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Socialist Organiser

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Right wing prepare expulsions

AS WE go to press, the new right wing dominated Labour Party organisation sub-committee is meeting to discuss a purge of Militant. Proposals from general

secretary Jim Mortimer suggest no delay with detailed argument about whether Militant can satisfy the conditions for the register, but immediate expulsion of five members of its editorial board. This would be followed by more drawn-out proceedings against some 50-odd other Militant activists.

Meanwhile Mortimer's report accepts that the Labour Friends of Israel and the Labour Committee for Europe, for example, may fail to qualify for the register, but proposes no action against them.

It could not be clear that the register is just a formula for a purge of the Left.

But the organisation sub-committee right-winger may decide to proceed even more brutally than Mortimer suggests. They may also move to disband Hornsey Labour Party because it has refused to exclude Tariq Ali.

The new 'Labour Against the Witch-Hunt' group, set up at a conference on September 11, is campaigning for CLPs to defy the purge up to and including facing disbandment. If enough CLPs support this stand the Right can be checked.

• Contact: LAW, 11 Widderton Rd, London N16.

• Inside, page 3 — LAW model resolution; and why CLPD should not register.

NHS leaders run for cover

JOHN HARRIS

SOLD OUT —



Spanswick gets militant — against calls for all-out action!

FOR 30p?

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

IN VIEW of the latest negotiations on NHS pay, the Sheffield October 30 meeting of health union shop stewards is to be recalled this coming Saturday (November 13).

The questions tabled for discussion are:

- Should the latest offer be put to the membership?
- Should any deal be accepted which is to be financed out of cuts in other NHS spending?
- Should any form of two year settlement be accepted?

A preliminary meeting of the national steering committee will take place at 1pm, with the full session opening at 2pm, in the N Floor Lecture Theatre of the Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Sheffield.

INSIDE

What's the
real rate of
inflation —
see page two

DESPITE inflation, the price of betrayal is getting speedily cheaper. It cost the Romans 30 pieces of silver to buy out Judas Iscariot; it has cost the Tories a mere 30 pence to throw the leaderships of the health unions into dangerously derailing the 7 month pay battle of their 700,000 members.

The 30 pence is the weekly amount of the ½% 'increase' in the government's latest pay offer to nurses — next year! The total package would amount to a further brutal cut in real wages, imposed over a 2-year period up to April 1984.

As we go to press the offer has been made only to nurses, in the expectation that the anti-union Royal College of Nursing will accept it, splitting the ranks of health workers and creating conditions to defeat the struggle for a 12% increase on this year's review.

But many NHS union leaders — in particular Albert Spanswick, general secretary of CoHSE and head of the TUC Health Services Committee — would have grasped at almost any excuse to end the dispute before the decision was taken on calls for an all-out indefinite strike.

Indeed, as soon as the November 8 transport strike and one-day health strike was called off late on Friday night, it was obvious that Spanswick had not the slightest idea of what the 'new' offer might be.

The one idea firmly rooted in his mind was that the struggle had to be undermined if it were not to escalate into an all-out confrontation with the Tory government — a spectre which the TUC leadership as a whole has consistently sought to exorcise from the class struggle.

Spanswick's TUC colleagues in the transport unions had already done their best to undermine the tide of solidarity with the health workers by deliberately organising a demoralising fiasco in place of the promised one-day transport strike for November 8. The men who knifed ASLEF have now got their eyes set on the health workers.

The results were predictable. Fowler's contemptuous ½% increase in next year's offer was greeted not with the required immediate rejection by the unions, but with a whingeing appeal for a mere ½% more next year by CoHSE representative David Williams, and an agreement by the unions to put the sell-out package to their members.

NUPE officer Bob Jones succeeded in facing both ways on the issue: 'It is a lousy, ludicrous and ridiculous deal', he announced, only to add in the next breath: 'My organisation will be against it. But if the Royal College of Nursing accept we will go along with it'.

Jones seems to forget that NUPE members have opted to join a union, not to be dictated to by a reactionary professional body like the RCN, which has consistently blocked the pay struggle.

Worse still, the Tory initiative in making its offer only to the nurses has sent the union leaders down the blind alley of demanding simply an equal (equally bad!) percentage offer for non-nursing staff.

Formally, the process of consultation on the TUC Health Service Committee call for all-out strike action is still proceeding as normal in the health unions. The CoHSE special conference is still fixed, and NUPE leader Rodney Bickerstaffe has re-stated the union's support for an all-out strike to win the 12% claim.

But the latest evidence of the spinelessness and gullibility of their leaders will do nothing to strengthen the resolve of the membership. And with the nursing pay talks set to reconvene in mid-December, the outward impression of an impending collapse could decisively tip the scales against action.

To fight back, health workers must resist the Tory divide and rule tactics, and the pressure for a two year deal. Mass meetings should be held in each area, open to all health unions, to unite the membership and consider resolutions:

- Upholding the 12% claim, and rejecting the new offer and any two-year settlement.
- Condemning the sabotage and cancellation of the November 8 day of action.
- Demanding that the health unions — predominantly NUPE — that backed the TUC Health Service Committee call for all-out strike action mount an all-out campaign for it, and seek every available means to win CoHSE members and conference delegates to this policy. A date should be fixed early in January as the start of the all-out stoppage.

Calling all youth!

JOHN HARRIS



Class Fighter conference — November 20-21, at the Wyvern Centre, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. Starts 10.30 Saturday. See inside p.13

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Bitter lessons of 1-day strikes

Firing darts at the Tory tiger

John McIlroy asks some questions about the NHS dispute

WHAT was wrong with the unions' strategy of one-day strikes? The unions' overall strategy has been to convince, to persuade, to plead. And yet this government is just not susceptible to reason. The unions' struggle has been to achieve something all workers should avoid, arbitration.

Albert Spanswick hasn't been struggling to get 12%, God bless him. He's been fighting that's the right word, arbitration to decide whether 12% is fair. The union strategy has

Health Workers for the Full Claim: c/o 78 High St, Atherton, Lancashire.

been like refusing to use an available armalite, and instead firing a small dart at a tiger and then waiting a very long time in the unlikely event that the beast will miaow and lick your hand.

One day stoppages can be useful tactics for flexing our muscles, enlisting our troops, putting a shot across the enemy's bows — if they are preliminary to throwing in all the members.

In themselves one day strikes never achieve anything. They merely signal faintly to an employer our anger and frustration.

In the NHS dispute one day strikes have been a substitute for a strategy, not a component part of one. After each stoppage the answer has been 'more of the same, give the Tories time.'

So we've gone from the one hour stoppage on April 14, through 2 hours' stoppage on April 26, to the one day strikes in June, the 3-day strikes in July... the 5-day strikes in August, the 16 Regional Days of Action...

By September 22, with millions on strike in solidarity, even the TUC knew that it had come to the end of the 'more days' recipe. The Regional Days of Action were a big step back.



JOHN HARRIS

a painless replacement for an all out stoppage. And in the industrial jungle of Tory Britain you don't get owt for nowt.

But would an all-out strike have worked last January or even April?

Perhaps not. The idea of one-day stoppages then would have been useful if they had been seen as a preparation of the membership building towards an all out stoppage.

Instead they have been used as an easy way out.

What about the selective strikes of key workers?

In one hospital near me, 2 groups of workers have been out for 20 and 18 weeks respectively. They have stuck it out well

but not surprisingly they feel isolated. 'We've done our bit, yet our hospital is still working' is a typical comment. They can't see any return for their efforts.

In any limited industrial action there comes a point where either you go forward decisively or you start going back. At least by June the NHS action had gained sufficient momentum for a great leap forward to have been taken.

Step

Hasn't the solidarity action been a big step forward?

It's been fantastic. It's shown that fight is still there, that workers

have been willing to put their own jobs on the line for their brothers and sisters.

However, there has been a clear lack of leadership by the TUC. The best example was last month: October 18, water workers one-day strike — enemy Mrs. Thatcher; October 19, Regional NHS Day of Action — enemy Mrs. Thatcher; October 20, British Telecom one-day strike over privatisation — enemy Mrs. Thatcher; October 22, one-day strike by steelworkers against closure — enemy Mrs. Thatcher.

Our field marshals showed their complete inability to grasp a first principle of industrial warfare — concentrate your forces, take advantage of your enemy's weakness. They lost the opportunity to fuse these struggles in a 24-hour General Strike

against the Tories' policies.

But solidarity action moves forward and back according to the momentum, confidence and plan of the original dispute. Dockers, miners, bus drivers are not going to keep striking and losing money for a dispute which itself lacks a perspective for victory.

Unity

So the TUC Health Services Committee hasn't done a very good job then...

If 11 different unions can co-ordinate their efforts, it's definitely a move forward. But unity has been the unity of the lowest common denominator.

When the NUPE conference voted in June for an all-out strike, that decision didn't pull unions like COHSE forward. Instead, they

dragged NUPE back.

The committee is too far away from the membership, unelected by it and outside its control. Peter Jacques, its secretary, is a full-time non-elected TUC employee, yet he and Albert Spanswick have held private talks with the Health Minister, Norman Fowler.

'What on earth is the point of having a co-ordination committee to conduct negotiations if the chairman and secretary don't tell the rest of us what is going on?' said one member (Financial Times, September 21).

Strikers need to control their own strikes — through establishment of strike committees, the linking up of these committees on both a local and a national basis, and the creation of a leadership committed to the interests of the rank and file.

Adding insult to injury

by Ian Rez

PRESS GANG



SPER Carott has developed a new stock for the butt of his hour. Better than their-in-laws, thick lips and moronic shop warts by far — but still half-hearted word in place of Sun readers.

Carrott ended last week's by driving out of the are a member of the fence he had 'caught' a copy of the paper regularly wins laughs his audience by facing the moronic variations between two readers.

Carrott is a good confidant and the Sun is an equally nasty paper — there's the problem? A couple of years back the Nine O'Clock was making everyone by depicting Keith as a monster from space. It became part of the wagon effect.

Carrott is searching for a balance of political balance to refer to Joseph as a monster and cancel a smear in the direction of the Sun. Joseph is not a monster. He is an intellectual. He is a part of the Thatcherite machine and the people who read the Sun cannot all be

The Sun is the biggest selling daily paper in Britain. It has pioneered a style of formula writing which has taken the political message of the Daily Mail down market.

Sexist, racist, jingoistic to the point of frenzy, the Sun is not by any means written by morons. Its ingredients are carefully weighted and balanced to create its own market.

Leering

There are probably only a handful — if you will excuse the word — of men who get their rocks off on the page 3 pin up. There are perhaps several million who would not want to be caught not leering over the picture with the appropriate response.

What a brilliant stroke — not only to humiliate women daily but also to police deviants amongst men by a daily masculinity test.

The Daily Mirror made thousands of friends a few weeks ago with its editorial 'Lies, Damn Lies and Sun Exclusives' which revealed in some detail the extent to which the paper will go in making up quotes and fabricating stories. (Their 'quotes'

from a Falkland dead soldiers widow were gained by asking secretaries in the office 'How would you feel if your husband had just been awarded a posthumous VC?')

'Heard the one about the thick Paddy mother in law with big tits who read the Sun every day?...

But the paper is not separate from Fleet Street. It fills a legitimate corner of the bourgeois armoury. Other papers have imitated it. The Mail and the Telegraph do the job on a different group of readers a different way.

But nobody takes the poison of the ruling class unrefined, raw and vicious, with such effect into the ranks of the working class.

Moronic

The millions of Sun readers are not all moronic caricatures. It is likely a large proportion of them rubbish the paper themselves. But they take in the poison nevertheless.

Monday's edition was run of the mill. No big set piece attacks on the left in sight. There were page leads on Cliff Richard whistling at Sue Barker and 'Gran Gets a Sex Op

Shock' (a story which boiled down to the unsurprising news that a woman of 40 was pregnant.)

A new Super Sun game 'Your Future at the Flick of a Coin' in which the Sun predicted your fortune according to five consecutive flips of a coin. (Really deep analysis here five heads means 'Act Now. You are the master of the situation' — Five tails: 'You are in a stubborn mood and others will not cooperate'.)

You could find any of this drivel in numerous magazines and other daily papers.

The problem is however that once one newspaper is singled out as an aberration — something apart from the rest of Fleet Street — then it acts as a decoy to draw away criticism from being directed against the whole structure of the press.

The other papers in Fleet Street take it in turns to sneer at the Sun, while the Sun cheerfully shovels in the money.

But the paper at the bottom of the gutter provides a kind of social service for the rest. It allows them to claim they are not the bottom of the heap.

TO add insult to the injury of the looming sell-out on NHS pay, the bosses' paper the Financial Times has organised a conference on November 18-19 on 'Private Health Care in the 1980's'.

The conference has little to do with health care, but a lot to do with profits. To quote from the blurb by the FT's Conference Director, Martin Brooks, 'The Conference will highlight current developments in private health insurance and will review business opportunities in the private health care sector...'

Fee

And it is not a conference for the likes of you and me, but for senior management, members of the medical profession in the private and public sector, executives, the City and investment community, and suppliers of equipment and ancillary services — all those who can afford the conference fee of £379.50!

Yes, that's right, I

haven't made a mistake. This fee for a two day conference is more than an average health worker's monthly earnings!

Value

Still I suppose the delegates will be getting value for money, as the fee includes cocktails and lunches as well as speakers from BUPA, Private patients Plan, NEL Permanent Health Insurance Ltd. and a number of other private health insurance companies.

Others with a vested interest in privatisation will also be there, such as Crothall & Co. Ltd., a well known private contractor for NHS ancillary services.

The medical profession is represented by David Bolt from the British Medical Association, who is not only one of the conference chairmen but also a speaker giving the BMA's viewpoint, presumably on how good privatisation will be for his profession.

But I suppose the speaker that the delegates

will really want to hear is Norman Fowler (that well known 'flexible' Secretary of State). Fowler will open the conference with the Government's view of private medicine — i.e. the Tories' stamp of approval for privatisation of the health service, to screw workers out of their hard earned pay and make even fatter profits for the Directors of BUPA and their like.

The FT's organisers have laid on some light relief in the form of Frank Dobson, MP, the chairman of NHS Unlimited, to put the case against privatisation.

Come off it, Frank, you can't really think that there's any value in speaking to this conference! You won't be heard above the sound of clinking cocktail glasses and crashing cash registers!

What should SO supporters do about this conference? It seems to me that we ought to go and demonstrate that we won't let the Tories and their big business friends destroy our health service by privatisation. There should be a mass demonstration outside this conference on November 18 and 19, linking up privatisation, cuts and the pay dispute.

The conference starts at 9.00 am on Thursday 18th and delegates will be collecting their conference documents from 8.00 am, at the Inter-Continental Hotel, 1, Hamilt on Place, London W1. (off Piccadilly, between Hyde Park Corner and Green Park)

Note: SERTUC Health Services Committee and the TUC Health Services Committee have both been approached to organise this demonstration. However, it is highly unlikely that they will do this. We will have to organise the demonstration ourselves.



JOHN HARRIS

Four good reasons for not registering

The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy is circulating position papers for its ballot on whether to register. John Bloxam argues the case for boycott.

THERE are four main arguments why CLPD should not apply for registration now.

First, that the Register is not like the curate's egg — good in parts, bad in others. It is a mechanism of witch-hunt and purge, immediately aimed at Militant supporters, and already being implemented.

It is a blatantly rigged device — Labour Solidarity is accepted while Militant is outlawed, and one of the reasons given for this is Militant's ideas.

Militant, however, are the chopping block for the real target, the serious left who organised for the democratic reforms and policies like unilateralism. The Register gives the Party establishment the power to regulate, vet and, if they choose, outlaw everything that moves, thinks and organises in the Party. Foot and Mortimer might want to limit its use, but others don't, and already they have lost control of the process of the purge.

Second, that our arguments for democracy do not oblige us, even temporarily, to acquiesce in this mechanism.

Our argument for Conference decisions to be binding was that Party leaders and MPs, in their capacity as representatives of the Party, should abide by Party policy. This is what the CLPD supporter's card says!

We have never argued that Conference 'sovereignty' gives one section of the Party — the trade union leaderships and their block votes — the right to impose a system of internal regulation over and against the wishes of the vast majority of individual members (80% of the CLPs voted against the Register).

Move this motion

Model resolution from 'Labour against the Witch-hunt' for LP regional conferences: *This Regional Conference declares its opposition to the decision to establish the National Executive Committee's Register of non-affiliated groups of members operating within the Party and believes that it should be reversed at the next Labour Party annual conference. Expulsions and other bureaucratic action represent a witch-hunt against socialist ideas in the Party, and will weaken and divide us. The NEC should be fighting the Tories, not the socialists. This Conference therefore declares its complete opposition to any expulsions under the NEC's Register and also any attempts to close down or restrict the activities of the Labour Party Young Socialists. It declares its full support for any CLP which refuses expulsions and stands firm against threats of disaffiliation.*

Most importantly, and whatever its democratic credentials, the decision on the Register strikes at the very roots of Party democracy and will do damage that may prove irreversible to the democratic life of the Party. It has been part of the CLPD's argument that the Party rank and file do not have the democratic right to resist any measures which will weaken and perhaps destroy democracy in the Party.

If comrades now want to deny such a right in the name of Conference 'sovereignty', then they should think carefully where it will lead the CLPD. Presumably and logically, we would then have to acquiesce in the expulsion of our own supporters as long as it had been rushed through Conference with a cobbled together majority — and then go and argue against any CLPs refusing to

expel for being 'undemocratic'. Do comrades seriously think this would be a way to defend democracy in the Party?

Third, that for the CLPD to apply for registration now would give the Register legitimacy, and immediately help to tighten the noose around Militant's neck.

Why has Mortimer been anxious to persuade certain groups (e.g. LARC) to apply to register? Because he knows that the more who apply, the greater the credibility of the mechanism; the easier it will then be to isolate those like Militant who will not get on the Register whatever they do; and that once the mechanism of the Register is working then it can not only start to create havoc in the Party but also that it will be much more difficult to change. He would like nothing better than a group like the CLPD to apply

now when the Register is just being 'established' and has begun to be used, and when it is in danger of being exposed as a blatantly rigged device.

Exemption

At a time when Labour Friends of Israel and the Labour Committee for Europe get their 'exemptions', when Labour Solidarity is accepted but Militant supporters expelled, the CLPD should be denouncing the Register, not trying to join it.

The boycott of Edward Heath's Trade Union Register, brought in after an election victory, played an important role in stopping the Tories' attempt to cripple the unions. Likewise with the NEC's Register. A boycott, combined with a refusal to expel, provides the best means to stop the purge and defend the Party.

Fourth, that an effective boycott can be organised,

and that the CLPD can and should play a major and probably decisive role in this.

With the exception of Militant, no other 'boycotting' group has sought to register since Conference. They represent the great majority of groups in the Party.

Of them all, the CLPD has probably the greatest influence and 'weight'. Any comrade who doubts that should just look at our list of affiliates, as well as our record of success. With the CLPD even a majority of the groups now boycotting would be a substantial force. Without the CLPD they could very well be decisively weakened.

Towel

With Conference over the fight for a boycott is now really starting. It is the last time to be talking of throwing the towel in. Mortimer's concern for groups to register should be a sign for us to fight, not give in.

Will this tactic not dangerously expose CLPD? Not if we organise enough groups to stand together. The right is certainly determined and well-organised. They have captured the NEC, but they are opposed by the great majority of individual members and CLPs. They have chosen to pick on Militant because it is a relatively soft target, and they want to split up the left. They do not yet feel strong enough to attack their real target — groups like the CLPD.

The alternative of not fighting, however, will not bring us 'safety'. The idea that if CLPD refused to give the lead, if it ditched others and applied to Register, then the right wing would leave us alone, would not try to hound us and stop our effectiveness, is just not credible. The right are now talking about trying to expel Nigel Williamson for writing an article — and Tribune don't even have to register! Comrades talk about CLPD 'traditions'. Surely one of the most important

ones has been the refusal to opportunistically retreat on fights because the cause might appear 'unpopular'. Remember positive discrimination at the beginning. Instead, CLPD's tradition is to decide what is right, what can be fought for, and then go and convince comrades in the Party.

The CLPD has a democratic right to oppose the register and boycott it. We have a duty to stop it.

It can be stopped. We should organise an effective boycott of it, and oppose any and every expulsion of socialists. A boycott will be a major help in the campaign to resist expulsions, and if 80% of the CLPs refuse, come what may, to expel socialists outlawed under the Register then the purge will fail. Like Edward Heath's Industrial Relations Act after the dockers faced him down in 1972, it will be a busted mechanism, an harassment incapable of doing the job it was designed for. Then we can repeal it.

John Bloxam



Democracy means insisting that Labour Party representatives, in their capacity as representatives, represent Party policy as decided by conference. It does not mean accepting gag laws imposed by block votes on the labour movement.

Whose living standards?

ACCORDING to government figures, wages are still keeping ahead of prices. It seems an unlikely story. And a recent analysis shows that it is indeed, for most working class people, not true.

An article by Peter Kellner in last week's New Statesman looks at the government's Retail Price Index.



Would you trust this man to calculate your cost of living?

According to this index, prices went up only 3.9% in the first nine months of 1982, while earnings were rising at about 8% per year.

Very good. But Peter Kellner points out that inflation has been far above the RPI for council tenants, and far below for people with mortgages. "There is nobody in Britain to whom the present RPI applies".

The RPI assumes an 'average' household which spends about equally on mortgage payments and on rent. In real life people pay one or the other.

Rents

As interest rates have fallen, so have mortgage payments. But rents have been forced up, by order of the Tory government.

Taking the example of Haringey — where the Labour council has actually raised rents less than instructed by Heseltine — Kellner calculates an average increase in rent and rates of 60% between December 1980 and

December 1982.

The mortgage-payers' 'inflation rate', he concludes, was 8.8% in 1981, and less than 0.1% in 1982. For a council-house family, the cost of living has risen 16.1% in 1981 and a further 8% in 1982.

So council tenants, if they have been getting average-size wage rises, have had their standard of living cut seriously. According to the Sunday Times (November 7) the Tories are likely to call for a further £2 per week rent rise this year (about 16% on average).

The Sunday Times also reports that: "Rent arrears owed by council tenants have reached an all-time high. More than £80 million is owed to councils, mainly in the big cities".

This is not the first time that the RPI has been misleading. Its 'average household' is a fiction, and a misleading one in a society with gross inequalities.

Another common snag with the RPI — though one that has not applied recently

— is the different rates of inflation for food, at one end of the scale, and consumer durables, at the other.

Through technical progress, prices of consumer durables often rise slowly or even fall; but food prices rise more steadily. Obviously better-off people spend a bigger proportion of their income on consumer durables, and worse-off people a bigger proportion on food.

Recently food prices have actually increased less than most other prices. But there is no saying how long that will last.

In France and other countries, the trade unions compile their own cost of living indices, rivals to the government index. It's about time the British labour movement started to do the same.

A working class index can provide a solid basis for seeing which wage offers actually do meet inflation and which don't. It is also useful as a basis for cost of living escalator clauses in wage agreements.

Socialist Organiser Alliance

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International News International News International News

Pressure for talks on Salvador

UNCONDITIONAL talks with the military junta and extreme right wing government officials were offered last month by leaders of the political opposition in El Salvador, the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR).

They were angrily brushed aside by Roberto D' Aubuisson, the chairman of the country's newly elected constituent assembly, and dismissed also by President Magana. The regime's American sponsors in Washington also brusquely dismissed the call for talks.

The response however has incurred the displeasure of the governments and political leaders who have seen collaboration with the FDR leadership and a negotiated settlement as the best means to contain the revolutionary struggles under way in El Salvador and restore stability to Central America as a whole.

Prime mover in this has been the Mexican government — under President Lopez Portillo. Significantly the FDR appeal for talks was made in Mexico City.

Pressure

But pressure upon the USA to seek a negotiated settlement to the war has also come from the French Mitterrand government and from other social democratic leaderships.

Though the West German government of Helmut Schmidt, which had taken up this position, has now fallen, Schmidt's place in the lobby has now been filled by the newly elected Spanish prime minister, Felipe Gonzalez.

And it has been announced that the social democratic governments of Sweden and Greece will join the ranks of those attempting to persuade Reagan to reconsider, and to bring his puppet regime in Salvador into line.

Urgency has been added to these efforts by the recent evidence of growing strength in the guerilla struggle in El Salvador itself. Reports last week indicated the impending capture by guerillas of

the key garrison of Suchitoto, a mere 30 miles from the capital city, San Salvador.

It is the prospect of a military collapse of the Salvadoran junta, and the stimulus this would give to the revolutionary struggles and demands of the working class and peasants in Salvador, which appeals the social democrats.

They do not believe that Reagan's strategy of escalating military and economic support to the junta can hold the line — and that if the guerillas cannot be

beaten by the Salvadoran state, the best way out is to strike a deal with the more pliable leaders of the FDR.

For the guerillas waging the war which alone gives the FDR any credibility internationally, there is an acute lack of any leadership committed to carrying the civil war through to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

This political weakness must be confronted both in El Salvador itself and in the campaigns in solidarity with the liberation struggle.



Sandinistas expose CIA

THE Nicaraguan regime has added its own detailed revelations to the accumulation of evidence on the

CIA plots to destabilise the country.

Last week (as reported in SO) Newsweek magazine lifted the lid on the scale of US operations in assembling a counter-revolutionary strike force operating from bases in neighbouring Honduras.

It detailed the list of forces — including former National Guardsmen of deposed Nicaraguan dictator Somoza — enlisted by the CIA for cross-border raids into Nicaragua aimed at economically and militarily harassing the ruling Sandinista leadership and creating conditions for its overthrow by the extreme right wing.

Display

The Sandinistas themselves have added to this, with a display of prisoners, testimony from captured raiders, stocks of US-supplied weapons, and further details of the Honduran activities.

The government spokesmen listed 16 bases inside Honduras from which between three and five thousand counter-revolutionaries are operating



Reaganomics swells the dole queues — but the Democrats have little alternative

Voters give thumbs down to bosses' parties

FACED with a choice between the Republican Tweedledee Party and the Democrat Tweedledums, American voters last week handed out what amounted to a gesture of no-confidence in both.

The outcome was that leading Democrat, Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill, forecast a turn to more 'bi-partisan' policies, which will further confirm the fact that neither of these capitalist parties has anything to offer the American working class.

The Democrats, offered the sitting campaigning target of President Reagan's catastrophic economic policies, which have driven unemployment to the levels of the Depression, succeeded in winning a hefty 26 seats from Reagan to increase their own majority in the House of Representatives; but they failed to dent the Republican grip on the upper chamber, the Senate, where Reagan retains a 54-46 majority.

Though disaster was averted in several areas by the narrowest of margins, the results are no landslide defeat for Reagan.

Voters — largely drawn from the American white middle class, since vast numbers of workers, alienated by the twin parties of big business, are not even registered to vote — were plainly unconvinced that the Democrats had any serious alternative policies to offer in place of 'Reaganomics'.

They also showed a considerable ability to separate political issues from politicians. A referendum on the proposal for a freeze on nuclear weapons produced overall majorities in California, Michigan, Montana, Rhode Island, North Dakota, Oregon, and New Jersey — and a staggering 74% support in Massachusetts.

Harry Sloan reports on the US mid-term elections

Yet the support for this proposal did not necessarily flow over into support for 'pro-freeze' candidates — Governor Jerry Brown in California was defeated, and Edward Kennedy plummeted to his lowest share of the vote for 20 years in Massachusetts.

Several warmongers were among those who did lose their seats — and there was a spectacular failure of the ultra-reactionary religious 'new right', which had set out to influence these mid-term elections through the well-financed 'National Conservative Political Action Committee'.

Not one of the 'too liberal' Democrats targeted by the NCPAC was toppled, despite its efforts, and at least one — Tennessee Democrat Jim Sasser — increased his majority.

This setback for the most extreme reactionaries will limit their already restricted ability to press-gang Ronald Reagan into implementing their demands for more anti-abortion legislation and other attacks on the oppressed and exploited.

Reagan will certainly have to consider how much of his planned programme of action for his remaining time in office will secure the bi-partisan support needed to pass through Congress. Defence spending in particular could fall victim to this.

But Reagan can count upon the evident and total

disarray of the Democratic opposition.

Reagan's claim that they had no alternative to his policies was largely vindicated not only by contradictory statements or evasion on the part of Democratic candidates, but also by the fact that Democrats have wound up supporting many of Reagan's most controversial policies.

The elections show a swing neither to Kennedy-style 'liberal' capitalist policies, nor towards right wing conservatism. Which leaves the Democrats, as the 1984 Presidential election approaches, still lacking any plausible central figure to challenge for the candidacy.

Meanwhile as Reaganomics continues to take its toll of jobs and welfare services, the American working class faces an even bigger quandary.

Lacking any independent party to represent their interests, they are up against a trade union leadership largely tied to the coat-tails of the Democratic Party and resolutely opposed to the building of a Labour Party.

Yet only such a political break can offer a means to channel the demands of the American working class — and in particular the blacks, unemployed and ethnic minorities who have suffered most at the hands of the two capitalist parties in recent years.

Bolivian prices raised

THE BRIEF honeymoon for the 'Popular Unity' coalition government of President Siles Zuazo in Bolivia appears to be already over.

After only a few weeks in office, the government — a cross-class coalition including both capitalist and Communist Party politicians — has announced its first set of anti working class policies.

The price of petrol has been raised by 300%, and prices of poultry and meat increased, together with a face-saving increase in the lowest rates of pay, and a charade of 'workers' co-partnership' in nationalised industries.

Bolivia's trade union federation, the COB, has until now strongly opposed economic austerity measures, which run hand in hand with appeals for renegotiation of the country's \$4 billion in debts.

It remains to be seen whether union leaders will be prepared to fight Siles on this round of attacks, or if the inevitable conflict will wait until the equally inevitable further attacks which will follow.

Tehran terror

ELEVEN strike leaders from a car plant near Tehran have been executed in the latest wave of anti-communist repression by the Khomeini regime in Iran.

Over 400 Communist activists have been rounded up in mass arrests which have included junior officers and NCOs from the gendarmerie, police, and 'revolutionary guards'.

The raids have also hit the left wing Fedayeen. Khomeini's self-styled 'anti-imperialist' regime, fearing working class opposition, evidently places anti-communism as its main priority, with anti-union repression coming a close second.

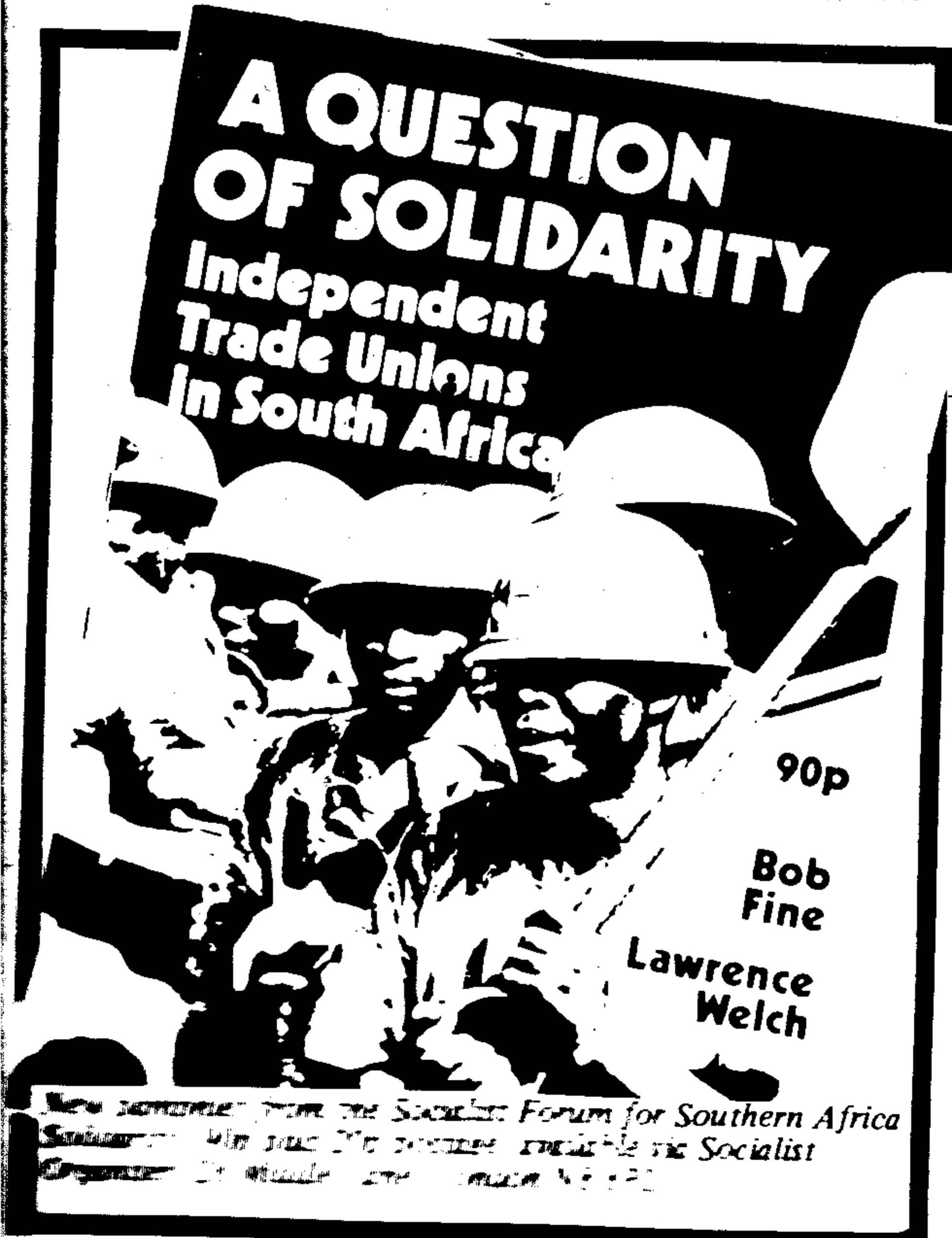
Meanwhile the decision to 'empty the prisons' and abolish law courts brings the immediate threat of summary execution to some 40,000 existing political prisoners and to anyone unfortunate enough to run foul of savage Islamic laws.

Turkish junta 'victory'

THE British Tory press has been quick to seize upon the heavy vote in favour of a draconian new 'constitution' in last week's referendum in Turkey.

The constitution installs junta chief General Evren as president for 7 years with almost unprecedented powers — and bars existing political parties and their leaders from activity for 10 years.

Voting was compulsory — and anyone campaigning for a 'no' vote was subject to vicious repression. On the basis of this evidence of 'democracy', Turkey will soon appeal for admission to full EEC membership.



International News International News

Brazil's workers make a political break

by Martin Thomas

THE new Workers' Party (PT) is likely to score major successes in Brazil's general election on November 15. 'Lula' (Luis Inacio de Silva), president of the PT and a militant metalworkers' leader, is given by opinion polls 15 to 20% of the votes for governor of Sao Paulo state.

The PT is standing candidates at all levels, local and national, practically throughout Brazil — being one of only three parties to do so. The other two are the so-called Social Democratic Party PDS — in fact the party of the present military-dominated regime — and the PMDB (Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement).

The elections are part of the military's strategy of 'opening' — gradual transition to a civilian parliamentary regime. Political parties were legalised last year, and the PMDB was set up from the MDB, the 'official opposi-

tion' established and sponsored by the military regime itself.

But the PT is using the election to preach radical struggle against the regime and against the whole capitalist system.

It calls for the overthrow of the dictatorship: 'In the struggle for a society where power will be exercised by the workers, we defend right now full political and trade union freedom for the people'. The PT proposes preparation for a general strike as the weapon to achieve these aims.

Its economic programme includes a minimum wage with an inflation-protection clause; the shorter work week without loss of pay; land reform and cheap credit for the peasants; a free state health service; nationalisation under workers' control of the financial institutions; abolition of business secrecy; workers' control; and free public



The Workers' Party came out of militant trade union struggles education.

The PT election platform also calls for gay rights, for equal rights for the Black and Indian populations, and equality for women. 'Women', it declares, 'are treated as second-class beings. They get the worst jobs and the lowest wages, and they face a double work day and have to do all the household tasks. Constantly they are humiliated, not only as workers, but also as women'.

The PT pledges solidarity with workers and oppressed peoples world-wide, especially in Central America, southern Africa, Palestine and Poland. And it promises that if the PT wins power in any municipality or state, it will set up popular assemblies, neighbourhood councils, or workers' councils, to take decisions. 'Lula' rejects any idea of coalition administrations with bourgeois parties.

New

Both in its programme and in its history, the PT is something new not only in Brazil but in Latin America. It was founded in 1979, coming out of tremendous strike movements in the Sao Paulo industrial area.

In a continent where nationalism and populism (the idea of the 'people' without class definition, being the agent of pro-

gress) dominate the working class, and where those sizeable workers' parties that do exist are mostly Stalinist, the PT is a party which bases its politics clearly on the industrial working class and is anti-Stalinist.

It is not homogeneous. It includes a strong radical Catholic element. (Not very Catholic, as can be seen from the PT's commitments on gay and women's rights: but the PT platform, though declaring for a woman's right to choose whether to have a child, is evasive on abortion). There are members influenced by Eurocommunist-type ideas as well as Marxists.

But the contrast is sharp with the Brazilian Communist Party and most of the numerous Maoist groups — which have joined the PMDB!

The PT has no chance of winning a national majority. But the regime is none too happy about the prospect of the PT scoring successes, or even the PMDB (which has adopted some leftist rhetoric) winning the election.

All sorts of restrictions have been imposed on campaigning, and the election procedure — in a country where 24% are illiterate — is deliberately complicated. When it was tried out on staff at the government election super-

vision agency, 50% of them got it wrong and cast invalid ballots!

The generals' plans for gradual political change have been undermined, perhaps fatally, by Brazil's economic crisis since last year.

Since the 1960s Brazilian capitalism has grown rapidly, so that Brazil now ranks as the 7th industrial power in the capitalist world (ahead of Canada), and produces more steel than Britain. It has become a major exporter of manufactured goods not only to the rest of Latin America but even to the US.

Crisis

The number of industrial workers has grown from 3.6 million in 1964 to 12 million today.

But since last year the world crisis has hit Brazil. Car sales slumped 50% in the early months of 1981, and have remained low. 140,000 car workers lost their jobs in 1981.

Afflicted by foreign debt problems, the government has set about drastically cutting imports — which improves the balance of payments, but at the cost of an industrial slump.

The president of Brazil's CBI summed it up like this: 'With the inflation rate we've got, if this goes on, everything's had it. Including the 'opening'.



by Andrew Hornung

WHAT qualities do you think a Labour party leader should have?

A long record of militant trade union struggle? Consistent internationalism? An incorruptible hatred for the international crooks and mass murderers who head the governments of the world's most powerful states?

Last week Denis Healey — someone who wouldn't have given St Francis a character reference for a job with animals unless he also supported NATO — extolled the virtues of West Germany's recently unseated Chancellor Helmut Schmidt.

'He represents', eulogised Healey, 'the generation which learned its politics the hard way — from boyhood in Nazi Germany, through distinguished army service in Russia and the Ardennes, to responsibility for helping to organise the postwar recovery of his native Hamburg, moving from the left to the right of the Social Democratic Party in the process...'

'He maintained his friendships abroad whether the individuals were in power or not — a trait not universal among politicians. These long-standing links with men like Kissinger, Haig and Schulz have been of real value...'

So here we have the catalogue: patriotism even in the service of Hitlerism, right-wing ideas, warm relations with the chief warmongers of the most powerful imperialist nation. What an irresistible combination for a working class leader!

WHILE we're on the subject of Germany, I notice that Franz Josef Strauss has suggested that the 'Greens', the West German ecology party, be banned.

Strauss, the leader of the Bavarian conservatives, the CSU, is concerned to make democracy safe — just as he was over a decade ago when he was at the centre of an illegal phone-tapping scandal.

The argument he is putting forward is that, because the Greens have declared that they would use any strength they gained in the Bundestag [Parliament] to

oppose legislation proposed by either of the two main parties, they can be said to be making Parliament unworkable. That, according to the constitution of the Federal Republic, is an offence, and parties that commit this offence may be banned.

FOLLOWING the recent CBI conference call on the Tories to do something about unemployment, the organisation's director-general, Terence Beckett, was asked what financial contribution the employers of the country would make towards any new initiative.

'Oh, industry can't do it', he responded. 'I mean, look at profitability'. He then listed such hardships as tax, national insurance and so on, and concluded, 'Industry isn't making any profit at all'.

Sad. Sad. I can just imagine the scene of poverty outside the Grand Hotel, Eastbourne, after the conference.

Hordes of penniless industrialists lined up at the bus stops looking watery-eyed and envious at passing taxis, and some of the more enterprising ones begging for alms under the sign, 'Profitless industrialist — family and workforce to support — give generously'...

THERE IS a widespread myth that Thatcher may be a nasty piece of work, but she has fulfilled her election promises. Treasury figures on taxation allow us to test out one pledge — to reduce taxes.

According to the figures, given in a parliamentary answer, a married couple with two children earning three-quarters of the national average is now paying 17% more in tax (that is, income tax, VAT, national insurance etc.) than in Labour's last year in power.

The same family on average earnings is paying 14½% more, while a family on twice that income pays only 9½% more. And a family on five times the average income pays 6½% less.

West Bank threat to Arabs

by Terry Smith

ARAB leaders who might have expected a friendly reception for their latest 'peace' plan from Ronald Reagan in Washington trailed back with their olive branch in tatters last week.

Reagan has reportedly followed up the military and political defeats inflicted during the Israeli invasion

of Lebanon by posing a new, stern ultimatum to the Arab rulers.

Either they must hand over negotiating rights for the Palestinians to King Hussein of Jordan, or face the prospect of Israeli annexation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

As if to underline this threat, Reagan's administration last week issued a cosmetic complaint at the most recent Zionist settlements on the West Bank —

effectively warning the Arabs that the savage Israeli state machine could at any moment lurch out of Washington's control.

With this as a lever, Reagan is attempting to force the conservative Arab rulers — and through them the PLO — into de facto recognition of the state of Israel.

Publicly

King Hussein himself has only just publicly urged the PLO to recognise the existence of the Israeli state.

To begin negotiations from such a standpoint is effectively to renounce the demands for the right of the Palestinians to return to their homeland, and for a democratic, secular state of Palestine with equal rights for both Arab and Jew — both of which require the destruction of the viciously discriminatory Zionist state.

There is every indication that many Arab bourgeois leaders would themselves be more than ready to contemplate such a sell-out — were they not fearful of the hostility of the working class and peasantry in their own coun-

tries.

The defeat inflicted upon the PLO in Lebanon, however, has now weakened their political influence and thrown the Arafat leadership more into the arms of their wealthy Saudi sponsors. It is this opportunity to force home crucial concessions which Reagan has been so obviously eager to seize.

Reagan's squeeze on Hussein and other Arab leaders is linked with a pell-mell rush to reconstruct the Lebanese army, and complete the destruction of the PLO and left wing forces in order to stabilise the new right wing government.

Advisers

US 'advisers' have been dispatched to Lebanon to begin training Lebanese soldiers in the techniques taught to the Salvadorean army. Lebanese president Gemayel himself has continued his world-wide search for more bodies of armed men to swell the present multi-national 'peace-keeping' force to a projected total of 20-30,000 men.

At the same time plans leaked from his government look to the eventual

expulsion of up to 450,000 of the present 500,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Such a move would obviously be explosive.

Gemayel's neo-fascist Phalange party and its 25,000-strong militia have long taken a viciously racist attitude to the Palestinians — exemplified by the recent slaughter in Sabra and Chatila camps. But so far his public pronouncements have been carefully calculated to extend a cautious invitation to economic assistance from the Arab oil states — whose rulers, like Reagan, wish to see a stable state established in Lebanon.

In each of these aspects of the wheeling and dealing of Middle East politics, the chief victims are the oppressed and exploited, the working class and peasantry of the Arab states and the dispossessed Palestinian people.

Only the struggle for the revolutionary socialist overthrow of the Arab regimes and the destruction of the apparatus of the Zionist state can open the door for the establishment of democratic rights, peace and decent living standards for the peoples of the Middle East.

Labour Committee on Palestine founding conference

Conference open to Labour Committee on Palestine members, delegates from affiliated organisations, and non-voting observers. Details from the secretary, 28 Carlton Mansions, Holmleigh Rd, London N16.

Saturday November 20, 1pm to 5pm at Brixton Town Hall, Acre Lane, London SW2.

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To: Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.



Women
in
struggle



Ministry of Defence

Air

This is a prohibited
within the means
of a secret

JOHN HARRIS

'Camp-paigning' against the

missiles

A woman
from the
Greenham
Common
peace camp
describes
their fight ag-
ainst the
Bomb — and
the courts

The 'security box' action
dates back to August when
a group of 19 women walk-

ed onto the base, past the
security men, and occupied
the sentry box for about an
hour before Thames Valley
police smashed their way
into the box (causing a con-
siderable amount of
damage).

Breach

Eighteen of these wom-
en were subsequently
charged with 'behaviour
likely to cause a breach of
the peace', and their court
case is in Newbury on
November 15.

We see this trial as im-
portant both to the Peace
Camp and to the peace
movement as a whole be-
cause we plan to use it to
contest the court's inter-
pretation of the word
'peace'.

All eighteen women are
pleading not guilty, saying
that they believe they were
acting as responsible citi-
zens because in taking this
action they were prevent-
ing a breach of the peace
which will be caused by the
use, or threatened use, of
nuclear weapons.

Claim

Several prominent fig-
ures from the peace move-
ment are being called as
key defence witnesses to
back up this claim. There
has been a great deal of
media interest in this trial,
and we are expecting to
receive good national press
and TV coverage.

Two days later, on Wed-
nesday November 17, 13

women are appearing in
court on another charge of
breach of the peace in what
has become known as the
'sewage pipe trial'.

Shortly after the last
eviction on September 29
from Department of Trans-
port land (we are now cam-
ping on common land),
work began on laying sew-
age pipes. The new sewage
pipes are part of the im-
provements being made to
the base in order that a
further 1,300 US service-
men can be accommodated;
the extra personnel are
scheduled to arrive shortly
before the Cruise missiles.

The women were charg-
ed with behaviour likely to
cause a breach of the
peace for lying down in
trenches dug for the sew-
age pipes. They had suc-
cessfully managed to hold
up the work for two days
before the arrests were
made.

We would like people to
come and demonstrate out-
side the courtroom during
the trials, as we feel it is
important to show the jury
and the media the extent of
public support for the
women's peace camp.

We are also putting out
an appeal for extra women
to come and stay at the
camp for all or part of the
week beginning November
15 (the women on trial on
Monday may receive prison
sentences if we lose the
case, which will mean that
the camp will be low in
numbers).

Please come and show
your support!

Turning our backs on Thatcher's war

THE City's Falklands Vic-
tory Parade got a big splash
in all the press — but a pro-
test against the parade by
women from the peace
movement went almost
unreported.

Despite the fact that we
had sent out press releases
to all the national papers
explaining what we were
planning to do, and later
followed these up with
phone calls, all the press
chose to ignore the action
with the exception of the
Guardian, which wrote:
"... a group of women turned
their backs on the
parade"

The protest originated
from a weekend of work-
shops on non-violent direct
action held in September
for women living at or in-
volved with the Greenham
Common women's peace
camp. On the Sunday we
talked about the victory
parade, and felt that the
event was so horrific that
we could not let it go by
without protest.

On Monday October 13,
30 women met in London to
take part in planning and
preparation for the follow-
ing day's action.

The parade was due to
begin at 12.40 from the top
of Moorgate, and would
take about 30 minutes to
reach Mansion House,
where Thatcher, Foot and
all the top brass military
people were seated in a
special box. Opposite them
were the TV cameras, and
on the third corner of this
triangular area we stood
where we would be visible
to the TV cameras.

We arrived at 9 am when
there were very few people
about, and stood right at

the front near the crash
barriers.

The police were obvious-
ly suspicious of us early
on, and insisted on search-
ing our bags and asking us
what organisation we were
from. Fortunately we had
our banners concealed
under our clothing, and
they didn't find them.

As more and more people
arrived, we found ourselves
being pushed forward
into the barriers. There
were three very obvious
plain clothes policemen
immediately behind us
watching our every move,
and three ordinary police-
men in front of us on the
other side of the barrier.

As the parade passed in
front of us, we deliberately
turned our backs on it and
held up a banner which
read, 'Women turn their
backs on war'.

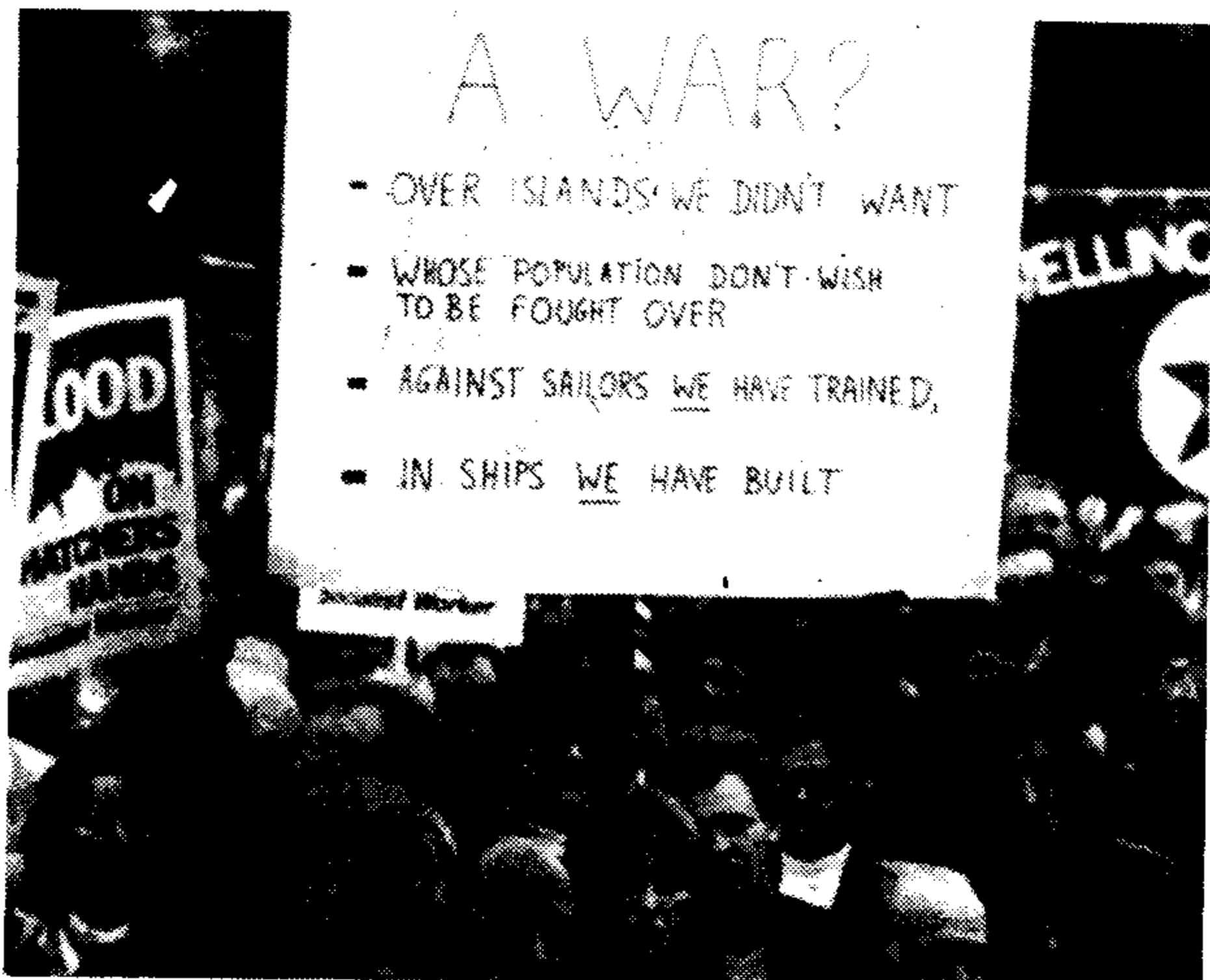
There was a great deal
of hostility from people in
the crowd. The banner only
stayed up for two or three
minutes before it was ripp-

ed down by a group of
people behind us. There
were the usual clichés
shouted at us, such as
'Go back to Russia', 'Those
boys died for you, you
should be proud', and
'Stupid women'.

One particularly hostile
man began to attack one
of the women physically.
Immediately a police-
man leapt over the barrier
and arrested her for breach
of the peace! He let her go
after trying unsuccessfully
for 15 minutes to struggle
through the crowds with
her.

The remainder of the
women continued to stand
with their backs to the
parade until it was over. It
was a very frightening
experience, perhaps the
longest half hour of my life.

As we were leaving, we
were stopped by a Swiss
man who said he was very
glad we had made our pro-
test and he could not be-
lieve how stupid all these
people were.



JOHN HARRIS

Two years ago,
Women's Fightback's
first conference for Labour women
stimulated the new growth of women's sec-
tions and launched the demands for major ref-
orms. Now we need to get these implemented, and
weld the women's sections into a force that can lead
women against the Tories, and represent women's interests
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 un-
waged) and s.a.e.
for credentials,
to:
41 Ellington St., London N7
01-607-5268



Fourteen months on, the Greenham Common women are
still there

Councils crisis

CAN LABOUR

BEAT

HESELTINE?



If Heseltine has his way, council tenants and all users of council services are next...

This week several Labour councils in London are mounting a joint 'Save London from Heseltine' campaign. Islington Labour council leader Margaret Hodge explains

ONE OF the growth industries in Islington after the council elections in May, was the production of badges acclaiming the 'Socialist Republic of Islington'. However, the harsh realities of the impact of Thatcher monetarism on the development of socialism in one borough has gradually depressed the market for these badges.

We were elected on a socialist manifesto which had been developed after a tremendous effort in consultation and participation both within the Labour Party and with trade unions, tenants' organisations and community groups.

The programme we want to mount is financed in three ways, by central government grant, local council charges (mainly rents), and the rates.

We all know that paying for local services by high rates and rents constitutes an attack on the living standards of working class people. So to mount our essential programmes we must have proper funding from central government in the block grant they allocate to us.

Yet since 1976 central government has cut the money it allocates to local authorities. Looking at London alone, these cutbacks have been particularly vicious.

Since the Tories took control London has lost £500 million in real terms. Government used to meet

66.5% of local government expenditure, but this has now been cut and in 1983-4 the Tories have said they will only meet 54.0% of our expenditure.

Inner London is the only education authority in the country where the government makes absolutely no contribution to the education service. ILEA have lost all their grant since Thatcher took over.

Centrally

The Tories have operated their cuts in two ways. They assess centrally how much they consider local councils should spend, and they allocate grant accordingly. Thus for example, in social services, comparing central government expenditure assessments with local authority budgets, they have said that in 1982/83 London is 'overspending' by £128 million on services such as home helps, meals-on-wheels, provision for the physically and mentally handicapped and so on. Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster are as guilty as Islington and Camden for allegedly spending too much.

Secondly, the Tories have developed a particularly vicious weapon to cut grant and specifically hit Labour authorities. If you spend above the targets they set you, they penalise you by fining you a certain sum for every additional pound you spend.

This year every pound Islington spends above its permitted level costs us £1.60 because we are fined 60p in loss of grant. Next year, Heseltine intends to concentrate his attack more directly on Labour authorities by dramatically increasing his penalties.

Loss

In Islington we fear this may lose us a further £10 million in grant as compared to the £2 million we lose in penalties in the current year, and as compared to the £3 million it would cost to implement our manifesto immediately and in entirety.

This merciless and criminal attack on local government cannot even be justified in terms of public expenditure cutbacks. The truth is that between 1975/6 and 1981/82, local government expenditure has been cut by 20% while central government expenditure has

gone up by 8%.

The Tories have chosen to spend more on defence, the police, the dole and war, at the expense of the old, the disabled, the young and the poor.

What can socialists do? Obviously we must campaign for more money and we must campaign to expose the wrongness of the Tory assertion that local authorities are profligate and wasteful.

In Islington we have initiated a new grouping of all London Labour Leaders, so that a concerted attack by Labour boroughs on the Government can be mounted. Islington has also taken a lead in the formation of the Association of Socialist Councillors, which similarly aims to bring together Labour councillors across the country. We are working together with the Trades Council, community groups and tenants' associations to develop grassroots support.

Options

We are examining the options for open confrontation with government.

The fact is that the legislation has been contrived by the Tories to make the Clay Cross option virtually impossible. For example, were we to decide neither to cut services nor raise rates, this would not result in elected councillors being surcharged and martyred into Holloway or Pentonville Prison.

The effect of a no rates, no cuts position would be either that the bureaucrats would have a statutory obligation to implement cuts, or that the council would somersault into bankruptcy, and the people then on the front line would be council workers for whom there would be no wages, and the old and the disabled for whom there would be no services.

We are looking at withholding the police precept, at rescheduling our debt and other ideas, but these options do not, at first glance, appear viable.

So the question we must concentrate on is, where do we go in the short term? In the longer term, the return of a Labour government committed to socialist policies must be our aim, but what do we, elected councillors, do in setting the rate for next year?

WHO'S NEXT FOR A

PAY CUT



Margaret Hodge: 'We are examining the options for confrontation'

Pat Longman puts the case against rate rises

SOCIALIST Organiser supporters in Islington have argued against budget-balancing rate rises as an option.

We do not do this because we have a cut-and-dried answer as to just how a confrontation with the Government on the basis of no rate rises/no cuts could be managed to tactical advantage - for the next local SO meeting (see What's On, p.15) we have invited an expert on local government law to discuss this - but because we feel that strategic options should not be confused by tactical problems.

The experience of Lambeth and Lothian showed that Labour councils which try to finance left-wing policies out of hard-pressed ratepayers' pockets end up losing any will and any credibility as fighters against the Tories, and sliding into cuts.

Working class people in Islington, as elsewhere in big

cities, have been hard hit by rent and rate rises over recent years. 'Socialism on the rates' will not get their support - especially if the local socialism is unable to do anything decisive about central problems like housing.

But the fight against Heseltine is not only, or even mainly, a question of what councillors do.

Whether councillors are wheeled in tumbrils down Caledonian Road, or the Tories find more subtle methods, the outcome will be decided by the action of council workers, other trade unionists, and tenants. What can be expected of socialist councillors is that they give a lead, use their position to the maximum, and give all support they can to local workers and tenants.

Crucial is not what tactics we can work out next spring - though that could be very important - but the

ISLINGTON is probably the most left wing of the Labour councils elected this May.

Islington had for some years been an arena of battle between an entrenched Labour right wing and newer, more left wing, members. After the founding of the SDP, this battle culminated with all three Labour MPs in the borough, and a majority of the 50 (out of 52) Labour councillors, going over to the SDP.

Islington became the first ever SDP council. But in May an active, vigorous Labour campaign swept out the SDP. One SDP councillor retained his seat by one vote, the other 51 seats were taken by Labour.

Accountability of Labour councillors to the Labour Party - or lack of it! - had been a central issue in the previous political battles. The new Labour group operates a probably unique system whereby major policy decisions are taken by quarterly joint meetings of the councillors and the Local Government Committee (an elected joint committee of the three local constituency Labour Parties).

The July 19 joint meeting, on the initiative of Socialist Organiser supporters, resolved: "to formulate a clear statement of intent: to carry out our manifesto in full by the next financial year without increasing the financial burden, through rates, on the people of the borough."

"We will prepare material for mass distribution which explains, simply, how much extra funding this will require, our intention to

launch a mass campaign to get it, and our commitment to carrying out our policies even if the government refuses to provide the money."

The Labour council has reversed all major SDP policies, promised a freeze on rents, helped fund an unemployment centre, opposed discrimination against gays in employment, social services, housing; started plans to centralise council services so that they are available and accountable, and repeatedly and publicly supported the NHS workers.

Yet as the Local Government Committee put it in September: "Every person in Islington now faces the stark choice of abandoning the manifesto on which the Labour Party swept to power, imposing a massive rate rise (of 40-50%) to allow the Central Government to again cutting its support to Islington Council."

To combat both the alternatives, the Islington Labour Parties' policy is to campaign this autumn and winter to get more money from the government... (to start from the position that the rate burden should not be increased, and that the Government should make the difference instead imposing penalties".

The policy is not a defence of 'no rate rise' commitment. Such a commitment was proposed by Socialist Organiser supporters for the May manifesto, and defeated. The actual decision that the rates will be next spring and many councillors are Labour activists clearly feel that, campaign or no campaign, rate rises are inevitable.

Turning outward for support

Nadine Finch

(secretary, Islington Labour Parties Local Government Committee)

ISLINGTON'S Campaign against Heseltine so far has been conducted amongst Labour leaders and councillors and in the press.

It is now time that the campaign reached the people of Islington, who are those who will gain from the new and restored services brought in by the new socialist

Labour Council and lose the penalties imposed by Heseltine and the Tory government on the poor inner city area that is Islington.

The Local Government Committee has booked the Co-op Hall in Seven Sisters Road for a debate with national speakers on January 21. The debate will centre on possible solutions to the economic and employment problems of Islington.

Leaflets that can be used by wards for their own localised campaign, following from the large meeting, are being prepared at the moment.

The debate will aim to bring in those not usually interested in Labour Party meetings, and the local campaigns will try to reach members of the community where they work, where they live, and where they pass their free or unwaged time.

The need for the campaign to reach out to the community in its territory cannot be stressed enough. Meetings in the Town Hall and press statements issued from the steps, will reassure those who have seen all the promises and plans of previous Labour administrations disappear over the night. We have to win the confidence.

In the next few months by campaigning around employment, by supporting the Health Strike and opposing the disastrous plan for the Archway Road, the Labour Party has a chance to put its presence where its mouth is.

The moves it makes to decentralise council services and bring them into the control of the people of Islington will also be an acid test of our commitment to the people we hope are going to support us in the fight against Heseltine's policies.

campaign to rouse Islington to revolt against both the rate-rise and the service-cut versions of Tory robbery. And it is for the campaign that the rate-rise option is damaging.

If Labour councillors appeal to the people of Islington on the slogan - 'Here we stand, defiant against the Tories! Mind you, next spring we may have to back down and raise the rates' - then the outcome is predictable. By next spring rate rises will be not an option, but the only option.

To make Islington's Labour council more than a humane administrator for Tory policies with a few left wing gestures, we need a mass campaign against Tory policies. And for that campaign we need a policy of no rate rises, no cuts.

Pat Longman is a Labour councillor for St George's ward, Islington.

Polarisation in Spanish election

IS GONZALEZ SP

Last week the Spanish Socialist Party was the winner in a remarkable election result.

The most obvious feature was the unstoppable advance of the Socialists. The PSOE's share of the total vote was 48%, compared with 31% in the 1979 elections.

Given that the turnout this time was 78%, compared with only 68% in 1979, this means that this time, several million more Spaniards voted Socialist than 3 years ago.

Where did all these new votes come from? Many of them were ex-abstentionists who in this election sensed a real possibility of change in Spain.

Second, the PSOE gained votes from other left-wing parties, and in particular from the Spanish Communist Party.

Since 1979, the CP, under the leadership of Santiago Carrillo, has passed through split after split and purge after purge. These upheavals have lost the party much of its old authority in the eyes of sections of the working class.

The CP's share of the vote fell from 11% in 1979 to less than 4% in these elections, as its former supporters decided not to waste their vote.

In parliament, the communist representation will be reduced from 23 to a mere 5. By far the most dramatic drop was in Catalonia where the PSUC (the Catalanian CP) lost 7 of



Carrillo - forced to resign

its previous 8 members of parliament - a clear result of the bitter split between the pro-Carrillo, Euro-communist and the pro-Moscow factions of the old PSUC.

Carrillo has resigned as CP leader because of the party's bad results.

Collapse

Dramatic as it is, the collapse of the CP's vote was not the determining factor in the election.

That was the even more sensational collapse of the party which has ruled Spain since the first election after Franco's death, the Democratic Centre Union (UCD).

What was the majority political party of the Spanish ruling class has almost completely disappeared. In the 1977 election the UCD had 165 seats, in 1979 it had 167. Now it is reduced to 12.

But before going up in a puff of smoke the party had shattered into smithereens like a pane of glass. In the last months since Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo took over the premiership from Adolfo Suarez, the UCD has said goodbye to five separate groups of defectors from the parliamentary party.

One of those was led by the man who led the UCD

to victory in the two previous elections, Adolfo Suarez, a former leading Francoist bureaucrat.

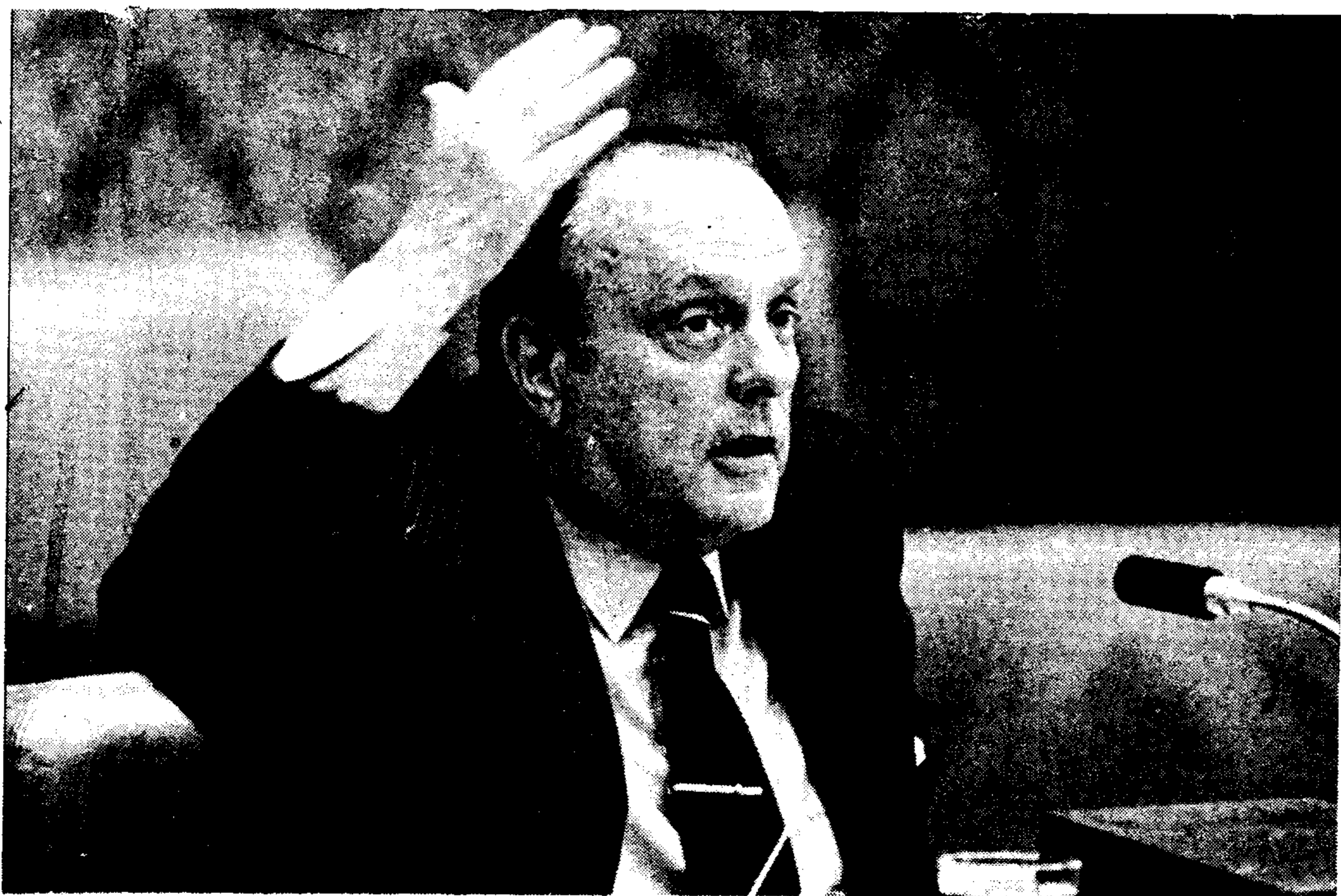
Suarez was forced to resign as premier in January 1981, apparently under pressure from the military.

His experiences seem to have made him into a genuine convert to bourgeois democracy, and in these elections, leading his own splinter party, the Democratic Social Centre Party (CDS), he was the only one of the bourgeois leaders to defend with any conviction the limited reforms of the post-Franco period.

Separating himself from the rest of the bourgeois parties, he made clear his will to join a coalition government with the Socialist Party. And had the Socialists fared worse and Suarez's party better, that might have been possible. But as it turned out, Suarez's party obtained only two seats, though he himself was elected, which is more than can be said for his successor as Prime Minister, Calvo Sotelo.

The UCD and CDS's share of the vote fell from 36% in 1979 to 10% this time. And undoubtedly about a third of those who voted UCD in 1979, sections of the middle class genuinely committed to democracy, voted for the PSOE in 1982.

But the rest of the former UCD voters this time voted for the so-called Popular Alliance, led by Manuel



Fraga - champion of the Right

Fraga, a long-time faithful servant of dictator Franco as Minister and Ambassador.

If one of the dramatic features of the election was the political collapse of the Centre and of the Communist Party, the other was the rise of the Popular Alliance (AP).

Its vote rose from a mere 6% in 1979 to over 25%. Though its leaders profess a formal adherence to bourgeois democracy, they are very quiet about their commitment and their campaign has been based on extreme right-wing rhetoric, largely about the 'integrity' of the Spanish nation, law and order, and the traditional values of the family.

It is hard to argue that the AP is as yet any more of a seriously organised political party than the UCD was. But its rise is definitely a symptom of a growing polarisation in Spanish politics.

The AP is strongly associated with a return to the politics of Francoism.

It was therefore very important that during the campaign, after a sharp discussion, the CEOE (the Spanish equivalent of the CBI in Britain) came out in favour of a vote for Fraga's party.

With 106 seats in Congress, the neo-Francoist AP is now unquestionably the second force in Spanish politics. In fact the only other significant forces in Parliament are the right-wing nationalists of Catalonia (Jordi Pujol's Convergencia i Union) and of Euskadi (the Basque Nationalist Party). Both of them increased their representation in the present parliament largely because they took part the declining UCD vote.

Only their defence of the rights of the oppressed nations within Spain have mitigated the fundamentally very right-wing nature of both these parties. It has lead them to oppose the centralism of both the national bourgeois parties and of the PSOE.

Gonzalez' programme

THE PSOE went through the election campaign armed with a single slogan: For Change. And there is no doubt that the overwhelming majority of the Spanish people voted in last month's election for change, many of them for profound change.

In practice what changes can the election of a PSOE government be expected to produce in Spain?

One starting point from which to answer that question is to look at the party's election programme, though in the case of Spain today, as I shall argue later, there is even less reason than usual in Western democracies to expect any connection between what the government does and

its programme.

But, for what it is worth, the PSOE's 47-page programmatic document, surely even more boring to read than the Labour Party's manifesto, is certainly a blueprint for change in nearly all areas of Spanish society.

Under a Socialist government, it says, there will be a programme of reforms of the legal and administrative systems, of the social security and unemployment benefit laws, of laws which impose sexual discrimination, of the state finances, of the energy distribution network and many other things.

Democratic freedoms and rights will be strengthened. In foreign policy Spain will move towards non-alignment and hence freeze its integration in NATO pending a national referendum about membership.

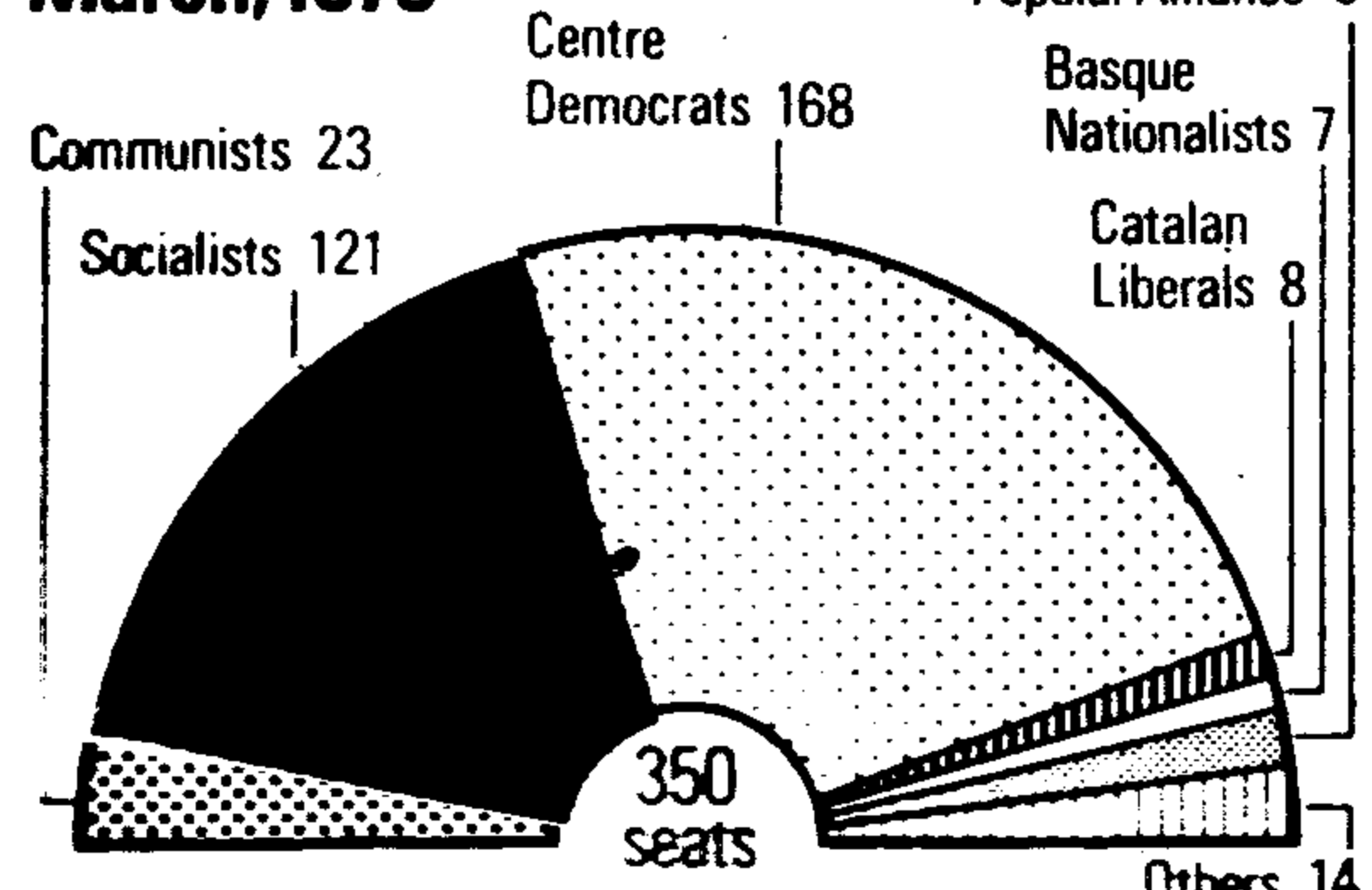
The philosophy underlying the document, however, is not, even rhetorically, the pursuit of socialism - a term which is not mentioned in the title of the party. It is a pure democratic capitalist philosophy consisting of more freedom, more social equality, and, above all, the 'modernisation' of Spain.

In all the 47 pages of changes suggested there is nothing which would not in abstract be supported by most of the democratic sections of the capitalist class the world over.

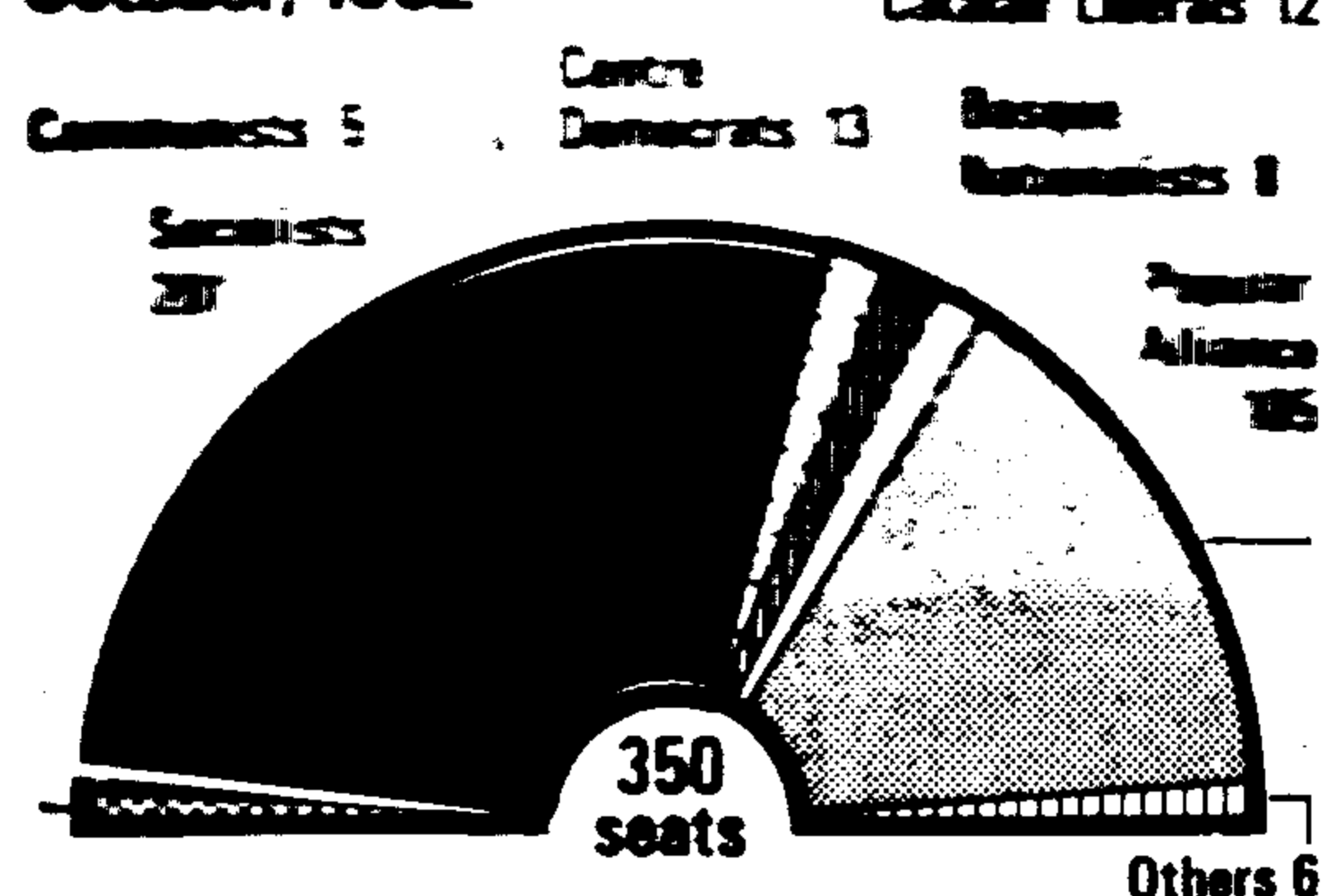
That is not to say that from the standpoint of socialists and oppressed sections of the population many of the changes, if they could be effected, would not be very desirable. Spain is still a long way from granting even

The Centre was crushed

Seats in the lower house, after the elections of March, 1979



October, 1982



February 23 1981 - right wing officers invade Parliament. How long before a repeat?

On the spot report by Bob Sutcliffe

SPAIN'S ALLENDE?



'For change' was the Socialists' single slogan

democratic freedoms. The trouble is that the PSOE proposes no really radical changes which would alter the underlying economic inequality in Spain. In fact the PSOE programme proposes many changes — with the exception of the basically needed of a radical land reform which would dispossess the large landowners.

In the rest of its economic policy it suggests a more expansionist approach and encourages investment in the banks to finance investment; but it proposes nothing which would reduce the capitalist basis of the Spanish economy.

It is capitalism's desperate thirst for profit which in Spain, as everywhere else, is the capitalist world, is creating mass unemployment on a scale unknown for decades.

The best the PSOE can envisage is the creation of 1,000 jobs over four years, about a third of the present number of unemployed. It hopes to disguise the problem by encouraging young people to stay longer in school and old workers to retire earlier.

But again it will leave private property inviolate, except for a plan to nationalise the national high tensile electricity transmission system. On paper the PSOE's alternative economic policy is very much less radical than that of the Mitterrand government in France when it was elected or that of the Labour Party in Britain today.

Reforms

The British Labour government of 1945-51, for instance, undertook reforms which on the surface at least infinitely more radical than anything the PSOE is committed to.

Politics depended on more than written programmes, it might be said. But now faced with a period of political stability in which even the most mildly reformist government has just been elected by such a popular majority

could get on with introducing its many marginal reforms, none of which seem much of a threat to bourgeois power and could therefore be expected to be accepted with little more than formal resistance.

Scenario

The scenario of a stable era of gradual reforms is about as far from Spanish reality as it is possible to be. In fact the PSOE enters office in the middle of a very acute and rapidly worsening economic crisis and amid a permanent short-term threat to any kind of political democracy posed by the powerful Francoist army.

There are several separate but interrelated sources of instability and potential crisis which the Gonzalez government will be forced to contend with.

At the top of the list is the economic situation. Leading Socialist spokesmen often point to the unacceptability of over two million unemployed. But they have a tendency to talk about it as if it were a static problem which could be gradually reduced by their programme of reducing the retirement age to 64, reducing the working week to 40 hours (in Spain it is still longer) and raising the school-leaving age, while ameliorating the conditions of those who remain unemployed by spreading the right to benefit which (even in a grossly inadequate form) is received by less than 30 per cent of the unemployed at present.

Such measures have no hope of fully offsetting continual increase in unemployment which is resulting from the wave of bankruptcies of firms. These collapses are also having major repercussions in the financial sector.

Many banks have failed in Spain in the last five years. And the latest was only a week after the elections when the Banca Catalana, the largest commercial bank in Catalonia, went bust. At the same time a run on the peseta began, its value began to fall on world

markets, and as a consequence inflation, already rapid by European standards, started to accelerate.

From its programme there is no sign at all that the new government has a policy which can solve the interrelated problems of rapidly growing unemployment, financial crises and crashes, and a major run on the peseta. It certainly has no plan for any radical attack on the rights of private property such as would be needed to begin to resolve these problems. So in the early period of the Socialist government they will in all probability get a lot worse.

The second acute immediate problem faced by the new government is the political terrorism practised by the Basque nationalists of ETA. The day after the collapse of the Banca Catalana, ETA assassinated the commander of the important Brunete Tank Regiment, whose leaders were heavily implicated in the coup plot of February 23 1981.

Such effective anti-military actions by ETA are not the cause of the existence of an ever-present tendency towards military coups in the Spanish army. The basic cause of that is a large and deeply reactionary caste of Francoist military officers feeling that over seven years they have been robbed of some of their prestige and power and economic privileges in Spanish society.

But the coup mentality in the army is tactically aided if there seems to be an excuse for military action to 'stabilise' the political situation. And the actions of ETA have up to now been the most convenient such pretext.

There was much talk during the election that Felipe Gonzalez might be willing to negotiate a truce with ETA. And while this has been intermittently denied by both sides, there are elements in the PSOE and in ETA who believe that a negotiated truce is desirable.

The ETA leaders can hardly have failed to notice that the electoral coalition

which supported them, Herri Batasuna, in the Basque provinces failed, in spite of a vast expenditure on propaganda, to maintain its share of the poll compared with recent elections. If they have passed their peak of popular support, then perhaps it is the moment to negotiate.

The elements in ETA who, by contrast, would like to return to the old days of military government in Madrid are probably quite small. The fact that they exist, however, gives the organisation a politically very erratic character.

This problem is an example of a more general one — that of the power and privileges of the military in general.

Spain has the largest repressive apparatus (army and police) per head of its population of any in Western Europe. The great majority of its 1500 serving generals are loyal to the memory of dictator Franco, who appointed them.

They are a permanent and daily threat to any reform or democratic advance in Spain. Their many plots of political takeovers in the last few years are open secrets. Yet they remain impossible to control.

Even those like Milans del Bosch, sentenced to 30 years in prison, are free to continue plotting from their comfortable cells. Colonel Tejero, the man who invaded the parliament in 1981, was allowed to stand in the elections, though his candidacy received only 25,000 votes nationwide.

The PSOE talks vaguely of the need to 'modernise' the army and at length to convert it to a professional one, but they have absolutely no idea at all about what to do with the Francoist officers. Even their plan to reduce the jurisdiction of military courts to soldiers on duty, and similar obvious reforms, may provoke the ire of the generals.

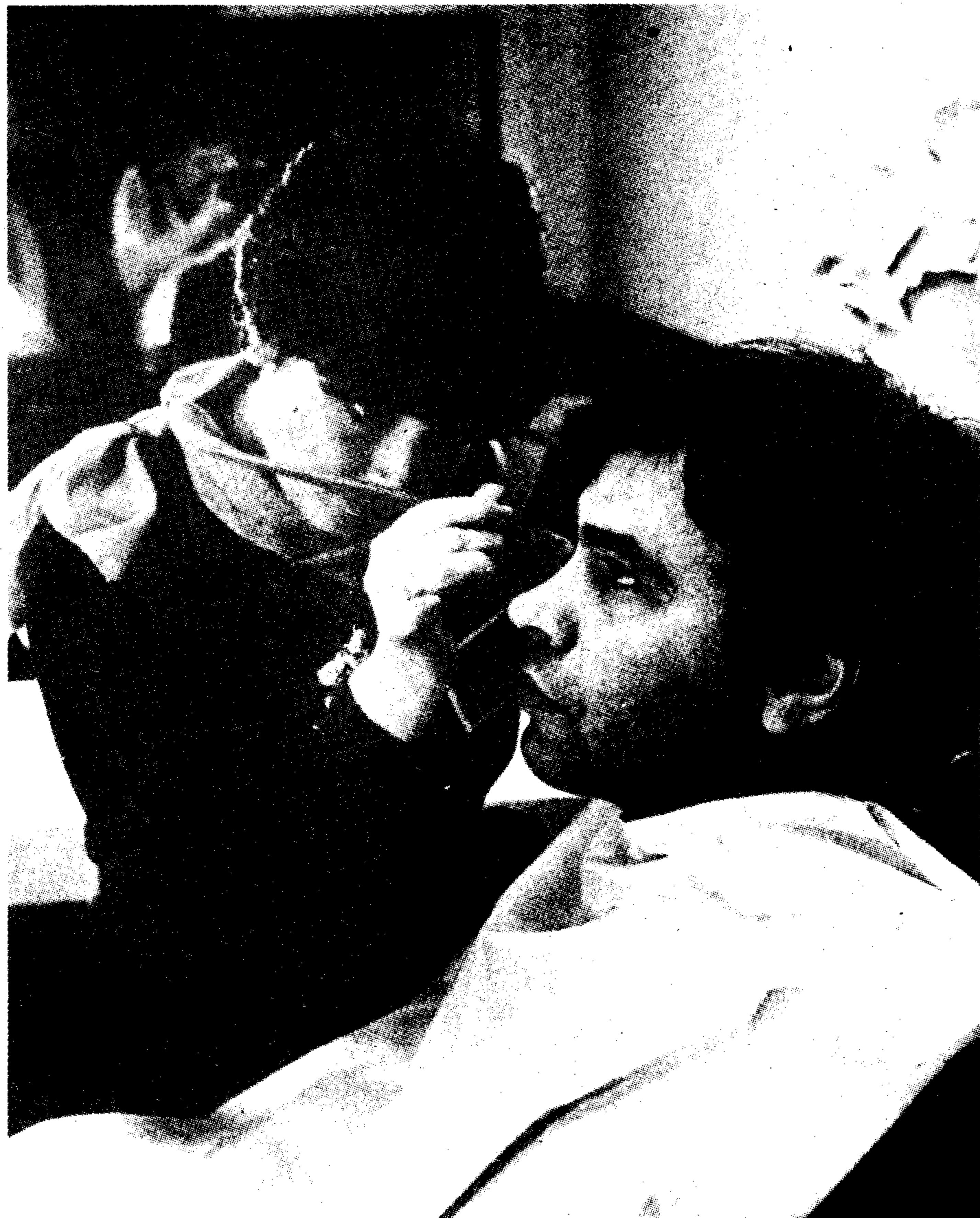
The PSOE leaders do not even conceive of the possibility of anything more basic like sacking the generals. In their programme they refer to the army as a whole as the guarantor of the constitution, and call for strong measures against those officers who plot coups (the 'golpistas'). The trouble for the PSOE and for the people of Spain is that all the officers are 'golpistas'.

The PSOE leaders know this but realise also that there is no way of dealing with it within the confines of their cautious parliamentarism.

It is still probably true that the great majority of the bourgeoisie of Spain, even in their present agony, have not yet come to believe that their problems can only be solved by a coup. And some of them even have hopes of the socialist government.

But the AP leaders' studied ambiguity about democracy must in general strengthen the tendency towards military coup.

Bourgeois support for unconstitutional action



Gonzalez — putting on a brave face as dangers loom?

would no doubt rise fast if the Socialist victory led to a renewed upsurge of class struggle in Spain. This, of course, will not be at the behest of the Gonzalez government leadership, which never tires of calling for moderation.

But the accentuation of the economic crisis is forcing growing numbers of workers every day into conflict, merely to defend their jobs.

In addition there is a strong possibility that, faced with economic reality, the Socialists will, like governments all over Europe, abandon their mild expansionism in favour of full-scale austerity, perhaps even quicker than the Mitterrand government in France.

If such a move is responded to by a new wave of workers' struggle, then the bourgeoisie might very quickly abandon constitutionality. They would have no reason to tolerate a Socialist government which had lost its ability to control the working class.

The final term in the complex equation of Spanish politics is the church. There are clear signs that the church played less role in the elections than in the two previous polls. Fewer sermons were reported promising eternal damnation for voting Socialist — and this might have helped the PSOE's vote in some rural areas.

But Fraga's campaign concentrated very hard on the elements of the PSOE

programme which might be expected to alienate the Church — and especially on the PSOE's plans to legalise abortion, though this will be only when the life of the mother is in serious danger, when there is a serious possibility of the child being deformed, or when the pregnancy is the result of rape.

Since the election this pledge has been taken up by the Pope in his visit. His call to Spaniards to resist the Socialist government's plans to legalise abortion will be seized on by the far right, and perhaps used by the 'golpistas' as a pretext for a seizure of power which among other things would 'protect Christian morality'.

A leaflet which fluttered around the streets of Spanish cities the night before the election said simply, 'If the Socialists are elected your savings in the bank will be in danger'; the next one could add something about forced infanticide and nuns being raped in the street.

The threat to Spain's limited democracy is now very severe, even if an immediate serious coup attempt looks rather unlikely. The Socialist leaders almost certainly have at least a little breathing space to prepare for a probable right wing attempt to destabilise the country and overthrow constitutional rule.

In the dramatic week after the election — which saw the collapse of a major

bank, the assassination of an important Francoist general, and a call by the Pope to mobilise against the government in defence of reactionary superstitions — the prospective government displayed some disturbing signs that it had no intention of using its breathing space to politically arm and mobilise its vast numbers of potential supporters. On the contrary it seemed intent on lulling them into a profoundly false sense of security.

In particular the assassination of General Ramon was greeted by Felipe Gonzalez with flattery and conciliation towards the armed forces.

When, just over 50 years ago, Largo Caballero became Socialist Prime Minister of Spain, he was described (over-generously) as 'the Spanish Lenin'. Last week Felipe Gonzalez looked more like a Spanish Allende.

Not only in Spain but also in other countries socialists, recognising the significance of the ousting of the Francoists from the Spanish government for the first time in 45 years, will be preparing to defend unconditionally the new government against the immense threat which it faces from the right.

But they will also fight for genuinely radical moves against the repressive system in Spain. 'Slow but sure' is no motto for the coming struggles.

Lenin and the Russian workers' Revolution

65 years ago this week the Russian workers took power. What made their victory possible? What caused the later Stalinist degeneration? First of a series of articles by Andrew Hornung and John O'Mahony



Local revolutionary 'circles' were the first form of Marxist organisation in Russia. Above: Lenin (centre) with a group in St Petersburg, 1895

Beginnings of Bolshevism

"THE Russian revolutionary movement will be victorious as a movement of workers. There is and can be no alternative".

What astonishment must have registered in that vast, backward prison house of nations and peoples, that permafrost block on progress, that was 19th century Russia, at these words of George Plekhanov, spoken in 1889.

For Russia in those days was a country with a tiny working class numbering about one million, while there were over a hundred million peasants. It was this vast peasant mass that had been looked to as the revolutionary class by the then dominant revolutionary organisation, Narodnaya Volya (Narodniks). Plekhanov's words expressed the historic perspective of Marxism on the working class, and were a rejection of the views of the Narodniks.

Lenin was then only 19. He had already read Marx's Capital and begun to ground himself seriously in its scientific method.

Born in the provincial town of Simbirsk, into the family of a school administrator, Lenin was no stranger to revolutionary ideas other than Marxism. His brother Alexander had been hanged in 1887 for planning the assassination of the Tsar. He had been a member of the Narodnik organisation.

But if the execution of his brother sharpened Lenin's sense of justice, it was not the views of the Narodniks that influenced him, but those of Marx, Engels and Plekhanov.

The first things Lenin read were devoted to a scathing 'Narodniks' book, in the pamphlet form. It was a scientific study of the Russian situation, and the pamphlet — 'The People' — as a single issue. Lenin used these studies to show the differences within these

masses, how out of 'the People' was crystallising the proletariat, the modern working class.

He also criticised the tactics of the Narodniks, who sent out heroic and isolated revolutionaries with guns and bombs to act in the name of 'the People' and assassinate the hated representatives of Tsarist tyranny.

What he had to say in the course of fighting these terrorist tactics is particularly instructive for us today. "We have never rejected terrorism on principle, nor can we do so... The point is however, terror is advocated [by the Narodniks] not as one of the operations the army in the field must carry out in close connection and in complete harmony with the whole system of fighting, but as an individual attack, completely separated from any army whatsoever. In view of the absence of a central revolutionary organisation, terror cannot be anything but that".

This was the period when the new Russian working class, recently driven into the factories from the countryside, revolted against their conditions and against Tsarist tyranny, with wave upon wave of mass, illegal strikes.

Even the savage Tsarist repression failed to quell the movement of the workers, which was spontaneous and lacking in any stable organisation. Trade unions were of course illegal.

There were also groups of 'intellectuals' who had imported the ideas of Marxism into Russia from Western Europe. These turned eagerly to the task of seeking the proletarian movement and in the task of fusing a revolutionary Marxist organisation with the actual movement of the working class. It was during this period that Lenin, still a student, came to the conclusion that the Narodniks were the present danger to the movement — 'the People' — as a single issue. Lenin used these studies to show the differences within these

In 1895 Lenin travelled abroad to contact the emigre 'Emancipation of Labour Group' and learn

about developments in the West European labour movement.

The Emancipation of Labour Group comprised the oldest generation of Russian Marxists, like Plekhanov, Axelrod, Zasulich and Deutsch, and was the powerhouse of Russian Marxist analysis and propaganda.

With them, he arranged for the publication of a miscellany, 'Rabotnik' (Worker). Returning to Russia, he arranged its illegal distribution, and in the autumn of 1895 set up in St Petersburg the League for the Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class and arranged for the publication of a new illegal paper, Rabochye Dyelo.

But just as the proofs for the paper were finally being checked, Lenin and most of the other members of the League were arrested.

After a period in jail Lenin was sent into exile in Eastern Siberia. Here he was joined by his comrade Nadezhda Krupskaya. They were married in 1896.

Neither jail nor exile meant silence or inactivity. This was a period of intense political study, the monument to which is the massive work, 'The Development of Capitalism in Russia'.

But he was cut off from the working class, and unable to carry out the urgent task of building a working class revolutionary organisation. From the time of his release in 1900 he concentrated his entire energy on this.

His first idea was to break with the isolated 'circle work', in which scattered groups of Marxist propagandists existed more or less independently of each other throughout Russia. In order to do this a paper on all-Russian scope was needed, a paper which would act as an organiser and centraliser for the whole Social Democratic movement (Marxism was called Social Democracy until 1914). This cen-

tralism was to prefigure the unification and ideological independence of the working class.

Again he travelled abroad, realising that the paper would have to be produced outside Russia owing to the close police supervision there of their every move. At the end of 1900 this work bore its first fruit with the appearance of 'Iskra' (The Spark), and then in January of the following year a journal, 'Zarya' (Dawn), was produced.

Now he set about that work that was to lead to a breakthrough in Marxist thinking, and in its practical effects was to become one of his most important and most characteristic contributions to Marxism as a revolutionary force: the organisation of the Russian workers' revolutionary drive into a fighting party.

Although an attempt to found a party had been made in 1898 while he was in exile, it had collapsed almost immediately when nearly all the delegates to the founding conference were arrested soon after it.

The period from 1894 to the first Congress of the Party in 1898 had been, in Lenin's own words, one in which Social Democracy appeared "as a social movement, as a rising of the masses of the people and as a political party".

Even the Zubatov 'unions' — so-called because they were 'unions' organised by the police chief Zubatov — 'led' strikes, even general strikes, in large cities, so great was the spontaneous will to struggle of the working class.

But if Social Democracy appeared now as 'a political party', it was a political party in the old sense: in the sense of a unified group having common characteristics and acting more or less together. Lenin understood, however, that what was wanted was a 'party of a new type': something that

broke out of the scattered, restricted work of the Marxist educational and leaflet-distributing circles and became a factor on the national political scene, enabling the working class in turn to unite organisationally and ideologically.

This 'party of a new type' had to combine the features of an organisationally secure unity capable of escaping detection by the secret police and of a politically trained and unified group capable of directing struggles surely and singlemindedly.

The period of the rise of working class struggle in the '90s was, however, also the period of the rise of the theory of 'economism', the view that economic, trade union struggles of workers were in themselves an adequate basis for the political struggle of the working class, leaving the sphere of the political struggle to the domination of the bourgeoisie.

All Marxists then agreed that the first revolution in Russia would be a bourgeois revolution. The 'economist' approach meant surrendering the working class in politics to the leadership of that bourgeoisie, while the socialists concentrated on trade unionism and general propaganda.

The inevitable separation between 'economic struggle' and 'political struggle' that this entailed made economism the at first unwitting, and later conscious, ally of the revisionism that had just reared its head in Germany. The revisionists wanted to transform Social Democracy from a movement to overthrow capitalism into one aiming merely to achieve reforms.

In the famous book 'What is to be Done', Lenin outlined a 'first draft' so to speak, of the theory of the organisation and role of the party. Published in 1902, this book developed ideas already set out in 'Where to Begin' (1901)

and 'Letter to a Comrade in St Petersburg'.

The book showed how a central revolutionary organisation based on a scientific programme could both link together the fragmented struggles of the working class and also link the struggles of that class on a whole series of fronts and around a great variety of objectives. It would do this by forging out of these disparate struggles an organisational and ideological unity which would be a crystal of the true character of the proletariat.

This struggle to protect the purity of the proletarian character of the revolutionary movement was concentrated within the revolutionary party. But it had a clear relationship to the movement outside.

"The stronger our Party organisations are, consisting of real Social Democrats, and the less wavering and instability there is within the Party, the broader, the more varied, the richer and more fertile will be the influence of the Party on the elements of the working class masses surrounding it and guided by it".

In backward, semi-Asiatic Russia, however, where the peasantry, the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie of both the town and the countryside, as well as the working class, were oppressed classes, there was a great danger that the working class movement would fall under the domination of these far more numerous classes.

The struggle against false ideas developing in and around the workers' movement had to be coupled with an equally determined struggle against the external class influences.

With the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party in 1903 came an even greater sharpening of differences within the RSDLP. Ranged against Lenin were all those who understood a 'party' to be, as in the old sense of

the word, simply the same side.

Such a conception was entirely inadequate to the founding of a 'party' whose practice and programme was based on an underlying scientific theory, whose members would have to be steered, dedicated, and politically trained. Lenin had to fight against many of his one-time collaborators to establish his ideas.

He won, but his victory was shortlived: though his Bolshevik (majority) faction triumphed over the Mensheviks (minority) at the Congress, the defection of Plekhanov soon afterwards to Menshevism put Lenin in the minority. He resigned from the Editorial Board of Iskra.

Thus began a long and bitter struggle in which he fought not only his close collaborators of the previous period such as Martov and Potresov, but also his teacher Plekhanov. He began to build up a faction that was finally to emerge in 1912 as the Bolshevik Party.

The split in 1903 is referred to in vulgar Stalinist legend as already exhibiting in fully developed form all the distinguishing traits of both Bolshevism and Menshevism, traits which led the two factions to line up on different sides of the class barricades in the revolution of 1917. In reality it was no more than their prefiguration.

A whole series of experiences, struggles, reunifications, new splits and the interchange of personnel was necessary before the final crystallisation of the two tendencies.

Many of the active workers in Russia rallied to Lenin against the 'anarchic' behaviour of the emigre Menshevik intellectuals who had overturned the conference decisions. The debates of this period were anticipations of the burning problems of the revolution. "The approach of the great storm was felt everywhere. All classes were in a state of ferment and preparation".

Continued next week

"I had hoped to be denounced and discussed by the other side"

Chris Mullin's recent novel, 'A Very British Coup' (Hodder and Stoughton, £6.95) is about a left Labour prime minister, Harry Perkins, forced to resign by capitalist plots

and manoeuvres. Last week Chris Mullin — who is also editor of Tribune — discussed the book with Martin Thomas from SO.

talking about one where accidentally the electoral process delivers up our kind of government. I'm coping with the reactions of the existing established forces.

What about the reactions of the existing forces that are opposed to the Establishment?

I do think Perkins could have been far more involved with the trade union movement than he was. But he was at least as much involved as any of our leaders to date have been — except of course for those leaders who are very much in touch with the bigger and more right wing block votes!

I could have written learned articles in Tribune, for example, or Socialist Organiser, but they would reach a very limited audience. My purpose was to reach the largest possible audience with the message that the real threat to parliamentary democracy comes not from the likes of you and me, but from those who frequently make the most noise about the threat to parliamentary democracy, in the ruling class.

The real threat to parliamentary democracy comes from the City, the press, the higher levels of the civil service; this is the message we've got to put over, to get the other side on the defensive.

Democracy in this country was not a gift from the Conservative Party. It was obtained by prolonged popular struggle.

A final question. You've had a lot of reviews. What's your impression? Do you feel you have succeeded in what you set out to do?

My ambition was to be denounced by the other side loudly and publicly. And I've only had a minor success on that front.

But there's still time. I would like to see the book made into a television series. I would like to set people talking in the enemy camp about whether this version of events is true to life or not.

Your novel ends with the defeat of the Left. Obviously in writing it you must have had some idea of how it could have ended in victory. How?

I think Perkins should have done a lot more to mobilise the mass movement. Also, I don't think he should have resigned when he did. He should have stood up to the blackmail.

You chose to write the story from the point of view of the prime minister, rather than any other. Why?

I tried to adopt a potentially popular theme — to write a political thriller. So I had to consider what would appeal to the widest number of people.

Yes, it could have been done from the point of view of Fred Thompson, or of somebody living in a council house in South Shields...

Or the editor of Tribune...

But I don't think there is any public interest in the view of the editor of Tribune outside the ranks of the

converted.

If you had written it from the point of view of someone more 'rank and file' than the prime minister, I'm not sure that it would have been less popular, but it would have raised different questions.

As it is, the main question raised is, 'what should the prime minister have done differently?' But for working class readers, there is no way they can decide about the prime minister acting differently. They may be able to do something different themselves...

From the point of view of the editor of Tribune, I don't honestly think that anything I could do would influence the outcome in Downing Street, and I think we flatter ourselves if we imagine otherwise.

The decisions that affect the lives of most people in this country are not taken by those people themselves. What you and I are aiming for is a situation where the decisions that affect the lives of people are taken by the people themselves. Before we can even begin to make progress in that direction, we've got to convince people who it is that is running the country at the moment.

I'm not so sure that convincing people about ruling class power is the main problem. I think it's more a matter of convincing them that this power isn't inevitable — that working class people can run society instead, that it doesn't all depend on what decision a prime minister takes.

I agree. But I think we're talking about two different novels. You're talking about one where we've arrived at, or are well on the way to, the promised land, and I'm



Chile — are the key lessons about what Allende should have done differently? Or about what socialists organising independently from Allende could have done?

BRILLIANT BLACKSTUFF

CHANNEL 4 has opened with a claim to give the news from new angles — including the left. We shall see.

Meanwhile television drama continues to show occasional brilliance in capturing the struggle of the working class.

The plays are usually put on late at night when the children are safely out of the way of its influence. So it was with 'Boys from the Blackstuff', Alan Bleasdale's remarkable return to the characters he depicted so brilliantly in a one-off play a few years ago.

His six stories took the energies of the Merseyside road gangsters whose attempts to get rich had gone so disastrously wrong, and set them against the background of Mrs Thatcher's 1982. Unemployed, harassed by social security snoopers, beaten up by police, held together by a sense of community rather than family, by humour, and by a determined optimism called into question only at the last.

The final episode saw the death of George — the former militant convenor of the Liverpool docks — from cancer. He was pushed by his son down to the docks where he saw his first ship. His final words were, "Those days of long ago, they still give me hope and faith in my class. I can't believe there is no hope".

His wife had earlier shouted at her sons, who were blaming workers for refusing to come out on strike, that they were defeat-

Peter McIntyre reviews 'Boys from the Blackstuff', shown recently on Sundays on BBC2

ist. "I won't have such talk in my house".

George is buried in a scene which was a brilliant attack on the church. As hundreds of mourners pack into the church, the priest tries to bury George under his wrong name (the name he was baptised under), and is then stopped in his tracks by George's son when he starts spouting about the Kingdom of Heaven.

"You are not on. We didn't come here to listen to this".

Later the priest is seen vomiting into the gutter after getting smashed at the reception.

Two of the former gangsters go for a drink and find themselves in a pub where everyone is round the twist, performing strange routines in complete isolation from the world around them. The publican — rapidly going the same way himself — points at each in turn, naming the factory from which he was made redundant.

Chrissie, leaving the pub, gives a final twist to George's optimism, saying, "You know what he stood for. Yeah, well that's dead and

all".

This struggle between optimism and pessimism is at the heart of a series of plays which always seemed to be on the brink of going over the top.

The social security snooper trying to trap her victim by selling her expensive make-up through the letter box, the revolutionary falling to his death trying to escape from a raid, when the one modern part of a Victorian building gave way: Yossier Hughes — surely the performance of the year by Bernard Hill — trailing his children in his wake as he pounced on hapless passers by with his keening monologue: "Gi' us a job. Go on, gi' us a job. I could do that. I can carry things".

But director Philip Swithe and Bleasdale always held it together with a blend of black humour and tragedy that have rarely been combined to such good effect. It wasn't so much that you didn't know whether to laugh or cry, but that you were trying to do both at the same time.

Scenes would switch from total realism to set piece staginess. Yossier's children were to be taken into care. He barricaded them in the house while the social workers tried to persuade him to come out, talking through the letter box.

The next minute a gang of ape-like policemen had charged through the back door — "You don't reason with shite" — and beat Yossier to pulp while the goggle-

eyed social workers protested feebly through the window. It captured symbolically the relationship between the 'caring' side of the state and its armed bodies of men.

I am sure Alan Bleasdale would react against any attempt to characterise his plays in terms of a precise political message. It seemed to me however that he had perhaps caught the synthesis

between optimism and despair which breeds the next major upsurge of working class anger.

It is better, of course, that revolutionaries and socialists should keep their optimism, but the iron will of the class is forged somewhere between the two.

This series should be repeated, quickly, often, and at prime time.



George "can't believe there is no hope". Others believe just that...

Why support Militant ?

OVER THE last three years Socialist Organiser has been in the forefront of the battle to democratise the Labour Party: the decades-long monopoly of power by the PLP has been broken, policy-making was handed back, albeit with the exclusion of the undemocratic trade union block vote, to the members of the Party.

Temporarily we have been thrown back on the defensive by the recent NEC turn to the right, but the long-term prospects for a thorough democratisation of the Labour Party and key trade unions must still look promising.

In mounting their counter-attack the Right have, however, struck at the Achilles Heel of the left wing movement: the Militant. During the political and constitutional battles of the last period, Militant

have remained aloof, walling up behind their demands for total nationalisation of everything that moves.

Not only that, but they hold to political positions on major issues that put them well to the right of even bourgeois forces. On Ireland, they substitute a mundane trade union economism for the political dissolution of this imperialist enclave in the North.

On gay rights, they are outflanked on the left by the Young Liberals. On the Falklands, they even proposed that their own members should join the Armed Forces. On CND, they abstain, saying it is a diversion from selling the paper.

Why are these archaic positions still held to by a current that imbibes the rhetoric of revolutionary Marxism?



Ted Grant — aloof and archaic?

The answer lies in a form of political organisation practised by the Militant newspaper that has effectively insulated its leading core from the major political developments of the last three decades. For Ted Grant and Peter Taaffe, the

women's movement is an irrelevance, something of no significance whatsoever for working class people.

Unfortunately, and I don't like having to say this, the Militant is an ossified sect, incapable of any creative application of Marx's tradition to today's problems. It occupies a 1940s time-warped which in practice entails that the current will become a genuine obstacle to a thoroughgoing politicisation and democratisation of the Labour Party.

It has not been possible for the women's and gay movement, the campaigns for withdrawal of troops from Ireland, or any of the other progressive movements of the past few years, to express themselves through the Militant as an organised tendency within the Party.

If we are to politically disarm the right wing and win the mass of working people to our views, then we have to be simon-pure in both our 'socialism' and our 'democracy'.

To defend the Militant today in the present battle with the right wing is to misunderstand the immensity of the tasks that face us and the practical measures that need to be taken to win workers to socialism and democracy.

Hence I would advocate a policy of non-support for Militant in the present struggle, on the basis that we can't support a current with which we so fundamentally disagree and which fails to understand the very nature of the 'new working class democracy' we all wish to create.

ALAN CAMPBELL, Withington, Manchester.

Writeback



We invite readers to send us their letters, up to a usual maximum length of 400 words.

Send to 'Writeback', Socialist Organiser, c/o 28, Middle Lane, London N8.

Ballots and bullets

THE caption under the picture accompanying my article on the Northern Ireland elections [SO 106] got a number of things wrong.

The Republican movement has not 'abstained from elections' for 60 years: they have in fact contested elections at various times in both the Six and Twenty-Six Counties. 'Republican abstentionism' is a refusal to sit in the 'partitionist parliaments' north and south of the Border when they won elections.

The supporters of the Republican side originally seceded from Dail Eireann over the Treaty. Three years after the Republican defeat in the civil war, most of the TDs [MPs] followed De Valera into the Dail when he founded Fian-na Fail.

Since then, to take seats won or not to, together with the concomitant commitment to physical force, has divided Republicans from those (like Fianna Fail) who share their nationalist

aims.

In the '50s, during the IRA military campaign on the Border, the Republicans ran candidates, and even won elections on the abstentionist ticket. As a matter of fact, their proportional vote then was not very different from what it was in the recent election.

What has happened now is that for the first time since the Catholic revolt got under way, the Republicans are combining election campaigns with their military activities.

The change has not entirely depended on the Republicans. For example, in the 1973 elections to the Assembly, Sinn Fein would not have been allowed to participate by the British government, even if it wanted to. Both British government policy and Republican abstention allowed the SDLP, which then embodied and expressed the common policy of the Dublin and London governments for the Six Counties, to have a clear field as the 'political representative of the Catholic community'.

In a certain sense it reaped the political benefits of the military campaign which forced the British government to scrap the Protestant Ascendancy parliament at Stormont and to seek new structures.

The SDLP vote has been in decline since the mid '70s, probably as a result of a growth of abstentionist attitudes among Catholics. Most of the Republican votes seem to have come from previous abstainers rather than from the SDLP vote at the previous election.

JOHN O'MAHONY, London.

Newsline in the gutter

THE British gutter press has predictably blamed the Brixton disturbances of Monday 1 November on 'outside agitators'. Last year the same newspapers said that the massive inner-city revolt by black youth was the work of 'four whites on motorbikes'.

We expect to see this kind of trash from Fleet Street. But we do not expect to see it in the left-wing press. Yet this week's Newsline (paper of the Workers' Revolutionary Party) ran a front-page story claiming that 'outside political groups' had 'cynically manipulated' Brixton's Front-Line youth into rioting.

On 3 November a complete Newsline leader was devoted to attacking two of those 'outside groups' — Workers Against Racism, plus its parent organisation

the Revolutionary Communist Party.

The Newsline version of Monday's events goes like this: everybody in Brixton supported Lambeth Council's plans to demolish the Front-Line. Furthermore, the 'handful of evictions' that took place 'went off with scarcely any bother'.

Even the presence of 500 police, including the notorious new Instant Response Units, would not have sparked off any trouble had it not been for WAR and the RCP. This, of course, is precisely the lie propagated by Lambeth Council and the police, who say that demolishing the Front-Line is merely about clearing up slums and petty crime.

The rest of the Editorial is given over to accusing WAR and the RCP of being agent provocateurs.

Newsline apparently shares Fleet Street's racist

view of black people: that they are not capable of responding to a military-style occupation of their community without being 'put up to it' by outside agitators. Worse still, Newsline denies that Brixton's black community had anything to do with the riot on 1 November.

The Editorial claims that everyone in Brixton supported the demolition of the 'festering slums' on the Front-Line, except for WAR and the RCP. This, of course, is precisely the lie propagated by Lambeth Council and the police, who say that demolishing the Front-Line is merely about clearing up slums and petty crime.

On 1 November Brixton's black community demonstrated that they know better — that the offensive against the Front-

Line is about smashing resistance in what has become a 'no go' area for the police. When the revolt began Lambeth Council ran for cover. One councillor in particular did not know which way to turn; Opposition leader Ted Knight who had drawn up the demolition plans jointly with Tory Council leader Robin Pitt.

For reasons best known to itself, Newsline is an unreserved admirer of Ted Knight. It has given him and Lambeth's Labour Group extensive complimentary coverage. When Knight needed a scapegoat to explain the cause of the Front-Line revolt, Newsline rushed to the rescue with its red-baiting attack on WAR and the RCP.

Newsline is entitled to its political views. It is not entitled, in what is meant to

be a labour movement publication, to print statements that help the British state do its dirty work.

Its slanders about 'provocateurs' assist the police in their efforts to frame up individuals and organisations on 'conspiracy' and 'incitement to riot' charges. Its lies about why and how the Front-Line erupted contribute to the Government's strategy of isolating and criminalising black people.

We urge all anti-racists, all black and labour movement organisations, to denounce Newsline's coverage on Brixton in the strongest possible terms. We ask you to provide us with the right of reply to its slanders by publishing this letter.

Workers Against Racism, London E8.

SCIENCE Knocking the spots off E. coli

by Les Hearn



Genetic engineering — 'fashionable but untried'

DIABETES is the world's fastest growing disease, and the West's third biggest killer, after cancer and heart failure.

These facts underlie a developing battle between drug companies Eli Lilly of USA and Novo Industri of Denmark for dominance in the UK market for insulin — one of the hormones produced by the body to control blood sugar levels, which is lacking or absent in diabetics.

The battle is about selling synthetic human insulin, which is about to become available thanks to new biotechnological techniques. It is taking place in Britain at least partly because it is easier to get new products licensed here than in the USA.

One of the techniques involved is genetic engineering, something that has been much discussed but little understood. But first we need to look at how insulin is made.

The human body makes insulin first as an inactive parent molecule — pro-insulin, a small protein molecule made up of 86 building blocks called amino-acids (there is a

special gene in our DNA which codes for pro-insulin). The whole thing twists up into a three-dimensional tangle, and is prevented from unfolding by three pairs of amino-acids becoming joined by little chemical bridges.

Then 35 amino-acids are dropped out of the middle of the chain, leaving two separate chains joined by these bridges. The A-chain has 21 amino-acids, and the B-chain has 30. The molecule is now active and is called insulin.

All these changes are carried out by little chemical machine tools called enzymes.

The usual source of insulin for diabetics is the pig or the cow — their insulins are almost (but not quite) the same as human insulin. For example, pig insulin has a different P30 amino-acid.

This difference may cause problems with some diabetics, whose bodies may produce anti-bodies to what seems like a dangerous invader.

Novo's contribution to solving this problem consists in using an enzyme to chop off the offending B30

and replace it with the correct amino-acid. This is really quite simple, once you have discovered such an enzyme (probably in some obscure fungus).

Lilly plumped for the fashionable but untried technique of genetic engineering.

They made genes for the A- and B-chains of insulin, and introduced them into Escherichia coli, a humble bacterium found in billions in the gut of the SO science correspondent, in common with all other humans. These insulin-producing bacteria are disabled by various mutations to prevent them being able to colonise the colon of an unsuspecting lab technician.

The A- and B-chains are purified and then joined in the correct way to make human insulin.

The process works well in the laboratory, but there are problems in scaling up for commercial production.

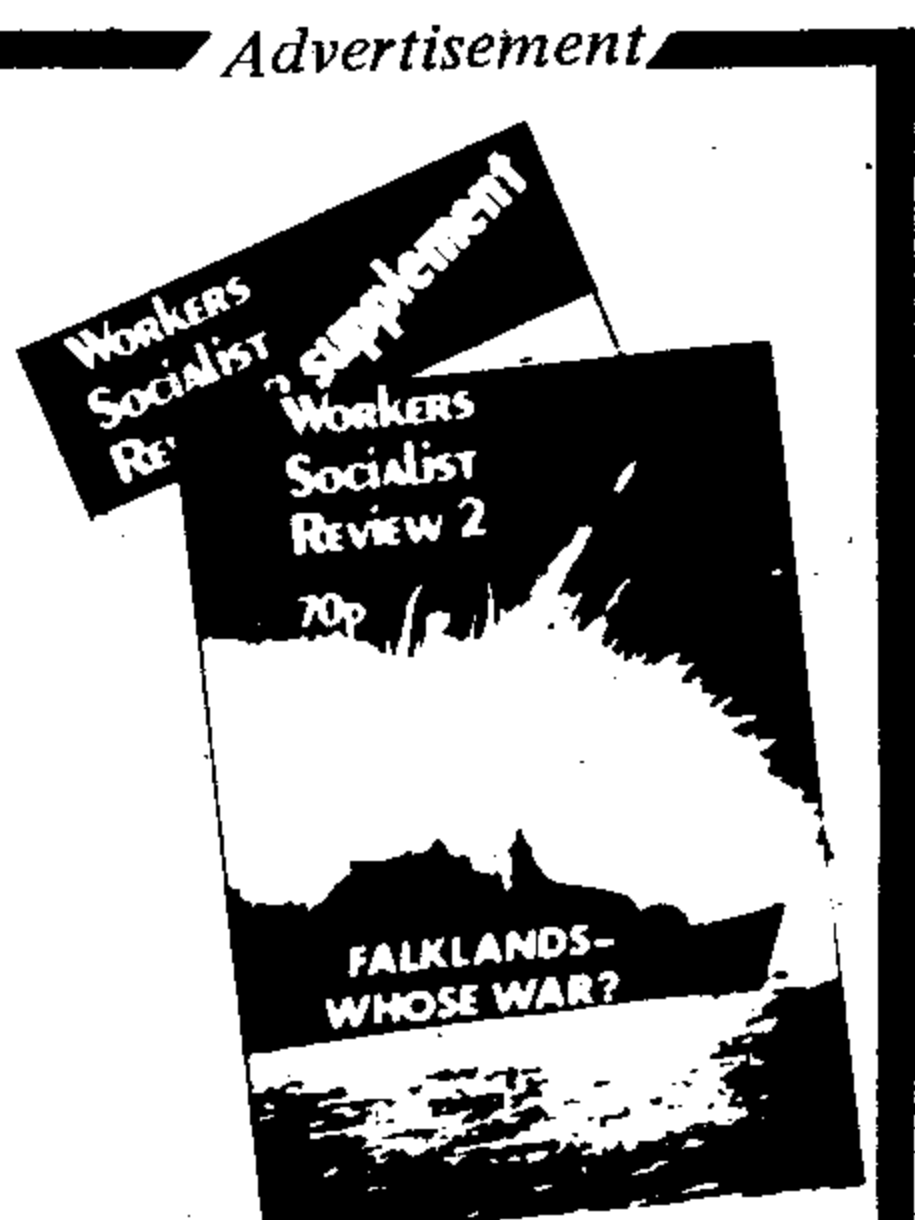
First, E. coli doesn't need to make insulin. Indeed, it's a lot more competitive with its fellows if it doesn't make it, so there is strong evolutionary pressure for it to lose the ability

to make it.

Secondly, for the same reason, there is no adverse effect to E. coli if a mutation happens in the insulin gene (rendering it useless or dangerous to humans). Such a mutation might make a human less fit for survival, but wouldn't worry E. coli, which doesn't need insulin anyway.

The insulin market is big business — with a value of \$400 million per year (expected to double by 1986). In contrast, little money is going towards prevention of what seems to be a disease caused by unhealthy high sugar diets.

It even seems that the wider availability of human insulin does not represent much of a step forward in reducing some of the terrible side-effects of diabetes — namely, blindness and deterioration of blood vessels necessitating amputation. This probably requires more research into how to mimic the pattern of secretion of insulin by the human body.



Workers' Socialist Review no. 2 includes: debate on the Falklands/Malvinas; Bob Sutcliffe on Argentina in the world economy; articles on Lebanon, Central America, Poland, South Africa, France. 80p with supplement, plus 20p p&p, from WSL, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

YOUTH PLAN FIGHT BACK

FOR THOSE of you who don't realise the scale of attacks on young people in this country, you only have to look at the Tories' new 'Young Workers Scheme'.

It is presented as a scheme to encourage small employers to take on young workers. If they pay them less than £40 a week, they get a £15 bonus from the government.

So the average wage of young workers has dropped dramatically in the last few months. Big industries are also taking advantage. If the Agricultural Wages Council agrees to employers' demands, 13,500 young farm workers under 20 will have their pay cut from £42.40 a week to £28.16.

This will only be the beginning, unless the trade unions are prepared to block the scheme — if necessary through strike action.

The Young Workers Scheme is only one example

by Mick Liggins

of attacks on youth. Last week in Brixton we saw another.

Class Fighter supporters in the Labour Party Young Socialists are holding a conference on the weekend of November 20-21 to discuss what we can do against these and many other attacks on young people.

We'll be discussing YOP schemes, the unemployed, young women, black youth, gay youth, international solidarity and many other issues.

Another big topic at the conference will be the witch hunt inside the Labour Party. It looks like the LPYS is going to be a prime target of the right wing.

They may go to disaffiliate us from the party or restrict us. We need to be prepared for this situation, and the conference will decide what we will do. One idea is a conference of YS branches

against the witch-hunt.

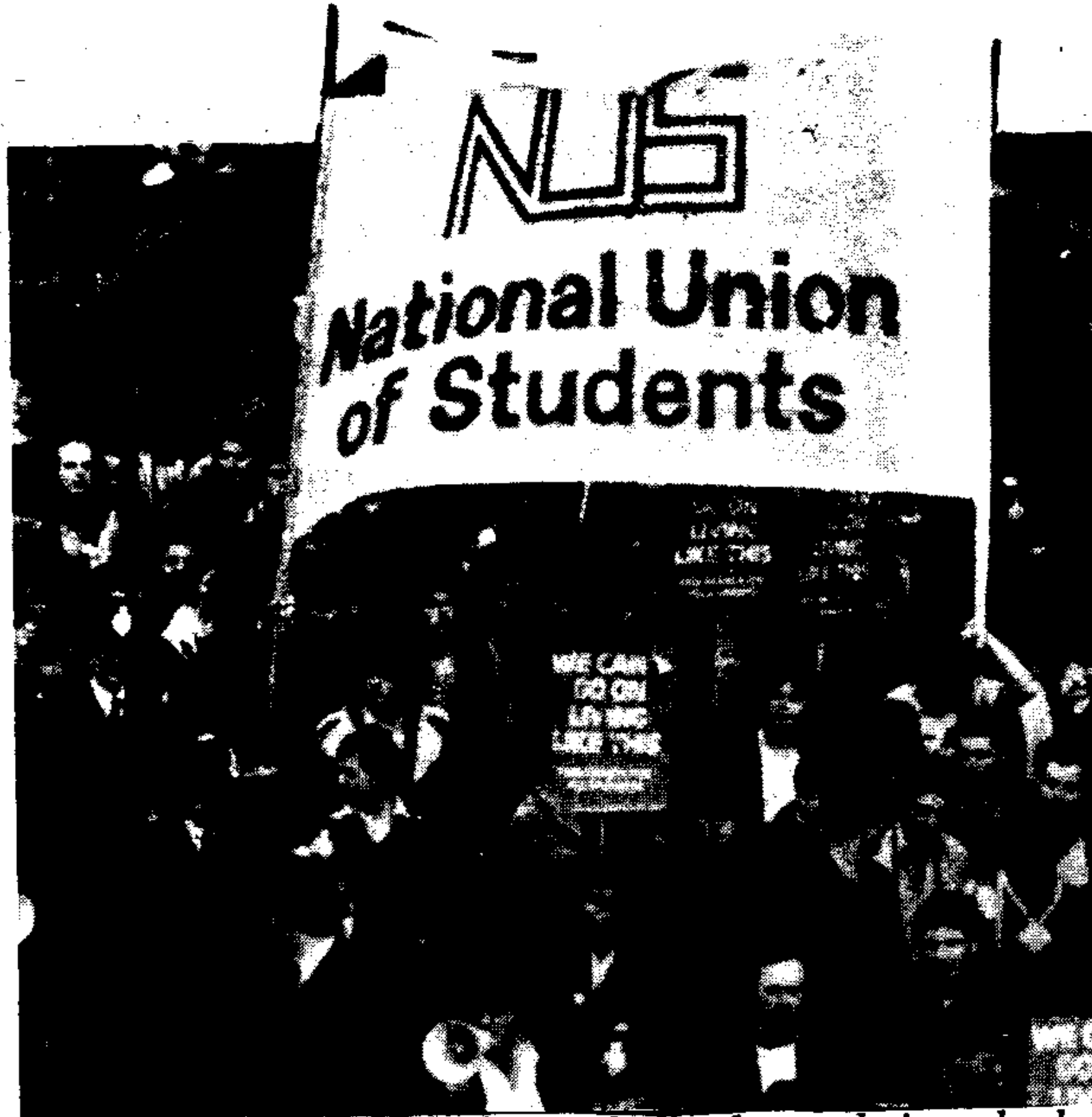
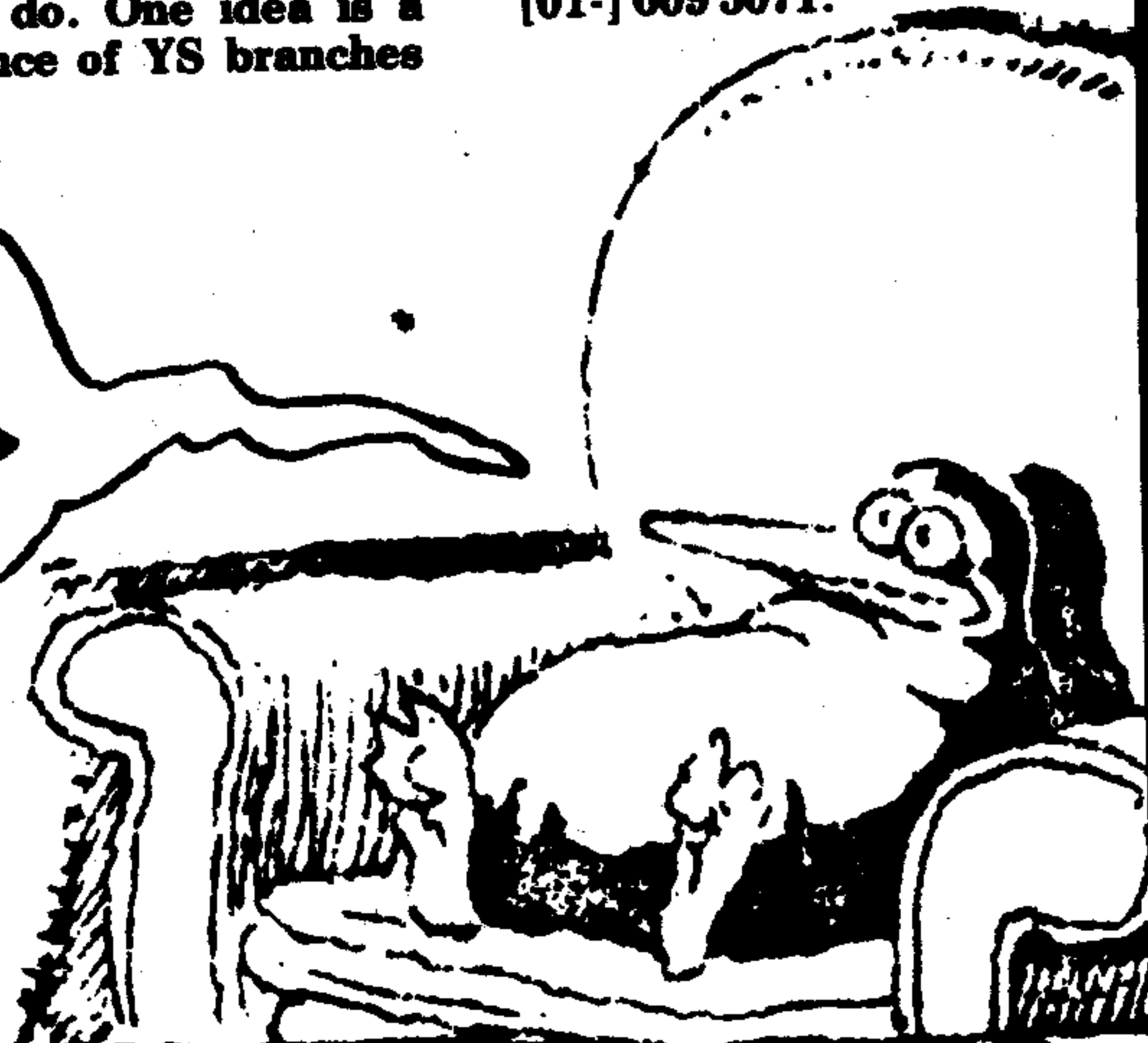
The conference is open to young people who are looking for a real fightback against the Tories, not tub-thumping speeches that usually mean nothing — but proposals for action.

The conference will be passing resolutions and electing a new steering committee. Most of the discussions will be held in workshops, so that everyone will feel confident to speak, and we can cover a wide range of issues.

The cost of the weekend will be £2.50 if you're working, and £1 if you're on the dole. If you have no income at all, the conference will cost 50p. There will be a social with bands on Saturday night.

Transport will be organised from most areas, and we want a real push in the last few days. If you want more information on the conference, ring us on (01-) 609 3071.

DON'T JUST SIT THERE — COME TO THE CLASS FIGHTER CONFERENCE



Grants have already declined severely in real value

Socialist students in NOLS conference

Saturday November 13, 11.30-5, ULU, Malet St, London WC1. 6-8: public meeting with speakers from NZS, NUS, and Solidarnosc.

Conference to organise the left in NOLS, open to all Student Union and Labour Club activists.

Registration £2 (grant), 50p (no grant).

Crisis in student housing

by Sarah Veale (vice-president welfare of NUS)

Students face grant cutback

The Tories have said that this year's 'offer' for students is 4%. Jane Ashworth reports.

'SORRY! Your grant hasn't been wrongly calculated'.

That's the reply welfare officers are having to give to students who don't understand why their cheques are on average £137 lower this year.

The figure of £137 comes from a National Union of Students survey at Stirling University, and the reduction arises from the extremely low increase this year in the threshold for parental contributions. Students are supposed to rely more on money from their parents, but the Stirling survey found that only 50% of students get the full amount allowed for from their parents.

This year's NUS grants claim demands the raising of the threshold for parental contribution from £6600 to £9000, and a £5 per week increase (11 or 12%, not 6% as previously reported in SO), to restore the grant

to its 1980-81 value.

What makes this claim more comprehensive than previous ones is the call for a minimum grant of £25 a week for all full-time students. This will primarily affect tech and FE students 300,000 of whom don't get a penny at the moment. £25 brings them in line with people in colleges on Youth Training Schemes.

The government will not concede without a big fight, and is likely to 'offer' loans instead of grants. NUS is planning a lobby of Parliament for the £25 minimum on November 17, and demonstrations in London and Glasgow on the 19th. Motions are needed for the Christmas NUS conference to instruct the Exec to organise more activities.

By spring, when the universities will announce packages of redundancies and increased hall fees,

we need to have built up joint union committees in the colleges ready for united action.

Joint activities by students and campus workers to support other public sector workers against the government can help develop this unity. Student union meetings should invite trade union activists to speak about their struggles.

Socialists should put motions to CLPs and Trades Councils supporting the NUS claim and opposing the Tories' attempts to cut courses, numbers and jobs — and to abolish the grants system.

LPYS branches too should back the campaign for a minimum grant. Invite a speaker to discuss how to involve school students and the unemployed — the people who stand to benefit if we win.

THE National Union of Students recently published a 'Report on Student Housing' which provides an in-depth look at student living conditions, and makes a number of recommendations.

The main problems for students are the high rents in private accommodation and the low level of council property available to students and young single people.

The majority of students not living in college halls live in private sector accommodation. Rents are usually high, yet students are prevented from receiving more than a few pounds in rent allowances because the 'board and lodgings' element of the grant is deducted automatically when assessment is made. It is assumed that all students receive a full grant, although many in fact do not.

The 4% 'increase' in the student grant this year has made students one of the poorest sections of the community, yet they are excluded from many forms of welfare benefit.

One of the recommendations of the Report is that students and young single people should have far easier access to council housing than they do currently. It also calls upon local authorities to make short-life housing available to students, and to take over private houses which have been empty for more than one year, and let them to young single people as well as families.

Many students who are desperate for accommodation end up signing licences (a form of contract which exploits a loophole in the Rent Act and affords tenants none of the usual protection offered by legislation) and paying extortionate deposits. Students and young people who are under 18 rarely gain independent access to rented accommodation because of problems with contracts for 'minors'.

NUS advocates a limited amount of new hall of residence provision, in places where it does not already exist such as North East London Polytechnic, although survey returns have indicated that after their first year few students want to live in hall.

The emphasis in the report is very much on young single people, not just students, as many of the difficulties faced by students are faced by all young single people on low incomes. NUS believes that the Government should amend the Rent Act and the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act to afford more protection to tenants, and that local authorities should make specific provision for young single people.

Not much hope, perhaps, under a Government which represents the property-owning class.

Problems — and Policies

What kind of government?

The last SO delegate meeting discussed what we mean by a 'workers' government'

We argue that it is not enough to get a new Labour government — though the achievement of such a government even under a Dennis Healey is of course a central objective of the labour movement. We need more. We need to fight for accountability in the labour movement and for socialist policies. And we need to organise and agitate to push that fight to the most radical conclusions.

With the present political positions of the Labour Party and even of the leaders of the left, we will get a Labour government which is fundamentally more of the same, possibly with radical trimmings. It will not serve the working class, and in present conditions it will not be able to adequately serve the ruling class. It will not even placate them.

The right wing know

this: and so they want to make the Labour Party a stable bourgeois governing party again by means of a purge.

The only serious alternative to the right wing programme is for the Left to go forward — to fight for a Labour government which is controlled by the labour movement rather than the established state apparatus and which starts a real attack on the wealth and entrenched power of the ruling class. We propose a fight to transform the labour movement so that it becomes able to create such a government.

As a revolutionary Marxists, we believe that there must be a socialist revolution — a clean sweep of the capitalists and the establishment of the state power of the working class. The big majority of the labour movement don't yet share our views. But a common need and determination is shared to oppose and fight the Tory government and to oppose any moves, even by the Labour Party in government, to load the cost of capitalist decay and crisis onto the shoulders of the working class.

We can organise a joint fight for a workers' government which begins the assault on capitalist power. That does not mean losing ourselves in consoling fantasies: if the Labour Party really were to strike at

the power and wealth of the bosses, they would strike back, using their army and state forces.

Rhythms

Even under a workers' government, the working class itself would only serve and protect its own interests by organising itself outside the rhythms, norms and constraints of Parliamentary politics, expanding its factory shop stewards' committees, combine committees, trades councils, etc., and creating new action committees, to be an industrial power that could as necessary dispense with the Parliamentarians.

But to counterpose the full revolutionary programme of a state based on workers' councils to the actual political processes within the actual labour movement is to make the revolutionary programme empty words. To the labour movement activists engaged in the fight for Labour democracy and socialist policies, we propose the objective of a Labour government based on the labour movement and taking serious measures against capitalist power.

We propose this to serious reformist and semi-revolutionary militants, without demanding prior agreement on our view of the full revolutionary impli-

cations of such an objective — and trust to the logic of the class struggle to provide the basis for our intervention to secure the further development of those implications.

There is no need to seek doctrinal guarantees, elaborate calculations about future possibilities, slogans designed to sew up all questions in advance, or fearful formulas which place protection against hypothetical future opportunist dangers above the job of developing the logic of the class struggle now.

Whatever the guesswork, the slogan of a workers' government has in any case a tremendous educational value in organising and rallying the left.

KICK OUT THE TORIES!
Labour democracy

and the
fight for a
WORKERS
GOVERNMENT

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



A Healey government 'will not serve the working class'

Scottish jobs disaster

ON top of all the savage job destruction already carried out in Scotland in recent years, Scottish workers are now threatened with another round of swinging job cuts.

Top of the current hit-list is the Ravenscraig integrated steelworks, which faces either complete closure, or the closing down of the major part of its operations.

At Ravenscraig itself, 5,000 jobs are now at risk, plus also — just in the short term — another 7,500 in associated industries.

The entire production of the Polkemmet colliery (1,400 jobs) goes to Ravenscraig; steel is British Rail's biggest freight customer in Scotland; steel and associated industries consume 5% of the total electricity output in Scotland, and the drop in the demand for electricity would in turn lead to further job losses in mining, etc. ...

Unemployment in the North Lanarkshire area, where the plant is situated, is already running at 21.6%. Closure of Ravenscraig would lead to a jump of 50% in the unemployment rate.

Nor is Ravenscraig the only section of the Scottish steel industry under threat: Clydebridge is closing on November 13, with a cost of 575 jobs; the closure of Parkhead Forge (350 jobs) has also been announced; Glegarnock and Dalzell would inevitably be shut down in the wake of any closure of Ravenscraig.

Not even Clydesdale and Imperial Calder are safe. They produce for the North Sea oil industry, currently a at a low ebb. The axing of 50 jobs at the Clydesdale tube works was announced at the beginning of October, and two days later over 130 redundancies at the Imperial works.

In the Central Region of Scotland, scene of recent collapse of the Carron Iron Works, the major threat to jobs is in aluminium: the possible closure or cutbacks at the British Aluminium

(BACO) rolling mill in Falkirk, due to 'rationalisation' in the wake of the takeover of BACO by Alcan UK.

(BACO lost £3.7 million in the first six months of this year; in the same period Alcan UK lost £13.2 millions. By the logic of capitalism therefore the latter took over the former, a welcome boost to BACO shareholders. During the merger talks the value of their shares jumped 40%.)

BACO employs 2,500 workers in Scotland, and the jobs of another 7,500 workers in service industries 'are dependent upon BACO's operations. But Alcan UK has 'expressed confidence' in the BACO plants in the West Highlands, Fife, and Glasgow (a total of 1,400 jobs). The major threat is to the BACO Falkirk mill (1,060 jobs).

Other major threatened job losses in Scotland include the closure of the Hunterston oil-rig terminal (1,100 jobs), which has now run out of contracts, and the closure of the Kinneil colliery (324 jobs). Other job losses could result from cutbacks in rail and road transport, the possible closure of a number of Job Centres, and cutbacks in Direct Labour Organisations throughout Scotland.

Fighting back will not be easy.

But the only effective campaign is one based on the strength of the working class.

It would be kidding ourselves to think that just raising the right demands will automatically galvanise workers into action. Organising for action will take a real fight, against a variety of obstacles, not the least of which is the present leadership of the unions.

But unless we do that work, literally tens of thousands of jobs in the Scottish region will go.

Stan Crooke

S&K back on picket line

STRIKING Asian workers at the Sandhar and Kang cash and carry in Coventry last week returned to the picket lines and restarted High Court proceedings to try to reverse the injunction decision made against them several weeks ago.

The strikers believe that the court decision may be in their favour, despite the lessons of previous disputes which showed that trade union solidarity and pressure on the local union officials are the ways to win — not confidence in the legal system.

The local TGWU district committee meeting voted overwhelmingly not to

recommend that the strike be made official. The leading local bureaucrats argued this on the grounds that the strikers acted against their advice, and several district committee members who had assured the strikers of their support refused to back the call to make it official.

However, the strikers have decided to build further links with the Birmingham S&K workers and the Asian women strikers at Randi's, also in Birmingham. They intend to hold public meetings and a picket of the regional T&G offices, too.

Messages/money: S&K strike committee, c/o 88 King George's Ave, Coventry

DHSS strikers tour for support

SINCE the unanimous rejection by the Oxford DHSS strikers of the offer recommended for acceptance by CPSA president Kevin Roddy at their mass meeting on Wednesday 27th, the strikers have started visiting other offices to get support for their strike.

At the moment the CPSA section executive advice is that this is only to waste money.

Paul Howarth, SCPS branch secretary, told us on Monday, 'This week we'll be visiting other offices in London and on the south coast. We had a good response from Kensington and Paddington, who asked what action they could take to support us.'

'Next week we'll be sending people to South Wales and to the south west. At the recent SCPS special conference, we raised a magnificent £500.

'We've extended the picketing to all three gates of Government Buildings, Marston Rd, from 6am to 5pm, and we're trying to stop post going out between 3pm and 5pm. We need support on this.'

'We're stopping the post for the tax and map offices

because management is sending DHSS post out through these offices. We are leafletting IRSE, IPCS, CPSA, SCPS and POEU members there to explain the developments in the dispute, and why we're picketing their gates. Management have forced us into this escalation.'

'At the last Trades Council our calls for support for mass pickets on Monday and Friday between 7am and 9am was very well received. Personally, I see escalation as crucial to winning this dispute'.

Rally

CPSA branch committee member Roger Bunting told us, 'At the mass rally in Birmingham on Friday, I got the impression that the SEC

doesn't want to see an escalation of the dispute. However, at our meeting on Sunday the Oxford strike committee was unanimous in its view that we need other offices out if we are to see this dispute going anywhere'.

At the Oxford strike committee meeting on Tuesday lunchtime, they supported the national meeting being organised by the Socialist Caucus group of the CPSA for branch reps and reps in Birmingham on Saturday week to discuss escalation to other offices in the DHSS and making it a national dispute.

* Messages/ money: M. Robertson, 24 Beechcroft Rd, Oxford.

Alan Stephens



Airline call for boycott

ON October 27, members of the Air India strike committee met with Moss Evans (general secretary of their union, the TGWU) and some regional organisers.

At the meeting it was agreed that the dispute, which has lasted four months, needs stepping up. By spreading the dispute outside the airline to the docks and other places, and starting a general boycott of trade with India, the strikers

hope to force the Indian government to intervene in this dispute — which so far it has avoided doing, though it directly owns Air India.

Meanwhile cases for unfair dismissal have been lodged for all 91 strikers. The cases probably won't come up until February or March next year.

The strikers are keeping up their pickets at Heathrow and New Bond Street. They desperately need financial

support.

Some airport TGWU branches have organised regular levies, others collections, but more is needed. Sued to: Air India Strike Committee, c/o TGWU, Transport House, 7-9 South Rd, Southall, Middlesex. Cheques payable to 'Air India TGWU'.

Will Adams

NALGO votes 'no'

STRIKING NALGO and NUPE social workers in Birmingham have rejected their officials' first attempt to sell out the strike.

At a meeting on Monday November 8, NALGO strikers voted by 3 to 1 to reject the deal put to them by the NALGO bureaucracy. The deal (which the NUPE officials publicly dissociated themselves from) had been reached on Friday 5th, after three days of negotiations with the City Council.

As well as reinstatement of the three sacked workers, the council promised that it would, '... seek to ensure that within the social services department ... services will be maintained by directly employed staff' and that, '... the City Council will have discussions with the trade unions before any decisions are taken'.

However, it was also stated that, 'the council will not depart from its stated position, including its decision to

use, as it thinks appropriate, outside consultants for efficiency reviews'. In other words the council made clear its intention to continue with its so-called efficiency review, and was prepared to reinstate the sacked workers only so long as they would cooperate with consultants Price Waterhouse — though it was refusal to cooperate that they were sacked for in the first place!

NALGO officials, who clearly favour reinstatement at any cost, had agreed to 'full cooperation by all staff of the social services department with the current efficiency review'.

At the strikers' meeting, the official tried to win acceptance for this deal by arguing that the issue was privatisation, not Price Waterhouse, and that therefore members could and should cooperate. He further argued that there would not be support in NALGO for escalation of the dispute.

In the debate only two or three spoke in favour of a return to work — and all of them expressed disgust at the deal. About 30 strikers spoke strongly for rejecting the deal, and argued that the NALGO membership as a whole should decide at a mass meeting to be held on Wednesday November 10.

At this Wednesday meeting, which will be attended by some 9,500, a call for all-out strike action will be put by the strikers. The outcome of this vote will be crucial for striking NUPE social workers, since it will be difficult to maintain the NUPE strike if NALGO returns to work. However, even if NALGO do vote not to support an all-out strike, NUPE must take a lead and stay out on strike. If NUPE follows NALGO back to work, it will mean cooperation with Price Waterhouse, paving the way for privatisation — or else victimisation.

Teresa Munby

Stanfords stay out

LAST week's (correct) report that Stanfords bookshop management had agreed to reinstate the ten sacked strikers may have given the impression that the dispute was over.

It isn't, and will not be unless the company withdraws the harsh conditions attached to the reinstatement offer.

Shop steward Judith Cook told SO that these proposals, demanding sweeping changes in the working arrangements

which existed prior to the strike, were unanimously rejected when put to the strikers. Management was informed of this on November 1, and there are no further plans for negotiations. The picket, kept on during the talks, continues.

A sign of the growing organisation among London bookshop workers is the formation this week of the London Bookshops TGWU/ACTSS branch, including Stanfords and the staff at the Economists Bookshop, who themselves secured a notable victory after a long struggle against a similar management a couple of years ago.

A benefit for the strikers is being held on Tuesday November 16, 7pm at the Seven Dials club, Shelton St, WC2.

Foot to back Randis?

SUPPORT continues to grow for the 200 Asian women and men on strike for union recognition at Randi quilts in Smethwick.

One of the key sectors still working was the cutting department. Last week all but three of them joined the strike.

Regular collections have been started in a number of local factories. Warley East Labour Party GC passed unanimously resolutions calling on all members to support the picket line. More important, the Executive was instructed to interview Ram Singh Kharia, a GC member and prospective councillor who is reported to be advising the employer.

Michael Foot is visiting the area on November 19, and a mass picket is being arranged for that day. The GC is asking Michael Foot to attend.

Godfrey Webster

Hostel mass picket

A MASS picket has been called for next Wednesday, 17th, in support of the strikers at Arlington House hostel in Camden.

The mass picket — from 7am to 3pm outside the Grand Hotel in Southampton Row, London WC1 — will back up the strikers' demands for improvements on their wages of £30-odd a week.

The Grand, like the Mount Pleasant hotel in Calthorpe St and the London Park hotel at the Elephant and Castle, is owned by the owners of Arlington House, Rowtons. The strikers have been picketing the hotels consistently, as well as the hostel, and trying to get supplies blacked.

Meanwhile, the first decisions are expected this Wednesday, 10th, in the court case brought by Rowtons to evict the strikers from their rooms in the hotel. Camden Labour council has promised to re-house the strikers if they are evicted, and they are determined to carry on the fight whatever the court decision.

Help is needed on the picket lines — at Arlington House (Arlington Rd, NW1) and at the hotels — and money (to the strike committee c/o Camden Labour Centre, 8 Camden Road, London NW1 (485 1100).

Cowley workers challenge Edwardes' boot boys

WORKERS in British Leyland's Cowley Assembly plant walked out again today (Monday, 8th) after being back to work for only a few hours.

They had been on strike for a week after the plant director had abused and intimidated a worker on the track and threatened him with disciplinary action.

The 1,000 workers involved had voted by a very narrow majority to accept a formula put to them by full time officials. Two hours after they had returned to work, the plant director went onto the track and tried to intimidate the same man. The track walked out.

The strike is important because the incident was a symptom of something which is now very deep, the vicious attack by the government and the employers against industrial workers over the past few years.

BL's management has been pushed forward by the Tory government — and the Labour government before it — into the spearhead of that attack. How it was done is important, since the operation is now being generalised throughout industry, not least in car components.

Edwardes set out to gain control of the plants through systematically building up his authority. Systematically it was done thanks to repeated sell-outs by the trade unions at the top.

'Unbeatable'

Cynical sell-outs in the 1979, 1980 and 1981 wage reviews gave Edwardes the so-called 'unbeatable' reputation he needed. At the same time he pushed through extensive new 'agreements' which stripped away all trade union rights.

Protective agreements such as seniority agreements were ended, complete mobility was introduced, and the trade union structures were substantially dismantled. The vast majority of full-time trade union positions in the plants were abolished.

The pressure has been greatest in the car assembly complexes.

By
Bill
Peters



The Cowley complex has been built up as a major production centre over the past few years. It produces the Rover SD1, the Ambassador, and the Honda Acclaim, and it has received £180 million investment over the last two years for the mass production LC10 model, which is in its pre-production stage at the plant.

BL have therefore seen the plant as a key target for their productivity offensive and their efforts to reduce trade union power.

Edwardes' management method has been to send special management teams, selected from managers made surplus by closures, into individual plants.

Only the most ruthless are selected, and many of them carry the authority of corporate management. They are boot-boys, and get the job for that quality.

In some plants, such as the Cowley Assembly Plant, they have imposed a system of total management authority. Every management deci-

Edwardes' boot boys



Anger has built up as management have imposed an authoritarian regime on the shop floor

sion is backed by those at the top, and imposed ruthlessly. Any manager not prepared to operate these methods is sacked, and usually humiliated in the process.

This has created appalling conditions on the tracks. Manning levels have been cut repeatedly, relief times cut, and facilities and conditions worsened.

The trade unions are barely recognised, and shop stewards rarely released to deal with trade union matters.

Top managers constantly patrol the tracks, rushing

around hysterically, shouting and swearing at everyone. Workers are abused and threatened with disciplinary action or the sack when things happen which are completely outside their control.

If a part will not fit, a manager will arrive and threaten to sack someone until it does.

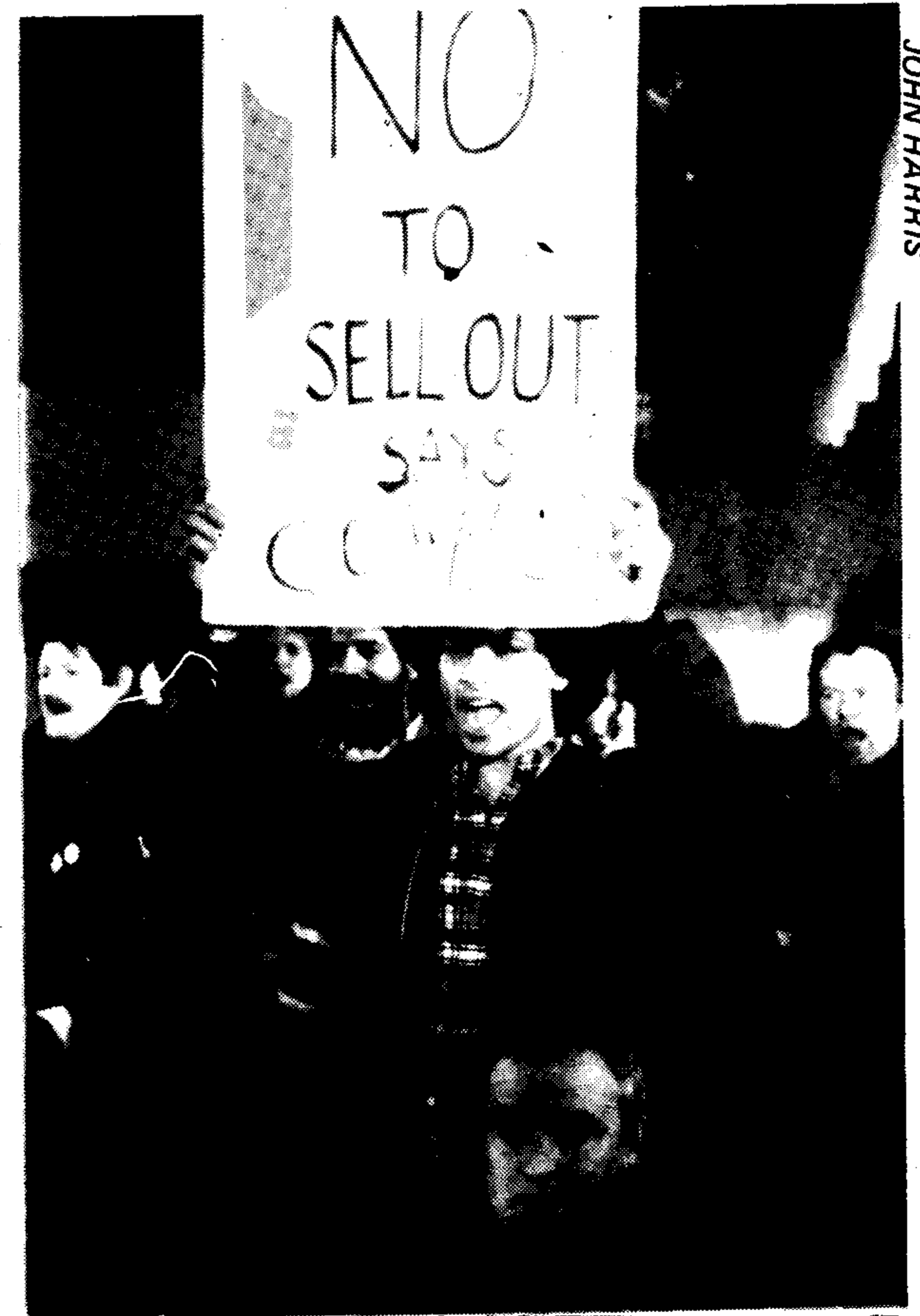
When these conditions result in strikes, management respond in the same way — with threats and intimidation.

Last September they began a policy of sending

threatening letters to everyone involved in unofficial strike action. They claimed there had been 56 strikes on the plant since May — which is not surprising given the conditions, although most of them were very short.

Since then the letters have been building up, and the threats getting harsher every time. 'Next time we will take disciplinary action against you'... 'Next time we will dismiss you'... 'Next time you will be instantly dismissed'... etc.

Shop stewards have faced constant intimidation. Curr-



The 1981 wage review — Cowley workers lobby convenors against the sell-out

ently management are disciplining the deputy convenor, Andy Brown, and threaten to withdraw all his facilities.

Shop stewards find it impossible to get off their jobs to represent members. No information is given, and every action of management is arbitrary.

Shop stewards' meetings have been virtually banned, and shop stewards are disciplined if they criticise the company in writing or in public.

In a strong trade union plant, this regime, imposed not by breaking the spirit of the workers but by buying off the leadership at the top, was bound to lead to an explosion. And last week it did.

On Monday night (November 1), a worker on the Rover track was sworn at and threatened with discipline for alleged bad workmanship, and the track walked out demanding an apology.

By Tuesday night the action had spread to the whole North Works (which produces the Rover, the Ambassador, and the Honda Acclaim). On Wednesday it spread to the day shift, and all production was at a standstill.

The militancy was tremendous. All the usual threats from the management were swept aside with unanimous votes.

Demands were advanced for the full restoration of trade union facilities; the end of 'bully-boy' management; and the withdrawal of all previous threatening letters.

The unions were in a strong position. An absolutely determined labour force was stopping three models BL badly needs, in a plant where a major new model is being launched.

The strike had the strength to break the company's strategy and re-establish conditions in the plant.

On Friday BL opened negotiations with the outside officials. They went on until almost midnight.

At the end of it they came out with a miserable compromise. The disciplinary action against the individual worker would be dropped; a committee of top management, union officials, and convenors would be set up to investigate the problems in the plant; and there would

be no letters sent out, or victimisation, as a result of this particular strike.

At the mass meeting on Monday 8th, after very strong pressure from the platform, and two votes, a majority was declared for a return to work on this formula.

Then management repeated the same intimidation two hours later! This shows their sheer arrogance. It was a declaration that their strategy was intact, and their methods would not change.

The workers were furious. They struck again, in a very angry mood. Management representatives who tried to observe the meeting were chased off.

They know that on the tracks they are paying the price every day for the union leaders' catalogue of betrayals.

They, however, are far from broken. They need and deserve leaders worthy of the strength they display.

Steel closure

THE fightback against BSC's proposal to close the Clydebridge Steelworks is over. At a mass meeting in the workplace, the workforce voted by a 10-1 majority to open discussions with management on severance pay.

The closure of Clydebridge, involving 575 workers, is a serious blow to the Cambuslang area where, over the last few years, Hallside Steel Works, Clyde Iron Works, and Chunky Chicken have closed, and Hoover has cut many jobs.

There are links between Clydebridge, Hoover, the Trades Council, Labour Party, and tenants associations, which could have been the basis for a fightback.

But the workers were more convinced by the carrot of redundancy payments than they were by the union leadership's will to fight the closure.

Alan Ferguson

November
S M T W T F S
1 8 15 22 29
2 9 16 23 30
3 10 17 24
4 11 18 25
5 12 19 26
6 13 20 27

WHAT'S ON

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

HARINGEY Socialist Organiser: fortnightly meetings at Brabant Rd trade union centre. For details phone 802 0771 or 348 5941.

OXFORD Socialist Organiser meetings, Thursdays at 8pm, 44b Princes Street.

NOTTINGHAM Socialist Organiser meets every Friday 7.30pm at the International

Community Centre, 61B Mansfield Rd.

NORTH-WEST London Socialist Organiser group discussion meetings, every other Sunday, 8pm (for venue, see SO sellers).

In Poplar and Clay Cross, Labour councils have defied Tory governments. But a confrontation over refusal to balance a council budget would be different and unprecedented? What would happen? What tactics would be best?

Islington Socialist Organiser meeting: speaker, Martin Loughlin. Sunday November 28, 3pm, Thornhill Neighbourhood Project, Orkney House, Caledonian Road. For baby-sitting, phone Nik, 607 5268.

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

STOKE Socialist Organiser meeting: Dave Spencer on 'What Socialist Organiser is, and why we are fighting the witch-hunt'. Sunday November 14, 7.30, The Swan, Swan Square, Burslem.

ISLINGTON Socialist Organiser, meets alternate Sundays

3pm at Thornhill Neighbourhood Project, Orkney House, Caledonian Rd. Next meeting November 14. Details. Nik, 607 5268.

GAYS in Education conference: 'Homosexuality in the curriculum'. Saturday and Sunday November 13-14 1982, 11am to 5.30, Health Education Centre, 304 Westbourne Grove, London W11. £2 waged, £1 unwaged. Further info: 112 Broxholm Rd, London SE27.

ISLINGTON Labour Party Young Socialists meeting: Annajoy David (national secretary, Youth CND) on 'Jobs not Bombs'. Tuesday December 16, 8pm at the Labour rooms, 295 Upper Street.

WAGELESS WOMEN

If you are a woman without an independent income then you are welcome on Wageless Women's Day, 10am — 10pm, 12 November, Co-op Hall, Seven Sisters Road. Films, Music, Kids' things, Theatre, Food, Drink, Discussion.

NO PASS Laws conference. Sunday December 12, 10am, County Hall, London SE1. Details: 146 Kentish Town Road, London NW5.

BAN PLASTIC BULLETS, a Labour movement delegate conference, planned for Manchester, February '83. Sponsors include LCI, Bernadette McAliskey, Ken Livingstone. More sponsorship needed from LP/TU bodies. Contact Martin Collins c/o Box 15, 164/6 Corn Exchange, Manchester M3 4BN.

HARINGEY Labour Party Young Socialists public meeting: Solidarity with the people of Central America. Monday November 15, 7.30 at Brabant Road TU and Community Centre.

SOCIALIST Students in NOLS meeting: Saturday, November 13, 11am to 5.30, ULU, Malet St, London. Details from Jane Ashworth, 41 Ellington St, London N7.

ANTI-APARTHEID Trade Unionists' conference. Saturday November 27, details from AAM, 89 Charlotte St, London WC1.

FROM WAR in the Third World to World War 3? Dayschool, Saturday December 11, 11am, at Hargrave Hall, Hargrave Road, London N19, sponsored by CND, EISSOC, CAAT.

REPRESSION in Northern Ireland: day school organised by Glasgow Labour Committee on Ireland, Saturday November 13, 10.30am to 5pm, Queen Margaret Union Building, Glasgow University. Speakers — Dennis Canavan MP, Vince Mills, Derry TC member — plus workshops. Admission £1, 50p unwaged.

LONDON Workers' Socialist League educational on basic Marxism. Next one, 'Imperialism'. Friday November 12, 7.30pm. For details of venue write to WSL, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

DISCUSS the 'degenerated revolution'. A day of debate and discussion about the new book from Workers' Power/Irish Workers' Group. Debates on: Is Russia a Workers' State? The Cuban Revolution and Castroism. The Theory of Structural Assimilation. Saturday November 13, 11am to 7pm, Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham. Tickets £1 waged, 50p unwaged.

SPARTACIST Truth Kit — a 68-page analysis by John Lister, published by the Workers' Socialist League. £1 plus 25p postage from WSL, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

Socialist Organiser



"SOLIDARNOSC CANNOT BE DISSOLVED"

In the run-up to Solidarnosc's one day strike on November 10, the junta arrested union leader Wladyslaw Frasnuk and 12 others in Wroclaw. Meanwhile Archbishop Glemp met General Jaruzelski and issued a joint statement calling for 'strengthening of peace, the social order, and work'.

But the Polish workers remain defiant, as this appeal to Western unions and workers' parties from Warsaw Solidarnosc shows.

IN THIS dramatic moment of our national history, it is the workers' movement organised in Solidarnosc which has given proof of political maturity and patience.

The junta, on the contrary, has shown that it is willing to sacrifice anything — the blood of the workers, the economy, national sovereignty — to keep itself in power. As junta spokesperson J. Urban cynically declared: "The government always manages to eat".

It should not be forgotten,

en, either, that during the 16 months of legal activity of Solidarnosc, the most spectacular act of violence from this union of ten million members was the expulsion of two (!) bosses of the old corrupt unions, taken out of their factory on a wheelbarrow.

As for the 'prize list' of the junta in the following 10 months, it has been: dozens of workers assassinated, hundreds of people tortured by the police and in the prisons, thousands of others beaten and sacked, thousands jailed and condemned to long sentences for trade union activity, hundreds of thousands of workers kept in daily terror in the militarised factories.

Today, Poland is a country where the trade union problem is distinguished more by the interest shown in it by the police than by debate on the paths to political and economic emancipation of the working class. There must be no misunderstanding: the military junta is not fighting in defence of socialism, it is fighting for its power and its privileges.

[But] Solidarnosc cannot be dissolved, any more than the Polish working class can be 'dissolved'... Today, reduced to clandestinity, imprisoned, 'dissolved' on paper, our union is reflected in the

fear-filled eyes of the generals and the apparatchiks.

It is for this reason that it has no use for dialogue with Solidarnosc, today or yesterday. Those who still believe that what is at stake in Poland is the defence of 'people's power' or of 'social property in the means of production' are — forgive us the expression — hopeless imbeciles.

In Poland, the junta is trying by all means to preserve 'socialism' based on the bludgeon, fear, and corruption, on prisons and the despotism of the factory bosses, the military commissars, the police, and the apparatchiks. The Polish workers have had enough of that sort of 'socialism' and 'people's power'.

We hope you will seize every opportunity on the international level to make the military 'gorillas' pay the price.

The trade union 'model' which has been imposed on us by the junta for the years to come is nothing but a copy of Pinochet's 'model' in Chile. The complement of this model is the transformation — by means of the law — of all state administration into an 'army of overseers', with special rights and privileges, in the image of the hierarchical system of the Tsarist administration.

We are convinced that the Western trade union organisations and workers' parties are willing to wage a determined struggle in solidarity for the defence of the rights of the Polish workers. We are convinced that you see in support for Solidarnosc a form of defence of the vital interests and the rights of the Western workers.

Support and solidarity today and tomorrow — that



Jaruzelski

is that what we want from you. From you above all. From us, you can expect one thing: to carry on the struggle against the junta.

Solidarnosc is not dead!

Abridged and translated from the French revolutionary weekly Rouge, 29.10.82.

All the way to the bank...

by Harry Sloan

YES! He's done it! A giveaway budget that gives nothing whatever to the working class, but hands £1 billion to bolster the profits of big business.

By cutting the surcharge on employers' National Insurance contributions by 1%, Geoffrey Howe knows he will make not the slightest dent in the soaring unemployment figures.

Indeed, Tory predictions, despite endless hints that lower inflation means an upturn just around the corner, show a 10% increase in unemployment to an official figure of nearly 3.4 million.

With industry still not yet at the bottom of the recession, and continuing to lay off workers, Howe's cut in employers' contributions will not create jobs, but simply fill the wallets of the directors and shareholders.

In fact, Howe is raising workers' national insurance payments, and proposing to cut back benefits and pensions to deny claimants and the elderly any benefit from

the fall in inflation.

Nor of course will it be the working class that benefits from the tax cuts confidently predicted for Howe's official Budget next spring.

And while the Health Service and education are slashed to ribbons by cuts, Howe finds an extra £622 million for Thatcher's arms bill — to finance the imperialist war effort in the Falklands/Malvinas.

It has become a cliché to say that the Tories are the party of the rich: but in these times of mounting misery and growing poverty, Howe's mini-budget makes brutally clear the Thatcher cabinet's contempt for the vast majority of society, and their dedication to the interests of their own class.

A Labour or TUC leadership even half committed to the interests of the working class would today be mobilising mass action to challenge Thatcher rather than sabotaging struggles and witch-hunting socialists.

£6000 fund



STAR prize of the week for fund-raising goes to the Leigh SO group. With a £42.50 donation this week came news of future plans: they're selling pontoon cards, organising a social, a Xmas dinner, and a bring and buy sale, and making Xmas cards (to be advertised in SO).

If every group organised fund-raising like this, all our problems would be over! Other plans we've heard of are: socials (Birmingham, Edinburgh), Xmas party (Coventry), Xmas dinner (Brent), raffle (Leicester). Leicester are also organising a Hundred Club.

Meanwhile Oxford SO supporters are organising a giant Xmas bazaar, and London SO supporters a Xmas jumble sale.

Many supporters are organising for our 'buy the paper a Xmas present' appeal: if you hold a collection for a Xmas present for SO, we'll write to you and tell you what we've bought for the paper.

Thanks to Leicester SO supporters for £200 paper money — one of many groups to respond to our appeals by paying off paper debts. Supporters should take heed and send in the money for papers they've sold regularly, not just when we're about to go bankrupt!

We've had £362 for the fund this week, mainly from individual donations. Thanks to: Oxford DHSS striker (£1.50), Peter Kenway (£180), Abdul Sheir (£10), Sue Himmelweit (£20), M. Starr (£20), J. Brown (£5), A. Campbell (£5); a Brentwood reader (£5). Thanks also to Leigh, to supporters from the print unions in Oxford (£23), and to Brent SO group (star group in the London area) for following a recent donation of £85 with £50 this week.

Total. £4661.82 (78%). Donations to Treasurer, c/o 214 Sickeret Court London N1 2SY. Cheques to Socialist Organiser.



"The Polish workers have had enough of that sort of 'socialism'..."