

Join the
Labour
Party

Socialist ORGANISER

Fight the
witch-
hunt

Paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance. No. 129. April 28 1983 25p Claimants and strikers 10p

Maggie may, but will Labour's left be ready?

Will it be June? No time to lose!

THE PRESS is alive with speculation on the prospects of a June election. Pundits argue whether this is the best time for the Tories to catch the Labour leadership on the hop.

But for sure, if Thatcher goes ahead now, she has a good chance of catching the Labour left unprepared.

With opinion polls still showing a substantial Tory lead, and gloom, slump and sell-outs on the industrial front, the labour movement is not in a confident mood. And many on the left are responding with a retreat from the last four years' struggles for radical policies and for Labour democracy.

Tony Benn declares that "if you spend all your time niggling away at the difficulties, then you are actually assisting Thatcher's prospect of victory". "You can't really argue that continued polarisation of the Party would lead to any hope of removing the Thatcher government".

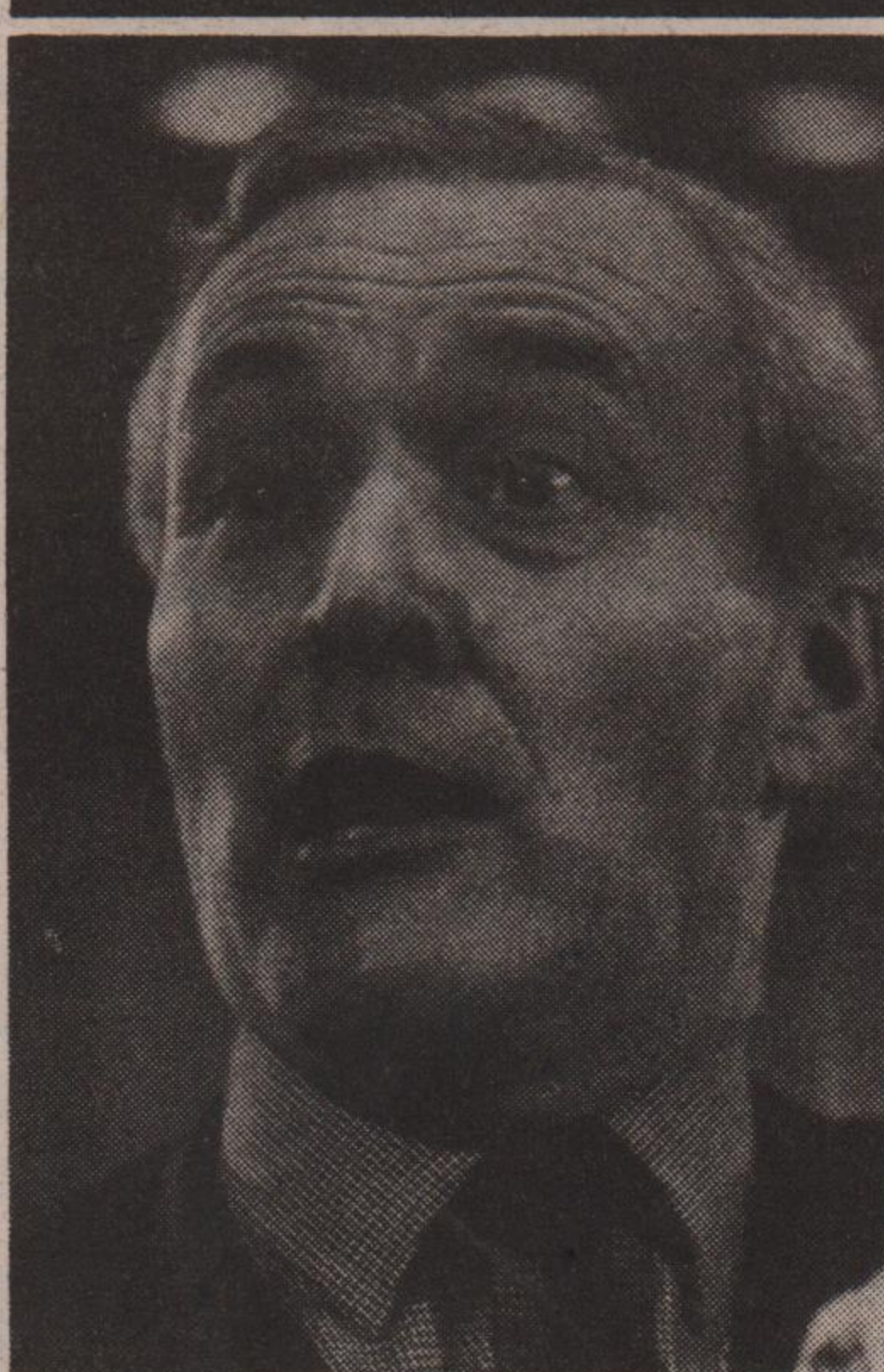
Nigel Williamson in London Labour Briefing argues that warnings about the incomes-policy implications of the 'National Economic Assessment' "are less than helpful... it is surely the task of socialists now to highlight and campaign upon the positive aspects of the [Labour Party campaign] document".

But why is Labour's support low enough to give demolition-squad Toryism real prospects of another term in office? Not because working class people are contented with their situation, and want a comfortable business-as-usual message!

Labour's handicap is that after the record of 1974-9 millions no longer believe in Labour's — or anyone else's — capacity to bring progress. It is that sort of despair that has made it possible for Thatcher to retain support while preaching a "return to Victorian values".

The despair can be cleared away only by the Labour Party and unions advancing bold policies and — just as important —

By Harry
Sloan



Benn

demonstrating a will to fight for them.

That cannot be done without mobilising the Left. The Labour right wing is calling no pre-election truce. And if the Left calls a one-sided truce, all it can do is confirm working-class voters in the belief that the radical promises in the campaign document are strictly for show — just like the 1974 manifesto.

The opening of the union conference season has seen drowsy delegates listening to perorations on the wonders of the latter day social contract — the 'National Economic Assessment'.

Union leaders determined to deliver the goods on wage control to a re-elected Labour government have been flexing their muscles against their rank and file members in the Cowley

sell-out.

Terry Duffy and Denis Healey have resumed the offensive against unilateral nuclear disarmament.

But what of the Left? Where is the organised reply to the tightly knit right wing action that would lose us the election or at best kick Labour voters in the teeth with a re-run of 1974-9?

Nearly two months ago — in good time for any election campaign — an enthusiastic 100-strong meeting in the House of Commons set up Socialists for a Labour Victory to offer a rank and file alternative that will turn outwards to link up with struggles in the unions, the mass anti-missiles campaign, and build the broadest possible working class support.

Yet May Day finds the SLV still largely marking time, and still to an alarming extent restricted to existing left wing circles in the London area.

Of course there have been difficulties: the boundary commission changes — which hand another dozen safe seats to the Tories — have forced a number of left-wingers who support the SLV to look for new seats. There have been organisational problems.

But time is running out, and it is reaching the point where the SLV must get itself firmly on the road to a rank and file campaign if it is not to concede complete control to the right wing.

Some of the MPs appear to be getting cold feet on the question of an independent campaign. Tony Benn, who sent apologies to the SLV founding meeting, has made call after call to shelve polemic within the Labour Party, and supported the National Economic Assessment. Perhaps others will follow him in this retreat.

But if we are going to build an anti-Tory campaign that will win the enthusiasm of workers on the shop floor, dole queues and council estates, and at the same time prepare the fight for socialist policies under a Labour gov-

Continued back page



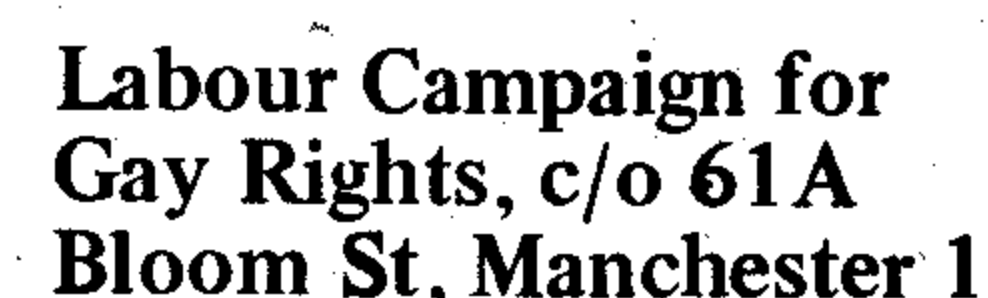
JOHN HARRIS

The vote to return — secured by a top-level sell-out

COWLEY STRIKE

Bell-to-bell BETRAYAL

See centre 4 pages



Telecom unions step up fight

The British Telecoms unions' campaign to fight the privatisation of BT is beginning to escalate. In London, POEU blacking of maintenance work which initially covered the Bank of England, has been spread to cover all government buildings in the London area except for Buckingham Palace, just in case the Corgis catch flu and need an ambulance.

UCW telephone operators refused to scab on the POEU, when telephone fault control was withdrawn from Whitehall.

Meanwhile, as part of the reorganisation of BT, in preparation for privatisation, Swansea POEU branch have been told by management that they intend to pay off 80 workers over and above the expected job wastage in the current financial year which has just begun. This is just under 10% of the Swansea engineering workforce. A similar notification has been given to Cardiff branch. The Swansea branch

By Ricky Houston

immediately called an overtime ban with life and limb cover only.

The overtime ban may spread to other parts of Wales as further management intentions are revealed.

The POEU NEC and full time officers are currently touring the country to hold meetings on members' problems. These meetings will provide an ideal opportunity for demands from the rank and file for more information on the plans to oppose privatisation and for stepping up the fight.

The recent press release by POEU general secretary, Brian Stanley, concerning the London industrial action, does not offer much hope.

He makes it clear that the

officially sanctioned action is to register opposition to the government's plans, but does not make any point of the action being called to defeat the proposed Bill, which is now in its final parliamentary stages.

This has been the official strategy throughout the campaign, basing all attempts to stop the Bill purely in Parliament.

The POEU Broad Left have consistently argued for a campaign spanning across Parliament, to industrial action to stop the Bill, raising the demand that the workers of BT must fight the Bill in order to stop it and the subsequent huge job losses which may reach 100,000.



Telecom workers lobby Parliament against privatisation

Socialists for a Labour Victory

The Socialists for a Labour Victory campaign, launched last month, has now done its first mailing to Constituency Labour Parties.

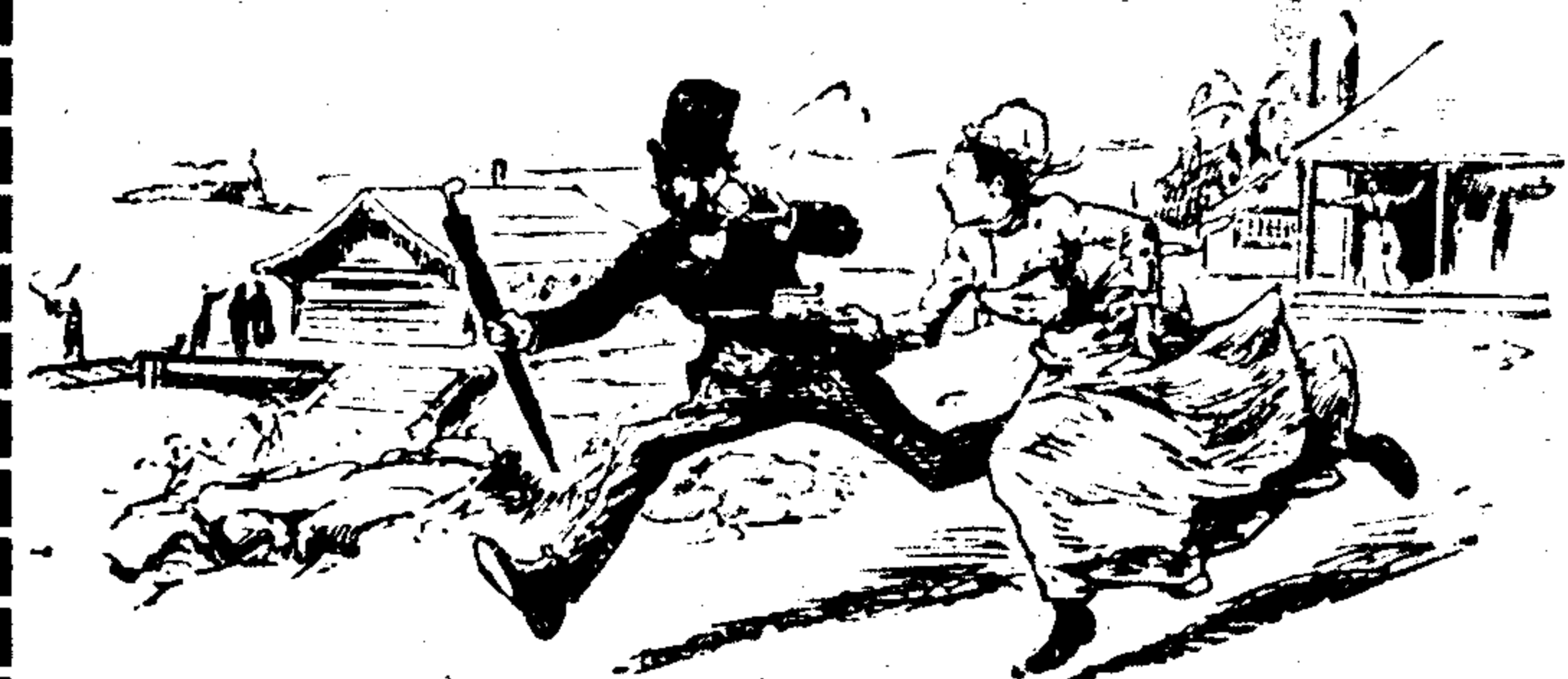
A letter from campaign secretaries Mandy Moore and Andy Harris calls on CLPs to affiliate, and says that SLV will be publishing leaflets for CLPs to use in campaigning.

SLV will also produce suggestions for election activity, and try to help link the Labour Party with struggles like Greenham Common and protests like the People's March for Jobs. And it is preparing a statement for MPs and Labour candidates to sign, committing them against any Labour/Alliance coalition.

Affiliation to SLV is open not only to CLPs but also to trade union bodies, Labour Party women's sections, etc. It costs £5 for organisations, £3 for individuals.

Affiliations to, or copies of the mailing from SLV, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

No time to lose!



- Unilateral nuclear disarmament and removal of all nuclear bases in Britain
- Nationalise the top 25 companies, return social spending to 1977 levels in real terms. 35 hour week, withdrawal from the EEC, expansion of NHS, education, house-building. Renationalisation with compensation only on grounds of proven need and without gain to the recipients
- No incomes policy. Repeal of Tory anti-union laws
- Women's rights, including the right to control their own fertility
- Repeal the Nationality Act and Immigration Acts

- Police accountability, repeal of the Police Bill
- A united Ireland. Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act, ban plastic bullets
- A socialist foreign policy supporting liberation movements abroad
- No formal coalition, no informal deals. End the witch-hunt
- A Labour government that carries out Labour conference decisions.

Contact: Mandy Moore/Andy Harris (joint secretaries), c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8. Affiliation fee: £3 individuals, £5 organisations.

LCC bars socialist

by Ronnie Clyde

The application was immediately challenged by one-time left-winger Chic McCafferty, who argued against the application on the basis of a statement from the Labour Party Scottish full-timer that "no application for membership from Stan Crooke to any CLP in the United Kingdom can be considered unless the NEC reverse their decision at a later date".

Verdict

Stan Crooke argued that, in re-applying, he was asking the branch to stand by the verdict of the appeals tribunal rather than the decision of the NEC, and was backed up by a "Militant" supporter, who pointed to the London CLPs defying the NEC's expulsion of members of the "Militant" editorial board.

NUPE full-timer, LCC member, and Labour Party Scottish Executive member Bob Thomson backed up McCafferty, demanding that the expulsion had to be

accepted, and his fellow LCC member Eileen Dinning, who was chairing the meeting, ruled the application out of order.

Despite the presence of other LCC members and two Militant supporters at the meeting, no one challenged her ruling. The application was thus rejected.

Such a decision makes a mockery of the motion passed just last month at the Labour Party's Scottish conference which opposed any Party member being expelled for his/her socialist beliefs. LCC members, including those at the Crosshill branch meeting, had enthusiastically declared their support for this motion, as "proof" of their "left-wing" credentials.

Unless the LCC at Scottish level provides active support for Stan Crooke's campaign for reinstatement, it will be clear that the Scottish LCC is just as much a gang of witch-hunters as its English counterpart.

Stan Crooke will be appealing for re-instatement to the 1983 Labour Party national conference, and local SO supporters have agreed to initiate a campaign to ensure a successful appeal. Full details of the campaign will appear in future issues of SO.

Support the Greenwich amendment

SEVERAL union conferences this summer will have motions supporting an amendment to the Labour Party constitution from Greenwich CLP.

The amendment, submitted to the 1982 Labour Party conference, must by Party rules be voted on at the 1983 conference. Its aim is to reverse the Register and the witch-hunt by establishing a positive right for groups to operate in the Labour Party.

Even where the amendment is such is not on conference agenda, trade unionists can campaign for it by sending in resolutions urging their union's Labour Party conference delegation to support Greenwich.

For copies of the amendment and of a model trade union resolution, contact Greenwich Labour Party, c/o Jon Lansman, 16 Tyle St., London SE10 9EY (tel 01-853 0056 home, 01-278 0911 work).



MARCH AND FESTIVAL - MAY 7.
Assemble, Embankment at 10.30am.
March to Brockwell Park, South London for Festival, including Paul Weller, Hazel O'Connor and others.

International news

Step up fight on Ireland

A RATHER dispirited annual general meeting of the Labour Committee on Ireland (LCI), which campaigns in the labour movement for British withdrawal, was held in London last Saturday (April 23).

Although the LCI could point to a number of individual achievements since its last conference, at the same time it has suffered a drastic slump in membership, its broadsheet "Labour and Ireland" has appeared only irregularly, and there has been a serious lack of any central leadership to co-ordinate and build a national campaign.

There was much beating-of-breasts about past failings, but little concrete discussion about what needs to be done to remedy the LCI's prolonged malaise.

The only occasions upon which life threatened to invade the proceedings were in relation to work in the trade unions and the production of "Labour and Ireland". But even then, debate was muted: everyone agreed on the need for more and better union work and issues of "Labour and Ireland"; there were merely marginal differences of opinion on how to achieve such goals.

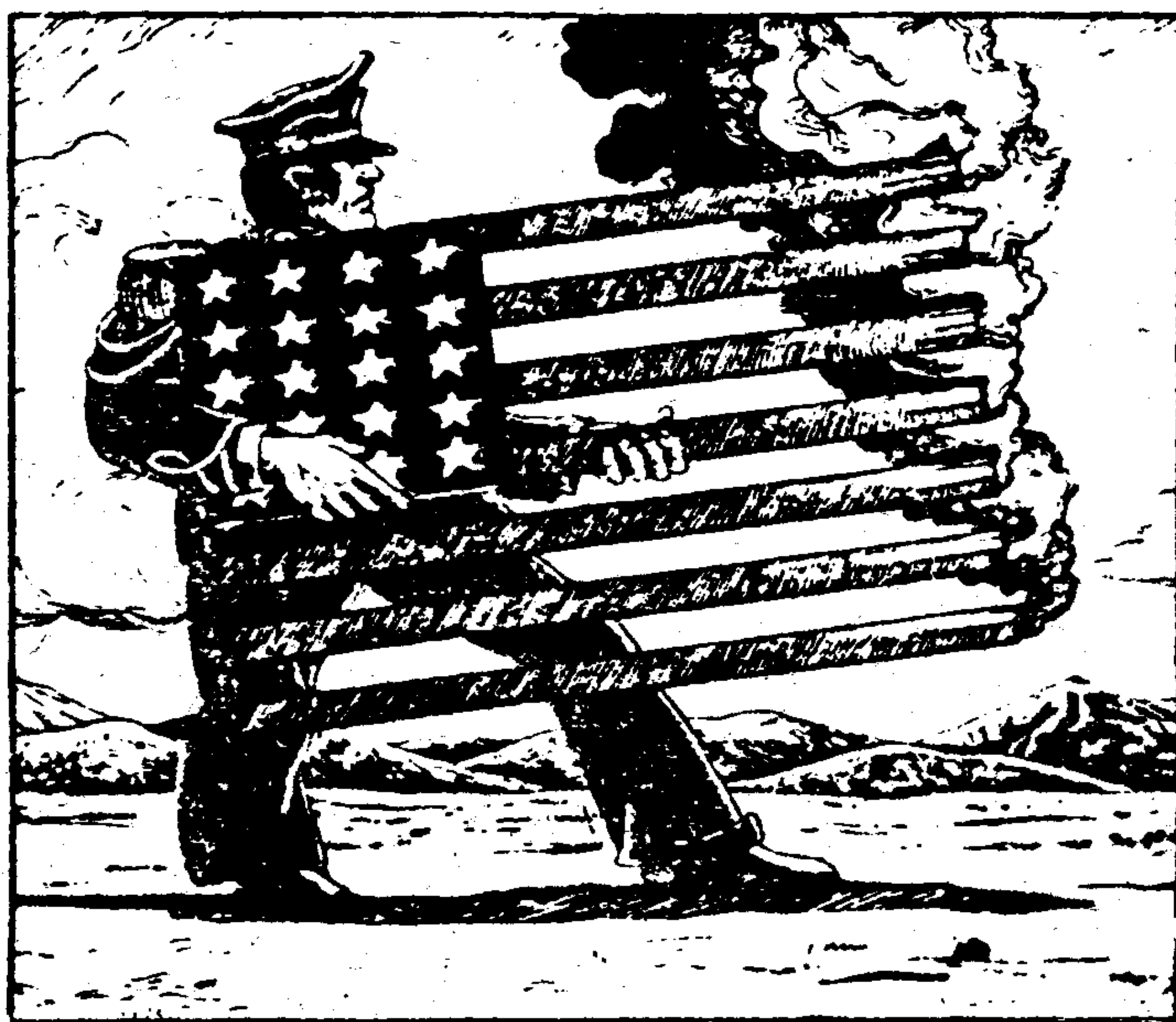
Attempts by supporters of "Socialist Action", to inject their own brand of zany politics into the LCI were however defeated.

Motions were passed committing the LCI to launch a recruitment campaign; build caucuses in the unions and make interventions into union national conferences; and increase the size and frequency of "Labour and Ireland". Unfortunately, as the previous record shows, the passing of a motion does not necessarily mean its implementation.

Although the conference can hardly be said to have fired anyone with enthusiasm for work over the year ahead, provided a serious effort is made on a firm political basis the LCI can pull itself out of its present rut.

In particular what is needed is: —a functioning national leadership capable of initiating country-wide campaigns; —regular production of "Labour and Ireland" to raise the profile of the LCI and help build support for its politics; —a much more serious turn to trade union work and more systematic youth work; —an emphasis on the basic political arguments which have to be confronted if a real labour movement Irish solidarity campaign is to be built, rather than chasing after the get-rich-quick scenarios in "Socialist Action".

Labour Committee on Ireland, BM Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX.



Reagan's friends — Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries

CIA's secret war Will US policies produce a second Cuba?

by Harry Sloan

BANDYING around the warning that the USA could face a proliferation of Cuban style regimes in Central America, President Reagan is attempting to press-gang Congressmen and women into voting massively increased military aid to El Salvador.

But so serious is the danger that he may lose the vote for the funds he is seeking, that Reagan has chosen the unusual step of addressing a joint session of the two chambers of Congress.

White House aides and Pentagon propagandists have been engaged in a non-stop campaign of button-holing, arm-twisting and confidence trickery in order to pressurise Congress into agreeing to Reagan's demands.

Reagan argues that El Salvador is the 'front line' against communist expansion, and that it is the 'moral duty' of the American war machine to stop the emergence of a 'second Cuba' — whatever the cost in lives and human misery.

He claims that modern Soviet fighter planes and even Cuban combat troops may be stationed in Nicaragua. And, so the Reagan story goes, if the bloody regime in El Salvador should fall to the FMLN guerrillas, the rot could spread north to Mexico and south to Panama.

Reagan's recipe to deal with this is a further increase in military aid to El Salvador and still more cash and arms for the CIA-sponsored counter-revolutionary gunmen currently fighting the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

The fact that *despite* the present high level of military aid the Salvadoran junta is acknowledged to be *losing* the war against the FMLN — and that the logic of Reagan's position must be to follow up aid, arms, and 'advisers' with US combat troops if this 'front line' position stands on the verge of defeat — plainly alarms a substantial body of Congressmen.

Yet though there is considerable controversy over the CIA operations against Nicaragua, nobody appears to be pointing to the possibility that Reagan's campaign of military harassment and economic sabotage against Nicaragua might actually bring about

the very development that he fears — and drive the Sandinistas firmly into the embrace of the Stalinists of Havana and Moscow.

It was in fact under such pressures in the early 1960s that Fidel Castro's July 26 Movement, which initially disavowed any socialist aims, was driven for its self-defence to mobilise an increasingly radical mass movement, and to seek economic support and a military alliance with the Soviet bureaucracy.

The chief factor limiting such a development in Nicaragua at the present time — given the sinister military threats to the country through CIA-sponsored activities based in Honduras and Costa Rica

— is the obvious reluctance of the Soviet bureaucracy to become directly embroiled in the Central American struggle.

While Reagan paints the conflicts in the region as examples of the East/West struggle for power, and the CIA struggles to produce 'evidence' of Soviet arms and aid to the FMLN in Salvador, the Moscow leadership has stayed well back from the events, and even Castro's involvement has been restricted.

It seems likely that Reagan will get at least the lion's share of the cash he is seeking from Congress to wage his wars in Central America: it is seems much less likely that the guerilla forces in El Salvador will receive the kind of arms and aid they need from the Cuban and Soviet leaders to carry through the fight to a rapid and successful conclusion.

Despite ringing phrases from Havana on May Day and other ceremonial occasions, the fight for real political and material solidarity with the struggles of the oppressed in Central America must be waged by the international workers' movement.

In Britain a step can be taken towards this by the national labour movement conference on El Salvador on May 14. Readers are urged to attend.

Protest blocks Reagan's road

by Alex Simpson

THE APRIL 7 edition of 'New Scientist' reports that proposals for a road-building scheme in Honduras with sinister implications for anti-imperialists and conservationists alike have been shelved temporarily as a result of forceful protests by environmentalists.

The United States government wished to put \$7.5 million into a construction project which would simultaneously cause irreparable environmental damage and greatly strengthen Reagan's plans against the liberation struggle.

The plan envisages a road to be built through a large area of unspoiled natural rain forest near the Nicaraguan-Honduran border.

The 'La Mosquita' rain forest is the ancestral homeland of the Mosquito Indians. Highly inaccessible,

it is a refuge for many rare plant and animal species.

As the forest is situated in the key border area, it could become a vital base for the CIA-coordinated raids into the northern provinces of Nicaragua by the counter-revolutionary supporters of the former dictator Somoza.

The improved transport links provided by pushing a road through the La Mosquita could enormously enhance the operational ability of the counter-revolutionaries to carry out raids as part of the brutal US strategy of destabilising the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua.

Protests have so far blocked US funds for the project. If pressure is maintained, then Reagan's schemes to devastate the environment and halt the liberation struggle in Central America can be thwarted.

Fight Turkish show-trial

LABOUR councils in Hackney, Islington and Haringey (North London) are this week discussing proposals to show solidarity with the people and former local administration of the Turkish town of Fatsa.

They are expected to support moves to organise a delegation of mayors and local councillors from cities across Europe to visit the mass trial currently under way of 759 citizens of Fatsa.

The trial began on January 12, and is likely to last up to two years. The people of Fatsa are charged with turning their municipal administration into a 'commune', and the prosecutor is demanding death sentences for 263 of them.

They were arrested in July 1980, in an army swoop on the town just two months before the military coup. Fatsa had been under a left-wing administration for nine months.

A Dutch lawyer who observed part of the Fatsa trial reports that all the prisoners said they had been tortured during the 2½ years they had been jailed before trial, and that they were in obvious fear of further violence from military guards.

The delegation is being coordinated by the European Committee for the Defence of Refugees and Immigrants (CEDRI), Missionstrasse 35, Postfach, CH-4002 Basel, Switzerland.

This year the annual fete organised by the French Trotskyist group Lutte Ouvrière is a joint event with the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire. The fete — at Presles, near Paris on May 21-22-23 — is a weekend of ~~celebration~~ but also of politics, with revolutionary groups from many countries represented. A contingent of SO supporters is going over. If you want to go, contact Ellen Taylor, 532 Abbeydale Rd, Sheffield 7 (0742 589307)

Fete



WHILE Lech Walesa has been granted his job back at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk, the Polish socialist militant Edmund Baluka (above) has been put on trial by the military regime. And underground Solidarnosc leader Josef Pinior has been arrested. Solidarnosc has called for protests on May Day.

LABOUR MOVEMENT CONFERENCE ON EL SALVADOR
COUNTY HALL LONDON MAY 14
SPEAKERS **Judith Hart**
Jenny Pearce (author of 'Under the Eagle')
Salvador Moncada (FDR Representative)
Salvadorean Trade Unionists
DELEGATES invited from Trade Union & Political Party branches
FURTHER INFORMATION from:
El Salvador Solidarity Campaign
29 Islington Park Street
London N1 Tel: 01-359 2270



International news

Interview with West Bank student leaders

'There is no struggle against the Jews, only against Zionism'

What was actually decided about the topics on the agenda and how does it bear on the different trends expressed in the Council?

For example, on Egypt, some diplomatic wording was agreed upon, saying that "we will approach the Egyptian regime to the extent that it will distance itself from Camp David."

The position of the left, stemming from an understanding of the Egyptian regime's character, was against approaching Egypt unless it scraps the Camp David agreement. It was not what was agreed in the end but there is neither unconditional rapprochement but a link between the two.

*On Jordan: The right wing, wishing to enter the settlement framework, stressed that there are 1¼ million Palestinians living in Jordan, that we have a common interest, and that it is better to start some "movement" on the political arena, and then we will see what will be offered.

If it is not in our interest then we will be able to reject it and nothing will be lost.

There are two difficulties in such a position. It would have appeared before the world as if the Palestinian Liberation Organisation was ready to enter the framework of the imperialist settlement and secondly, it would blur the character of the Jordanian regime, which is in contradiction to the Palestinian liberation movement.

That's why the left suggested cutting relations with Jordan, explaining that political manoeuvres can bring nothing.

The left completely supported tightening relations with the Jordanian people, to the level of confederation or unity with it — it is part of the aim of the Arab liberation movement to unite the region — but it opposed discussing with the Jordanian regime about ways of implementing the imperialist plans.

In the end the left got through a resolution that confederation with Jordan will be established, but on the basis of an independent Palestinian state.

*On the armed struggle: with all the violence against the Palestinian people, especially in occupied Palestine and Lebanon, it was clear to all that the Palestinian people has no other choice but to continue the struggle. The question was whether after the loss of the base in Lebanon, the armed struggle should be stressed again.

At the end this was confirmed again to everybody's agreement.

*On the Reagan plan: the right wing raised the idea that we might neutralise the US if we co-operated with it politically — basing ourselves on Arab support and the connections of the Arab regimes with the USA. Hence the right wing's activity to establish contacts with the US, through Saudi, Moroccan, Tunisian or independent Palestinian personalities close to the right wing.

The left's position is that one should start from a clear definition of our allies and our enemies — and the US is on the enemy side, together with Israel and Arab reaction.

From this flows a position of total rejection of the Reagan plan, seeing this plan as part of the overall imperialist line in the region, a new shape for the Camp David agreement designed to confuse the Arab liberation movement and especially the Palestinian revolution.

The conference resolutions endorsed the left's stand and rejected the Reagan plan. Despite

Continuing an interview, from our correspondent in Haifa, with leaders of the Progressive Student Action Front, the main grouping of left-wing students in the West Bank. We will follow up in later issues of SO with other left views — including our own

this, more room for political manoeuvres was given — but without giving up principled positions. The Reagan plan was rejected because it does not speak of the Palestinian people as a people, or of the Palestinian revolution as representing this people.

Also, Reagan's term of "freezing Israeli settlements" implies accepting the existing settlements. So the plan has no positive points, and it was wholly rejected.

*On the Fez plan: From the beginning the right wing supported the Fez plan, and even the Fahd plan that collapsed with the first Fez conference. The left opposed this plan as it gives Arab cover to the imperialist plans, gives Arab recognition and security borders to Israel, and gives up the Palestinians' rights in their land. It does not even demand Israeli recognition of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people.

In Fez they spoke of "ensuring security borders to all the states in the region, including the independent Palestinian state" — as if the problem is securing the states, while the state of Israel actually exists and the Palestinian state doesn't, and it is not made clear how and where it will be established.

There are two reasons for rejecting the Fez plan on principle: 1) understanding the character of the Arab regimes that developed the plan — that they are part of the camp of the enemies of the liberation movement; 2) the plan itself will give us nothing, and does not recognise the right of self determination. It raises in a diplomatic fashion a request for the establishment of a Palestinian state, and does not suggest any real struggle that will bring about its establishment.

The left criticised the Fez plan publicly in the conference, and completely rejected it, but for unity's sake signed the joint resolution that endorsed this plan.

*On the contacts that took place between the right wing and progressive forces within Israel: The basic ideas of the left about who constitutes the progressive forces within Israel differ fundamentally from those of the right wing. This difference stems from the difference in ideology, as the left represents the attitude of the working class, while the right represents the views of the bourgeois class.



Israeli troops in the West Bank

The left doesn't see Avneri or Reled and their like as a deep rooted left force that represent the Israeli working class, and argue that it is clear that they have not finally broken their ties with the Zionist movement and its goals in the region. The left advocated discussion with democratic and progressive forces that will serve the interests of the whole working class, Jews and Arabs together.

The final resolution endorsed calls in a general way for discussion with democratic and progressive forces, and each side will translate it according to its views. IT has been said in the world media that the Palestinians in the 1967 occupied territories are more moderate. (The representatives of the occupied territories were prevented by the occupation from attending the conference).

This is part of the propaganda war waged by imperialism. There is a plan to distance the Palestinian people from its representatives. They try to use pressure from Israel and Jordan to strengthen some personalities here as a substitute to the PLO.

There was a document signed by Elias Freij (mayor of Beit Lehem), Rashed A-Shama (Raza's mayor), Heimat Al Masri (Jordan's man in Nablus) and some 80 notables from Jordan's supporters, asking the Palestinian National Council to accept the Reagan plan.

But before the opening of the conference they cancelled this document and announced their support to the PLO and acceptance of the resolutions that will be adopted by the council. So the imperialist line to split the Palestinian people failed.

Doesn't that testify to the wishes of the public?

It deals with a group that represents the Palestinian bour-

geoisie and is pushed by its interests to play that role. The Palestinian bourgeoisie is subject to a special situation stemming from the prolonged occupation.

On one side they have economic and social links with the Zionist bourgeoisie; and on the other side the continuation of the occupation threatens to finally destroy them as a class. They want to find a formula that will save them from that destruction now, while the PLO sees the general situation and the interests of the broad masses.

The PLO understands that the liberation struggle of the Palestinian people is a long and hard struggle — and is not prepared to give imperialism whatever it asks for.

Public opinion supports the PLO — and all its steps — against the occupation.

The target of liberation is a long term one and people here don't believe it could be achieved in two, three or five years. Not because the masses here are weak — but because of the whole balance of power in the region, the imperialist policy, Zionism and the reactionary Arab regimes.

Only hard work can change this weakness by changing the situation of the Arab regimes — and only then will it be possible to force imperialism to change its goals in the region, or finally to abandon them, as happened in Vietnam.

Everybody in the West Bank supports the leadership as it emerged from the National Council's conference. People want the right of self-determination, not Camp David or the Reagan plan.

The policy of the Palestinian bourgeoisie also destroys itself. The Zionist bourgeoisie don't want the Palestinian bourgeoisie as a competitor, it wants the territories as its private market. Hence the settlements suggested by the

bourgeoisie expose themselves, not only that they are not in the interests of the working class, but they are not in the interest of the Palestinian people as a whole.

The positions of the Palestinian left against diplomatic agreements is posed by many as an extremist position against the Jews...

On the contrary! The Palestinian left today advocate Marxism-Leninism — as a strategy and philosophy — and have finished with all the chauvinist positions that interpreted the struggle as taking place between Jews and Arabs.

There is a national struggle, for the expression of national identity in a Palestinian state, but it also has its class character — a struggle against imperialist, Zionist and fascist plans. Hence we make a complete differentiation between Zionism and Judaism, and there is no struggle against the Jews, only against Zionism as a colonialist, exploiting and imperialist movement, opposed to the interest of the Arab and Jewish peoples.

We support any struggle of the forces opposed to the Zionist movement, be they Jewish or Arab, of any religion, white or black, for the establishment of a democratic secular state that will develop toward socialism.

We know well that many Jewish workers are deceived today by Zionism. We regard them as people like us, that have been deceived — but might be more sober tomorrow.

That is why it is important that the Jews hear us and understand that we do not want to throw them into the sea — will understand our wishes for a democratic parliament, for socialism, and will see there is a basis for living together.

You should also understand the situation of the masses in the West Bank, that know them from their daily experience only as soldiers and settlers that come as occupiers, oppressing, beating torturing, etc. People here ask where is the progressive force? And if somebody comes and says he wants peace they ask whether he serves in the army and if he would have shot us on command?

Despite all this we believe there is a basis for discussion, and there are people ready to understand, and a way to struggle together for the future.

The plans

Reagan

The Reagan Plan — September 1982.

*Elections among the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to prepare for 'full autonomy' in these areas.

*A five year transition period in which the Palestinians would take over control, leading up to a 'final status' of 'self government' by the Palestinians in association with Jordan.

*Israeli withdrawal from these occupied territories in accordance with UN Resolution 242 adopted after the 1967 war.

*The status of Jerusalem to be opened up for 'negotiations'.

*Peace treaties to be signed by the Arab states recognising Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state.

*An explicit 'ironclad' guarantee of Israel's security.

Fez

The Fez Plan — September 1982.

*Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem.

*The dismantling of Zionist settlements on these territories.

*Guaranteed freedom of worship.

*The recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and of the PLO as the Palestinians' sole legitimate representative.

*The West Bank and Gaza Strip to be placed under UN control for a transitory period.

*The establishment of an independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital.

*A UN guarantee of peace among all states in the region.

*UN guarantee of respect for these principles.



Campaign on Palestine

'The left criticised the Fez plan, but for unity's sake endorsed it'

Labour's campaign policy document

Why is it mainly "jobs for the boys"?

PARTNERS in Rebuilding Britain talks about expansion and creating jobs, specifically in the public sector, which will mean jobs for women and necessary services to enable women to go out to work.

But it doesn't mention the existing sexual division of labour and how to end it. There are vague references to discrimination in training and employment practices.

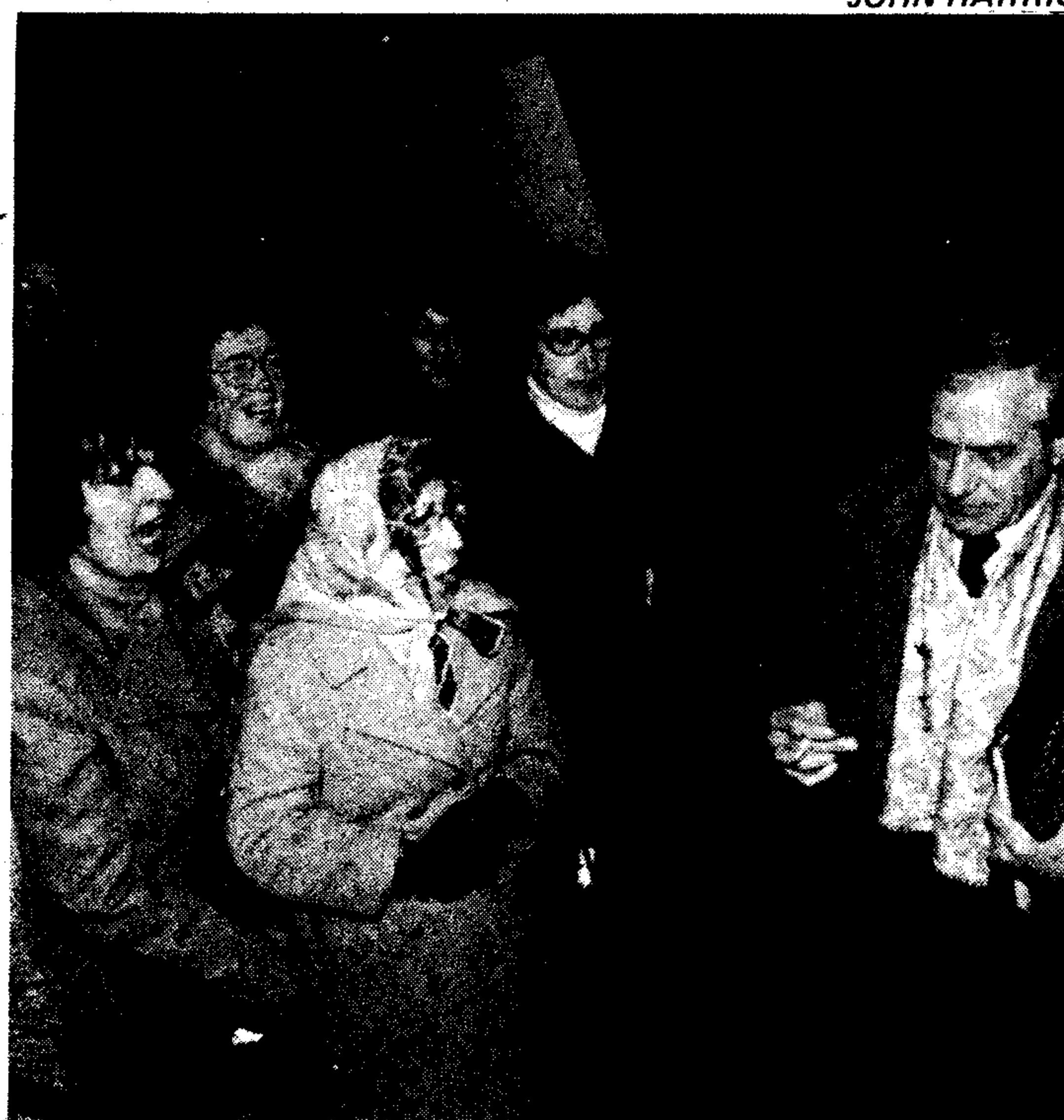
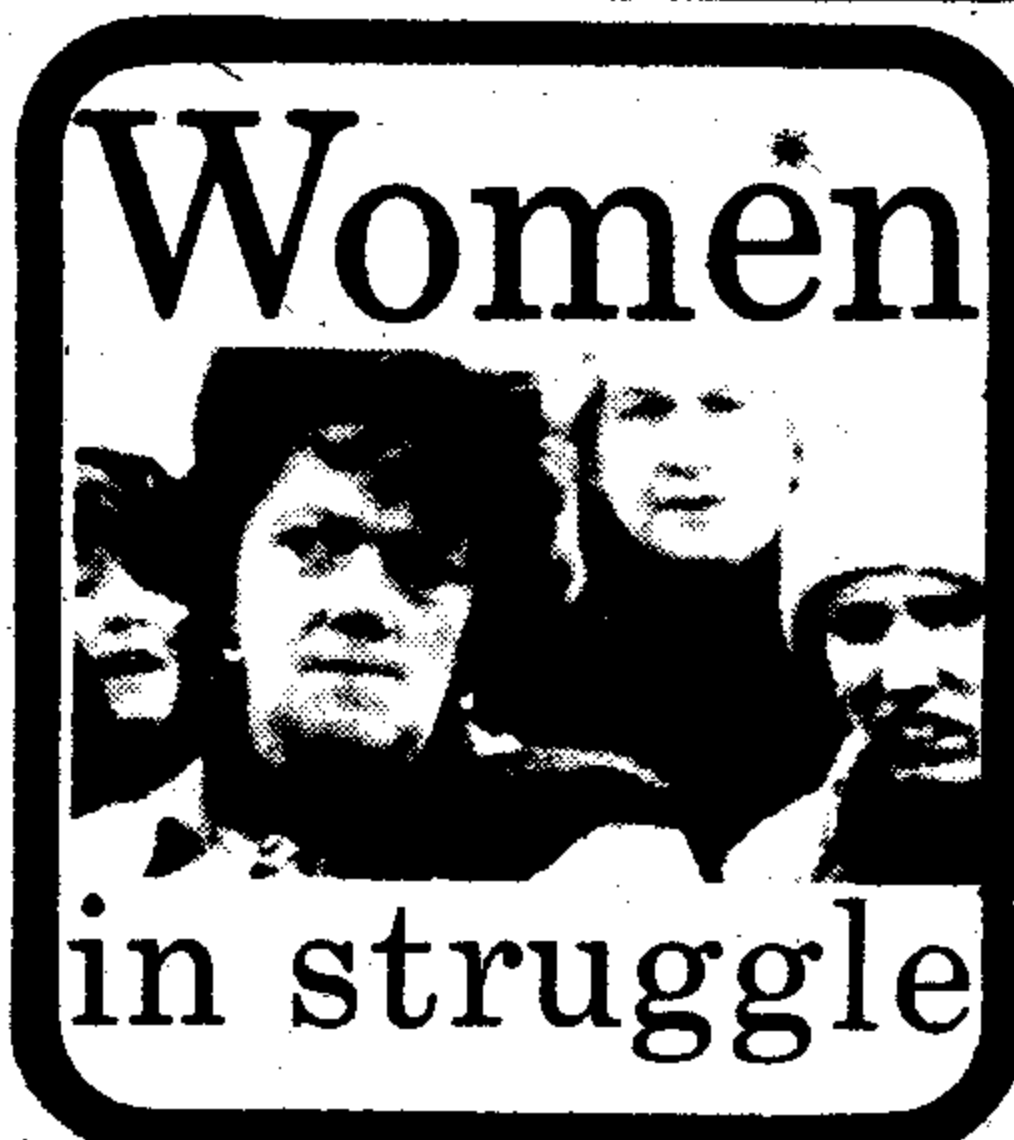
'Partners' talks about creating 500,000 jobs, half of which will be in the construction industry. £30 billion over five years is to be spent on major construction and investment projects in housing, transport, energy and sewerage. Women hardly exist in these industries and there are no proposals to ensure they get equal benefit from this £30 billion investment.

The whole employment programme doesn't challenge the sexual division of labour; in fact it reinforces it. Although it will create jobs for women in the public sector, this won't involve a redistribution of skills so that women can take their place alongside men in manufacturing, house-building, transport and energy industries.

The TUC has recently produced figures which show that of the four million women jobless and eligible to work, only 1.3 million are registered as unemployed. Neither document refers to the major problems that this poses for any party committed, as the Labour Party claims to be, to make the 'main goal of the next Labour government to put Britain's wealth to use for full employment, industrial revival and social justice' ('Partners').

The reason that 3½ million women are not registered is because of the assumption that they are not entitled to work, and because of the lack of social provision such as childcare, to enable them to go out to work. These same assumptions are embedded in the TUC/Labour Party document: there is no mention of support to enable women to work. Clearly this is a sticking point between men in the movement.

ANN PETTIFOR is a leading activist in the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy Women's Action Committee. She spoke to Gerry Byrne about Labour's campaign document, 'New Hope for Britain' and the joint Labour Party/TUC document, 'Partners in Rebuilding Britain'. What do they offer women?



Public sector jobs confine women to "women's work"

What about low pay?

Six million workers earn less than the average male manual earnings (currently about £90 a week). The majority of these are women.

The Labour Party says "We will discuss the possibility of a statutory minimum wage with the TUC". A very high proportion of these low-paid workers are in the public sector, yet there is no programme for raising public sector wages for school cleaners, dinner staff, health workers.

The major unions opposed the minimum wage at the TUC; and a NUPE-sponsored resolution to Labour Party annual conference was defeated.

Any strengthening of the Equal Pay Act which doesn't deal with the horizontal division of labour will still leave women segregated in the low-paid sectors of the economy. Until the unions show the same willingness to organise women as men, there is little hope that a Labour government would "take action together with the trade unions against low pay" ('New Hope').

Research by the National Institute for Economic and Social Research shows that despite their claims, the Social Contract and incomes policy did precious little to alter differentials. There must be a concerted effort to raise low pay. The Labour and trade union movement must devise a strategy that will guarantee raising the wages of the low-paid and also reduce differentials.

There is no indication that a male-dominated trade union movement is prepared to take this challenge on board. This is not surprising. They won't respond until women organise.

The Sex Discrimination Act didn't include any attempt to put the government's own house in order. Witness the Invalid Care Allowance and Non-Contributory Invalidity Pension, which directly discriminate against married women.

The reason the Labour government did this, and the Labour Party is unable to challenge this discrimination is because they accept wholeheartedly the concept of female dependence

within marriage. Further evidence of the acceptance of this dependence is the promise "to increase maternity grant to at least £100". Maternity grant would have to be £110 to be the same value in real terms as in 1963 when it was introduced.

60,000 women receive no maternity grant whatsoever because they do not pay National Insurance contributions, or are not dependent on men paying it.

It is clear from the document that it has been drafted by men. For example, women's right to choice in birth control has been phrased in negative rather than positive terms: "barriers will be removed", rather than facilities positively extended.

Unless women are given this autonomy and choice, control over our own bodies, our ability to participate equally with men in this proposed industrial and economic recovery will be severely limited. So-called left-wingers on the NEC are still not able to make this connection and extend to women their full and deserved rights.

There are however a number of policies in the campaign document on which the Party must be congratulated. If carried out they will begin the process of altering the present unacceptable balance of power between men and women. For these policies to be carried out with commitment and enthusiasm will require women in positions where they have the power of implementation.

The Parliamentary selection process so far suggests that there will be fewer women in the next Parliament than there are now. More women candidates have been selected - but the majority are in safe Tory seats. Without an organised force of women to monitor and promote these policies, we will have the same situation as in 1976 after Barbara Castle was sacked from the Labour cabinet and a section of the TUC and the Cabinet colluded to attempt to ditch Child Benefit.

Women therefore cannot be confident of anything in this Programme until they have mobilised to ensure proper representation and an equal voice in the labour movement.

Ann Pettifor: the Labour Party accepts wholeheartedly the concept of female dependence



NALGO go-ahead

IN A SUDDEN, uncharacteristic flurry of leftism, NALGO has given a boost to women in struggle against the cuts and against the missiles.

NALGO members have been authorised to take strike action in support of the one-day stoppage and rally being organised by unions against plans by Merton council to withdraw the school meals service entirely, sack a number of school caretakers, and privatise school cleaning services.

The strike call for April 27 had been led by council manual unions. NALGO has also pledged its support for the May 24 women's day of action against the missiles, and invited branches with members wishing to stop work for the day to seek the necessary authority from the union's Emergency Committee.

Though this is a long way short of a national call to action, it is a major advance on the hollow verbal support offered by many more overtly 'left wing' union leaders - and should be used in the struggle for protest stoppages to be called by every union.

What to do for May 24 strike

What you can do:

- Find out from your Regional Contact what has already been planned, offer your services and suggestions. Phone Brighton (Carmel or Laura) 0273 553466 for your regional contact.
- Raise support for the day of strike action in your union, workplace, estate, shopping centre, school college, nursery, just anywhere you go.
- If your local council has a nuclear free zone policy, and many do, demand that the council gives over office space for organising for the 24th. Sheffield and Leicester City Councils have already done so.
- Plan action for the day itself - we can do ANYTHING, occupy, encircle, decorate, die-in, blockade at military bases, banks, armaments factories and supporting industries, nuclear bunkers, Ministry of Defence Offices.
- Leaflet everywhere, so there can be no excuse for not knowing what's happening on May 24. If you don't have local leaflets, they can be obtained nationally from the London Greenham office.
- Demand the support of men. Ask them to take supportive strike action as well, and to help organise creches so children can be looked after and the women are free to take the main action on the day.
- Pressure to get unions to support May 24 must now be generated in local branches. Trades Councils can arrange for every delegate to take support for May 24 into their branches and arrange for speakers from Greenham Common to address meetings.
- Help set up local organising meetings, including women's centres, women's groups, minority ethnic women's groups, trade union women's groups, anti-cuts campaigns, etc.
- Labour Party Women's sections can take up the call and show that there are Labour Party rank and file members who are determined to commit the Labour Party to campaign on conference resolutions.

Let's make May 24 the biggest, most successful action yet!

SAVE SOUTH LONDON HOSPITAL!

Save South London Hospital Campaign meets every Thursday at Balham Food & Book Co-op, High Street, Balham at 8.00 p.m.



Socialist ORGANISER

Industrial Special

Supplement to SO no. 129, April 28 1983. 5p if sold separately

Day and night efforts bring Cowley's

Bell-to-bell

BETRAYAL!

THE 4½ week Cowley strike, like the London Docks strike, the South Yorkshire steel strike and the recent strikes at Ford and in the South Wales coalfield, reflected the willingness and ability of the working class to fight back against the Tory government.

The betrayal of this strike therefore has implications, not just in Cowley, or even BL, but for the working class as a whole. In some ways the implications outside Cowley are more negative than within the plant.

The record of the working class in successive strikes since Thatcher came to power in May 1979 has been a willingness to fight. The record of the trade union leaders has been one of opposition to an industrial challenge to the Tories.

Politics

These are the politics which lay behind the sell-out at Cowley.

Cowley workers are in a powerful strategic position. Their strike instantly affects not only four models in BL's highest-investment plant, but a section of the engineering industry as well. Compare the publicity and the attention of top union leaders for the Cowley strike with London Docks, where workers have been out two weeks longer.

If the trade union leaders wanted to fight, Cowley was a perfect situation to do so. The sell-out of the strike under these conditions makes its effects on the working class more damaging. Many workers will think that if a victory was not possible at Cowley, where is it possible?

If nothing else can be said for Moss Evans, Terry Duffy, Ken Cure and Grenville Hawley in this issue, their determination and singlemindedness in getting the Cowley Assembly Plant workers back to work on the company's terms should be recognised.

By Alan
Thornett



Moss Evans - 'more determined than Duffy to end the strike'.

From the time Moss Evans arrived for the talks last Thursday at a plush hotel near Gatwick in the same car as Austin Rover chairman Harold Musgrove, they have worked unstintingly.

Variant

At that meeting, management repeated a slight variant of their original terms: Audited Plant Status (APS) to be introduced by May 16, 1983 bell to bell running to be introduced by May 30, a four person inquiry into labour relations in the plant.

Out of this meeting came "trade union" proposals which were almost identical to management terms, to be put to a mass

meeting the following day, Friday: "Audited Plant Status will only be introduced in Cowley Assembly from Monday May 16 1983, given cooperation by the workforce in the productivity improvement measures necessary to qualify for APS which includes the 39 hour week, this to be brought about by agreement of the trade unions or by a ballot of the workforce."

Ballot

In other words they were saying *accept* APS (they seem incapable of grasping that the workforce doesn't want it), and *accept* bell to bell running.

The only problem, they were saying, was that the company wanted to force these things in, and that was undemocratic. Incredibly, they were saying that the way to avoid such an imposition was *voluntarily* to accept BL's terms.

The key sentence is "this [APS and bell to bell running] to be brought about by agreement of the trade unions or ballot..."

This gave them two options - get BL to agree to a ballot, or simply agree to the terms themselves.

The shop stewards committee, meeting immediately before Friday's mass meeting, rejected both management and trade union proposals. Instead they passed a resolution calling on the workers to reject BL's terms, to continue the strike and to meet again in a week's time.

The mass meeting was very big, with all the 5,000 strikers attending. The mood was not quite as strong as before. The waverings at national level, and the hardships workers were now facing, were having some effect.

The vote however, was a solid 3-1 in favour of the shop stewards resolution. The problem of the strike was not the resolve of the

workers but the manoeuvrings at the top.

After the vote, which most workers saw as the end of the meeting, Buckle announced that there was to be a *second* vote on the trade union proposals - that BL's terms were OK providing they were voluntarily accepted and not imposed.

There was complete confusion. Hundreds of workers were streaming out of the meeting as Buckle tried to explain the reason for the second vote.

The trade union proposals were then carried with maybe 100 votes in favour and 50 against.

That same evening Evans and Duffy acted on that second vote and met BL management again, this time in the Holiday Inn near Heathrow.

Final

At the meeting the company's terms were formally accepted by the unions. BL presented a document which was their 'final offer' and which was accepted by the trade union side.

The key clause read as follows. "In accordance with the collective agreement between the company and the trade unions, both parties reaffirm that Audited Plant Status will be established in Cowley Assembly as soon as it is practically possible, and the trade unions and management will cooperate in the productivity improvement measures necessary to qualify for APS which include 39-hour working."

That was interpreted by the Sunday papers in the obvious way. The Sunday Express was the most candid, with its headline: "Car Unions Yield Victory for BL". The first sentence of the lead article read, "An almost total climbdown by union negotiators has paved the way for production to start again this week."

The formula also provides for a four-person committee to in-

Continued



Laughing all the way to the bank - BL boss Musgrove

IN an earlier and simpler age, surrender was announced simply by sending out someone with a white flag.

In our sophisticated modern society, it's a much more elaborate process. The Sunday Telegraph on April 24 reported on the talks between top union leaders and BL management at the Holiday Inn, Heathrow.

They were lubricated with steaks all round, wine, unlimited coffee, sandwiches, and a large breakfast. By the time the union leaders were whisked away in chauffeur-driven Rovers, a bill of over £500 had been run up.

But the hotel's efforts were not wasted. The rigours of class struggle were softened.

"Although three rooms had been booked for the talks apparently the different groups drifted between them rather than talking in entrenched little parties. One member of staff said she had difficulty distinguishing who were the bosses and who were the union men... all the suits looked the same."



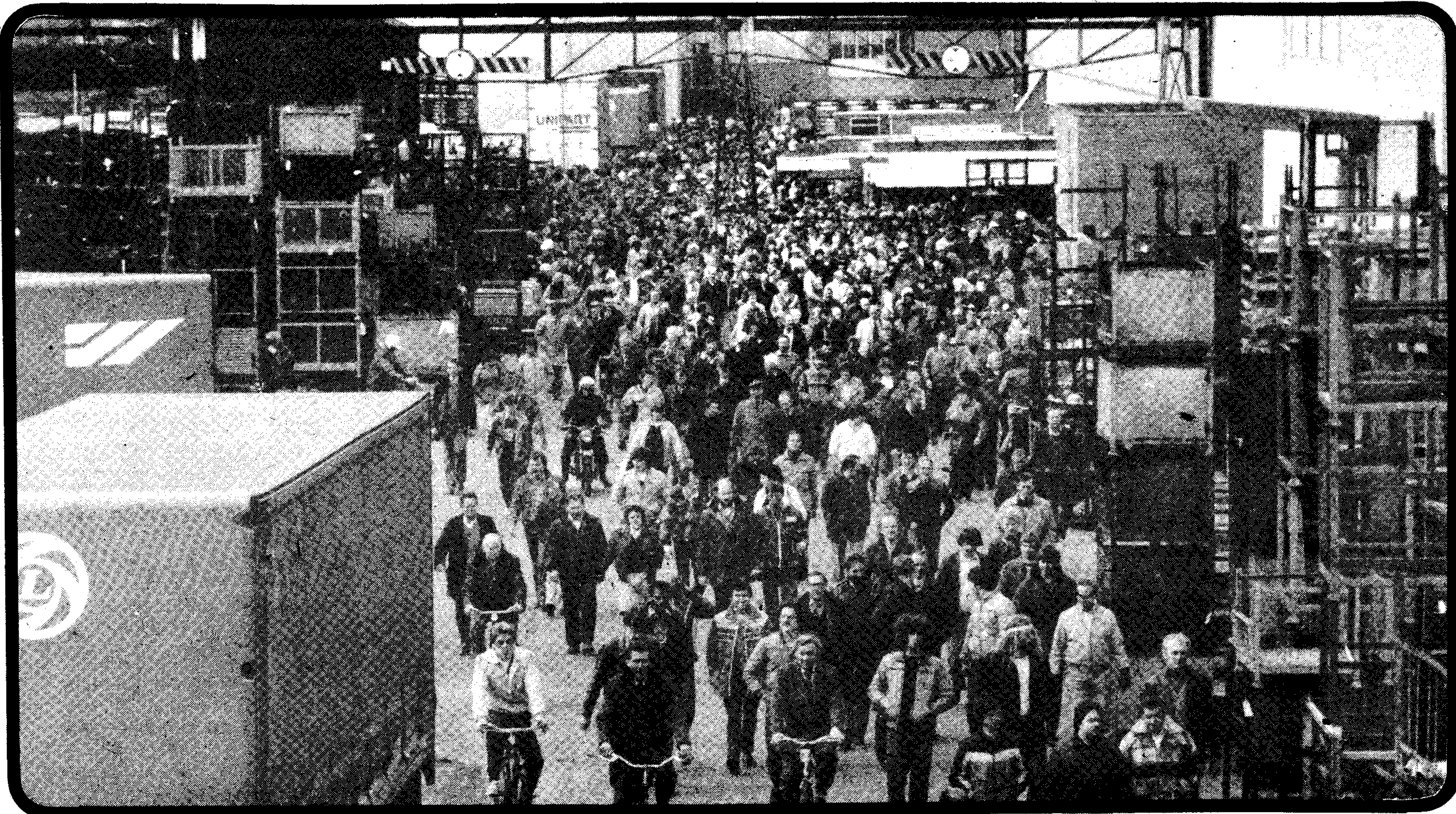
Terry Duffy



JOIN THE LAC!

Join the Leyland Action Committee
Contact: 194 Dawlish Rd, Birmingham 29

'The problem was not resolve of the workers, but manoeuvres at the top'



Continued

quire into the attitude of management, similar to the committee set up out of the so-called 'swearing' strike last year, which resolved absolutely nothing.

In reality the only way to change the attitude of management is for the unions to win something, in this case to successfully defend the six minutes.

The final clause of the formula says that the unions make no recommendation whatsoever to the mass meeting, and allow the workforce to decide — which is astounding when you consider that the formula was not a compromise, but BL's original terms restated.

BL certainly had it both ways, since they promptly placed advertisements in the newspapers recommending a return to work.

The shop stewards' committee, which had given leadership throughout the strike, was also to be gagged. The major part of the shop stewards' meeting on Monday was taken up with the stewards arguing for the right to make a recommendation to the meeting. When that battle was won, the stewards passed a resolution saying that 'the formula was not a basis for a return to work', although whether, and in what form, this resolution would be put to the mass meeting, was not clear.

The main pressure for the sell out did not in the end come from Terry Duffy. Reports to the stewards' meeting made it clear that Moss Evans was the most determined at national level to bring the strike to an end. He had made the running in both the Carlton Hotel and the Holiday Inn meetings. He apparently fought with

Buckle over it, accusing him of being responsible by his support for the continuation of the strike in its early stages.

Formally Moss Evans is presented as being rather to the left in the trade union movement, while Duffy is presented as the extreme right. This demonstrates once more that when the issue of viability arises, and when it is a matter of a major industrial struggle against the government, the left and right of reformism play the same treacherous role.

Failed

The workforce remained completely disciplined after the sell-out at the weekend. Musgrove's call for a return to work on the Monday failed completely. Only one or two workers turned up, to face a picket of several hundred.

At today's mass meeting [Tuesday], the mood was equally strong. The media had for two days set out to create the mentality that the strike was as good as over, and this had obviously had its effect, but it was clear from the reaction of the meeting to the platform that a substantial vote to continue the strike was possible, given a strong lead from the platform.

There was however no such lead. The meeting was gradually talked back to work.

Last night's [Monday] Oxford Mail was very skillfully presented. 'The 5000 men and women who have supported the washing-up strike are likely to vote tomorrow for a return to work. But a small minority of militants are claiming that the latest peace terms are a sell-out'. It went on to say that

the workers would "only be asked to suspend the strike, and not abandon it".

This kind of line was equally skilfully put from the platform this morning by every speaker. Buckle spoke as if the strike was already over. There were endless patronising statements about how magnificent the strike "had been", long references to what "must happen" when everyone was back at work, great praise for the four-person inquiry which was going to bring changes in the plant. Workers were urged to bring their grievances to it so that it could begin its work.

When it came to dealing with the shop stewards' resolution, Buckle simply lied about it. He said the shop stewards had expressed a view, but "we're not

recommending either way".

It was of course stressed continually that the platform itself was not recommending either way.

Buckle had been saying that he was not prepared to allow Harold Musgrove to "write his script". But Harold Musgrove, in return for no concessions at all, had certainly determined what was not said at the meeting by Buckle or anyone else.

Bob Fryer, as the final speaker, did mention the stewards' resolution. But it was in the context of a speech which was in tune with the rest of the platform.

Inevitably, after this, the meeting voted to return to work by a majority of about four to one.

It was certainly a major victory for management. The Mus-

grove management will claim to have cut their teeth and successfully continued Edwardes' hard-line management style into the post-Edwardes period in BL. The Tory government will claim it as a victory for their policy on the shop floor, and use it to clamp down in other sectors of industry. Local BL management will use the new commitment they have to APS to force in new manning cuts and push up productivity. Local full-time officials will use it to gain control of a plant traditionally run by a democratically elected shop stewards' movement.

But that's not the whole story. The strike was the product of a process of breaking down shop floor organisation in the plant, which had gone a long way. The shop stewards' committee, for example, had been reduced to a fraction of its previous strength. But now gains can be made to begin to rebuild the shop stewards' movement.

Hundreds of young workers fresh in the plant have been in action for the first time. They work on tracks where in many cases there are no shop stewards. Militants who came forward in the strike must remain active in the trade union movement, become stewards and trade union activists, begin to tackle the political problems which led another powerful strike to defeat at the hands of the bureaucrats.

"Tough came fr

by a TGWU steward, BL Longbridge

Longbridge shop floor workers and rank and file stewards were very sympathetic towards the Cowley strike. Although most areas of Longbridge had their "washing-up time" taken away some years ago, the general attitude was to say 'Good luck to anyone who fights this management'.

The "tough-guy" managers, presently at Cowley, are all people who came from Longbridge — Andy Barr, for instance — and we know exactly how the Cowley workers feel because we've had exactly the same treatment from these people.

Press Gang

Moral agitators

LEAVE to one side for a moment the question of whether John Lister crawled into Cowley and put something in the BL tea or whether the sight of Pat Lally selling Socialist Organiser outside the mass meetings reaches the votes other papers can't reach.

The workforce, as seen by the Daily Express, is a passive mass incapable of thought, feeling or independent political action. 'Marxists move in for the kill', the paper declared and went on to report accusations that the workforce were lemmings, following the union over the cliff.

The red baiting was taken up to a lesser extent by some of the fellow Fleet Street outside agitators, but it was a minority voice and a weak one. Majorities of up to ten to one at mass meetings need better explanation than Marxist plotting.

The real contest this week has come from the Christian mafia.

It was probably best expressed in the BBC Sunday programme the Heart of the Matter which posed the issues of the strike as a moral dilemma — on the one side the need for economic success, on the other a need for peace and stability.

The paper explained that the Marxist approach began by blaming the other fellow", while Christians began with penitence.

He didn't seem very penitent himself but then he wasn't a car worker so he didn't have so much to be penitent about.

This year being the centenary of Marx's death has given all kinds of parrots the opportunity to confute a Marxism which exists largely in their own minds — but this analysis took the biscuit. The long careful brick building analysis of Capital is reduced to a game of name calling.

The Reverend Tony Williamson, Lord Mayor of Oxford, body plant lift truck driver, and worker priest, was confident that it was possible to reconcile his ideal of Christian management with profitable car production — Buckle was not. He raised doubts as to whether car production should be undertaken at all if the consequences were slave conditions.

We can confidently predict a flood of articles trying to reconcile Christian morality (love your neighbour) with factory production (work harder than your neighbour). This could be the theme of the next big speech from the Archbishop of Canterbury, drawing on his vast experience of the matter.

Finally BL might be forced into a compromise. Compulsory prayers every morning before the line starts and before a three minute service before starting and stopping work. Or more production. Now there's a deal that would really appeal to Duffy.

OUR POLICY

BL is publicly owned. For years it even had workers' participation as a cosmetic to cover the real face of speed-up and tight-fistedness on wages.

Participation was kicked aside by the bosses when it no longer suited them. Now, several insulting pay offers and several ultimatums and closure threats later, BL is still setting the pace for managerial gangsterism.

Faced with a serious crisis, the BL bosses react no differently from private capitalists. Their answer has been to take it out on the workers.

BL was nationalised in order to bail out the private shareholders. Throughout the 1950s and '60s the shareholders have pocketed fat dividends. If you invested £3000 in the British Motor Company in 1952, then by the time of the merger with Leyland in 1967 you would have received £33,000 in dividends.

Meanwhile there was very little investment. In 1969 BL had fixed assets of £969 per employee, compared to Ford UK's £2709. So when the world competition in the car industry became sharper, in the late '60s BL went onto the rocks.

BL workers came under attack, but the shareholders were safe. The government paid them 10p for every share, although the shares had been fetching only 6½p the day before nationalisation was announced.

BL still has to pay millions every month in interest charges.

Nationalisation was not a way out of the mad international capitalist rat race in the motor industry. It was just another way for the bosses to organise themselves for that rat race.

For workers, the only answer is to fight for workers' control. The first essential is full information about management's plans — open the books and end commercial secrecy!

Having opened the company's books, BL workers should work out their own work schedules, based on work-sharing without loss of jobs or pay. With combine-wide solidarity and the willingness to seize the factories if necessary, the BL workers can enforce this workers' control.

They can establish links with workers in the car components firms and in the other giant car firms in Britain and internationally, for a common struggle for an integrated, publicly-owned, car and components industry under workers' control.

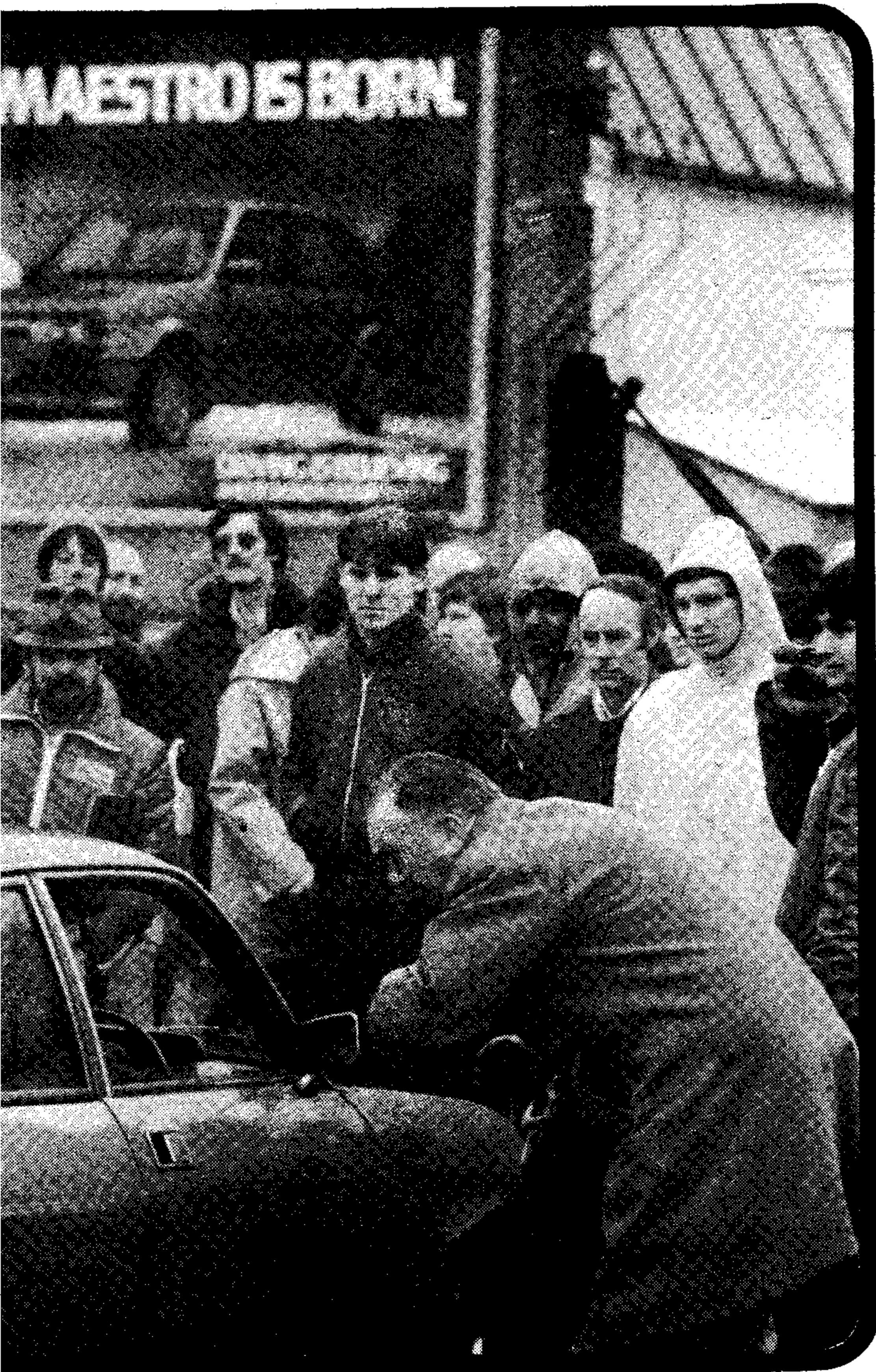
ON THE MARCH

There will be seven legs — from Glasgow, starting April 23, Land's End (May 11), Liverpool (May 9), Newcastle on Tyne (April 30), Keighley (April 27), Hull (May 1), and Great Yarmouth (May 21) — all merging to enter London on June 4/5.

The 500 'core' marchers will be selected by the Regional TUCs, though the TUC organisers say they expect more to join sections of the march along the way.

Ron Todd, chair of the national organising committee, told a press conference on March 28 that he expected "at least a quarter of a million" in London on June 5".

BL still sets pace for ga



guy" managers om Longbridge

The Monday after the sacking threat was announced, the shopfloor workers at Longbridge were saying that if a single Cowley worker was sacked, then we all had to come out.

Grasp

Everyone at Longbridge understood the implications of the sacking threat for the whole trade union movement... everyone, that is, except the works committee. They seemed unable or unwilling to grasp the seriousness of the situation. They didn't organise any measures to prepare the workforce to meet such a threat.

On the Tuesday after the ultimatum, the delegation of shop stewards went to see the works committee and proposed that a joint shop stewards committee meeting be called to prepare for solidarity action.

The convenor, Jack Adams, was away at the Scottish TUC, and the rest of the works committee seemed unable to operate without his presence. The works committee without Adams is like a chicken with its head cut off, except that at least a chicken without a head runs about. These people were simply paralysed.

They failed to even call a works committee meeting to discuss the situation. Their answer to the delegation's request for a joint shop stewards committee meeting was a bland "Cowley hasn't asked for any support so far and when they do, we'll start to move."

Later a suggestion was made by another steward who went over to see them, for at least a message of support and a donation. Even this met with a similar negative response.

One of the works committee members actually said that because the strike was official, everything was OK and we didn't need to do anything at Longbridge!

The other reason that Longbridge rank and file workers have identified so strongly with the Cowley workers is because they know that the Longbridge

management is only holding back on further attacks here because of the Cowley situation.

Three weeks ago, workers in CABl voted to resist management plans to remove all inspectors from the tracks and to force all operators to carry out their own inspection (stamping their own work). Since then the company has held back from implementing this measure for fear of having both their major assembly plants in dispute at the same time. But nobody is in any doubt that if Cowley is defeated, the Longbridge bosses will go ahead with their plan immediately.

Our bosses only held back because of Cowley

I've got no doubt that if the Cowley strike continues and if BL management go ahead with their sacking threat there will be a strong response from the shop floor at Longbridge. The only problem is the weakness and cowardice and complacency of our plant leadership here. However even they now show some signs of moving. Last week at the TGWU branch of which Jack Adams is chairperson, a resolution was proposed by him, giving full support to Cowley, sending £100 donation and calling for strike action in every BL plant if management go ahead with the sackings. That is obviously the kind of solidarity action that is needed and it is good to see that Adams and the works committee seem to be pushing for this. Better late than never.

ngsterism



Leyland Action Committee

Five years fighting a chain of betrayals

THE Leyland Action Committee is a body of Leyland workers, formed at the time of the 1978 wage review, whose aim was to campaign within the plants against a wages sell-out.

It has remained in existence ever since then because of the continuous sell-outs.

From the 1980 review, in which the workers were balloted and voted in favour of strike action, which was then not implemented, through to the present Cowley assembly plant sell-out, it has been clear that what is required is a new leadership to struggle for the workers' interests, independent from the employers.

Leyland has been used as an example by successive governments, as to how they want industry's profits defended. Under the last Labour government it was through workers' "participation", whereby unions at all levels were to be used to jointly agree speed-up and low wages.

With the Tory government it has been through dictatorial measures, using the union leaders to sell out struggles. In both cases, the result is the same.

The central plank of the employers and the government has been to look after the "profitability" and "viability" of the industry to the detriment of the workforce.

Collusion

In this they have benefitted from the collusion of the trade union leadership.

In January 1980 the steel strike started. The November 1979 BL pay review was still being negotiated. BL workers were held back from taking any action alongside the steelworkers.

In February of that year there was a national ballot of BL workers, who voted 2-1 in favour of striking. The trade union leaders refused to implement this. It was the Leyland Action Committee that organised coaches of steel workers and BL workers to lobby a convenors meeting at Canley, demanding they implement the strike vote.

They refused. And it was only put to Leyland workers whether they wanted to strike or not on April 8 - the day after the steel strike ended.

Throughout each of the subsequent wages campaigns, the Leyland Action Committee has put forward proposals and campaigned in the factories and at BL combine level for action to defend wages.

Similarly on jobs. Our consistent opposition to speed-up, which means job losses, is exemplified by the issuing of a different leaflet to each of the mass meetings of the Cowley assembly

plant strike.

Our supporters have taken a principled stand in fighting this struggle from the beginning.

On victimisation: Our record is clear. We took a strong position in defence of Derek Robinson, of the Longbridge 8 and of Alan Thornett.

In the case of Alan Thornett, for example, we produced a special edition of our bulletin, distributed at the main plants, explaining the case and showing how the union bureaucracy sold out.

The Leyland Action Committee holds regular meetings and throughout the Cowley Assembly strike we held fortnightly meetings.

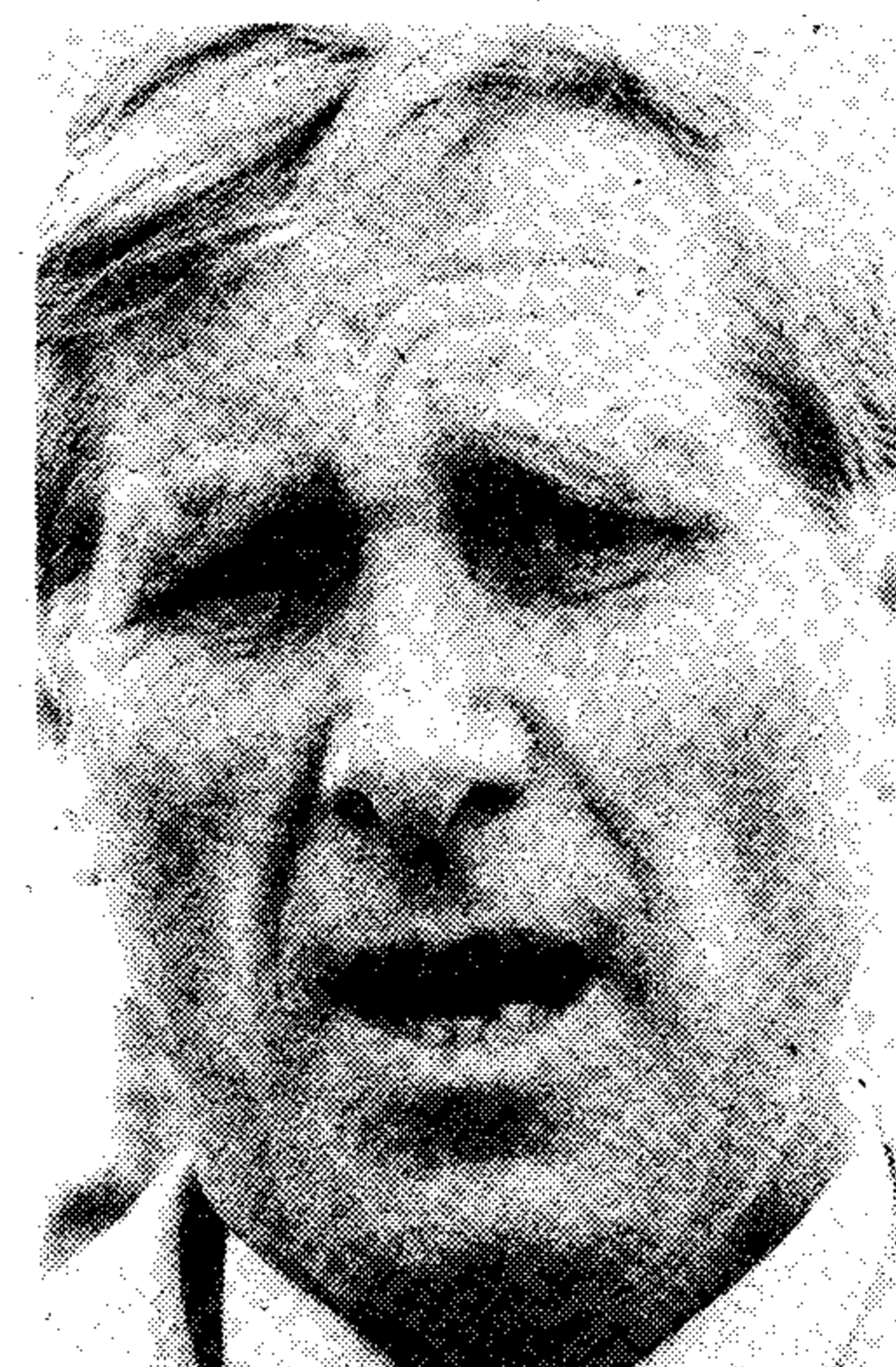
The meeting on Monday, 25th, for example, heard reports from assembly plant stewards, and discussed the state of the

union organisation and the crisis of leadership and drew up the leaflet for Tuesday's mass meeting.

We do not see the Leyland Action Committee as an alternative to the BL Combine Shop Stewards Committee, which is unofficial, but as an alternative leadership that struggles within both the official and unofficial bodies.

The Combine Committee, controlled jointly by the Stalinists of the Communist Party and the right wing, has been virtually defunct, having met only once in the last year. This in itself shows the crisis of leadership.

Anybody interested in receiving copies of leaflets and LAC material or wishing to join LAC should write to Leyland Action Committee, 194 Dawlish Road, Birmingham B29.



Buckle - betrayed fight to defend Alan Thornett.

THE Leyland Action Committee put out bulletins at every turn in the dispute, warning of dangers and pointing a way forward.

On April 6, the bulletin explained that "the so-called 'offer' the management have made is actually worse than the conditions they were threatening to impose at the beginning of the strike..."

"Audited Plant Status (APS) is not a concession, it is a further imposition. It involves, in management's latest figures, a *manning cut* of a further 243 across the plant... Management's *problem* has been that they have been hesitating to force APS in because they feared the reaction of the

workforce - now they are trying to get it in as a *concession* in return for the acceptance of bell to bell running!"

The April 14 bulletin underlined the statement from BL boss Geoffrey Armstrong that for him the six minutes was "only the beginning" towards a rate of exploitation "equal to the best international standards in Japan, the continent and the USA".

On April 19 the bulletin argued the case against a 'buy-out' of the six minutes. The April 22 bulletin picked up on hints dropped by union officials Ken Cure and Moss Evans on TV the evening before, and accurately warned against the danger of

proposals for a ballot on the six minutes and APS being "brought in in a deliberately confusing way".

April 26's LAC leaflet argued against the sell-out. "We have the unity of the workforce, the official support of the unions and the full support of the community in Oxford. That doesn't happen very often and we should not throw it away now."

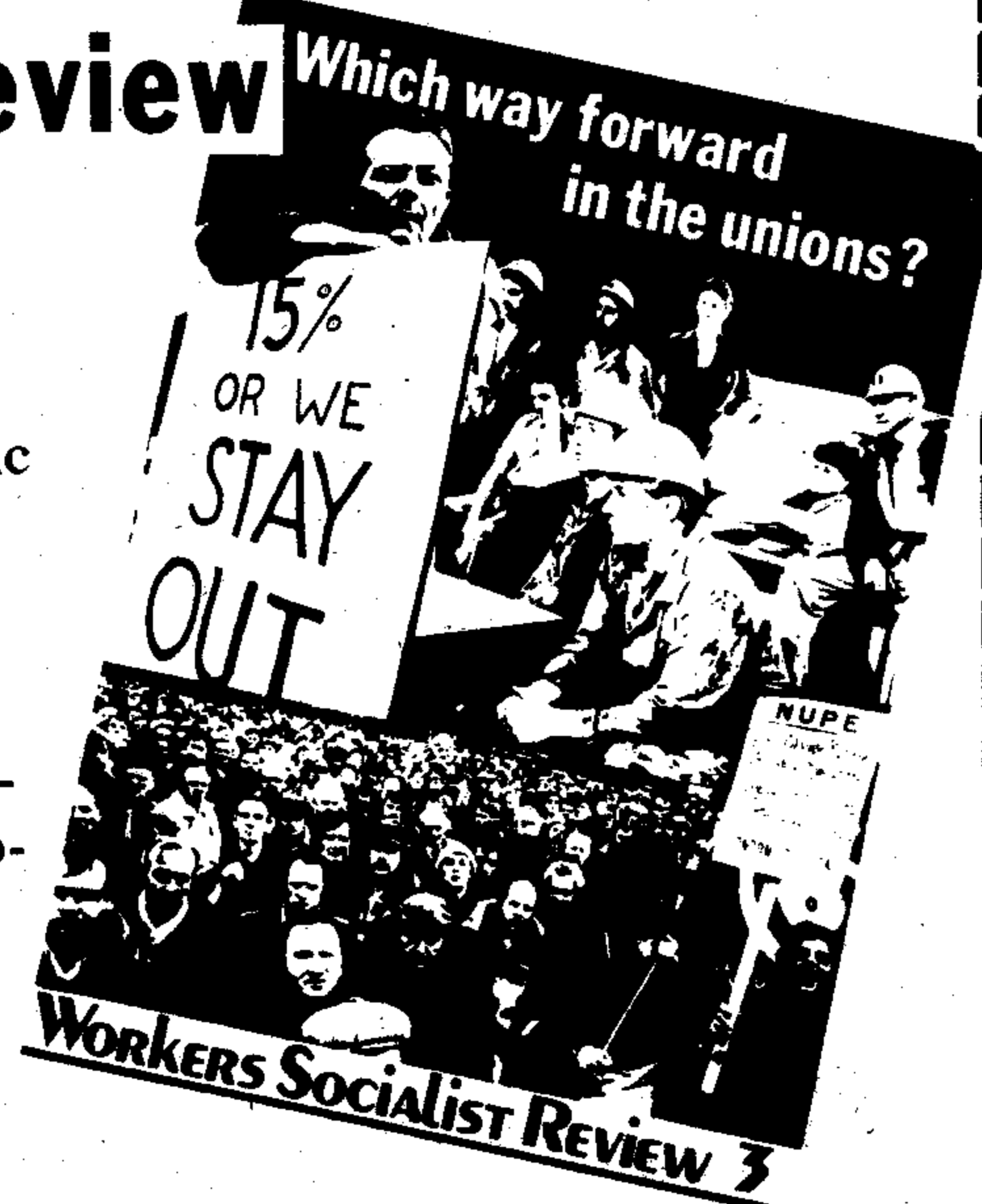
With more supporters and more resources the LAC can have a bigger voice next time. Join the LAC now; help to rebuild the shop stewards' movement in BL, and help to prevent future sell-outs.

Advertisement

Workers Socialist Review OUT NOW!

Articles on the stewards' movement, the public sector and the fight against cuts and privatisation, lessons from the NHS strike, and unions and the Labour Party. Polemics on the Socialist Workers' Party and the Communist Party. Features on the left and the Stalinist state 'unions', and on workers' politics and national liberation. From the arsenal of Marxism: Leon Trotsky on boom, crisis, and workers' struggle.

70p (plus 16p p&p) from WSL, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD



Socialist ORGANISER

Industrial Special

Viability argument leads to

The slippery slope of concessions

IF POPULAR myth is to be believed, everything is bigger in the USA — even the sell-outs by union leaders.

That may be pretty hard for Cowley workers to believe — but even they have not (yet) been forced by their leaders into legally-binding three year contracts embodying an actual *reduction* in wages. That — if Duffy and Evans have their way — is a treat yet to come.

In the USA, however, wage cutting concessions or 'givebacks' have been 'negotiated' by union bureaucrats in a wide range of industries in which employers have claimed the only alternative is redundancies or closure.

A recent leaflet put out by the New York rank and file grouping 'Teamsters for a Democratic Union' sums up the results of these 'deals':

"In the steel and rubber industries giant corporations like Uniroyal, US Steel, General Tire and National Steel closed plants even when workers made concessions.

At Chrysler, the auto workers made concessions three times, giving up \$1 billion in pay, yet 50% of them are laid off.

Across the auto industry including suppliers, the union has made \$5 billion in concessions. The net effect of this no-fight strategy has been the loss of 600,000 jobs.

Freight Teamsters [transport workers] see carriers closing up nearly every week, despite the recent sell-out Master Freight Contract which freezes wages, cuts cost of living allowances, forces drivers to pay into the pension and health funds, and gives major concessions on work rules.

Besides carriers like Time-DC which have folded anyway since the new NMFA contract was signed, hundreds of others, seeing the union in retreat, are refusing to sign, and are demanding even more 'relief'.

Not only have the union bureaucrats been giving concessions,

Black trade unionists SOLIDARITY

T.G.W.U.

OFFICIAL
—MIKF

Contact:
Neville Adams
115 Neville
St. London
N16

Problems



and Policies

By Harry Sloan

but the government has cut money out of social programmes, and shifted it into programmes which go directly to the corporations, into military spending, direct subsidies, loans and tax cuts.

Still, big business is not investing in production that increases employment, but mainly in speculation.

No jobs are being created for working people. US Steel, for example, instead of modernising the decaying steel industry, just

bought Marathon Oil. Unemployment is over 10 million — the worst since 1939.

Sometimes the extra money a company saves when we make concessions is used to automate existing jobs out of existence, or, as at Cooper Jarrett, to invest in new areas while the company lays off the very workers who helped the employer finance them out of a job.

The biggest problem is that the employers rightly see union givebacks as a sign of weakness, and this whets their appetite for even more concessions. This means less job security, because the company knows it can walk all over the union without the union doing a thing.

Wage cutting at one company may help that company get a competitive edge on other companies for a while.

Jobs may be transferred from one place to another, but it won't create a single extra job in the balance.

It does, however, cut the heart out of unionism, if it gets Teamsters in one local or company competing with those in another so as to undercut the wages and working conditions of our brothers and sisters.

The current economic crisis is driving many, especially smaller, companies to the wall. The freight industry, for example, under the impact of deregulation and recession, is undergoing rapid consolidation.

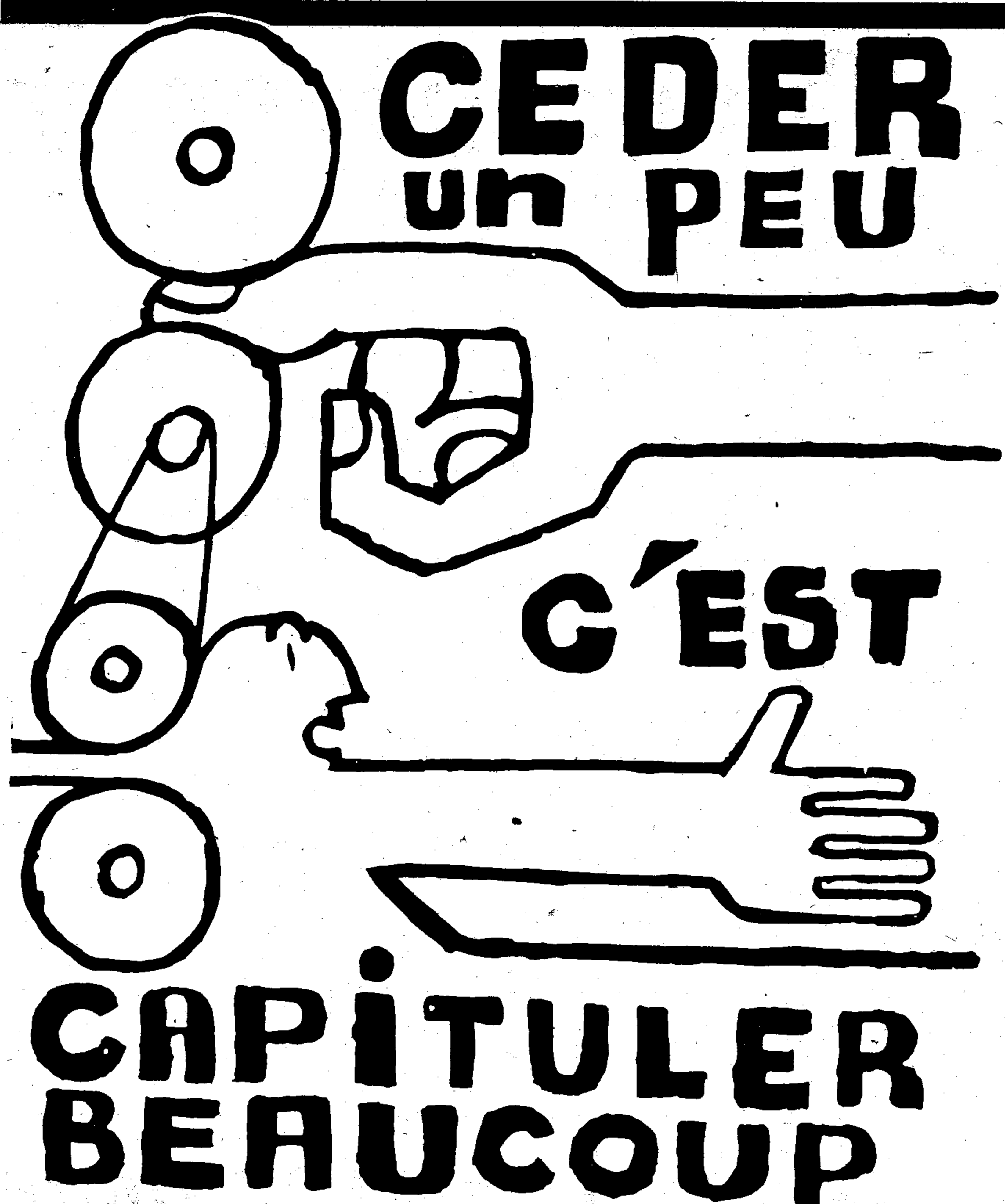
The largest carriers are expanding their facilities and service, and increasing their profitability. Yet, even they are demanding concessions as they prepare for more cut-throat competition with other firms. No amount of union givebacks will keep the weaker companies from being swallowed up.

Since 1976, 150,000 Teamster freight jobs, over one third of the total, have been lost due to industry reorganisation and the carriers' union-busting campaign. The growing non-union sector is being used as a club against unionised workers by the employers to force more concessions.

The only way to end this threat is by a campaign that mobilises the Teamster rank and file to help organise the unorganised, and proves to them in deeds that the muscle of the entire IBT will be used to back them up, including supporting strike action and secondary boycotts.

The American experience is echoed in each and every example of retreat by British union leaders.

Far from being satisfied by the concessions they have gained, the employers see these as mere appetisers for further inroads into workers' standards and hard-won



A poster from France, May 1968. 'Give a finger and they'll take an arm'

management threats of impending bankruptcy, closure or mass sackings can just as easily be suckered into wholesale collaboration in this or that 'miracle' scheme that might 'save' the company — most recently the BL Maestro.

The financial crisis hitting whole sections of capitalist industry flows not from workers' excessive demands but from capitalism's own chaotic methods of restructuring production and re-viving profits, by driving weaker firms to the wall.

Employers — whether 'loss-making' or highly profitable — have embarked on a sustained and ruthless offensive designed to drive up the rate of exploitation on the shop floor. Some have pleaded impending bankruptcy: others — such as Ford — have bluntly threatened to shut down 'uncompetitive' plants and shift production elsewhere.

In such conditions of confrontation it becomes crystal clear that there is a conflict of interest — of class interest — between the bosses and the workforce.

As far as the ruling class is concerned, providing employment, and production of even the most socially useful goods, are secondary to the drive for profit. For the working class, the creation of profit for the capitalists is simply an unavoidable by-product of seeking to earn a living wage.

The lower the wage, the higher the potential profit: the smaller the workforce, the harder each worker is made to toil, the better the employer is pleased. There is no common ground.

The employers obviously pressurise union leaders to sacrifice their members' rights and conditions in order to ensure a satisfactory level of profits. This is dressed up in fancy talk about 'saving the company', 'saving the industry' or 'saving jobs', in a supposedly common 'national interest'.

But how should workers respond to such blackmail? Must their conditions be driven down at every whim of the capitalist class? Is the mere threat of closure now to be enough to force a miserable capitulation?

The answer must be no. For workers' interests to be defended, the bosses' offensive must be halted, and the 'viability' argument

company's bluff on the sacking of the whole workforce of a vast, newly re-equipped plant that produces the company's star model, and mobilising the full industrial strength of the TGWU and AUEW to occupy the plant, and to paralyse the car and engineering industry until the sackings are reversed and union demands conceded.

Plants

It means in smaller plants taking a similarly hard line against management demands and threats, fighting closure threats with mass occupations and the struggle for supporting strikers and boycott action by the trade union movement.

The calling of management's bluff could often save jobs by halting redundancy plans. If threats of closure are implemented, it is clear that a fight to defend jobs could not have been long postponed even by making concessions.

Workers must challenge every management claim of bankruptcy and every financial argument for redundancies, rationalisation and closure, by fighting for the opening of the books of the firm concerned to elected trade union committees — to show the ways in which the massacre of jobs and hard-won conditions shovels profits into the vaults of the big combines, banks and multinationals. A crucial task is also that of building awareness among rank and file members that the slippery slope of concessions begins in one firm, but leads at once into its

competitors and into a never-ending drive for more speed-up and lower wages, while the weakest firms must in the end, under the present system, inevitably go to the wall.

The logic of sacrifices to the god of viability is the pauperisation and super-exploitation, the division and fragmentation of the working class into competing units identifying each with their 'own' employer and cutting each others' throats in the fight for the remaining few jobs available.

Against that fearful prospect we must fight for the logic of the class struggle: just as the employers gang up against workers, so we must unite as a class to defend jobs and living standards, our organisations and our self-respect.

Anarchic

Against the never-ending decline imposed by the anarchic capitalist system we must look towards the fight for a workers' government, the nationalisation without compensation of the major monopoly firms, the banks and finance trusts, and the establishment of a workers' plan of production that can utilise and expand the wealth of society, creating the millions of new jobs that are needed and creating goods which are socially useful on a national and international level.

A necessary starting point in this is to begin within the unions and the Labour Party to build the necessary alternative leadership to Evans, Duffy and the apostles of 'viability'.



Time ripe for unity?

IF the Socialist Organiser, Militant and Socialist Action tendencies were to unite, a powerful Trotskyist tendency could be formed capable of establishing a Trotskyist daily paper fairly soon and rapidly transforming the situation in Britain.

Socialist Action (letter of D. Biggs in SO, April 7) seems to understand this, or at least be pointing in that direction (it is not clear whether it is prepared to include Militant).

There seems little doubt that, whatever they may still be saying publicly, under the impact of events, including the expulsion of

some of their leaders from the Labour Party and the determined defence of them by SO, Militant supporters are also thinking again about the way forward.

However John Lister is right when he points out that divisions that exist "for the most part reflect genuine political disagreements which must be resolved rather than ignored."

The big danger is that a unified organisation would be centrist and not revolutionary, that while it would correctly show "the greatest flexibility towards the mass organisations" it would not combine with that the necessary "intransigence of the

party toward reformism and centrism" (Trotsky, Writings 1935-36, p.321).

And this danger does not only come from the other tendencies. In my view, since the unification of Socialist Press with the old Socialist Organiser the "hardness" of SP has not been sufficiently strongly represented in the combined paper, the present SO.

What I would like to see SO do, is propose to the other two tendencies that for a period, of say six months, supporters of all three tendencies should together make an intensive study of Trotsky's writings, including, to take a few examples, Where is Britain Going?, what he wrote on Germany in the 1920s and '30s, Spain in the '30s and his Writings 1929-40.

I believe for instance that after Trotsky's writings collected in The Spanish Revolution 1931-39 (Pathfinder, 1973) had been read, there would be general agreement that a wishy-washy centrist party like POUM, which many considered to be Trotskyist, cannot carry through a revolution.

It is a question of putting clearly to the other tendencies the willingness of SO to do all it can, particularly through a period of joint study, to reach a principled agreement on the basis of the strengths but not the weaknesses of all three tendencies, of a deeper understanding by all of what has to be done. The time is ripe for such a unification.

DAVID HARRIS,
West Sussex

Superheroes' Organiser?

AS AN S.O. reader for some two years I have often meant to write particularly about the paper's trade union coverage. While SO on the Labour Party thoughtfully attempts to find new solutions to old problems, industrial articles have often neglected serious analysis in favour of sloganising.

Often (not always) they seem informed by the idea that SO knows all the answers and if it shouts loudly and often enough workers will eventually get the message.

Recently regimental sergeant major Alan Thornett has been letting the world know that the problem is 'leadership'. What this means is left unclear, but it appears to involve acting like superman (or superwoman) when all too often left wing activists are Clark Kents and Lois Lanes, i.e. ordinary human beings faced with all the constraints trade unionism involves.

I am particularly disappointed that John McIlroy's recent careful articles giving a realistic analysis of the level of the membership's consciousness and providing us with ammunition to answer their problems should be met by a response from Tony Richards which, far from debating the issues, simply asserts a dogmatism which could make SO irrelevant to people like myself.

If Tony really believes that Arthur Scargill's behaviour over the recent ballot was 'the very highpoint of leadership betrayal', he is not living on the same planet as I am.

If Tony really believes that support for import controls simply infects *stewards* and not members, he is dreaming. When he suggests that we should campaign today for the sliding scale of wages, he is simply avoiding the real issues of 1983.

Because Tony believes that matters were settled once and for

all by Leon Trotsky in 1938 he can even deduce, from his statement that the 'Open the Books' demand has never been implemented in recent times, the innate excellence and utility of this slogan.

SO has moved some distance from the half-world of other left groupings. The politics of Tony Richards will drag it back into the abyss.

JOYCE BROWN,
(ASTMS no.2 Divisional Council
delegate, in personal capacity)
Manchester 19

Could Scargill have won?

ALAN Thornett (SO 127) and Martin Barclay (SO 128) interpret my brief letter (SO 125) as "defending" Arthur Scargill, or giving him "the benefit of the doubt".

My argument is not so much about *whether* we should criticise Arthur Scargill on the Lewis Merthyr struggle, as *how*. If it is a question of whether or not to *rely* on Scargill, then we should not give him the benefit of the doubt.

But if *criticism* of Scargill — or anyone else — is to be convincing for those who are not already convinced, then we must grant the benefit of the doubt. We must take on the *strongest* case that can be made for those we criticise, not the weakest.

Maybe Martin Barclay is right about big coal stocks not being an important factor. But for sure the situation was one where a big, vic-

torious struggle was *difficult* to organise.

In his statement on the Wednesday of the strike, Arthur Scargill put forward the perspective of spreading the strike through an Executive call coming in the wake of the area strike decisions and the Derbyshire walkouts. Alan Thornett calls this statement 'excellent', and I agree.

On the Thursday, Alan writes,

Scargill made "concessions to the right wing". Obviously. He came out of the executive meeting with a decision — the ballot, and the withdrawal of the area strike calls — quite different from what he had called for.

The question I raised in SO 125 was, were the concessions unavoidable? Or did the right wing majority on the Executive, or a large chunk of it, with its force of inertia strengthened by the difficult objective situation, mount sufficient resistance that Scargill's perspective proclaimed on Wednesday was no longer viable? I don't know. But that is at least possible. And the situation, it seems to me, was not one where spontaneous militancy was riding high enough for Scargill simply to go over the Executive's head.

Now it is also true, as Alan points out, that the way Scargill announced the ballot decision was "not the language of someone forced into the position after a fight and making a formal statement..." It happens too often in the labour movement that militants, having been forced into an unsatisfactory compromise on this or that committee, then 'make the best of it' and thus fail to do what can be done to educate and organise a rank and file movement which can create better alternatives for the future. They confine themselves too much to what will get a majority now, and fail to blaze a trail for the future.

I think there is a good case for criticising Scargill on that score. But that is different from saying that he could have got through his policy of the Wednesday, and failed only through lack of will to fight the right wing.

MARTIN THOMAS,
Islington

A mirror image of 'Militant'

UNFORTUNATELY Mike Foley (letters, SO 128) is right — it is unlikely that the communal sectarian divisions in the Northern Ireland working class will just disappear one morning soon when the Protestant workers recognise that most of their economic privileges are gone or going.

The mass Protestant demand for restoration of Stormont is in part a programme to change this by restoring a provincial government that will 'take care' of the Protestants at the expense of the Catholics.

On the basis of facts from the TV programme, and memories of the big mainly Protestant unemployment demonstrations of the early '60s, all I suggested was that we should at least dare to hope that some common Catholic/Protestant working class struggle might develop, even if only at a very low level, against what are now common conditions of economic and social oppression.

Mike seems to think that it is 'Militant' politics even to suggest that this might be possible. What's

wrong with Militant on this question is that it pretends that the inter-communal division is a rift and not a chasm, or doesn't exist, and that workers' unity will certainly be created out of economic and social struggles. It looks to mundane economic questions 'on the ground' and to the socialist revolution on the horizon, and has no way of linking the two. It resolutely stands apart from the Catholic struggle and has an abstentionist attitude to all the living political questions, like partition and so on.

I recorded *the facts* about the Protestants' situation now. I noted that in the past common conditions of oppression in which the Protestants could not grab a special advantage — as now — had produced a joint Catholic/Protestant fightback. I expressed a 'hope'. This is not Militant's politics.

The opposite of Militant's way of understanding the situation in Northern Ireland is the view that any possibility of common Protestant/Catholic action, even in

conditions like these, is ruled out: that therefore it is wrong even to express a hope about it, and a waste of time or politically wrong and diversionary to advocate it, that the only way out of the impasse is the 'national struggle' and everything else is a distraction from that.

This is the position of the Provisionals, IRSP and *in fact* of the USFI supporters in Ireland: that the 'national struggle' in the Six Counties is the central question of political life North and South. The socialist-nationalists see this as a question of taking it in stages, and the 'Trotskyists' as 'permanent revolution'. For now there is no difference in practice.

But any serious Marxist policy must integrate both the struggle on economic and social questions, and the struggle for the democratic reorganisation of the Irish state system. It must integrate the struggle on both sides of the Border. Militant, on one side, and the Republicans and 'Trotskyists', on the other, both embody a

crippling one-sidedness: each repellent to the other, and both equidistant from even minimally adequate revolutionary politics for Ireland as a whole.

Mike Foley himself thinks that working class unity will only be possible within a united socialist Ireland. Will this united socialist Ireland be created by magic? Or when the trumpet sounds and Brian Boru and his Dolcassian hordes, or the Red Branch Knights come riding out of Tir Na Nóg? Or by a few hundred Republican gunmen?

It can only be created by the working class — a (mainly) united working class. Mike Foley is in a vicious circle: for him the socialist revolution will miraculously come out of the national struggle, whereas for Militant it will come out of the economic and social issues.

He parallels, or creates a mirror image to, Militant. He does not rise above their ideas, integrating their proper concerns into a coherent whole.

JOHN O'MAHONY,
London.

DEFEND THE NEWHAM 8!

The Newham 8 — Asian youths aged between 15 and 21 — face charges of conspiracy as well as threatening behaviour and actual bodily harm.

They were arrested on September 24 1982 after an incident with plain-clothes police officers. In the previous week there had been three major racist attacks on Asian schoolchildren at Little Ilford School, in Newham, and an incident where 60 or 70 white youth with iron bars and sticks went on the rampage in East Ham and Manor Park.

Send invitations for speakers, or resolutions of support, to Newham 8 Defence Campaign, c/o PO Box 273, London E7 9JN.



FEW PEOPLE would deny that tobacco smoking is largely responsible for the plague of lung cancer is the elder half of our population.

As with most cancer-causing substances, it is difficult to say how tobacco causes cancer, but research from America recently published shows one possible way — with an amazing link to radiation in the air!

Radium

Many buildings are made from materials containing small amounts of radioactive elements like *radium*, while the soil they stand in also contains such elements.

Radium decays slowly into *radon*, a radioactive gas which then escapes into air inside buildings from the structure itself or from the soil via unpaved basements or damp, porous walls. Radon can then decay into other radioactive substances such as

isotopes of *polonium*, *lead* and *bismuth*.

These substances produce a type of radiation known as *alpha-radiation* — they produce alpha-particles. This is not terribly dangerous (alpha-particles are stopped by a few centimetres of air or a thin layer of clothing, or even the dead layer on the surface of our skin) unless they are produced in the lungs. Here, an alpha particle may have enough energy to break into the living cells lining our lungs and damage the DNA inside, possibly causing a cancerous change.

Now radon and other radioactive particles enter and leave the lungs every time we breathe, producing a *small* risk that they may decay and give off their radiation while inside the lungs.

But, according to Edward Martell of the National Centre for Atmospheric Research in the USA, smoking massively increases the risk from these substances.

Particles of tar in tobacco smoke attract these radioactive

elements and then make them settle in the lungs where they are able to do maximum damage when they do decay.

Martell calculates that small regions of lung tissue can receive quite high doses of radiation. For example, a 20-day smoker for 40 years will receive a cumulative dose of 100 rads — enough to trigger off cancer (as well as spending £15,000 at 1983 prices).

Uranium

Support for Martell's theory comes from the fact that uranium miners who smoke tend to contract lung cancer four times faster than other smokers.

Also at risk from radioactive smoke are 'secondary smokers', people who live or work with smokers — and research has shown that secondary smokers have poorer health than more fortunate non-smokers.

An interesting thought is that one way in which the release of polonium from Windscale in 1957

(see SO 127:) could have had its effect on health is through its being mopped up by tobacco smoke.

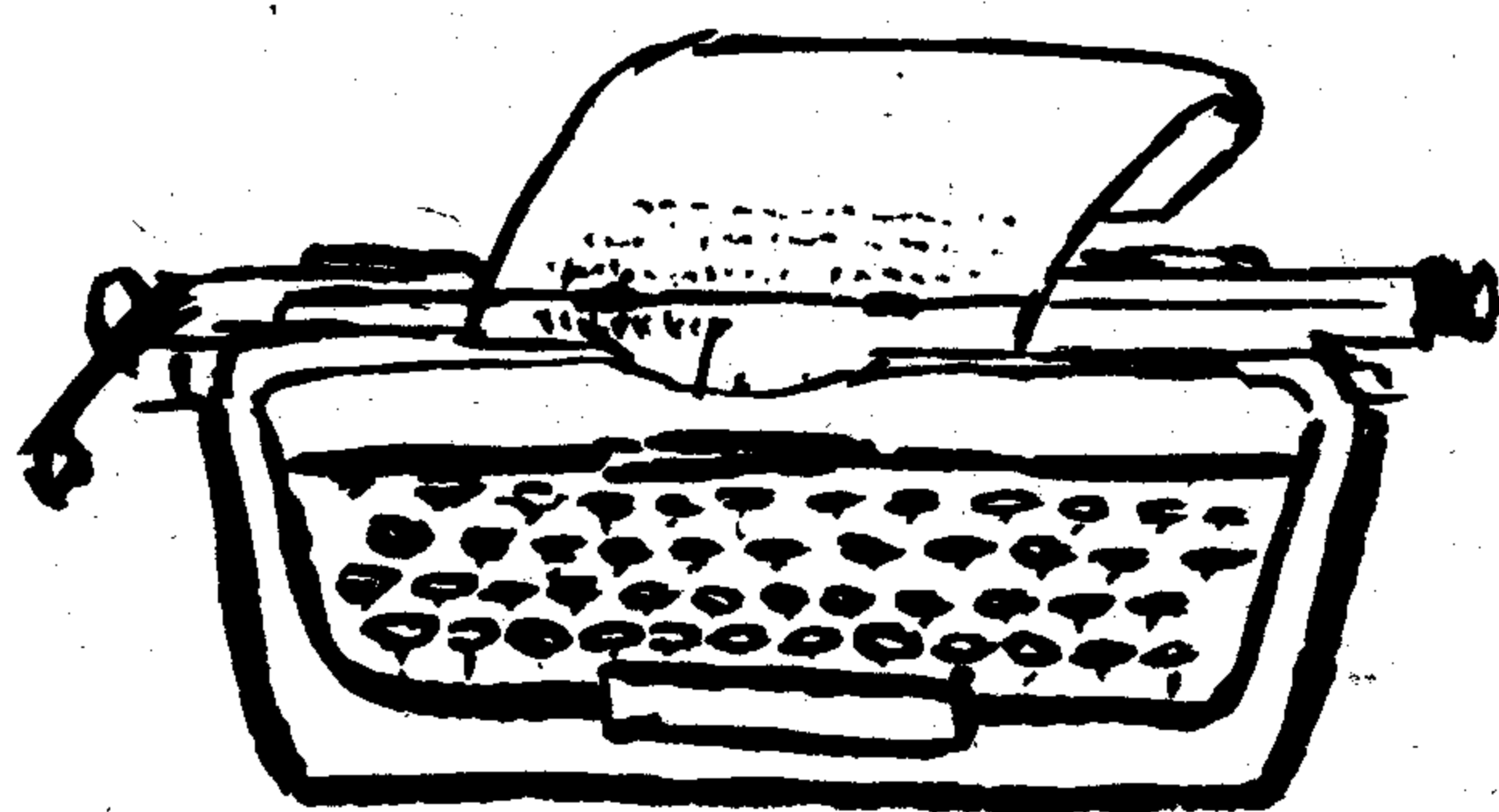
FEAR AT WORK a public meeting tonight (8pm, Thursday April 24).

This meeting is about *fighting job blackmail* — the way that employers impose unsafe working conditions by the threat of unemployment. It is also about how powerful vested interests try to make environmentalists appear 'anti-worker', caring more about the environment than unemployment.

One speaker will be Richard Kazis, co-author of 'Fear at Work' (which I will try to review when I get a copy of it), and member of the US group 'Environmentalists for Full Employment'.

Place: The Black House Rathbone Place, London W1 (near Tottenham Court Rd underground). Sponsored by BSSRS and Trade Union Bookservice.

Writeback



Send letters to Socialist Organiser,
28 Middle Lane, London N8. No
longer than 400 words, please:
longer letters are liable to be cut.

Agenda

PAID ads 5p per word, £4 per column inch. Send copy to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8, to arrive by Saturday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

SOUTH London CND/labour movement conference, Saturday May 21, 10am to 5pm, at Battersea Arts Centre, Lavender Hill, Battersea. Registration £2 per delegate, £1 unwaged, to Nick Guttman, Battersea CND, 16 Chivalry Road, London SW11.

EL SALVADOR Solidarity Campaign: Labour Movement conference, Saturday May 14, 10am to 5pm, County Hall, London SE1. Credentials £2 from ESSC, 29 Islington Park St, London N1.

MAY DAY Peace Festival organised by the GLC. Sunday May 1, noon to 7pm at Victoria Park, Hackney.

LABOUR Committee on Ireland Annual General Meeting: Saturday April 23, 10am to 5pm at County Hall, London SE1. Resolutions to be submitted by April 8. Contact: LCI, BM Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX.

BLACK Trade Unionists Solidarity Movement Conference. June 4 & 5 at County Hall, London SE1. International Black speakers. Credentials from Neville Adams, 115 Neville Road, London N16.

NEWHAM 8 Defence Campaign. Details of activities, speakers and model resolutions from PO Box 273, Forest Gate, London E7 9JN

GAY LPYS. Next meeting Sunday May 1, 6pm at Gay's The Word, Marchmont St, London WC1.

BENEFIT for the May 7 Britain out of Ireland demonstration. Saturday May 7, 7.30, Co-op Hall, 129 Seven Sisters Rd, N7. £3 waged, £1.50 UB40.

HULL Trades Council May Day march - Saturday April 30. Assemble 10.30am Wilberforce Monument, march through city centre led by Humberside contingent of People's March for Jobs 83. Speaker from Greenham Common.

HULL Trades Council 'Rock Against Thatcher' with Bushfire, Bocks O'Phroggs, Student Centre, College of HE, Cottingham Rd. Saturday April 30, 7.30pm: £1.25, £1 NUS, 50p UB40.

Chile Solidarity Campaign presents: In Concert for Chile, 'Quilapayun' and 'The Boys of the Lough'. Sunday May 1, 7pm, Dominion Theatre, Tottenham Court Rd. Tickets from Chile Solidarity Campaign [272 4298], £6, £5, £4 and £2 unwaged.

LONDON May Day march and rally: assemble 12 noon at Tower Hill, march at 1pm to Victoria Park for rally and GLC Festival. Organised jointly by London trade unions, Labour Party and Co-op under the slogans: stop Cruise and Trident, jobs not bombs, defend the unions.

LABOUR Movement Campaign for Palestine: recall first national conference, Saturday May 21, 11am, County Hall, London SE1. Open to members and to delegates from affiliated organisations. Membership £5, conference fee £2, to LMCP, c/o 28 Carlton Mansions, Holmleigh Rd, London N16.

LABOUR CND West inaugural meeting. Sunday June 26, 2.30pm, Taunton CLP meeting rooms, 24 East Reach, Taunton. LP members only.

CONFERENCE of Socialist Economists conference 1983: The World Economy in Crisis. July 9 to 11 in Sheffield. Details from 25 Horsell Rd, London N5.

Delegate meeting

DELEGATES from SO groups across the country met in London last Sunday, 24th, to hear reports, discuss motions, and plan this year's Socialist Organiser Alliance AGM.

John Bloxam reported on the progress of 'Socialists for a Labour Victory'. Labour's right wing, he pointed out, will be pushing to have Labour's more radical policies relegated to the long term, and the left needs to organise against this.

Alan Thornett spoke on the strike at Cowley, and described the union leaders' role as a spectacular sell-out. We decided that SO groups should still hold meetings on the issue, and that the paper should publish a special supplement.

Reports were given on the witch-hunt in the Labour Party, on reselection, on the People's March for



'A spectacular sell-out'. Above: TGVU official David Buckle

Jobs, and on the May 24 women's strike against nuclear weapons.

We debated our attitude to the Labour Party NEC elections, and priorities for Labour Party conference motions.

The financial report revealed major problems with paper money owed by supporters. Local groups were also asked to ensure a regular flow of supporters' contributions and fundraising.

The constitution of the Socialist Organiser Alliance lays down that the AGM must be in May or June. We decided that if Thatcher calls an early general election, an extraordinary general meeting will be called to put back the AGM. Detailed plans for the AGM will be prepared soon.

A resolution from Manchester supporters was discussed, and we agreed to improve coordination of comrades involved in international solidarity work.

Where to find Socialist Organiser

• SCOTLAND

Glasgow. For details of meetings contact paper sellers or Stan Crooke, 114 Dixon Avenue, Glasgow G42. SO is sold at Maryhill dole (Tuesday mornings) and Rutherglen shopping arcade (Friday lunchtime).

Edinburgh. For details of meetings ring Dave, 229 4591. SO is sold at Muirhouse (Saturday 10.30-12) and the First of May bookshop, Candlemaker Row.

• NORTH-WEST

Wirral. Contact Colin Johnstone, 1 Wellington Rd, Wallasey. Next meeting: Thursday May 12, 8pm, at the Labour Club, Church Rd, Seacombe. 'Democracy in the unions'.

Liverpool. Contact 733 6663. SO is sold at Progressive Books, Berry St, and at News from Nowhere, Whitechapel.

Manchester. SO is sold at Grass Roots Books, Newton St., Piccadilly. Contact: 273 6654.

Stockport. Contact c/o 38 Broadhurst St. Meetings every Sunday, 7.30pm: phone 429 6359 for details. SO is sold at Stockport Market every Saturday, 11 to 12.30.

Rochdale. Meets on second Monday of the month, 7.30 at Castle Inn.

Hyndburn. Contact Accrington 395753. Meetings weekly - see SO sellers for details. SO is sold at Broadway, Accrington, Saturdays 11.30 to 1pm.

Stoke. Contact Arthur Bough, 23 Russell Road, Sandyford (84170).

• YORKSHIRE AND NORTH-EAST

Huddersfield. Contact Alan Brooke, 59 Magdale, Holey, Huddersfield HD7 2LX.

Durham. SO is sold at the Community Co-op, New Elvet.

York. Contact: 796027. SO is sold at Coney St on Saturday mornings, at the Community Bookshop, and outside the dole office most mornings.

Leeds. Contact Garth Frankland 623322. SO is sold at Books and Corner Books, Woodhouse Lane.

Bradford. Contact Barry Turner 636994. SO is sold at the Starry Plough bookshop.

Sheffield. Meets every other Wednesday, 7.30pm at the Brown Cow, The Wick. SO is sold outside

Boots, Fargate (Saturday 12 to 1) and at the Independent Bookshop, Glossop Rd. Contact: Rob, 589307.

Hull. Meets every Wednesday, 8pm: details from SO sellers. Childcare available. SO is sold at the Prospect Centre (Saturday 11-12).

Halifax. Contact 52156. SO is sold at Halifax Wholefood, Gibbet St, and at Tower Books, Hebden Bridge.

York. Contact: 796027. SO is sold at Coney St on Saturday mornings, at the Community Bookshop, outside the dole office most mornings, and at the University on Friday mornings.

• WALES

Cardiff. Contact 492988.

• MIDLANDS

Birmingham. Meets alter-

nate Fridays, 7.30pm, the Hen and Chickens, Constitution Hill. Next meeting Friday May 6. SO is sold at the Other Bookshop, Digbeth High St.

Coventry. Contact Keith White, 75623. SO is sold at the Wedge Co-op, High St. Meets on first and last Thursday of the month, 7.30 at the 'Queen', Primrose Hill St, Hillfields.

Leicester. Contact Phil, 857908. SO is sold outside Supasave (Friday 4.30 to 6), the Co-op, Narborough Rd (Saturday 11-12.30), and at Blackthorne Books, High St.

Northampton. Meets every other Monday. Next meeting May 2: 'Socialists and the trade unions'. Details: contact 713606.

Nottingham. Meets every Friday, 7.30pm at the International Community Centre, 61b Mansfield Rd. SO is sold outside the Victoria Centre (Saturday 11 to 1) and at the Mushroom Bookshop, Heathcote St.

• SOUTH

Oxford. SO is sold at the Cornmarket (Saturday 11 to 1) and outside Tesco, Cowley Rd, Friday 5 to 7. Also at EOA Books, Cowley Road.

Basingstoke. Public meeting May 16. 'Is a Socialist Revolution Possible in Britain?' 7.30, Chute House.

• LONDON

North-West London. Readers' meetings first Sunday of month. Phone Mick, 624 1931, for details. SO is sold at Kilburn Books.

Hounslow. Next meeting Sunday May 8, 8pm, on Ireland. For venue see SO sellers. SO is sold outside All Saints Church, Hounslow High St, Saturday 10.30 am to 12.

Haringey. Contact 802 0771 or 348 5941. Meets every other Thursday, 7.30, Trade Union Centre, Brabant Road.

Islington. Next meeting Sunday May 8. For details and for childcare, phone Nik, 278 1341.

Tower Hamlets. Meets fortnightly on Fridays, 6.30 to 8.30pm. Contact 377 1328 for details.

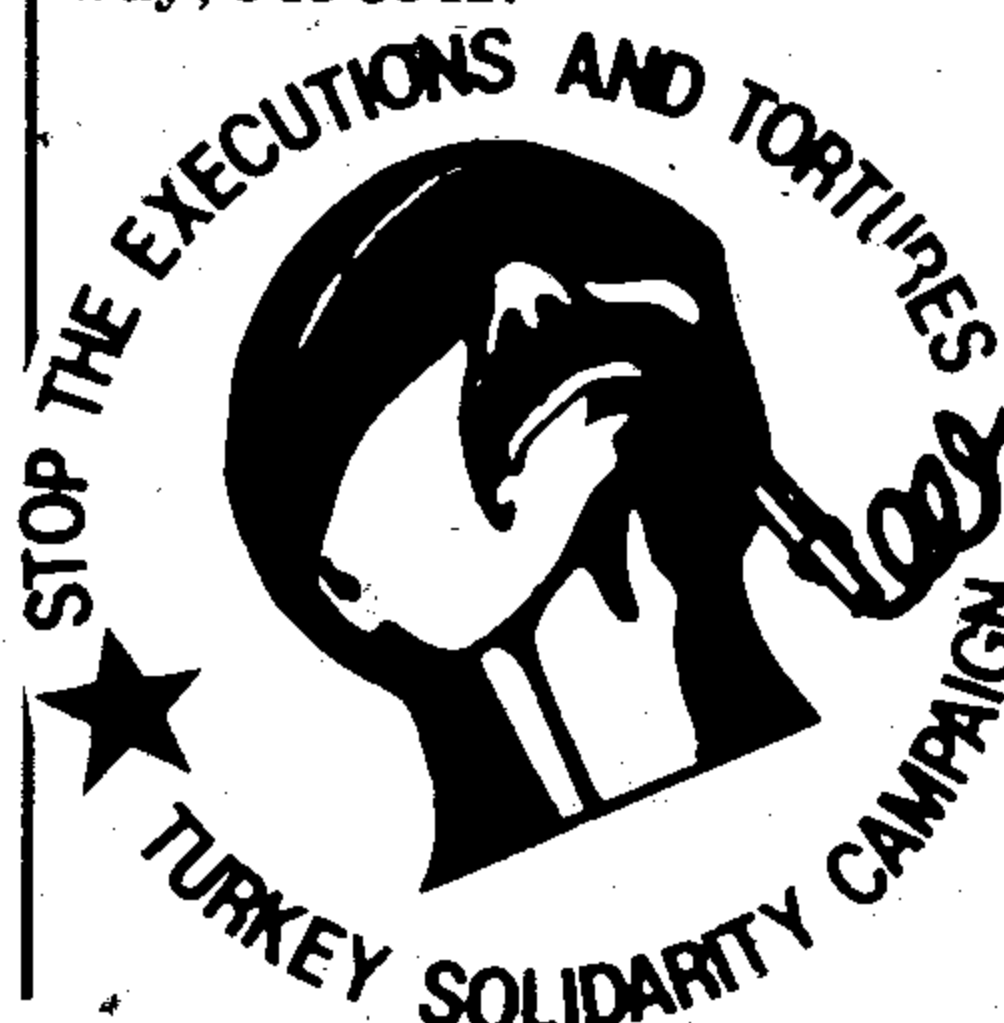
Southwark/Lambeth. Meets every other Wednesday at Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, SE5. Business meeting 7.30pm, open forum discussion 8.30pm. Next meeting May 11. Details next week.

SO Marxist discussion group. Sunday May 8 at 7.30pm on 'Imperialism: how the bosses divided the world'. Phone Ian on 670 3279 for venue.

Hackney. Contact Andrew Horning, 28 Carlton Mansions, Holmleigh Rd, N16.

SO is sold at the following London bookshops: Colletts, Central Books, The Other Bookshop, Bookmarks, Bookplace (Peckham Rd, SE15), Kilburn Books, and Reading Matters (Wood Green Shopping Centre).

HARINGEY Socialists for a Labour Victory organising meeting. Tuesday May 10, 8pm, 5 Stuart Crescent, London N15. Speakers include Valerie Veness (PPC, Hornsey), Reg Race MP, and Dolly Kiffin (Broadwater Farm Youth Association). Contact Peter Kenway, 348 5941.



Where we stand

* **Organise the left** to beat back the Tories' attacks! No to attacks on union rights; defend the picket-line; no state interference in our unions! No to any wage curbs. Labour must support all struggles for better living standards and conditions.

* **Wage rises** should at the very least keep up with price increases. For a price index calculated by working class organisations, as the basis for clauses in all wage agreements to provide automatic monthly rises in line with the true cost of living for the working class. The same inflation-proofing should apply to state benefits, grants and pensions.

* **Fight for improvements** in the social services, and against cuts. Protection for those services against inflation by automatic inflation-proofing of expenditure. For occupations and supporting strike action to defend jobs and services.

* **End unemployment**. Cut hours, not jobs. Fight for a 35 hour week and an end to overtime. Demand work-sharing without loss of pay. Organise the unemployed - campaign for a programme of useful public works to create new jobs for the unemployed.

* **Defend all jobs!** Open the books of those firms that threaten closure or redundancies, along with those of their suppliers and bankers, to elected trade union committees. For occupation and blacking action to halt the closures. For nationalisation without compensation under workers' management.

* **Make the bosses pay**, not the working class. Millions for hospitals, not a penny for 'defence'. Nationalise the banks and financial institutions, without compensation. End the interest burden on council housing and other public services.

* **Freeze rents and rates**.

* **Scrap all immigration controls**. Race is not a problem: racism is. The labour movement must mobilise to drive the fascists off the streets. Purge racists from positions in the labour movement. Organise full support for black self-defence. Build workers' defence squads.

* **The capitalist police are an enemy** for the working class. Support all demands to weaken them as a bosses' striking force: dissolution of special squads (SPG, Special Branch, M15, etc.), public accountability, etc.

* **Free abortion on demand**. Women's equal right to work and full equality for women. Defend and extend free state nursery and childcare provision.

* **Against attacks on gays** by the state: abolish all laws which discriminate against lesbians and gay men; for the right of the gay community to organise and affirm their stand publicly.

* **The Irish people - as a whole - should have the right** to determine their own future. Get the British troops out now! Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Political status for Irish Republican prisoners as a matter of urgency.

* **The black working people of South Africa** should get full support from the British labour movement for their strikes, struggles and armed combat against the white supremacist regime. South African goods and services should be blacked.

* **It is essential to achieve the fullest democracy** in the labour movement. Automatic reselection of MPs during each parliament and the election by annual conference of party leaders. Annual election of all trade union officials, who should be paid the average for the trade.

* **The chaos, waste, human suffering and misery of capitalism** now - in Britain and throughout the world - show the urgent need to establish rational, democratic, human control over the economy, to make the decisive sectors of industry social property, under workers' control. The strength of the labour movement lies in the rank and file. Our perspective must be working class action to raze the capitalist system down to its foundations, and to put a working class socialist alternative in its place - rather than having our representatives run the system and waiting for crumbs from the tables of the bankers and the bosses.

Rates: £5 for three months, £7 for six months, and £16 for a year.

Bundle of 5 each week: £12 for 3 months, £21 for 6 months.

Name: _____

Address: _____

I enclose £: _____

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

Subscribe

Socialist ORGANISER

Steelworkers, carworkers walk out against bosses' offensive

Fighting back!

Get ORGANISED!

Become a supporter of the Socialist Organiser Alliance - groups are established in most large towns. It costs £1.50 a month (20p - unwaged) to be a supporter.

I want to become a Socialist Organiser supporter/want more information.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Send to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.

A world at the end of its tether

WE ALL need reminding sometimes of the tremendous impact of television on popular consciousness. For more and more people the printed word matters less and less.

Labour doesn't need a daily paper. It needs its own television channel.

Nonetheless, in a world where even the high spots of Coronation Street or Dallas are instantaneously obsolescent, and where the evidence of serious television drama related to contemporary political problems is slight and its impact negligible, it is surprising to find the BBC drama series *The Boys from the Blackstuff* still a talking point in homes, workplaces, pubs and clubs long after its second showing.

The indomitable figure of Yosser Hughes has entered the pantheon of modern folk heroes. 'Giz a job' and 'I can do that' have become instantly recognisable parts of modern street lore, and his fondness for the violent use of his head has formed in Liverpool what was formerly termed a 'Kirkby kiss' is now called a 'Yosser Hughes'.

Whilst plays which challenge and subvert the status quo from time to time appear on television — the Loach/Garnett/Allen films are perhaps the best examples — they rarely have had anything like the resonance beyond the circles of the already politically interested, committed or active, of Alan Bleasdale's cycle.

The plays have probably done more to publicise the plight of Britain's unemployed, the coercion and oppression they suffer from the state, the impotence and desperation people are *feeling* in our devastated cities, than a thousand leaflets or newspaper articles.

The central reason for this is quite simply that the five plays constitute a major artistic achievement. With the help of brilliant casting, acting, production and direction, Alan Bleasdale has succeeded in capturing in all its complexity and contradiction the real universe millions inhabit in Britain today as the working class is caught in the decline of the system that created it.

Where television so often lies, Bleasdale tells the truth. He creates working class life as it is lived. He shows vividly what Thatcher-

'The indomitable figure of Yosser Hughes has entered the pantheon of modern folk heroes'. But does it represent a radical challenge to the status quo — or just a statement of despair?

John McIlroy continues the discussion on Alan Bleasdale's celebrated TV series, 'The Boys from the Blackstuff'.

ism does to human beings, what mass unemployment does to any sense of worth or dignity.

Researchers touch on a reality beyond statistics when they claim that one per cent on the unemployment figures means up to four per cent on admissions to mental hospitals, four per cent on the suicide rate and a five per cent increase in murders.

It is because Bleasdale captures the psycho-drama of Liverpool in the '80s and compellingly portrays the *range of reality*, the rage, the desperation, the futility and the *resistance* of the maimed and wrecked citizens of this world at the end of its tether that millions have been convinced, imaginatively involved, emotionally engaged.

Weeks after the plays it is easy to recall the horror when the young socialist, Snowy, worn but still defiant, goes to a ridiculous wasted death, the passionate grief of his father, George Malone, as he visits the grave, the anguish of the bitter, wrenching conflict between Chrissie and Angie, and the despair as he destroys the pets which, with drink, were his only solace.

Or the joy which lights up and rejuvenates the beaten features of George's wife when the doctor treating the old socialist asks whether he was the same George he heard addressing a mass meeting when he was a boy.

Or the jolt of a sick surprise when the old security guard, the one pillar of rectitude and conventional morality in the corrupt world of the docks, is revealed as the organiser of the heist — rotten beneath the facade.

Or the final ray of optimism when Yosser, a sane figure in the mad pub, lays 'Shakehands' on the floor in an affirmation of the necessity to continue the struggle and the residual power to do this.

If Bleasdale had merely illuminated in all its oppressive detail the system under which the unemployed exist, he would have deserved our gratitude. He shows us what the welfare state has become. Thrown onto the dole the victims are unable to exist on its handouts.

The authorities, the social service bureaucracies, are there to see that they do. Everybody with a job in the plays is an agent of discipline and control, whether the police themselves, the social security clerks, the Department of Employment snoopers, or the social workers.

Whatever their own beliefs, the apparatus forces them into an oppressive role. By linking his characters' responses to his description of the state's creation and institutionalisation of helplessness poverty, Bleasdale links private suffering to public issues, the personal to the political.

The real strength of the plays lies in their depiction of the spectrum of responses. Chrissie gives in. He takes refuge in the old Liverpoolianism, 'You have to be a comedian to live here'.

But as his wife Angie says, 'It's not funny. It is not friggin' funny. I've had enough of that "If you don't laugh you'll cry". I've heard it for years. This stupid sodding city's full of it. Why don't you cry? Why don't you scream? Why don't you fight back, you bastard, fight back'.

Stuffing

But Chrissie doesn't. The stuffing has been knocked out of him. Despite pleading he fails to negotiate his way back into the other world of steady jobs and remains locked into his mutually destructive struggle with Angie.

Dixie enters the path of rolling with the punches and beating the system. Throughout this episode there is the taste of fear. He moonlights for a security firm and embarks on a war of manoeuvre with the DHSS.

He is bribed and bludgeoned into cooperating with the rifling of the ship he is paid to guard. And, like Chrissie, his family life is devastated. Where one of the characters earlier claims in response to Snowy's militant preaching, 'Don't you think we know all that stuff... but at times like this you look to your own', the family is unmasked as no refuge at all.

It disintegrates as Dixie becomes estranged from his children, sees with quiet desperation what the system is doing to his eldest son, and watches his wife become a bundle of nerves terrified to answer the door or answer the phone as the snoopers close in.

The main will to resistance in the plays is exemplified by Yosser Hughes. The situation has driven Yosser mad, but his madness is a measure of his iron will to resist.

Yosser demands a job. When the wall he builds is crooked and he is sacked he lays out the bent building contractor just as he lays out the invincible 'Shakehands' before whom all others crumble.

For his children Yosser is not



"One per cent on the unemployment figures means four per cent on the suicide rate..."

mad. Unlike Dixie and Chrissie he has not been turned in on his own. His family has to be physically destroyed by the state.

Even when Yosser wants to give in, wants to kill himself, wants to accept that resistance is futile, he can't. His suicide bid fails. If everything that is worthwhile in humanity is to be preserved, you have to go on fighting. You can't cop out.

But if Bleasdale is not ultimately pessimistic, does not believe the game is up in a hopeless world, still Yosser's struggle is individual and demented. The tradition of collective, explicitly political struggle is represented by George Malone, his wife, and his son Snowy. The tide is running strongly against that tradition.

In the first plays the workers on the site discuss politics, the riots, unemployment, the Tories. But the view is pessimistic. One of the characters complains, 'Everything's gone sour. Everyone is looking after number one. We're not winning any more... Your beliefs go out the window when the bailiffs are at the door'.

George's other sons articulate the feeling of many trade union activists today. 'I'm telling you da, honest to God. Sometimes I look around at some of the fellas I'm supposed to be fighting for, and they don't seem to care or understand about anything that hasn't got tits or comes out of a barrel'.

They are answered by their mother, who exclaims that she and George have spent a lifetime struggling against defeatism. The point is to keep resisting even when you are not winning.

Rocky

But the collective struggle she and George represent is almost entirely excluded from the plays. It is no longer relevant. Snowy's words fall on rocky ground. His death suggests the futility of his ideas. George, the unions, the Labour Party, are echoes from a foreign country where they did things differently.

Where once George addressed mass meetings, the annualistic dockers loot the ships. George holds the community together. Even as he dies they queue for advice. But he can pass this into Yosser, who in turn can't even relate to Chrissie and Dixie.

Where once workers built organisations and fought successful trade unionism is now dissolved into manic drunken camaraderie. Trade unions can't help the employed or unemployed. 'Yet an-

ther redundancy party' puts its £1000 down on the bar to drink away defeat.

The last play in the series is a key one for socialists. George, who represents all that was best about his class, takes a last ride in a wheelchair past the silent cranes, the decaying warehouses and dying docks, where the Liverpool proletariat was forged, recalling in a final monologue old battles and old friendships with a delight and warmth which turns cold in the face of the present reality.

But George rages against that reality, crying over and over again, 'I can't believe there's no hope for my class...'.

It is not the playwright's job to provide answers, and Bleasdale doesn't. We can all certainly recognise an important truth in the play's argument. The unions have failed thousands.

The Labour Party appears all too often and culpably irrelevant to the preoccupations of those trapped by our economic and social crisis in the Kirkbys, Dingles and the Garstons.

Do the leaders of our party and unions really understand the world of the Chrissies, Dixies and Yossers? Do they really know what is going on?

Many of us will have our doubts, but we will still disagree with the play's conclusions. We cannot go on in the old ways. But the tradition of George Malone is not irrelevant to the concerns of Britain's unemployed. It should not be written off.

It does need development. It does need revitalising. But there are answers, there are ways out for the Chrissies, Dixies and Yossers. Fundamental social

change in the interests of the working class is still possible. To achieve it we have to start with the tools at hand. And despite their inadequacies — and god knows they are numerous — those tools are still the unions and the Labour Party.

Whilst we should not demand of drama which enriches people's lives, illuminates reality, and explains us to ourselves, that it should have a neat political message tagged on, the exclusion of collective struggle from the plays is not only a political deficiency. It is, in the end, a limitation on Bleasdale's dramatic vision.

Liverpool — like Glasgow, like Newcastle — is full of Chrissies and Dixies. It is also full of Jimmy Forsyths, Rose Murphys, Dave Kirkbys, Jenny Dales, Tony McQuades, Bobby Owens, men and women thrown onto the scrapheap who share the world of Chrissie and Dixie but who have kept faith with George Malone.

They are still involved in their collective organisations. They are fighting to turn them to their purposes. They ensure that collective struggle and optimism are still part of Liverpool in 1983.

The Boys From The Blackstuff has done a marvellous job. If it had shown a little more of this, its importance would have been incalculable. Perhaps we should not ask for too much, but rest with the hope that the cycle constitutes a breakthrough for real drama on television.

Nevertheless, when the 1983 People's March reaches London, wouldn't it be wonderful if both Alan Bleasdale and Bernard Hill, who played Yosser Hughes, were on the platform?



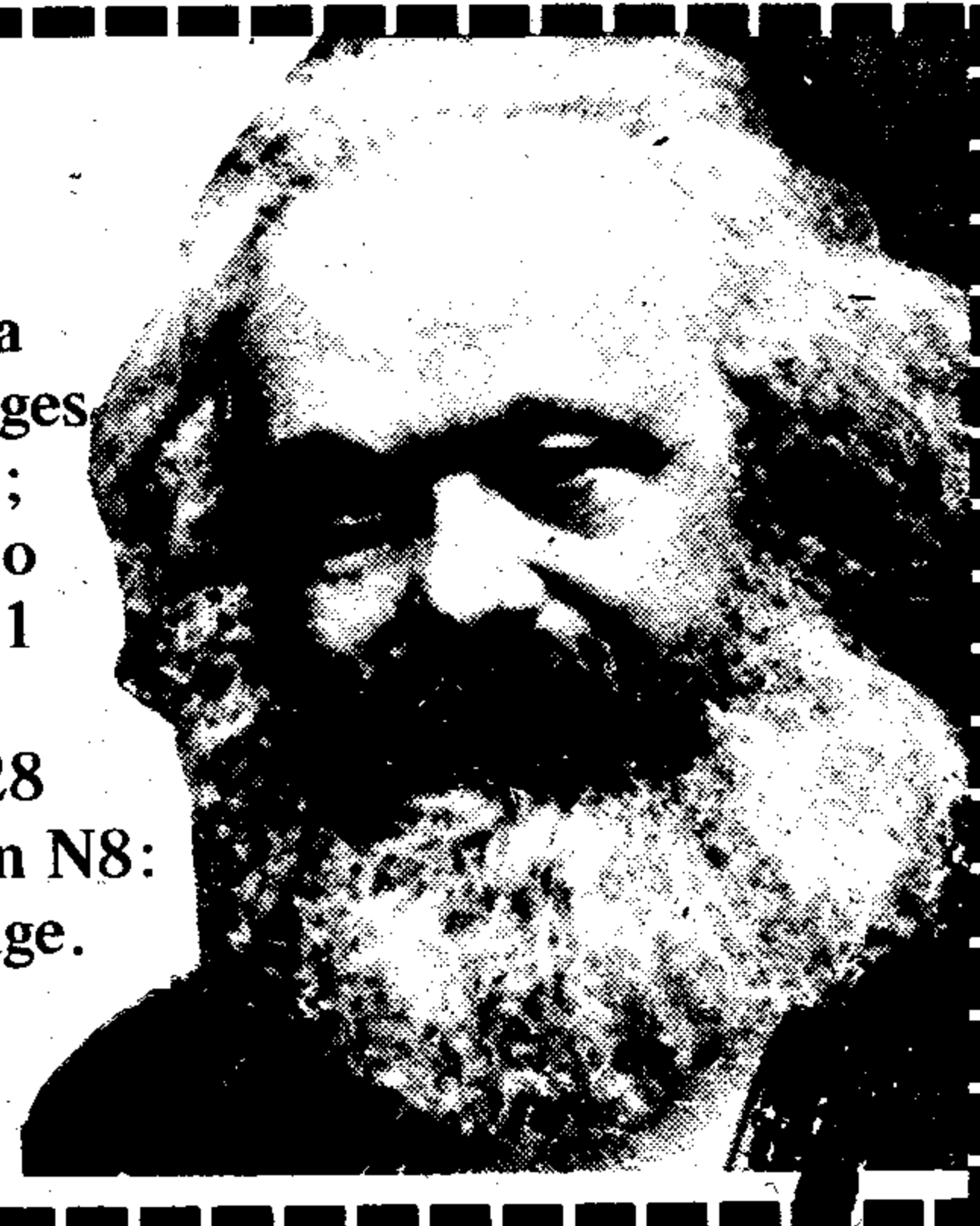
HARD TIMES

Just out from Pluto Press: an analysis of capitalism in crisis from regular Socialist Organiser contributor Bob Sutcliffe. £2.50 from bookshops, or (with 50p post and packing) from Pluto, The Works, 105a Torriano Avenue, London NW5.

BOOKS

Critique of the Gotha Programme, 30p; Wages, price and profit, 40p; Communist Manifesto 60p; Capital volume 1 £3.95. Available c/o Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8: add money for postage.

by MARX



Craft strike ended

by John Cunningham

THE STRIKE by steel craftsmen in South Yorkshire is over.

At a mass meeting in Rotherham on Monday night, 25th, the strikers agreed to the shop stewards' recommendation to return to work. The strike was basically over the same issues on which ISTC members in the steel industry in South Yorkshire had struck two weeks earlier. It was a defensive strike to prevent BSC management riding roughshod over the workforce and imposing shift changes without consultation.

The ISTC returned to work, but the craftsmen, traditionally the strongest section of steelwork-

ers in South Yorkshire, stayed out, believing that the ISTC had given in to management — a belief shared by many ISTC rank and file activists.

The craftsmen's leader, Bernard Connolly of the EETPU, said of the decision, "We have not gained anything. We have just defended our rights". These rights include consultation on shift changes, consultation on redundancies, and an assurance from BSC that apprentices will not be made redundant when their apprenticeships are finished.

Given the current state of the steel industry, to defend these points is an achievement. But prospects are far from rosy.

BSC say they want 100 staff redundancies in South Yorkshire.

The strikes by the ISTC and the craftsmen have once again demonstrated the weakness of the organisation of the unions in the steel industry, particularly of the ISTC, whose leadership, under Bill Sirs, were only too eager to settle with BSC in return for very little. The craftsmen stuck it out for longer. However, until genuine unity can be built between all sections of workers in the steel industry, and a united response instead of regional or individual plant responses, prospects will be bleak.

Dockers defy Tebbit

LAST Thursday, 21st, 2300 Tilbury dockers voted two to one to stay out and meet again in two weeks' time.

Over the six weeks of this official dispute, the strikers have resisted threats by the Port of London Authority that it will declare itself bankrupt and/or declare huge redundancies, and moves by TGWU officials (following secret talks with the employers) to get the issue shunted into ACAS.

At one point their own stewards recommended a return to

work, and it was voted down.

They have also picketed back out the riverside dockers, who initially struck in solidarity and then voted narrowly to return after a TGWU full-timer told them that their action could not be made official because of the Tory union laws.

Parity

The dockers' demand is for pay parity with office staff. In Hull and Southampton parity is the rule, but in London dockers get a basic of £106 as against the lowest grade clerks' £134. The

strike was sparked when the dockers were offered a pay rise of only £4 this year.

Widespread blacking has made the strike effective, and shipping companies are putting pressure for a settlement.

The employers have offered £1 more on basic pay, increased holiday pay, and a promise of 'wage comparability' in 1985 — but since that was rejected, they say they can afford no more.

Donations: George Lake, TGWU office, Calcutta Road, Tilbury, Essex.

What do Tories plan for students?

IN the absence of a manifesto it is only possible to speculate on the effects on further and higher education of another five years of Tory rule. However, it is possible to note current trends in the government's policy and also various statements of intent from prominent education spokespeople in the Tory Party, and to draw conclusions.

The Tories are clearly committed to reducing the amount spent by the government and local authorities on education (as on all areas of public expenditure on social services) and to privatising education to a much greater degree. This, of course, means that while access is still guaranteed to the wealthy, it will be enormously reduced for the rest of us.

Loans

What form will this privatisation take? Firstly, on student financial support, it is almost certain that a re-elected Tory government would replace at least part of the current student grant with loans. There would be nothing offered to students in further education, or in other areas not covered by the current mandatory award system.

It is highly unlikely that they would increase the eligibility of students to social security benefits, so we can expect a very different class composition among a much reduced student population, if such a move goes ahead.

As this would, in effect, mean college closures, it would enormously help the Tories in their desire to see a reduction in the number of public sector higher education institutions, and in the size of the ones which remain.

Teachers

Judging by Rhodes Boyson's recent comments about there

By Sarah Veale

(Deputy President, National Union of Students)

being too many teachers, and his expressed desire to curtail subject choice for qualification in this field, no doubt we will see further reductions in this area.

The National Advisory Body, set up to co-ordinate the activities of the public sector higher education colleagues, has become little more than a device for implementing cuts in these colleges and then coming up with the rationale for so doing. The University Grants Committee is now effectively in a similar position.

This trend will no doubt worsen as a new Tory government pursues an even more ruthless monetarist strategy.

The further education sector is rapidly becoming part of the Manpower Services Commission, so colleges, faced with cuts in local authority financing, take on more and more Youth Training Schemes, often with little idea of how to organise them.

Muddle

William Waldegrave recently admitted that further education was in a muddle. (His boss, Thatcher, went a step further by helpfully declaring that the whole education system was in a mess!! Whose fault is that, one might well ask!) Their solution to this mess will probably be to turn further education colleges into training centres, so that students wishing to pursue "academic" options will have no choice but to stay at school, whereas all non-academic courses will go to the colleges.

This will create a clear division between "training" and "education", and between sixth forms in schools and colleges and no prizes for guessing what the over-riding class composition of the respective institutions will be!

Unions

Finally, no doubt, we will see yet further increases in fees for overseas students, privatisation of ancillary services in education (such as catering) and increasing interference in course content from central government as institutions are more closely scrutinised. In terms of student union financing, we can expect at the least further cuts in funds, and at the worst, voluntary membership and/or far tighter government or institutional control.

We can't afford to let the Tories back in if we want to retain even the current State education service, let alone the expanded one that is needed.

CPSA calls for rejection

by Stephen Corbishley

180,000 MEMBERS of the civil service union CPSA are currently voting on the Tory pay offer made to civil service workers two weeks ago.

The CPSA's Broad Left dominated National Executive Committee (NEC) is urging rejection of the offer, worth 4½% to some and less to most, with a campaign of leaflets, town meetings, and

posters. It is calling for all out strike action from June 1.

The Tories have offered 4 per cent plus £70 for those on the maximum of their scale, and 3½% plus £70 for those on lower points. They reckoned this was a concession to the low paid of CPSA sufficient to buy off opposition.

They may be right. But only because the national leaderships of all civil service unions, organised in the Council of Civil Service Unions (CCSU), have pursued the joint pay claim of £12 a week,

presented in January this year, only in a token fashion.

Not one single union organised mass meetings to explain the claim and how it could be won.

And worse. The Tories, in top secret negotiations, have softened up the top bureaucrats to accept a modified version of the Megaw report on future civil service pay, and the offer seems to be part of the deal to encourage moves to a permanent pay bargaining system that will tie the rank and file down.

While no campaign was being waged by COCSU, the Tories got on with the job of smashing up the growing opposition from other workers to their plans, and the COCSU leadership made no attempt to link our fight for our claim with the wafer workers', steelworkers', or carworkers' struggles.

Alone

Now the CPSA NEC is alone in campaigning for rejection of the pay offer. They face an uphill task, since all the other civil service unions have agreed to settle on the offer, or are campaigning in favour of it. (CPSA organises the lower-grade white collar workers. Other grades are organised by other unions, such as SCPS).

The general secretary of CPSA, Alistair Graham, is also openly campaigning against the NEC position. His regular column in the union paper Red Tape has been used both to attack the Broad Left NEC and to denounce any idea of a fight on wages.

The NEC must be congratulated on attempting to make a stand, and their campaign to win rejection must be backed. However, the only group within the Broad Left that has been prepared to produce material for the rank and file arguing how it is possible to win, and the politics of why a victory against Thatcher is necessary, has been the Socialist Caucus.

SCHOOL STRIKE

SCHOOL caretakers and cleaning staff in Ealing, west London, have been on official strike since Monday 25th.

The strike has been called by the GMBU and NUPE against council moves to cut agreed staffing levels. At some schools NUT and NALGO members have supported the strikers and refused to cross picket lines, so that the schools have been closed.

The council is likely to retaliate by trying to bring in contract labour.

Support for Greenings

Delegations from the strike at N Greening Ltd., Warrington, have got a good response at Halewood, at local collieries, and at other branches of the parent company, Johnson Firth Brown.

400 workers at Greenings — members of GMBU, EETPU, AUEW, TASS and NSMM — are on strike against moves by management to abolish the annual wage claim, end negotiated holidays, reduce trade union facilities, and axe 89 jobs immediately with more cuts to come.

Messages/donations: N Greening JSSC, c/o Len Blood, 26, St. John St., Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside.

Scottish TUC

Cold, dull and uninspiring

by Stan Crooke

THE Scottish TUC's 82nd annual congress was held at Rothesay on April 18-22. Stan Crooke reports.

Rothesay in late April is rather like the congress itself: cold, dull, uninspiring, and predominantly inhabited by senior citizens who have long since retired from active life.

The congress was really nothing but a re-run of this year's Labour Party Scottish conference: with a general election likely in the immediate future, the word "unity" provoked a response among delegates similar to that produced whenever Lesley Crowther used to shout "Cracker-jack!" in the show of the same name.

The only fundamental difference was the strong influence of the Communist Party on the STUC which revealed itself particularly in relation to international issues.

Major victim of the bureaucracy's unity offensive was a composite motion calling for opposition to "any discussions on wage restraints, whether statutory, voluntary or through a national economic assessment."

The same day that Helen Liddell, Scottish secretary of the Labour Party, addressed the congress and called for support for a national economic assessment, this composite was rewritten to delete all reference to the national economic assessment.

The only opposition to deletion from the composite of reference to the national economic assessment came from right

wingers in the AUEW delegation. They wanted the phrase retained since they equated the national economic assessment with the beginnings of socialist corporatist planning.

ASTMS General Secretary Clive Jenkins drew up an emergency resolution, which he got the STUC General Council to move, pledging full support for "Partners in Rebuilding Britain" — the Labour Party document which contains plans for a national economic assessment.

An apparently unending series of resolutions was passed, opposing all things evil and supporting all things good.

Unemployment, sexual and racist discrimination, anti-union legislation, nuclear weapons, low pay, long working hours, cuts in public spending, privatisation of council services, hiring off of nationalised industries, the Tory government in general and Margaret Thatcher in particular were all condemned.

Unfortunately, all the resolutions were singularly lacking in any proposals for action.

The French and the Japanese were blamed for the plight of the Timex workers in Dundee. South Koreans and the Taiwanese were to blame for the threat to jobs in Scottish shipbuilding. Various European and third world countries were responsible for the crisis in the Scottish steel industry.

And so it went on. Time and time again, the reactionary demands for import controls and a ban on the export of capital were put forward as a 'solution'. Working class mobilisation was never even seriously suggested.

NUR backs down on closure

WHILE the NUR's official paper campaign against Serpell goes on under the new General Secretary Jimmy Knapp, 50 guards at Lincoln put words into practice. And on Monday April 25, the NEC called it off.

A few months ago BR closed the 20-mile section of track from March to Spalding, diverting traffic through Peterborough.

The NUR accepted the closure but said they should not lift the track itself as it was a direct line to the eastern counties and therefore a part of the national rail network. It carried most of the Harwich and Parkenson traffic and would be vital in the event of an end to the recession.

BR agreed not to lift the track and therefore put it in the same situation as around eight other lines existing but not used around the country.

However, on 19 April, local management without consultation, instructed train crews to staff trains to lift the track. They refused and were sent home. The rest of the guards followed. Within days, all trains to and from Lincoln were stopped, and the NEC made the strike official.

The guards at Lincoln were effectively carrying the flag for the other A lines, and won the support of guards in Sheffield and Doncaster.

Otherwise, they were left isolated as the NEC did nothing to bring out other rail workers in support. Then at an emergency meeting of the NUR NEC on Monday 25th, they threw out a request for a grant to run the strike and then called it off.

The reason? BR had agreed to hold up the lifting of the track until a national meeting in a week's time. So the guards who had been on strike for nine days had only won a week's reprieve for the line.

A similar course took place in Manchester last Wednesday (20th) when again without consultation management brought in contractors to install new telecoms equipment that would do away with information staff.

Signal and telecoms staff went on strike for the day and again won official endorsement only to have the action called off pending a national meeting.

Jimmy Knapp's election campaign was based on the slogan 'Together, a new start'. Yet it was always Weighell's policy to leave isolated any action that he could not stop flaring up.



AGAINST THE WITCH-HUNT!

Join LABOUR AGAINST THE WITCHHUNT
Membership open to Constituency Labour Parties, trade union organisations, Labour Party affiliates, and individuals.

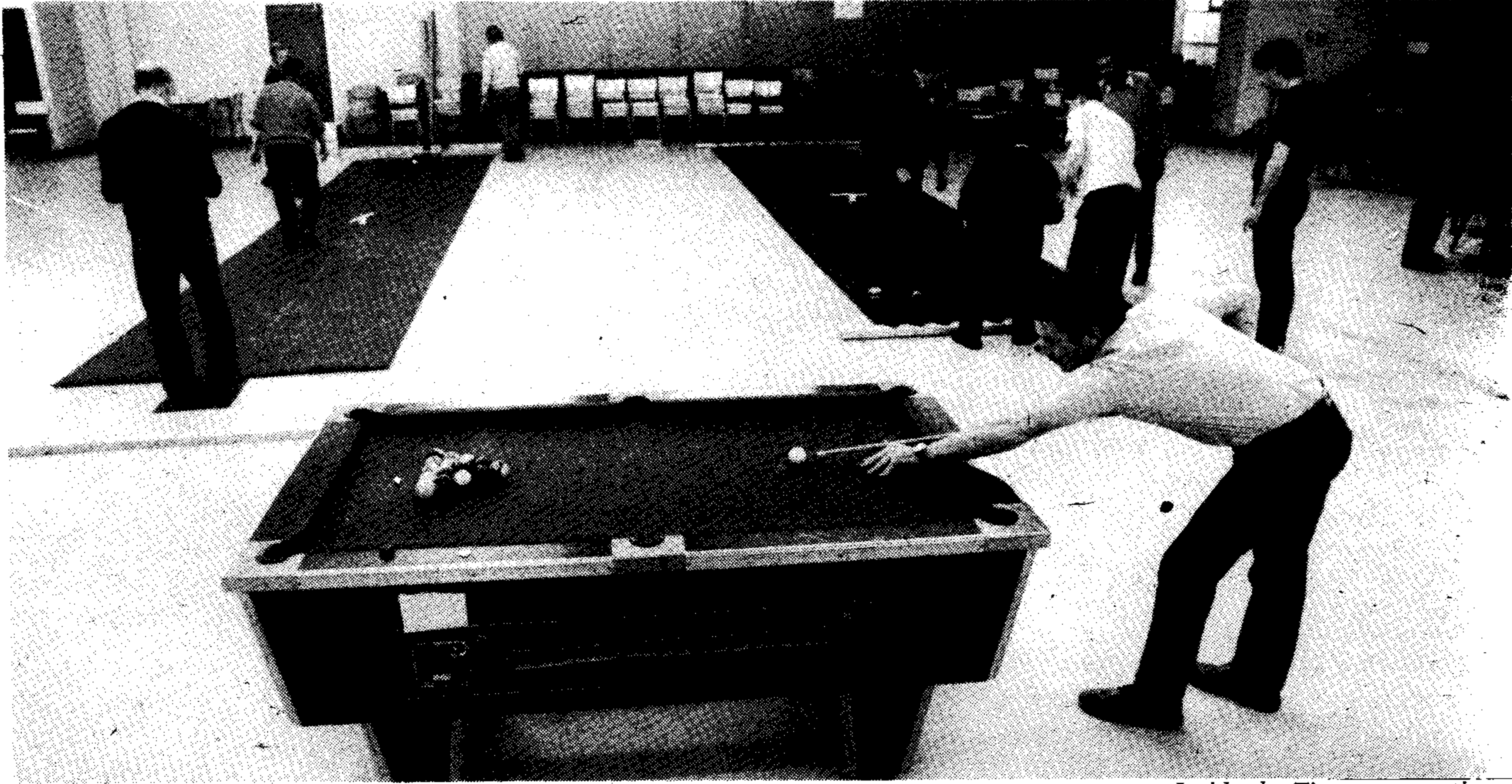
Fee. CLPs and unions £10, wards £5, individuals and other organisations £3. Write to LAW, 11 Wilderton Road, London N16.

New issue out now!

Get a CLASS FIGHTER

10p per copy plus postage from 13 Buxton Rd, N19.

Support floods in for Timex occupation



Inside the Timex occupation

THE sit-in at the Timex Milton factory in Dundee entered its third week with an ever increasing amount of support continuing to flood in.

The occupation began on Friday 8 April, in opposition to management's demand for 197 compulsory redundancies, after it had already achieved 1,700 voluntary redundancies at the two Timex plants in Dundee.

Management's reaction was at first to ignore it, not even bothering to suggest any negotiations. Then they switched to using Michael Edwards style tactics, by threatening the 197 on whom compulsory redundancy had been served with immediate dismissal, and consequent loss of redundancy pay, unless they immediately accepted the redundancies.

The workers refused to be intimidated. Only 20 backed down and accepted the redundancies, whilst the remaining 177 continued in the occupation, in

By Stan Crooke

which the number of workers involved grew from an initial 100 to over 500 by the end of the first week, representing some 90% of the workforce at the Milton plant.

Those in occupation remain in high spirits and their determination to fight on to victory was reflected in speeches to last week's Scottish TUC by the chair and vice-chair of the occupation committee.

"We shall remain in occupation until we win, and we are confident that, with the unity and support of the labour movement, we shall win", Gordon Samson, chairperson of the committee told the conference, whilst the committee vice-chair stated: "Fred Olsen (owner of Timex) has told us he doesn't accept threats and has taken on better people than us. But we don't make threats, we believe in action. And with your support we can win."

Official support for the occupation has been mushrooming. Both the AUEW, Engineering Section and AUEW-TASS (the main unions involved) support the occupation as does the STUC, whilst Michael Foot has also issued a statement of support.

There has also been a good response to date to appeals for financial support, with donations coming in from Dundee District Council, UCS, and local NALGO, COHSE and NUM branches amongst others.

At the same time though, the occupation faces a series of very real problems which need to be confronted and overcome if it is to win the victory it deserves.

The support presently being sought, and offered, is in reality extremely modest. The official occupation committee leaflet does no more than "appeal for

both moral and financial support".

The union bureaucracies are only too happy to respond to such limited demands, whilst dressing this up in outlandish rhetoric such as the GMBATU delegate to the STUC who urged "all delegates to campaign for meaningful support - letters, messages and money."

Particularly inadequate was the emergency resolution passed by the STUC itself. It simply called on the General Council to "request an immediate meeting with the Secretary of State for Scotland to deal with this urgent situation."

Equally damaging is the leadership's uncritical attitude towards the union bureaucracies. Instead of demanding that union officials translate their verbal and written support into action, the occupation committee seems prepared to take the bureaucrats' stock-in-trade left rhetoric at its face value.

A strongly nationalistic - and thereby self-defeating - undercurrent continues to run throughout the whole campaign. Great play is made of the "dictates of foreign multinationals" and the "unfair government support being received by the watch industry in France and the camera industry in Japan."

Such arguments inevitably lead in the direction of collaboration with British capitalists and their political representatives. Hence the importance which the STUC attached to seeking a meeting with the Tory Secretary of State for Scotland, the importance attached to the fact that "all political parties" support retention of the watch industry

'Our bottom line is no compulsory redundancies'

in Dundee, and Gordon Samson's at first sight peculiar statement that "we have been deserted in our struggle by the Tory government."

The pernicious influence of the politics of the Communist Party (CP) is only too clear. In fact, the whole campaign is steeped in the CP's politics: an absence of any appeals for active support in the form of solidarity strikes and occupations, a failure to take up the inadequacies of the union bureaucracies, long tirades against the evils of foreign multinationals, and a populist, cross-class type of campaign rather than a specifically labour movement one.

The very act of occupation was in itself an indication of workers' seriousness.

For the jobs to be saved, there must be a turn away from appeals to the Tories and uncritical acceptance of the extremely limited support forthcoming from the union bureaucracy. Instead active support must be argued for and won from both the Scottish labour movement and Timex workers abroad.

Donations

*For speakers contact G. Sampson, 32 Elgin Terrace, Dundee, (0382 818452).

*Send donations to J. Kydd (Treasurer), 81 Brownhill Road, Dundee.

UCW pay vote

MANCHESTER. Amalgamated, one of the country's biggest UCW branches, has voted with only one against for rejection of the pay deal recommended by the union executive.

Other branches are also debating the deal over the period up to Wednesday May 4.

Manchester members were contemptuous of the offer of 5% on basic from April 1, and 1% extra from August 1. The deal also includes just one day's extra annual leave this year, continuation of the bonus scheme, no reduction of the working week, and an agreement with mail order firms that could cut lots of jobs.

Another item important in motivating rejection of the deal was a 12 month trial of Optical Character Recognition machines - which would completely automate sorting.

Firemen retreat

by Doug Mackay

THE FBU recall conference on Tuesday 26th defeated the recommendation of the Executive Committee for a series of one day strikes against the employers' intention to raise pension contributions by an average of £6 per week.

12 WORKERS - drivers and labourers - at Holden's Glass in Birmingham are now in their fifth week on strike.

The action started when two workers (including the TGWU steward) were made redundant and other workers told to cover their jobs.

The strikers are mounting a 24 hour picket and have got Holdens blacked by most of their suppliers including Pilkington's.

Although the TGWU made the strike official from the start, the union has not been publicising the dispute, and hasn't even supplied collection sheets or official placards.

Meanwhile scabs, including one TGWU member, FTAT members, and some recruited into the EETPU by the management (!) are still going in. Members of these unions should be raising the matter in their branches as a matter of urgency.

Send messages of support and donations to J. Johnson, 68 Jayshaw Ave. Great Barr, B/ham 43.

The situation and the mood of the membership had changed quite dramatically over the previous fortnight. For example, in the West Midlands, firemen voted by a large majority for strike action only a fortnight before the conference. Since then, the Home Office has offered to 'phase in' the increase over a period of six months.

Although the EC formally maintained their stand of calling for one day strikes, and there was an unanimous vote to this effect on the EC, it is clear that many EC members did not fight for this position. At a meeting in the West Midlands last Sunday, 24th, the local EC member failed to motivate the EC's recommendation, merely giving a factual statement of the situation.

The membership sensed the lack of resolve among their leaders and were quick to respond in a negative fashion.

The result of the recall conference was a two-to-one defeat for the strike call. It was in the balance up to the last minute because of the important London vote: but it became clear that the London leadership had failed to get any mandate from their members, and few if any local meetings had been held.

This is a clear defeat for firemen. Many FBU members are aware that further attacks are on the way: especially on the question of manning levels and jobs. In the near future firemen will have their leadership tested again over this question.

Deputy convenor John Kydd spoke to Stan Crooke

THE campaign against management's cuts in the size of the workforce has been going on for several months. What lay behind the decision to launch an occupation at this stage?

Because the 90-day consultation period on the redundancies was exhausted, management had not moved at all on the question of compulsory redundancy. We felt that management was more likely to occupy the factory than us if we didn't make a move.

How was the occupation carried out? What are you demanding?

A fortnight ago a mass meeting here backed a motion giving approval to any extraordinary action required, such as occupation, to save jobs. Only five out of 700 voted against. After that the management was expecting an occupation, but we thought that they wouldn't expect one during the holiday break, which began last Friday. So at the shift change-over at 9.00 pm on the Friday about 100 of us met outside the main gates and just walked into the factory. Only security was there, so there was no problem.

We are arguing for the retention of the watch business. This is the last mass manufacturing unit of watches in Britain. Our bottom line is no compulsory redundancies.

Have you had any trouble from the police?

The police have paid us a visit and told us that as far as they are concerned, only if an injunction is served on us would they take any action. But we will resist any police action and there will be maximum resistance to anyone entering the plant other than the workforce.

There's obviously nothing you can do about it now, but don't you think you would be in a stronger position if the 1,700 voluntary redundancies had not gone through?

Yes, we would. But like you said there's nothing that can be done about that now. But we're also of the opinion that the 200 redundancies the management is now looking for won't be the end. If they get them, then it will be days rather than weeks before they declare another six or seven hundred surplus to requirements.

At the big rally held in Dundee in January in support of your campaign there was a speaker there from Besancon, expressing the support of the French Timex workers. How have such links with Timex workers abroad been developed?

We've sent a letter to Besancon informing them of the latest development but haven't had a reply yet. But the letter was only sent last week. We know from the last contact we had with them that they are just as concerned about developments there as we are about developments in Dundee.

The government grants and aid they are receiving are only for a three-year period. Olsen's philosophy can hit them just as much as us.

Future

He has made his philosophy quite clear to us: In a recession we should not be producing many products, and the recession will not end until 1990 or 1995. He also talks of a new high technology age in which people born before 1965 have no future and no chance of a job.

A QUESTION OF SOLIDARITY



Published by Socialist Forum for Southern Africa Solidarity. Available (at 90p plus 20p post) c/o SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

90p

Bob Fine

Lawrence Welch

For an independent inquiry into the death of Colin Roach! Roach Family Support Committee, 50 Rectory Rd, London N16



Socialist ORGANISER

A noisy cover-up

By Sean Matgamna

THE 'WORKERS' Revolutionary Party' and its 'leading member responsible for writs and litigation', Ms Redgrave, have so far made no direct response to my open letter challenging them either to sue me for saying that there is reason to believe that they take Libyan gold, or agree to a workers' inquiry, or else shut up.

No new writs have been thrown at us. They have ignored the challenge. But they haven't shut up.

A page a day in Newsline is still being given over to letters denouncing the BBC and... SO. Last Saturday there was also a 'reply' to the SO article on the WRP's anti-semitism, covering three pages — that is, one quarter of 'the first multi-colour daily paper with a four figure circulation' was given over to it.

It accused us of being 'state provocateurs', of 'setting up' the WRP leaders for assassination by agents of the Israeli state, and other idiocies. It made a great fuss over alleged inaccuracies in last week's SO report of their Conway Hall meeting — from which we were excluded, apart from an unrecognised but inexperienced reporter.

Even all the alleged inaccuracies they cite — if they are inaccuracies — would not seriously change the picture we gave SO readers of the political character of the meeting.

Mr Healy, Ms Redgrave — your failure to sue me over the Libyan money question, you who have repeatedly sued me for comparing you to the Moonies, is taking on the status of an admission of your guilt with every day that passes.

Do you get money from Libya? If you don't, and you still won't go to a labour movement inquiry, then why don't you sue me for saying that all the political and circumstantial evidence suggests that you do?

Help defend freedom of political comment in the labour movement press against the WRP's use of its money and of the capitalist legal system. A labour inquiry, not the courts!

Donations towards our defence costs to: Labour Movement Press Defence Fund Treasurer, Jonathan Hammond, c/o 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.



The Peoples March for Jobs is now on its way to Carlisle. The Yorkshire leg also starts this week from Keighley

No time to lose (from p.1)

ernment, we need a rank and file campaign.

Tony Benn has said that if a Labour government is elected, then the Greenham women — far from shutting down their Peace Camp in the confidence that the government will now do everything — should double their contingent at the US Air Force base. On the same principle, the approach of an election should be the signal for a fiercer, not a quieter, fight for left wing policies.

We need to turn not simply to the old, bureaucratised union officials, but to militants at branch level, and to stewards' committees, if we are to build a struggle in every workplace for a Labour vote.

We need to turn Labour wards outwards from their existing

circles of activists to organise and enlist the support of the unemployed, women and youth.

We need to convince organisations of black workers that there are forces in the Labour Party who will fight for their demands to be taken seriously and for the repeal of racist laws.

We urge those readers who have not already done so to move at once to raise resolutions in their organisations, affiliating to SLV; to organise campaign meetings locally, aimed at building rank and file support; and to argue for their Labour Parties to start election campaigning now.

To drift becalmed at this point in the fight is to risk the complete collapse of any broad left alternative to the right wing before and after the election.

Reject Heseltine smear!

CND needs more politics not less

MICHAEL Heseltine may have been brought into the Defence Ministry to counter the arguments of CND but the job seems to be completely beyond him. Support for CND continues to grow.

So he's now decided to resort to the age-old tactic — if you can't beat 'em, smear 'em.

According to Heseltine, CND is a conspiracy by left wingers in the Labour Party and the Communist Party to dupe thousands of honest but naive citizens into accepting the Moscow line on disarmament.

He's even published short biographies of leading CND members for use by Tory candidates in the next election to "prove" his point! CND, with nothing to hide, have already published detailed biographies of their leaders but some of the mud being thrown by the Tories is slowly beginning to stick.

Bruce Kent is now coming under increasing pressure within the Catholic church to give up his job as leader of CND because the campaign is supposedly becoming "too political" to have a religious leader.

On the contrary, the problem with CND is that it isn't political enough. By posing the question of disarmament as a moral rather than a political issue, CND ends up trying to pressure the Tory government by force of argument instead of turning to the labour movement as its natural ally in the fight for unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Let's show Heseltine that we reject his smears against CND. Let's show the Tories that

hundreds of thousands of people are opposed to Trident, Cruise and the nuclear arsenal being built up by the governments of America and Britain.

All out on May 7 for the march and festival in Brockwell Park!

YS for YCND (YCND activists in the Labour Party Young

YOUTH CND Secretary Annajoy David spoke to Jane Ashworth about the YCND "Rock the Bomb" festival on May 7.

The phones are going all the time and the 1,200 new members who joined YCND in March look like being followed by another 1,200 this month.

The Festival is obviously a big draw and CND's adverts in the national press have been drawing in new people. 30% of the returns from the advert in the Mirror were under 21.

We haven't got any definite plans for after May 7, because this National Committee finishes at our Conference (July 2/3 in Manchester). But we are assuming that the General Election is going to be in June, and we're preparing for it.

We have a responsibility to inform first time voters of the issues involved — to link up the social issues with military expenditure.

Also we've organised a couple of conferences which the incoming National Committee will have to ratify — one is for international youth and the other is for young trade unionists.



MAY 7

Britain out of Ireland; self-determination for the Irish people. Demonstration sponsored by Labour Committee on Ireland and others, Saturday May 7, 1pm from Hyde Park (Speakers' Corner).

FUND

THIS week we issue a warning for May. With the April Fund closing at £747.82 (three-quarters of the £1,000 target) we're organising a special drive to reach the £1,000 target for May.

The successes of the last couple of months have been in groups pledging donations. Now we're organising to turn these pledges into money which arrives here in London.

We'll be phoning round the groups this week to hear your plans — so have them ready to tell us.

Suggestions for you to think about are. Paper sales. We'll be publishing a list of debts in the SO Information Bulletin. (The average SO group is ten weeks behind on paying for its papers). Now's the time to organise extra paper sales, make sure the group collects the money from everyone who sells the paper and send it in.

Organise a jumble sale. A little work can bring in over £50. If you've never organised one before, phone in and we'll put you in touch with veteran jumlbers for tips.

Hold a social — again, phone us for tips. Ask for donations. Regular readers and activists in the labour movement who understand the cost of producing a socialist paper will often given donations if asked or buy the paper for £1.

So make your plans now — before the phone rings! Get organised!

For £199 this week, thanks to: Ann Crowder, £50; Roger Welch, £50; Callum Macrae, £40; Stockport SO, £12; £10 in donations from Pete Radcliff and Penny Barnett, Steve MacArthur, John McIlroy, Steve Corbishley; Alex Simpson (Cambridge) £2; Stan Croke, £5.