to the Israeli Communist Party has also been banned.

Those Arab mayors that have not been deported have been warned not to hold political meetings, talk to the press or leave their towns. When such representatives do speak out, the authorities take collective reprisals. For instance, because Mohammed Milhem of Halhoul has been a vigorous oppo-

nent of the Zionist occupation, his town has received no development aid and is subject to a virtual economic blockade.

On top of these measures come frequent assaults on the population. In Halhoul soldiers killed an Arab boy and girl; in Anabta near Nablus a soldier killed an Arab boy. Beatings and house demolition and arrest are even more frequent methods.

But the repression by the state sets the tone for the more extreme forms of repression by right-wing Jewish groups, the Gush and the ultra-rightist Kach group led by Rabbi Meir Kahane

and other reincarnations of the terror gangs of pre-independence Zionism. Kach probably does not number above 50, a number of whom are converts to Judaism. Indeed, one of the victims of the May 2 ambush, one Haze'ev (the wolf) was an American ex-Nazi. After the pull-out from Vietnam, it seems, he was looking around for another place to practice his talents of terrorising civilians and so he converted to Judaism and signed up with Kahane's Jewish Defence League when it shifted from the US to Israel; there he could be where the action is. Before his death he was already well-known for beating up Arabs, wrecking their homes and leading terror gangs in the Hebron area.

Kahane and his deputy, Baruch Green, are now under "administrative detention" after giving out leaflets in Ramallah calling for the Arabs to be kicked out. It is rumoured that the real reason is that the Kach group may have been involved in a plan to blow up the Muslim holy places in Jerusalem. Several arms and explosives caches were found by Israeli police hidden in Jewish centres.

While the state opposes

these developments, the "retaliation squads" set up by the Gush settlements have received government recognition. It was one of these squads which recently went into action in Ramallah and El-Bireh. In the latter two towns, the windows of 130 Arab-owned cars were smashed and windows of Arab houses and shops were shattered.

The right-wing Zionists are now calling for settlements on the West Bank large enough to take a million settlers, thus outnumbering the roughly 950,000 Palestinians there. While there is no official endorsement of this plan yet, Israel has already expropriated 30% of Arab land on the West Bank, and, on the day of the May 2 ambush it expropriated a further 30,000 acres, equivalent to about 2% of the land area.

This is the brutal reality behind the now stalled Camp David talks. How can there be any thought of Palestinian autonomy — let alone an independent state — within this context? Sadat's present "hard line", however, is likely soon to soften and Israel is making not-so-secret approaches to Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile Iraq is shifting closer to the US. All this creates the prospect in the longer term of a full-scale sell-out of the Palestinians.



Israeli soldiers on the West Bank

A 'liberal' warmonger?

LOOKING FOR liberals in the Zionist haystack is no easy task. Inventing them is so much simpler. So Ezer Weizman, who at the beginning of the month resigned as Israel's defence minister, was dubbed by the press "liberal" and "a dove".

Of course, so right-wing is the Zionist establishment that even a professional warmonger like Weizman looks "liberal" compared with people like agriculture minister Ariel Sharon. But it was Weizman who backed Chief of Staff Eitan when he reduced to almost nothing sentences on Israeli soldiers for murdering civilians during the Litani operation in the Lebanon last year. It is Weizman who is

above all responsible for the Israeli support of Lebanese fascism and Israel's frequent bombardment of Lebanon. It was Weizman who appointed a known right-wing extremist, Aluf Danny Matt, as military co-ordinator in the territories occupied since 1967. It was Weizman who backed the deportation of the mayor of Nablus and has now deported the mayors of Hebron and Halhoul. And it is Weizman that has pushed for the biggest anti-terror[?] operations — bigger than those the army itself proposed while subtly aiding Gush Emunim. As defence minister he was for stepping up military spending, for cutting nothing and for trying to pressure the US not to supply Egypt.

His sole stance that has been classified by the ornithologists of Western journalism as "dovish" is his insistence on keeping open the Camp David talks and playing down the settlement policy.

What divides Weizman from the more blatant expansionists like Begin and Sharon is his concern not to move Israel too far away from America's international stance.

EEC acts as broker

ACCORDING TO Sir Ian Gilmour, the Tory Deputy Foreign Secretary, "We [the EEC nations] wish to see full autonomy and to see the right of self-determination granted to the Palestinians."

At the same time the EEC leaders at their Venice summit declared that not only did they have a peace plan for the Middle East, now that the US initiative has stalled, but also that the PLO would "have to be associated" with any new negotiations.

Gilmour's statement is as important as it is untruthful. The EEC nations are not interested in Palestinian self-determination at all. They support in general some variant on a West Bank plus Gaza statelet under some kind

of international supervision or internationally backed guarantees.

What the statement indicates, however, is the way in which the EEC is being used as a broker for a "solution" to the Palestine question. This new role is encouraged by some in Israel, like Abba Eban, and vigorously opposed by most. Most of all it is being encouraged by the conservative Arab nations, who reject for now any close connection directly with Israel — Saudi Arabia, for example, has recently refused an Israeli approach — and know that the EEC needs Middle East oil. It is also an attempt to work through nations which, unlike the US, do not have strong internal Jewish lobbies.

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by JAMES DAVIES

CARTER'S RECENT attempt to grab the US hostages held in Iran rather than send back the Shah could have sparked off war. Any attempt to carry out the US's threat to back up its economic blockade of Iran by mining the Gulf could lead to war.

The warmongers who lead the great powers of Western Europe and the USA are rattling their sabres louder than ever following the Soviet Union's criminal invasion of Afghanistan.

In line with this mood, the Tories in their last Budget boosted military spending by millions; at the same time they slashed social spending by millions. Thus long before the crescendo of death and destruction brought by the outbreak of war, the policy of massive arms spending is an attack on the living standards of the working class.

And most activists in the labour movement know that. At the Labour Party Special Conference on May 31st, the fight against war was central.

The Conference statement denounced "the manufacture and deployment of Cruise missiles and the neutron bomb". It opposed NATO's plans to site Cruise missiles in Britain. And Labour's National Executive has organised a demonstration on June 22 against Cruise missiles and against any successor for Polaris.

But many delegates at the Special Conference felt that the National Executive's statement did not say enough.

Labour Weekly reports: "Sue Reeves... criticised the Labour leadership's commitment on peace as confusing

and said that more clarity was needed.

"She criticised the attitude that Russia was the international bogeyman while America's aggressive actions were justified.

"If Russia's intervention in Afghanistan was to be condemned, then so should the United States interventions in South Korea and Chile.

"It is no good just blaming Margaret Thatcher for kow-towing to American pressure. We were as much to blame in our time."

Other delegates denounced Britain's war in Ireland — and the NEC's failure to mention it. And "Diana Barry of West Lothian endorsed the conference statement's condemnation of the Soviet Union's actions in Afghanistan, but regretted that there had not been similar condemnations from Labour leaders in Parliament of events in Vietnam and Chile".

Missing

So what was missing from the NEC statement? In the first place, recognition that the Tories' basic policy hardly differs from Callaghan's.

Callaghan has not even seriously opposed Thatcher's international policy in Parliament.

Basically, capitalist government — Labour or Tory — serve the interests of the capitalist class. If that means arms spending, then the government will spend. If it means war, then the government will declare war.

The NEC's policy for peace did not even mention NATO. This was a criminal evasion. There can be no honest struggle against warmongering imperialism while supporting imperialism's most powerful military alliance.

Also, the policy concentrates on 'detente' and such things as 'Mutual and Balance Force Reduction Talks'. At best such moves are for a minor scaling down of military investment, for economic reasons.

The policy also implicitly rejects the idea of unilateral nuclear disarmament. But in fact this is the only sort of nuclear disarmament worth talking about. If we just wait and hope for all the warmongers to get together and disarm simultaneously, we will wait forever.

The labour movement must fight for unilateral nuclear disarmament. We should stop talking in terms

WAR AND PEACE

of the 'balance of power', as if the interests of the working class lie with one or the other side in this balance — or in keeping the balance equal... (Logically, a commitment to maintaining 'balance' ought to mean contributing to Moscow's arms bill when the USA's arms spending is up, and vice versa. What nonsense it is!)

The ruling class often expresses itself in openly warlike language, in terms of conquest, domination and profit. Its agents within the workers' movement — some of them not conscious that they are peddling the interests and ideas of the ruling class — usually put things differently. They use the language of peace-quackery, a language of gentle reassurances which avoid every concrete commitment.

The Special Conference Policy for Peace was full of that: Labour, it says, "will give every encouragement to those working for the cause of international peace. We will establish a peace research institute". This quackery is dangerous.

History shows that without a firm understanding of the roots of war in the epoch of imperialism and without a commitment to fight our own capitalist class and not the workers of another nation, turning the war into a class war, you end up in the same camp as the warmongers themselves.

Most fundamentally, the NEC statement failed to recognise and draw conclusions from the fact that capitalism breeds war.

Whatever has actually triggered off war, whatever incident has been used as a pretext, the big military conflicts of this century have been only the armed expression of capitalist rapacity

or economic rivalry.

Capitalism created the modern nation state to promote its development, but soon found its boundaries an obstacle to further growth. Capitalism's expansion created the world market, and with it, the struggle by the rich nations to dominate that market or at least a significant part of it.

Link

The drive to link the world in one vast network of commerce meant the creation of empires, the construction of canals joining one ocean with another, and the building of bigger and faster merchant fleets. But this drive to link up the world was also part of the struggle to divide it into spheres of interest, guaranteed markets, and safe sources of cheap raw materials and labour.

Since the imperialist rivals divided the world between them, they have turned on each other or on those states that have been wrung from the grip of capitalism, like the USSR — while also fighting efforts by nations like Vietnam to throw off the chains of imperialism.

The colonial wars and world wars of this century have been wars of plunder, huge piratical ventures that bathe the world in blood...

Yet the ruling class is time and time again successful in presenting them as necessary to ensure continued prosperity and democratic rights for the working class.

Within the workers' movement, the leaders almost always climbed into the pulpit along with the capitalists and preached the need for 'defence of democracy',

'defence of what our working class movement has built up over the years', or, more directly echoing the capitalists, 'defence of the fatherland'.

It is no different from protection racketeering. It is as if Al Capone offered to protect you from gangsterism. Every penny you paid him would go not to fighting gangsterism but strengthening it. You would be helping Capone against other mobs (even though he is your direct enemy) and eventually helping him impose his terror on those previously ruled by the other mob leaders (people just like yourself).

If Al Capone were doing it, everybody would know that 'protection' was just another word for plunder and profit. And if Margaret Thatcher does it...? If Jimmy Carter does it...? If James Callaghan does it...?

Revolutionary socialists see imperialism's insatiable lust for domination as springing from the fact that national boundaries can no longer promote the development of the forces of production.

Our opposition to imperialism is not to demand that each country's trade stick to the domestic market, or any such nonsense. Our objection to imperialism is not that it reaches beyond national boundaries, but that it does so to oppress and subjugate.

Imperialism threatens to plunge the world into a holocaust of barbarism on a world scale; it does not promise to promote a collective development of mankind, planned democratically by the producers.

The rulers of the USSR long ago turned their backs on this idea. By opting for the programme of 'Socialism in One Country' and later for

the programme of 'peaceful coexistence', the Stalinist bureaucrats who rule in the non-capitalist states (the degenerated and deformed workers' states), sank into the same narrow nationalism as the imperialist ruling class.

While not subject to the same economic pressures as the rulers of imperialism, the Stalinists have proved themselves to be oppressors not only of their own working classes but of other nations.

Recently, some 'theoreticians' in and around the Communist Party have concluded from this fact that socialism is not, as they had previously preached, the only guarantee of world peace. What they should have concluded — years before! — is that Stalinism is as chauvinistic in its spirit as imperialism, and is incompatible with socialism and internationalism.

Defend

Socialists defend the Soviet Union and other non-capitalist states against imperialism and its war plans. But we do not seek to defend the privileged and parasitic bureaucracies. We see any attempt to gloss over their crimes as a betrayal of socialist internationalism.

Unlike the priests of 'peaceful coexistence' (who with their invasion of Afghanistan enormously increased the possibility of war) we advocate not the limitation of revolutionary advance but its world-wide extension by class struggle.

Against the conservative and chauvinistic slogan of 'peaceful coexistence' (with imperialism), we propose revolutionary working class internationalism.



Above and top left: Berlin in 1945

**Labour Party
demo
Sun. June 22
12 noon,
Belvedere
Rd, South
Bank.
No Cruise
Missiles!**

Jenkins gets tangled in his kite strings

LONDON'S TWO mass circulation evening papers frequently run the same front page lead. So when the Standard announced Roy Jenkins' bid to start a new centre party, and the News reported that police had caught up with a dangerous lunatic, I naturally assumed the two headlines referred to the same story.

Probably, I thought, the cops have stopped Roy Jenkins driving across the central reservation of the M1 in his haste to get from his old West Midlands base to Dick Taverne's hide-out in Lincoln. Not far from the truth, as it happened.

According to one [of his six] supporters, the one-time Chancellor of the Exchequer and former Deputy Leader of the Labour Party was not driving cars but flying kites. "He's happy to keep his options open while flying the occasional kite", the Sunday Times was told. [A deadly serious man, this Jenkins].

According to Jenkins himself, however, he was not flying kites, but a metaphorical experimental aeroplane. This strange craft might well finish up "a few fields from the end of the runway", confided Jenkins to the press lobby, but "it could go further and more quickly than many now imagine". [Personally, I think it's more likely to stall while still in the hangar].

The press was so taken with this aeronautical imagery that the next day's headlines sounded like a silly day in the departure lounge at Heathrow. "Jenkins goes on standby for centre take-off", said the Guardian, while the Daily Mail's exuberant idiocy gave us, "I'm Roy, Fly Me".

All of which goes to show just how hard it is to take Jenkins' project seriously. But why is it?

Jenkins' basic political outlook, after all, is no different from that of the Campaign for Labour Victory, the Manifesto Group, and the rest of the riff-RAF on the right wing [sic] of the Labour Party. Indeed, it is not really different from Callaghan's or Healey's outlook.

What separates the Labour leadership from the small cast of extras attracted to Jenkins is this: Callaghan and Healey are aware that with the founding of the Labour Party the British working class moved one step nearer understanding the need for independent working class politics.

What the Labour Right are busy doing is trying to make sure that we do not take the next step, clear the Lib-Lab politicians out of Labour's ranks, and develop a real working class programme. [In large part this is what lies behind the present struggle to make the Labour Party more democratic].

Jenkins either thinks that the working class will go back on its first great move to define its interests, or [more likely] that a new party can be put together from the well-heeled rabble scared off or thrown out of the Labour Party when the working class takes another step forward.

The press understands the futility of Jenkins' plans [even while encouraging them in the hope that they will at least damage Labour]. Every day Fleet Street spends its time denying the facts of class society and the need for class politics. Like Callaghan and Healey and Thatcher and Joseph, they prattle on about the 'national interest' as if it was anything different from the interests of the upper class.

Yet their response to Jenkins' flight of fancy reveals that they know better. Deep down they know that calling for a centre party is about as realistic as shouting: bring on the bi-planes...

CLPD: 'Bad faith by leaders ruins the Party'

A BITTER constituency by constituency struggle to reconstruct the Parliamentary Labour Party will become inevitable if parliamentary and trade union leaders force the Commission of Enquiry proposals through this year's Labour Party Conference.

This warning was issued by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy:

"Labour's National Executive Committee has already been asked by the campaign to reject the Commission of Enquiry package and support mandatory reselection, election of the leader by the whole movement at conference and the NEC to have the final say on the contents of the Manifesto. Warm appreciation for the unflinching stand of the NEC's negotiators on the Commission of Enquiry is expressed in the letter which has gone today to the CLPD supporters and sympathisers on the NEC.

Rejected

"The proposal for an electoral college of 50% MPs, 25% Trade Unions, and 25% Constituency Labour Parties and socialist societies, to elect the leader and oversee the Manifesto is implacably rejected by the CLPD. It is a naked attempt to divest Labour Conference of its political authority and excludes rank and file Party and trade union members permanently from control of policy by the creation of a kind of Labour corporate state.

"The Commission of Enquiry has flagrantly ignored the evidence submitted to it by CLPs and affiliated

organisations.

"90% say that mandatory reselection must be supported. 86% supported the proposal that the NEC should have a final say on the Manifesto. The overwhelming majority supported a change in the method of electing the leader.

"But virtually none of these proposals was put forward by the Commission.

"Commented CLPD chairman Les Randall: 'The Parliamentary and trade union leaders controlled the last Labour Government and are determined to control the next one too. They have misjudged very seriously the mood of Party members and their determination to have an accountable leadership.

"One member of the last Labour administration, now a Conservative senior minister. A second is chairman of a major merchant bank, and a third, with the support of former Labour MPs, is planning the creation of a

new party.

"Three more have threatened resignation unless conference supports their policy. Such an outrageous record cannot be condoned."

The CLPD drew attention to the fact that one trade union leader on the Commission of Enquiry has ignored his conference's decision of last week in supporting the Commission's proposals. "This bad faith by leaders is ruining the Labour Party", said Les Randall.

Strategy

The Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy has called an emergency meeting at the House of Commons on Tuesday evening to consider strategy for the implementation of its five aims in the light of the Commission of Enquiry decisions.



Edmund Dell and Roy Jenkins: two ex-Labour ministers, one now a merchant banker, the other trying to float a 'centre party'.

How Labour democracy could be won

THE LABOUR Party Inquiry had a chance to do a thorough overhaul on the Party's structure. Predictably — given who set it up and who was on it — it didn't.

But submissions to the Inquiry from many left wing groups within the Party and many CLPs did call for radical reforms.

The Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory prepared a submission, backed by WA. It included the five main planks now campaigned for by the Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy, but went further on some issues.



□ For mandatory reselection for MPs by GMCs, as agreed by the 1979 Conference.

□ Defence of the present structure of the NEC. (While supporting this as an immediate demand, the SCLV also advocates for the longer term that some of the constituency seats on the NEC should be set aside for lay members — not MPs — and that the women's seats be filled by direct election from the Labour Women's Conference.

□ For the NEC to decide the Manifesto.

□ For the whole Party to elect the Leader. For 1980 Conference we support the

proposal for an electoral college (though for the longer term the SCLV prefers election by Conference).

□ Make the Parliamentary Labour Party accountable. Make it internally democratic, make its deliberations and voting public, and make MPs sign a pledge to follow Party policy. (The SCLV would go further and say that there should be no Parliamentary Labour Party as such, but only a Labour group in the House of Commons, controlled and monitored by the NEC. And MPs should also pledge to observe their CLPs' mandates. The Labour Party should declare that any MP breaking his or her pledge must resign from Parliament or be expelled from the Party).

The SCLV submission also took up other issues.



□ The Socialist Societies section of the Labour Party should be opened up for new affiliations. All socialist organisations should be able to affiliate, provided only that they support Labour at elections. Bans and prescriptions should be ended for good.

□ Workplace branches of the Labour Party should be set up, with the same status

as ordinary ward branches. Shop stewards' committees should be able to affiliate to CLPs. The old joint Trades and Labour councils should be revived. CLPs should be given an extra delegate at annual Conference if the number of trade unionists affiliated rises above a certain number.

□ Positive discrimination: shortlists for selecting Parliamentary candidates should include at least one manual worker and at least one woman.

□ Women should have the right to form women's sections in CLPs without asking the CLP's permission. Labour women's councils should be broadened out, with delegates from women's groups, trade unions, tenants' groups, etc.

They should send delegates directly to Party conference, and the Labour Women's Conference should be a conference of women's council delegates.

The women's conference should have the right to send resolutions to Party conference and have them prioritised for debate.

□ And the SCLV insists that the trade union 'block vote' must be democratised — by an all-out fight for democracy and rank and file control in the unions.

What the Party told the Inquiry: We want democracy!

MANIFESTO

Recommending joint NEC/PLP control of the Manifesto (the status quo) were:

4 CLPs
4 trade unions, and
2 socialist societies.

Recommending joint control of a different kind were:

11 CLPs and
2 trade unions, and for NEC control were:
133 CLPs,
4 trade unions, and
2 socialist societies.

ELECTION OF LEADER

The status quo was supported by:

13 CLPs and
5 trade unions.

For Election Election change by conf-by elector-
erence al college

(all
variants)

143 CLPs	52	72
5 TUs	-	4
2 Ss	-	1

Election Election
by NCL by all
party
members

19

1

1

RESELECTION OF MPs

Voting for mandatory reselection were:

190 CLPs,
7 TUs, and
3 socialist societies.

53 of the CLPs supported reselection by the whole constituency membership, rather than by its GMC.

Optional reselection (the 'Mikardo compromise') was supported by:

14 CLPs,
6 TUs, and
1 socialist society.

Retention of the old system was supported by 1 CLP.

NEC COMPOSITION

19 CLPs wanted no change at all.

In the TU section, voting for no change were:

15 CLPs, and
1 socialist society,
for enlargement were:

5 CLPs, and
4 TUs;

and for reduction were:

2 CLPs, and
1 trade union.

On the composition of the CLP section, for enlargement were:

35 CLPs,
1 trade union, and
1 socialist society;

and for no MPs were:

13 CLPs, and
6 trade unions.

On the women's section, for abolition were:

28 CLPs, and
3 trade unions;

for no change were:

11 CLPs, and
1 trade union;

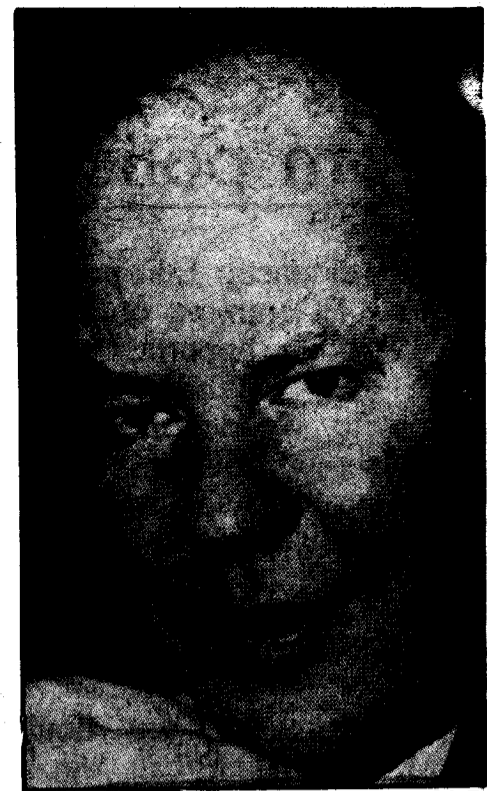
for election by the Women's Conference were:

34 CLPs,
4 trade unions, and
2 socialist societies;

and for reserve seats (proposed by the LCC) were
4 CLPs.

30 CLPs and 8 TUs voted for the introduction of a PLP section;

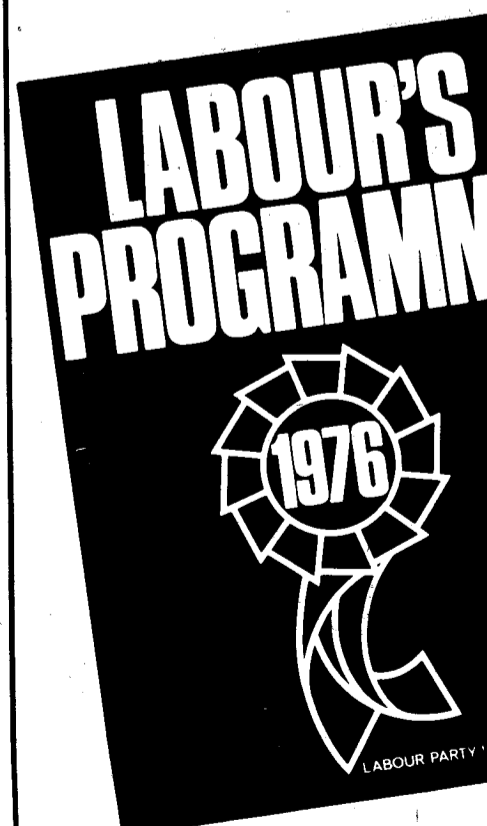
36 CLPs and 7 TUs for the introduction of a local government section; and
23 CLPs and 5 TUs for the introduction of a regional section.



Mandatory re-selection: 190 CLPs seven trade unions recommended last Labour conference voted it in Inquiry says OK.



Leadership: 143 CLPs and four unions wanted election by a broad party which last Labour conference narrowly defeated. The Inquiry wants an 'electoral college' dominated by MPs.



Manifesto: 133 CLPs and four trade unions recommended control by the electoral Executive, and last Labour conference voted for it. The Inquiry will give the final say to the 'electoral college'.

UNION CHIEFS TRY TO THWART LABOUR DEMOCRACY

by JO THWAITES

AS DAVID Basnett and Moss Evans are the co-chairmen of the Committee of Inquiry and the General Secretaries of two of the unions with the biggest block votes at Labour Party conference, it was predictable they would figure importantly in the battle about Labour democracy.

The union leaders proposed the Inquiry in the first place — hoping to make it an alternative to demands for immediate reforms in the Party — and the attitudes of those union leaders were the deciding factor for the Inquiry's conclusions.

Swung

Standing between Callaghan on the right and the National Executive (NEC) representatives on the left, they made the successful proposals and swung the decisive votes.

The report they came out with will irritate the Parliamentary right-wing, who would like the Labour front-bench to be able to spit in the face of unions or constituency activists just whenever it likes. But it will enrage trade unionists and Labour activists who want a Labour Party which really represents and is controlled by its working class base.

The Inquiry has flouted the clear mandate of the 1979 conference on NEC control of the Manifesto. It has ignored the strong support for democratic reform expressed by most of the submissions to it, and by many union conferences.

And instead of thorough-going democracy, the Inquiry proposes a rejigged set of checks and balances at the top, giving trade union leaders and constituency activists more of a say, but leaving the essential power still in the hands of the Parliament-

ary front bench!

Since the strength of feeling in the Party over mandatory re-selection is so great, the Committee of Inquiry could hardly come out against that. But on every other issue the Inquiry took steps backwards.

The union leaders are concerned about the amount of control they would have over the next Labour government, and the lack of control they had over the last one. They have a clear interest in influencing the election for leader of the party.

But they don't want too much democracy (it might spill over into their own unions). They don't even want too much influence. They want to be sure of having a Labour Prime Minister's ear, but they do not want the responsibility of publicly choosing Labour's leader themselves.

So the Committee of Inquiry arrived at a version of the electoral college compromise — with an electoral college quite different from the ones proposed at last year's conference.

The electoral college proposed by Moss Evans, based on the General and Municipal Workers' Union's proposal for a National Council of Labour and accepted by the Committee of Inquiry, is to be 50% MPs, 25% trade unions, and the other 25% CLPs and Socialist Societies.

The electoral colleges proposed last year would contain about 1500 or 2000 votes, divided 1/3:1/3:1/3 or 1/4:1/4:1/2 between MPs and candidates, Constituency Labour Parties, and unions.

Seems

Moss Evans seems to have forgotten what his union policy is. True, it is for election of the leader by electoral college, but not the G&M's sort of 'electoral college'.

When Clive Jenkins of ASTMS also voted for the Evans proposal, he disre-

garded his union's policy decided only last week.

It is bad that the electoral college idea ever gained the majority support of the Left, rather than the simpler and better idea of election of the Leader by Conference. The electoral college idea was open to distortion and manipulation from the start. The 1/2:1/4:1/4 formula of the Inquiry (and the exclusion of parliamentary candidates from it), and a smaller college, can be presented as just detailed variations from formulas backed by the Left.

But no-one should be fooled on the essentials: what some on the Left have campaigned for, and what others on the Left (like Workers' Action) have been prepared to back tactically for the sake of unity, is a much broader and more democratic election procedure than the Inquiry proposes.

The vote on the electoral college and control of the Manifesto was seven to six. All the six who stood up for democratic reform are on the NEC — Tony Benn, Jo Richardson, Norman Atkinson, Joan Lester, Frank Allaun, and Eric Heffer.

They should produce a minority report, and fight for the NEC to endorse the



Moss Evans doesn't want a new Labour government to spit in the face of the unions like the last one did over the 5% limit and the Ford strike [below]. But he doesn't want too much democracy, either.

minority report, not the Evans-Basnett carve-up.

The timetable for the coming fight runs like this:

This week: Resolutions drafted to give effect to the different recommendations from the Inquiry.

Friday 20 June: Inquiry meets again.

Friday 27 June: Inquiry meets to finalise report.

Monday 7 July: Organisation sub-committee of the NEC meets to consider report.

Wednesday 23 July: NEC meets to decide on report. The NEC will also advise the Conference Arrangements Committee on the procedure at the Labour Party conference in October.

Already

The right wing has already given notice that it will be on the offensive. So the Left cannot win by retiring and hoping for the best at Blackpool. Between now and then, the Left in the Party and the unions must wage a major campaign to defend and extend the gains made at Brighton last year.

The Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy is actively campaigning and arguing to convince militants on five issues:

- ★ Defend mandatory re-selection.
 - ★ Defend the NEC
 - ★ NEC must decide the manifesto
 - ★ The Party must elect the Leader
 - ★ Make the Parliamentary Labour Party accountable
- We want the NEC to join us in this effort.

There are still several union conferences coming up over the summer before the Blackpool conference. Labour Party activists supporting the Mobilising Committee will be at them, distributing the campaign bulletin, and winning trade unionists to the vital battle for democracy.

MOBILISE FOR LABOUR DEMOCRACY

1 Defend mandatory reselection

DEFEND THE NEC 2

3 NEC must decide the manifesto

4 The Party must elect the Leader

5 MAKE THE PLP ACCOUNTABLE

Rank & File

Mobilising Committee

Launched by:

Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, Clause IV, Independent Labour Publications Institute for Workers' Control, Labour Coordinating Committee, National Organisation of Labour Students, Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory

Contributors include:

Tony Benn, Vladimir Derer, Rachel Lever, Ken Livingstone, Frances Morrell, Reg Race, Brian Sedgmore, Audrey Wise, Bob Wright

20p

JUNE 1980

"I BELIEVE we've got two Parties", Tony Benn writes in the new Mobilise for Labour Democracy broadsheet, "the Parliamentary Party and the Labour Party... the Party as a Party is squeezed out when we're in office..." Democracy in the Labour Party is vital, he argues, "if we are going to mobilise our full strength to change society, as distinct from sending some people into Government as Ministers..."

Other contributors include Vladimir Derer, Rachel Lever, Ken Livingstone, Frances Morrell, Reg Race, Brian Sedgmore, Audrey Wise, and Bob Wright. And an article from the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory explains why SCLV took the initiative to launch the Mobilising Committee

The broadsheet can be ordered at the rate of 20 for £2 plus 75p postage (or 20p plus 10p for individual copies), from the Mobilising Committee, c/o 10 Park Drive, London NW11. Or phone John Bloxam (01-607 9052), Jon Lansman (01-440 9396), David Smith (01-985 8635), or Barry Winter (0532 703664).

RFMC will campaign at union conferences

THE MOBILISING Committee for Labour Democracy will be campaigning for support at union conferences this summer:

June 16-20
June 16-22
June 17-20
June 24-26
June 24-27

FTAT
CoHSE
NATSOPA
T&G [rules revision]
Confederation of Shipbuilding & Engineering Unions
NUR
Blastfurnacemen
NUM
NGA

Bournemouth
Blackpool
Southport
Weymouth
Llandudno
Guernsey
Eastbourne
Blackpool

Socialist Organiser

Paper of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory



Mobilise for Labour democracy

BY FRANCES MORRELL

The Labour Party March and Rally
NUCLEAR ARMS NO
PEACE YES
Sunday 22 June

Socialist Organiser says

AP Out June 22nd! Ban

the bombs! Out of NATO

New

New issue of Socialist Organiser: 15p with Women's Fight-

back. Rates for subs and bundles: contact SO, 5 Stamford

Hill, London N16.

Their Labour Party or ours



"MR KARMAL has lost the support of the reform-minded middle class which backed Afghanistan's two previous Marxist regimes", reported the *Economist* on 14 June. "Even among some avowed communists, opposition to the Soviet occupation has become a patriotic duty".

The brutalities of the Russian occupation have set virtually the whole population of Afghanistan in opposition to the regime. Even the Afghan army — the main base of the would-be revolutionary regimes of Taraki and Amin between April 1978 and December 1979 — is by all reports seriously weakened by discontent and desertion.

Both protest in the towns and fighting in the countryside have become more intense.

In May, at least 50 school students were killed and 800 injured (according to reports received by press agencies in India), when they protested in the streets of Kabul against the Russian occupation. 620 were arrested, said Radio Kabul.

Since then the schools in Kabul have been half-empty as protests continue. And there have also been strikes and protests in the factories. "In the Kabul plastics factory, there were riots on 31 May, after a worker was arrested because he refused to accept shoes donated by the Soviet Union" (*Le Monde* 13 June). "On June 3rd, 100 men at Kabul's water and power ministry went on a one-day strike when they received their call-up notices. The next day they disappeared" (*Economist*, 14 June).

Shopkeepers in Kandahar declared a general strike on 5 June, and Moscow Radio itself reported that leaflets calling for a general strike have been going round Kabul. Moscow and Kabul Radio have also reported armed clashes in major cities like Kabul and Herat. Armoured cars stand at Kabul street corners.

Meanwhile, Russian planes

Afghanistan: The whole people against the Russian army

by COLIN FOSTER

and artillery have destroyed hundreds of houses in villages near Kabul, in areas where anti-Russian rebels are reported to be massing. There has been bitter fighting within 15 miles of Kabul, according to the official Indian press agency.

Non-military air flights inside Afghanistan have been suspended, and the major roads are not safe.

More and more Russian troops and equipment have been brought into Afghanistan. The Russians invaded

scription, first for all men with higher education qualifications, and then for all 21 year olds.

The police force is crumbling, too: the Indian press agency has reported an incident where an Afghan police officer killed four Russian soldiers and then killed himself rather than give up to the Russians four girl students whom he had arrested.

To make up for the unreliability of the army and police, the Russians have formed a militia of teen-

split in 1967, *Khalq* and *Parcham*.

The *Far Eastern Economic Review* (16th May) reported: "Following the February uprising in Kabul (an extension of grassroots resistance to the Soviet presence), the *Khalq* group led by [deputy prime minister]

ations about a continued Soviet stay in Afghanistan. The *Parchamites* are not united on this: sections of the faction have serious reservations about permitting an indefinite Soviet presence..."

Recently several *Khalq* members have been executed.

The big difference between the situation now and before the Russian invasion is that the Russians (unlike Amin's *Khalq* regime) have the resources to win a milit-

now faces the plain evidence of facts to the contrary.

The political leadership of the opposition is mostly dominated by the mullahs and landlords in the countryside, but the war in Afghanistan is now in no real way an internal war between classes in Afghan society. Virtually the whole population of Afghanistan is opposed to the Russian occupation.

The opposition is not a single movement, but a disunited collection of movements.

In Afghanistan, a very backward country, any national cohesion was mainly provided by the army and a small urban middle class. The anti-Russian movements cannot find any positive programme for unity.

All attempts to unify the rebels and form a government in exile have failed, and in any case the rebel leaderships in exile in Pakistan seem to have little actual control over the rebel fighters inside Afghanistan, who look only to their local chieftains.

The urban opposition (according to a report in *Le Monde*, 25 May) has its own separate organisation.

The exile leaderships preach a more or less openly backward-looking Islamic programme, they try to enforce Islamic law in areas they control, and they get finance from Arab monarchies, from the right wing *Jamiat-e Islami* party in Pakistan, and (some of them) from the Khomeiny regime in Iran. The US press has recently published reports of the CIA arming the rebels, and Pakistani customs have seized a consignment of weapons going from the US to the rebels.

But many of the urban rebels must have quite different social ideals from the right wing exile leaders.

Socialists in the West, without giving an inch to the cold-war militarism of Carter and Thatcher, and without idealising the Afghan rebel movement, must condemn the Russian occupation and demand the immediate withdrawal of the troops.



Now the Russians face not only guerrillas in the hills but mass protests in the cities.

because the pro-Russian People's Democratic Party regime of Hafizullah Amin was falling apart — but the new PDP regime, remoulded by the Russians and headed by Babrak Karmal, is falling apart just as fast.

The Army, according to several reports, is down to 50% of its pre-invasion strength. Whole units have gone over to the anti-Russian rebels. In an effort to combat the effect of desertions, the regime has announced con-

agers, who police Kabul with guns and electric cattle prods.

The *Economist* also reports (10th May) that the school students' protest in May "was joined by supporters of Mr Karmal's murdered predecessor, Mr Hafizullah Amin". Within the highest ranks of what remains of the PDP and the army, bitter internal warfare is breaking out again, principally between the two factions into which the PDP

Assadullah Sarwari began advocating a harder line against the dissidents...

"The *Parcham* faction wants the Karmal... policy [of] a limited accommodation with the dissidents [or vain attempts at that] to continue. The *Parchamites* dominate the party and the government and have Soviet backing. [The Russians insist that they are hostile to neither Islam nor private property in Afghanistan].

"The *Khalqis* have reserv-

ary victory and the ability to consolidate a military victory by introducing revolutionary social reforms. They have the firepower and the strength to beat down the entire population of Afghanistan if necessary.

But they will have to do just that — with great brutality — if they do not withdraw. Any socialists who thought the Russian army was there to 'help the Afghan worker and peasants' against counter-revolution

TROOPS OUT NOW!

MANY socialists who rightly condemn and denounce the hypocritical outcry over Afghanistan have concluded that opposition to imperialism must mean some sort of support for the Russian invasion.

Workers' Action says no: we oppose imperialism's pretensions and its preparations for war; we say the planned and nationalised economy in the USSR should be defended against imperialism, but at the same time we call for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Afghanistan.

Some revolutionaries in other countries have taken the same view. We print here [abridged] a statement on Afghanistan from a special supplement to the Austrian Trotskyist paper *Permanente Revolution*.

EVEN IF revolutionaries do not put the Soviet Union on the same level as imperialism, they cannot and must not be silent on the crimes of the Stalinist bureaucracy which has been in power for decades in the Soviet Union.

[Stalinists] demagogically put everyone who criticises and rejects the internal and external policy of the bureaucracy in the same bag as those who want to help capitalism back to power in the Soviet Union and the other countries of 'existing socialism'. But that is not at all the aim of revolutionaries. On the contrary.

The non-capitalist mode of production must be defended against a bureaucracy, and we do not criticise the Soviet workers and peasants, but denounce the crimes of the bureaucracy!

SABRE-RATTLING

The 'Red Army' did not invade Afghanistan in order to advance later to the oil fields of the Near and Middle East, and it was not the intervention in Afghanistan which started the US sabre-rattling. The Kremlin bureaucracy wanted to keep a 'friendly' regime alive with its intervention and at the same time to secure its sphere of influence.

But we decisively reject this power bloc mentality. The basis of our political attitude is not the interests of the 'Soviet bloc', but the

fate of millions of oppressed workers and peasants in this region around Afghanistan. The only yardstick to evaluate the intervention is its consequences for the consciousness of the workers and peasants of Afghanistan, and Pakistan, and whether their ability to fight in an independently organised way against their own oppressors and for their own class interests was developed.

Feeble and shameless international Stalinist propaganda tells us again and again about CIA agents who are at work in Afghanistan and Pakistan, trying to organise armed bands. What a derisory and malicious caricature of communism!

Hundreds of thousands of peasant refugees, living in misery, regarded as anything but welcome by the Pakistani regime (for they are a potential focus of unrest, which could shake the unstable and hardly viable Pakistani military regime) — are these the members of CIA bands?

Thousands and thousands of peasants, prevented by the warfare from tilling their fields, and so suffering terrible hunger — is that the struggle against CIA bands? Blanket bombing of whole area, destruction of whole villages — is this, perhaps,

the struggle against CIA bands?

We do not doubt that CIA agents are active in Pakistan and have their own fish to fry. The CIA is active worldwide. But how can a Secret Service — any Secret Service — endanger a regime which supposedly was and is supported by the masses? Secret Services — however 'refined' and powerful — cannot create social developments, but at most can try to influence them. Against mass movements and against the will of the masses, Secret Services are helpless and powerless. Hundreds and thousands of CIA agents were surely active in Iran and in Nicaragua. But their efforts to halt social development do not represent so much as footnotes to that development.

With the fairy tales of 'CIA bands' the Stalinists only want to conceal the facts:

- ★ that the PDP regime was completely isolated, because it aimed to develop society by means of military force,
- ★ that the great majority of the population is fighting against the regime and against the 'Red Army',
- ★ that the resistance is not at all uniformly reactionary, but contains very different political currents,

with different aims,

- ★ that through the invasion, which has all the marks of a war of annihilation and national oppression, a reactionary unity has been forged between workers and peasants and mullahs and landlords, and thus the independent organisation of the oppressed has been held back,

- ★ that the social position of the mullahs and the landlords has not been weakened, but strengthened by the invasion, because the reaction will put itself, under the slogan of 'national liberation', at the head of the resistance, though really it fights for the full re-establishment of its power.

CLASS INTERESTS

- ★ that millions of workers and peasants in the whole region round Afghanistan have learned about 'communism' in its malicious Stalinist caricature: bombs, oppression and annihilation — and this must have terrible consequences for the development of their consciousness.

- ★ We are for the immediate withdrawal of the 'Red Army' from Afghanistan,
- ★ because we are for the

right of self-determination for all oppressed nations. It directly opens up the prospect of the socialist revolution.

- because we are for the independent organisation of the workers and peasants, and for their independent struggle against the mullahs and landlords,

- because we refuse to accept the party of the Stalinist counter-revolution, which is not a 'lesser evil' as against the counter-revolution of the mullahs and the landlords.

- because the different interests of the classes can come out in the struggle for national self-determination, and only the class struggle of the workers and peasants themselves can lead to socialist revolution.

When we demand the withdrawal of the 'Red Army', we do not put ourselves on the side of the mullahs and the landlords. The workers and peasants of the whole region will only be able to liberate themselves if they link the struggle against the Soviet intervention with the struggle against their 'own' reaction. Both the Soviet bureaucracy and the landlords and mullahs are forced that oppress them and are a powerful obstacle to their liberation.

Musicians fight for their jobs

FROM MONDAY 2nd June onwards, pickets from the Musicians' Union have been on duty in support of their campaign against the BBC's attempted cutbacks in the broadcasting of live music and the number of musicians they employ.

Using alleged economic difficulties as the pretext, the BBC is planning to sack nearly 200 musicians and disband five orchestras. But in spite of the cuts in jobs, the BBC proposes to maintain the amount of music broadcasting at its present level of 60% of total broadcasting. In other words: manning levels fall while output remains the same.

The ruthlessness of the BBC's attacks on musicians' jobs is underlined by the fact that, while arguing that across the board cuts of 5% are necessary, they intend to cut the number of musicians employed by 30%. And despite 60% of radio output being music, only 5% of BBC expenditure goes on orchestras — so the amount of money saved by the sackings would be a measly half a million pounds.

Pickets pointed out to WA that the strike has been forced upon the Musicians' Union, right from the outset the BBC has refused to make any compromises, although the proposed cuts involve the break-

ing of previous agreements with the MU. And in the weeks of negotiations which preceded the strike, management did not budge an inch.

The BBC's spending on freelance and non-house musicians, however, is increasing. Freelance players unlike those in the staff orchestras can be taken up and dropped individually and easily, and without any publicity. The BBC thus conveniently avoids any of the responsibilities of an employer.

Support for the strike among the MU members employed by the BBC is solid. The MU operates a closed shop at the BBC, and in its secret ballot on the strike, an overwhelming 87% voted for action. The strike has been official from the start.

Freelance musicians have also been active in the strike action and on picket lines, and have helped make up travelling bands which have performed outside the Festival Hall instead of scheduled concerts, and outside Broadcasting House to remind management of the strike.

The most important support comes from the Association of Broadcasting Staff, which the majority of BBC staff belong to. It has officially recognised the strike, and members have refused to cooperate at recordings, transmissions and rehearsals of music programmes to take

the place of transmissions cancelled due to the strike.

BBC radio has not yet used up its stock of prerecorded material: if the ABS refuses to broadcast repeats, the strike will soon hit much harder than at present.

The MU has also requested the T&G to step up solidarity action by refusing to deliver to the BBC: many drivers have already been turned back by pickets, and divisional secretaries have now been contacted urging maximum support.

Support and solidarity have also come from abroad, and recently the Amsterdam Concertgebouw refused to perform at a concert which the BBC was to record: the BBC withdrew. And the prospect of cancelling the Promenade Concerts, due to begin in mid-July, will, the MU hopes, put increased pressure on the BBC to reconsider.

The MU is a small union — 41,000 members — with no tradition of militancy and no strike pay. It needs support from all other unions, particularly those whose members work at the BBC, to help it beat this attack on live music and on musicians' livelihoods.

Donations and messages of support to Musicians' Union, 60-62 Clapham Rd, London SW9 0JJ.

STAN CROOKE



Musicians on the picket line

Glasgow nurses: 'we want 30pc'

"MAGGIE MAKES more cuts than Glasgow Royal Infirmary surgeons", said placards on a demonstration through Glasgow city centre on a very rainy Saturday afternoon [14th].

About 300 uniformed nurses led the way, with banners from Western District and Gartnavel hospitals and Gartloch hospital Action Group, followed by contingents from NUPE, CPSA, GMWU, NALGO, EIS, and Glasgow District Trades Council, making up a 700-strong protest against the paltry 14% offer for nurses.

The nurses shouted loudly for 30% on wages, an end to cuts, and kick out the Tories.

They also protested about 100% increase in rent — 'Colditz is cosier than some nurses' homes', they said — and handed in a petition at the Greater Glasgow Health Board.

The demonstration was called by the Nurses' Action Group [rank and file members of NUPE, the Royal College of Nursing, and COHSE], with backing from NUPE.

The Action Group will be discussing proposals for an all-Scotland mass demonstration on July 8, when management meet, and a mass lobby of Glasgow Health Board.

JOHN WILDE

Our fund closed last month £75 below target. We received:

Birmingham	£90
CPSA readers	£20
London	£57
Machen	£3.50
Bankers' Orders	£54.50
TOTAL	£225.00

Some of our readers might be able to manage a break over the summer, but our fund certainly can't afford to take one. Fund raising possibilities are enormous over the summer — there are literally thousands of community festivals, tenants' associations, summer fairs and the like where a WA stall could raise us money — let's get some coming in.

Cat and mouse game at Harshaws

AS THE STRIKE for reinstatement of sacked convenor Gerry Haughey at Harshaw Chemicals in Glasgow enters its eighth week, the focus of attention is beginning to shift from the picket lines to the negotiating table.

Solid shopfloor support for the strike and effective picket lines have kept the factory at a standstill throughout the strike. No lorries have come near the factory for weeks and the few commercial travellers who've tried to get in haven't had any luck.

The whole of the office staff, with support from the local ASTMS full-timer, are continuing to cross the picket line, however. Some of them are even getting dropped off by taxis at the doors of the office block to avoid the pickets.

Negotiations began on June 9th, after management had failed to prevent shop stewards attending the meeting. They had wanted to restrict the talks to themselves and the local T&GWU full timers. But when the strikers said, "No talks unless the stewards are in on them", management gave way.

By the end of Monday's talks, the management were giving the impression that Gerry Haughey would soon be reinstated and that only a few minor problems needed sorting out.

But on Tuesday 10th the management didn't turn up to the negotiations. On Wednesday they asked for — and won — an adjournment of the industrial tribunal that had started again after Monday's talks.

"It's a cat-and-mouse game, you don't know what the hell they're up to, you're just got to play it by ear", commented one of the pickets.

Other pickets thought the same. They had thought that the start of talks meant that the strike was nearly won and a planned tour of England to raise support never got off the ground.

Now nobody is sure about when the strike will finish.

The bosses have also been attempting to tie acceptance of the convenor's reinstatement to acceptance of a new procedure. The new procedure included a 7-day "cooling-off period" and secret ballots.

The secret ballot was dropped after strikers told the bosses firmly, "Keep your nose out of union business".

Many strikers see a new disputes procedure as a lesser evil than staying out without getting Gerry Haughey reinstated. "We're out get Gerry back in — if he's back, we've won", said one of the pickets. But whilst accepting a new procedure might get Gerry Haughey back in, it might also end up tying stewards' hands in future disputes — and leave

the door open for future victimisations.

If Gerry Haughey is not reinstated, or if the price paid was a new procedure, it wouldn't be because the strikers aren't determined — they are.

If the strike doesn't win, it will be because the Harshaw's workers haven't received the support they deserve — they've already been let down by one of the local T&G full-timers who promised to circulate all Scotland's T&G branches about the dispute but never did.

Donations to the strike fund aren't as frequent now and strikers' debts are getting heavier — money should be sent to: TGWU Harshaws Chemicals, c/o Trade Union Centre, 83 Carlton Place, Glasgow 5.

STAN CROOKE

EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word, £5 per column inch — payment in advance. Send copy to Events, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

SATURDAY 21 JUNE. Demonstration: Fight racist attacks, no Nazis in Small Heath! 1.30pm from Small Heath Park, Birmingham. Called by several organisations of the black community.

SATURDAY 21 JUNE. 'Tories attack women: the labour movement response'. Conference organised by the Labour Coordinating Committee. 11am, Edinburgh Trades Council, Picardy Place.

SATURDAY 28 JUNE. Tribune group national conference. 10.30am, Institute of Education, Bedford Way, London WC1. Open to Labour Party members and labour movement delegates. Delegates' credentials: Reg Race MP, 133 Grieson Rd, London SE23

SATURDAY 28 JUNE. Engineers Charter conference. 11. Holborn Library Hall, Theobalds Rd, London. Credentials from Jack Robertson, 265a Seven Sisters Rd, London N4.

SATURDAY 5 JULY. London Labour Briefing Local Government conference. 10am, Hampstead Town Hall, Haverstock Hill, London NW3. Open to all Labour Party members and trade union delegates. Delegate fee £1 to 155 Green Lanes, London N16.

FRIDAY 4 JULY - FRIDAY 11 JULY. 'Marxism into the 80s', organised by Socialist Worker Students Organisation. At North London Poly, Prince of Wales Rd, London NW5. £9 in advance, from SWSO, PO Box 82, London E2 8DN; £10 on the door.

SATURDAY 26 JULY - SATURDAY 2 AUGUST. Labour Party Young Socialists summer camp. Bracelands camp site, near Coleford, Gloucestershire. Booking fee £5 (cheques to 'LPYS Summer Camp Fund'), to LPYS, 144 Walworth Rd, London SE17. Cost for full week £35.

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No equal opportunities here!

WILLIAM Whitelaw has vetoed the TUC's nomination of Communist Party member Terry Marsland to sit on the Equal Opportunities Commission.

Terry Marsland is Deputy General Secretary of the Tobacco Workers' Union [which has a 2/3 women membership] and a member of the TUC Women's Advisory Committee. She was nominated after one of the other TUC representatives retired.

Although Whitelaw gave as his reason the effect on the "proper balance" of the committee, there can be no doubt that Marsland's membership of the CP is the real reason. After all, Whitelaw had no complaint about lack of balance when Sir Geoffrey Howe's wife was deputy chairman of the EOC. He only objected when the TUC had the gall to appoint someone who might want the EOC to fight sexual discrimination more vigorously.

If the trade unions can't even appoint who they want to the EOC, how can the EOC represent the interests of women trade unionists? We can't rely on 'independent' bodies like the EOC to fight for equal pay, conditions and rights. We have to rely on our own strength to defeat discrimination.

WORKERS' ACTION

Thatcher goes for Orange rule, Haughey bleats

THATCHER HAS approved proposal to set up a new form of Orange sectarian government in Northern Ireland. The proposals, which were drawn up by a Cabinet Sub-Committee, will probably be published by the end of this month. The Tories are not even restoring the degree of "power-sharing" that existed in 1974; the Catholic SDLP will be left with chairmanship of a few committees which will have little real power.

The Tories have made it clear that they intend to push through these plans, despite any objections that the Northern minority or the Southern government might make.

Having failed to achieve any concessions in his recent discussions with Thatcher, Southern Prime Minister Charles Haughey last week gave an interview to 'Panorama', in which he offered new concessions to the Northern Unionists within the framework of a federal Irish state.

Haughey made the usual pseudo-Republican noises about British withdrawal being a "long-term objective", but added an attack on Britain's guarantees to the Northern Protestants that they would remain a part of the UK as long as the majority within the Northern statelet wanted it.

Haughey did not attack the British presence in Ireland in order to take on the British government. On the contrary, Haughey stated, "It is very important for Great Britain to have beside her a friend, an ally, a stable Ireland." He wants Thatcher to give him room to approach the Unionists on his own and try to come to terms with them.

His proposals for doing this would mean, in the words of the Irish Times, "A fearful, fragmented Ireland with only a pretence at unity". Haughey proposed that within a federal state different laws would apply in the North and South, particularly on divorce and contraception. While he claimed there was "no possibility" of changing the divorce laws in the South, he offered free divorce to the Northern Protestants to entice them into his 'united' Ireland.

Different laws, Haughey said, would also require a new constitution, replacing the 1937 constitution which explicitly states that the Southern Irish state is a Catholic state.

Haughey is on a hiding to nothing. The Northern Protestant News Letter responded to his speech by reasserting their support for 'majority rule' in the Six Counties. Thatcher is backing this, too. Having been spurned by the British government, who want to move back to a Stormont Parliament, Haughey has little he can do except devise grand plans and sound off about his "long term objectives".

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK: STATING OUR INTENTIONS



Rachel Lever

The Women's Fightback campaign was launched at a conference of 500 women this March. Since then Fightback has produced a leaflet to mobilise women for the TUC May 14th Day of Action.

It circulated an Open Letter too, calling for an end to the sexist slogans heard on previous anti-Tory demonstrations — 'Ditch the Bitch', 'Kill the Cow', 'Maggie Thatcher — Wanted for Rape', and so on.

It has put out two issues of a monthly Women's Fightback newspaper. And now it is organising a second Fightback conference for June 21st.

Women's Fightback Secretary Rachel Lever talked to Workers' Action about what Fightback has done and its plans for the future.

What we've done since the last conference I would classify as feeling the ground and stating our intentions.

We did 30,000 leaflets to tell women why they should come out on the Day of Action. They did get given out all over the place, and people came back for more, but 30,000 isn't really very many when you think of the number of women we could organise.

The Open Letter about sexist slogans has made some headway. It has, for instance, been in this month's T&G Record,

which goes out to a lot of trade unionists.

In terms of showing to women in the women's movement that it's worth organising in the labour movement, it was a very successful initiative.

What we did at the Malvern Labour Party women's conference was also, in some ways, a statement of intention. If we organise properly, next year we can be a major component and a major influence in that conference. But for the moment what we did was to show ourselves and make our presence felt — which we certainly did, although there were only five of us there!

We've gone ahead with the paper, too, as a prototype, declaring the intention to produce a mass, cheap, agitational, women's paper. I don't think that at 4 pages per month it's anything like enough. The need for a women's newspaper which can link the struggles is very clear.

It's bad to disparage the level that the struggle is at, simply by having grandiose dreams about what it might be. But we ought not to be satisfied with the small efforts here and there and a bit of work on an estate... we ought not to be satisfied until we've got a movement that the mass of women know about and relate to... a movement at least on the scale of the Anti-Nazi League.

The June 21st conference will be discussing ways to make progress towards that mass movement.

A lot of what we've done so far has been a matter of people receiving material and saying 'that's a good thing, I'll use it', but not really taking a very active part in what we produce.

The conference should be a very important stage in drawing in a number of



people to be active, in ways that they will define for themselves.

Rachel Lever herself sees two activities as central in the next stage of building Women's Fightback: the newspaper and the Women's Festival planned for International Women's Day, March 8th 1981.

The Festival is not our own project, but we've joined with other groups to get it off the ground. It will be a Festival and a demonstration at the same time. Part of the day will be a march, but the whole day will be a demonstration against the Tories, rather than just being an exhibition for women of what other women are doing.

It can give the movement a boost, something like the first Carnival did for the Anti-Nazi League. And there's a lot more we can do. We can hope to organise the beginnings of a number of women's trade union caucuses, actually on the day itself. All the people who are organising the Festival feel that we need to have a very strong Labour movement bias to it.

The newspaper can be something new too. The women's movement has a lot of magazines, and the magazine format does suit the women's movement as it has developed so far. Some of the magazines have played an enormous part in developing women's consciousness and ability to redefine the environment we live in.

That will go on. But in Fightback we're talking about a political campaign against what the Tory government is doing to women, and campaigns need newspapers — with screaming headlines and angry stories.

So that's why a newspaper and not a magazine. But I see no reason why it should simply exist in its

own sphere and why people who currently work on some of the magazines should not be involved in this as well.

We've been approached by the Women in Action Editorial Board. They're quite impressed by what Fightback is doing and seem to be enthusiastic about a merger. That's a very good sign.

Local Fightback groups are also being set up. But their aim is not to duplicate the work of women's groups that already exist.

We don't want to set up another group of 10 or 12 or even 30 people in a locality who are simply going to have another meeting and duplicate the work of cuts campaigns and so on.

Fightback does see itself as an umbrella organisation. At the conference, we will be suggesting a combined structure for local groups. There will be an individual membership of women who are primarily committed to Fightback, and groups will also attempt to gain affiliations from all the other campaigns, and ask them to send delegates to the Fightback meetings.

Fightback has been twice described in the press

as a Labour Party campaign, but it's not, although it includes many women who are Labour Party members, and it does want to help those women organise within the Party.

A lot of women's campaigns have members who are in the Labour Party, but the campaigns don't ask how they can organise those women in the Labour Party. The abortion campaign is one exception, where NAC works with the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign. We would like to do the same thing, but in a more general way.

We are trying to develop Labour Party women's sections as outward-going, active, campaigning bodies and we are taking up also issues of Party organisation and positive discrimination.

But we're not a Labour Party campaign as such. We are primarily a campaign to bring together women who are in the Labour Party, who are in the trade unions, who are in women's groups, or who are simply sitting in their homes feeling frustrated and wanting to get out into the struggle. It's a uniting campaign, not an exclusive area campaign.



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