

Join the
Labour
Party

Socialist Organiser

Against all bans and proscriptions!

By jingo, it's Foot!

IT was quite fitting and in order for the City of London to organize a victory parade this Monday for the Falklands Task Force. True enough, the armed forces did a good job for the bankers.

It was appropriate, too, that Margaret Thatcher should be there. No-one owes a bigger debt of grati-

tude to the men who reconquered the islands at the cost of so many lives from their own and the Argentine ranks.

It jarred a little, perhaps, that the City backed down to a press outcry and allowed a few of the wounded and maimed into the celebration, instead of sticking to its original plan of excluding them all.

As well invite the workers maimed by industrial accident and disease to spoil the party at a company directors' banquet to celebrate record profits!

But that's the City's problem. The labour movement's problem is this: why was Michael Foot there alongside Margaret Thatcher?

Why does the Labour Party tolerate a leader who calls himself an "inveterate peacemaker" and then joins the City's jingoistic celebration?

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FIGHT FOR

WITH formidable courage, Polish workers have risen in direct revolt against the Jaruzelski dictatorship.

As we go to press, the Stalinist regime has declared the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk militarised — its workers subject to military discipline. The next step could be workers shot down for 'mutiny'.

The Polish workers, confronting the regime after ten months of repression have weakened Solidarnosc and strengthened the state machine, face terrible odds. They urgently need all supporting action possible from labour movements more free to act, like our own.

A vote to make Solidarnosc formally illegal — it was only 'suspended' by the martial law last December — was pushed through the Polish parliament last Friday, 8th.

The next day a government reshuffle ousted one minister who had expressed doubts about banning the union, and the other minister considered as some sort of liberal. According to the Paris daily Le Monde, "It also seems that sanctions are envisaged against those [few] MPs who did not vote for the law [banning Solidarnosc]..."

The underground Solidarnosc leadership responded with a call for a boycott of the new official 'unions' and a four hour protest strike on November 10. The clampdown, they declared, showed weakness not strength on the part of the martial law regime.

"By this act, the WRON [junta] has recognised that it has suffered a defeat.

"The WRON has not succeeded in breaking up the trade union movement and its attempts to corrupt the best-known leaders have been fruitless.

"Through ten months of martial law, the workers have solidly shown their opposition to the



general's club-law".

The Solidarnosc leaders were more right than they knew. On Monday 11th, workers struck and occupied the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk. Soon a strike committee had been formed and other yards and factories had joined the action.

The workers demanded:

- *Restoration of full rights to Solidarnosc.

- *Freedom for all those jailed under martial law.

- *Freedom for Lech Walesa and all the other internees.

All communications were cut off from Szczecin, another militant area of Solidarnosc, but Polish government sources spoke of 'trouble' in five provinces.

By Monday evening in

Gdansk there were barricades, water cannon, armoured cars, and tear gas on the streets. On Tuesday night Polish state television said 148 people had been arrested, and an underground radio station reported that two had been killed.

The Russian defence minister, Marshal Ustinov, sent a message to Jaruzelski, offering full support against the insurgent workers, whom he described in bureau-

crat-speak as "internal counter-revolution and imperialist forces".

This Solidarnosc uprising is more explicitly political and radical than the struggles of August 1980/December 1981.

Then, Solidarnosc leaders insisted that their movement was only a trade union, not out to change the political system. Now, after the lessons of the Jaruzelski coup and the months of discussion among under-

ground Solidarnosc militants since then, the Solidarnosc leadership's strike call has stated their aim in terms much closer to the programme of political revolution against the bureaucracy. They declare for a "self-governing Republic".

All the more reason for us to step up class solidarity with our Polish brothers and sisters. Workers' boycotts of Polish trade; commit-

ment by unions to boycott Russian trade if Ustinov makes good on his promise to help Jaruzelski; breaking of links between British labour and trade union organisations and the East European state 'unions' and 'parties'; demonstrations, pickets, and every other method of working class action available should be used to give aid to the Polish workers' movement in its fight for life.



Jaruzelski

SOLIDARITY!

Sid hits the skids

AS we go to press, our comrades at the NUR conference report that NUR leader Sid Weighell has failed to engineer sufficient support to regain his position as General Secretary. See report page 15 and Press Gang, page 3.

THATCHER JUGGERNAUT CRUSHES THE 'WETS'

by Harry Sloan



AFTER the TUC Congress and Labour Party conference, the annual gathering of the Tory Party presents itself as the world turned upside down.

There are no delegates — mandated or not by their organisations; instead there are 'representatives', free to let it all hang out in unbridled demonstrations of their own bloodthirsty politics.

There are no resolutions which mean anything on major problems of policy: instead the motions selected are vacuous affairs, almost always carried unanimously, which in any event are in no way binding upon the Tory leaders.

And the 'rank and file' on the floor of the conference stand in general to the right of their leaders, ready to cheer the slightest hint of brutality, chauvinism, and nostalgia for the lost values of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Tory speakers complain of the 'left wing' bias of journalists in the mass media, and in general talk in a topsy-turvy language according to which the struggle for nuclear disarmament is 'selfish'; the

"SO, off your bottoms, lads. Get on with it. Remember that the Leader's eye is on every single one of you — and on all of us".
— Michael Heseltine

destruction of industry is the means to create 'real jobs'; and the promotion of private medicine is seen as the way to 'support the NHS'.

On occasion the logic descends to sheer lunacy — such as the speech by Transport Secretary David Howell, in which he struggled to persuade tweeded Shire Tories that an increase in the size of juggernaut lorries would be good for the environment. Apparently the management of Sainsburys had informed him that bigger lorries would mean less journeys — while admitting that most of the existing size lorries already travel half empty.

With speech after speech delivered laboriously from

written texts approved by the conference stage managers, the mixed metaphor industry had another field day while journalists nodded over their notebooks or amused themselves by watching Sir Keith Joseph.

But for those prepared to cut through the mists of tedium and deception, the conference brought a chill message.

Amid the heaving seas and howling winds of the current economic storm, Captain Thatcher (with a parrot Geoffrey Howe on her shoulder) has lashed the wheel of the Tory ice-breaker to remain locked on a collision course which means the wholesale destruction of the welfare state, the nationalised industries, and the power of the trade union movement.

Deck

Exposed on the deck, a number of more faint-hearted 'wets' are still clinging (or frozen) onto handrails and doorknobs, while some — like Thatcher's predecessor Edward Heath — seem likely to be swept overboard altogether, possibly to be rescued in the SDP/Liberal dinghy.

Heath — whose own brutal attacks on the working class have paled almost into insignificance in comparison with the Thatcher offensive — gave interviews during the conference which castigated the Thatcher leadership for abandoning 'traditional' Tory philosophy. His statements were an almost exact echo of Liberal leader Steel's lament that the 'heavy mob' had now 'hijacked' the Tory Party, turning its back on the old 'one nation' ideals which the Liberals loved.

As if to respond to these criticisms or to lend a 'human' face to their actual policies, a handful of surviving 'wets' made guarded references to 'compassion' and to the 'concern' for the plight of the unemployed in their speeches at fringe meetings.

The unlikely figure of millionaire Michael Heseltine — perhaps mildly enlightened by his occa-

sional flying visits to Merseside in the past year — even suggested from the platform of conference that hope needed to be given to the unemployed.

In return, Sir Keith ("I want to do things with young people") Joseph offered the unemployed the 'hope' that their kids might find their state schools closed down under his 'voucher' scheme; Sir Geoffrey Howe gave them the 'hope' of more cuts in public services to offer more tax cuts to the wealthy; and Francis Pym offered them 'hope' that with

Britain as a front-line European launch-pad for US Cruise missiles, the unemployed could — along with most of the rest of the population — be wiped out in a nuclear war.

There were even more 'hopes' on offer: William Whitelaw promised to punish the unemployed and youth more severely if they are driven to crime; Nigel Lawson and others offered the unemployed the 'hope' that they can invest their pathetic state benefits in shares in 'hived-off' nationalised industries; and Norman Tebbit, in

You thought some Labour Party conference decisions were bad? Here are three motions from this year's Tory Party conference agenda:

Motion no.583, Norwood. This Conference calls upon the Government to recreate the conditions in which a virgin leading a child and carrying a bag of gold can pass on foot from one end of the kingdom to another without fear.

Motion no.812, Manchester Blackley. This Confer-

ence is proud to tell the world that Britain has the best, most hardworking prime minister and political leader on earth.

Mrs Thatcher is full of backbone and guts, a real Tory, and the best thing since sliced bread.

Motion no.822, also Manchester Blackley: The Party is still failing to get its message across to the people of our great land. We call on Central Office to pull its socks up.

usual style, promised the unemployed and the labour movement a punch up the bracket — with still more anti-union laws and still less jobs in the next year.

It was just what the assembled throng of managers, majors, landlords and loafers wanted to hear.

In the giddy atmosphere of the conference hall, many may even have convinced themselves that the public at large wants to pay privately for its health care and education. As the week went by, there were less and less attempts to deny the logic of the now notorious 'Think Tank' proposals for the axing of public spending.

By the time of Thatcher's finale performance, any glimmer of defensiveness over the plans was concealed behind a vast billow of red, white, and blue smoke.

Roll back

While boasting of the extent to which she had already 'rolled back socialism' in the public services, and promising to do even more if re-elected, Thatcher made the ludicrous claim that "The NHS is safe with us".

Her speech also at one point waxed poetic. In the 60s and 70s, she argued,

"the fashion was to say that the long-term doesn't matter very much because, as Maynard Keynes put it, 'in the long run we are all dead'.

Anyone who thought like that would never plant a tree. And we are in the business of planting trees, for our children and grandchildren, or we have no business to be in politics at all".

The reality is that Tory policies are planting trees on the disused sites whose factories once employed workers.

Outside in the real world, however, the NHS dispute continues to demonstrate the attachment of the whole working class to the health service; and other sections of workers too are being driven into confrontation with the government.

In order to complete Thatcher's programme it is necessary to maintain a rigid stance in the face of such struggles and to inflict further setbacks on the working class before and after the next election.

It would be in the event of a serious failure in this policy of confrontation that the feeble and subdued voices of the 'wets' might hope to gain the hearing in the Tory party they currently lack.

Britannia scuttles the fleet

BP announced 1300 redundancies last week from its tanker fleet — and seafarers' unions were up in arms about the effect on Britannia's military ability to rule the waves!

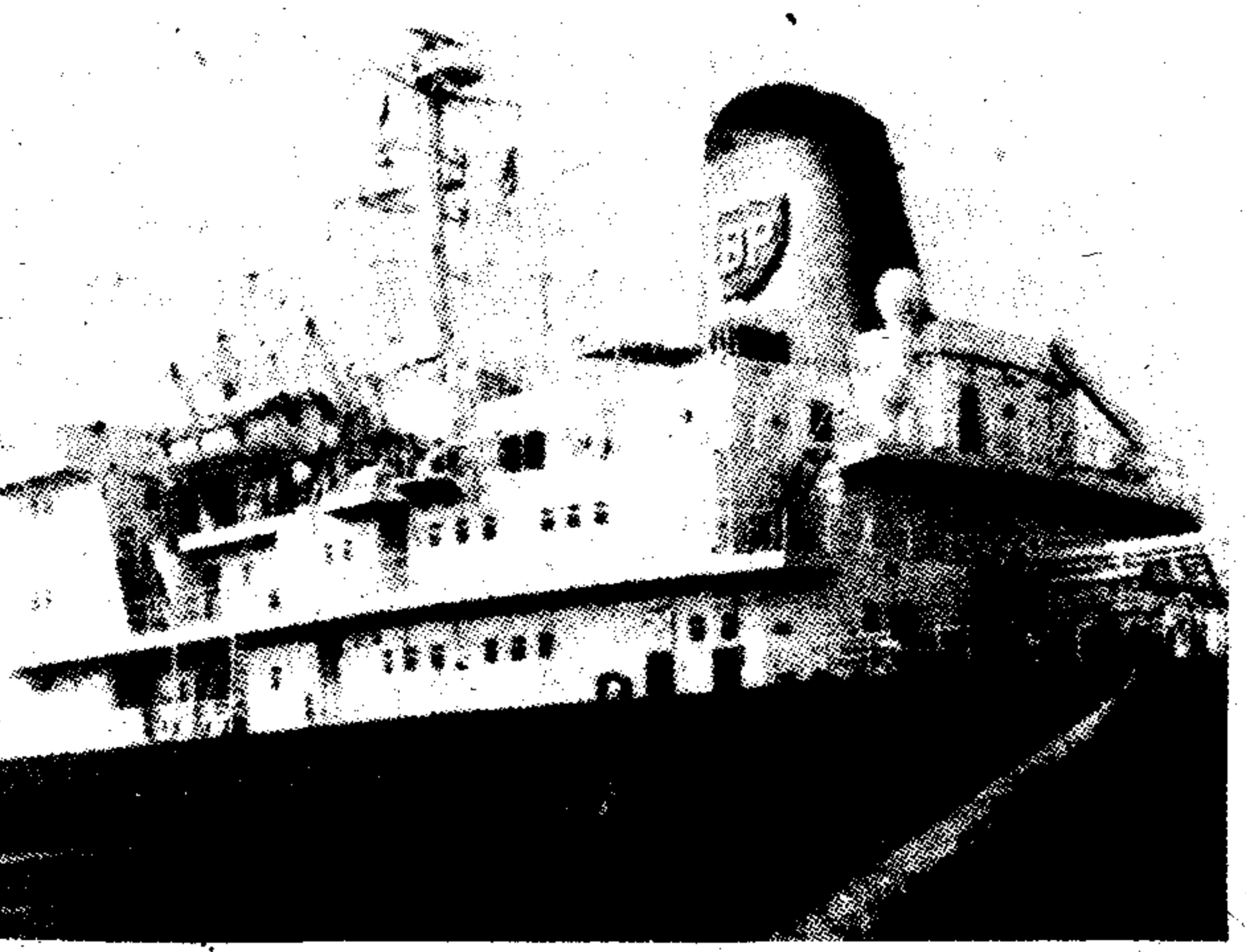
"General Galtieri must be kicking himself", declared Merchant Navy Officers' assistant general secretary John Newman. "Without a strong BP fleet, Britain would not have been able to recover the Falklands".

This stuff about having to borrow ships is a bit of a knock to all the talk of imperial grandeur. But, nothing daunted, the National Union of Seamen

also based their objections to BP's plan on the contribution made by 11 commandeered tankers to the revival of gunboat diplomacy.

16 of BP's 45 tankers are now due to be laid up. Most other tanker operators are in a similar situation: world-wide, 385 tankers, one third of the total fleet, are laid up. The general recession, and the increased use of pipelines, are the reason.

If the unions could only focus their sights on workers' interests rather than imperial nostalgia, then the job cuts could certainly be fought. Few other industr-



ies offer workers the chance to immobilise such huge amounts of capital by industrial action.



Tory hands off Telecoms!

by
Ricky
Houston

ON Wednesday October 20, POEU, CPSA and SCPS telecom members will be on one day strike against the privatisation of British Telecom.

If BT is sold off, as the Tories plan, it will certainly mean lower pay for BT workers and job cuts — 45,000 was the conservative estimate made by the Department of Industry secret memo recently leaked to the Guardian.

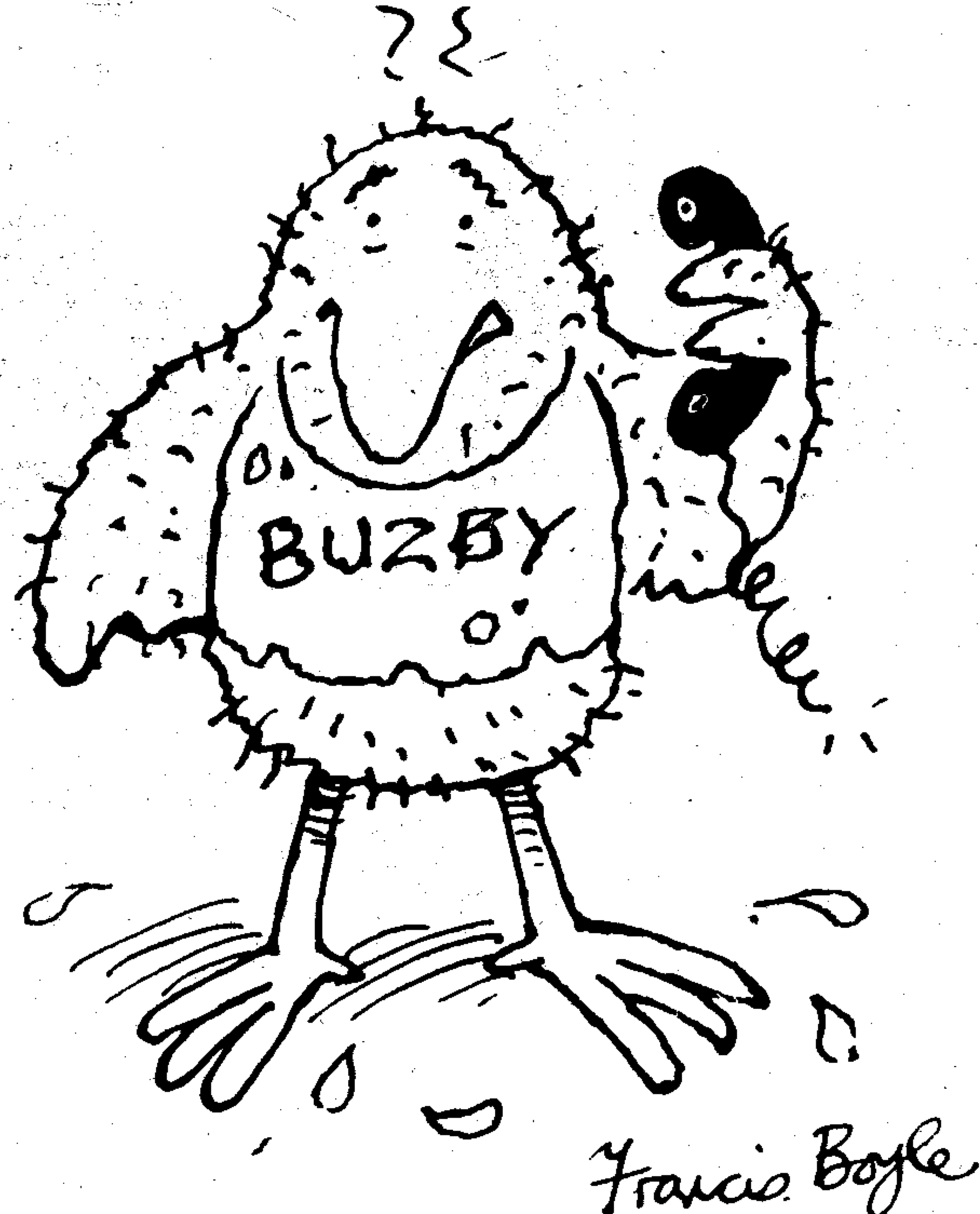
These threats are already beginning to take shape under the BT management chaired by Sir George Jefferson, who was brought in after the split of the Post Office into separate telecoms and postal businesses.

To prepare for privatisation, Jefferson began the streamlining late last year under the slogan "sharpen up, sharpen up!"

The telecommunications industry will undergo huge technological changes in the next few years with the introduction of System X (the new telephone exchange), satellite communications, cable TV, optical fibre cabling and the computerisation of office work.

The huge input of new technology will make it an extremely capital intensive industry, and also holds out the possibility of huge profits for multinationals that can build up a monopoly or cartel control of telecommunications equipment supply.

But privatisation affects many other workers besides



us. The TUC should be mobilising the whole movement to fight against privatisation and for the shorter working week, to save jobs.

Local trades councils should be pressed by BT unions to set up joint committees of the different unions fighting privatisation.

A first step in privatisation of telecoms was the abolition in 1981 of BT's monopoly. A private consortium, Project Mercury, is already planning to take away vital trunk calls custom — where the profits are made — from BT.

At the POEU annual conference this year, a detailed plan for action against Project Mercury was talked out by the union's right wing — the president waving aside calls that the motion be put.

But the executive have since correctly instructed branches to black Project Mercury's connection to the BT network.

A privatised BT would make that blacking action more difficult, and improve the chance of success for non-union firms such as Project Mercury.

Project Mercury is a con-

glomerate of finance houses and others, including Barclay's Bank, who no doubt will be seeking to buy BT shares after privatisation.

The privatisation of BT is not a policy confined to Britain. In Australia, the state telecoms industry is under threat of privatisation and loss of monopoly.

Tentative links have been built through the exchange of information between unions in BT and our Australian counterparts. These should be built on.

After the one day strike, what next? The one-day strike alone will not stop the Tory government's privatisation plans.

Tebbit's law is due to become law in the near future. This could become a major obstacle to any action against privatisation, i.e. action to defend our jobs, could be deemed to be political and therefore unlawful.

To ensure defiance of the privatisation plans and continuation of the fight against it despite Tebbit, branches must call on the union executives to step up the campaign immediately through continued industrial action.

Branches of all the BT unions should call on their executives to instruct all branches to black government telecom lines immediately and indefinitely and to carry on this action even if Tebbit's Bill becomes law. We should also call for special conferences of each union.

Strike to save steel jobs!

STEEL workers will strike on October 22 in a one-day action called by the TUC Steel Committee against threats by British Steel [BSC] of more plant closures.

With BSC losses rising and likely to be over £300 million this year, steel bosses have warned that closures are likely. Ravenscraig [Scotland] and Redcar [Teesside] are the plants most at risk.

The steel union leaders' main demand is import controls. ISTC leader Bill Sirs has complained especially about steel from Bulgaria, Rumania, Spain, Korea, and South Africa. The Labour Party has called for a total ban on imports.

Meanwhile, US steel bosses — supported by US steel unions — are demanding measures to stop British steel exports to the US.

It's the same more or less

all round the world: steel industries in crisis, and the union leaders in each country blaming it on the workers of some other country producing too much steel!

But a spiral towards protectionism would help workers nowhere. The steel crisis is a crisis of capitalism world-wide.

In Britain, there has been a drastic decline of steel-using industries like cars (down 50% since 1972), construction (down 40%), and mechanical engineering. The decline of steel has gone in parallel. In 1970 the industry had 260,000 workers, making 28 million tonnes. Now it has 94,000. The capacity is 14 million tonnes, but production is running at only 64% of capacity.

The trend is the same everywhere else. EEC steel is running at 60% of cap-

acity, the US industry at 40%. Even Japan has production 11% down on 1980.

In the US, 150,000 steelworkers are laid off, 40,000 on short time. France's steel workforce has been cut 37% since 1976, West Germany's 17%, the Netherlands' 10%. Belgium's has been cut 12% since 1978, Italy's 10%.

Import controls are no answer to this world crisis — and any effect they do have will mean suffering for the world's worst-off steelworkers, in countries like Korea and Brazil.

An answer to the international crisis has to be an international answer — a workers' plan for the industry, starting off with work-sharing under workers' control with no loss of pay, and enforced by occupation of plants threatened with closure.

Councillors refuse to register

by Alan Clinton (chief whip, Islington council)

AT A meeting held in Camden Town Hall on 9 October with Labour councillors from most London boroughs and a number of General Committee delegates, the Association of Socialist Councillors was established.

It agreed to a declaration following some of the same points as the statement supported by over 500 candidates in the May elections, reiterating the refusal to carry out any cuts in services or to be intimidated by the activities of district auditors and adding a clear opposition to witch-hunts in the Labour Party. The ASC itself refused to register.

Introducing the conference on behalf of its organisers, Councillor John Plant from Newham emphasised the continuity of this body

from past efforts to develop left wing policies on local government, notably those associated with the Socialist Campaign for Labour Victory, London Labour Briefing and Target 82.

It was only with the elections of last May that it was possible now to set up a body of councillors determined to oppose all cuts and to proceed on the basis of the pre-election declaration.

Islington Council leader Margaret Hodge spoke on the problems faced by all councils in inner city areas. All the Tory cuts in public spending had not affected what the central government itself was spending. But local government, which when the Tories were elected had been getting two-thirds of their funds from central government are now getting little more than a half.

Comrade Hodge outlined the ineffectiveness of the various joint bodies supposed to represent different councils — the Association of Municipal Authorities and the London Boroughs Association. Even when the AMA had a Labour majority it had been attempting to find a policy of 'consensus' with local Tories in the face of Tory attacks on all the services.

GLC leader Ken Livingstone also spoke, mainly on ways of getting round some of the impediments placed in the path of socialist councillors by lawyers, full-time officials and others.

He advised on getting lawyers to act not to impede what we wanted to do but in ways that supported our policies. He also outlined methods that had been developed at the GLC to get full-time staff and resources to work directly with elected councillors rather than to the stifling and conservative bureaucratic procedures.

Many other aspects of what socialist councillors needed to do were put forward in the wide-ranging discussion that followed. There were calls to confront Tebbit's latest so-called training initiatives, the privatisation schemes of Tory councils, and the secretive procedures that persist in certain Labour Groups.

As Association joint secretary Keith Veness put it in this discussion, the easiest thing for right wingers to do was sit back and let the councils be run on 'automatic pilot'. As socialists, we needed to challenge the established institutions of local government not to mention the vicious attacks of the Tories.

It is to be hoped that this initiative will lead to further discussion on specific policy areas, and in particular on the political issues that will be at the centre of the fight to defend local services against the next onslaught of the Tories.

The joint secretaries of the Association are Keith Veness and Jeremy Corbyn and details are available by writing to Flat C, 155 Green Lanes, London N16 9DB.



by Patrick Spilling

BILL WORMLEY, general secretary of the National Union of Ballot Box Makers, was admitted to an orthopaedic ward of a London teaching hospital last night with severe strain to the wrist and forearm.

Mr Wormley damaged his arm while writing a spontaneous outburst of support from the membership for him to withdraw his resignation, which he submitted last week.

Left-wingers — who have tried for years to subvert the union — took advantage of his injury to reopen the attack, saying that he had been caught "rigging a response from the membership".

Mr Wormley — too tired last night to talk to anyone except a couple of dozen reporters — said from his hospital bed that this was typical of the carping he had to put up with at every executive meeting.

"I know what the membership wants, and I was just putting it into words", he said.

Mr Wormley has been the centre of a storm since

the Labour Party conference, where he cast his union's 700,000 votes for Norman Tebbit in the election for the National Executive.

The union executive had tried to tie Mr Wormley hand and foot by passing a resolution to "oppose Tebbit", but Mr Wormley said he had to interpret the union instruction as best he could.

Mr Wormley said: "Circumstances have changed since the conference vote to 'oppose Tebbit at all costs', and I found myself having to weigh up the consequences. I sent a second class letter to Mr Scargill asking him whether he still wanted me to vote for a miners' candidate, but I had no reply by the time the vote came".

Left wingers were furious that the leading Tory union-basher should have been voted onto the National Executive of the Labour Party, but Mr Wormley had once again put his finger on the pulse of the membership.

For this hard-hitting, no-nonsense bluff man of the

people knows that behind the rhetoric, Mr Norman Tebbit is the kind of man ballot-box makers respond to best.

The hard-line leftists on his delegation also complained that Mr Wormley had not given any hint of the way he had voted. Mr Wormley said, "It is a lonely life at the top. It would be only too easy to keep asking your delegation this, that and the other, but the buck has to stop somewhere".

Crime

If Mr Wormley does go, it will be a tragic loss to the trade union movement of one of the few men who had any public credibility.

Mr Wormley's main crime has been to call for a truly socialist incomes policy. He had told the TUC that if the trade unions really wanted to help the low-paid, they would cut their members' wages until health workers no longer seemed badly off by comparison.

It was this kind of plain-speaking truth that the trade union barons and

hard-line Marxists on his executive could not stomach. But among ordinary rank and file ballot-box employers it made him a hero.

From that day to this, the Moscow-paid assassins on the unrepresentative executive have been out to get him.

Mr Wormley's response was to go over their heads to what he knew the membership's real interests were.

It might seem to some carping critics that sitting in a hotel room writing out letters of support to himself was an example of manipulating the democratic process.

But that is only in the twisted logic of those who want to use democracy to their own ends and reduce it to a question of vulgar majorities.

The true democracy which Mr Wormley has sought is the democracy which counts up the real desires of the members — the innermost desires so well hidden beneath the surface that even the membership doesn't know they are there.

International News International News International News

More union leaders face trial

TWO new trials have just started before the Military Court in Istanbul. The death penalty has been demanded against ten trade unionists and senior members of democratic associations. Others risk a punishment of fifteen years in prison.

Six members of the Executive Committee of the DISK labour confederation are being prosecuted for having upheld "Marxist-Leninist" ideas - e.g. unifying the Turkish trade union movement.

The defendants are Sukru Ozbayrak, Erol Yalgin, Mustafa Cengiz Acar, Ali Ozarkaloglu, Sabahattin Topuz and Cetin Uygur, chairman of the Miners Union.

Teoman Ozturk, chairman of the Union of Turkish Architects and Engineers, Ethem Erhan Taneri, chairman of the Federation of Social-Democratic Associations, Ercan Eyupoglu, secretary-general of the Association of White Collar Workers, and Senator Ahmet Tildiz, chairman of the People's Cultural Organisation (an institution set up by Ataturk), are accused of trying to change the constitution by force.

Former senior officers of DISK, who were responsible for managing the various departments of the confederation - Yucel Yaman, Gunaydin Erdogan, Argun Muceldili, Mete Sonmez, Faruk Pekin, Ibrahim Sadun Aren, Zafer Kutlu and Mehmet Erhan Gomuc face similar charges.

Many others are being tried in their absence.

The second trial is aimed against the printers' trade

union, BASIN-IS, the chairman of which, Burhan Sahin, is being tried in his absence at the trial of the 52 major DISK leaders. (He has been given asylum in Sweden). Many defendants are still to be brought to trial.

Punishments of between 11 and 20 years in prison have been demanded for them. And the military prosecutor is calling for the final dissolution of this trade union.

Free this victim of apartheid!



IN 1959 a shop steward belonging to DATA (now TASS) was sacked by the British Oxygen Company for his refusal to give up being a steward. He decided to return to the country of his birth, South Africa, and join the struggle there for democracy and an end to apartheid.

In 1964 he was committed to trial with several others for 'sabotage', 'terrorism' and 'communism'. He was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment and is now in his nineteenth year.

His name is David Kitson and his family are living in Islington.

His wife, Norma, his son, Steve and his daughter Amanda have been organising a round-the-clock vigil outside South Africa House at Trafalgar Square in protest against the imprisonment of David Kitson and all the other political prisoners in South Africa who are held under apartheid's draconian 'laws'. They are calling for his immediate release, and short of that an improvement in the conditions under which he is gaolled and medical care for his bad heart.

Viva

It is a spirited picket which welcomes newcomers with cries of "viva Bob" (or whoever).

It has been subject to considerable police harassment. While I was there, two policemen aggressively informed us that anyone not standing on the tarpaulin covering a small area of the pavement would be arrested. Already seven pickets had been arrested.

Steve Kitson said that he had personally been charged on two counts of obstruction but both charges had been dismissed in the magistrate's court. Taxpayers' money had been wasted on the fact that the pickets had hung their dripping sleeping bags on Hyde Park railings to dry after a wet night.

Steve Kitson said that this police harassment was

an example of the many ways in which the British authorities work hand in glove with their South African counterparts. Their common purpose, he said, stemmed from their mutual need to preserve the profits of British investment in South Africa, whatever the consequences for black workers there or British workers here.

Representatives from several unions and from the Labour Party have attended the picket (NUJ, TASS, Reg Race, etc). It shows again the tremendous importance of British trade unionists uniting with our South African counterparts in our mutual struggle against apartheid.

The rapid growth of independent, non-racial trade unions in South Africa has made this much more feasible and pressing now than ever before.

David Kitson has been busy in prison taking degrees in Economics, Political Science, Zulu, Mechanical Engineering and some other subjects. He has been offered a fellowship by Ruskin College, Oxford, where he had once been a student. He is due to be released on December 17, 1984.

Let us support the Kitsons in their endeavour to have him released earlier and to protest against the barbaric policies practiced under the veil of apartheid's law and order.

Anyone wishing to offer support can join the picket at any time any day outside South Africa House. You will be warmly welcomed.

BOB FINE



Uruguay protest

EIGHT trade unionists in the South American dictatorship of Uruguay will go on trial on November 15, charged with being members of the banned Socialist Workers' Party (PST).

The fact that they are coming to trial is a victory for the campaign waged in their defence since their arrest in April. Previously the police had denied having them in jail - and they

could simply have 'disappeared', like so many others in Uruguay since 1973, Argentina since 1976, or Chile since 1973.

The eight were in fact active in secretly reorganising the trade unions in Uruguay. After arrest, they were severely tortured.

A campaign has been organised in many countries. In the US, many

union officials and shop stewards have endorsed it, as well as the National Lawyers' Guild. 30 congressmen in Peru signed a telegram demanding the release of the eight, and one trade union leader personally went to Uruguay to pursue the campaign.

Trade union organisations in Colombia, Mexico and Brazil have also called for the eight to be freed.

The campaign asks for signatures for the following text, and donations to cover the cost of sending telegrams to the Uruguayan authorities: "We demand the immediate release of Roberto Rodriguez Suarez, Ulises Marshall Nigro Ortiz, Jorge Frutos Oliva, Alicia Locatelli Misericordia, Maria Cecilia Duffau Echevarren, Jose Bruzzone, Miguel Matos Fanguio, who were arrested by the Uruguayan police because of their union and human rights activities.

"We hold the Uruguayan government responsible for any physical harm that may have come to the above-named during their detention".

Contact: Susana Fernandez, PO Box 27421, Los Angeles, CA. 90027, USA.

Albania repels "invasion"

by John Riley

THE Peoples Socialist Republic of Albania continues to be the source of mysterious stories and peculiar events. Following the strange death of Prime Minister Shehu last December and explosions in the Yugoslav Embassy in the capital, Tirana, this year, there are now stories of an attempted invasion of the country by Italian-based emigres.

Radio Tirana announced that on Saturday night September 25, a gang led by bandit leader Xhevdet Mustafa had landed on the Adriatic coast of Albania with "guns, dollars and spy-glasses". Unfortunately for the "criminal gang" they had been spotted by local inhab-

itants who promptly reported their presence to the People's Army.

Eventually the invasion force was 'liquidated' after a battle which lasted five hours.

The Hoxha government describes gang leader Mustafa as a well-known criminal and supporter of the deposed Mussolini puppet king of pre-war Albania, Ahmet Zogu. However nobody outside of Albania has ever heard of Mustafa, and so speculation as to the truth behind the story has commenced in Belgrade and Vienna (where the limited news from Albania is often monitored).

Owing to the incredibly rigid, ultra-Stalinist police

state that exists in Enver Hoxha's Albania it is very difficult to find out very much about internal politics there, so stories mushroom. Current theories on the invasion range from it being a mistake by badly disoriented Greek smugglers to it being connected to the present inner party power struggle of which the last symptom was the death of Shehu during a Politburo gunfight (not the first time this sort of thing has happened at Party of Labour Politburo meetings).

There may well be some truth in this latter theory because changes in Hoxha's isolationist policies are both needed and show signs of appearing.

They are needed because after Hoxha's assorted quarrels with anyone who matters in the Stalinist world (except the idealised image of Stalin himself), Albania's economy needs assistance. Russian and Chinese projects were left unfinished and much of Albania's machinery relies on cannibalisation in order to lumber along.

Trade deals with North Korea have been set up, and farming experts from France and oil technologists from slightly less maverick Romania have been spotted in Tirana.

These changes, their pace, sluggishness or existence, may well be at the heart of an inner party dispute which could rock Albania to its Stalinist foundations.



Right wing guerrillas sponsored by South Africa have recently cut a water pipeline 25 miles from the capital of Mozambique. And Angolan troops (above) still face a simmering war with South African or South African sponsored forces in the south of their country.



"I SEE 1983 as being just as tough as 1982". "We are operating on the assumption that there will be no upturn next year". "We had a false spring. If things don't improve, we shall have to reduce capacity further".

When bosses surveyed by the Financial Times read their order books this way, then the prospect for the working class is that the dole queues will continue to get longer.

Unemployment increased 120,000 in the first half of 1982. Significantly, the total number of jobs decreased by a much greater number - 250,000. The difference reflects partly an excess of people retiring over school-leavers in the given period, but also unemployed people just giving up all hope of a job.

The rate of profit, which last year was rock-bottom, seems to have been increasing slightly in the second half of 1981 and first half of 1982. Wage rises behind the rate of inflation, and a massive increase in output per worker, explain this.

But there is no indication that the increased profits mean a return to prosperity. Real interest rates have risen, too, and the Bank of England reckons that the 'cost of capital' may now be higher than the industrial rate of profit. In other words, capitalists will do better to lend their money at interest than to invest it productively.

Besides, if productive investment does pick up, it can just as well mean more machines to replace workers as more jobs.

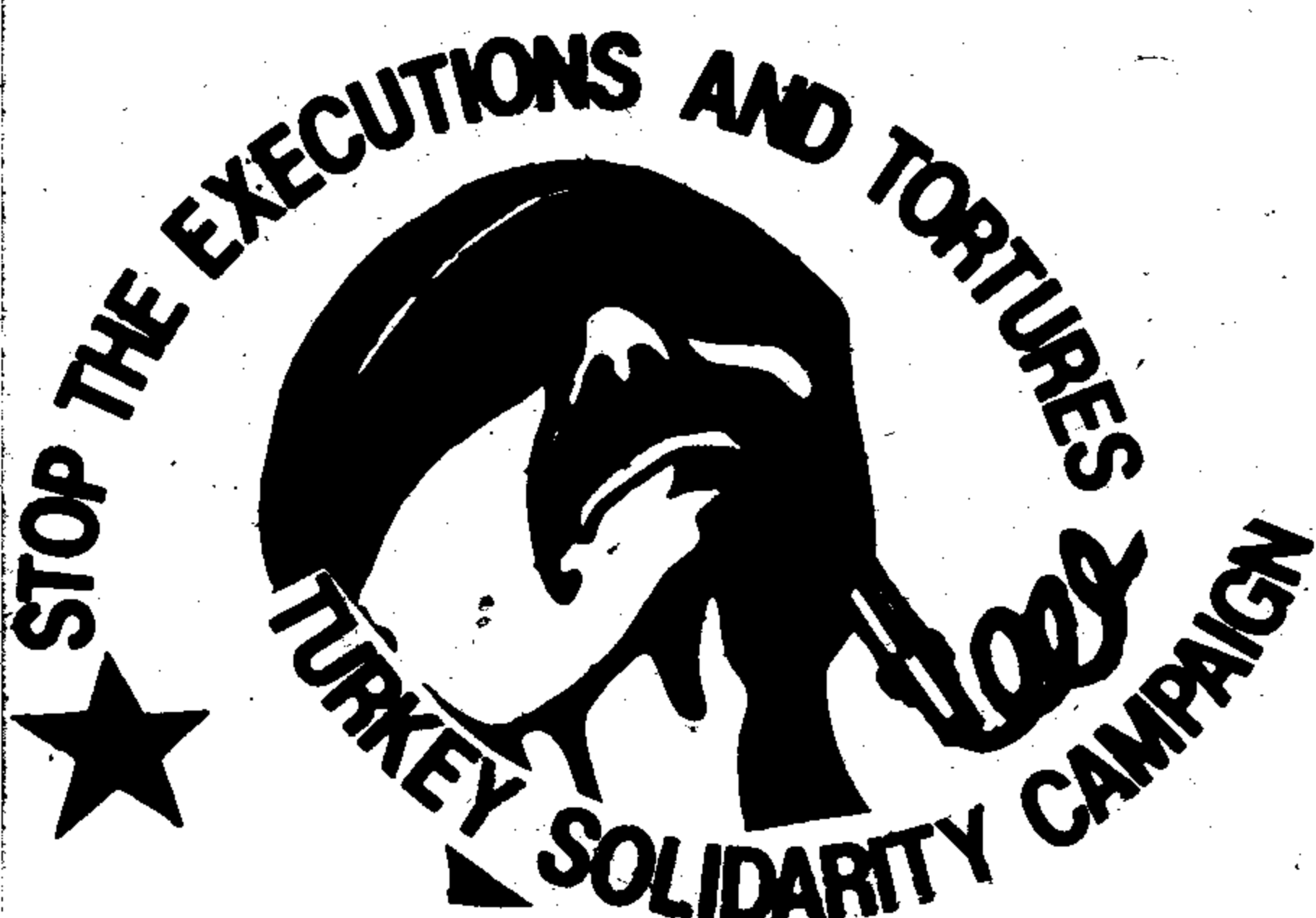
The immediate cause of the new upsurge in unemployment seems to be the renewed downturn in the US. Between about mid-1980 and autumn 1981, the US had something of a limited recovery from the slump which started in 1979. Since then, however, it has plunged downwards again. So have the advanced capitalist economies as a whole.

Industrial production went down between August 1981 and August 1982 in all the major advanced capitalist economies except Belgium and Japan. And unemployment increased

Slump

An overview of Britain's slump is given by a few figures. Employment in production industries has gone down from over 9 million in 1978 to 7.2 million in July this year; employment in manufacturing industries has gone down from 7.1 million to 5.6 million. Public sector net capital formation ran at about £4 billion a year (1975 prices) up to 1976, and last year was down to £400 million - a 90% decline.

But the Thatcher doctrine is that this purge must continue until the working class is sufficiently beaten down to allow a new capitalist upturn on a more profitable basis.



Affiliate to the Turkish Solidarity Campaign. Write to: TSC, BM Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX.

International News International News International News

Will Bolivia take the 'Chilean road' to ruin?

"A triumph for democracy", trumpeted the Morning Star as it hailed the inauguration of a civilian government after 18 years of almost unbroken military rule. But the triumph is far from complete — and there is no stability for the new government.

The team announced by the new President Hernan Siles Zuazo is described by the Star as a "left wing popular unity government". It incorporates two Communist Party ministers; but it also embraces members of Siles' own bourgeois nationalist party, the National Revolutionary Movement of the Left (MNRI).

And the petty bourgeois Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) also finds seats in the government.

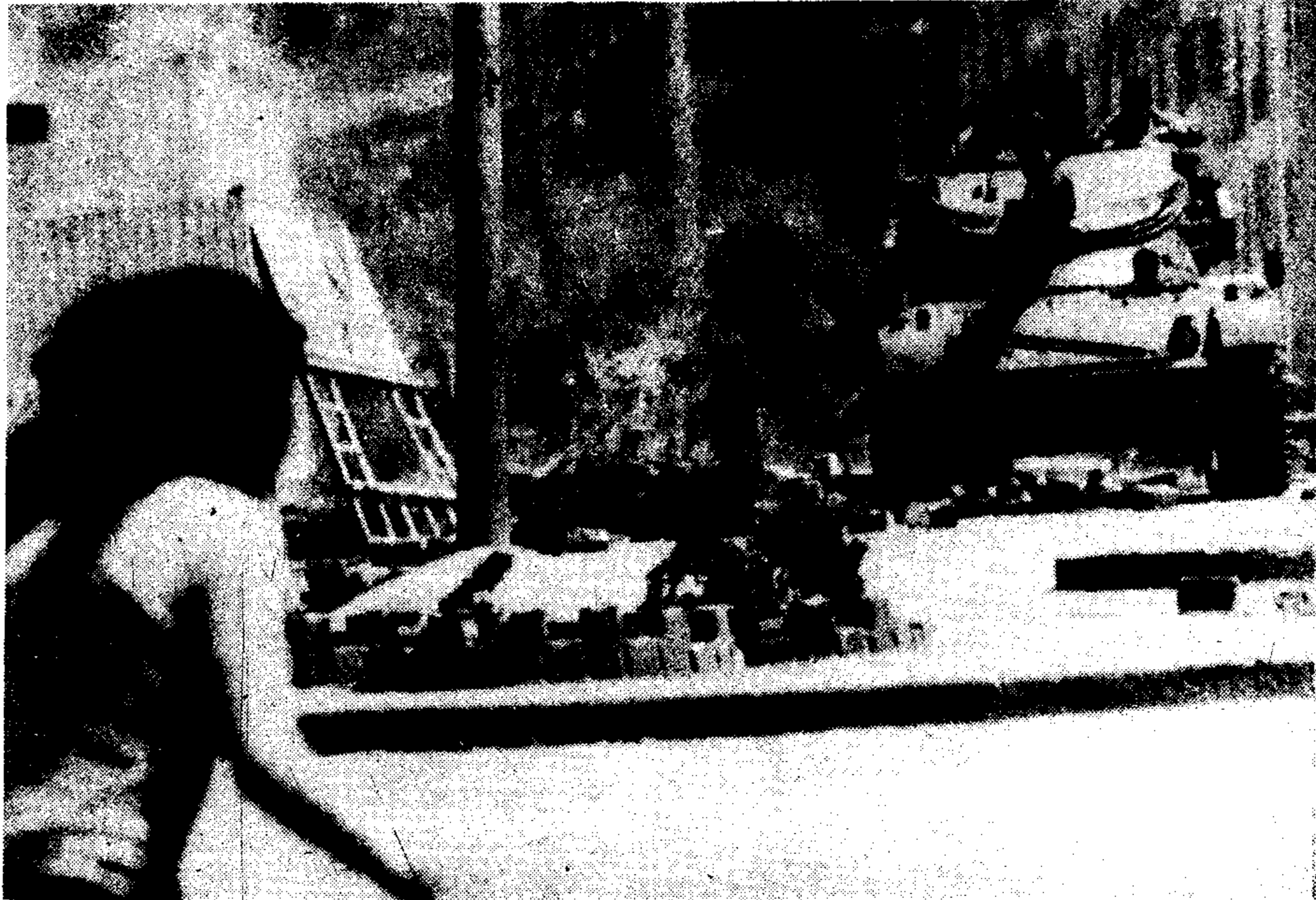
This same alliance won a majority in the last elections in Bolivia (June 1980); but they were prevented from taking office by a military coup led by officers who could not stomach the notion of 'Communists' in power.

Since then Siles and his allies have conducted a limp campaign around the embassies of other Latin American and imperialist governments, pleading for recognition as a "government in exile".

They succeeded, too: Siles' inauguration was marked by a major display of support from, especially, EEC diplomats, eager to see some more rational capitalist regime replace Bolivia's corrupt cocaine-trading generals.

But it is typical of the politics of this grouping that their notion of such a struggle was to appeal to the international bourgeoisie rather than the militant workers and peasants of Bolivia, who showed in repeated strikes and mobilisations their determination to rid the country of its succession of military dictators.

This passive attitude to the fight in Bolivia is no



1980: the tanks roll in to stop Siles becoming president. How long will they give him now?

accident: it reflects the political bankruptcy of the "popular unity" leaders themselves, who, like all such formations, are incapable of presenting anything resembling a revolutionary solution to the working classes.

Siles' own party, representing the interests of an extremely small section of anti-dictatorial Bolivian capitalists, uses populist rhetoric to enlist the support of sections of the peasantry.

He has said in his first Presidential address that "We cannot demand more sacrifices from those who have already suffered so much".

But the demands and needs of the peasantry cannot be fulfilled by pious speeches: they require material action — to expropriate the landowners, the banks and other capitalist holdings, to provide cheap credit and guaranteed markets for agricultural goods, and to disband the standing army whose vicious, corrupt existence stands as a threat to the Bolivian masses

as a whole and a huge burden upon the debt-ridden economy.

Such steps would bring Siles directly into conflict with the Bolivian capitalists his party represents: he has no intention of undertaking such action — and is incapable of so doing.

By entering a coalition with such a party, therefore, the Communist Party and the reformists of the MIR are explicitly abandoning any hint of socialist solutions to the crisis, and thus nailing their colours to the mast of "democratic" rule.

But there is simply no social basis for a 'democratic' capitalist government to operate in the situation of Bolivia.

Siles and the MNR were at the head of a revolution in 1952 which nationalised the tin mines, pushed through sweeping land reform, and virtually destroyed the military caste. But it remained within capitalist limits and failed to open a way for the workers and peasants to escape from

crushing poverty. By 1956 Siles, as president, was imposing an IMF austerity plan.

Since the military regained power in 1964, rival cliques have replaced each other in coup after coup; but a constant factor has been their absolute determination to block any reforming efforts that give a hint of resuming their work of the 1952 revolution.

The national bourgeoisie itself numbers only hundreds out of a population of nearly six million. And the gulf between this elite grouping and the 50% of the workforce who toil at agricultural labour is colossal.

The desperate conditions faced by the masses are attested by the 13% infant mortality rate, and the fact that 20% of the population in 1975 existed on £30 a year.

There is a small, but highly organised and militant working class whose developing class consciousness has been diverted time and again by a combination of reform-

ist and populist politics from their trade union leadership and political parties like the MIR.

It was general strike action by the working class, not the hand-wringing of Siles and company, which last month persuaded a divided and discredited military regime to hand over power to the new "Popular Front".

But the new government takes over in the worst-ever economic crisis — and its first action, once the leftist speeches have been made, must be to tour the world's imperialist banks and the IMF cap-in-hand seeking extensions of existing loans and fresh credit to bale out Bolivia.

Only the naive will believe that such loans can be achieved without intensified attacks on Bolivia's working classes.

Meanwhile the military — in disarray but by no means disbanded — remains as the

standing threat hovering behind the Siles government.

Siles may have made a braggadocio beginning — removing the old army high command and replacing them with officers "loyal to democracy". But this means only that the bitter lessons of Allende's reactionary "Popular Unity" government in Chile — incorporating 'democratic' Generals as well as 'Communists', reformists and capitalists — have not been learned in Bolivia, any more than they have by the British Stalinist Morning Star.

Siles stressed that he wanted cooperation, not conflict, with the military.

Likewise he is seeking class cooperation in industry: he has announced plans for workers' participation in management.

But as long as the armed forces of the capitalist state remain in being, then irrespective of the composition of the "democratic" regime,

A general strike has pushed Bolivia's military into handing over to the same left nationalist politicians whom they ousted by a coup in 1980. What now? Harry Sloan reports.

the working masses of Bolivia face the most acute danger.

They must be organised in workers and peasants councils which in turn must be armed, physically and politically to defend themselves and to press home the fight for a workers' and peasants' government. Only such a government can enact the sweeping revolutionary socialist policies to meet the needs of the Bolivian masses.

Peace-keepers target left wingers

ILLUSIONS were short-lived for those who believed that the troops sent to Lebanon by the French, Italian and US governments were there impartially to "keep the peace".

Last week French paratroops accompanied Lebanese army soldiers in a series of massive raids on the Muslim areas of Beirut.

The state radio station announced that the raids had resulted in the arrest of "many people living in Lebanon illegally".

In fact they appear to have rounded up hundreds

of Palestinians and left wing militants as a further wave of the offensive mounted in the Israeli invasion.

But this repression is, not surprisingly, entirely one-sided. While the oppressed Muslim people are hounded and harassed, there is no parallel search for arms or arrests of the 25,000-strong militia of the Phalangist right wing.

Indeed there is no sign of any attempt to find or bring to trial the gang of Phalangist gunmen who carried out the brutal slaughter of men, women and children in the Palestinian Sabra/Chatila camp.

The fact is that the objective of the "peace-keeping" exercise is to provide additional weight and authority to the Lebanese Army as it emerges from relative impotence and obscurity to form the main pillar of the right wing Gemayel regime in Lebanon.

Far from protecting the Palestinian and Lebanese masses from the violence of the Phalangists, the imperialist troops have been sent to complete the defeat inflicted by the Zionist armed invasion, which forced the evacuation of the PLO detachments.

The leaders of the left wing militias, which had, in alliance with the PLO, previously protected the

Palestinian areas, have since adopted a stance of collaboration with Gemayel, and supervised the disarming of their own supporters. Now the Lebanese army, with its imperialist sponsors, is putting the boot in.

The parallel which cannot be avoided is with the situation in the North of Ireland. There was a brief period in which many people fondly believed that the British troops dispatched to the six counties in 1969 were there as a "peace-keeping" force to protect the oppressed Catholic minority. But it soon became unmistakably clear that their purpose was precisely to repress the Catholics and to crush the forces opposing continued imperialist rule.

Some 13 years later, the British troops have not succeeded in their mission. When President Reagan says now that US troops will stay in Lebanon until such time as there is "a stable government established" he could well be opening the door to a long term US presence in this key area of Middle Eastern politics.

Meanwhile we must fight within the labour movement to draw attention to the facts of the situation in Lebanon — and demand the withdrawal of Israeli and imperialist troops.



Palestinians protest on the West Bank



What price imports?

FOR years now some leftwingers — above all the Communist Party — have been arguing that the best way to save BL is to have a ban on imports, or a restriction at least.

Now a report has come out that shows that British car buyers are paying out £1.3 billion a year in artificially high car prices. Some cars sell at up to £5,000 less than British prices in continental showrooms.

The present barriers to buying British abroad at a lower price than at home include quoting long delivery times or withholding Type Approval certificates, says the report, prepared for the Institute

of Fiscal Studies.

There can be no doubt that if these informal barriers were replaced by a formal ban — eliminating competition from foreign cars too — motor prices in Britain would be even higher. And who has to pay these increased prices? You of course.

HAVE you been sending your holiday snaps to be processed at Grunwick's? You may have — without knowing it. Bonus Print, Bonus Spool, Trucolour and Darkroom Film Service are among the trade names that the fanatically anti-union firm uses. If you hear of any other names they're using, let us know and we'll pass it on.

PRESIDENT Daniel arap Moi of Kenya has declared that henceforth that country will be a one-party state. The party he heads, KANU, has for some time been the only visible political party. Now that position is constitutionally guaranteed.

The press of British imperialism is happy.

Just over twenty years ago they were happy because Daniel arap Moi had done the opposite. He and some others split from KANU, accusing it of being dictatorial, to set up KADU.

Then the press showed its pleasure: "Congratulations to KADU" crowed one paper: "We can expect a return of business confidence..."

Inside Kenya the press is effectively gagged. Thus, when George Githii, editor of the Kenyan Standard, spoke out, he was sacked by the paper's board.

Githii had written: "In the past six months, this country has increasingly

been gripped with fear... There are also instances in which editors of our national newspapers have been told in no uncertain terms that they can publish certain things at their peril."

The Standard is owned by the British-based Lonrho company. Lonrho's chief, Tiny Rowland, recently put in a bid for the Sunday Times, promising a liberal editorial policy...

James Cameron has just finished a short and shallow series of articles entitled "Cameron's Wars" in which he reminisces about his war-reporting days.

Drama

On September 21 his subject was "The Mau Mau period" in Kenya which started with the declaration of a state of emergency there on October 21, 1952.

After a couple of paragraphs Cameron profoundly opines "Nobody will write a drama about Kenya. Probab-

ly the only one who might have was Noel Coward..."

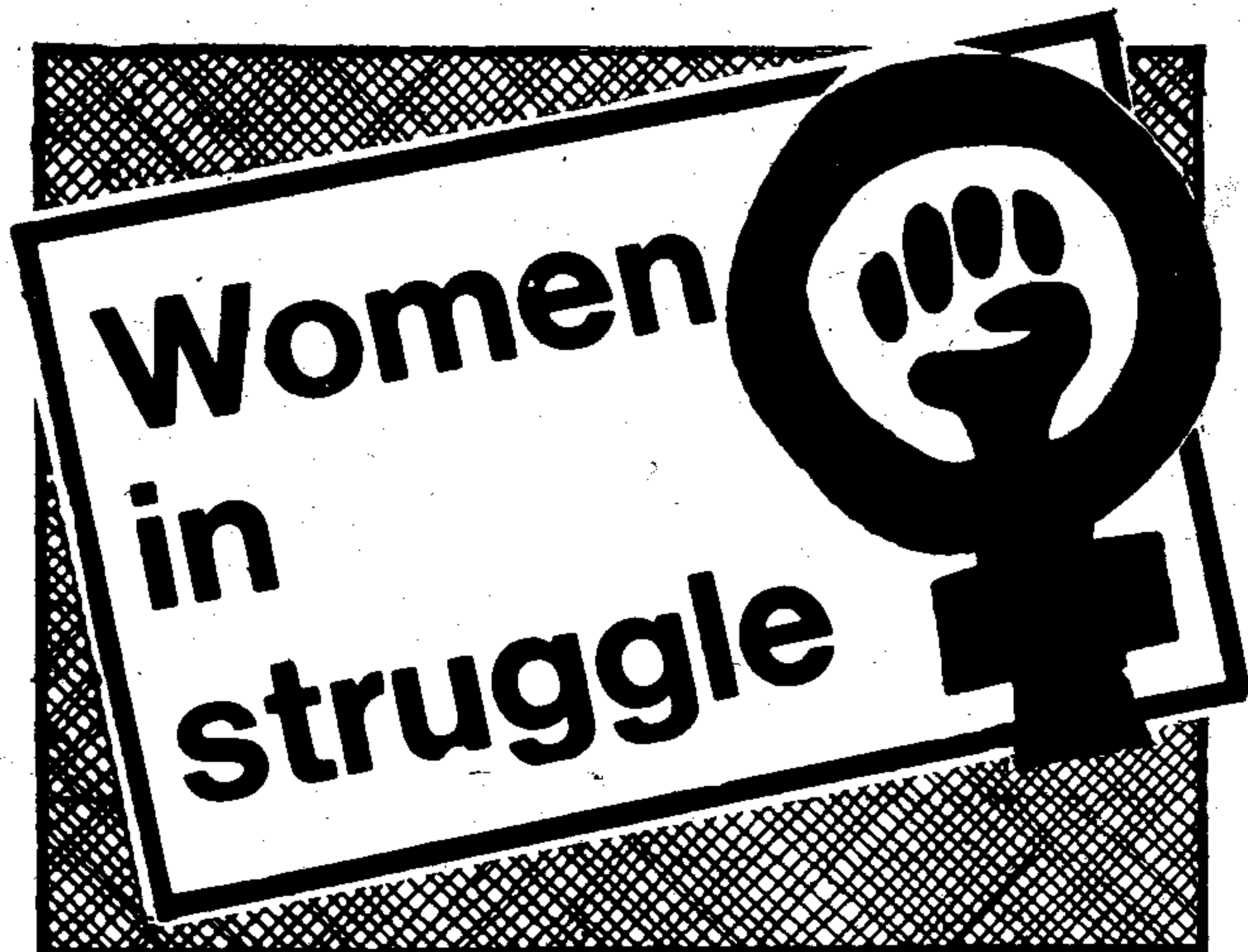
Yes, Noel Coward, just the man to depict a war of liberation against imperialism! Fortunately, Cameron is wrong. Drama's have been written about Kenya's struggle to throw off the yoke of settler colonialism. James Ngugi's "The Trial of Dedan Kimathi" is one of them.

Figures

Cameron then reminisces about the brutality of "the Mau Mau". But how about a few statistics? I quote from the autobiography of one of the liberation movement's leaders: "Casualties inflicted by the so-called 'Mau Mau' were about 2,000, of whom only 30 were white. By contrast government forces killed over 11,000 Africans and detained 90,000 in detention camps (with many) permanently disabled by torture to extract confessions..."

Fighting for jobs

UB671: WEEK OF ACTION



What to do

ON October 18, the new "availability for work" questionnaires (UB671) and voluntary registration will be introduced all over the country. The civil service unions are calling a day of action (with lunch-time meetings and the possible closure of Job Centres) in protest against the job losses involved in the implementation of the Rayner Report.

The Women's Campaign for Jobs is calling a Week of Action against these attacks on women claimants, for the week beginning October 18.

These are some ideas for things to do during the week.

1. Contact your local CPSA branch in Job Centres and Benefit Offices. Ask what action is planned for October 18. Suggest you help on picket lines, offer a speaker to their meeting to outline the effects of Rayner on women claimants, propose a joint meeting on other joint action that seems appropriate.

2. Leaflet/picket benefit offices explaining the Week of Action and what the Rayner proposals involve. Call a press conference.

3. Contact local unemployed centres/groups. Find out if they have a women's group. If they do, suggest a joint meeting/leaflet for the Week of Action, and plans for future joint work (e.g. a Stand up and be Counted campaign). If they don't have a women's group/committee, suggest they hold a meeting and invite you to talk to women users/group

members on problems of women and unemployment and the possibility of forming a women's group.

4. Contact trade union branches, Labour Parties and Labour Party women's sections, trades councils, etc., who have shown an interest in the past or might be sympathetic. Suggest you address one of their meetings or plan future joint meetings on the Women's Campaign for Jobs and the Rayner report.

5. Contact unemployed/unwaged women. As well as Job Centres and benefit offices (which only cover those who are registered and able to claim), try leafletting/street meetings/a stall/street theatre at shopping centres. Some groups have got a good response from questionnaires, asking women if they are looking for jobs though not registered, what their childcare problems are etc.

6. Use the Week of Action to launch a Stand up and be Counted campaign.

7. During the Week of Action bombard local press and radio with press releases, letters, information on what actions are being taken. Most local papers and radio stations are willing to feature anything a bit local and "newsy", but be careful not to let them trivialise it. See if you can get an interview or a phone-in programme on local radio, at least, use any phone-in they do have to put the message across. The enclosed press release can be used as a model, adapted to local conditions.

8. Labour couns (especially where they women's committees) can be asked to organise monitoring of women's unemployment and offer free services for unemployed women. Ask for space for their free sheets.

9. In many areas, week of action may coincide with one of the local day action in support of health service workers. Join any local demos, pickets with a leaflet drawing the links.

*It's the same reactionary government which is trying to dismantle both health and welfare services.

*The government will try to make the health workers pay in job losses any wage increases.

*Women work in low paid ghettos (like hospital domestics) partly because they're denied financial independence in the benefit system.

*Women's work at home is invisible and unpaid, or work is low paid and in status.

10. Whatever you do during the week (and you are bound to think of lots more imaginative things than can), send in reports and pictures to the campaign. We can organise national publicity and tell other women what's going through the newsletter. As affiliate to the campaign we won't be able to keep contact.

Useful contacts:
Civil Service Department
Employment, regional trade union Convenors:
Nottingham and East Midlands: Dave Vickers 061 49381 (w); 0602-242450
Yorks and Humberside: Leedham, 0482-27065 (w); 0482-842014 (h).
Manchester and NW: Fra Sullivan, 061-848 9000.
Bristol and South West: N Stone, 0272-656121.
West Midlands: Margaret Keaney, 0203-28693; Ken Brown, 021-773 2321.
North East: Sheila Scott Anderson 0642-24819
Tony Taylor (Benefits) 071 863561.
Brighton and SE: J Farrell, 01-987 4101.
Wales: Malcolm Rennard (DE Section Organiser) 0213 4552.
London: Cathy Hughes 88 0483 (h); 836 6622 x (w).

CPSA, Broad Left: Paul Martin 01-981 4764.
Other addresses:
Welsh Women's Aid (free pamphlet): Incentive House, Adam St., Cardiff 0222 388291.
Wageless Women, c/o Cromer Street Women's Centre, 90 Cromer Street, London WC1.
National Childcare Campaign, 17 Victoria Park Square, London E2. 01-981 1221.
Women's Campaign for Jobs, 41 Ellington Street, London N7.

By Irene Breugel

IN July 1982 nearly a million women registered as unemployed in the UK: 943,000 to be precise. These women figure in the official statistics — the monthly returns published by the Department of (Un)Employment which are reported in the press.

But because of the way unemployment is counted in this country, another half a million women who are looking for work are not covered in the figures. These women are 'hidden' by official counts because these measure only people who are registered at the Employment Office or Job Centre and not those who don't have any reason to register even though they want paid work. Married women don't always qualify for unemployment benefit and so many don't register.

However when household surveys like the Census, the EEC Labour Force Survey (LFS) or the General Household Survey (GHS) are done, they uncover the hidden unemployed. The latest LFS was done at the same time as the census and found 909,000 unemployed women in Britain at a time when the official figures said there were only 681,000. The latest GHS (1981) also found that over a quarter of the women who were looking for work in Britain at that time were not registered. So every time the unemployment figures are quoted, multiply the female figure by 125/100 to get an idea of how many women are really looking for work.

The Tories' latest plan for voluntary registration is a further device to disguise unemployment amongst women. From October 1982 people who don't get benefit won't figure amongst the unemployed. The counting



Half a million jobless women are 'invisible' for the official statistics

of the unemployed won't be based on registration any more but on whether you pass the availability for work test for benefit.

The latest available figures (1980) show that only half of the unemployed women in Britain on May 8, 1980 got any benefit (unemployment or supplementary) while 72% of unemployed men got some dole money. On that day there were some 144,000 unemployed women who were registered (i.e. counted) but who didn't qualify for benefit. From

October they will disappear from the official record.

That isn't the end of the story, unfortunately, because the recession has meant that many women have given up looking for work altogether. If the economy had continued to grow and if the public sector had not been cut, over half a million women who are now full-time 'housewives' would be looking for paid work. The Department of Employment found in 1976 that nearly 30% of women looking for long term work left

the register within six months without getting a job — more than the number that got work.

In 1977 the Department of Employment predicted that 7.2 million married women would be in the workforce in 1981 but in fact only 6.6 million were: half a million of whom were unemployed. On this basis, 600,000 women have vanished back into the home.

From the Women's Campaign for Jobs newsletter

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK

AGM

October 23 in London. For details send s.a.e. to Women's Fightback, 41 Ellington St, London N7.

School meals massacre

A FIGHTBACK FROM THE KITCHENS

Last week Mary-Ann Todd reviewed the rise of the school meals services — and its decimation by cuts in recent years. This week she looks at the politics and tactics of the fight back

N MOUNTING its cuts in school meal services, the Tory government has been able to count on the fact that trade union resistance could be restricted to area-area struggles, usually schools which would seldom be closed by strike action of meals staff — once children would in any event be sent in with packed lunches.

Staff on strike under such conditions of isolation rapidly become demoralised and feel that their struggle is pointless.

Early this year in his letter to the prime minister the Kent proposals, Alan Fisher talked of the Tories "picking on women who are least likely to and could be least effective if they took strike action".

In other words, don't kick us, we're weak and vulnerable and can't fight back. NUPE's national leadership says this instead looking at ways of overcoming the weaknesses of school meals staff taking strike action alone, by bringing out other sections alongside them.

As for school meals women being unwilling to fight, this is patently untrue.

Last year the mass strike in Coventry showed that they are willing and able, and can be effective.

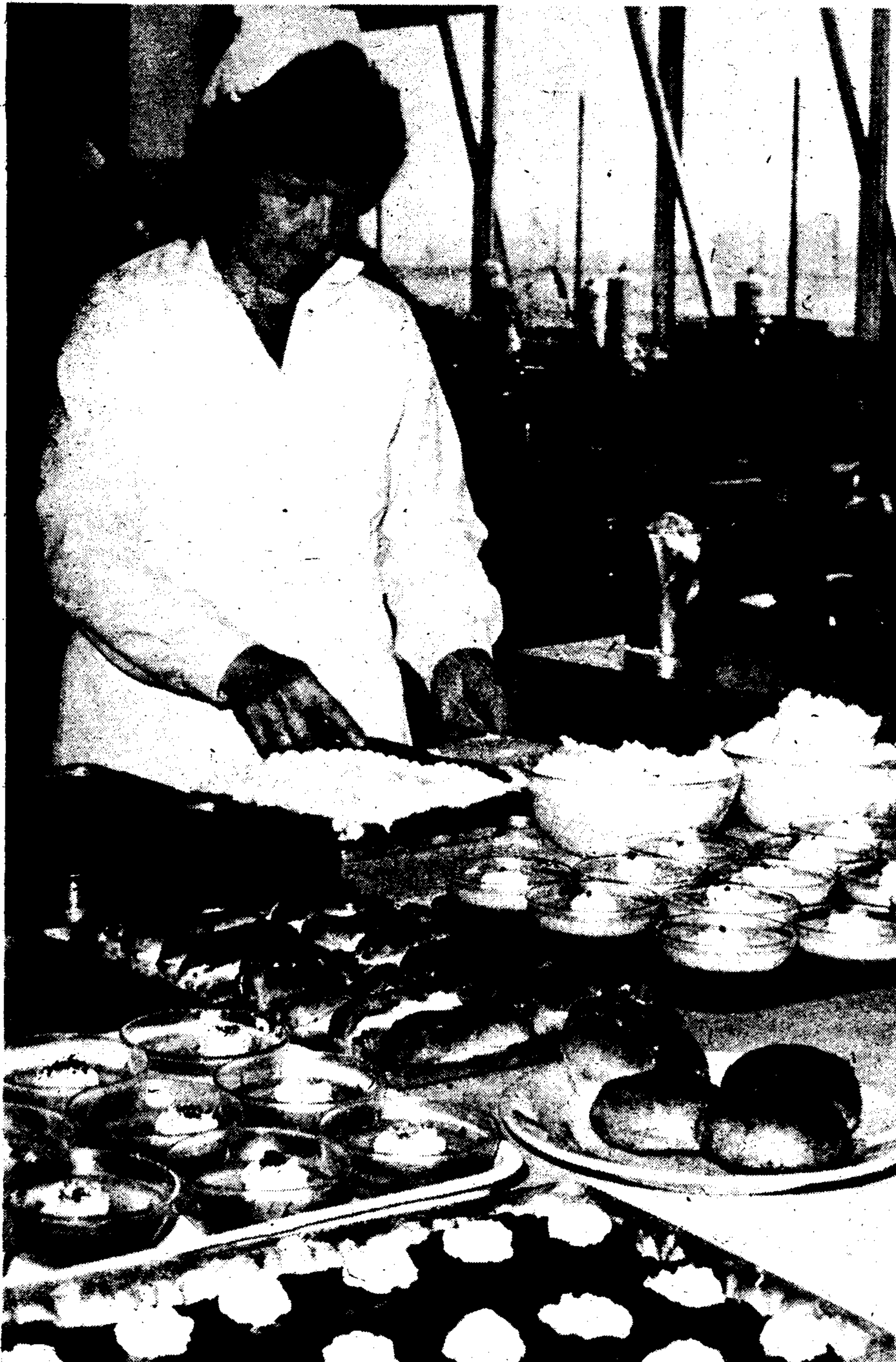
This year, employers on the National Joint Council for local authorities service have said that the question of the arrangements during school closure periods (i.e., the retaining fee) should not be part of the national arrangement but should be subject to local determination.

And some local authorities decided to pre-empt the plan.

Devon County Council announced that they wished to sack their entire school meals staff before the summer holidays, taking them on again on annual employment in the autumn term.

Retainer

Kent announced that they wanted to employ kitchen staff for only 195 days each year to do away with school holiday retainer fees, sick pay and any other conditions of service. They also want the right to give the women whatever catering jobs they want, including work on Saturdays and



"For socialists, school meals raise questions of the politics of food"

wedding receptions.

The resulting pay reduction would be about 23%. Both Kent and Devon

school meals staff struck at the time of NUPE's annual conference.

It is hard to convey to anyone not present at that conference the depth of anger and frustration of school meals staff.

On the day for local authority members, it was calmly announced from the platform that since the last conference there had been a loss of 37,000 employees in local authorities — mainly from school meals.

The women there, confronting their leaders on the predominantly male platform, wanted to demand when they were going to do something about it. When were the leadership going to stop letting them be picked off kitchen by kitchen, county by county?

Action

When were they going to discuss how the Devon, Kent, and Cheshire strikers could win, and what action we should take nationally over the dropping of the retainer fee?

When were they going to say enough is enough?

The platform listened while school meals workers

demanding national action, and wider support, like the health workers were to be given — while delegates demanded some effective leadership, because they knew members who couldn't see the point in being in the union any more and were ready to tear up their cards.

Moved on

The NEC listened, and wound up the debate saying that they would back any local action. Then they moved on to next business.

Other school meals workers in the country are never directly told of the action that their sisters on strike are taking, or how they can help. The EC and NCs never spell out clearly and simply what kind of effective action school meals staff can take.

On the question of the retainer fee, it has to be argued nationally and locally that what councils are doing to school meals today they'll do to caretaker and cleaners tomorrow, and the teachers after that.

Instead of NUPE officials utilising the problems that exist in often poor relations between the NUT and

NUPE members as an excuse for not attempting to close down schools, every attempt should be made to establish good communications within each school, even if it is just on health and safety committees.

Only through such initiatives can we ensure that a national strike of school meals, caretakers and cleaners to stop any further cuts could enlist the rank and file support of the teachers in closing down the schools.

At the national conference of NUPE there were school meals staff of three counties on strike; the Wandsworth dust fighting to extend their action; the health workers on strike; and NUPE water workers declaring that they would take action in support of the NHS struggle.

Every NUPE member was threatened; the time was ripe for a solid, all-out national strike of NUPE.

The leadership were determined, however, that everyone was to remain isolated, fighting their own battles. And the group to pay the highest price for this is undoubtedly the school meals women.

If local authorities are given any further powers to attack school meals staff, sacking or employing them at will, it will be the end of trade union organisation in school meals, and the end of the service itself.

The strongest pressures must be put on local Labour Party wards, GCs, and councils to take seriously the fight against school meals cuts.

A fight has to be taken up with those who argue that children don't like them, and prefer junk food, that they're stodgy and not worth the money. What they say is partly true — but that's in itself a direct result of cuts.

The meals are stodgy because it's cheaper to use starchy foods to fill plates up, as kitchen staff are given tiny portions of meat, fish, cheese, etc.

The junk food market has blossomed on the decline of school meals. Food companies with an eye to the highly lucrative packed lunch market for crisps, soft drinks, cups of soup, cartonised desserts, etc., bombard children with seductive ads.

Very often school meals aren't worth the money. School meals staff are all too well aware of who profits from school meals.

Private food supplies to the school meals service rival drug companies which supply the NHS in leeching and sucking dry public funds.

Staff often complain, for example, that it would be cheaper to go up the road and shop at the local supermarket for (say) bacon, than to pay the price Walls charge to deliver to each school. There are no central stores, only an anarchy of individual competitors

fighting for contracts.

When county councils argue that there is no money to continue the service or that the prices must go up to make the service 'viable', we need committees of users, parents, and workers to demand to see the books for themselves.

For example, why, when it is cutting all hot meal provision, is Bromley (Kent) Council spending £176,000 on taking out usable equipment and re-equipping?

For socialists the question of school meals raises questions of the politics of food.

The school meals service points immediately to the need to nationalise food suppliers. It is, however, not only the question of suppliers. Communal catering needs to be subsidised.

Not only should school meals be extended and made available, for example, to pensioners, unemployed, and homeless, but the point should be emphasised that much of women's lives is embroiled in the individual preparation, cooking, and serving of food.

School kitchens show the logic of one, not a hundred, kitchens making 100 meals. And school meals have traditionally broken down individual privileges. They were established to ensure that every child had the right to a cheap (if not free), hot, square meal each day.

The act of eating together is an important social event, making children feel part of a community wider than the individual family gathered at home around the table.

Socialists have sadly neglected the job of arguing and fighting in defence of school meals, many probably thinking that it won't be that great a loss to the working class if they go. The left in the trade unions must join with the left in the community, in Labour Party wards, in parent-teacher associations, and with the school meals workers themselves in putting pressure on the public sector union leadership to organise effective action against the cuts.

Unless they do so, this leadership can carry on doing nothing, with nobody noticing or caring except the tens of thousands of women who will lose their jobs, the mothers who will have yet more work to do every day with yet another meal to prepare, and the children who will suffer from hunger and hardship and — yes! — malnutrition.

* Thanks to the Lancashire School Meals Campaign's excellent booklet 'Now You See Them, Now You Don't' — available, with further information on the LSMC, for £1 from Margaret Jones, 17 Marlowe Ave., Baxenden, Accrington, Lancashire.

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THE WAR OVER

NHS: the case for an all-out strike

COHSE activist Andrea Campbell reviews the arguments on indefinite vs. selective action.

"It will bankrupt the union," said Albert Spanswick in arguing against indefinite strike action at this year's COHSE Conference. It's an argument (excuse) which made a lot of sense to some delegates who could not find any other reason to oppose the call for indefinite strike — and it swayed votes.

Arguing for indefinite strike action is sometimes like trying to reach infinity. Everytime you logically demolish one reason for not taking it, another one appears.

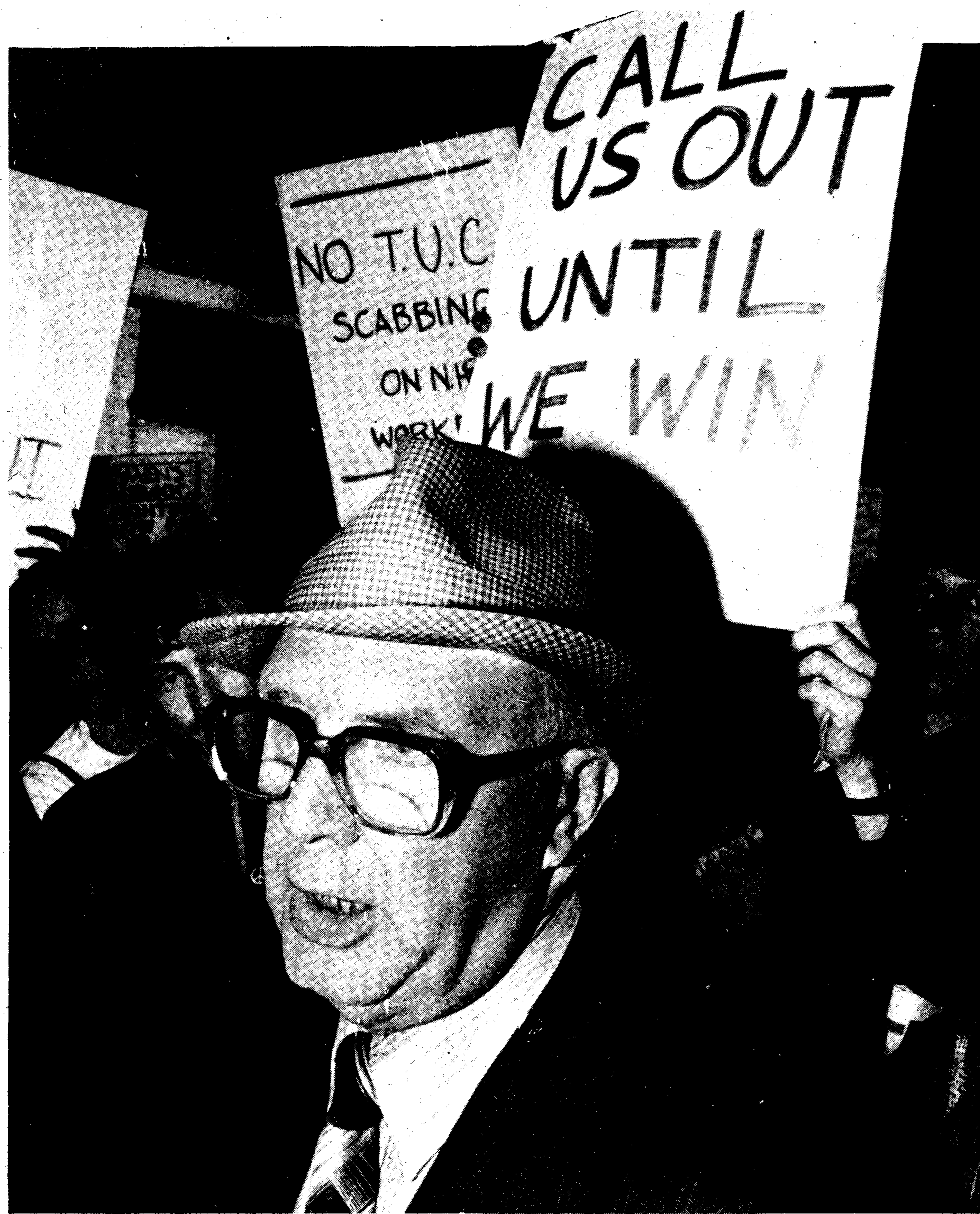
There are some people — the trade union leaders for example — who do not want indefinite action because they fear its consequences. They know the power of the health workers' case, the tremendous swell of public opinion and the potential of indefinite strike linked to a general strike.

It could bring the Tories down. Such action would politicise hundreds of thousands of workers. To the extent that we are armed with the knowledge of our own strength, the trade union leaders and reformist Labour leaders could be the next to go.

It is therefore not in their interests for the working class to win against the Tories.

But not only cynics argue against indefinite action. Recently I heard a well-meaning branch secretary argue against supporting indefinite action by saying "my members can't afford it" — seemingly a caring argument.

NHS workers are already earning wages below official poverty levels, unable to accrue savings, living from hand to mouth every week and sometimes not having enough food the day before pay day facing gas bills rent and electricity overdue.



Spanswick under pressure from lobby by Health Workers for the Full Claim

they want to strike, but how can we call them out?

But when this secretary was asked how we were going to win the 12% (more days of action? more lobbies?) he didn't know.

Of course health workers can't afford to come out and

lose their pay — but we can't afford not to. This benevolent secretary would condemn his members (possibly without consulting them) to continued low pay year after year.

It is no coincidence that miners and print workers, for example, are comparatively well paid. They have earned it not by the odd one day strike here and there, but by strong and united strike action. By hitting the profits and pockets of the rich, they win.

That's true (people will argue) but we are not hurting the rich. We don't want to shut the health service down. It is the working class who are suffering by us taking strike action.

Yes, it is the working class who are being hurt — and the working class will always be hit under a Tory government and a capitalist state. Capitalism is built on the backs of the workers.

But it is the working class, from the derelict East End of London, the miners, the redundant steel towns, the defunct docks, who are supporting us. They know

how important nationalised health is.

They know that waiting lists will grow and grow under the Tories, that eventually the NHS will disappear — and that the fight is here and now. But, just as important, they know what it is like to do a hard, sometimes dirty job for peanuts.

They know what low pay is and will back workers prepared to fight for themselves.

And now we are down to the basic argument: dedication, the "patients will suffer" syndrome. This is probably the best known argument against indefinite strike, particularly used by nurses and particularly by the RCN.

Workers, stewards, and full timers wheel the "dedication" credo out during every industrial dispute.

Strangely enough, though, it isn't used to defend old people as they are being uprooted and evicted from their beds during closures of hospitals.

Those who advance this argument, particularly the bureaucratic, blinkered RCN

leaders, only see patients suffer when hospital workers strike. Perhaps they should speak to some of the parents whose children died because there is no money to staff the paediatric specialist wards at Guy's Hospital.

Maybe they could reason with the thousands of women forced to stay at home and care for an old or handicapped relative as geriatric beds are cut every month. Or they could speak to someone who knows that they will die soon because only a set number of pacemaker operations can be done in some districts due to 'savings' being required.

The facts are that people are suffering more under the Tories' health policies than they ever would because of industrial action. Hospitals are closing, wards are being run on a shoestring budget, casualties are being shut at nights and weekends (paving the way for closure), patients are forced to travel miles from home, and visiting is made impossible.

Yes, it is true that patients will also suffer during strike action. They will have longer waiting times for

operations: but without indefinite action we will not win.

If we lose, people will leave the health service, many for more lucrative jobs in private hospitals. Staff shortages will get worse, conditions will get worse, and the Tories will then move in for mass closures on the grounds of 'economic feasibility'.

With indefinite strike action we can win, and if we win on pay we can use that strength and confidence to roll back the increasing numbers of cuts and closures.

The weakness of the 'patients will suffer' argument is also shown when you argue coherently for people to come out with only emergency cover left.

Because of stewards' knowledge of hospitals, and because they do care, emergency cover in most hospital wards surpasses the ordinary staffing levels. No way would we leave a student nurse in charge of a ward during a strike. Every ward has the correct number of trained staff to cover.

This is the answer which

the 'conscience' people least counter. They see the appalling levels of increasing under management, the danger to patients, particularly at night, under current 'cash limits' so to rising health costs.

And they have seen strong organisation of the one-day strikes in general and maintaining emergency cover.

Argument

But the best argument for indefinite strike action (and now, six months increasingly powerful evidence that there is no other way to get all health workers out and to save the NHS from a killing downward spiral).

Opponents of indefinite strike action argued at conferences in June that they could win by sectional action, by solidarity action reducing the hospital accident and emergency only. And now all those options have been used and still we have not won.

And what about 'reasonable' argument? Indefinite action would bankrupt the unions?

Make the links

SEPTEMBER 22 was the biggest cross-industry strike since 1926. And nobody who struck that day saw it as the end of the story.

But the TUC leaders still have a policy of dribs and drabs. On October 20 British Telecom workers will be striking against privatisation — the same Tory privatisation policy threatens the NHS. On October 18 there will be a strike by water workers — all of them in unions like the GMWU and NUPE, which also organise in the NHS. The steelworkers' one day strike — against the threat to their jobs caused by Tory policies of running down the public sector — is on October 22.

These struggles are being kept separate. The TUC Health Services Committee's policy of splitting the action into regional days is predictably not gaining as much support from non-NHS trade unionists as the 22nd.

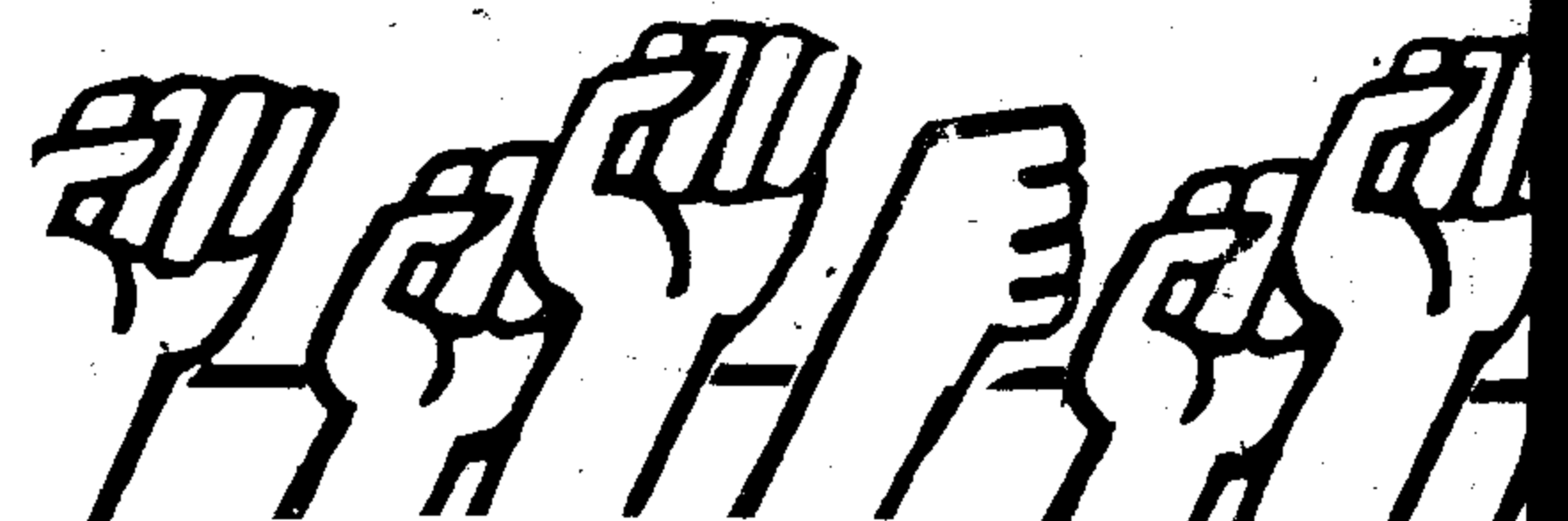
To win we have to keep up the momentum. On September 22, and escalate action, and escalating action, a day like that has to mean building towards a general strike.

We should call on the TUC to make the November transport strike a full one-day general strike, as part of preparation for an indefinite general strike.

Meanwhile there is a lot of work to be done. The regional days of action have to be made a success. November 8 has to be organised for — without hard organising, there's no guarantee that all transport workers will be out — and have to try to get other workers out as well as transport.

The best way to do this is local action committees uniting NHS and non-NHS unions with Labour Parties and unemployed groups.

Make the links. Keep up the campaign.



The Sheffield NHS joint shop stewards' committee has called a national meeting of representatives from NHS strike committees and stewards' committees, for October 30 in Sheffield.

The aim is to exchange experiences, build contacts, and help campaign for a representative national stewards' conference. The TUC health services committee have also been invited to the meeting.

Details of time and place are not final as we go to press. Contact: Martin Skelton Robinson, 0742 550582.

Health Workers for the Full Claim — latest bulletin 10p (5p for strikers) from Anna Lunts, 78 High Street, Atherton, Lancashire (0942 877296)

But Full dedication won't pay the rent

ALL OUT FOR THE 12% FOR THE FULL CLAIM • HEALTH WORKERS

Health Workers for the Full Claim badges — 20p each from the same address.

R WAGES

ike



JOHN HARRIS

Albert Spanswick really think that CoHSE militants expected the union to foot the entire bill for strike pay for over 200,000 workers?

The answer to the strike pay problem is in the whole labour movement. It is solidarity, the bedrock of socialism.

The TUC knew the feeling was high in the NHS for a fight on pay. They knew that only indefinite strike could hit the Government hard enough to make it crumble, and they knew that workers would have to get some subsidy in order to be able to strike.

Yet they did nothing. In October of last year, when we were voicing our opposition to the government's 4% norm for the public sector and saying that we would fight, the TUC should have committed itself to support us and organised a levy of affiliated organisations to help finance the dispute.

Money

Rank and file members know how easy it has been to raise money. Most work-

places are now financing their members through local strike funds without going to the national union offices. The "it will bust us" argument is itself bankrupt and we have proved it.

Indefinite strike action is the only way to win this dispute and everyone knows it. For some health service workers, though, it is a big step - trade union officials will argue (have always argued) that the membership will not take the step. However, where the membership have come out on indefinite strike they have been smashed by the leadership, left without strike pay and forced to go back to work.

Officials

The members have been prepared since May 19 for indefinite strike. Reactionary officials, both lay and full-time, have tried to dampen that spirit but have failed. Even some full timers are now openly calling on the TUC to call for an indefinite strike.

Spanswick can still argue bankruptcy, Bickerstaffe can

still argue unity, but they can't and nor can anyone else come up with a formula to win without arguing for indefinite strike.

Militants must still continue the pressure on the bureaucracy for indefinite strike action with emergency cover under workers' control.

The leadership have used excuse after excuse. They have been unable (though perhaps not unwilling) to sell out the health workers in the same way as they sold out ASLEF.

Confidence

We can still win and with that win we can use the experience and confidence gained to press for real changes in the NHS, changes which will radically alter health care - democracy and accountability throughout the NHS - with workers in control of the hospitals and services who will expand the services and build a real national health care system.

But first we have to win, and to win we need indefinite action now.

Poole calls for general strike

NUPE's national officer for the health service, Roger Poole, called last week for an indefinite general strike for the health workers' claim.

"We have the right", said Poole, "to demand that the rest of the trade union movement comes out on a general strike, not just for one day, not for two days, not for three days, but until we have won the 12%."

He made this militant call at a public meeting organised by East Lewisham Labour Party on 6 October, which was also addressed by Michael Meacher MP and Fred Burnall of Lewisham and Deptford Trades Council.

The audience of hospital workers, Labour Party activists and left councillors greeted Poole's strike call with enthusiasm.

However, Poole rejected the idea of a full-scale strike in the NHS. He made out that the choice was between the present level of activity by the health service unions and a total withdrawal of all services.

Leading militants in the health unions locally were disappointed; they see an all-out strike with emergency cover as the only way forward after 22 September.

Poole is thus in a position of calling for an illegal general strike by other workers with no escalation of action in the hospitals. And, though he was dubious about the value of the current round of regional strikes, he was against public criticism of the TUC Health Services Committee.

Yet he must know that without massive, openly-organised pressure, there is no chance of the Committee calling a general strike.

From the floor, Lewisham Hospital shop steward Millie Barnett outlined the problems of sustaining such a prolonged dispute and demanded that full time officials get into the local hospitals.

Local Labour Party activist Scrape Nishona pointed out the political character of the dispute. He argued that it was not just the responsibility of the unions to support the health workers, but was also the responsibility of the Labour Party. The Party could not just wait for the workers to bring down the Tories, like in 1974, he said.

It had to be involved with the workers now in bringing down the government.

Health Workers for the Full Claim

Next national meeting: Sunday November 7, 1pm to 5pm, Labour Club, Bristol Street, Birmingham.

Miners fire opening shots

THE RESPONSE so far to the National Union of Mineworkers' overtime ban, which started on October 5, has been good.

But there is no room for complacency about the result of the ballot on strike action, which takes place on October 28-29. Unless the NUM branches organise and explain the issues to the membership, the pressures of the recession could push miners into accepting the Coal Board's 8.2 per cent offer.

The NUM is calling for a mandate for strike action on pay and to stop pit closures. The pay claim is a minimum basic rate of £115 for surface workers and a £27.20 across the board increase for higher grades.

Linking pay and closures in a single ballot is unusual. But it's the right thing to do. No way can the two issues be fought separately. The Coal Board are already linking the issues in their way - offering more on pay if the NUM accepts job cuts.

John Cunningham (Dinnington NUM, Yorkshire)

told Socialist Organiser: "We had a well-attended branch meeting on the overtime ban on Saturday (9th), with over 150 there. We expected a lot of hostility, but when we put the arguments we won the men round. We got very solid backing."

When the campaigning work is done, the support can be won. In Yorkshire all the pits are having pit-head meetings on the claim. Arthur Scargill is speaking at a meeting of all NUM committee members from the whole Yorkshire coalfield on the 13th, and at an all-Yorkshire rally on the 21st.

"But there has been little coming out in the way of leaflets and papers. And a real campaign should include sending flying pickets from Yorkshire to areas like Nottinghamshire, to win support. (This would be unconstitutional. But it can be done. Similar things have been done before).

There has been scattered resistance to the overtime ban. Petitions against

it have been got up in high earning pits. Six pits in south Leicestershire have asked for exemption.

But the overtime ban should begin to bite fairly soon. All weekend repair work - normally done on overtime - is banned except in emergency, so as soon as breakdowns and repair jobs begin to build up the effects of the ban will increase.

Disputes are likely to be provoked by local management.

Together with strengthening the overtime ban and explaining the case for fighting on pay and closures, the other job that needs to be done now is making links with other unions.

Support from power workers will be vital in strike. A large part of the large stocks of coal are inside the power stations.

The Triple Alliance - rail, steel, coal - also needs to be made a reality with joint union meetings at local, area and national level.

BL convenors reject 2 year deal

BRITISH Leyland management continue to blaze a reactionary trail on behalf of the big employers and the Tory government. This year's wage offer to its workforce in Austin Rover, Jaguar cars, the Unipart group, and BL Technology, is based on the principle of a two year deal. If accepted, it will be a further step towards the kind of control established by the employers in the United States. It is in line with Tebbit, who said: "We (the Tory government) have to re-educate workers out of the ridiculous notion of expecting a pay increase every year."

If accepted, the deal would become yet another major principle established within BL which would

then be generalised to the working class as a whole.

Today's delegate conference decision (October 12) to reject the deal and pursue the original claim is very important.

The meeting decided that Shop Stewards' meetings and mass meetings should be held in the next few days with a recommendation of rejection, followed by a further delegate conference next Monday.

The package offered is not really a two year deal. It is two one year deals negotiated at the same time. The

company handout explained that BL needs a two year deal in order to 'achieve total stability'. The offer provides for increases in the grade rate ranging from £4.15 to £5.50 across the five grades from November 1 this year and further increases of the same amount on November 1 next year.

It provides for consolidation of £3.75 per week of bonus into the grade rate on November 1 this year and further consolidation of £3.75 per week bonus on November 1 next year. This is subject to an average of 2 bonus points being earned in the preceding six months.

Consolidation which became part of the claim pressed by Jack Adams from Longbridge, involve workers being paid with their own money. The offer also provides for improvement of overtime and night shift payment through increases in the premium base rates of £3.60 to £5 in November this year and the same next year. It proposes increased lay-off days which are given in return for the abolition of the national guaranteed week. So the proposed new lay-off deal, despite some minimal fringe benefits, is worse than the present one!

Taken together the deal represents a further major cut in the living standards of BL workers, since previous settlements of 5% in 1978, 5% in 1979, 6.8% in 1980 and 3.8% in 1981.

To defend living standards we must fight for a huge vote against the offer at this week's mass meetings, followed by preparation for strike action.

Sit-in made "secure"

The occupation at Wood Green and Southgate Hospital continues after a DHA refusal to reverse their decision to temporarily close the hospital and a number of wards at another local hospital.

Their decision, which on the DHA's own figures will in a full year lead to a serious underspend, underlines the hypocrisy of Thatcher and the Tories claim not to be moving towards the privatisation of the National Health Service.

At the hospital a 24 hour picket rota has been established, which has found wide support from the local community and labour movement.

Local workers from DLO are showing their support by "securing" the hospital

against a possible raid by the DHA.

While the local strike support committee (which has agreed to send a delegate to the Sheffield conference) has played a major role in organising support for the occupation and has regular weekly meetings with the occupation committee, a large reservoir of support for the occupation still has to be organised, both in the local community and labour movement.

A major test of the labour movement's commitment to the occupation will come this Thursday when the occupation committee meets the Labour Group who will be presented with a series of proposals to aid the occupation.

Blackpool '82

What they think



Wembley conference — campaign must avoid sectarian wrangling

Left must unite against purge

Steering Committee from the giant Left's Day Conference, Fight the Tories, not socialists, at Wembley September 11 — has a task ahead of it: of nationwide campaign against witch-hunts against all expulsions. Fight to guard against campaign getting bogged into a quagmire of wranglings about tactics — which tendency wins or when or where should be held.

Steering Committee move forward not only involve CLPs, the Party Sections, the Young Groups, but most definitely trade unions. As Wall so rightly said Annual Conference many of the trade union at the conference their block vote and the wishes of their Conferences and Executive Committee's on the issue — the extreme example being the 'militant' Sid Weighell now being praised by Standard, Norman and all the hysterical against the union members' desires and

Vidya Anand reports from the Steering Committee against the Witch-hunt

wishes.

The most immediate task before the left is to unite, because only united can it struggle against the witch-hunt, and make sure that as many GMCs as possible pass resolutions opposing witch-hunts and expulsions. The model resolution suggested at the Briefing meeting was as follows:

"This GMC resolves:
1. To resist any expulsions arising out of the decision of the Annual Conference at Blackpool to establish a Register of political groups;
2. To send delegates and support the October 30 conference of CLPs against the witch-hunt.

It also called upon the comrades on the Regional Executive of the Greater London Labour Party to

move a resolution seeking to support the October 30 Conference.

It will be a great pity if our efforts to mobilise a gigantic campaign against the witch-hunt were to fail to reach out to the Women's Committees and sections, and the large number of ethnic organisations, many of whom have been discriminated against and have been on the receiving end of the witch-hunts over the years.

The Campaign Against the Witch-hunt should not be dominated — visually or otherwise — by the usual, all-male, white leadership that we have seen in the past. What about Women Against the Witch-hunt and Blacks Against the Witch-hunt?

The Steering Committee agreed to organise one-day rallies and conferences against the witch-hunt to be held simultaneously on 27 November at London, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Bradford, Liverpool, Brighton, Birmingham, Bristol and Manchester; regional steering committees to be set up with membership to be drawn from both the CLPs and the trade unions and not forgetting the Co-ops and other

sections of the labour movement.

Terrence O'Neil, President of the Bakers Union, who is Joint Chairperson of the Steering Committee, left no-one in doubt about the enormous task ahead and the challenge that looks the left in the eye.

Comrades, now is the time to end internecine strife on the left and unite on a broad front against the witch-hunt, the register and expulsions.

'Responsibility lies with the far left'

by Vladimir Derer

FOR the second year running the Labour Party annual conference saw the defeat of the forces striving to commit the party to democratic change and socialist policies. The upholders of the status quo managed to achieve a net gain of another two seats on the NEC, adding this to the net gain of the five won last year.

It may be argued that the loss of two seats was accidental. Joan Maynard would have been elected had some unions been briefed properly. Eric Clarke lost his seat because a trade union leader cast his union's vote against the wishes of its delegation. Whatever the causes, the effect remains the same: a decisive shift to the Right.

Unlike last year, when some sections of the left managed to deceive themselves that the narrow defeat of Tony Benn was really a victory, this year they will be unable to do so. Last year's change in the composition of the NEC resulted in the Militant Ten-

dency report and some CLPs being denied the right to choose their parliamentary candidate.

With this year's NEC we are likely to see the disbanding of some parties for exercising this right as well as the expulsion of individual party members.

But even accepting that adverse changes in the NEC were inevitable, this cannot be said to be the case with the most serious setback of all, namely the approval by conference of the Militant Tendency Report. Here a significant section of the left joined forces with the NEC and the reactionary trade union leaders to defeat the one option which could have halted the advance of the Right.

Those who sought support for CLPD's 'fall-back' formula, the adoption of which would have made a witch-hunt far more difficult had to contend not just with right wing opposition but also with a systematic campaign of denigration from the pseudo-lefts.

Not only did this cause

our views. It's extremely helpful that the Tribune newspaper is now under new management and is taking a very different editorial line from what it was 12 months ago.

It looks as if we may have a general election before very long. Do you see the new group as having any distinctive role within an election campaign?

I certainly see the group as having a distinctive role up to and including the general election campaign — that is, to fight for the socialist policies agreed by the Party conference, to build a movement to ensure that the

manifesto of the Party adequately reflects those agreed policies, and to try to build up an extra-parliamentary support for a socialist Labour government which will face the possibility of destabilisation and intervention by outside forces after an election victory.

I also see the new group as being very important in relation to the working class in general. If you ask yourself the question: who is going to argue for and fight for the Labour Party's policies, it has got to be the Left — and that voice has been silent for quite a long time. It's about time it was mobilised properly.



A kick in the teeth

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Briefing)

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September 22 represented.

The conference decision to set up the register must be resisted immediately. How far the new right wing NEC will go in pursuing expulsions does not just depend on the balance of forces between Foot (who probably wants 80 expulsions) and Healey and Golding (who probably want to expel thousands). It also depends on the extent and the speed of our reaction.

Immediately, we must fight to ensure that hundreds of constituency parties, and trade union branches throughout the country, support the October 30 con-

ference and the call for no expulsions.

The NEC may well be prepared to shut down a dozen parties. They will think twice before shutting down a hundred.

The central fight is to ensure that there are no expulsions following the setting up of the register. But the question for left wing papers and campaigns within the party — as to whether they should register — cannot be dodged.

London Labour Briefing will not register, and we trust that this line will be followed throughout the Left.

BRINGING DEMOCRACY TO BERMONDSEY

As the right wing prepares to try to force CLPs to dump candidates associated with Militant, a Bermondsey CLP activist spoke to Bob Sugden about the fight over Peter Tatchell's nomination

THE trouble with Bermondsey Labour Party really began at the time of the re-organisation of the London County Council into the GLC, in 1965. An area that had previously elected 50 councillors became eligible for only ten, and the ten people who secured the seats in Bermondsey made sure that from then on they'd got it sewn up tight.

That was the beginning of the rot — they had gained the power and the perks, and were quite content to remain councillors forever.

From then on, you could select whoever you liked for your councillor, so long as it was one of those ten!

They became known as the Bermondsey Mafia, and they controlled the chairs of almost all the committees on Southwark Council. The only time they were ever 'good socialists' was when the Tories were strong on the council, after 1969.

When I got active in my ward in 1971, there were only 3 or 4 who came to meetings and only 7 members in the ward! Meetings were held once a year!

As assistant secretary I recruited another 30, and we got monthly ward meetings, although the existing officers tried to sabotage them. Then I became ward secretary, and the membership went up to 250, and by then the right wing had started to take notice!

Peter Tatchell became secretary, but we still had to contend with the old establishment trying to fiddle things — for example, one ward managed to have four delegates to the GMC with only 12 members!

Frank Chapple came on the scene a bit too late to save Bermondsey from the 'extremists' — but the EETPU establishment did their best. One of their delegates was a chemist. We asked him about this, so he said, "Well, I turn the light on, don't I?"

Why did Bob Mellish leave the Party? Because if he hadn't left, he would have been chucked out, after he supported candidates against us!

What was the 'Palace Revolution' that Mellish spoke about?

That was when the left

took over for the first time in 1980. He didn't like it at all — wouldn't come to meetings. He regarded the right wing as 'good councillors' — but that didn't mean they had to stop there forever!

What were the effects of the 'Palace Revolution'? What do you think will happen now?

It's very democratic now — everything in the Party is on an open basis. We've opened the doors now. It's up to them. If the Council mess things up now, well, it's down to them.

As far as Peter's endorsement goes, Mellish has got a lot of pull with some sections of the community, so it's going to be a fight.

Stop horse-trading

by Pete Firmin

UNION members will probably never know the extent of the horse-trading for seats that goes on between bureaucrats in casting their votes for the Labour Party NEC and the TUC General Council, but this year's Labour Party conference certainly exposed a great deal.

Most (in)famous was Sid Weighell's casting the NUR's vote for Tom Breakell, the right-wing president of the electricians' union, rather than Eric Clarke of the NUM as mandated by both the conference and executive of the NUR. Thomas Ham, president of the NUR, also signed the block vote along with Weighell.

So right-winger Dennis Howell of APEX was elected rather than Clarke.

But the left-wing NUPE



Discussing block votes — but not with the membership

delegation cannot be passed over without criticism, either. Because of a rumour that ASTMS had not voted for NUPE assistant general secretary Tom Sawyer, NUPE's vote was not cast for Doug Hoyle of ASTMS, no red-hot militant, but part of the left slate for the trade union section.

In fact ASTMS had voted for Sawyer, and Hoyle would have been elected

with NUPE's votes.

NUPE was also decisive in ousting Joan Maynard from the women's section of the NEC. NUPE did vote for Maynard — but it also voted for the candidate put up against her by the right wing, Anne Davis. If NUPE had not voted for Davis, Joan Maynard would have kept her seat.

This, together with unions flouting their own pol-

icy (such as TGWU, USDAW, and GMWU on the register), gives a picture of the contempt which the bureaucrats have for democracy.

NUM members should be asking how come their delegation was committed

to vote for a NUR winger like Russell. The claim that it is because of the Triple Alliance not hold water. No agreement exists with ISTC, the third union in the Triple Alliance, and an agreement on fighting to defend jobs (NUR members have yet to see the sense of this fighting Weighell!) does not support candidate elections.

Perhaps surprisingly, a motion that votes for NEC should be recorded from next year was passed by 4.5 million to 2.7 million.

The most common accusation at Blackpool was that the rival bureaucrats are now so suspicious of each other than they are to be sure their deal is kept to!

But the decision gives the rank and file a chance to drive forward the fight for accountability delegations to union po-

Closer to the roots!

THE defeat at Labour's Annual Conference of those motions which had the unanimous support of the Constituency Labour Parties, demonstrates the imbalance in the size of the CLPs vote as compared to that of the trade unions.

The basis of representation at Party Conference does not fairly reflect the political and financial contributions of the CLPs to the Party. The CLPs which have the major responsibility for recruitment and campaigning for the return of members to central and local government, contribute in total 29% of the Central Party Funds but have only 9% of the votes at conference. Affiliated organisations which contribute 71% of the funds have 91% of the votes.

Constitutional changes are necessary in order to facilitate fair representation of the component bodies at Annual Conference; otherwise, what is the good of winning the debates if we cannot win on the votes.

The composition of the National Executive Committee is also in need of reform. As it is presently composed, the NEC lacks sufficient grass roots involvement.

Both the CLP and the Women's Section are usually totally comprised of MPs for whom being well known

nationally is a major criterion for being nominated for election to the NEC.

There are also unnecessary restrictions about the criterion for qualifications as a bonafide nominee, i.e. that one has to be a conference delegate. The Party should consider new proposals regarding the composition of the NEC.

That would provide it with a closer link to the grass roots of those organisations affiliated to the Party.

I suggest the following proposals:

1. That the NEC membership be increased from 25 to 30 with an additional three members for the CLPs section and an additional two members for the Women's section. The new composition would thus be: Div. 1 — Trade Unions 12 members (same); Div. 2 — Socialist & Co-op Soc: 1 member (same); Div. 3 — CLPs: 10 members (plus 3); Div. 4 Women: 7 members (plus 2).

2. By relevant amendments to Labour Party Standing Order 4, the Trade Union Section should exclude MPs and full-time employees of the nominating trade unions.

3. By relevant amendments to Labour Party Standing Order 4, the CLP Section should include a maximum number of three MPs (i.e. 3 MPs with the highest vote would be elected). All nominees should be entitled to attend Conference as nominees if they are not delegates.

4. By the process of election at Labour Women's Conference, the Women's Section should include a maximum of two MPs.

5. Election addresses of NEC candidates should be circulated to all Party affiliates.

6. Also the Parliamentary Labour Party and through the PLP the Parliamentary Committee, when in opposition, and the Cabinet, when in government, should be made accountable to the NEC.

MICHAEL IDUN, Dulwich CLP

Making gay rights a party issue

by Chris Beer
(Labour Campaign for Gay Rights)

From the moment we arrived on Sunday and started distributing our four page statement of our case, and our "Gay 16 OK" stickers — shorthand for our demand for an age of consent for gay men identical to that for het men — until the Thursday evening when we made vigorous efforts to sell the special Party Conference edition of Gay News, delegates could not deny that some Party members, at least, regarded gay rights as a Party issue.

On the Saturday before the conference, the Sun published another of its attacks on Peter Tatchell, this time alleging — wrongly — that he had been to the Gay Olympics in San Francisco.

The News of the World affected that delegates had been "shocked" by the "obscene" articles in London Labour Briefing — particularly the expression by Mary Evans that she was glad to be a lesbian.

On the Monday, the Daily Mail published a somewhat similar piece. As Peter Tatchell said, "Papers like the Sun, the News of the World and the Mail are using this campaign not merely to discredit individuals, not merely to ridicule and destroy gay rights as a serious issue, but also to try and discredit the left within the Labour Party."

Comrades on the platforms of Labour Herald, London Labour Briefing and the Women's Rights rally referred to the issue. Our allies talked about it to their comrade delegates.

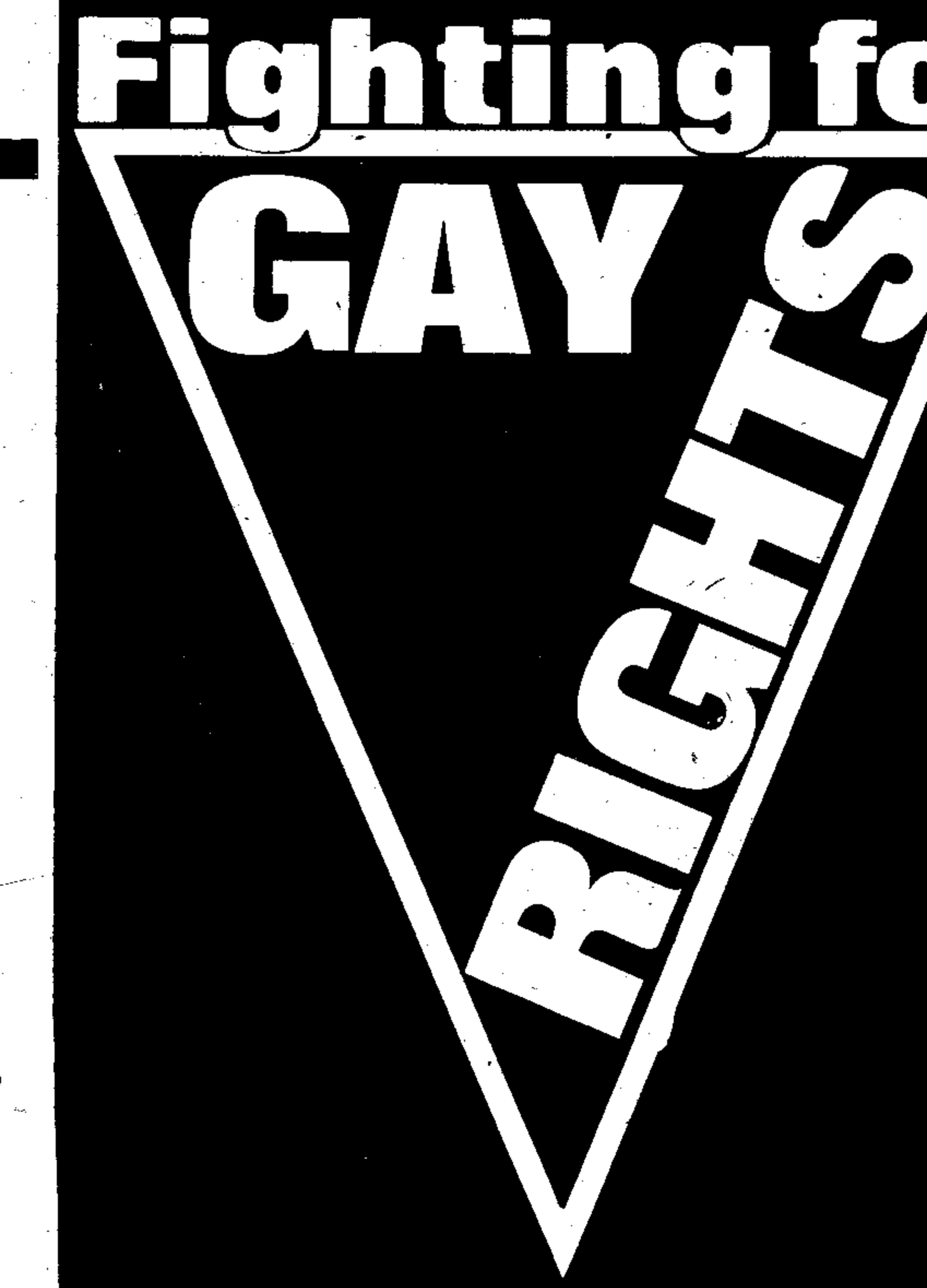
Thus by Tuesday evening

when we held our own fringe meeting, we were no longer raising what many might have seen as a fringe issue. By the BBC's count, we had 250 present in a room booked for an audience of 100 — and that was after we had ejected reporters from the Sun, News of the World and Mail.

Our platform included Joan Lester, Jo Richardson, Ken Livingstone, and Peter Tatchell. Tony Benn cancelled an engagement to attend in solidarity with us when he read of press attempts "to hound and harass in a disgusting way".

The issue also reveals the underlying politics of those who debate it. When we lobbied him after an NEC meeting, Neil Kinnock told us that the fact that the next Labour government would be committed only to 18 as the age of consent wouldn't prevent it from reducing the age to 16 once it was in power. But he felt that 16 would be an electoral liability.

By contrast Tatchell said at the meeting: "As long as we pander to what we think are people's prejudices, they will be reinforced, they will never change. For socialism is not just about economic and point-of-production struggles: it is also about liberating us from all the different forms of oppression, whether it be sexual or racial, whether it be the oppression of class or the oppression of sexual orientation. If we seek power at any price, if we compromise on those fundamental principles then we



are a very weak and poor party."

Three platform speakers told of the immediate effect on them and others in the same position of the NEC's policies. Two men from the Gay Youth Movement spoke of the oppression of spending the first sixteen years of gay life in a heterosexual nuclear family, only to find that oppression continuing under law for a further five.

Parental control and economic oppression restricts freedom of movement and association. In its present state, the law reinforces the power of the heterosexual family over young gay men by prohibiting any legal expression of their sexuality.

Indeed, Dicken's Bill, which would outlaw the Paedophile Information Exchange implicitly attacks further the ability of young people to determine their sexual identity.

Andrew Watson told of the fear of being gay in the armed forces as he had been in the Royal Navy. He described how it had been necessary to act heterosexually, "to sit in a bar with heterosexual servicemen, who are looking for a woman".

He had been forced to have sex with a woman not simply because of social pressures but because to be discovered as gay would lead to dismissal and possibly a jail sentence.

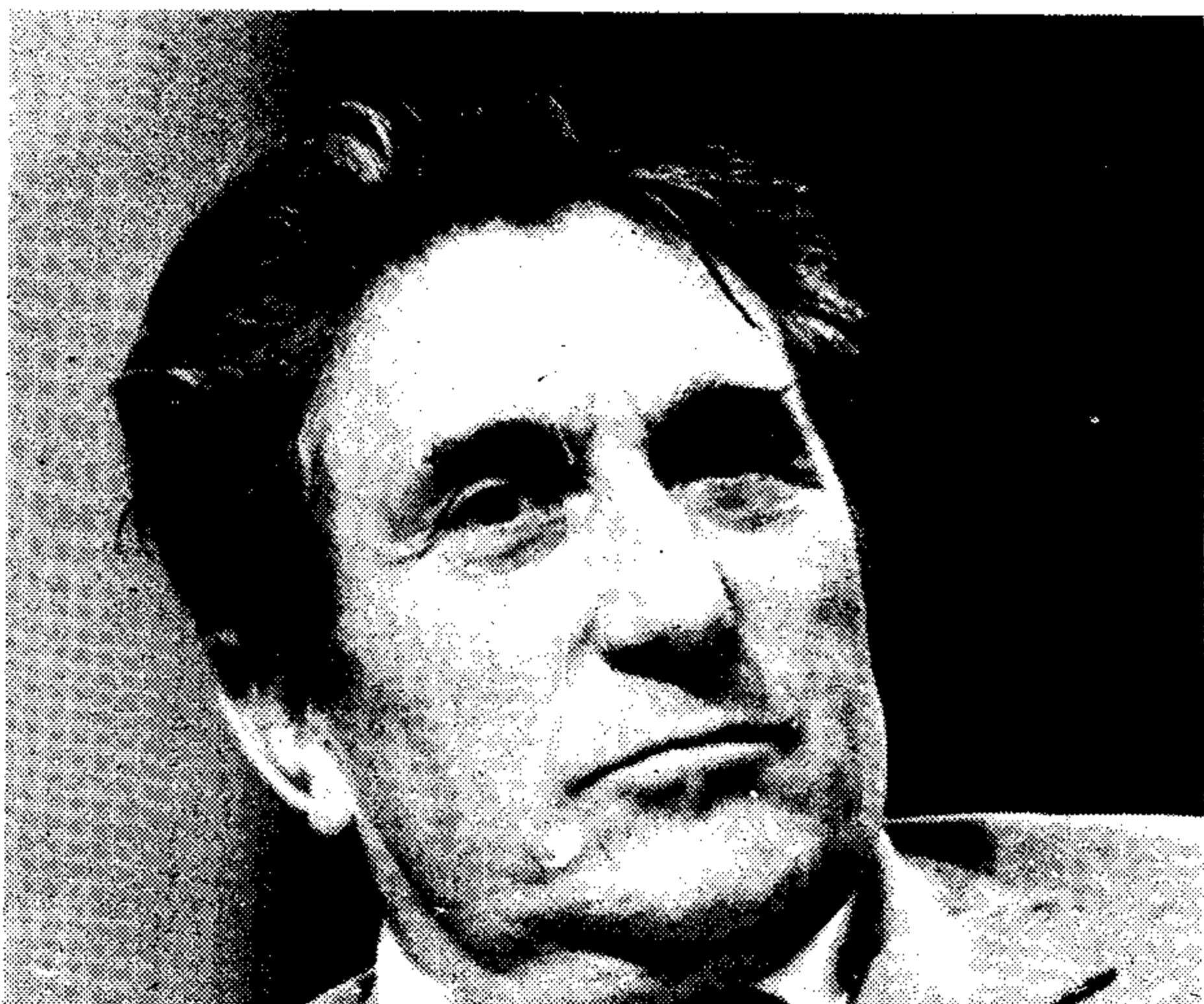
The Labour Party's

current policy does not pose to change this.

One way forward was to promote, in our CLP trade union branch policies which are explicitly concerned with fighting patriarchy and which contribute rather than seen as alternatives to fight for women's rights.

We hope shortly to discuss on these with the Women's Action Committee of CLPD. Livingstone spoke of LCGR as well as for him when he said: "We will on fighting and challenge prejudice in every CLP trade union branch until we commit this party position not just on sexuality but on all forms of sexuality. The Tories and press know that our campaign unlocked the repression in their sexuality, we do so we take our much closer forward transforming the whole society than perhaps other single issue that movement faces."

Contact:
LCGR, 61a
Bloom St,
Manchester
1; Gay Youth
Movement
BM GYM, London
WC1N 3XX



Chapple — too late to save Mellish

Andrew Hornung reviews 'Not a Love Story'

'Turning on' the profits

'MARKET' research shows that a woman on her knees committing fellatio is the biggest turn-on,' declares the pornographer dispassionately. 'We're producing a product that satisfies a need.'

And why is it the biggest turn-on? Because it combines an image of physical stimulation with the frisson of the forbidden. These are in turn combined with an image of male mastery which contains its own 'justification': the dirty bitch needs to be punished! 'Not a Love Story' is an investigation of pornography.

Its producer, Bonnie Sher Klein, wanted to make this film for two reasons.

Pornography is a bigger industry than film and

music together. And she wanted to show that the sex portrayed in pornography was a form not of love and intimacy, but hate and fear.

The film is no 'Mondo Porno' flit through the filth of 42nd Street. Instead the documentary is punctuated by interviews with feminist writers and anti-pornography campaigners. It is also held together not only by the presence of the producer-as-interviewer but by Linda Lee Tracey, a stripper with doubts.

The idea is to stop the viewer becoming desensitised through the steady build-up of breasts, bums, fellatio and flagellation by creating an empathy with an increasingly

sensitised Linda Lee. It is not completely successful here, but by the end of the film what strikes you is not Linda Lee's toughness and isolation, but her growing compassion and sense of solidarity.

My own feelings about the film are certainly very much determined by my being a man. I was horrified at the sadism, but more by the pathetic, longing, disappointed faces of those men in the coin-op cubicles who strain to get a last good look as their coin runs out and the peep-hole closes.

One of the feminists interviewed tells us that when the Nazis invaded Poland they distributed huge quantities of pornographic material. The idea,

says the commentator, was to isolate men — each jerking off in a room on his own. The woman wears the gag, silenced by the master in his fantasy. In reality, the 'master' fantasises in his room alone, in his cubicle, in the booth.

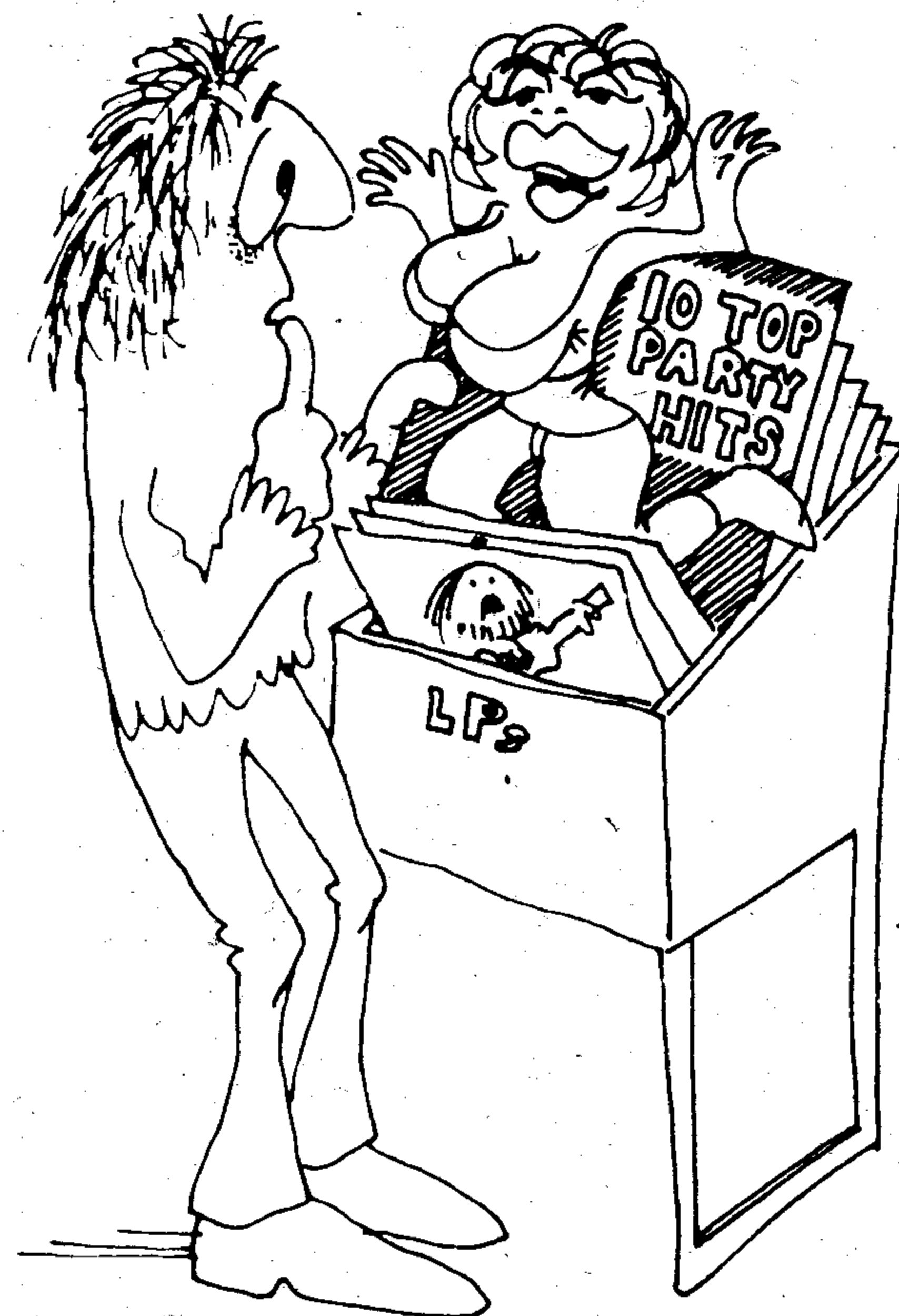
But things don't stay there. Applauding the porno film's gang-rape is not going to be followed by outrage on hearing of a real rape. The person who pays his pound to watch bondage is not going to protest at any of the thousand petty enslavements that make women specially oppressed.

At the beginning of the film, Linda Lee is self-confident and solitary. It's her body she's dis-

playing and she knows what she's doing. But when she watches 'Beat the Bitch' she exclaims, 'That's my body that's being abused!' Soon the solitariness is replaced by solidarity. She knows that her display of her body affects the lives of all other women in the same society.

The value of the film does not lie in the solutions it offers, nor in the sheer shock it produces.

Its importance lies in the way it contrasts the image of women presented by men in pornography with the image of women presented by women appearing in the film itself: the first passive and degraded, the latter mutually supportive and creative.



Steve Bell Refreshes the parts...

Harry Sloan reviews, 'Further Down on Maggie's Farm', by Steve Bell (Penguin, £1.95)

GET up the noses of your reactionary relatives and cement your friendship with fellow socialists: give them both a copy of Steve Bell's latest volume of cartoons this Christmas.

Right wingers will gnash their teeth at Maggie's Farm, the Falklands strips and the debunking of the SDP. Religious nuts will fume at the antics of Lord God Almighty. And socialists with any life in them at all will roll around with laughter.

The drawings are pure fantasy and exaggeration: the dialogue is imaginative fiction: but the mixture holds more truth than the outward form might suggest. Harry Hardnose and his Fleet Street hacks in particular are all too real a feature in the lives of millions: they really are absurd exaggerations.

We can learn by laughing — and learn to laugh at ourselves as well, in Bell's occasional light parody of the self-righteous ultra-left.

Use the book as a litmus-test in cases where a person's sense of humour is in doubt. Anyone reading through without a smile is dead for the purposes of anything at all.



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SCIENCE

THE Socialist Organiser science column has a predecessor, albeit a Stalinist one, in J B S Haldane's 'Science and Everyday Life' weekly column in the immediately pre-war Daily Worker. It ran from July 1938 to January 1941.

J B S Haldane FRS, Professor of Biometry at London University, was one of the most brave and brilliant scientists of his time. As a communist, Haldane was concerned to see science used for mankind's benefit, not for capital's.

He realised that much scientific knowledge is monopolised by the ruling class, and thus they gain an advantage over the

workers. Haldane's science page was an (inevitably small) attempt at removing this advantage.

He opposed the elitist views of his bourgeois contemporaries who saw science as unteachable on a mass scale.

It was said that modern science could not be explained in anything less than massive tome-like books, and that short popular articles were useless and superficial. These critics argued that an astronomical discussion on news of say white dwarf stars being discovered in relative proximity to the sun (a typical Haldane discussion subject) necessitated know-

ledge of parallaxes and spectroscopies before they could be understood properly.

Haldane's reply was that astronomers don't need to be aware of the complexities of leather tanning before choosing a new pair of boots, and neither do laymen need detailed background knowledge to understand a short newspaper item on the stars. He thought that, 'the ordinary man must know something about the various branches of science...' because, like boots for the astronomer, 'it affects his everyday life'.

'Science and Everyday Life' often used the Daily

Worker's news items to lead in discussions on general science which might otherwise be somewhat abstract and boring. A 1938 ammonia explosion at the Eldorado Ice Cream works which killed a woman worker and injured many others provided a backdrop to a chemistry lesson on the properties and uses of ammonia.

Digestion

Refrigeration was covered, but so was spectroscopic measurement of gas quantities in the atmosphere of distant planets. Digestion, and ammonia,

followed in a subsequent issue of the paper.

An article on 'Mathematical Conundrums' digressed into the class nature of Ancient Greece in order to explain the continued hegemony of 'pure' over 'applied' mathematics. Professor Haldane attributed this to Greek slaveowning society's contempt for manual labour.

Topics from genetics to grass pollen, from astrophysics to zoology, were covered in an extremely interesting and thought-provoking style.

★ Continued next week.

Communist Professor

by John Riley

Fighting ward faces suspension move

by Dave Spencer (West Midlands county councillor)

A WARD Labour Party in Coventry has been threatened with suspension by right wing councillors. The 'crime' committed by Upper Stoke Labour Party was to carry through a successful housing campaign in the Stoke Heath Council Estate during the last local elections in May.

The Upper Stoke Labour Party found a considerable amount of dissatisfaction among tenants with the increase in rents and yet the lack of repairs and maintenance to their houses.

Most of the houses in the Stoke Heath area were built during the First World War. The Ward Party produced a questionnaire which they got all tenants to sign. They

took photographs of the worst cases. They compiled a report, published it and got coverage in the local press.

The three local Labour councillors, Richard Morris, Bob Holland and Dave Edwards took the issue to the local Labour Council, blamed their spinelessness in not fighting the cuts and so on.

The results were on the one hand that many of the repairs have now been done but on the other hand that

the Upper Stoke comrades have been accused by right wing councillors in the North East CLP of "bringing the Labour Party into disrepute".

At first this was seen as an aberration on the part of the pompous Councillor Albert Rose, chief whip of the Labour Group, and treated as something of a joke.

But last Wednesday's North East CLP Executive endorsed Councillor Rose's call for the suspension of the

whole Ward.

Note that this meeting took place immediately after the Labour Party Conference - so much for unity!

Clearly the right wing councillors who run the District Party in cahoots with the local bureaucracy of the TGWU and AUEW see the new right wing NEC as a means of disciplining any moves at all from the left. At the time of the debates on the register, many of them were calling for the proscrip-

tion of the whole of Militant.

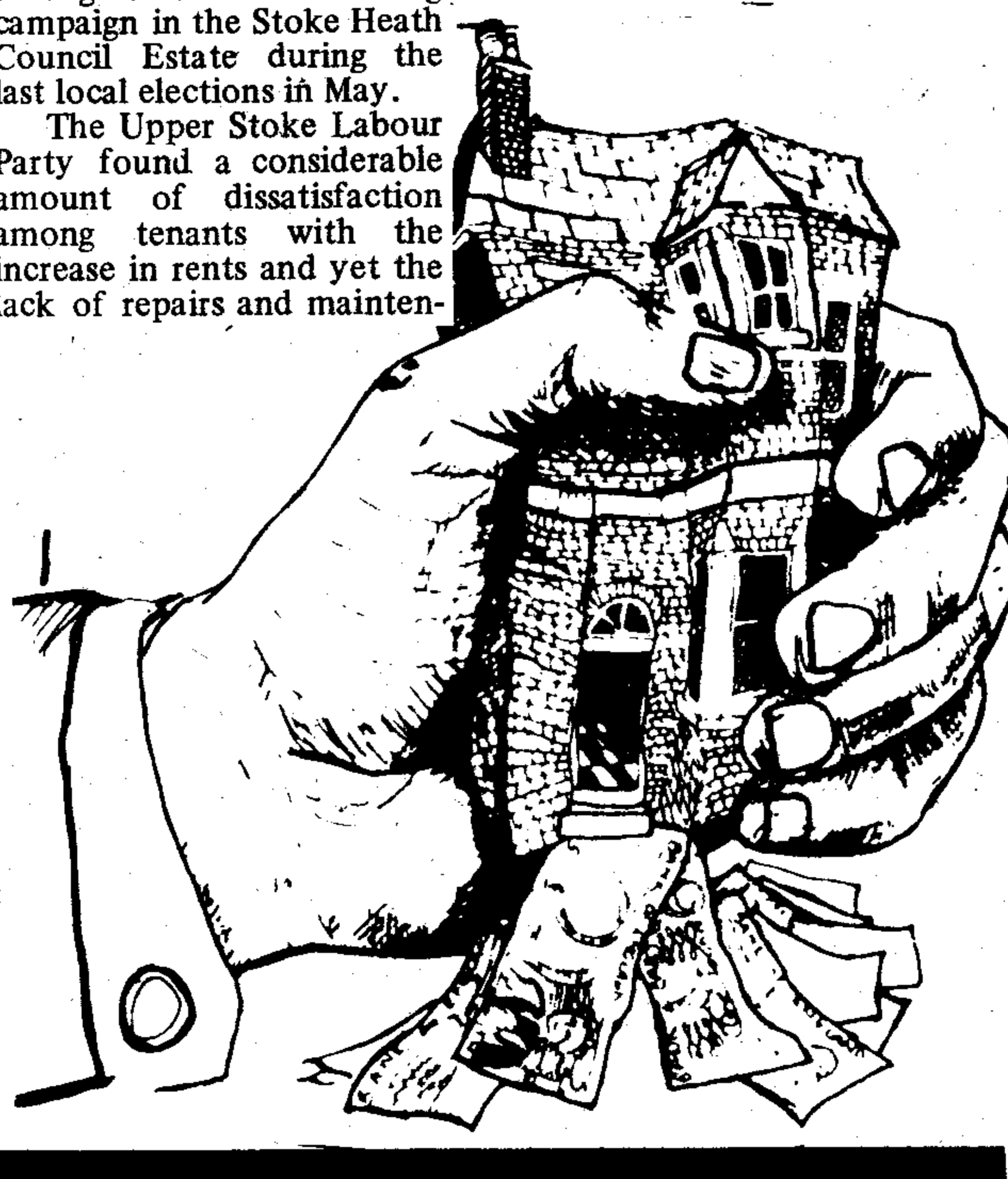
But what they mean by Militant is the whole of the left - they make no distinctions between Militant and Socialist Organiser or take note of non-alignment - they want to maintain the power to quietly carry through the cuts and to disperse patronage.

The response of the left must of course be to support Upper Stoke Ward Labour Party. Their housing

campaign is a model of how a Ward should act. They actually achieved practical results for the tenants at the same time as recruiting members.

They now have to go back and recruit more people on the basis of a fight against the right wing politics of the Labour Council. Other Wards in Coventry should start similar housing campaigns and recruitment drives. The battle must be on to make the Labour Party a mass party reflecting the lives, interests and aspirations of working people, not those of a privileged layer intent on selling us out again.

The pub which dominates the Stoke Heath area, the Barras Hotel, is known locally as "the Bolsh". The name refers to the politics of the World War I regulars and the many meetings that took place there. The spirit obviously lingers on.



Gorbals housing sale delayed

by Stan Crooke

IN the face of mounting opposition to its plan to hive off the Hutesontown 'E' housing scheme in the Gorbals (Glasgow) to private enterprise, the Labour Group on Glasgow District Council has now stated that no decision on the future of the scheme will be taken until discussions have been held with the District Labour Party and the local Constituency Labour Party.

At first sight, this seems a considerable climbdown. By a majority of 21 votes to 19, the Group had previously voted specifically not to inform the Party of its plans for privatisation. This is the seventh major decision since 1980 which the Group has taken without any prior consultation with the Party.

In fact, though, the climbdown is more apparent than real. At the discussions, the Labour Group representatives will argue that there is no alternative to privatisation. Meanwhile the council has gone ahead with putting the scheme out to tender.

Scheme

The Stop the Sale Campaign (SSC) is demanding that the scheme, which suffers from structural dampness, should be completely demolished and replaced by decent council housing, after full consultation with the local community to ascertain the

needs of the area.

Support for the SSC continues to grow. Local community and Labour newspapers such as Glasgow Tenant, Strathclyde Labour Briefing and Glasgow Fightback have all backed the SSC as have a number of Labour Party branches and constituencies. NALGO is being contacted by the SSC to appeal for backing of all work connected with the possible sale of Hutesontown 'E'.

But the Labour Group has been attempting to dis-

credit the SSC. Some members of the Group have insinuated, for example, that the SSC is unrepresentative of local feelings in the Gorbals or is merely a front for "left wing extremists" in an attempt to scare away support for the campaign.

The right wing in the local CLP have likewise aided and abetted the Labour Group's attempt to undermine support for the SSC, for example by turning down proposals for joint public meetings and other forms of joint work with the

SSC.

The immediate task for the SSC is to restore to the centre of attention the basic political issues posed by the sale of the scheme (defence of public sector housing, accountability of the District Labour Group) and thereby defeat attempts to undermine support for the campaign.

For further information about the SSC contact: Stop the Sale Campaign, C/o Laurieston Information Centre, Block 80, Stirling-fauld Place, Glasgow G5.

Isolate racists!

by councillor Susan Carlyle

A TYPICAL day for a Bengali boy in Stepney Green school is spent avoiding certain parts of the school. If you're sent on an errand, even by the kindest of teachers, you don't want to go on your own.

Small new boys run gauntlets of trouble on the stairways and in corridors. In older years the violence and thuggery increases.

Maruk, a sixth former, was threatened in the playground one Thursday break time. He reported it to a senior teacher, and on returning to his class was set on by three white boys from behind and knocked unconscious. He lay in a corridor for half an hour before being discovered, then was taken to hospital and kept in with an eye injury.

The punishment for the three has so far been varying lengths of time of suspension. A private prosecution may decide otherwise.

Labour Party elected governors, including for the first time a Bangladeshi person, pressurised the head staff to allow a parents' meeting to discuss this attack and the racism in the school. For the first time the school hall was packed with Bengali parents, demanding justice and fair treatment for their children.

School students past and present attended, giving their experiences of beatings and unfair treatment at the hands of racists in the school. A relation of Maruk told of the family receiving telephone calls threatening petrol bombing if they proceeded with their complaints.

No solution was forthcoming from the senior staff who see 'football' as the great example of multi-racialism, and rely on an attitude of "come and tell us, we'll sort it out".

Over one third of the new entry forms at this school are Bengali. The school has dealt with bullying as being a problem, but has not had a

positive anti-racist policy built into its school programme.

Until schools like this do combine a strong set of sanctions on racists, coupled with a complete re-education programme, the racial violence will continue.

The parents and Welfare groups, with the Labour Party, have a job to pressurise and influence school authorities to take this up. ILEA already is asking questions about Stepney Green's level of racist bullying and violence.

The streets outside the school are just as much the staff's area in protecting their pupils.

The very next day after the meeting, a group of first years were attacked by a set of whites yards from the school gates. I witnessed this.

At the moment the Bengali youth have to organise to protect themselves. 'Self-defence is no offence' is taking on a real meaning, especially when school authorities sanction them more severely than the racists. (Maruk was suspended last year for defending himself, with others).

Parents are not being bought off with invitations to be elected to one of the three parent governor seats.

Facilities for Bengali-speaking interpreters should be used by ILEA, rather than putting school students into separate classes for language reasons. Isolate the racists!

For too long the immigrant minorities have been seen as the problem: they have been segregated and treated as difficult to teach. Despite this the Asian pupils are the highest attainers in a system pressurised heavily against them.

"We are here to stay. Our children's education is suffering. Expel the racists", was the clear message at the school meeting, coupled with a resolution for an open independent inquiry.

Glasgow witch-hunt

THE RIGHT wing and some supposed left-wingers in Queen's Park Constituency Labour Party, Glasgow, have joined together to take disciplinary action - maybe expulsion - against a Socialist Organiser supporter in the Crosshill - Prospecthill branch.

The secondary reason for the witch-hunt is the general political work of the SO supporter. In the last few months the branch has passed motions for immediate British withdrawal from Ireland, refusal to expel socialists, active support for the 'Stop the Sale' campaign, etc.

But the crucial issue is an article which appeared in SO five weeks ago on the Gorbals Anti-Dampness Campaign.

Criticising the failings of the local Labour Party, councillors and MP, it touched a raw nerve.

The article, several hundred words long, also contained a five-word statement making an accusation which the author and the paper have since withdrawn and apologised for. But the hysteria has not died down.

It surfaced first in a front page article in the Glasgow Herald on October 6. Jean McFadden, leader of the Labour group on the District Council, was quoted as saying:

"I saw Frank (McElhone MP) on the Sunday before he died, and he was terribly upset. I believe that on the night before he died, photo-

copies of the article were put through every door in Govanhill".

The innuendo that the article caused the death of the late MP is ridiculous, and the bizarre allegation about photocopies is completely untrue.

But the SO supporter has been summoned before the EC on October 13, and this has been used as justification to prevent discussion on the issue in the Crosshill-Prospecthill branch meeting.

This witch-hunt must be rejected, and the CLP turned to the more fundamental struggle to build a militant, fighting Labour Party in the area.

October

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WHAT'S ON

Paid ads 5p per word, £4 per column inch. Send to Socialist Organiser (What's On), 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

NATIONAL UNION of Students (Scotland) women's conference. October 30-31, at Strathclyde University Students Union, 90 John St, Glasgow. Open to all women - not just students. Registration £2, information from Cas Stewart, NUS Scotland, 12 Dublin St, Edinburgh EH1 3PP (031-556 6598).

NOTTINGHAM Socialist Organiser meets every Friday 7.30pm at the International Community Centre, 61B Mansfield Rd.

SOCIALIST Organiser Labour Party conference briefings - full set £1 from SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

SOUTH EAST London Socialist Organiser forums: every other Thursday, 8pm at the Queen Victoria, Artillery Place, Woolwich.

October 21: 'The Tebbit bill' - speaker Wendy Mustill.

ISLINGTON Socialist Organiser, meetings every other Sunday, 3pm at Thornhill Neighbourhood Project, Orkney House, Caledonian Rd. Next meeting October 24. Details. Nik, 607 5268.

NORTH-WEST London Socialist Organiser group discussion meetings: every other Sunday, 8pm (for venue see SO sellers).
October 24: 'The Tebbit bill'
November 7: 'The Women's Campaign for Jobs'

HULL Socialist Organiser public meeting. 'After the Labour Party conference'. Wednesday October 27, 7.30pm, Trades and Labour Club, Beverley Road.

WOMEN, Immigration and Nationality. conference organised by women involved in immigration law campaigning and the GLC women's committee. Sunday October 24, 10 to 5, County Hall, London SE1. All women welcome.

International 'Debating Socialism' weekend on 23/24 October. Alan Thorne debates Socialist Challenge and Socialist Worker on the unions, Ernest Mandel on the monetary crisis, John Ross debates Duncan Hallas on entrism and the Labour Party; Bernadette McAliskey on Ireland, Frances Morrell, Alan Freeman, and Labour Briefing on the new Labour Left; Ken Livingstone, Hilary Wainwright and Tessa van Gelderen on the lessons of Golder's GLC, John Harrison, Bea Campbell, Valerie Coultas, Mike Davis and more discussions on a socialist programme for the British crisis. Just £4 for the weekend, £2.50 per day at Kingsway Princeton college, near Kings Cross, London WC1. Starts 10am.

POLISH SOLIDARITY Contact addresses: Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group, Acorn House, 314/320 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP. Tel: 01- 837 9464.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER North of England day school on 'The International Class Struggle'. Sunday October 31, 10am to 5.30pm at Manchester University Students' Union, Oxford Road, Manchester. Lots of workshops, speakers, discussions, etc. Registration £1.50 waged, 75p claimants, from 78 High St, Atherton, Lancs. Cheap lunch available, creche provided.

CAMPAIGN against Racist Laws conference. Saturday October 23, 10am, County Hall, London. Details. 56 Edithna St, London SW9.

KURDISTAN News and Comment issue no.6 now out. 50p including postage from Kurdistan Solidarity, c/o Carila, Box 30, 29 Islington Park St, London N1. Kurdistan solidarity conference: Saturday October 2, starting 11am, at Brabant Rd Trade Union Centre, Station Rd/Brabant Rd, London N22. Details 01-809 1089.

HARINGEY Socialist Organiser: fortnightly meetings at Brabant Rd trade union centre. For details phone 802.0771 or 348 5941.

SPARTACIST Truth Politics and practice of the Spartacist League, by John Lister. 70 pages, £1 plus 26p postage, from WSL, PO Box 135, London N1.

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Workers' Socialist Review no.2

FALKLANDS - WHOSE WAR?

40 pages plus new 8-page supplement: 80p plus 20p P&P. 5 copies £4 post free. Orders: WSL, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

BA back Air India

THE strike by Air India workers at New Bond Street and Heathrow Airport has received support from British Airways workers at the airport. BA engineers have agreed to black work on Air India planes. And BA staff have stopped Air India's attempts to link into Travicom, the computerised reservation system run by BA. This is important since Air India's own reservation system is not functioning because of the strike.

The regional director of Air India has written to Moss Evans, threatening to sue the TGWU, the strikers' union.

He claims there is no dispute and that the slogans on the pickets' placards are detrimental to Air India's business.

There seems to be little chance of the actions succeeding — the workers are picketing their own place of work over a dispute with

their immediate employer. The TGWU won't be swayed by this feeble threat.

The deputy convenor of the shop stewards' committee, C.B. Madhavan, left this week for India. He took with him a petition signed by British MPs and trade union leaders to the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi asking her to intervene in the dispute (Air India is owned by the Indian government).

Questions have been asked about the dispute in both houses of the Indian parliament and there are signs that Air India management's claim that they are backed by the Indian government is false.

The strikers are picketing the Indian High Commission at Aldwych in London from 10 am on Monday 18 October. Support would be welcome.

TGWU snub to S&K

Aly Mir

THE struggle at Coventry's Sandhar and Kang cash and carry against redundancies and victimisation of TGWU members was continued with another picket last Saturday.

As before, the success of the picketing was reduced by the police keeping pickets away from the entrance. Nevertheless customers were turned away.

An important development was the presence of several Birmingham S&K black workers on the picket line. This first concrete act of support from the Birmingham workers and the promise of more support next Saturday have increased the confidence of the strikers and the solidarity pickets.

Supporters have started to raise money for the strike committee, particularly for the very high legal defence costs which the strikers have incurred, following the bosses' court injunction.

There has still been no support from the local TGWU. A lobby of the TGWU District Committee by 30 strikers and supporters, ended with the officials being forced to hear the Asian strikers, but refusing to allow them to have any translators.

Another picket will be held this Saturday (16 October) from 8am to 12.30. More support is needed. Messages of support and donations to S&K Strike Committee, c/o 88 King George's Avenue, Coventry.



Available from SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 for 60p incl. postage.

Civil servants fight DHSS cutbacks

by Alan Stephens

FOUR DHSS offices are now on indefinite strike in Birmingham. After the walkout over staffing levels at Erdington, union officials have been encouraging other offices in the area to come out too.

In Oxford, Harcourt House DHSS have been on strike for two weeks. There are reports of other offices also walking out.

In Bury SCPS (Society of Civil and Public Servants) members have been on strike against regrading. In Dundee they've been out over this too, while in Newcastle the newly drafted in Special Claims Control team was met by a picket of union members.

Although the strikes all have similar origins, there is a difference. The action on staffing levels has been spontaneous while the others follow national union policy.

The government's aim to reduce the civil service from its 1979 level of 730,000 to 630,000 in 1984, and the introduction of new schemes such as Unified Housing Benefit (which will involve thousands of redundancies) are bound to lead to further spontaneous walkouts.

However, as CPSCA/

by Bill Peters

WORKERS in the BL Cowley Assembly Plant have won an important victory. Recently, as part of a full-scale management offensive within the plant, BL sent letters to workers involved in strike action which threatened that any further strike action for any reason would result in instant dismissal.

Management claim that there have been 43 strikes in the plant since May 1 and announced that they would be prepared to take any drastic action necessary to stop further strikes taking place.

Although the figure of 43 strikes exaggerates the situation, since many of them were of very short duration, the strikes which have taken place have been in response to the ruthless management which has been installed over the past year.

Using the authority which Edwardes has reaped through repeated sell-outs by the top trade union leaders, and the agreements full of penalty clauses, which have been forced in with their collaboration, BL have introduced a system of management based on sheer intimidation and fear.

The trade union structure

within the plant has been seriously undermined, shop stewards' facilities almost abolished, protective agreements, particularly seniority agreements, systematically broken down.

Hundreds of jobs have been abolished, and the remaining workforce has been substantially speeded-up, with workers constantly intimidated and abused.

The resulting strikes have been unable to halt this process. The recent threatening letters were therefore both a response to these strikes and an attempt to go all the way, establish total management control and effectively end the power of the trade union movement for a considerable period.

Last week, mass meetings made it clear that they would fully back anyone victimised under the letters.

Another serious issue was also brought before the mass meeting — the disciplinary action being taken against Andy Brown, one of the TGWU deputy convenors and secretary of one of the major TGWU branches.

Although the day shift meeting took no vote, the night shift where most of the letters have been issued, voted unanimously to back anyone victimised under the terms of the letters.

The following night a group of workers struck, demanding the withdrawal of the letters. Management promptly said that this constituted a further unconstitutional stoppage, and therefore the threat contained in the letters would

be activated.

Ten workers were instructed to report onto the day shift on the morning of the 11th to be disciplined.

It soon became clear that management were not proceeding with sackings, but instead said that they intended issuing the ten men with a further letter, saying that next time they would definitely be sacked.

The reason for their shift was obvious. They had assessed the mood of the workers and had rightly concluded that the sackings would have created a massive backlash from the workforce which has been just

under the surface for some time.

It is an important victory for the plant under present conditions and shows that even the most hard-line management, created by Edwardes, can be pushed back if it meets a united response.



AUEW votes to strike

A mass meeting of the 700 skilled workers represented by the AUEW in BL's Cowley Assembly Plant has voted to take strike action in defence of their convenor Roy Fraser.

They gave five days' notice of an all-out stoppage next Tuesday, demanding that management withdraw a final warning issued to Fraser.

The action was recom-

mended by the AUEW District Committee and local official Malcolm Young and carried 3-1 at the mass meeting.

Fraser had been disciplined by the company for calling a shop stewards' meeting off the plant which had then called a mass meeting to discuss the amalgamation (i.e. loss) of AUEW jobs on the plant.

THE PAPER have been reporting that the switchboard at Unity House (NUR headquarters) was jammed with members phoning in their support for resigned general secretary Sid Weighell, and there was a flood of similar telegrams (funny, I thought the telegram service had stopped).

So being an NUR member I thought I ought to phone and give my view.

I got through first time — no jammed switchboard.

Young male voice: "Unity House".

Me: "Who do I speak to to give my opinion of Sid Weighell's resignation?"

YMV: "If you tell me, I'll pass it on".

Me: "I think it's a good thing that he's resigned, and he should be put up against the wall".

Pause.

YMV: "I agree, and so do a lot of others".

Me: "Oh, what about all these calls in his support".

YMV: "There haven't been any, all the calls I've taken have said good riddance".

I've since found out from a member of the NUR executive that the whole press story of mounds of letters and messages is a lie. Most branches that have met have welcomed Weighell's resignation. The few that haven't did so only by a small majority.

Today (Monday), in its attempt to drag up sympathy for poor Sidney, the press reports that he was attacked and punched. Again, the executive member says it never happened!

Will Special General Meeting delegates support the real wishes of the members?

Two years ago, Women's Fightback's first conference for Labour women stimulated the new growth of women's sections and launched the demands for major reforms. Now we need to get these implemented, and weld the women's sections into a force that can lead in the Labour Party. That's what the second Women's Fightback conference, on November 27th, will be looking at. Register Now!

2nd National Conference for Labour women

November 27th 1982

at

Kingsway Princeton College
Grays Inn Road, London WC2

Please fill in:

Name

Address

Organisation

Phone

Send, with £2.50 Registration fee (£1.50 unwaged) and s.a.e. for credentials, to:
41 Ellington St., London N7
01-607-5268

members.

In Oxford, a successful joint protest by CPSCA/SCPS, Unemployed Workers' and Claimants' Union, NALGO, Ruskin Students' Union and the Claimants' Defence Committee, was held outside South Oxford Middle School, now being used as an emergency payments office.

Petition

Over 500 signatures have now been collected on the OUWCU petition supporting the strikers' demand for at least 25 extra full-time permanent staff. (They've been offered two).

Joint picketing at South Marston Road and the school is being planned, along with joint speaking engagements at union branches, Labour Party wards, and unemployed groups. A joint committee of CPSCA/SCPS, NALGO Social Services, OUWCU, CDC, and NAPO has been formed. Employed and unemployed, unite!

Contact: Richard Horton, CPSCA, Room 337, Fiveways House, Islington, Birmingham 15; Morag Robertson, CPSCA, 24 Beechcroft Rd, Oxford; Claimants' Defence Committee, 44b Princes St, Oxford.

SCPS militants in Oxford point out, the civil service unions are organisationally geared up for selective strikes only, with high levels of strike pay.

They fear that the national leadership will try to restrict any fight on cuts to the Birmingham region. To win, the fight on staffing and cuts has to be national.

This summer CPSCA members voted by a narrow majority for industrial action in the DHSS. Rapidly rising unemployment and cuts in staff had increased the pressure in the offices all round.

But the DHSS section executive decided against calling for national action against the cuts. This failure to give a national lead can now be challenged. All the civil service unions involved have made these strikes official.

To stop the cuts, other offices must follow the lead given in Birmingham and Oxford.

The rest of the labour movement can play its part — employed and unemployed. Messages of support, donations and assistance on the picket line are always needed. Health unions and unemployed groups should especially mobilise their

Socialist Organiser

1984: THE TORY DREAM

1984: the date has become linked in popular thinking with George Orwell's nightmare vision of a totalitarian, centralised state machine operating on the Stalinist model, with 'Thought Police' and 'Big Brother watching you'.

But the 1984 that Thatcher's gang are dreaming of could make Orwell's nightmare seem like a soft option.

It is now clear that the Tories' plans to put more cash into the pockets of the rich are leading even now to a wholesale demolition of the welfare state. The premature and embarrassing leak of the cabinet's Think Tank report - proposing the scrapping of the National Health Service, of free higher education, the axing of pensions and state benefits and even the abolition of the state education system itself - has pinpointed the direction of Tory policies.

Such plans may seem fantastic - too outrageous to even mention. But they have only been "shelved", not scrapped.

And meantime, draconian cutbacks are actually being made in the NHS. Oxfordshire Regional Health Authority, faced with a cash crunch directly resulting from Tory cuts, last week spelled out the horrifying kind of "economics" they need to balance their books:

- *Scrapping accident and emergency services at weekends.
- *Denying health care to people newly arrived in the region.
- *Closing some general hospitals.
- *Closing all mentally handicapped hospitals.
- *Charging patients for family planning and non-urgent operations.
- *Charging for patient's catering, laundry and transport.

So sweeping are these plans that even Tory ministers have been forced to warn the Regional Health Authority that some may at present be illegal.

But if the cuts are not made in this way, they will come in some other form if Tory cash limits are enforced.

RHA chairman Gordon Roberts blandly admitted that "some of our ideas will surprise a lot of people and cause despair, but we must take measures to live within our resources."

Mr Roberts' "measures" mean, of course, ensuring that fewer working class people live and more resources go to the Tory rich. Indeed RHA spokespeople in Oxford and elsewhere are quick to blame the elderly for the crisis in the NHS. Tory strategy will deal with this 'problem' in a ruthless pincer movement - raising their rents and rates, cutting their pensions and destroying the NHS and social services which sustain them.

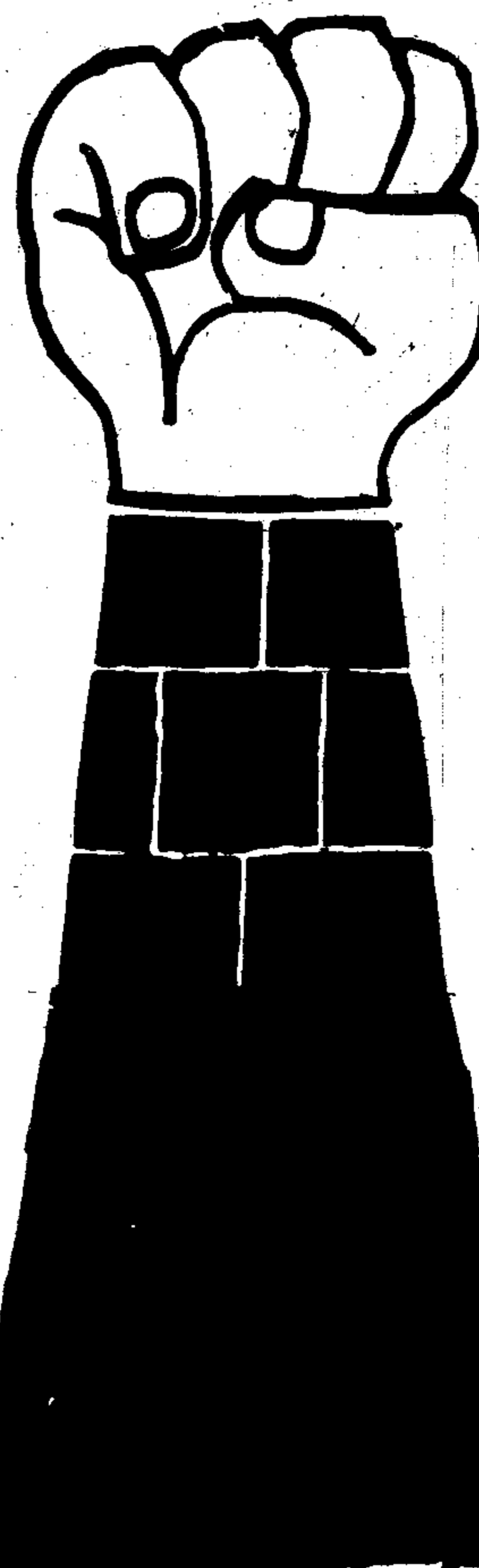
If this is not the solution you had in mind, remember the Tory wreckers can be stopped.

A general strike, led by the NHS unions, could not only win the 12% pay claim, but lay a solid basis for defence of existing services in the NHS. It could even grow into a movement strong enough to topple the Thatcher government itself and create conditions in which the workers' movement could carry through the struggle against Labour's right wing leadership for a genuine workers' government.

Only a government based on the strength of the working class and prepared to carry through a socialist programme can prevent the nightmare visions of 1984 becoming the stark reality of tomorrow.



£6000 fund



Well, at least somebody still cares . . . This week we've had £10 from Hull, and £8 from our "intrepid knitter", who has donated money from knitting a jumper.

Merseyside Marathon money: so far we've had £54.70 with a lot more still to come.

New totals:

Hull	£25.00	42%
Oxford	£431.50	85%
Leeds	£93.00	93%
Sheffield	£137.50	138%
Leicester	£96.00	25%
London	£389.50	18%
Merseyside	£174.70	55%

Some groups have now met or nearly met their targets - what are the others doing?

Total £3892.22 65%

This leaves us with £2107.78 to raise!

All donations should be sent to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Rush donations to
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28, Middle Lane,
LONDON
N8 8PL