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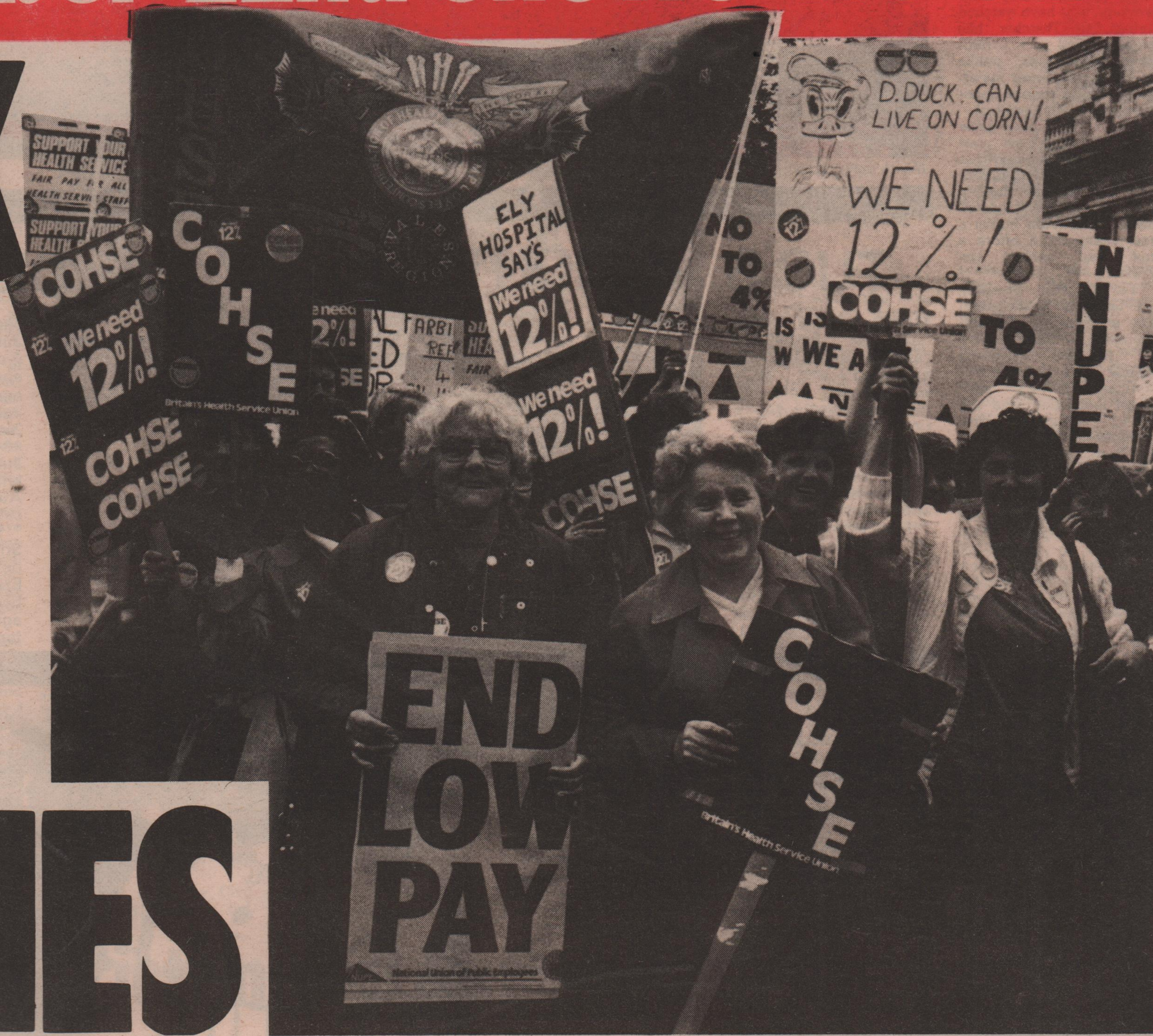
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Lebanon
massacre
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September 22nd shows we can

KICK OUT THE TORIES



THE Newspaper Publishers' Association — which organises the Fleet Street bosses — has announced that it will not try to get a court injunction to stop printworkers striking on September 22.

NPA director John Le Page said that there was no point, since Bill Keys, general secretary of the print union SOGAT 82, had said he would defy any injunction.

Last month the NPA took out an injunction under the Prior Law to stop Fleet Street workers striking in support of the health workers during the August 9-13 week of action, and pursued electricians' branch secretary Sean Geraghty for contempt of court when the EEPTY struck regardless.

The solidarity for Sean Geraghty — shown in a demonstration outside the hearing, and pledges of industrial action if he were jailed — has evidently frightened off the NPA this time.

Solidarity can beat back the bosses and the Tories' law. Solidarity action on the scale of

the strikes on September 22 represents a power that can defeat all the Tories attacks. It could do so much more quickly and surely if only the TUC leaders weren't frightened of the power of working class action — if only they had made a clear call for a 24 hour general strike, instead of a vague 'day of action'.

If mass, cross-union, strike action can make the Prior Law unworkable, then it can stop the Tebbit Law and it can win the NHS workers' 12% pay claim. General strike action can throw back the Tories' cuts, closures, and anti-union laws. It can make it impossible for them to maintain their ruling-class authority — it can drive them out of office and challenge their whole system. Already September 22 is not just a demonstration of sympathy on a wages issue. It is a mass political strike in direct defiance of Tory anti-union law, and a direct challenge to government cash limits policy.

It is the Left, the militants, who are the

most active force for this effective fightback against the Tories. It is the right-wing, the witch-hunters both in the Labour Party and the unions, who are the biggest drag on it.

The right wing and 'soft left' of the Parliamentary Labour Party have campaigned against 'extra-parliamentary' action (though they dare not condemn September 22). Albert Spanswick, general secretary of COHSE, has been having secret talks with the Tories to seek a get-out formula in the run-up to September 22.

Policies

To fight the Tories effectively we also need to pursue the battle for policies of militant action against the existing right wing dominated leadership of the labour movement. This fight to call the leadership to account [and replace it] is also necessary in order for Labour to be able to present a real working-

class alternative to the Tories.

The immediate next tasks after September 22 will be:

- Inside the NHS unions, to redouble the pressure for DECISIVE action — that is, an all-out indefinite strike, with emergency cover under workers' control, backed up with solidarity action from other workers.

- In other unions — to continue joint committees with the NHS unions established for the 22nd. To be ready for action if workers are victimised by employers or by the law for solidarity with the NHS workers. [An AUEW shop steward in Leicester has already been sacked for solidarity activity — see page 3 — and, despite the NPA's climbdown, CBI director-general Terence Beckett has encouraged bosses to use the law. 'There is no point in seeking industrial law which has teeth if you are not going to bite if you have to'.]

- At Labour conference in Blackpool — to beat back the witch-hunters.

We can beat the block votes and bureaucrats

HUNDREDS of thousands of workers all over the country and in a host of industries will take strike action: they will show both the solidarity of the whole working class with the health workers and their hostility to the savage Thatcher government.

The action will be an inspiration to many health workers, now in the fifth month of pay struggle, and will be an antidote to pessimism and demoralisation amongst many other workers, who have watched aghast as Thatcher has been allowed to run rampant, axing jobs, public services and living standards with no serious opposition from union leaders.

There are certainly some who will share the view argued by Tony Benn that this year's TUC Congress and the militant rhetoric offered up by union leaders from the rostrum marks a real change and offers a real lead against the Tories.

Yet in fact precisely the opposite is the case. The arm-waving and tub-thumping by union leaders in Brighton focussed mainly on two issues — Norman Tebbit's anti-union legislation, and the NHS pay struggle: on both these issues the TUC policy has been, and remains one of betrayal through cynical inaction.

Only a couple of weeks before we saw its parade of union leaders pledge their readiness to go to jail in defiance of the Tebbit legislation, a union officer, (Fleet St. electricians' leader, Sean Geraghty) had been dragged into court and actually threatened with imprisonment for having held a stoppage in solidarity with the health workers: the TUC leaders did nothing to defend him.

Indeed the very reason that first the Prior Act and soon the Tebbit Act have reached the Statute books has been the stubborn refusal of TUC leaders to mobilise action to defeat the legislation or bring down the Tory government which spawned it.

For this same reason, the TUC record on the NHS pay dispute has been an unmitigated scandal. Health workers have watched in horror as union leaders have for over 20



Health workers lobby COHSE general secretary Albert Spanswick at the TUC Health Services Committee meeting on August 26

TUC'S 6-MONTH DIARY OF DELAY

March: Routine protest lobby of Parliament called by union leaders, expecting that RCN would accept Tory 4% offer and create conditions for union acceptance.

In the event both 4% and 'revised' 6.4% offer rejected by RCN and unions.

First strikes begin — to pressurise TUC Health Services Committee.

April 14: One hour token stoppages called by union leaders.

Thousands stop work. COHSE announces 'warm-up' action for April 26.

April 16: NUPE calls time wasting ballot on the offer — with no proposals for action.

April 29: 1-day strike by COHSE Oxford members demands TUC HS Committee call all-out stoppage.

May 5: NUPE Executive lobbied by Health Workers for the Full Claim.

May 11: TGWU health service delegate conference votes for all-

out strike.

May 19: Ignoring NUPE 99% ballot for action and TGWU vote, TUC calls 1-day stoppage and 2 hour strikes each week.

May 20: TUC calls further 24 hour strikes, June 4 and 8.

South Wales miners vote for solidarity stoppage.

End of May: NUPE conference votes for all-out strike — denounced by GMWU official Donnet. NUPE leaders ditch policy, seizing on a

technicality.

June 4: Strong support for 1-day strike.

June 8: Biggest yet strikes, backed by miners in Yorks, Lancs, Kent, and by other sections.

June 14: COHSE leaders attack and defeat conference motion for all-out strike.

June 16: South Wales one day strike, backed by miners.

Tories make new offer — 7.5% to nurses, 6% to ancillaries: 40% of 'new' money to be finan-

ced through cuts.

June 23: Even bigger 1-day strike — widespread solidarity stoppages.

June 24: TUC calls 3-day action for July 19-21.

July 18: ASLEF strike knifed by TUC.

August 9-13: TUC calls 5 days of action.

Solidarity from Fleet Street electricians in defiance of injunctions brings papers to 24-hour halt. Sean Geraghty brought to court for 'contempt'.

weeks stalled, spluttered, dodged and ducked from the all-out action necessary to win the full claim. Most recently the astoundingly successful 'week of action' in August was followed — to the undisguised relief of the Tories — by a month of inaction, leading up to the September 22 one-day stoppage.

Since the TUC Congress, the spread of local decisions for supporting strikers in non-NHS unions has taken place — with notable exceptions in the print and the NUM — largely in spite of rather

than because of any clear directive from the leaders at the top.

The set-piece speeches at Brighton should not blind us to the fact that if sustained strike action had been called in the NHS, and the early solidarity of the miners built upon consistently, the struggle could have been resolved long before September.

Secret

Even now, in the run-up to the Day of Action, secret talks have been shown to be taking place with the Tories on the notion of a 2-year pay deal: and still there is no call for all-out action, or any hint at all as to what is planned to follow the strikes on September 22 when the Tories, predictably, refuse to give further ground.

Bitter experience of over 3 years of Thatcher's rule has now made it inescapably obvious that the TUC leaders prefer to moan and groan about life under the Tories than to lift a finger to build the kind of mass action that could force them from office.

From the isolation and betrayal of the steel strike in 1980, through successive sell-outs in British Leyland, up to the brutal knifing of the ASLEF strike, the record of the TUC bureaucracy has been consistently to oppose the generalisation of struggles and any



head-on confrontation with the government.

Jobs by the hundreds of thousands and much-needed public services have been sacrificed without a fight by union leaders who are totally committed to a policy of seeking to reform rather than to overturn the Tories.

And now it is union block votes and union bureaucrats who form the cutting edge of a witch-hunt in the Labour Party designed to stamp out those socialists who point to the impossibility of defending the working class through the established and impotent channels of 'parliamentary' democracy.

September 22 at least shows that these union leaders are not having things all their own way. The NHS union chiefs have been unable to kill off the pay struggle; even Frank Chapple couldn't prevent Geraghty and the Fleet St. electricians flouting

Tory laws; in every section of the working class there are militant forces emerging seeking ways of fighting back against Thatcher.

The TUC Day of Action was called not to advance the struggle but to contain it, to keep the union bureaucracy firmly in the driving seat — with its foot on the brakes.

Meanwhile the rank and file are fighting back. The NHS pay battle has seen the emergence of a new grouping of militants — Health Workers for the Full Claim — expand its bulletin to newspaper format and a print-run of 10,000 nationally. In a host of other unions Broad Lefts on a new, fighting basis have begun to emerge and fight to mobilise the membership on demands to defend jobs and wages and press for union democracy. In the Labour Party too the best militants are preparing to fight back against Foot's witch-hunt, and defend the recent gains on democracy and accountability.

Socialist Organiser actively supports these campaigns as the concrete means by which workers at all levels can take up the fight to build a new leadership and a new programme for a renewed, re-armed and reinforced labour movement. We need a movement capable of confronting and defeating Thatcher's government and pressing home the fight for a workers government which will nationalise without compensation under workers' management the major industries and the banks; dismantle the repressive military apparatus, the police and the bureaucracy of the state, replacing them with accountable bodies drawn from the organised working class; and lay the basis for a planned socialist economy.

The working class spirit which will prevail on September 22 confirms that such a perspective could be achieved: the spineless spirit of the leaders in Congress House and Labour headquarters confirm that the main obstacle remains our own bureaucratic leaders.

Help us break the logjam! Join with Socialist Organiser in the struggle for a new leadership!

Organise against the Tebbit Bill with the new broadsheet from the Mobilising Committee for Trade Union Rights.

10p plus post from MCDTUR, 28 Middle Lane, London N8

STOP THE TORY ROOTROY!

MOBILISING COMMITTEE IN DEFENCE OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS

TEBBIT'S LAW

After Sept 22nd PRESS FOR ALL-OUT STRIKE!

Health Workers for the Full Claim met last Saturday to compare experiences and discuss perspectives

LAST Saturday, 18th, NHS activists from across the country met to discuss perspectives for September 22 and beyond.

Anna Lunts, editor of the Health Workers for the Full Claim bulletin, gave the opening report.

September 22 is a big step forward. But it will not shift Fowler and we must press for further action of the same kind.

Our attitude should not be that the action is simply to save the TUC's face; despite the TUC leaders it is a big challenge to the Tory government and their anti-union laws. 10,000 have been printed of the latest HWFC bulletin (no. 6). HWFC has grown in influence, as shown by the success of the August 26 TUC lobby, but we should still be cautious about what we represent and not over-rate our strength.

Gap

Dave Michelmores (COHSE Maudesley Hospital, London) agreed. There is a gap between the 5,000 copies sold of the last HWFC bulletin and the handful of activists at the meeting.

The TUC's half-hearted call means the 22nd will not be a general strike.

In London, hospitals have been slow to link up, but a cross-hospital JSSC has now begun to operate.

Dominic Johnson (NUPE convenor, Churchill Hospital, Oxford) said that in Oxford NHS action of the 22nd will be as strong as ever, and solidarity action will be the biggest yet.

Most UCW members will be out for 4 hours, the Poly will be shut, Print workers will be out and so will the NUJ at the Oxford Mail, the FBU, and Didcot Power station (an 8 hour

strike).

The main focus is the London demo - 4 coaches from the NHS unions, plus NUT, Trades Council and perhaps others.

There will be a picket on one hospital all day.

Bickerstaffe

One way forward - the majority of the TUC have no plans whatever for the future. The only voice calling for further action is Bickerstaffe, and his attitude is to limit NUPE to whatever the TUC majority are prepared to accept.

Overall, the balance of forces are not in our favour, and will only change decisively when the wage claims of other sections, such as NUM and BL come up. There is the problem of several weeks' gap after September 22.

The East London report was that two hospitals have mass meetings on Monday. Tower Hamlets Council has decided to call off council business. Ten Labour councillors have called for strike action.

But there is only token support from docks and breweries. Work is being done by HWFC and unofficially at building sites, Post Offices, etc.

Solidarity

Anna Lunts spoke about Manchester. The North West Area NUM will be out solid. Most buses will be on strike. Shell Carrington has a one day strike, also the two biggest GEC factories, Wilson Breweries, Massey Ferguson,



JOHN HARRIS

NUPE's Bickerstaffe calls for more action - but then limits NUPE to what other unions will accept

Brown and Polson Trafford Park, and Cussins soap factory.

Support from the Civil Service is patchy but

printworkers are solid. NUJ are considering one day strike action unless management accept NHS reporting only. Granada

TV has a one day stoppage.

Manchester confed is in disarray due to the slump and CP influences, but there will still be mass-



Health Workers for the full claim 10p SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 22

Health Workers for the Full Claim bulletin - no. 6 now out. 10p plus postage from 78 High St, Atherton, Lancs. Next HWFC meeting: Sunday October 3, 1pm to 5pm, at the Labour Club, Bristol St, Birmingham.

GENERAL STRIKE!

ive action.

Ron Giles from Sheffield told the meeting that local NHS JSSC has been a major force in organising for the 22nd, pushing the bureaucracy aside. It has made the link with the steel jobs threat. BSC River Don and Firth Brown will be out for the day.

The local TUC has a sub-committee organising with convenors. Confed have called for one day, and nearly all factories will support this. Buses have balloted to stay in, but there will be a NHS workers' picket anyway.

In the hospitals feelings are higher than ever. Four trains running to London and there'll be a local demonstration.

Jeremy Corbyn, a NUPE full-timer from London, stressed that we need to organise to prevent the TUC doing an ASLEF-type sell-out. There is an important connection between this dispute and the whole public sector.

Jeremy Corbyn reported that he had spoken to the London District Committee of UCW. 200 delegates were there, and gave strong support. Facing

privatisation and Tebbit they saw themselves as having a common struggle with the NHS workers.

The difference with '79 is that the TUC never moved then. We should build links with other trade union sections. In the face of Fowler's plans, the TUC one hour stoppage is pathetic.

The GLC has turned all facilities at County Hall over to NHS unions for the day. Councillors will be on picket lines throughout London.

The meeting decided to take back to local NHS Joint Shop Stewards' Committees the idea of a national conference of shop stewards' committees - we felt HWFC was not strong enough to organise this conference. The Sheffield comrades felt that the Sheffield committee might be willing to make the initial call.

HWFC in any case will continue co-ordinating and campaigning for all-out indefinite action with emergency cover under workers' control.

Court protest

OVER 500 Asian and white militants attended a meeting in Leicester on Friday 17th in support of the Leicester 3.

These are three youths who were harassed and arrested on trumped-up charges by the local police.

At the meeting it was pointed out by a supporter of the Bradford 12 campaign that in fact Asian youth have consistently faced a situation where they have no rights in relation to the police.

The campaign is to be developed along the lines of the Bradford 12 campaign, including mass court pickets and efforts for maximum possible support from the local Asian community.

Already the Asian youth movement has established its own network of links to defend other youths who might be threatened by similar police attacks.

Contact: Leicester 3 campaign, Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre, Leicester.

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Victimised for solidarity

AUEW members at Fox's Glacier Mints, Leicester, have taken strike action in support of victimised shop steward Jim Tolton, who has been sacked for showing three nurses the way to the works canteen.

The AUEW members have responded to what is a clear provocation by the management against a shop steward who has played a leading role in the fight against the present bonus and productivity scheme in the factory, and also against the policy of Rowntree Mackintosh (the parent company) internationally, particularly in South Africa.

At a meeting of the joint health unions strike committee in Leicester (which has been extended to include industrial unions supporting the health workers) on Monday evening, 20th, the health workers agreed unanimously

to support Jim Tolton in his fight for reinstatement.

A mass picket has been called for the afternoon shift of Tuesday.

Bro. Tolton, who has worked at the factory for 5 years without any disciplinary record, was sacked solely for his campaign in support of the health workers. This clearly demonstrates the way in which many employers are going to attempt to use the background of the Tebbit laws against those workers who give solidarity to the health workers' campaign for a decent wage.

Already, the membership in Rowntree Mackintosh are faced with redundancies. It is against this background that Jim Tolton has been sacked.

It is vitally important that the other craft shop stewards' committees in Rowntree Mackintosh take

supporting action for Jim Tolton. It is equally important that the bulk union in Rowntree Mackintosh, USDAW, should support this fight.

Solidarity with the health workers is an official trade union policy and the policy of the TUC. It is something

which cannot be rejected or abandoned in the face of management victimisation.

It is crucial for this dispute that not only the health unions but also the other unions in Rowntree Mackintosh support Jim Tolton.

Messages of support to 11 Bisley St, Leicester.



International News International News International News

SCHMIDT FINALLY SPLITS

Jenny Fisher looks at prospects for the West German working class after the fall of the SDP-FDP coalition.

LAST Friday (17th), as the world woke up to newspaper headlines predicting the imminent collapse of the ruling SDP/FDP coalition government in West Germany, the four FDP cabinet ministers were resigning and bringing that prediction to reality.

Events have been moving quickly in the past fortnight, but the split has been on the cards for the past year.

At last the world recession has caught up with the Federal Republic.

It is expected that company bankruptcies this year will total 16,300 (a 40% increase on 1981). The number of jobless has risen to 1,800,000. It seems certain to rise to 2 million over the winter.

(Unemployment has been kept artificially low in Germany by two reasons: as in Britain, many women don't register, but also the Republic has been able to send 'home' a large number of its immigrant population, brought in when workers were in short supply.)

Over the course of 1981,



Schmidt, like Kohl (right), is a good ally of Reagan. But many SDP rank-and-file dissent



real wages fell by 1.2% overall.

Many firms are now beginning to 'trim' the workforce as an 'economy package'. The most serious 'economy package' to be announced recently comes from the company AEG, which plans to sack 30,000 to 40,000 workers nationally.

This is the economic background to which the political parties have been responding, and which has caused the SDP (Social Democratic Party — the right-wing dominated Labour Party) and the FDP (Free Democratic Party —

akin to the British Liberals) to go their separate ways.

The parliamentary SDP has been growing away from the body of the party for some time: most notably on the issue of NATO nuclear bases in West Germany and the level of the upper rates of income tax and tax on business profits. It has also been drastically losing electoral support: even in traditionally strong Labour areas.

Although some local parties offered a 'left' policy, this hasn't been able to soften the attitude of German workers to the

SDP's record in government. Some union leaders are conscious of the problem. Eugen Loderer, leader of the IGM (Metal Workers' Union), which has been the traditional licensed left in the SDP, told his union's conference recently: 'We don't want a change in party, but we do want a change in policy'.

The DGB (German 'TUC') has called regional and a national demonstration to remind the SDP whose side it's supposed to be on. This response would be unusual at any time, but is especially so against a ruling SDP-dominated

government.

The initiative is largely thanks to the agitation of a group called 'Initiative Soziale Sicherheit', formed from various left groups and members of union factory committees. They are putting forward a workers' response to the crisis: calling for a 35 hour week with no loss in pay, an end to the forcing-down of the real value of wages, and an end to racism and sacking foreign workers first.

They are currently busy building local groups to organise local days of action.

This trade union activity, coupled with a very real fear as to the SDP's chances in the two forthcoming by-elections (in Hessen, the local FDP switched allegiances some time ago, and decided to run as partners with the Conservatives), forced Chancellor Schmidt to draw the line.

He challenged Otto Lambsdorf, FDP Chancellor of the Exchequer, to come clean, and outline his budget proposals, stating that the maintenance of the welfare state was crucial to the SDP's policy.

Lambsdorf responded by publishing a document containing drastic anti-working class measures. Included were proposals to: • cut the first three months unemployment benefit from 68% to 50% of the claimant's previous wages, and cease paying benefit after a year's unemployment.

• To scrap the (already meagre) system of student grants, and replace it with loans. This is particularly important, as the current means-tested grant is paid from 16+, and many working class young people rely on this to get not only academic qualifications, but also to attend technical colleges, without which there is virtually no hope at all of getting a job.

• To increase the level of 'National Insurance Contributions' paid by workers and the level of contributions paid to the private health insurance companies to such a degree as to form a severe attack yet again on the level of real wages.

These proposals were acclaimed by the employers' organisations: and branded 'antisocial' and 'a declaration of war' by the unions.

The incompatibility of these proposals with Schmidt's declared line brought about the split that everyone had been

waiting for.

What will happen in the immediate future remains uncertain. Schmidt's first response to the resignations was to ask the other parties if they would tolerate his staying on as leader of a minority government, if he asked the President to call elections in November.

This move is unconstitutional, and anyway not to the liking of Helmut Kohl, the leader of the CDU/CSU (the Conservative parties) in Parliament. Kohl will now spend the next few days in discussions with the FDP, bargaining with Cabinet positions and allocations of policy areas, to try to form a new coalition government between the CDU/CSU and FDP.

Some form of agreement is bound to be reached, and the likelihood is that Kohl will then attempt to spread some time in office and establish a clear economic policy, before going to the voters.

Whatever the balance between the FDP and CDU/CSU in the new government, the economic measures they adopt will be attempting to bolster up the capitalists at the expense of the workers. The FDP has only recently shown its teeth: those of the CDU/CSU have been very visible since the last general election.

The Conservative alliance was then led by the infamous Franz-Joseph Strauss, and lost the election mainly thanks to scare-mongering tactics of Schmidt and the left, which the avowedly right-wing Strauss could not deny. Strauss was ditched after this failure, in favour of Kohl, but plans to make a comeback. He expects to hold the number two position in Kohl's government.

The German Left and trade union movement must be ready to face the challenge.

Deng's changes cannot stamp out dissent

The Chinese CP congress produced a reshuffle, but little more. Chin Yang reports.

THE Chinese Communist Party has just held its 12th congress, six years after the death of Mao.

In those six years, the Gang of 4 has been ousted from power, and all the key remnants Maoists in the Politburo have been given the boot. The last to go was Mao's hand-picked successor, ex-Party Chairman and ex-premier, Hua Guofeng.

The key posts held by Hua went to Deng's proteges Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang in 1980, with Hua demoted to 12th vice-chairman. Now Hua is out of the Politburo altogether, and is only a member of the 200-plus Central Committee.

Earlier publicity emphasised that the congress would rejuvenate the party leadership by retiring

veterans, point to policy changes to modernise China, and repudiate once and for all the Maoist excesses of the past 25 years.

Abolished

The post of Party Chairman was abolished, as this post represents to Deng & Co the Maoist personality cult. Chairman Hu Yaobang now becomes Party secretary Hu Yaobang!

As for policy pronouncements, the congress in fact did little more than confirming recent decisions by Deng and Co., such as encouraging peasants to enrich themselves and stimulating economic growth in light industries by methods including investment from overseas.

And at the end of the congress, some prominent 70-year olds, far from retiring, came onto the newly created Advisory Council. Deng has replaced only political opponents like Hua and the genuinely senile, and kept himself and other equally old co-thinkers on the seven-strong Politburo standing committee and 25-strong Politburo.

Deng himself is far from taking a back seat. He chairs the Advisory Council of elders, is nominally number 3 in the Politburo, remains head of the Military Affairs committee, and in fact is further entrenched as leading frontline policy-maker.

All this indicates that the purge of oppositionists is not yet over. Indeed the congress decided that all party cadres will be 're-registered' shortly.

The 39 million strong CCP is swollen with petty bureaucrats used to decades of corruption and privilege; the Cultural

Revolution gave a younger generation of careerists the chance to oust older cadres, but most of these old 'capitalist roaders' have been restored.

What both groups have in common is graft and incompetence, with no interest in raising productivity through modernisation. The top leaders have tried to rectify this — but reforming the Party from the top while stamping out dissent outside of the Party has proved to be a near impossible task for Deng and Co.

While they have imprisoned dozens of democratic movement activists, and removed Hua and other remaining oppositionists from the top ranks of the Party, they cannot reverse the irretrievable loss of the prestige and confidence that the CCP had in the early 50s.

The seeds of dissent and disaffection have long been sown and the 'Wild Lilies and Poisonous Weeds' of political revolution against bureaucracy will grow and flourish in time.

FOR an excellent account of China's democratic movement, including key essays by leading dissidents, read 'Wild Lilies and Poisonous Weeds', edited by Greg Benton, Pluto Press.



... to foreign investment? We'll deal with them ...

UPI

IN BRIEF

Ecuador

IN THE face of a bosses' onslaught on wages and jobs and the open complicity of the Hurtado government, the United Workers' Front (FUT) in Ecuador has announced a 48 hour national strike for September 22 and 23. FUT groups the three leftist trade union confederations in Ecuador, CEDOC, CTE, and CEOSL, and accounts for a large majority of organised labour in the country.

The claims put forward by the FUT range very widely over the needs of the workers, the peasants, and the unemployed and urban poor. (Industrial workers represent a very small part of the union federations' membership. The backbone of CEDOC, for example, is its peasant federation, FENOC.

FUT demands the minimum wage be raised from 4,000 to 7,000 sucres a month (£70), automatic wage adjustments in line with price rises, and job security. They are also pressing for a law against the fraudulent liquidation of firms, a frequently employed

tactic to protect profits and deal with a well-organised workforce.

The strike is crucial. In the period of the constitutional government (since 1979), the standard of living of the vast majority of Ecuadorians has fallen drastically. Full report next week.

ACCORDING to press reports last Saturday, a general strike in Bolivia has forced the country's military rulers to stand down.

Military chiefs have agreed to recall the parliament they dissolved in mid-1980 after a presidential election was won by the candidate of the left-wing UDP, Hernan Siles Zuazo.

According to the Guardian, Siles is now likely to be recognised as president.

This follows a general strike called by the union federation COB on Friday 17th. The Guardian, however, reports: "There is opposition to this plan from hardline Right-wingers among the military... Fighting or even a civil war cannot be ruled out".

BOYCOTT ISRAEL'S WAR MACHINE!



BEGIN

HARRY SLOAN surveys the facts behind last week's massacre of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon — and calls for a labour movement response

THE blood of the innocent thousands of men, women and children slaughtered in Sabra and Chatila camps in Beirut was spilled by Lebanese fascist militiamen — but the prime responsibility is that of Israel's Zionist regime and its imperialist backers in Washington and the EEC.

Even while frantic efforts are made by Monachem Begin's government to concoct a stable cover-up story it is clear that the Israeli army, with express cabinet approval, decided on Thursday September 16 to unleash the fascist murder squads on the unsuspecting civilians in the camps.

This much has been officially admitted by spokesman Brigadier-General Ya'acov Even. Broadcasts by Israeli armed forces monitored that day by the BBC stated that Zionist troops controlled 'all the main cross-roads and roads in the city', and that 'only houses inside the various neighbourhoods remain to be purged.'

Command

The Zionist command remained in radio contact with the fascists as they set about this grisly work. By Thursday night, according to an Israeli television news reporter, shooting could be heard within the camps, and by Friday morning Israeli soldiers watching through binoculars from observation posts were able to watch the slaughter taking place

Yes, fascists!

EVERY Sunday Conor Cruise O'Brien writes a rambling column-cum-editorial in 'The Observer'. Last week he was at some pains to stress that the Lebanese Phalangists ought not to be called that because Phalange is only the French name for the brigades loyal to the Gemayel family.

According to Mr. O'Brien, the term Phalangist is a smear used by those who want to suggest that there is something unpleasant about these militias. A smear that 'leads away from the realities'.

Fortunately Mr. O'Brien's literary efforts are confined to the middle of the paper while others write the front page.

In the same issue the front page reported 'Women and Babies Massacred ... Hundreds Shot Down in Beirut Bloodbath'. Who were the perpetrators of this massacre? Apparently those whom we should not besmirch with the term Phalange.

and the piles of bodies.

By this time the news had been relayed to Israel itself. According to the Israeli daily paper Vedioth Aharonot, the first accounts of the killings reached ministers and army chiefs during Thursday night-Friday morning.

Friday

By Friday morning the military correspondent of the daily Ha'aretz had heard of the massacre. Mordechai Zipori, the Communications Minister, that morning informed Foreign Minister Shamir of the killings before he went with Defence Minister Sharon into talks with President Reagan's envoy Morris Draper.

Yet it was not until Friday afternoon that the Zionists took any action to limit the slaughter, eventually demanding the evacuation of the camp by the fascists they had sent in — and not until Saturday that the news of the massacre was broken by foreign correspondents who went into the camp.

The Zionist government and army high command had therefore taken a cold and calculated decision to perpetrate the mass murders.

Indeed if the accounts of survivors of the massacre prove correct, and if unconfirmed reports from Beirut are based on fact, then it appears that the Israelis went further — and airlifted the known butchers of Major Saad Haddad's 6,000-strong Zionist-financed militia from the South of the country to Beirut in order to send them into the camp.

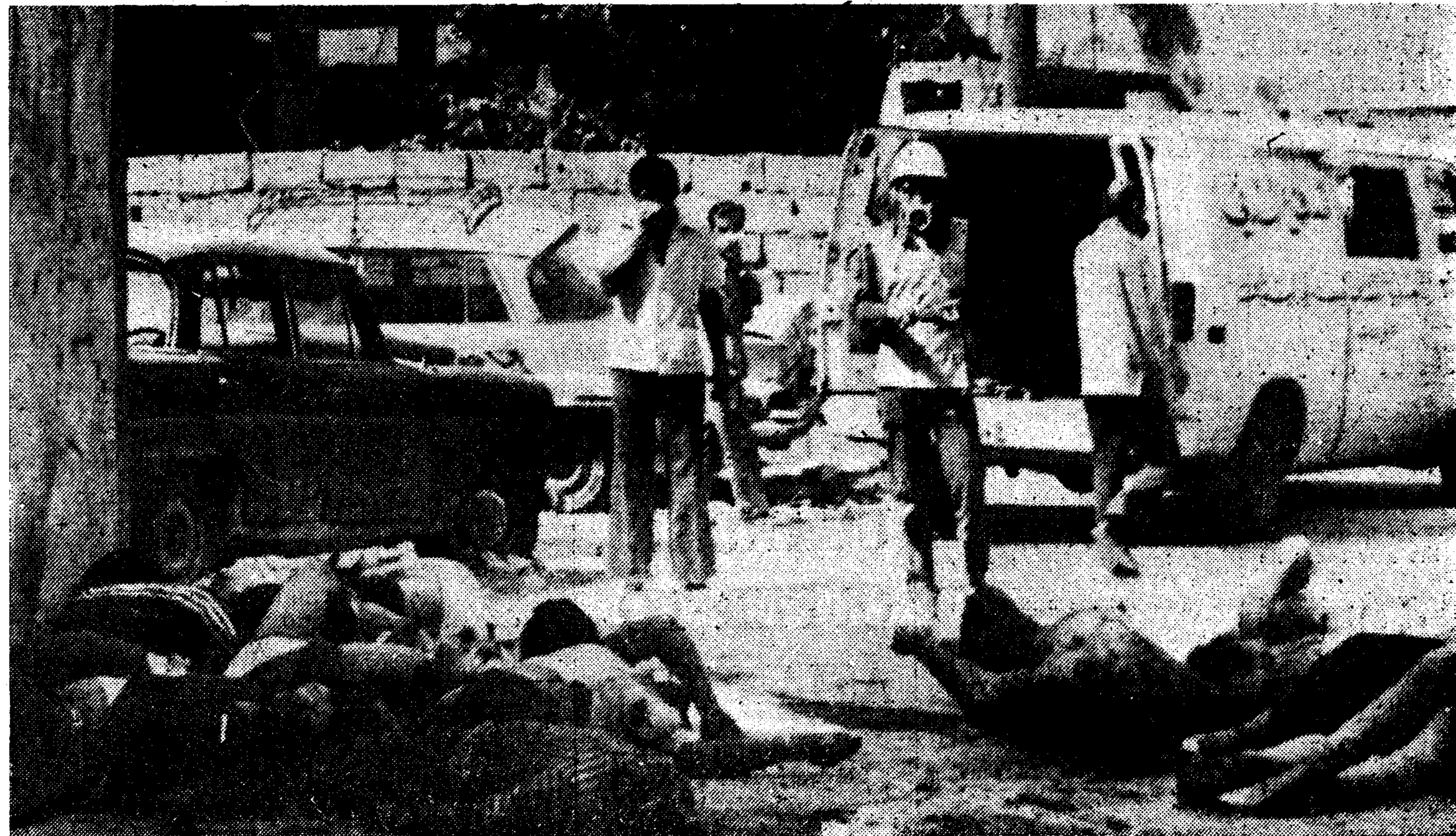
Haddad

Most of the survivors appear to cite distinctive Southern accents and uniforms as evidence that it was Haddad's forces, and not gangsters from the 25,000-strong Phalangist militia of assassinated President Gemayel who carried out the brutal murders.

Israeli spokesmen have gone out of their way not only to deny that Haddad was involved, but also to point the finger firmly at the Phalangists, naming them on several occasions as the people involved.

It is of course possible that a combined force of armed reactionaries was sent into the camp: but the Zionist efforts to implicate the Phalangists would seem to tie in with other developments — and point to the fact that the latest slaughter was planned as a cynical Israeli move to rekindle sectarian strife in Lebanon.

The aftermath of the assassination of Gemayel has brought forward



Israeli troops watched the slaughter through binoculars

several theories as to who carried it out, and for what motive. And from early on it became obvious that Palestinian and left wing forces could virtually be ruled out as suspects. They would not have had the necessary access to Gemayel's tightly guarded headquarters, not a strong enough motive for the killing. Indeed most of the forces of the established Lebanese 'left' had already reached an accommodation with Gemayel: the Organisation of Communist Action even joined the mourners at his funeral, while leaders of the Muslim Murabitoun militia broadcast a eulogy to the dead Phalangist gunman!

Rival Maronite leader Suleiman Franjeh certainly had a motive to kill Gemayel, and may have had the necessary contacts for the operation. But an equally likely suspect for the assassination is the Israeli regime, which had obviously been perturbed that the man whom they had effectively instated in the Lebanese Presidency at a cost of a £1 billion invasion was acting increasingly independently of his puppet-masters in Jerusalem.

Direct

Instead of implementing Begin's plan of a Lebanese/Israeli peace treaty and buckling down to a career as a stooge, Gemayel had taken advantage of the crippling of the forces of the PLO and left wing in order to cobble together a political base and strategy of his own, and form a direct relationship with US imperialism.

A suitable amount of explosives could easily remove Gemayel. But for the Zionists to prevent his successor moving in a similar direction required a fundamental disruption of the relationship of political forces Gemayel had begun to establish. The co-alignment of Muslim and Christian political leaders had to be forestalled — and the most obvious and advantageous means to this end was a massive and unforgettable provocation to the Muslims.

This is certainly the way it is being seen by the Lebanese left, who increasingly bland Haddad and exonerate the Phalangists for the slaughter in the camps.

But the response from the Left wing has been an opportunist and reactionary accommodation on the level

of Lebanese nationalism to the forces of the Phalangist right. This has produced support on almost all sides for the election of Bashir Gemayel's older brother Amin to the Presidency.

Whatever the details of the process by which it has been reached, the possible result is the consolidation of a wide bloc of forces that can offer some stable central government in Lebanon. Isn't this the objective which both the Zionists and the imperialists have been pursuing so ruthlessly in the heavy-handed military interventions that have taken place?

However we assess the motives of the Zionists, there is no doubt that the slaughter was deliberately permitted and planned at the highest level. Res-

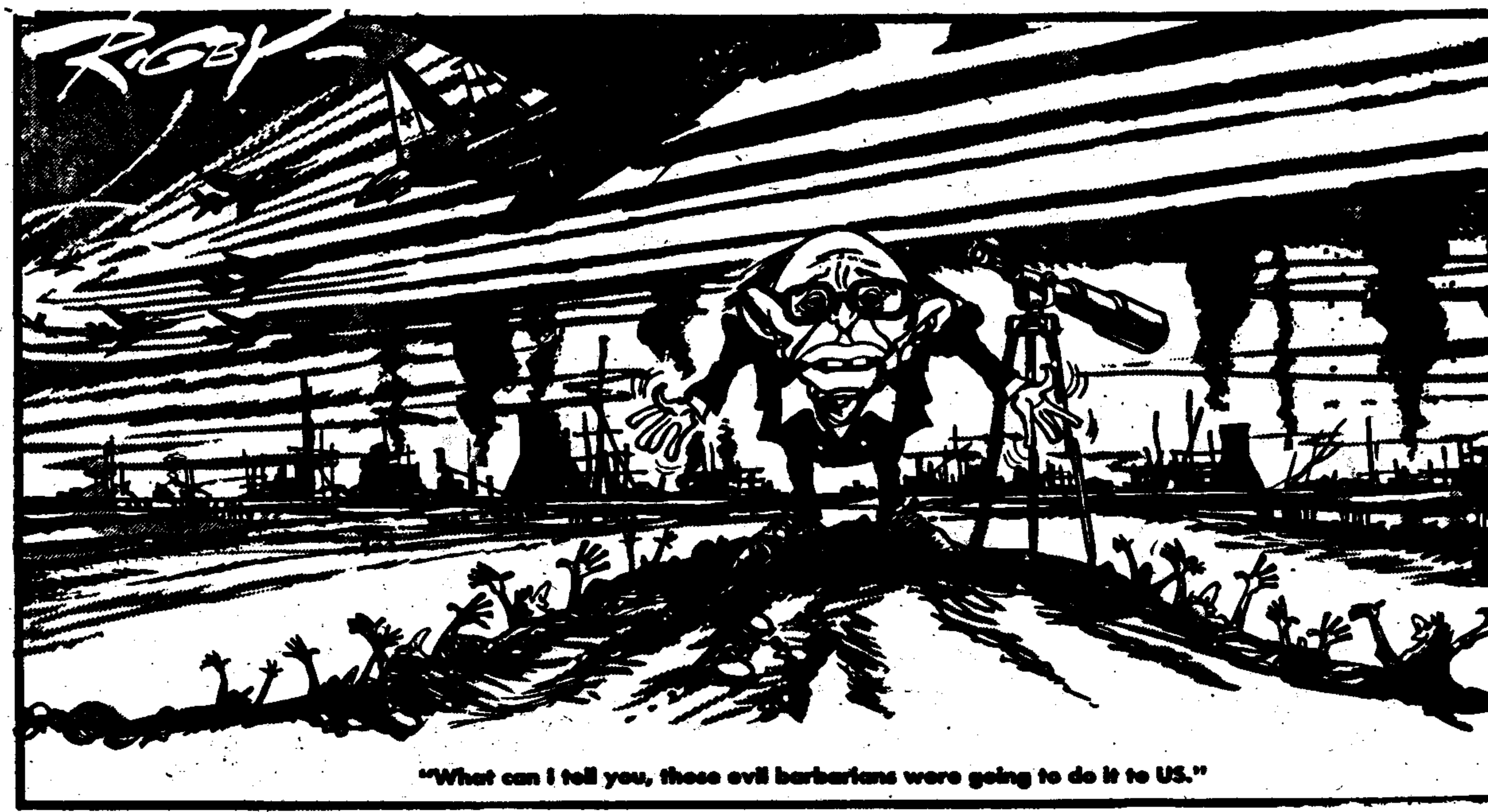
pensibility for this must rest not only on the gangster Begin regime, whose very rule rests on generations of terrorism against the Palestinian people, but on the warmongers in the Pentagon, the White House, and the EEC, who even now have not broken in the slightest from their massive economic and military support for the Zionist regime.

For the imperialists, the state of Israel has been ruthlessly used as a tool to intimidate the Arab masses of the Middle East. Despite diplomatic hogwash about concern for the Palestinians, the imperialists have no intention of supporting the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland — which is incompatible with the Zionist state.

Despite the label 'peacekeeping' the new big power force due to be despatched to Lebanon on Reagan's proposal will have no defence for Lebanese working people against the Israeli war machine or the sectarian Maronite militias.

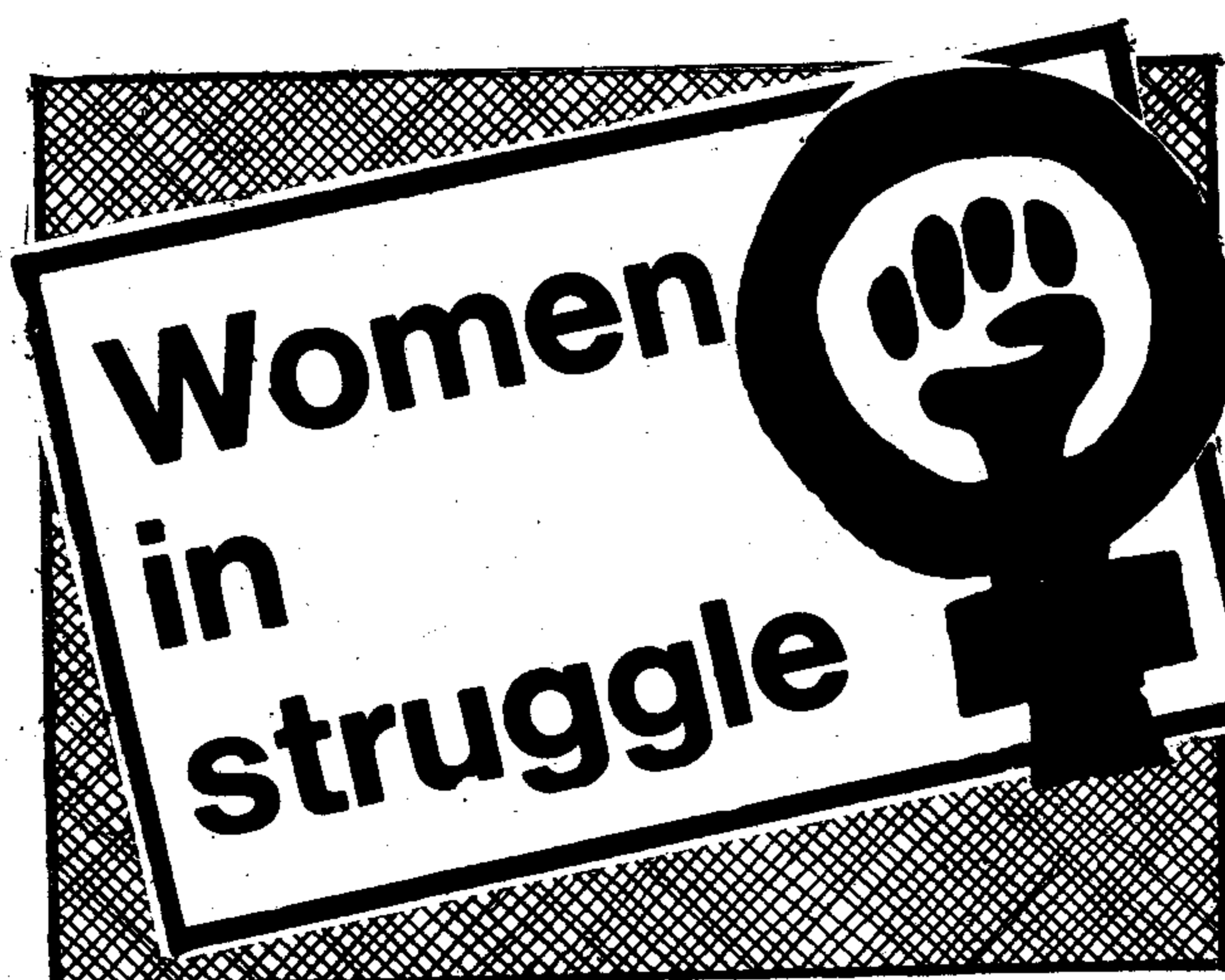
It is up to the international working class to champion the struggle of the Palestinian and Lebanese masses — by the method of struggle open to the labour movement. This means fighting with transport and other unions for a full-scale boycott of trade to and from the bloody Begin regime demanding the immediate withdrawal of Zionist troops from Lebanon.

Already the demand has been taken up by the Scottish TUC, Greek and Australian dockers. must be implemented now



"What can I tell you, these evil barbarians were going to do it to US."

Marches to highlight hidden jobless



Gerry Byrne reports on the Women's Campaign for Jobs conference

4,000,000: that's the closest thing to an accurate figure for the number of people now out of work.

The General Household Survey, published last week, points to the huge undercounting of the real extent of unemployment. 17% of the unemployed are not registered, and for married women, the proportion rises to 43%. That's a massive gulf between government claims and the reality.

And next month a whole package of measures is being brought in to further discourage unemployed women from showing up in the figures — voluntary registration, the UB671 forms which question women about childcare arrangements, thus reinforcing the idea that mothers should not go out to work.

Last Saturday, September 18, in County Hall, London, a small step was taken to reverse this push. The Women's Campaign for Jobs (formerly the Action Committee for a Woman's Right to Work) resolved to constitute itself on a more organised footing, with affiliations, local groups, and a regular newsletter.

One of its immediate objectives will be to campaign against the Rayner proposals and other changes in the benefits system which will hit women claimants. This will have to be mounted in conjunction with the unions in the benefit offices and draw on wider support from the labour movement.



The decision of the South East Region TUC to mount a campaign on the UB 671 is a positive step in this direction.

Drive

Against the Tories' attempts to cover up the real level of unemployment, the Campaign proposes a drive to contact and organise women who are jobless but unregistered, culminating in a national day of registration.

It also agreed to give support and encouragement to the formation and ongoing work of unwaged women's groups, both to campaign on the specific problems of women's unemployment

and tackle the sexism that many women experience in unemployed groups and centres.

The conference, of about 80 women, showed a real commitment to building at the grass roots and deepening links with local struggles, but the main focus of the discussion was on how all this local activity could be focused and drawn together by a national event.

Tribunal

The conference was presented with two alternatives: a Tribunal which would draw together evidence on women's unemployment and end up with a showy event (in London) or a women's march for

Jobs.

The Tribunal was greeted with overwhelming apathy. In the workshops the Women's March for Jobs was the main talking point, with many sisters keen on the basic conception of an event which went out to the women we are trying to reach, rather than pulling the same old worn-out activists down to London.

Many drawbacks were highlighted — the enormous logistical problems of a long march, the fact that it would inevitably exclude many women with children or other heavy domestic responsibilities, the terrible waste of energy involved in trudging through largely deserted

countryside.

But it was also felt that there was a need for demonstrations to unite local opposition to the many-sided attacks on women's right to paid work, and that the answer to these attacks is not propaganda on how bad women's position is, but militant struggle.

Retain

The decision was to retain the original idea of the Women's March, but to take the difficulties into account by bussing the core marchers between towns and focussing days of action and demonstrations on local struggles round defence of jobs and facilities (eg nurseries).

I think it fairly represented the mood of the conference, to turn out to the mass of working class women, to relate to their battles, and to centralise the local activities in a national movement.

We must take childcare seriously

Frances Morrell, GLC Councillor for Islington South, replies to a press campaign.

I AM a working mum. Council work takes about ten hours a day, and I'm bringing up a nine year old daughter.

The timetabling of meetings, set by men to suit men's working hours, prevents me from spending as much time with Daisy as I want to, and I'm not around to see her at tea-time and bed-time, when kids want their parents around.

Women on the Greater London Council (GLC) and Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) have tried to change meeting times to fit in with our dual responsibilities. But committees on the whole can't see that they shouldn't meet at tea-time, or why they should juggle with agendas if children's needs won't be met otherwise.

Only a couple of weeks ago, Daisy had to come with me to a committee meeting. She was ill and obviously should have been in bed. I asked the meeting to take the item concerning me first on the agenda. It wasn't taken until 8.30pm, and as I picked up Daisy to leave at 9pm no-one even asked how I was going to get an asleep nine year old across London.

I've come to the conclusion that there is an unbridgeable gap between those who have childcare

responsibilities and those who haven't. At that meeting they couldn't even see that a sick kid who had fallen asleep on a row of hard chairs could not wait all night for them.

And now the press is alleging that I am abusing my position by jumping into a GLC car to collect Daisy from school and take her back to County Hall where she can safely wait for her dad or until I finish my meeting. It makes me mad to hear that because of this I'm supposed to be part of a privileged elite.

The situation would never have arisen if we had decided to try to afford a car, or if we had paid or unpaid domestic help at home (a wife, perhaps?)

The Labour Party at County Hall has defined the timing of meetings so that male councillors with kids shouldn't expect to see much of them. Much worse, it has defined things so that councillors' wives should take almost all the responsibility of childcare, and the children of labour movement activists won't have a normal amount of contact with their parents.

What the press have picked up on is not an abuse of privilege, but an attempt to make the best of a bad job and to be a serious councillor while making sure that my daughter doesn't suffer too much because of it.

The response from many Labour Party members has not been to back me. They have gone along with the press and forgotten about the changes we have to make to 'normal' (i.e. male-organised) working patterns. I'm sick of being lectured by single men with cars and no children about how Daisy can be treated as a parcel, picked up and dumped in left luggage offices. They have to realise that child care is work with another individual, and that the views of both parties have to be respected.

Apart from Socialist Organiser comrades in Islington, who immediately initiated a press statement from Islington South CLP, the left has backed off. But women's sections have understood that using a staff car occasionally doesn't add up to an abuse of power.

Taking a lift to stop your kid having to go home to an empty house where no-one will be home until 7 is not living in the lap of luxury, and, they add, if the cars are flashy and that attracts press interest, then the men should choose smaller, less ostentatious ones in future.

Defeat racist laws!

UNTIL last March, 19 year old Asima Begum and her young child were preparing to join her husband in Britain. Then, he was killed, in a tragic house fire in Brick Lane.

Asima was granted a visitor's passport to attend the funeral and settle her husband's affairs. Now, the Home Office is using its racist laws to send her back to Bangla Desh. There, she would be alone; her father and brothers are resident in Britain, her mother and sisters ready to join them.

Last Friday, after representations on her behalf, the Home Office granted Asima a final 'grace' of 2 weeks extra stay, although they had already bought her plane ticket to Dacca.

Tower Hamlets Labour Party Women's Section is making an urgent appeal to women's organisations and the labour movement to organise to defend Asima.

We have only two weeks! Watch next week's SO for details of lobbying, etc., and in the meantime please send letters of support, petitions or requests for further information to: Sue Carlyle, 36, Bradmore House, Jamaica St., London. (01)-790-4937

Here to stay!

CARL Conference: County Hall, 10 am, October 23. Speakers from IWA GB, & Jo Richardson MP. Contact: 56, Edithna St., SW9 9JP.

FOR MY WORK, living with a violent husband is a desperate situation. For Halimat Babamba, this plight is even worse than for most.

Halimat came to Britain from Nigeria to join her husband in Leeds. After 2 years of his violence, of his threats to her life and to take their 2 small children from her, Halimat escaped to a Woman's Aid refuge.

Her husband has now returned to Nigeria. Halimat can't do this: under local law, her husband can take the children, and she would face further violence, or else destitution.

But this is the fate the Home Office has condemned her to. Instead of Hali-

mat and her children being able to build a new life for themselves in Britain, the Home Office intend to deport them in October.

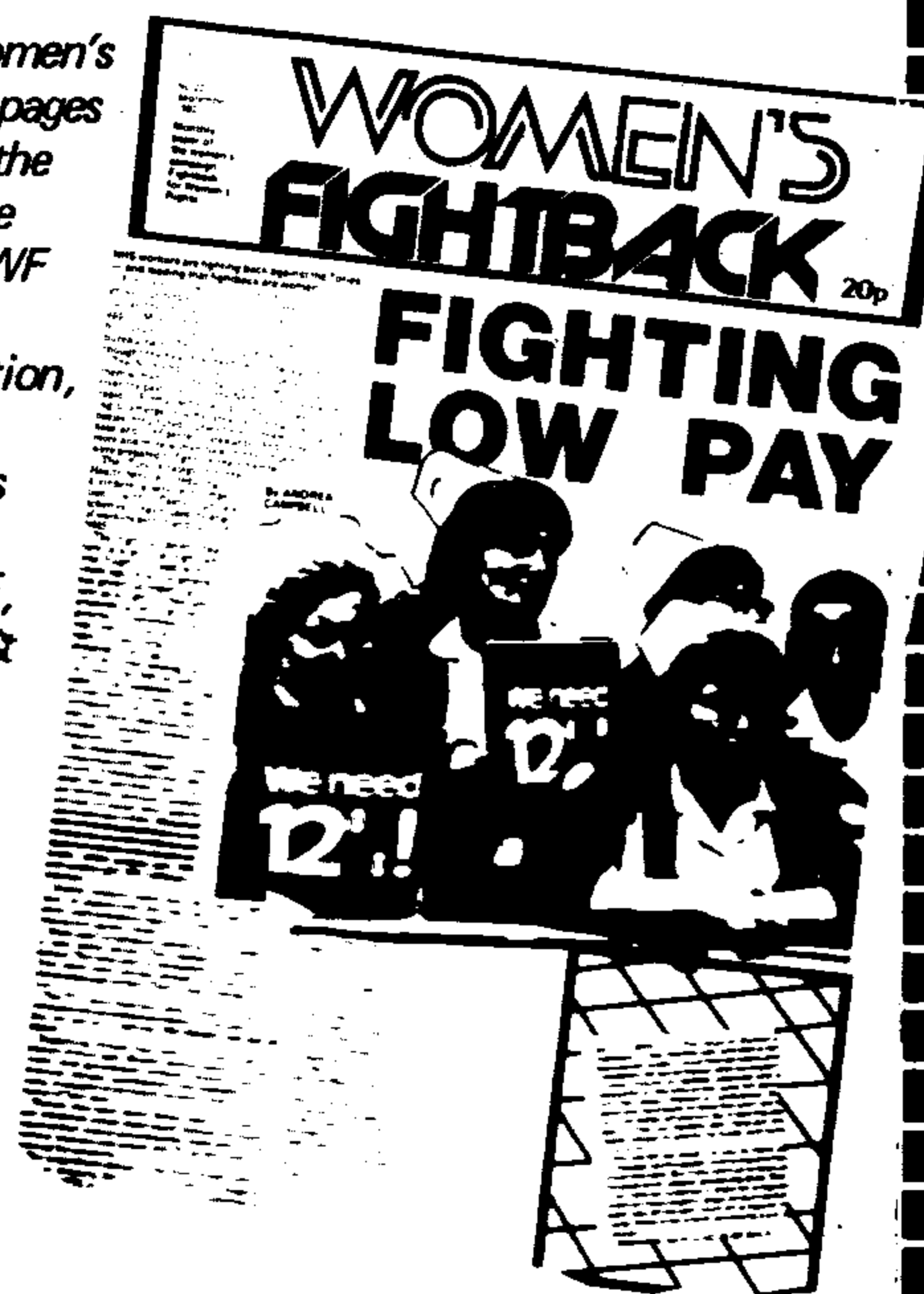
The Labour movement has united before to protect individuals from this racism and sexism. We must make it do so again.

What you can do:

- Write to Halimat's MP, Stan Cohen.
- Write to your MP.
- Write to Timothy Raison, at the Home Office.
- Get your union, LP, or community group's support and affiliation to the campaign.

Please send donations to: Friends of Halimat Babamba, Box HB, 59, Cookridge St, Leeds.

New issue of Women's Fightback — 16 pages and articles on the NHS dispute, the jobs campaign, WF summer space, sexism in education, Judith Williams, Labour women's conference, etc. 20p from WF, 41 Elington St London, N7.



COMING UP Women's Fightback AGM. October 23. County Hall, London. Open to all women, but only members and delegates from affiliated groups can vote. For conference details send s.a.e. to 41 Elington St, N7; to join WF too send £3 (or £5 to include regular mailings and the paper).

Blackpool '82

PEACE-JOBS-FREEDOM



FOOT'S LINE MEANS

BETTER DEAD THAN RED

We won't expel

Frances Morrell told Socialist Organiser:



Healey wields the axe — and Kinnock says: submit for the sake of democracy

"BETTER DEAD than red" — the warmongering slogan of America's loony Right — will not be the slogan under which Michael Foot and the trade union barons launch the full-powered witch-hunt at this year's Labour Party conference.

It should be. Because, make no mistake about it, the witch-hunt will gut the Party in the run-up to the next election.

Foot and his allies know this perfectly well. They are citing the destructive effects of conflict as an argument to persuade the soft Left not to resist them. But, egged on by the Tory press and scared by the strength of the rank and file revolt of the last three years, they have declared war on the Party, and plainly they are prepared to gut it to save it from the socialists.

Thereby they also serve notice on us what sort of Labour government they would run. This makes the register the most important issue at this year's Party conference.

The target is not just Militant but the Left that won — so far mainly on paper — the campaign for Party democracy. The victories of the Left scared the Right and the trade union establishment. Their problem is that the rank and file of the Party support left policies and democratisation. 83% of CLPs voted Benn for deputy leader. Therefore their tactic is to split

and divide the Left.

Militant did not head the democracy campaign. It was more often its tail than its head. But Militant is definable, distinct, visible — a soft target. They are lyingly — presented as anti democrats and 'conspirators'. The Kinnocks and the Foots have had some success in driving a wedge into the Left. Sections of the Left have been got to support the register.

But the proposals of the NEC are a blueprint for an authoritarian Labour Party. Under the old system of proscribing named organisations, if a grouping was not explicitly proscribed then it was likely to be tolerated. Under the new system a rank and file group is assumed to be outside the Party unless positively recognised, licenced, and registered.

By whom? By the power-centres of the Party — the

trade union bureaucrats, whose block votes control Party conference, and the badly scared Parliamentary Labour Party.

This puts tremendous power in the hands of the labour movement establishment. It implies the power to licence all Labour Party rank and file publications: for a newspaper cannot be published without a sustaining network of supporters, unless it has wealthy patrons.

They say that this is not a return to the proscribed list. They are right. It is potentially much worse.

Today it is the 'extremists'. Later it will be bodies like the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy. It is not quite 20 years since attempts were made by Party leaders to expel

Bertrand Russell for his CND activities.

Something like 300 parties are said to oppose the register. But the union block vote will decide the issue. If they win they will claim that democracy demands acceptance of the decision. With an appeal to the Left's own arguments for democracy, smart-alecs like Kinnock are trying to bamboozle and split us.

In fact a decision for the register will have very bad democratic credentials. A majority of the rank and file in the CLPs will oppose the register: in contrast, the rank and file was overwhelmingly for the democratic reforms.

The block votes of mainly undemocratic unions backed up the rank and file on democracy in 1980 and

1981: now they will be used to steamroller and flatten rank and file opposition to the new drive for an authoritarian Labour Party.

Right and duty

In any case we have a democratic right and a socialist duty to resist an attack on the basic rights of the Party rank and file. Re-selection and the other democratic reforms were about forcing people to follow Party policy in their function as Party representatives; this is about the right of Labour Party members to organise and fight for their ideas within the broad mass party of the trade union movement. There is no valid comparison.

If they win at conference, we must mount a campaign

of determined and sustained resistance. Every single expulsion must be fought. Parties must defend the right of Militant supporters to continue to distribute their paper within the Party. The rank and file of the unions must be mobilised against the bureaucrats.

We must explain what Foot's war on the socialists implies for the next Labour government. Programme 82 spells it out plainly. It is a diffuse list of a thousand and one promises, in no way a socialist answer — or any answer — to the crisis of British capitalism.

We will fight every inch of the way to stop the witch-hunters gutting the Party and saddling the working class with another term of Thatcherite rule.

MY CONSTITUENCY Labour Party, Islington South, wouldn't dream of expelling one of its own members.

We have never expelled anybody, and we're not clear why we should start now. If the NEC seriously asks us to do that when we have won a massive victory against the trend in the council elections, I would think that the NEC has really gone off its head.

The whole purge doesn't make much sense. Whose interest is it in to have such a decisive dispute within the Party over a fraction whose influence on Party policy is in reality very minimal? It can only be understood in the context of the very successful pressure for a more democratic party. It is a manifestation of the opposition of the Party establishment to a rank and file who can both participate in the making of policy and hold representatives responsible for its implementation.

As far as the LPYS goes — it's been shut down before, and the Party establishment has not realised that if you want a YS movement worth its salt it won't be a rubber-stamping organisation. I want a YS, and accept that they are going to be a troublesome crew, critical of all sorts of people including myself.

Women demand a voice

THIS YEAR's Women's Conference marked a turning point for women in the Labour Party. Its decisions to support demands for direct access to forums of power within the party — the Annual Conference and the National Executive Committee — have set the stage for a major debate on the Women's Organisation on Monday afternoon of Conference week.

At the heart of the debate will be twenty-six resolutions calling for five major changes to the women's organisation.

The first, and politically most significant, demand is for the right of Women's Conference to submit five resolutions to Annual Con-

ference — to be debated as of right.

The demand — agreed by an overwhelming majority at Women's Conference — has by far the broadest support and is contained in sixteen of the resolutions submitted for debate.

The second major demand is for the Women's Section of the National Executive Committee (NEC) to be elected by, and accountable to, the Women's Conference. At present the Women's Section is the only section not elected by its own 'constituency': while the trade unions elect their representatives to the trade union section, the socialist societies elect their

section, the YS elects its representative at the YS Conference and CLP's elect representatives to the constituency section, women remain disenfranchised. Their section, elected by the Conference as a whole, is in effect elected by trade union bloc votes.

The result is that little consideration is given to the interests of the 'electorate' for this section — women — and to their need to 'strengthen the fight for a fundamental shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families', according to Norwich South CLP.

Third is the demand

that at least one woman be included on the final short-list for a constituency's parliamentary selection.

The Women's Action Committee of CLPD has found while campaigning on this issue that of all the demands this one arouses the greatest antagonism from men, on both left and right wings of the party. In particular it attracts the jibe (most frequently from Militant supporters) that it is simply a device to secure the interests of middle-class women careerists; a jibe which in the words of one WAC organiser 'again manages to render working class women, their needs and

demands, invisible.'

The remaining resolutions contain two demands: first that the Women's Conference should, after more than 60 years, be formally constituted and permitted to follow the widespread practice within union and labour party conferences of electing its own executive. Second, that the women's organisation should be staffed by women and the party urged to 'examine its practices as an employer to ensure that women are not discriminated against, implicitly or explicitly.'

ANN PETTIFOR

Join the Labour Party

Socialist Organiser

Against all bans and proscriptions!

WITH THE HEALTH WORKERS

BRIEFING

need 12%!

COHSE

AGAINST THE TORIES!

NO TO WITCH-HUNTS!

BLACKPOOL '82

Is Programme 82 a workable socialist policy? Will it even be tried? ARTHUR BOUGH surveys the proposals.

Programme '82: is it more than waste paper?

THE cornerstone of Labour's Programme 82 is the economic strategy. If that fails, we can be sure that we'll be told that all else is 'impossible because of the crisis'.

But it is about the weakest part of the Programme.

Rapid progress to the right to work for all is not even promised. The maximum hoped for is to reduce unemployment below one million in five years. This will be done by a 'substantial' programme of public spending, and selective tax cuts, financed by borrowing. The main focus will be more investment (housing, hospitals, schools, railways, etc) and current spending in public services.

It looks easy. But the financiers will make a fortune lending to the state, industrialists faced with the resulting high interest rates and the world slump are unlikely to rush into expansion, and if purchasing power does rise, manufacturers will probably take advantage to raise prices.

Controls

With such inflationary pressure, demands will be raised for the introduction of wage controls. Indeed, talking about an annual economic assessment with the TUC, the Programme says this must include 'such issues as the share of the national income going to profits, to earnings from employment, to rents, to social benefits, and to other incomes.'

Import controls are proposed, to stop the increased spending just

going on imports. Socialists have long opposed these as trying to shift the burden of unemployment onto foreign workers. But Programme 82 introduces a new danger.

'...we will avoid simply protecting inefficiency by tying protection firmly to measures of industrial planning and intervention'.

I.e., import controls will be tied to speed-up and 'rationalisation'.

Toothless

Plans for nationalisation are very limited. Instead, 'planning agreements' are proposed — attempts (and pretty toothless attempts) to make the bosses co-operate.

The only place where mobilisation of the working class is mentioned is in the section on multinationals, '... every assistance will be given to trade unions in their attempts to organise on an international basis.'

Programme 82 does include some useful proposals on positive discrimination for women and blacks.

But it is extremely weak in its proposals to deal with racist attacks. Racism in the police force is recognised to exist, but no mention is made of the development of self-defence groups. Blacks are to wait until racism is 'trained' out of the police.

In line with the Scarman report, more democratic control of the police through elected police authorities (including for London), is proposed, along with an



Programme 82 proposes to reform police racism bit by bit

independent complaints system.

The racist thugs of the SPG will be disbanded, but opposition to the use of plastic bullets, CS gas, and water cannon is qualified by the phrase 'in any but the most exceptional circumstances'. Toxteth? Brixton?

The role of immigration and nationality laws in legitimising racist ideas is recognised and the repeal of existing laws is promised. But they will be replaced by a supposedly non-racist Nationality Act, on which will be based supposedly non-racist immigration laws.

On Ireland: the Prevention of Terrorism Act will be repealed. Irish prisoners will not be given political status, and the only proposal for the Diplock kangaroo courts is to have three kangaroos sitting instead of one. The troops will not be withdrawn, and there is no statement about the use

of plastic bullets or CS gas. In short, a continuation of the present imperialist policy.

There are many more important proposals included in the Programme — more than can be dealt with here. The following are some of the most important.

•The House of Lords is to be abolished 'during the lifetime of the Parliament'. (No mention of the monarchy.)

•A student traineeship for all 16 and 17 year olds, whether in full time education, at work, or on the dole. The right to a systematic education and training.

•Provide a maintenance allowance for all students on approved courses, at least £20 a week for 52 weeks.

•Provision for all pre-school children whose parents require it.

•Labour will retrospectively cancel any penalties

imposed on local councillors for carrying out manifesto commitments.

•In line with Party policy Britain will withdraw from the EEC.

The Programme states in many instances that 'Labour will' carry out this or that policy. But can we be so sure?

Interestingly, outgoing General Secretary, Ron Hayward, has gone into great length in his Foreword to the Programme in explaining the relationship between the Programme and the Manifesto. '... the priorities which will determine the Manifesto at the next election will need to be finalised at that time based on the relevance, costs, timing, and legislative time available over a five year Parliament.'

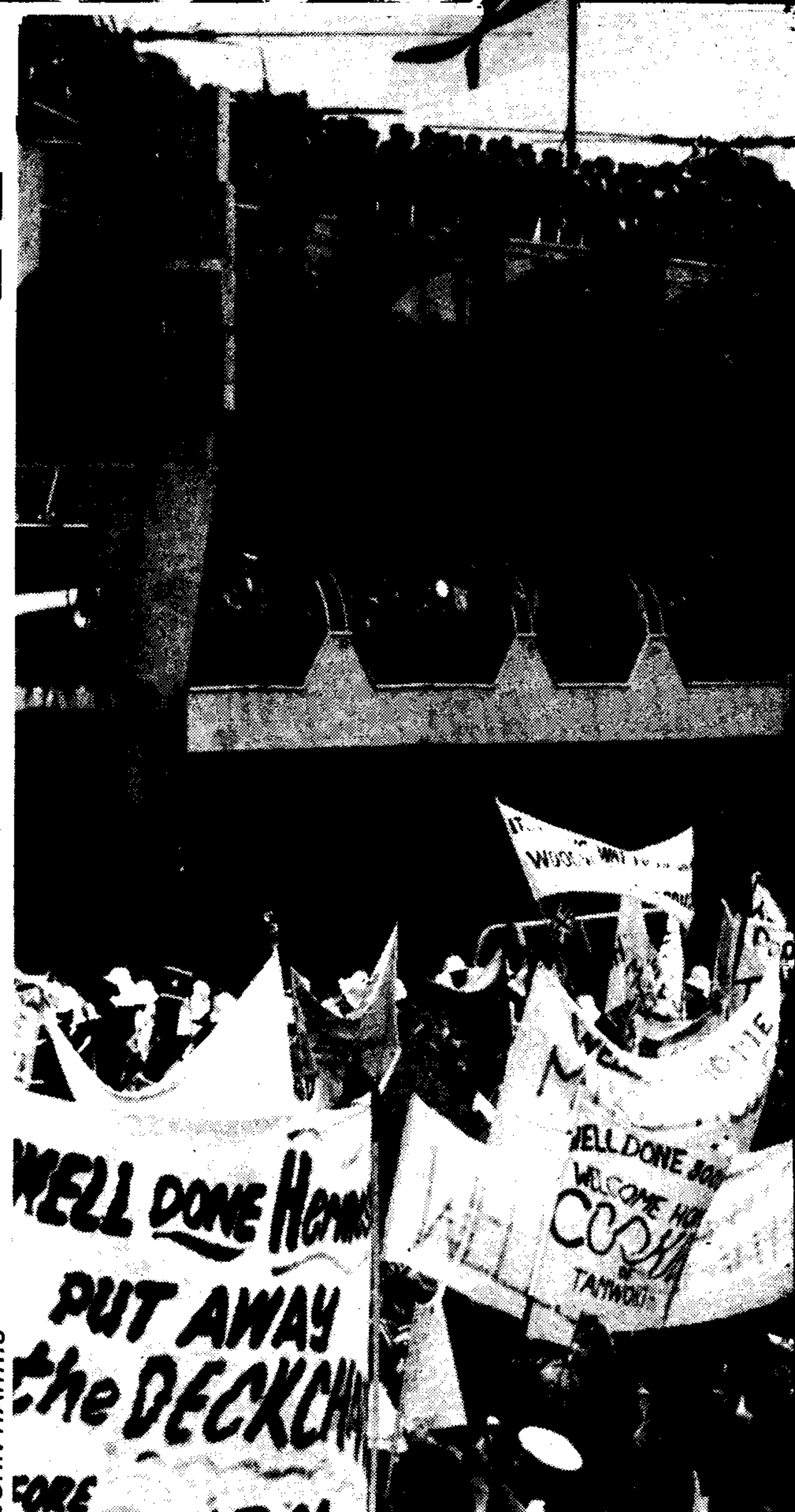
Weak

It is amazing how fast legislation like the Prevention of Terrorism Act can be pushed through, or how easily the Tories can push through anti-working class legislation, but when it comes to a Labour Government putting through measures in the interests of the workers there's never enough time.

Instead of the perspective of mobilising workers to challenge the bosses' property and state, the foundation of the Programme is a belief that the bosses can be persuaded to co-operate by various clever devices. There is a failure to come to grips with the fact that the interests of workers and bosses are irreconcilably opposed.

Thus the approach to the police, security services, and civil service is to establish all kinds of (usually Parliamentary) checks and balances — without any evidence of any real will to operate these checks — rigorously against the will of the cops and bureaucrats — rather than dismantling these institutions and replacing them with a state controlled by and responsive to workers' needs.

There are many important and radical ideas in the Programme, especially relating to women and blacks. But even those will be worthless unless the right wing counter-revolution is defeated and reversed. Without a fighting, organised left wing in the party, and adequate mechanisms to ensure democracy and accountability, this Programme will be no more than waste paper.



The Labour women's conference voted to condemn the Falklands war. Labour leaders backed Thatcher's fleet. But will the Blackpool issue?

Joint Labour Party conference meeting: SCLV and South Wales Campaign for Labour Party and Trade Union Democracy.

"A QUESTION OF LEADERSHIP"

The film most ITV Regions wouldn't show. Showing followed by discussion including: Ken Loach (film producer), Ray Davies (film participant; Llanwrn Steel Action Group), Alan Thornett (film participant, BL shop steward), Reg Race MP, Peter Tatchell, Anna Lunts (NUPE, Health Workers for the Full Claim), and Andrea Campbell (CoHSE, Group 81).

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 27, 5.30pm
at the Lobster Pot restaurant (Kingfisher Room),
Market St, Blackpool. Entrance 50p.

Labour Party Conference Meeting WHAT SOCIALIST ORGANISER STANDS FOR

Speakers: GERRY BYRNE (Socialist Organiser Editorial Board, Women's Fightback Steering Committee), ANNA LUNTS (Shop steward, NUPE), ANDREA CAMPBELL (Asst. branch secretary, CoHSE), WINNIE MURPHY (NUTGW). **Chair:** Wendy Mustill (Mobilising Committee for the Defence of Trade Union Rights).

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 30, 5.30pm, Chamber of Trade, 53 Queen Street, Blackpool.

LABOUR PARTIES AGAINST THE WITCH-HUNT

Conference of delegates from CLPs, LP branches, affiliated trade union branches, women's sections, YSSs etc.

Saturday October 30, 10am to 5pm, at County Hall, London SE1. Credentials for delegates from CLPs (two each), LP branches, affiliated TU branches, LPYSs, women's sections, etc. (one each), £1 each from 107 Nevill Road, London N16 0SU. Cheques payable to Hackney North and Stoke Newington Labour Party.

CLPs AGAINST THE WITCH-HUNT LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE MEETING

Thursday, September 30th 7.30 pm

THE LOBSTER POT Market St.

[Speakers include Jeremy Corbyn, PPC, Islington North]



The best intentions of the world's workers will mean little if right-wingers like Weighell and Chapple, and their parliament...

This conference can be a turning point

THE Blackpool conference will no doubt be dominated by the discussion of the proposed register of organisations. It is in the interests of the right-wing leadership to make it the predominant issue, as expulsions and witch-hunts are the only way of re-creating a policy-forming majority for the Right.

For the Left, however, the conference can be a turning-point. The fight-back against the right, for unity in the Party, and for a Labour victory on a socialist programme at the General Election can best be achieved by the following actions:

•First, we must win back control of the NEC. This means electing Michael Meacher as Treasurer, and supporting the left slates for each section of the NEC. In the constituency section, this means supporting Allaun, Atkinson, Benn, Heffer, Richardson, Skinner and Wise.

In the trade union section, support should go to Clarke, Fields, Hoyle, Kelly, Kitson, McCluskie, O'Neill and Sawyer.

In the Women's Section, support should be given to Beckett, Hart, Maynard, Morrell and Switzer.

By Reg Race



•Second, strong support should be given to the aim of obtaining a two-thirds majority at conference for unilateral nuclear disarmament, in order to ensure that this commitment must be included in the election manifesto.

•Third, to support the demands of health service workers — and to do this in a concrete way by endorsing the composite resolution which will, no doubt, be moved by NUPE, committing the next Labour Government to introduce a statutory national minimum wage to eradicate low pay.

•Fourth, to defeat the endorsement of wages policy, or the National Economic Assessment,

contained in Labour's Programme 82 and the TUC/Labour Party Liaison Committee Document. In doing so, conference would be supporting the views of the Trades Union Congress at Brighton.

•Fifth, to defeat the anti-democratic proposals for a witch-hunt of socialists in the Party. Nothing could be more diversionary twelve months before a General Election; and it can't be delivered as CLP's won't expel individual members, and the NEC will find it impossible to replace 'sacked' Parliamentary candidates.

•Sixth, proposals by the UCW to change the elec-

toral college to give MP's 50% of the votes must be strongly resisted. So must the NUR resolution to change the arrangements for electing the NEC, which would give MP's seats for the first time and still further reduce the inadequate representation of women.

•Seventh, conference must endorse the changes proposed by the CLPD Women's Action Committee to introduce a positive action programme inside the Party. Resolutions demanding the inclusion of a woman on Parliamentary short-lists must therefore be supported, as must the call for the Women's section of the NEC to be elected by Women's Conference, and for five resolutions to be submitted by women's conference to annual conference.

This conference can go down in history as the conference which opted for tolerance, dialogue and debate, and which endorsed a radical socialist programme for the next election. It can also be the conference at which the Left recovers its vision of the future and begins the process of finally winning the Party.



...ar, while the Parliament-
conference even debate the

'Star' suggests a 'civilised' purge

The proposed register has gained some apparently surprising allies or semi-allies on the Left — including the reputedly hard-left Communist Party. JOHN O'MAHONY investigates.

THE COMMUNIST Party's attitude to Michael Foot's witch-hunt and planned purge of Militant and others will have astonished those who think of that party as part of the hard left.

Editorials in the Morning Star have opposed purges and witch-hunts in general while mainly concerning themselves with offering advice to Michael Foot on how to carry through the purge now being set up against Militant in the most effective and least messy way!

The editorial on Monday September 16 is the latest and perhaps most scandalous example. Linking Militant with the old right wing of the Labour Party as twin problems facing Labour leader Michael Foot, the Morning Star suggests that the best way to fight Militant is for Foot to lead a serious fight against the Tories.

"These [Labour Party 'ultra-left'] groupings have not developed in a political vacuum", sagely cautions the Morning Star. They are a result of years of disillusionment and frustration with the past performance of the Labour Party, just like Thatcher's government is. Foot and co. must recognise this and "not SIMPLY hope to forge unity through administrative

measures" (emphasis added).

Not simply? But nevertheless a purge of Militant is legitimate as part of a package?

Combating the 'ultra-left', the Morning Star says, is best done by Foot mobilising the labour movement flat out to fight for "the progressive policies" of the Labour Party conference and TUC. "Campaigns of the sort which bring unity of a broad nature against the Tories will also help to overcome the problem of Militant within Labour's own ranks. This problem will, however, only be exacerbated by resort to SIMPLE administrative action" (emphasis added again).

Thus the Morning Star gives Foot faint-hearted support for the purge, while dressing it up in proposals that he should do other things as well.

For months they have argued against the register on the grounds that it is too sweeping a measure: Militant can be dealt with under the existing rules if it is proved to have broken them.

Most striking in the Morning Star's attitude is its exhortation to Foot to lead a serious campaign. Foot might well repeat

something like the mass demonstration on unemployment he led through Liverpool 18 months ago, or the vague support (against tremendous pressure) he gave ASLEF three months ago.

It is perfectly plain, however, that he will not lead a serious fight against the Tories, that he is increasingly identified with the Right in the campaign to roll back the gains made during the crusade for labour movement democracy, that he has no intention of using Labour Party policy for anything other than demagoguery, and that a Foot Labour government would be like the Wilson and Callaghan governments.

The point is that the witch-hunt, which for now targets Militant, is against those very 'ultra-left' Labour Party members who are the only people in the Labour Party seriously concerned to fight the Tories and win socialist policies.

The Star's attitude to Foot is the proof that the proliferation of left groupings is also a product of the senile decay of the CP.

The problem however is that the Morning Star is not just a sectarian rag standing on the sidelines outside the struggle in the Labour Party, watching with glee as the Labour Party establishment prepares to try to garrotte left-wing rivals of the CP. The Morning Star and the CP have a real and substantial influence inside the Labour Party. Many people in the Labour Party look to the CP as a stable pillar of militant socialist policies and attitudes.

This means that the Morning Star's comments on the witch-hunt are not just impotent sectarian spite, but a serious act of back-stabbing against the hard left in the Labour Party.

There are many who will be influenced by the Star against fighting to defend Militant — the grouping that is facing the brunt of the attack now. And many will oppose the register in words — as the Star does — and also join the attack on Militant.

The Scottish LCC leadership is a scandalous example of this. It put out a statement which opposed the register — but called on Militant to come clean and admit that it was an unsavoury 'conspiracy'!

Weight

Thus the Morning Star throws its weight into the scales on the side of the soft left and on the side of Foot — who should, they advise, do things with a little more finesse. Such an attitude links up with those who are trying to sell the register to the Labour Party membership on the grounds that it will not be used widely but only against the Militant 'conspirators' and others like them.

If Michael Foot — the hoary old rebel who has made his peace with the labour movement establishment — can be trusted to fight the Tories, then he can surely also be trusted to maintain a liberal regime. That is how it is presented by the soft left and the devious right-wingers like Dennis Healey.

Chop Militant and things will be all right, they say. The Star too says Militant should be chopped, and urges restrained and 'civilised' methods of doing it.

In fact the new rules offer the establishment control and regulation over everything that moves, thinks, and organises in and around the Labour Party. Healey and Shore — Michael Foot's favourite to succeed him as leader — are known to want to use it for a full-scale purge and thereafter politically to sterilise the party.

The CP's line on the witch-hunt is all of a piece with its politics: like Foot it thinks socialism is a good idea but not immediately practical politics. Like Foot it believes that the best that can be got now is a Labour government of the type we have had before. Like the elitist Parliamentary Foot, the Stalinist elitists of the Morning Star — about one third of whose print run is sold to the police-state 'Communist Parties' in Eastern Europe — is not really very keen on democracy.

And of course the CP and those it influences in the Labour Party are in factional competition with Militant and with those whom they (like Militant!) call the ultra-left.

If the CP were allowed to join the Labour Party right now, it would be in the faction of Kinnock and Foot. Forced to remain outside by its own sectarianism and by the right wing establishment, it nevertheless offers them the best support it can manage.



...ather than helping the left organise against Foot's purge, the
Morning Star advises Foot on how best to organise against the
fi.

Blackpool '82

Pushing policies on Gay Rights

Labour Campaign for Gay Rights:
c/o 61a Bloom St, Manchester 1

THE Labour Campaign for Gay Rights intends to be present in force at the Labour Party Conference — leafletting, holding its fringe meetings, pushing policies.

It will be pressing for a debate on resolution no. 514, from St. Pancras North CLP, which calls for full equal rights for gay people as part of a campaign for 'the eradication of prejudice on the part of heterosexuals and self-oppression on the part of homosexuals' and 'the positive representation in education and in the media of homosexuality and the lives of gay people'.

The LGCR will also be publicising the failure of the Labour National Executive Committee's draft 'Programme 82' to support equal rights.

'The NEC', LGCR points out, 'is proposing a discriminatory policy on gay rights. The age of consent for gay men would be reduced to 18 not 16; gay relationships for both sexes would remain illegal in the armed forces and merchant navy; lesbian sexuality would still remain unrecognised.'

In this Programme 82 falls short of the NEC's own (inadequate) document

'The Rights of Gay Men and Women'.

LCGR campaigned to publicise this document (which Labour Party HQ at Walworth Road preferred to keep semi-secret) and got discussion in many Constituency Labour Parties. Not one CLP — so LCGR was reliably informed — wrote to Walworth Road opposing the document; several supported it.

Consent

But Programme 82 still proposes that the law should consider non-gays old enough for consent to

sex at 16, but gay men not until they are 18! (The law doesn't believe that lesbians even exist.)

The LCGR is however advising supporters to support the NEC in any vote. A successful reference-back by the conservatives of left and right would leave Labour with no policy rather than an unsatisfactory one.

In any case LCGR will be mobilising support for a battle starting now to get a non-discriminatory policy passed at next year's Labour conference.

No change on Ireland

by Bruce Robinson

ONLY five resolutions on Ireland have got on to the agenda for this year's Labour Party Conference. It is uncertain whether there will be any debate on the issue this year — the Conference Arrangements Committee may either not schedule one at all or else go back to the days not so long ago when Ireland was only given half an hour in some obscure corner of the agenda.

The adoption of the NEC's document on Ireland at last year's conference may have led to the belief that the Party now has a positive and radical policy that includes a United Ireland and marks a real break with the bipartisan policies of the past.

In reality, little has

changed. The NEC document that was carried pushed any commitment to ending partition into the indefinite future and accepted that in the meantime direct rule would continue. It also accepted that unification would be by the 'consent' of the Unionists in the artificial Northern Ireland state and thus perpetuated their veto over the rights of the Irish people as a whole.

Little has changed in the practical actions of the Labour front bench. Hattersley urged MPs to abstain on the vote on the Prevention of Terrorism Act, despite party policy for its eventual repeal. Don Concannon was able, on the basis of quoting from the document passed at last year's conference, to

justify the PLP not voting against Prior's plan to set up a Northern Ireland Assembly.

There is then still a vast amount to be done to change the policy and practice of the Labour Party. The first thing we must do is to ensure that delegates are mandated to vote for the resolutions calling for British withdrawal and for an end to the use of plastic bullets. Delegates must force the Conference Arrangements Committee to have a debate on Ireland. None of the issues were resolved last year.

Labour Committee on Ireland, BM Box 5355, London WC1V 3XX.

Support the Palestinians

Labour Cttee on Palestine emergency motion

CONFERENCE notes the forced withdrawal from Beirut of the leadership of the Palestinian people and the attempt to set up a regime under the leadership of the Phalangist Gemayel to preside over a long-term Israeli occupation of Lebanon.

Conference wishes to take up its responsibility to the Palestinian and Lebanese people, and specifically it:

1. Recognises the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, without whom no settlement in the Middle East can be negotiated.

2. Demands an international investigation into Israeli war crimes in Lebanon, and into the position of the new wave of refugees.

3. Guarantees support to the Lebanese National Movement in their struggle against the fascist Phalange, and demands the immediate withdrawal of Israeli troops to agreed borders.

4. Commits the Labour Party to supporting the establishment of a democratic secular state of Palestine as the long-term solution of the Palestine problem.

Zionist hate campaign

MICK WOODS REPORTS FROM BRENT

BRENT East CLP has been going through a witch-hunt of its own in the last six months: from the Zionist establishment! Together with the local press, Tories and SDP, Zionists mounted a hate campaign against Alf Filer, Labour candidate for Cricklewood ward, during the local elections. This was provoked by an article Alf had written in the 'Brent Socialist', supporting the PLO.

But over 100 people gathered in Cricklewood last Wednesday, 15th, to hear Alf, Ken Livingstone and others put the case for the Palestinians.

Alf, who is a Jew, an ex-member of a Zionist Youth movement, and who has lived and worked on a kibbutz, was able to counter those who had

smeared him as an anti-semitic, and a collaborator. He challenged the Jewish Board of Deputies to match Brent East's record on fighting fascism.

Among the audience was local MP Reg Freeson, who has been under attack lately for his pro-Zionist stance — he left early to address a Labour Friends of Israel meeting in the local synagogue. Also present was John Lebor — the ex-leader of Brent Council who is at present facing expulsion from the party for telling the electorate to vote SDP to keep Alf Filer out. Lebor demonstrated his commitment to the movement by asking Ken Livingstone a question and walking out before the answer.

Much of the meeting was

marred by persistent heckling from a handful of Herut heavies whose racist comments and ill manners shocked even those Zionists present. These thugs had the nerve to call the police and claim assault after they had been ejected by stewards.

The success of this meeting, despite the resistance of the local Zionist Establishment, shows that Labour Parties can and must transform their good intentions into concrete solidarity with the Palestinians. There is an audience for the Palestinian case at a time when workers and even many Jews are questioning their commitment to Zionism after the holocaust in the Lebanon.

3-line whip on abortion!

by Mandy Moore

Labour Abortion Rights Campaign

in its own section, the abortion issue also appears on the Agenda. Although the 1977 Conference carried overwhelmingly a definitive policy composite on this issue, the Party's Programme still evades any real commitment to radically changing the law and consequently it is vital that the explicit provisions

set out in this year's resolutions are carried. These call for the removal of existing legislation which makes abortion a criminal offence outside certain restricted conditions and also demands permissive legislation to ensure a woman's right to choose.

However, one pit-fall that has to be avoided is the inclusion in any abortion composite of the Edinburgh Central Amendment which calls for a 3 line whip on Labour MP's on this issue. This amendment must appear separately if we are to ensure success on the main policy points. Hopefully Conference will accept the Amendment as well: it is about time our MP's were pressed to give women the right to choose instead of hogging this choice for themselves. But given past votes on the 3 line whip, it is an issue we need to win separately without jeopardising the main thrust of our policies by defeat on an all inclusive composite.



Socialist Organiser Alliance

Get Organised!

Socialist Organiser is not just a paper. We fight to organise workers in the struggle for a new leadership in the labour movement.

If you agree with what we have to say, you can help. Become a supporter of the Socialist Organiser Alliance — groups are established in most large towns.

To 'Get Organised' in the fight, or for more information, write at once to us at 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Name

Address



Pick the best of the fringe

IN China it was a hundred flowers blooming a thousand thoughts contending. In Blackpool it will be fringe meetings. For delegates/visitors looking for recommendations, SO would suggest

SUNDAY
10.30. Tribune Group of MPs. 'Any Questions'. Planet Rooms, Winter Gardens. (Go along and ask them why they are supporting the witch-hunt.)

11.00. Labour CND Peace March and Rally. Metro Hotel, North Promenade. Rally. 12.15. Manchester Square.

1.45. CLPD Pre Conference Rally. Planet Rooms, Winter Gardens.

4.15. CLPD Women's Action Committee Women's Caucus (details announced at CLPD Rally).

7.30. London Labour Briefing Meeting 'Our Struggle for Power'. Claremont Hotel, 270 North Promenade.

MONDAY
5.30. SCLV/S. Wales Campaign for LP & TU Democracy. 'A Question of Leadership'. Film and discussion. The Lobster Pot, Market St.

7.30. CLPDWAC/RACS Women's Rights Rally. Baronia Hall, Winter Gardens.

7.30. Peace Rally. Pavillion Theatre, Winter Gardens.

TUESDAY
5.15. 'New Socialist' Forum. Spanish Hall, Winter Gardens.

5.30. LARC Meeting. The Lobster Pot, Market St.

7.00. Women's Fightback Meeting. 'Support the Health Service Workers'.

7.00. LCI Discussion Meeting. Guest House Association. 87a Coronation Road.

8.00. LCGR 'Why the Labour Party should fight for Gay Rights'. Speakers: Joan Lester, Ken Livingstone, J. Richardson, Peter Tatchell.

representatives from the Gay Youth Movement & Judith Williams Defence Committee. Cliff Hotel, Queen's Promenade.

WEDNESDAY
5.30. LCI Rally. Spanish Hall, Winter Gardens.

6.00. Women's Campaign for Jobs Meeting. Trades & Labour Club.

7.30. Tribune Rally. Pavillion Theatre, Winter Gardens.

THURSDAY
12.30. Turkey Solidarity Campaign Meeting. Circle Lounge Bar, Winter Gardens.

5.30. SCLV Meeting 'What's For?'. Socialist Organiser Stands For. Chamber of Trade, 53, Queen St.

7.30. CLPs Against the Witch-hunt Meeting. The Lobster Pot, Market St.

The rich privileges that make Kremlin leaders

tick

JOHN O'MAHONY summarises some recent revelations about bureaucratic privileges in the USSR

MANY millions of workers throughout the world believe that the Soviet Union is socialist.

In the last fifty years, the very idea of socialism as understood, for example, Marx and Lenin, has been scaled down and turned inside out to fit what exists in the USSR.

But the USSR and the other states more or less modelled on it are in no sense socialist. Socialism is the self-rule and self-organisation of the working class. In the Stalinist-ruled societies, the working class is savagely repressed by a bureaucratically organised ruling elite which has vast social and economic privileges.

In some of their features, the USSR and its replicas are more distant from socialism than a capitalist society like Britain. Leon Trotsky, who remained a defender of the Soviet Union against capitalist restoration to the day he died at the hands of Stalin's assassins, wrote this stark comparison into the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International in 1938:

"As in fascist countries, from which Stalin's political apparatus does not differ save in more unbridled savagery, only preparatory propagandistic work is possible today in the USSR".

Rule

He was not saying that the USSR was fascist. He polemicised vigorously against any such notion. He was recording and summing up what existed in the USSR under the rule of the bureaucracy. He was preaching to the revolutionary socialists whom he was trying to organise in the Fourth International, mortal class hatred of those who rule in the USSR.

For though the nationalised property established by the October Revolution continues to be the basis of the social system in the USSR, there has been a political counter-revolution.

The caste of bureaucrats, entrenched within the totalitarian political structure which Trotsky compared unfavourably to fascism, has



But the bureaucrat's shelves are stacked high

seized control of the state and of all the commanding heights of society and the economy.

The society they lord it over is post-capitalist. The roots of its system of collectivised property are in the great working class revolution of 1917. But they rule over it in their own way, in their own interests.

They plunder and rob the working people. They maintain a savage police state, to keep the working class down and to defend their privileges.

Hard facts about this bureaucratic elite are rare. The bureaucracy rules in the dark and pretends that its privileges do not exist.

Now the Sunday Times has published excerpts from a forthcoming book by Konstantin Simis, a Russian lawyer expelled from the USSR in 1977. Simis, who was himself part of the elite, paints a picture based on direct knowledge and experience of the privilege and corruption.

He points out that though the media in the

USSR are forbidden to provide details of the life style of the privileged, there is nevertheless widespread awareness of it: the 'fat cats' depend on a vast network of cooks, chauffeurs, bodyguards, and personal servants, and these talk.

He makes the following assessment of comparative wages:

"The average monthly wage for manual and office workers, according to official data in 1979, is 164 roubles, before taxes. According to my own calculations, however, the minimum required for a family of three to live modestly is 250 roubles, about £189. (I use my own figures here because the official statistics are secret)."

At the same time the salary of the minister of defence or the president of the Academy of Sciences (2000 roubles a month) is almost 30 times the legal minimum wage of 70 roubles a month.

If all the legalised perquisites given to a minister or an academy president are also taken into account, then without exaggeration a minister's monthly income will run to as much as 4000 roubles - at least 60 times the minimum wage paid to a manual or office worker."

Higher floors

Simis cites his own experience as a research assistant in the Institute of Soviet Legislation. *"For 80 to 90 kopeks I could get breakfast (in the second floor snack bar in the presidium building) which was better than any I might find in a good restaurant for 4 or 5 roubles. But on the second floor we could not get either American cigarettes or Scotch whisky: they were available only on the highest floors."*

The higher the floor, therefore, the lower the prices, and the wider and more luxurious the range of available merchandise."

Members of the Politburo have a better deal still: *"without restriction and completely free of charge, they can get anything they want in limitless quantity."*

"Each Politburo member

has his own personal palace on the Black Sea in the Crimea or in the Caucasus and in the neighbourhood of Moscow, although they are not the private property of the official. These palaces stand in huge parks and are serviced by staffs of cooks, chauffeurs, gardeners, hairdressers, doctors and gamekeepers and so on.

They are screened by high walls surmounted with barbed wire, by high tension wires, and by photoelectric surveillance systems. Armed agents in the corridors and of the special section of the KGB's Central Office keep guard round the clock in the palaces and their grounds."

In short the bureaucrats have their own 'economy' within the economy that serves the working class - a private 'socialism' within mass deprivation and protected by savage repression.

'Unions'

The workers, of course, are forbidden to organise trade unions to defend themselves (the official 'trade unions', with which the TUC maintains links, are not in any sense unions, but part of the apparatus of police-state control over the workers - just what they were in Poland until the 1980 workers' revolt pushed them aside).

The ruling caste also gets goods denied to the working class:

"Among the privileges which come with the membership of the highest levels of the ruling caste, the most important of all is a secure private supply of food and such daily necessities as clothes, shoes and so forth."

Since the forced collectivisation in the late '20s and early '30s, the entire country has constantly suffered from a shortage of food. The ruling elite, however, which is concentrated in the main in Moscow, gets its supplies through the Kremlyovskaya Stolovaya (the 'Kremlin canteen'), which can be used only by people with special passes: in other words, the members of the elite, their families, and their servants."

People with access to the Kremlyovka are divided into two categories: those in the first category are given a monthly voucher of 80 roubles, those in the second get 140 roubles. These vouchers can be used... to pay for meals in the Kremlin dining room, at which the diner is also given a package of food 'for breakfast and lunch', as it is officially known...

But few recipients of dining room vouchers use them in this way. With the same 80 roubles worth of vouchers, an official can buy in the Kremlin stores enough food to feed a family of four for a month, with complete, first-rate meals (including caviar and other expensive delicacies such as brandy, wine and high-grade vodka).

Variants of this system of privileges exist throughout the USSR for the local elites.

Is the Stalinist elite then a ruling class?

Leon Trotsky once put it like this:

"The Soviet oligarchy possesses all the vices of the old ruling classes but lacks their historical mission."

It is rapacious, parasitic, savage in its own defence. It came to power in a bloody and one-sided civil war. As Trotsky described it:

"The substance of the [Stalinist political counter-revolution] was, is, and could not fail to be social in character. It stood for the crystallisation of a new privileged stratum..."

[In the 1920s] there were two pretenders to this role: the petty bourgeoisie [merchants, small capitalists and rich farmers] and the bureaucracy itself. They fought shoulder to shoulder [against] the resistance of the proletarian vanguard. When that task was accomplished [1927-8] a savage struggle broke out between them..."

[The bureaucracy made a] concerted effort to present its struggle against the petty bourgeoisie for the surplus products and for power as the struggle of the proletariat against attempts at capitalist restoration..."

The new social basis of the Soviet Union became



Stalin

paramount. To guard the nationalisation of the means of production and of the land, is the bureaucracy's law of life and death, for these are the social sources of its dominant position. That was the reason for its struggle against the kulak...

The bureaucracy took for itself that part of the national income which it could seize either by the exercise of force or of its authority or by direct intervention in economic relations. In the matter of the national surplus product the bureaucracy and the petty bourgeoisie quickly turned from alliance to enmity. The control of the surplus product opened the bureaucracy's road to power."

In fact the only thing the ruling elite lacks to make it a ruling class is that which has made ruling classes progressive for their time and place: a necessary and irreplaceable role in the economy.

Class?

The capitalist class, for example, developed the once historically progressive capitalist system. The bureaucracy in the USSR did nothing comparable.

There was a political counter-revolution against the working class within the collectivised system set up by the workers' revolution.

The bureaucracy is wrecking the economic system - which demands conscious planning and control by those who operate it - rather than allow the workers to control society.

It copies the greed and viciousness of old ruling classes, but lacks both stability and social legitimacy because it is in sharp antagonism with the economic system. The electrified barbed wire expresses their real relationship with Russian society, and in the first place with the working class.

Simis brings this out clearly. Discussing the fact of widespread personal corruption at the top of the bureaucracy, he asks why do people with such privileges take bribes?

He thinks the first and most important reason:

"... is the fact that none of the material benefits showered on a member of the ruling elite actually belongs to him: he owns nothing."

The dacha [country house], the chauffeur-driven car, access to the Kremlyovka - it all belongs to the state, and he enjoys it only while he occupies his official position. If he loses his position in the ruling apparatus, he automatically - literally the next day - loses everything that was his."

Collectively the bureaucracy have the privileges of a ruling class. But the individual bureaucrat has no ownership rights. This is not a fully developed ruling class but an unstable and crisis-ridden gang of parasites whose privileges rest on their jealously protected monopoly of political power and the social power that arises from it.

The economic system on which they rest will be cleaned up and restored to the rule of the workers in the USSR. The workers' revolt in Poland - as in Hungary before that - showed how: by a workers' political revolution against the bureaucracy.

The workers of the USSR will take back the nationalised property, which is a potential basis for democratic workers' self rule and as such must be defended against any attempt by imperialism to overthrow it.

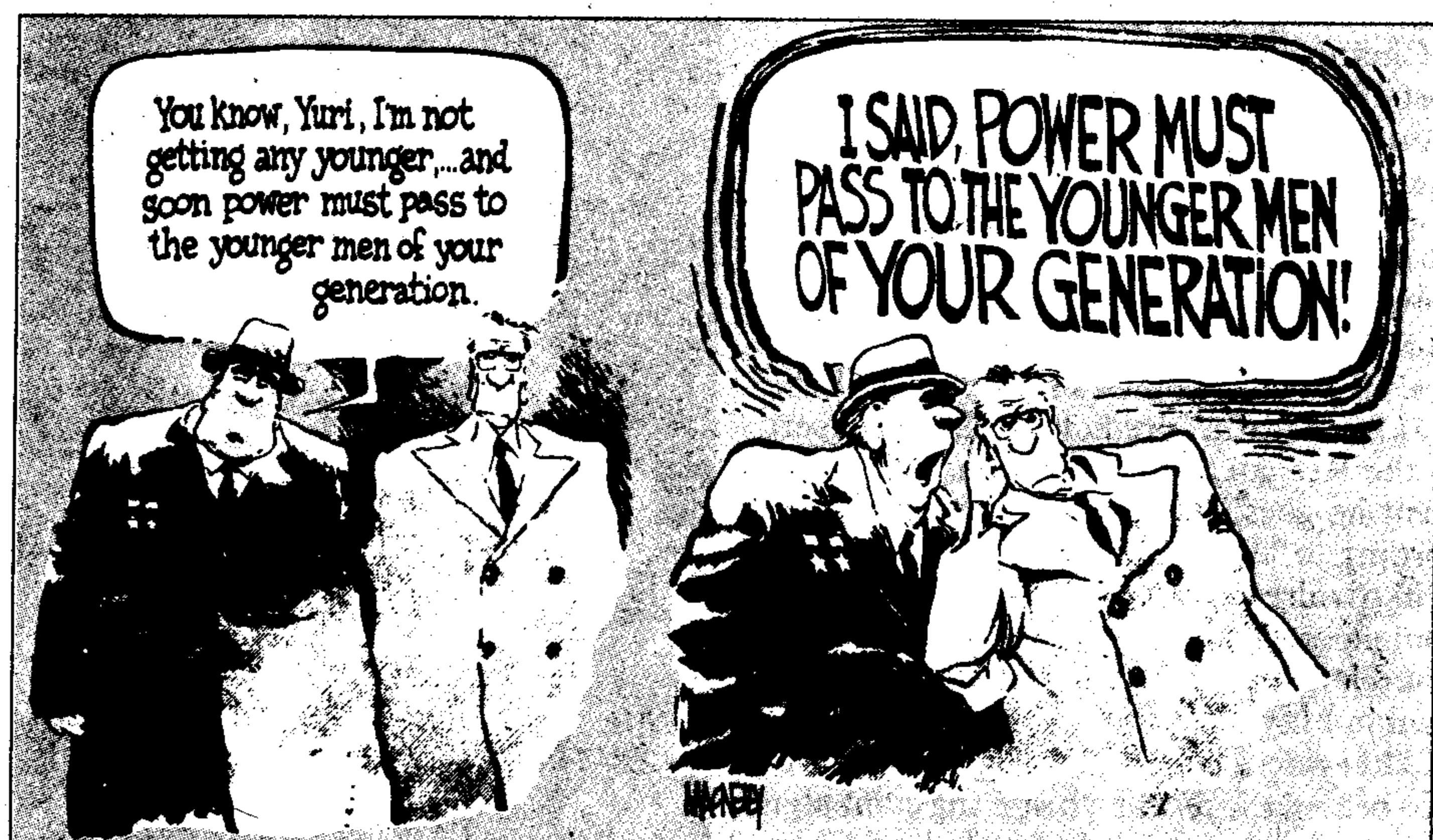
We must help the workers of the USSR against the vicious parasites. Information such as Simis's needs to be spread in the labour movement, where there are many illusions in the 'socialism' of the USSR, China, Cuba, etc, and some of the best militants are infected to one degree or another by Stalinism. (Even many self-proclaimed Trotskyists in the IMG have now come out as uncritical worshippers of the Stalinist state in Cuba).

And we need to give every practical help we can to aid the workers in the Stalinist states in developing their own organisations. The TUC should break off all connections with the police-state 'unions' that are part of the totalitarian apparatus which protects the 'fat cats' of the Moscow Kremlin and the other Kremlyns.

Jobs not bombs!



North West Youth CND and Labour Party Young Socialists branches are organising a Jobs Not Bombs march from Manchester to Blackpool on September 23 to 27, finishing with a lobby of Labour Party conference. Details. Youth March, Barnes Wallis Building, UMIST, Sackville St, Manchester (061 236 9114 or 4905).



Haringey work - in against NHS cuts

A warning for us all

by Jeremy Corbyn

A 'work-in' at Haringey (North London) hospital is fighting Tory plans to pay for any NHS wage rise with cuts and closures.

These cuts involve the complete closure of the Family Planning Service, and of at least the Wood Green and Southgate hospital, and a loss of a minimum of 85 jobs. Two wards will be closed at the Prince of Wales hospital. The DHA insist that the closure of the Wood Green and Southgate hospital will only be temporary but no one takes this claim very seriously.

A great deal of anger has been generated by the conduct of the Haringey (Labour) Council appointees on the DHA who ignored Council policy by voting for the cuts. A campaign for a recalled meeting of the DHA to reconsider their decision is being linked to pressure to ensure that these votes are reversed.

The response of the workers at the Wood Green and Southgate has been to

extend the pay dispute into a political battle to preserve the health service — they are occupying the hospital.

The hospital is a small general hospital, serving the immediate local community. It has already lost 21 of its 45 beds since 1979 because the DHA has refused to fill vacant nursing posts.

For the hospital to continue running local GPs must continue to refer patients. The GPs support the workers but are seeking legal advice on the implications of ignoring the DHA directives.

Meanwhile, the workers are refusing to meet DHA officials to discuss redeployment.

The workers now need help in maintaining a large 24 hour picket to protect the hospital from any attempt by the DHA to use force to remove patients. NUPE steward, Lesley Fisher, told Socialist Organiser that she feared a raid, like at St. Columba's hospital, where scab private ambulance workers, backed up by police using

dogs, carried elderly patients from their beds — the official who organised the St. Columba's raid is now a senior administrator with Haringey DHA.

Local MP Reg Race told a meeting held at the hospital that Haringey Council, who have a clear policy opposing the closure, should provide practical physical help in maintaining a strong 24 hour occupation. Private ambulance firms could be pressured into keeping clear of the hospital — three firms had refused to take part in the St. Columba's raid.

Substantial support from the local community, from the Labour Party and from trade unionists is vital to force the DHA to back down.

Offers and messages of support to Lesley Fisher; donations to Mary Halliday, c/o Wood Green & Southgate Hospital, 135, Bounds Green Rd., London N11.

Steve Macarthur.



THE people of Haringey have just been awarded a very dubious 'first'.

The District Health Authority has become the first in the country to make all the cuts required by Thatcher and Fowler to pay for this pay offer of

6% for ancillaries and 7½% for nurses.

Haringey Health District is chaired by Lawrence Bains who is paid £7,000 per year for two days work per week. He once lived in part of the Borough but for many years has lived in a large farm house in Arkley, from where he goes fox-hunting; his qualification for deciding on the level of health care needed by the people of Haringey is that he works as a Lloyds Underwriter and was one of Horace Cutler's cronies when the GLC.

The District Health Authority announced cuts (£147,000 for over spending on drugs and £135,000 to finance the pay offer) in a report to the August meeting. The report freely admitted that there had been no consultation with staff, but that the recommendations had been approved by a District Management Team meeting, who were going to have detailed discussions with staff on their implementation.

Among the cuts that the DHA is attempting to impose are the closure of the Wood Green and Southgate Hospital and the loss of 85 full time jobs. The cuts come on top of previous cuts, with wards being kept closed and vacancies deliberately maintained.

The Health Unions the District have voted to oppose these measures and to fight back by occupying the hospital and calling for support from local Trade Unionists.

Support has been received, and the Hospital Workers Strike Support Committee has produced thousands of leaflets and organised three public meetings to mobilise the support.

What is happening in Haringey is a measure what is in store for every part of the country. And if the Tories get away with this carnage on the National Health Service, then every other service is at risk.

Left prepares for battle of Brent

by Peter Firmin

LAST Sunday, September 12, 56 members of the left of Brent East Labour Party met to decide who we should put forward to replace the sitting MP, Reg Freeson, as candidate for the general election.

The constituency party has been at odds with Freeson politically for several years. As junior housing minister in the last Labour government he was responsible for introducing the Criminal Trespass law (which he claimed could not be used against workers' occupations — tell that one to the Laurence Scotts workers) despite opposition from the CLP.

Although he has recently opposed renewal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act he has opposed withdrawal of

British troops from Ireland and has described the Provisional IRA as 'fascist'. The CLP has a long record of support for 'Troops Out' and self-determination.

Recently Freeson has come out as a 'socialist Zionist' (though he does call for the handing back of the territories seized by Israel since 1967). The CLP has adopted the full policy of the Labour Committee of Palestine, including opposition to the Zionism within the labour movement.

For the deputy leadership, Freeson voted Silkin in the first round and Healey in the second, while the CLP backed Benn.

Freeson's politics are best summed up by his response when asked by tenant activ-

ists at the weekend to sign their petition for a freeze on council rents. "I do my politics in Parliament".

It has been obvious to all concerned that the left would oppose Freeson's reselection. However, Freeson is not a Ben Ford or Bob Mellish, but a middle-of-the-road (even, on some issues, left-leaning) Labour MP of some standing in the PLP.

Socialist Organiser supporters argued that in order to replace Freeson the left needed maximum possible involvement and discussion, and agreement on one candidate.

The left agreed to hold a meeting for potential candidates and for all left activists who wished to see Freeson replaced and were prepared

to be committed to the meeting's choice.

The two names put forward were GLC leader Ken Livingstone and Gerry Byrne (of Socialist Organiser and the Women's Fightback steering committee).

Much of the discussion at Sunday's meeting revolved around positive discrimination for women. (There were, at least formally few major differences between the candidates on current national and international issues, and unfortunately we did not adequately pursue the differences on putting policies into practice — over cuts or LI fares).

Supporters of Livingstone argued yet another version of manana socialism, or, in this case, 'tomorrow a

woman'. Positive discrimination was fine, they said, but in this case we had to put forward a well-known candidate in order to win.

"Livingstone would get 50 to 60% of the votes, Byrne 40 to 50%". (But one third of the 100 GC delegates were present, and we could have gone out to convince sufficient others of the need to vote for either left candidate).

37 voted for Livingstone, 16 for Byrne, and three abstained — no walkover, certainly a warning to Livingstone that the left will not act as an uncritical fan club, and an indication of the standing of Socialist Organiser in the party.

The significant fact not reported in the media was

that 50 supporters then proposed a second vote to endorse Livingstone as the candidate of the left. It was unanimous.

Screams

We have seen how the media and the right wing have screamed when other MPs have been replaced. This may well be nothing in comparison with what will happen in Brent East (I would not be writing this yet if some 'mole' had not already passed on accurate details of Sunday's meeting to the press).

We need a strong campaign to convince Labour activists to stand firm against this pressure, and particularly against the register.

SCIENCE Labour's theories

by Les Hearn

There is a tradition in the Labour movement of either ignoring science and technology (ST) or regarding it uncritically as the solution to all our problems — even as a way of bypassing the class struggle! This tradition has been ever-so-slightly dented by the recent establishment of the Labour Party's ST Study Group (STSG).

Les Hearn comments on its Interim Report (published as an appendix to the NEC's Report to the 1982 Conference).

The STSG's Interim Report bears strong signs of being a rush job — half of it consists of a cliché-ridden left-nationalist analysis of Britain's de-

cline, and in no sense can it be considered a report of work done.

However, it has its good points.

It begins with an implicit rejection of the Wilson government's approach to ST, with its belief that the 'white heat of the technological revolution' could transform the lives of working people for the better.

Its weaknesses arise from an analysis that sees the recession as a British phenomenon, at least partly due to a lack of investment in ST in this country, presumably by unpatriotic bosses. In fact, lack of investment in one country is a localised symptom of a world recession.

The report recognises that workers often see ST as a threat to jobs but then says vaguely that this 'simply underlines the need for socialist planning

to overcome the barriers to faster progress thrown up by private enterprise'. It does not seem to understand the difference between capitalist progress and socialist progress, and that one barrier to capitalist 'progress' is the resistance of workers to speed-up, de-skilling and job-loss.

The report also recognises that ST is seen as hazardous to the environment, and that there is mounting opposition to nuclear and chemical weapons. It says that there is 'concern' over nuclear power (the British art of understatement lives on!). With surprise, it notes that 'even information technology is viewed with suspicion', as if the possibility of mass electronic surveillance and information control is not alarming! It mentions important ethical questions raised by developments in medical research, but curiously

gives 'test-tube' babies as an example. This is hardly an issue, except for theologians, and is certainly far less important than expensive heart transplants, or medically-induced tranquilliser addiction, etc., etc.

Unfortunately, no position is taken or even suggested on these issues, so will the STSG end up sitting on the fence?

When talking about what STSG will or should do, the report improves markedly. It talks of redirecting ST towards solving social problems and needs, and calls for a radical change in research priorities — at present, some 53% of British research is devoted to offence.

It lists political objectives of the Labour Party which ST should be steered towards:

- Full employment,
- Improvement of the

nature of work and working conditions,

- Fairer distribution of production and wealth,
- Decentralisation of industry,
- Democratic control of and access to information in society,
- and what they call 'Varied employment patterns'.

It calls for a democratic framework for ST to establish the general direction of research and development, but sees this as including government, management, trade unions and the scientific community. It does not understand that at least two of these components have opposing interests and that such a framework could not remain standing for long.

Making a passing reference to the exclusion of women from ST, it calls for a closing of the gulf between ST and arts and humanities at all levels of

education. But it sees the aim of this to be the closing of the division between the scientific community, and industrialists, civil servants, administrators and politicians, i.e., the hierarchy of society. Socialists, however, need to find ways of removing this group from power, rather than improve its scientific knowledge. We also need to build links between the scientific community and the labour movement.

The report ends with more nationalist clichés about regenerating Britain's economy and British society, having completely ignored international issues throughout.

But the Programme of Work which is then set out contains many areas of interest for socialists, and we should therefore attempt to influence the STSG in its work.

We should prepare submissions to it on such

issues as:

1. its initial perspective, i.e., that capitalist industry is inevitably polluting, and careless of worker health and job satisfaction — and that capitalist medicine is biased towards the more profitable high technology, drug-based sensational approaches health, etc.
2. how socialist planning, democratic control and ST should relate to each other
3. what are the social problems and needs that socialist science policy should address.

But, primarily we need to see that the STSG is not ignored by labour movement activists, and that it be opened up to participation by the rank and file (there are no rank and file Labour Party members, it!), rather than continuing to meet in out of the way committee rooms in the Houses of Parliament.

Oxford claimants fight on

by Harry Sloan

THE Claimants' Defence Committee established in Oxford in the aftermath of the giant police swoop on September 2 has taken up a number of demands of national significance.

One key issue is the way in which the scandalously low £18.50 per week allowance for the homeless with no fixed address effectively drives the poor to contemplate any possible means of obtaining more benefit.

Another is the way in which such people are wide open to exploitation by unscrupulous, rack-renting landlords.

The third is the cynical way in which Tory cut-backs and cash limits in the civil service have cut DHSS staff to the point that even statutory requirements to make 'urgent needs' payments are not being fulfilled — and the need to campaign jointly with the CPSA and other unions for an increase in staff.

And the fourth is the lessons of the Oxford swoop and the ensuing 'conveyor belt' trials for claimants both in Oxford and nationwide.

It is vital that this campaign receives the widest support from CLPs, union branches and unemployed workers' organisations. Donations and affiliations are urgently needed.

Once the immediate tasks of defending those appearing in court have been completed, it will be important to ensure that a full and documented labour movement inquiry be mounted into the raid, the denial of civil liberties to those held in the bogus 'Social Security' office, and the issues behind the mass arrests.

Contact Oxford CDC, c/o 'B' Block, 44b Princes St, Oxford. Open meetings every Saturday morning, 11am. Affiliation £5, donations welcomed.

TONY KELLEHER was one of the 114 people held but not charged by the Thames Valley police in their mass arrest of 286 claimants in Oxford on Thursday September 2 — 'Operation Major'.

The Claimants Defence Committee was launched — on the initiative of Oxford Unemployed Workers and Claimants Union — to reply to the lies and distortion of the gutter press's 'The Sting', and to defend the rights of ALL claimants.

Since the formation of the CDC Tony has become committed to the work and campaigns it has begun. Alan Stephens of Oxford SO and the CDC asked Tony why he has become so committed to the campaign.

'I felt strongly about being arrested and the way I and everybody else were treated like animals and herded around by people who, just because they wear a police uniform, felt they could treat us this way.'

'I think that many of those arrested shouldn't have been. There were alcoholics, the mentally ill, the inadequate, who were ignorant of what they were doing — they



were forced into the whole situation merely because they were trying to survive.

'Since the 2nd I've been so wrapped up in the campaign that I've forgotten my own worries for a while — it makes me feel I exist.'

But at night, my own problems come back. In the daytime I'm aware of the reality affecting other people — like those arrest-

ed with me, especially those who have lost their liberty. At night its time again to realise my own responsibilities — family responsibilities which I feel.

It's also because of the way Cronin (the Bed & Breakfast landlord of 131, 135, 137 & 141 Iffley Rd., who denies being the alleged 'Mr. Big') has been

getting rich off people who think he's doing a favour for them, when actually he's exploiting them — I hope the dirty bastard goes down as well.

'I used to be working and married — but we split up.'

'I did try and get a B & B place, but because I was so screwed up I ended up sleeping rough for 5/6 weeks and I couldn't cope with working so I lost my job.'

'Then a clerk, a woman at the DHSS told me that if I went to 137, Iffley Rd. and got a letter from the landlord they would give me a voucher for a night's B & B and the DHSS could give me an interview the next morning, which I did and they did — and from now on I'm classed as a 'scrounger'! (That's what the papers call us all.)'

'I've never really been involved in politics — I've got my own views which I've expressed and people could take them or leave them — but I know I've never liked the capitalist system since I've been aware of it (which isn't recently).'

'There's no real difference between capitalists and Cronin — he's just the small fry... and wasn't

born with a silver spoon in his mouth.'

'My family and I have had to struggle for what we've got — which was never much. We've seen other people who have got more which they ought to share — nobody should have more than anybody else. Everything should be shared as we all have to live in this world together.'

'I hope that through the Campaign we can expose how the police abused the authority they've got — that in conjunction with the DHSS they've been able to walk all over us, the working class who are not working.'

Exploit

'And to show that capitalists like Cronin can exploit people and walk the streets free, while those he has exploited, the (non-) working class are being sent to jail.'

'I also hope that we can expose when it comes to the court system that the magistrates are only out to line their own pockets.'

'If we only achieve that much then at least we've achieved something positive and maybe we will protect people like me on the dole who don't really want to be.'

Newsline's scurrilous attacks

by Harry Sloan.

'THESE Newsline articles are disgusting. Obviously they have no evidence for their attack or they would have produced it.'

Oxford Trades Council was fully satisfied with the account it heard of Peter McIntyre's involvement. The lies and slander of NEWSLINE will be condemned without reservation by any honest person who knows Peter's record as a trade unionist, and as a journalist — where he has in fact done a vast amount of crucial work to help homeless people in Oxford.'

This was how Oxford Labour councillor David Whitfield responded to last week's scurrilous articles in the Workers Revolutionary Party's daily paper Newsline.

The articles alleged that Peter McIntyre (a well known NUJ militant and SO supporter who works for the Oxford Mail) had acted as a 'police nark' and 'collaborated' in the massive crackdown on social security claimants in Oxford on September 2.

Their evidence? The words of the right wing editor of the Oxford Mail! Newsline quotes only the Mail, not a single activist in the Oxford labour movement, where universal reaction to the articles has been one of revulsion at the Newsline slanders.

Labour councillor Peter Moss — actively involved in the Claimants Defence Campaign — said:

'I've known Peter for several years as a sincere socialist, as a journalist and on Trades Council.'

To my knowledge the Claimants Defence Committee of which I am a member has not even bothered

to discuss the issue — dismissing the matter with contempt if you like.

I was not surprised at the attitude of the Oxford Mail management in collaborating with the Police: but this conduct has nothing to do with Peter.

I think it's outrageous that Newsline does not campaign in support of the Claimants' struggle but carries this material against Peter. I would have thought that whatever the angle they would have seen the attack by the police and the state as the main issue, not their own sectarian attacks on a local socialist.'

The anonymous Newsline poison pen writer was obviously ignorant of the full meeting of Trades Council on September 3 at which delegates heard a report of McIntyre's involvement in the Mail coverage and were satisfied.

Newsline calls for a labour movement inquiry to 'drive McIntyre off the Trades Council', and for disciplinary action to be taken by the NUJ.

An inquiry is certainly called for: into the cynical and utterly scurrilous mud-slinging by Newsline, which masquerades as a paper for the labour movement.

Socialist Organiser this week carries the initial response from Peter McIntyre. Next week, with more space at our disposal, we will carry further response to the Newsline slanders against him, against Cowley militant Alan Thorne, and other supporters of Socialist Organiser — slanders which speak volumes on the filthy politics of the WRP.

TO the Editor of Socialist Organiser:

I enclose a copy of a letter which has been delivered by hand to Newsline. You may publish it if you wish. I hope to be in a position soon to publish a complete account of the events leading up to the Oxford raid, but as I am

raising some issues through my union in my workplace I feel unable to do so at present.

I realise that the Newsline article was probably aimed more at you than at me and am sorry that the name of Socialist Organiser has been dragged through the mud.

To The Editor, Newsline, 21b Old Town, Clapham.

Dear Editor, I returned from two week's holiday last night and was shown copies of two Newsline articles arising from the police mass arrests in Oxford.

The first was a page 3 piece of Monday September 13. The second was an opinion column, headed Comment, which was published two days later. I understand there are other similar pieces which I have not yet had an opportunity to see.

The two pieces I have

seen amount to a sustained smear on my reputation, character and politics. You allege I collaborated with the police in setting up the Oxford operation and covered up information to allow them to carry it out.

Any publication which had not been blinded by

sectarian hysteria might have thought it important to demand rigorous checking of such severe allegations. Any NUJ member who was familiar with my record in the union would have suggested double checking.

I have worked in provincial journalism for 12 years — and yes, all of that time has been spent working on 'Tory' newspapers. (Perhaps you could publish a list of the regional and provincial non-Tory papers.) I have never believed that individuals, however well intentioned, could change the class nature of these newspapers. I have however tried throughout that time to report fairly, accurately and to avoid witch-hunts, especially against individuals and groups already under general attack, such as the homeless and claimants.

The articles which appeared in the Oxford Mail of September 2, and September 3 are the responsibility of the editor. I am at present taking up through my union the presentation and content of those articles. I cannot until that process is complete comment in detail on the two Oxford Mail articles.

So far as I know you made no effort to contact me or other chapel or branch officers to check whether or not the Oxford Mail articles accurately attributed my role.

At one point you accused me of 'boasting' in the Oxford Mail and follow it by quoting two paragraphs, not one word of which I wrote. Was your reporter on sabbatical from the

Daily Mail or the Sun? Certainly the style is familiar.

Your Comment column begins by saying there is a prima facie case against me, finds me guilty of helping the police harass the homeless in the second paragraph and sentences me to be thrown off the trades council. Such summary justice, perhaps borrowed from your comrades in Iran — rests for its evidence on the front pages of the very newspaper which you seek to condemn, the Oxford Mail.

These untrue and defamatory allegations should be immediately withdrawn. I demand:

a) publication of this letter in the next convenient issue of Newsline, and at any rate within one week; b) an unreserved and complete apology in the same issue for totally unfounded allegations that I helped the police harass the homeless, collaborated in that harassment or any other such smears.

If the conditions in the above paragraph are not met I will initiate a complaint against the member of your staff responsible through the NUJ rule book. I would be grateful if you would send by return of post the name and branch of the NUJ member who takes responsibility for the articles.

Since for some reason you chose to include Socialist Organiser in your smear, I am sending a copy of this letter to that paper with my permission to publish it. I am also bringing this matter to the attention of my union chapel and branch.

Yours sincerely, Peter McIntyre.



■Privatisation

Tory plan to 'hive off' NHS

THE SCRAPPING of the National Health Service and its replacement with private health insurance schemes. An end to state funding of universities and colleges — with the introduction of fees of around £12,000 for the average three year course. And an end to the link between pensions and other social security payments and inflation.

These are the latest suggestions for cuts in public spending and privatisation being kicked around by the head-banging right-wingers on the Tory cabinet.

They are among proposals put forward by the Tory 'think tank', the Central Policy Review Staff. According to the Economist magazine, which leaked details of the plans, they so horrified the 'wets' among Thatcher's minist-

Some Tories want to make a clean sweep of it and scrap the NHS altogether. Harry Sloan reports.

ers that they blocked discussion of the CPRS paper at the September 9 cabinet meeting.

The objective of the CPRS is to reduce the proportion of the country's Gross Domestic Product allocated to state spending — and of course to maximise the proportion which finds its way into the pockets of the ruling class and their pampered errand-boys in the upper managerial sector.

The Tories are concerned that even after the wholesale public service cut-backs, government spending is set to consume at least 45% of GDP for the

foreseeable future.

In fact the 45% figure is a fraud. It is calculated by comparing total public expenditure (including 'transfer payments' like pensions and benefits) with a GDP figure that excludes transfer payments. The actual proportion of the national product which is produced by or directly for the state is twenty-odd per cent.

Chunk

But state spending still takes a big chunk of the social surplus product — what is left for profits, interest, rent, etc. after materials and wages have been paid for. And that is what the Tories are really worried about.

A major element of their worry is, paradoxically, the impact of Thatcher's three or four million unemployed, who can make no sub-

stantial contribution to government revenue, but cost thousands of millions of pounds in benefits.

Since the CPRS knows better than to presume a substantial increase in employment, it is forced to consider desperate measures to cut back government spending. The four biggest areas of expenditure are education, social security, health and defence.

Defence of course is a sacred Tory cow, and no serious proposals are put forward for cuts.

But education is a different kettle of fish. The Tory rich of course do not use the state education system in any event. They send their kids to private schools.

So the CPRS toy with the idea of scrapping state primary and secondary schooling altogether. That

would save a lot of money (!), they say, but (they reluctantly conclude) it would create political difficulties.

Higher education however might be easier, they feel: the introduction of fees could be combined with a tokenistic system of 300,000 state scholarships — and the provision of loans for students without scholarships.

With well over 100,000 graduates already on the dole, the deterrent effect on

students of replacing grants with loans is obvious: only kids from the wealthiest families would go on to higher education — heralding cuts greater than we have ever seen.

On top of this the CPRS recommends allowing the teacher:pupil ratio to rise.

On social security payments, the CPRS again recognises that these benefit only the working class and not the rich: they resent every penny going to claimants and pen-

sioners. They recommend that big savings could be made by leaving the payments to lag behind inflation.

The privatisation of NHS could, they argue, save £3-4 billion every year out of the £10 billion health budget. This bonus comes on top, of course, of windfall profits that would be reaped by private insurance firms and the wealthy shareholders particularly if the CPR recommendation of a statutory minimum level of private insurance for everyone were implemented.

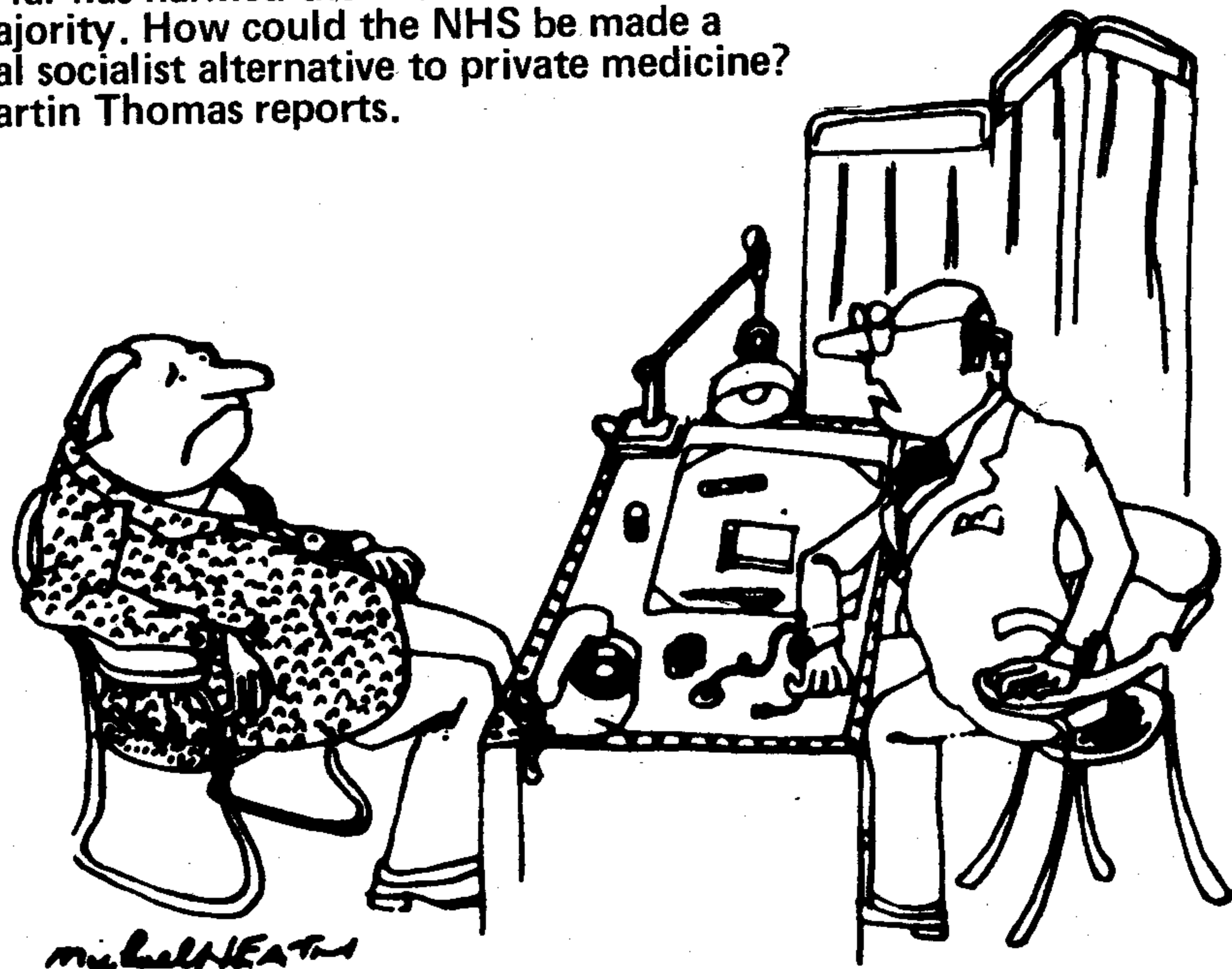
In any case the CPR suggests immediate introduction of charges to visit doctor and a further rise in the cost of prescriptions.

The CPRS proposals endorsed by Tory treasury ministers and have the backing of Thatcher herself — though they recognise certain problems pushing them through under conditions where they would antagonise substantial sections of the Tory middle class as well as the whole of the working class, and could split Tory party itself.

It is useful however to know the real thoughts of the Tories and the stark danger the most basic of public services and living standards if the workers' movement is not mobilised to force them from office.

What price saving life and health?

Even the limited growth of private medicine so far has harmed the health service for the majority. How could the NHS be made a real socialist alternative to private medicine? Martin Thomas reports.



Well, Mr Thompson, you can either die, or have private treatment

THE issue of private versus public medicine is the issue of capitalism versus socialism in a nutshell.

The Tory argument for private medicine is the same as its argument for the private profit system across the board. Everyone gets a fair deal for a fair price, and a fair income for a fair effort. So in the end everyone gets as much as they think it's worth making the effort for, with the minimum of waste and inefficiency.

But capitalism does not work like this pretty picture of an ideal free market. Some get a huge income for no useful work at all, others have no income because they don't get the chance to do 'a fair day's

work'.

It's difficult to see what is 'fair' about the sort of horrors that private medicine produces in the USA. Take one example:

John Lacey, aged 28, could not afford to pay his company's private medical insurance which costs 45 dollars a month. While cleaning his motor cycle with petrol, he accidentally set light to himself and received burns over 95 per cent of his body. He received emergency treatment from the nearby medical centre. But he required treatment at a Specialist Burns Unit to survive. Because he was not covered by a private Health Insurance, 40 hospitals refused him treat-

ment. As one official at Savannah Hospital, Georgia, commented, 'We're not condemning other hospitals for refusing to take him. A burn victim is expensive to treat.' (One man burned in a restaurant has run up a bill of 80,000 dollars in six months.) Eventually a Congressman agreed to underwrite at least 50,000 dollars cost of the treatment and luckily John was treated. (Guardian, 13.5.82)

What's a 'fair' price for saving life and health? Even if it were 'efficient' to organise the basic care that people provide for each other through the cash nexus, do we want a society like that?

Socialists aim to organise

society on the principle — from each according to his or her ability, to each according to his or her need. Health care should be provided as a basic service for all — and so should housing, education, clothing, food...

Over the decades the labour movement has fought for and won some partial provision of some basic services. And even Thatcher's Tories are likely to flinch at the idea of turning the clock right back and scrapping the NHS altogether.

The Tories can, however, shift the balance between private and public medicine. And they have already begun to do that in a sizeable way.

Something over four million people in Britain had private medical insurance at the end of 1981 — where there were only 120,000 in 1950. The Tory government has encouraged this growth by granting tax relief for medical insurance premiums.

As private medicine booms, and the NHS is cut back further and further, we move towards a situation where the NHS provides only a minimal fallback service, and for any major, complicated treatment you either have to sit out a long waiting list or pay to jump the queue.

If private medicine is capitalism in a nutshell, is the National Health Service socialist? No: for al-

though it is a reform won by the labour movement against capitalism, it exists in a capitalist society and is coloured, structured, and warped by that.

To become socialist it needs to be changed. The health service needs to be freed from all charges and from the leaching of the drug companies and suppliers, by the nationalisation of these profiteers.

It needs to be put under the democratic control of

health workers and the local communities, and adequately funded. Its workers need decent wages.

And the sexist, elitist hierarchy of the health service, the mystifications of medical 'professionalism', need to be broken down.

That would be a socialist health service. The fight for it is inseparable from the fight for a socialist society.

Protest at DHSS

THE Claimants' Union and the Action Group on Unemployment in Islington, North London, have been picketing and leafletting the local DHSS offices at Archway Tower in protest at the visit of the Special Claims Control Team.

CPSA members at Archway Tower are refusing all cooperation with the team, in line with national union policy.

The Special Claims Control Team was not directly involved in the Oxford 'swoop', but it was in Oxford a few weeks before that and probably had some indirect part in it.

What the team does is go round from area to area, select a sample from certain categories of claimant, and subject them to intense investigation. Sometimes

they launch prosecutions, more often they try to pressure people to drop their claims. The unions have thick dossiers on intimidation of claimants.

It all contrasts sharply with the state's lackadaisical attitude to under-claiming of benefit (through fear and lack of confidence in the face of bureaucracy), or to tax evasion — both of which involve far greater sums than any social security over-claiming.

The team is due to be at Archway Tower for two months. CPSA branch secretary and local Labour councillor Bill Sillet told SO: 'We intend to continue campaigning against them and make their stay unpleasant for them. We want to get rid of them as quickly as possible'.

Bury strike

IN BURY, Lancashire, CPSA and SCPS members the social security benefit office are on strike against management investigation team.

The team is visiting as the first of 26 of across the country — they chose Bury first because of its record two ago of cooperating with similar survey despite ional union policy!

But SCPS sub-branch secretary Peter Law says: 'realise that we were w to cooperate with the report. When it was published it didn't reflect our at all'. (The survey directly affects SCPS members, CPSA members are out solidarity).

Privatisation

UNIONS MUST FIGHT

TELECOM SALE

NUM
back
words
with
action!

THE POST Office Engineering Union executive has finally called for industrial action to oppose the latest Telecom Bill. This is a decision welcomed by many POEU members, and a necessary one.

As a recent statement by the POEU (July 1982) states, "The privatisation of British Telecom [BT] will mean a direct threat to the jobs of POEU members".

The threat cannot be overestimated.

First we had a statement by the gallant knight Sir George Jefferson, chairman of BT, who said that 15,000 jobs would have to go over the next three years.

Then within the last two weeks a Department of Industry memo has been leaked which estimates that over the next five years 45,000 jobs will be chopped (over 20% of BT's 245,000 workforce).

As regards cuts in telecom service, the brunt will be felt by individual subscribers, especially in the countryside where services normally show a loss in commercial terms.

Already, price structures are designed to benefit the business subscriber.

Even these figures do not really take into account life after privatisation. With the pressure of dividends to be paid to shareholders, 'costs of labour' will no doubt be under the hammer. Both estimates were made within the framework of government control and could not take into account the additional devastation to be wreaked by private ownership.

One thing is sure. The projected job cuts will not be stopped unless a fight is waged by all the unions in British Telecom.

The POEU executive has instructed all members in BT to strike for one day on an unspecified date in October, probably on the day

By Ricky Houston

of the Queen's Speech or when the Telecom Bill gets its first reading.

The other unions in BT have yet to state what form of action they will be taking on that day.

After the one-day strike, though, what next?

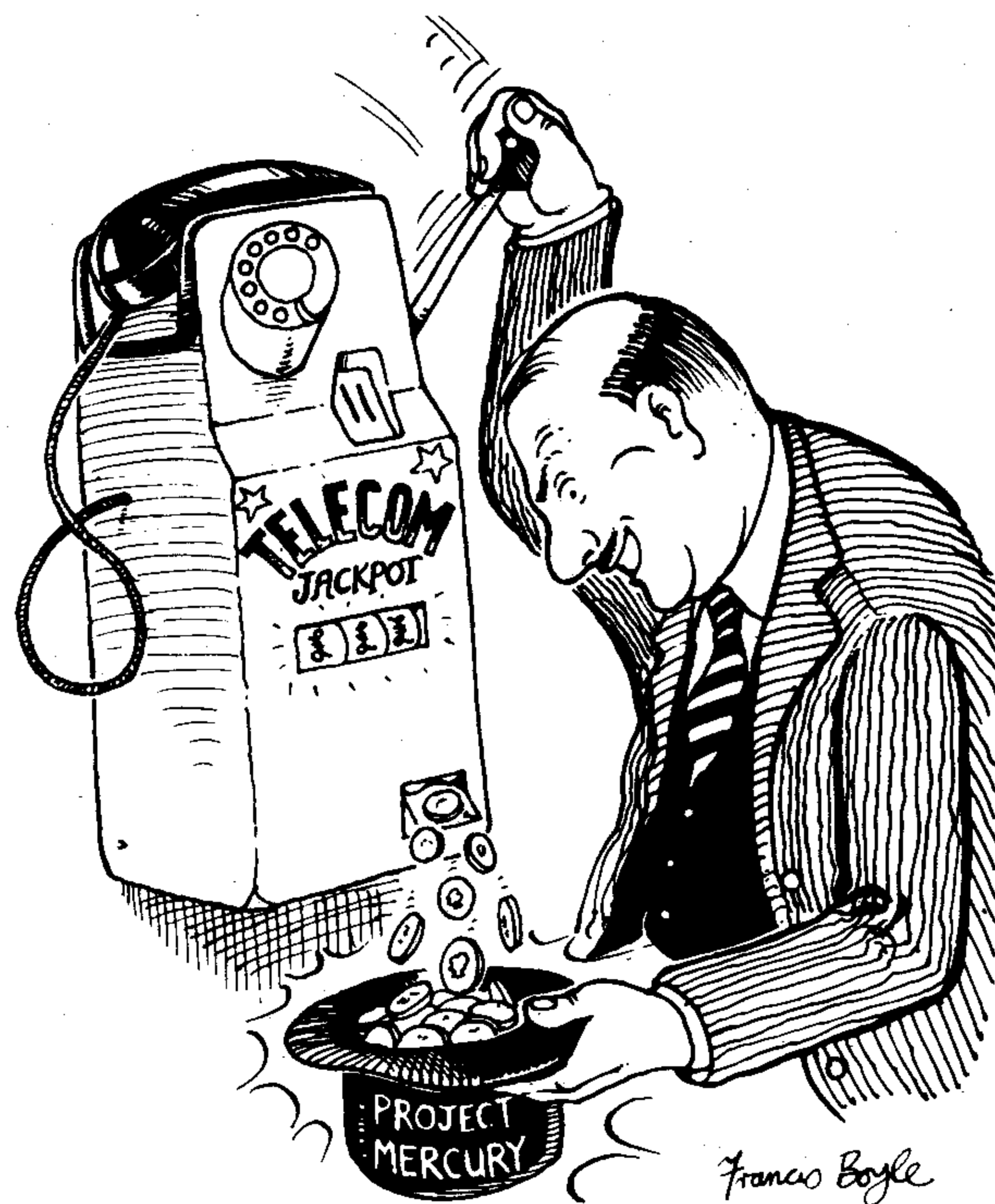
The record of the majority on the POEU Executive does not promise well for the future.

Throughout the campaign against the first Telecom Bill, the POEU executive relied completely on parliamentary action, never at any time trying to mobilise the membership.

In fact, they have argued against industrial action, in practice against almost everything, selling out the membership along with vague promises of a fight some time in the future.

Yet the membership has come under increasing attack over conditions at work. Disciplinary action by management has become more and more frequent. Real wages have fallen, and all the time there has been a threat hanging over our jobs.

Although there is disillusionment with the NEC, it would be a false picture to say that every POEU member is champing at the bit to fight the Privatisation Bill. There are areas where this is true, but at national level there has just not been enough campaigning.



Over the last few months the Hotline campaign has been formed. It is coordinated by BTUC, a body made up of delegates from every union in BT — the POEU, the CPSA Posts and Telecoms group, SCPS, SPOE, and the UCW Telecom section.

The Hotline campaign is concentrating on propaganda, resolutions, street leafletting, and agitation through the labour movement.

The POEU is the most influential union within BTUC, in terms of size of membership, and it is here that the POEU Broad Left is leading the campaign to alert and mobilise the membership to fight the privatisation bill. Without widespread, indefinite action soon, the Bill will become law. The lessons of the first Bill must be taken

into account.

Liverpool Internal branch has circulated branches with a well-documented history of the POEU's 'fight' against privatisation, from the build-up against the first Telecom Bill, the so-called liberalisation bill, which was passed with no real union opposition in 1980.

Action

They summarise: "1980 Conference: Prop. 346 is carried unanimously. It reads, 'to vigorously oppose by all available means, including industrial action, any attempt to interfere with or break the Post Office monopoly'. The mover points out that the Government's strategy will first be one of encroachment to weaken the Post Office, then to press home the attack".

THE 1980 Telecom Act — which came into force in October 1981 — opened the way for private firms to compete with British Telecom on supplying equipment and even in basic telecommunications services.

A rival network — Project Mercury — is being set up between 26 English towns and cities.

BT as a public service has the possibility of using the more profitable operations and heavier users to subsidise domestic-users and the phone network in more remote areas. Pressure from rivals who undertake only the more profitable heavy-traffic business-user operations will lead to increased charges for the small user.

The new Telecom Act goes further to propose privatising BT itself. It will be made into a private company and shares will be sold off. The other side of this operation is massive job cuts.

Later on that year, the Bill was passed with no industrial action except for a rally outside the hall-owed walls of the Houses of Parliament on the day the Bill was passed.

There is therefore little reason to have faith that the same leaders have either the will or the strategy to defeat the present Bill.

Once the Tebbit Bill gets passed, the POEU leaders are even less likely to fight. The Union will certainly be in breach of the Tebbit law if we take industrial action against privatisation — which will be interpreted by Judge Whoever as a political strike.

The Broad Left is calling for a special conference to be held on privatisation — so that the whole membership can be alerted to the situation — and for resolutions to instruct the NEC to carry out detailed action opposing the Bill to be put from the floor of conference.

More campaigning, however, is needed to gain the confidence of the Broad membership by the Broad Left, and to alert them to the dangers of privatisation.

London City Branch was one of the first branches to respond to the Broad Left call for a Special Conference, writing to other branches asking them also to support the call. A growing number of branches have since responded.

So much so that in the letter from general secretary Bryan Stanley telling us about the decision to hold a one-day strike, the last paragraph reads: "This is not a time to be calling for special conferences or other ideas which will delay or divide".

No-one should be taken in by this. It is obvious that the NEC majority do not want a Special Conference for the same reason that they talked out a resolution for a detailed campaign to oppose the activities of a rival company to BT, Project Mercury (which is chaired by none other than the murderer of the BL workers, Michael Edwards).

Support the call for a Special Conference, and support widespread industrial action to defeat the privatisation Bill!

'AN insult.' That was the unanimous reaction of the NUM National Executive Committee to the National Coal Board's offer of 6.5% following the first round of wage negotiations last week. This feeling was echoed round the coalfields, and pit-level discussion of the offer was usually short, sharp and largely unprintable.

This miserly response by the NCB is their first reply to the NUM's annual wage claim. Decided, almost unanimously, by the annual conference, the NUM claim is for a minimum of £115 a week (an increase of 30%) on a salary basis, with across the board flat rate increases for other grades, for a four day week and early retirement at 55.

The NEC met the day after the negotiations and agreed to a three-point plan of action:

1. To send the entire 28 man Executive to the next round of negotiations on September 23, instead of the usual Joint Negotiating Committee.
2. To call a special National delegate conference to meet on October 4 to decide on what course of action to pursue.
3. Provision to be made for a pithead ballot on October 28/9 to seek authority from the membership to take industrial action if necessary in pursuit of the claim.

It's essential that the NUM claim is pursued ruthlessly and that the entire forces of the working class are mobilised behind the miners. To prepare the ground, and it must be prepared as it looks like being a long hard struggle a massive propaganda campaign must be mounted locally and nationally to convince not only the waverers in our own ranks but also the entire labour and trade union movement and the working class community of the justness of our claim and the necessity of supporting the NUM.

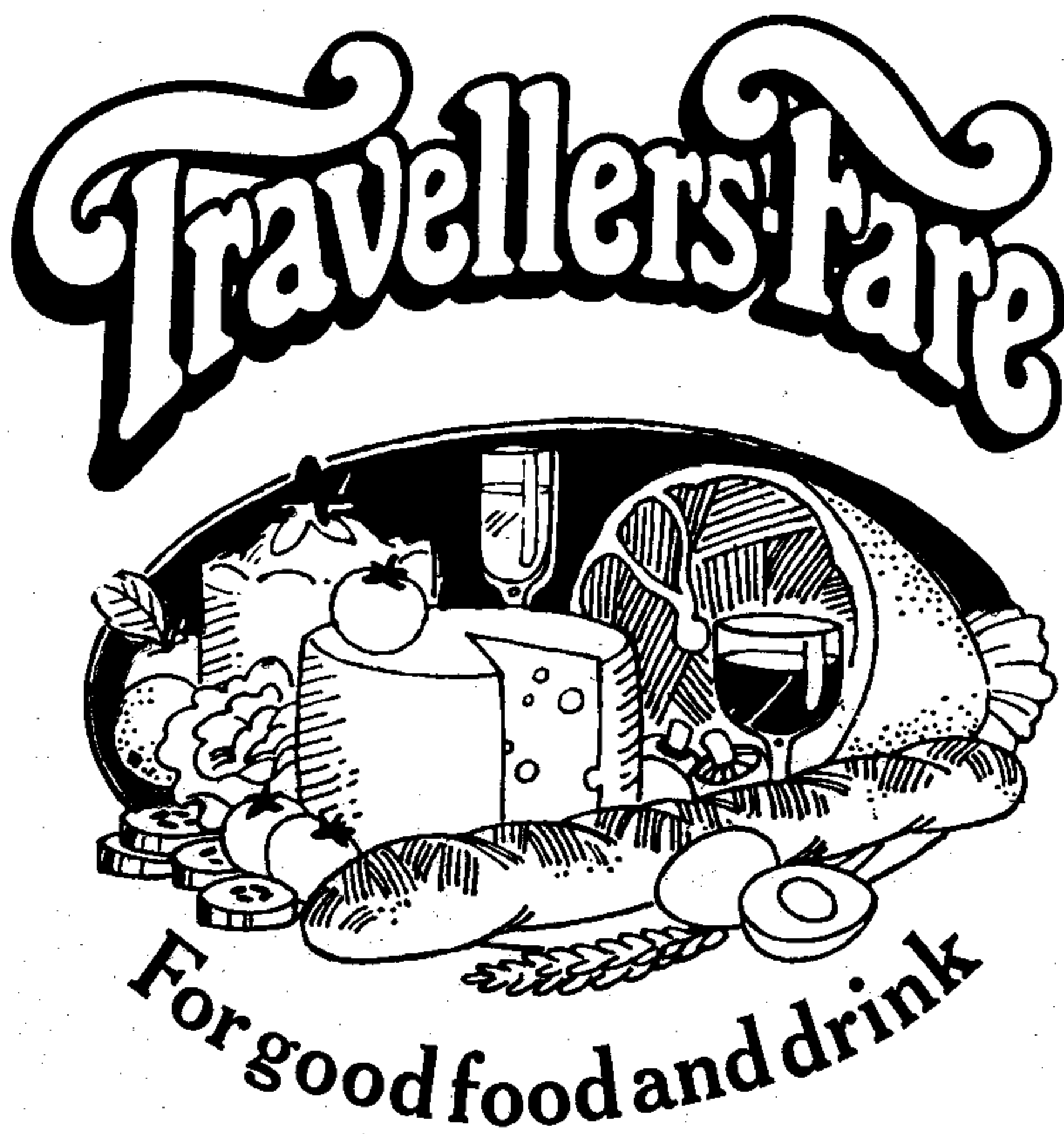
Joint meetings, locally and nationally, must be set up between the NUM and strategic unions, particularly EEUPT power workers, NUR, TGWU and ASLEF to co-ordinate action and prevent movement of coal from pits or stockpiles, but also within the power stations.

An overtime ban should be forthcoming immediately, in order to erode coal stocks as much as possible, but also to drive home to some of our members how much of their money is made up from overtime payments.

The coming months must be given over to intense preparation for the likely confrontation ahead. The stakes are too high for anything else.

John Cunningham
NUM, Dinnington Colliery,
Yorkshire Area.

Rail catering under the hammer



THE last three years have seen the privatisation of the major nationalised British Transport Hotels, including Gleneagles in Perthshire, the Derby Midland and the Sheffield Victoria.

It has recently also been announced that the remaining 22 British Transport Hotels are to be hived off totalling 29 in all.

The union involved (the NUR) appears to be doing as much as it can to ensure that the employees retain their existing conditions of service, but apart from this there is no visible resistance whatsoever.

In fact, far from opposing privatisation, the NUR bought £500,000 worth of shares in the first of the hived off hotels, claiming it was for the good of the members!

It may seem therefore that the socialist principle of worker ownership has

been realised: but during the 1981 pay negotiations it was understood that if a strike arose, the hotels would not be called out — since the union would, in effect be striking against itself! A strike did not arise; but the hotel workers only received 9½% that year where other rail workers received 11%.

Part ownership of a company in this case proved ineffective as far as protection of workers' pay is concerned. It would have been more advisable to have opposed the hive-off rather than get into a position where they could be pressured by joint owners into keeping down the living standards of their members.

So what happens next? Travellers' Fare station catering narrowly escaped privatisation last year by a few votes in the House of Commons and although the

company made a million pound profit last year this may not be enough to prevent it being denationalised next time.

Apart from the obvious effects on the workforce if privatisation does take place (for example, lucrative parts being expanded while the smaller station buffets are closed resulting in redundancies) there is also the fact that where now station catering is run as a service to the public, open 24 hours a day in some places, it is well on the way to ending up like the motorway cafes which charge high prices for poor quality food and a service which leaves a lot to be desired.

This is not to say that Travellers' Fare is much better. The cut back in staff has ensured that at busy times customers have to wade through endless dirty plates and cutlery in

search of a space off which to eat; not to mention the prices which, quite understandably turn people away with gasps of disbelief.

The difference between the two is that Travellers' Fare has the potential to provide a good public service with reasonable prices and good quality — but it cannot be done alone.

To ensure a regular flow of custom, the train service has to be accessible and attractive to the majority of the public.

Therefore what is needed is investment for complete electrification and modernisation of the system, and once we have that fares would have to be dropped to regain the lost customers, especially the ordinary traveller. Then hopefully both the railways and station and train catering will flourish as a service, not as a profit oriented business.

ELAINE JOHN (NUR)

CLP secretary speaks out

Socialist Organiser

WHO WANTS PETER SHORE?

The St Ermin's group of right-wing trade union leaders have tipped Peter Shore as the next Labour leader. Michael Foot is reputed to favour him. Fleet Street also boosts Shore. But what do the Labour activists and supporters in Shore's own constituency think?

STEVE COWAN (secretary, Tower Hamlets Labour Party, writing in a personal capacity) reports.

FEW IN the Labour Party would disagree with the calls for the immediate departure of Michael Foot as leader. His less than convincing presence at the head of the party will help return Thatcher for a further five years.

Those who do pause about Foot's departure point to the serious problems of the Parliamentary Labour Party throwing up anyone who could lay claim to popularity amongst ordinary party members. Several names have been mooted by the capitalist press along with pen profiles of their supposed strong points.

We read that Peter Shore is admired for his firm stand against Militants but is widely liked from the left for his stance on Europe. Roy Hattersley and John Silkin and Neil Kinnock all get a push from the enemies of Labour in Fleet Street.

Closer examination of the reality behind Shore's push for the leadership should provide food for thought.

He is the member for Stepney and Poplar, in what was once the heart of London dockland. His selection for the vacant seat in the early sixties came through sponsorship of the Transport and General Workers' Union, which had powerful representation in the local Labour Party at the time.

Since then things have changed. The docks closed and with them went the Dock Branches of the TGWU as well as the influence members had within wards.

Many of the branches still exist in name with paper members who are becoming fewer, older and more reactionary than they ever were. It is a matter of time before their waning presence turns into insignificance in terms of their impact within the Stepney and Poplar constituency.

Membership slumped in the ten years 1970 to '80. Some wards had actually ceased to function in any political or community way and had even ceased to meet. The party machine threw up councillors whose socialism was less than recognisable, and these town hall incumbents have gradually broken with the support all Labour administrations need.

Many are rabidly anti trade union, some are religiously sectarian, others are Masons. No wonder Labour came within a whisker of losing control in Tower Hamlets to the Liberal/SDP mis-alliance.

In the Shadwell Ward the Bangladeshi population did not support Labour because of ambiguities concerning attitudes towards black people from candidates. Two Labour candidates were returned with majorities of three! Shadwell is densely working class.

In the Blackwall ward, which is the next along the riverfront from Shadwell, the SDP would have won if they had brought out another 30 voters. This would have given control to the Liberal/SDP.

Peter Shore did not campaign anywhere in 'his' constituency during this challenging period for the party. Canvassers and party officers knew weeks in advance that SDP wins were on the cards but could get little enthusiasm for a robust campaign.



A consequence of this is that Shore lost a measure of support from sympathetic middle-class elements who, whilst not enthusiastic in his favour, would usually accept the status quo for 'party unity' or to avoid unnecessary divisions etc.

Such motives are creditable and serious, and certainly acted as a cushion for the sitting MP. With these gone, the division between older right-wingers and the new membership is complete.

Political control in the wards is drifting inexorably to the left, and a clear socialist majority on the next management committee is assured. With the advances for socialism in the wards has come a sense of fatalism about the future from the right wing.

Many are going to give up because the Labour Party is no longer the Labour Party they knew and loved. Clearly many new members and a majority of voters in the borough are not interested in recapturing the festering spirit of that old party.

The Boundary Commission is suggesting that the two seats within Tower Hamlets switch to an East/West divide rather than their present North/South divide. This would create the politically left wing Bow and Poplar party, which would not choose Shore bar the cynical affiliation of dozens of bogus union branches.

More interesting though is the state of what would be Bethnal Green and Stepney constituency. Labour's margin of victory (sic) in this at the last local elections was 0.3%. Electoral outcomes depend heavily on mobilising the thousands of Bangladeshi voters — who might have their own candidate.

The Bethnal Green Ward Labour Parties virtually ground to a halt and some pick-up was begun in 1981 by young and enthusiastic left-wingers who now effectively have political control of the wards. Changes are also occurring in some Stepney Wards, again through the impact of new members who complain of having spent three to four months trying to become members.

Shore could not expect a win on a GMC as presently constituted in Stepney and Bethnal Green.

The enthusiasm for curbs, witch-hunts, expulsions, registers and groups of conspirators like his Solidarity mob is based on the need to return to the dead membership days of yesteryear. He benefits from expulsions of members who challenge his right to sit on a safe seat.

The Liberals won eleven out of fourteen places on the local council in Bethnal Green. Any more gains through their Focus-style politics would leave Shore not wanting to stand for the seat because he might be kicked out by the electorate.

INSIDE

* PAGES 7-10; Four pages on Labour's Blackpool conference — articles from Reg Race, Ann Pettifor, Mandy Moore, John O'Mahony, and the campaigns of the Labour left.

* PAGES 2,3,14,15: Four Pages on the NHS dispute and the defence of public services.