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Break
links
with
Tories

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Stop Reagan's war on Lebanon!

IMPERIALIST intervention — above all by US forces — to prop up the feeble Lebanese Phalangist government has been seriously stepped up.

When on Friday 16th the Lebanese air force flew its first battle mission in ten years, one fighter was lost and another damaged. The damaged fighter sought the safety of the British base at Akrotiri in Cyprus.

That week French fighter-bombers flew "reconnaissance sorties over Druze and Syrian positions", British jets overflew Beirut, two frigates of the US 6th Fleet were shelling Druze positions, Marines were involved in street gun battles in South Beirut and others were with Lebanese government forces in the Chouf mountains, and US planes flew "reconnaissance missions" from the aircraft carrier Eisenhower.

The early shelling from the 6th Fleet was justified by claiming that the shells which fell near the US Embassy and US Marine positions were "an imminent danger to US lives". This line of reasoning has now been dropped as US guns pound Druze positions in the Chouf mountains as part of an effort to support government forces attempting to hold the town of Soukh al-Gharb.

The new line coming from the State Department is that this shelling is necessary to protect positions from which the US con-

tingent of the "multinational peacekeeping force" could be shelled. Given the size of Lebanon this line could justify an attack on any position in the country. What is clearly part of a US offensive in support of the Gemayel government is thus being hypocritically labelled "a necessary defensive effort."

The double-talk is necessary for US home consumption. There has been much criticism in the US of Reagan for illegally committing US troops to fight in Lebanon without the agreement of Congress. After Vietnam the power of the President to wage an undeclared war was curtailed. So Reagan has to lie about what he is doing.

What is at stake in the Chouf war? The current hostilities are the outcome of the Phalangists' attempts to secure a political monopoly in Lebanon, to disregard what the Lebanese call their "red lines".

The "red lines" are the traditional lines of demarcation separating one sect's sphere of influence from another's. The present clashes do not result from a drive by the Druzes and their allies in the National Salvation Front to dominate the country so much as from Gemayel's insistence — backed by the US at present — on

subjecting the whole country to Phalangist Christian domination.

A more "generous" approach by Gemayel could well have won the support of Jumblatt and the Syrians. Instead, a hard-line approach by the Phalangist President — who, on his own admission, now controls only 10 to 20% of the country — repelled some of his natural right wing allies both within the Christian and Muslim camps.

It is unlikely that Walid Jumblatt, leader of the Druze forces organised principally under the banner of the Progressive Socialist Party, wishes to go further than achieving a new settlement which would allocate the Muslim and leftist elements a bigger role. Certainly that is the limit of Syria's current horizon whatever her long-term ambitions might be.

One of the crucial issues in any such settlement is the future of the Palestinians in Lebanon and the PLO in particular.

The outcome of the battle for Souk Al-Gharb will determine the balance of forces in any such settlement. Hence its importance.

The National Salvation Front leaders — Jumblatt, Franjei and Karamieh — might be willing to leave Souk Al-Gharb in government hands if Gemayel withdrew the army from the Chouf and res-

pected the "red line" there, and if, additionally, the structure of the government and army were modified. Whether the rank-and-file militiamen, for all their loyalty to their leaders, would be satisfied is an open question.

The new outspokenness from the European imperialists — Healey's Weekend World interview outlined their "broadly representative government" plan — might yet lead the US to pressure Gemayel to accept such an option if the Lebanese army visibly disintegrates or suffers a major reverse.

In such an event the questions that will be posed for the imperialists will be how to make this concession without strengthening the Syrian position, without giving the left space to develop and crack the confessional system altogether and without giving the Palestinian people favourable conditions for strengthening themselves politically and militarily.

Whatever the solution arrived at in the near future it will be only provisional: the long term ambitions of both Syria and Israel cannot be satisfied by it. Above all, it cannot solve the economic and social crisis in which Lebanon has found itself for the last decade and a half.

Unfortunately, at present, the working class, the only social force capable of resolving that crisis has not been capable, in Lebanon or elsewhere in the region, of imposing its solution.



Back page: Yorkshire pit strike spreads

EDITORIAL

Carving out the future

IN THESE 16 pages, each week, we do our best to argue for socialism. We expose and denounce the Tories and their warmongering international counterparts. We chronicle, week in and week out, the doings of trade union bureaucrats and right wing Labour people.

We try to argue with the nationalist Left, and sometimes we denounce them. We try to stiffen the soft Left and knock sense into the woolly Left. We argue against sectarians and semi-syndicalists such as the comrades of the Socialist Workers Party, and try to persuade them to throw their weight into the political struggle in the existing broad labour movement.

We polemicise against Stalinism at home and abroad, and try to rally support in the British labour movement for the oppressed workers and suppressed labour movements in the Stalinist states. We preach solidarity with anti-imperialist national liberation forces.

This is all essential work for socialism. The ideas of the socialist movement, its programme — these are its heart and soul, the reason for everything it does. But socialism will not be won by argument and explanation alone.

The enemies of socialism in the labour movement — right wing and Stalinist alike — will not be beaten by mere argument. The Tories won't be driven out by denunciations. The warmongers won't be disarmed by words or appeals.

We need organisation. We need to embody our ideas in the bone and muscle of an organisation which has the concentrated power of a clenched fist — to rally our friends, to fight for our ideas, and to defeat our enemies.

Many things would have gone differently in the labour movement during the last few years if the Left had been better organised. And if the revolutionary Left had been better organised, then the broader Left would have been better organised too.

A fighting revolutionary organisation with some weight within the unions would have been able to counter the deadening effect of the trade union leaders on the movement, and to inspire the rank and file to resist the Tory onslaught. In the Labour Party, without the initiative of the (then much smaller) forces around Socialist Organiser which got the Left united in the Rank and File Mobilising Committee, the fight for democratic change would have been much less effective. With a better organised Left, Tony Benn could have won the deputy leadership. A stronger organised left wing straddling the Labour Party and the unions would have inhibited the trade union bureaucrats from throwing their weight around in the Labour Party, as they have done since Bishops Stortford.

The Right are well organised. They swarm all over the many bureaucratic apparatuses of the labour movement. The Left needs to organise. To create a force which can take the initiative in rallying the broader Left, and which can maintain a coherent, continuous struggle on every front, we have to organise the revolutionaries.

That is why we called the conference on 'How to fight the Tories' last weekend. There are signs of a serious revival of working class militancy. The Financial Times has warned the bosses that with even a feeble economic improvement — such as the 3% growth claimed for the British economy in the first half of 1983 — strikes will become more frequent.

We need to prepare.

We need to continue the fight in the Labour Party and trade unions against the bureaucrats and the right wing, who inhibit, sabotage, and sometimes scab on the fight against the Tories.

Over 300 people attended the conference, from all sections of the labour movement, women's movement, etc. It was not a sectarian conference — we had a broad platform, and many who came are not, or not yet, committed supporters of Socialist Organiser. Nevertheless it was the Socialist Organiser Alliance that called the conference.

The SOA exists to organise those who broadly agree with the politics of SO so that they support the paper and fight to make our politics a material force in the class struggle.

Such organising is an irreplaceable part of the work of Socialist Organiser. That is the reason why we need to develop the Socialist Organiser Alliance, not only to sustain the paper but as an irreplaceable organised force within the Labour and trade union Left.

As the Irish socialist republican James Connolly said: "The only true prophets are those who carve out the future they announce".

**CND
MARCH
ON
OCT.
22!**

11 am, Embankment,
London



Labour NEC bends the party rules

by Vladimir Derer

THE National Executive Committee (NEC) has always been famous for its flexibility in interpreting the rules to its own advantage, varying from extreme rigidity to extreme permissiveness, depending on the circumstances. This year it has gone one better, and is actually attempting an outright breach of the rules covering who is entitled to stand for the NEC.

Standing Order 4 (3)(c) of the Party Constitution lays down that "only persons appointed to attend Annual Party Conference as Delegates, or, in the case of Division III and Division IV, Members of Parliament or duly endorsed Candidates attending as ex-officio members of Conference, shall be eligible for nomination for a seat on the NEC". Clause XIV (10) of the Rules for CLPs states: "An election shall cancel any Parliamentary candidature".

It is therefore clear that, immediately after a General Election, under the Constitution there are as yet no "duly-endorsed Candidates", and only full delegates or MPs can be nominated for the NEC. In the past these qualifications have always been scrupulously applied.

As a special concession, defeated parliamentary candidates were allowed to attend the 1979 Conference as guests, and even to speak in the debate on the General Election which had taken place not long before. Never was there any suggestion that they should be given the status of ex-officio delegates and allowed to stand for the NEC.

This year, however, the NEC has taken it upon itself to write to all CLPs that "defeated candidates will be regarded as duly endorsed candidates for the purpose of nomination to the NEC". The Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC) has pointed out that this is completely out of order, and is advising Conference to treat the following nominations as invalid:

Division III (Constituency Section)

Lestor, Joan; McGuigan, John; Spellar, John; Vaz, Keith.

Division IV (Women's Section)

Hewitt, Patricia; Taylor, Ann.

Conference Arrangements Committee

Morris, David.

Like the CAC, the NEC is charged with the duty of upholding the Party constitution. Nevertheless, on this question it has decided to ride roughshod over the Constitution. The 1983 Conference will open with the remarkable spectacle of the Party Chairman, in the name of the NEC, calling on delegates to defy the rules and overturn the CAC recommendation.

Why is the NEC so desperately anxious that these nominations should not be ruled out? Suggestions that it sees the matter as one of principle can be safely disregarded.

In their submissions to the NEC's 1979 Commission of Enquiry on party organisation, over half the CLPs urged that the present restrictions should be lifted. This was because of the way they discriminate against ordinary Party members and in favour of MPs, as CLPD has always argued. The NEC totally ignored the overwhelming opinion of the rank and file, making not a single mention of the matter at any of the three Annual Conferences which have taken place since then.

An alternative explanation is that the NEC is trying to "be fair" — in other words to give an unfair advantage — to former MPs. This too seems implausible, since to begin with the NEC seemed to have shown no great concern about their plight until the closing date for nomination.

ations, two whole months after the General Election. As long as it seemed that Tony Benn, Albert Booth, Stan Newens, and Audrey Wise would be disqualified by virtue of their defeat at the General Election, the NEC seemed to have been happy to keep silent.

The question was only raised when the NEC majority realised that its opponents had been chosen as Conference delegates, but Joan Lestor, John Spellar, and Ann Taylor had not. Far from showing fairness, the NEC majority is really trying to exploit the atmosphere following an election to pull off a blatantly partisan manoeuvre to bolster up the position of its present majority.

Even if the NEC was on firmer ground in its arguments for change, its chosen method for going about this makes a mockery of the need to uphold the Constitution. Conference has indeed the right to change the rules, but only by first carrying a constitutional amendment. Unlike affiliated organisations, the NEC is allowed to put forward such proposals at any time and for immediate consideration.

The proper course would therefore be for the NEC to submit a constitutional amendment, though even if this was done the change would not come into effect until the following year.

The fact that this is not being done only confirms suspicions that in reality the NEC majority supports the existing rules, and simply wants to be allowed to break them when this happens to suit its immediate purposes. CLPD urges all affiliated organisations to uphold the sovereignty of the Party Constitution against this flagrant violation by the NEC.

Gays' campaign at TUC

THE Labour Campaign for Gay Rights held a small but informative fringe meeting at this year's Trades Union Congress at Blackpool. Delegates to the Conference listened as the three main speakers outlined ways in which lesbians and gay men suffer discrimination at work and how trade unionists can challenge this discrimination.

Unions

Brian West from LCGR spoke about the experience of losing his job simply because he was gay and how his trade union had failed to give him support. He also talked about how LCGR is working to increase its support within the union movement.

Geoff Hardy from the Gay Teachers Group described the impact the group had on the National Union of Teachers conference held in Jersey, where male homosexuality is illegal. He stressed the value of having gay groups within trade unions and for them to work closely with heterosexual allies to ensure that gay rights had the widest support.

Sexism

Sheila Smith, the chairperson of NALGO's Equal Opportunities Committee and a National Executive member, spoke about recent NALGO publications on gay rights, sexism and sexual harassment at work. She saw these as useful ways of raising sexual politics amongst trade unionists and convincing them that gay rights was a trade union issue.

Delegates at the meeting stressed the importance of using the work done by NALGO as a model for their own unions. They also felt that LCGR could play an important role in improving communications between gay groups in the unions and in coordinating pressure on the TUC to adopt an equal opportunities policy which included sexual orientation.

Bringing peace to Beirut

OUR reporter Patrick Spilling has been visiting US positions in Lebanon and brings this first hand report from the peace-keeping forces.

"Look bud". The GI rolled his cigar around the corner of his mouth and pointed with the butt of his automatic over the top of the sandbags.

"Out there soldiers from every army under the sun are running around armed to the teeth. Syrians with tanks. Iranians with machetes. Even some bastards from Druze wherever that is. If it wasn't for us here keeping the peace this country would be in the grip of outside forces within a week."

He paused to loose off some rounds at a nearby bunker. Some elderly jets of the Lebanese airforce flew overhead, above them, struggling to fly slowly enough to provide cover, a squadron of Tomcat fighters from the Carrier Eisenhower.

As the bombs began to ring out, a flight of Buccaneers from Cyprus crossed east to west executing a perfect 360 degree roll in tight formation. "Your boys", the GI said benevolently. "Goddam Limies".

"You want the Soviet Union in here inside a week", he said. "You pull us out and see what happens."

In the bay it was possible to

Daily Mail
Press EXPRESS
FINANCIAL TIMES
The Daily Telegraph
Gang
THE Sun

By Patrick Spilling

see the US cruiser, New Jersey, manoeuvring into position for another battery from its guns — "shells the size of Volkswagens" said one of the 1,200 marines who had come ashore. A further 12,400 troops stood by to support if the threat to the peace grew any worse.

The commander of the US forces later explained the new orders that his force had been given. "Our job is to keep the peace. We are not here to get involved in any combat. As you know when we first arrived we only returned fire when we were fired on."

"We are now moving to a phase we are terming aggressive defence. This will inevitably involve in some cases bringing forward the timing of our response so that it ante-dates the timing of the first attack on us."

"There has also been an extension of the definition of the forces which might be included among those justifying such a response. In future any

attack or potential attack on our allies or local Lebanese forces might be seen to constitute an objective attack on us."

The troops listened to their briefing with the knotted brows of men struggling with cosmic problems. "You mean", asked the first GI, "that we get to blast anything that moves?" "You got it", came the reply.

Over the other side of the hill from the peacekeeping forces the so-called Druze militia were preparing to disrupt the normal everyday life of Lebanon.

For us international reporters who remember this country in its heyday it is a pitiful sight. Where we used to sit and drink Campari in the shade, served by the friendly natives, now there is strife and division. The heroic efforts of President whatever his name is to unite the whole nation around the Christian Phalangists has been continually frustrated by Palestinian and Syrian intervention. The Russians are behind it. They are

cunningly keeping out of sight and letting the US take the weight of criticism but everyone knows that none of the Syrian, Palestinian or whatever forces can move without the Kremlin's say so.

Yesterday I went with other reporters to visit the British troops but we were not able to interview them. Their commander had just been taken off to mental hospital after telling a reporter that he thought the whole exercise a "bloody waste of time".

One report suggested that he had been angered by a personal message from Mrs Thatcher telling him to 'remember Goose Green' and offering him a posthumous VC.

French troops were treated to a special message from their Socialist President last night who urged them to remember that they were preserving all that was good in the country — especially French cuisine.

It is not yet known what effect the ruling in Britain's High Court will have on the conflict. The ruling that not more than six Druze militiamen can defend any one town is likely to be resisted by the extremists who now appear to have taken over what is rightfully ours... I mean rightfully belonging to ordinary, peace-loving Lebanese.

Turkey: NATO's ugly face

I visited Turkey with a delegation organised by CEDRI to attend the trials of the people, councillors, and mayor of Fatsa.

759 people are charged with membership of Dev Yol ('Revolutionary Way' — one of the biggest left-wing organisations in Turkey), with collecting money for it, and with 'plotting to overthrow the state'.

All of the charges relate to the period before the coup in 1980.

All of the defendants have been in prison for about three years, and some of them are still aged only about 18 — which means that at the time of their arrest they were 15.

Since the military coup of September 12 1980 Turkey has been governed by a military junta. Right now there are anything up to fifty political trials going on in the country.

They involve people active before the coup in a very wide variety of organisations: the Turkish Peace Association, the trade union DISK, the Communist Party, Dev Yol, Yeni Celtek (miners).

In all cases they are mass trials, and in all cases a very substantial number of death penalties have been asked for.

Since 1980 there have been over 1000 executions in Turkey — almost one for every day that General Evren has been in power.

Fatsa

As the purpose of our visit was to witness the Fatsa trial and prepare a report on it, we went to the northern town of Amasya where it is being held. Amasya is a beautiful old town south of the Black Sea, with a large prison and an even larger army camp outside the town.

We were assured that we would have 'complete freedom' of movement and be able to visit the trial and the prison. But this was not our experience.

When we arrived at the army camp we were told that we could not enter. We should come back the following day.

We heard that another trial was being held there, that of the people of Havsa.

When we returned, we were told variations of the same story, and that the Havsa trial would resume later. It did not: the many very poor relatives there who had made the long and expensive journey from their home town, to witness the trial, were very despondent indeed.

Dev Yol

Since it seemed unlikely that there would be any trial whilst we remained in Amasya, we returned to Ankara to witness the trial of people accused of membership of Dev Yol. After some complications we finally managed to attend this trial.

It takes place in a military camp in Ankara, at a converted sports hall. Outside, in a dusty courtyard, were armed soldiers, who continually harassed the few relatives who were present and tried hard to stop our delegation talking to them.

Inside the building 205 men, all young, in civilian clothes but with shaven heads, were sitting on benches, surrounded by soldiers.

By Jeremy Corbyn MP

Sitting on the front row were 13 young women prisoners, also wearing civilian clothes. All the accused were surrounded by a steel fence.

At the back, in a sort of grandstand, were perhaps a hundred families, also closely guarded. Apart from us the press benches were empty. The lawyers' benches, totally separate from the prisoners, contained just two people.

On a huge dais at the front sat seven military officers, all wearing uniform and high-collared cloaks. One of them was apparently the prosecutor.

The guard was changed every twenty minutes. A very intimidating parade of soldiers would march in and stand double guard, then the previous guard would march out. Any defendant wishing to go the toilet has to be accompanied by a soldier.

As the prosecutor read out his charge, the defendant concerned was ordered to the dock to give his response. (The women were not called while we were there). In all cases they denied the charges. Most stated that they had been tortured: all of them said that the statements were obtained under duress.

It is quite clear that none of the defendants ever had free access to lawyers, and that they had been tortured. We met people who told us the most horrifying accounts of being dragged from their homes at night in mid-winter without proper clothes on. We heard of a wide variety of vile methods of torture in use. These included cold water, keeping prisoners awake for long periods under questioning, electric shock, and hitting prisoners with sandbags. The threat to harm relatives was ever-present and frequently used.

Since the coup all democratic rights have disappeared in Turkey. The so-called trade union which exists is run by the government, and all non-approved trade unions are banned, as are non-approved political parties.

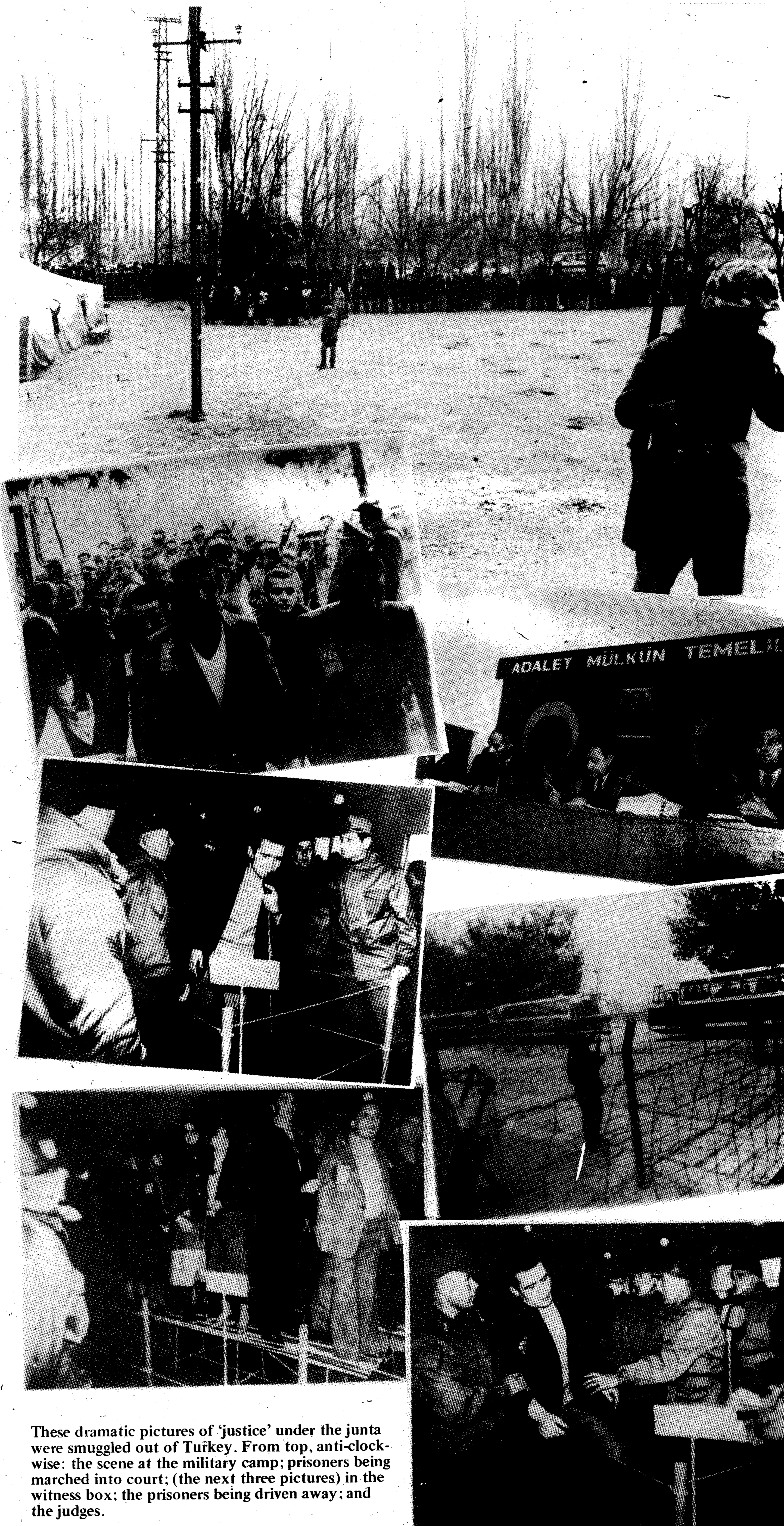
The Council of Europe has been asked to investigate the breaches of human rights in Turkey by Holland, France, Norway, Sweden and Denmark. The first hearing is due to take place soon.

Turkey is a member of NATO and supplied by NATO with the most modern weapons, which are used to repress its own people, and particularly the Kurds in Turkey.

The government of a country that has prisons bursting at the seams, daily executions, total control of all media outlets, and racism enshrined in its constitution (making any sort of Kurdish identity illegal) ought to stand condemned. Thousands of Turkish people in exile can attest to its brutality.

Our short visit convinced us that there is brutality, repression, and a complete lack of justice in Turkey under the iron heel of the military junta of President Evren.

CEDRI is the Comité Européen pour la Défense des Réfugiés et Immigrés, Missionsstrasse 35, Postfach, CH-4002, Basel, Switzerland.



These dramatic pictures of 'justice' under the junta were smuggled out of Turkey. From top, anti-clockwise: the scene at the military camp; prisoners being marched into court; (the next three pictures) in the witness box; the prisoners being driven away; and the judges.

Facts &



Figures

A recent survey in the Financial Times gives some picture of the dramatic rise of Japanese foreign investment in recent years.

In the 1960s Japan had an insignificant share of world total foreign investment. By 1980 it had risen to be the capitalist world's fourth-ranking foreign investor, behind the US, the UK, and the Netherlands. But the biggest rise in Japanese overseas investment has come since 1981.

Japanese investment in the US and Western Europe has expanded especially fast, though mostly through purchases of stock and loans rather than direct manufacturing investment. Within Western Europe, the UK has attracted much more Japanese investment than any other country.

Japan exports much less of its production than most West European countries — about 15%, as against 25% or more (over 50% for Belgium and the Netherlands).

Yet the FT concludes that "the expansion of its (Japan's) economy has depended on export growth during the past few years" more than for any other country.

Between 1970 and 1979, Japan's share of world exports of machinery rose from 8.7% to 13.3%, while the US's share fell from 19.9% to 15.7% and West Germany's also fell slightly from 17.7% to 17.5%. Since 1979 Japan's exports have risen further.

The FT survey also gives some interesting figures on the position of women in Japan — figures which suggest that a considerable gap has opened up between traditional attitudes and changing economic reality. That gap could be the basis for a mass women's liberation movement in Japan before too long.

In an opinion poll, 71% of Japanese women agreed that "husbands should go to work and women should stay at home". Only 26% of British women and 13.5% of Scandinavian women agreed.

Only 6.4% of Japan's scientists, 2.4% of engineers, and 0.5% of senior civil servants, are women. Women are even more confined to a few low-paid jobs than in the West.

Yet by now over 50% of Japanese women are in waged work. And by 1981, 33% of young Japanese women were completing higher education.

A selective report

by John Bloxam

THE National Executive Committee (NEC) report to the 1983 Labour Party conference contains a full four pages on the NEC's own attempts to witch-hunt socialists out of the Party and then blames Labour's "severe defeat" in the election on its "reputation for disunity and for internal strife".

The account of the NEC's expulsion of the five Militant editorial board members covers little of the tortuous wriggling the NEC went through. It blames Militant for the fact that it all took so long and that the NEC couldn't show the evidence. If only Militant had not gone to court, they could have been got rid of so quickly!

The report mentions that "the constituency parties to which the excluded members had belonged... were requested to remove their names from the

membership records", but not that two of the three CLPs involved are still refusing to do it.

Hornsey CLP is cited as having "refused to accept" the NEC's decision to keep Tariq Ali out. The report says that now, 21 months later, "the procedure to expel Mr Ali from membership has been initiated by the NEC".

The NEC wants Conference to endorse this, and also their suspension of Manchester Wythenshawe CLP.

Both Hornsey and Wythenshawe will be challenging the NEC.

Much is omitted: the attacks on Peter Tatchell; the decision to pulp the Bermondsey by-election leaflet; the attempt to ban Militant from Party premises

and functions; and the expulsion of Stan Crooke.

The NEC's manoeuvre to stop reselections after boundary re-organisations, and to prevent Ken Livingstone being chosen as Labour candidate in Brent East, is reported like this: "the NEC... used its powers under the Constitution to propose a shortened procedure for the re-allocation of candidates".

There is hardly a word on the rank and file resistance to the witch-hunt. "Not all non-affiliated groups of Labour Party members have applied for registration", the Report says, coyly. "In the circumstances... the National Executive Committee decided not to pursue organisations which failed to register".

That rank and file resistance can continue to push back the witch-hunt. But it's not beaten yet.



Kinnock: supporting the witch-hunt?

Influx and exodus

ACCORDING to the National Executive Committee report, total Labour Party membership stood at 6½ million in 1982, a decline of 100,000 on 1981. This decline came almost wholly from the affiliated trade union membership, which stands at just short of 6.2 million.

The individual membership stayed almost the same, at 273,803. The Report comments:

"Many constituency parties recruited a substantial number of new members in the year, only to see their year-end total reduced by a larger exodus of members. The reasons given for this are mainly the cost of membership when the economic climate is depressed, lack of attention by many parties to the regular servicing of their membership, and political reasons".

Will NATFHE face up to Side-effects of Tebbit's YTS ?

The assault on all things liberal and "wasteful" continues as the National Advisory Board sets out to stop polytechnics offering the same courses as universities. NAB, a particularly unpleasant Quango, want polys to go back to teaching mechanical engineering and drop the 'academic' non-vocational arts and social science courses.

Last year Sir Keith Joseph chewed over the idea of reducing the number of social science graduates admitted onto teacher training courses. What use is a social science graduate in an infants school, he wanted to know. Probably more use than the average physicist in fact, but some colleges listened to him and the papers carried a story about qualified applicants being turned down because they were social science graduates.

Youth on YTS are going to spend time in FEs. They amount to 80,000 full time students. Not surprisingly NATFHE (the union for FE and Poly lecturers) has bought YTS. As YTS gets underway, pressure is starting to grow on lecturers.

FE colleges are being drawn into the unemployment industry — keeping YTS youth busy for 13 weeks.

Here, in two articles, COLIN WAUGH, Tottenham NATFHE and AL SYRETT, Kingston Poly Students Union, look at what the Tories are doing in further and higher education.

TRADITIONALLY, most FE students have either been apprentices on day release or full time students on GCE or professional courses. Although some teaching is done by hourly paid part timers or as overtime, most is done by staff on permanent contracts working 38 weeks between September and July.

All the YTS schemes are supposed to have a general education element in them. Most will be in FE colleges. But some will not enter FEs at all. They will be taught instead by staff of the firm

where they are placed, or by a private agency.

In December 1981, when Tebbit announced the introduction of YTS, NATFHE officials hailed this as a step towards quality education and training for all 16 year olds, expanding FEs by the equivalent of at least 80,000 full time students. Members were urged to prepare themselves by embracing the MSC's ideology of flexible skills training and 'Vocational preparation'.

This line was pushed even harder from June 1982, after Tebbit conceded an increase in the YTS allowance from £15 to £25 and shelved his plan (temporarily) for denying benefit to refusers. Only over the last few months, as private agencies look set to grab more and more of the work, has a slightly more critical position been adopted.

This isn't simply the leaders selling out the members. Whilst many lecturers would, for elitist reasons, prefer to keep unemployed young people out of colleges, still more want YTS in because the collapse of apprenticeship (and hence of day release) threatens them with redundancy.

Others, including some with a record of political or trades union activism, see it as a way out of the institutional, educational and personal stagnation FE has suffered for years.

Again, this isn't merely careerism. In some areas of very high unemployment and local authority neglect (for example Liverpool) the MSC is, for the moment, genuinely cutting across the bureaucracy and elitism of

traditional FE, to enable progressive work to be done with oppressed young people.

Nevertheless, there are several reasons why conflicts are likely to develop over YTS within FE in the near future.

First, colleges will be competing with other agencies for YTS work. To lower costs, college principals (many of them NATFHE members) will attack lecturers' conditions of service. Already, two local authorities (Manchester and Croydon) have provoked major disputes by trying to do this.

In this year's salary negotiations the employers' side tabled the introduction of an 'instructor' grade below Lecturer 1. Because of MSC requirements a growing number of FE staff are already employed on short term contracts and inferior conditions, and this will pressurise others into accepting larger classes and other forms of extra work required for MSC schemes. These include the massive quantities of time necessary for assessing students by means of profiles and for finding and supervising 'work experience' placements.

The NATFHE leadership has effectively conceded the extension of the college year from 38 to 48 weeks. With existing holiday entitlements unchanged there will be peculiar hours being worked this year.

Secondly, as YTS moves to full implementation, the extent to which the whole scheme rests on cheap labour — on substituting 'work experience trainees' for regular employees — will be highlighted. There will be resistance by workers in some areas of industry and local government where they are to be 'placed'. It will become more difficult for NATFHE to remain neutral towards these actions.

South East London Tech college NATFHE branch have decided to boycott YTS work if the college takes in trainees from non-unionised workplaces.

Thirdly, as young people increasingly see through the MSC's propaganda, tension will build up amongst groups of them at college. This will be all the greater if — as seems likely — compulsion in the form of cutting the benefits of refusers is gradually reintroduced.

NATFHE may then be forced to consider how far its members should take on the role of police. At the same time, the MSC may well clamp down on what can be discussed in class, raising academic freedom as a union issue.

In short, socialists employed on YTS within FE must quickly build links with others involved via the youth and careers services, the schools and other workplaces, work out a principled approach towards YTS, and fight to get this accepted by NATFHE.

Poly gone?

THE National Advisory Board has revealed the Tory government's intentions to cut public sector higher education — the polytechnics and higher education colleges.

The NAB was set up as an interim body to "advise the Secretary of State on provision and funding of advanced courses". What it did last year was close three courses and recommend the closure of a further 68. This year it has recommended a 10% cut in public sector financing across the board.

Central government has imposed cuts on both the public sector and 'private' sector (the universities). But the quangos which administer them have managed the cuts differently. The universities chose to cut student numbers, the polys kept up the numbers but cut-back on everything else. In the polys, the student:tutor ratio has increased.

With this year's round of cuts the NAB intends to make sure that cuts will force colleges to turn away from 'non-scientific and technical' subjects and concentrate instead on the employers' market.

2,000 mainly teaching jobs will go, along with 5,000 student places.

Since the NAB report came out two weeks ago many colleges have complained that it inevitably means widespread course closures. Where the NAB has recommended mergers with technical or FE colleges it also means the possible closure of whole colleges.

Two weeks ago NUS called a conference for public sector higher education students to discuss our response to NAB.

Unfortunately NUS has decided that the way to fight NAB is by leaving it up to the areas. There isn't going to be a nationally coordinated campaign.

Tribune rally

Put socialism on the agenda

ERIC HEFFER MP

JO RICHARDSON MP

TONY BENN

BOB WAREING MP

MANDY MOORE

CHAIR: CHRIS MULLIN

CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER, SW1
TUESDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 7.30 p.m.

SOCIALIST STUDENT

Students, workers:

Together we can win!



Articles by Tony Benn, Karen Talbot, NUS Executive on 'The year ahead'; Tony Dale, NOLS NC and lots more.

New paper of Socialist Students in NOLS. Available from Andy Bennet, DSU, Dunelm House, New Elvet, Durham. Copies 10p each. Take a bulk order to sell!

Heffer launches 'Women's Manifesto'



THE left wing candidate for Leader of the Labour Party, Eric Heffer, has launched a Women's Manifesto as part of his campaign. He said:

"It is crucial that women receive a fair deal from the Labour Party. Women inside the Party are rightly demanding greater power and responsibility, and in addition Labour must persuade millions of women to support socialist principles and positive action, if a Labour Government is to be elected at the next General Election."

(...)
"A Women's Manifesto should be drawn up by the National Executive Committee in conjunction with the Women's Organisations in the Party, and should in my view contain:

*A major programme to provide free and integrated child care facilities for all who want them.

*Changes in the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts to strengthen them and widen their scope.

*The promotion of Positive Action Programmes to deal with discrimination in employment.

*Shorter working hours and a radical look at working conditions.

*The introduction of a Statutory Minimum Wage.

*Action to deal with the sexist and degrading portrayal of women in the media.

"As far as presentation to the electorate is concerned, I believe that the Party should give women, and women's issues, a higher profile in election campaigns. We should provide a range of leaflets for women, written by women. We should attempt to explain to the electorate the fundamental link between our socialist principles and the fight for equality for women."

"Our society is still caught up in the out-dated image of male breadwinners, with women providing the 'back-up services' of home-making and child-rearing."

(...)

'I support party policy on the issue of abortion'

"A number of actions need to be taken to alter this image and to change the attitudes behind it."

"Firstly child care facilities must be a major priority to enable women to have access to work outside the home and to establish the principle of a woman's right to work."

"At the same time working hours and conditions need to be altered so that all parents have time at home with their families on an equal basis."

"Action needs to be taken to end the discrepancies between men's and women's wages: this is one principle reason why I have supported over many years the idea of a Statutory Minimum Wage to reduce the enormous gap between the low paid — who are mainly women — and those on higher pay. Collective bargaining has clearly failed to achieve this redistribution."

(...)
"I support Party Policy on the issue of abortion. I believe there should be changes in the law to give women the right to choose whether or not they have an abortion, and to ensure that abortion facilities are available, free within the National Health Service, on an equal basis throughout the country."

I have voted against attempts to restrict the 1967 Abortion Act on three occasions in the House of Commons, and I voted for Jo Richardson's Abortion Facilities Bill in 1981.

"The links between the Women's Organisation and the rest of the Party could be strengthened by the adoption of a

formal constitution and rules for the Women's Organisation in line with the rest of the Party. It is only through such a formal structure that the Women's Organisation will be able to operate in a truly democratic manner and present itself as a recognised force in the Party."

(...)
"I believe that the promotion of resolutions direct from Women's Conference onto the Annual Conference Agenda would have two advantages for

women: Firstly, it will give direct access to the policy making structure of the Party to the Women's Organisation, and, secondly, it will mean that the views and aspirations of women in the Party will be brought directly to the attention of the whole Party."

"I support the principle that the Women's Section of the NEC should be representative of, and accountable to, the Women's Organisation in the Party. I would prefer to see all elections

for the NEC conducted at Annual Conference so that Conference remains the supreme policy making body of the Party."

"I also believe that we may face problems from other groups such as the Local Government Conference and the Parliamentary Labour Party who may wish to change the character of the NEC and demand similar representation."

"However, the arguments concerning the election of the Women's Section of the NEC by women are extremely strong, and I would welcome discussions with women in the Party as to how best we can achieve this aim."

"The Party should have a full-time Women's Officer. At present Joyce Gould is not only the Women's Officer but also Assistant National Agent and Campaigns Officer and can

therefore only devote a small portion of her time to the Women's Organisation."

"I believe that women should have a full-time officer with the appropriate research and administrative staff so they can effectively campaign and develop policy for women in the Party."

"I also believe that Regional Women's Officers should be women and that urgent action needs to be taken to end the present ludicrous situation where a majority of Regional Women's Officers in the Party are men."

"It is clear that the PLP must have a front bench spokesperson on Women's Rights who supports the objectives of the women's movement. If elected as leader, I would appoint Jo Richardson to that position as she is the woman who has consistently fought for these policies over many years."



TESSA HOWLAND (JFL)
National Labour Women's Conference — still no voice in the main Party conference

Extra delegates

Many local Labour Parties don't even know yet that they may be entitled to an extra woman delegate to Labour Party conference. The CLPD Women's Action Committee is circulating this model resolution:

"THIS conference deplores the action of the National Executive Committee in these last few weeks, in once more obstructing the constitutional right of CLPs to send an extra woman delegate to this Annual Conference."

Conference notes that this obstruction is inconsistent with the assurance given by the National Agent last year that every attempt would be made to make absolutely sure that the provisions of the Constitution would be met and that they are reasonable in order to see that constituencies do get the additional women delegates to Conference."

Conference regrets the National Executive's failure to act

on the advice of its own officers and to clarify the criteria for the election of extra women delegates. Failure to do so will only result in fewer women delegates to a conference which is overwhelmingly male-dominated and which therefore projects an image to the public of being primarily concerned with the interests of men and of failing to protect the concern of the majority of the electorate, women."

Conference instructs the National Executive Committee to act promptly on the advice of Party officers and last year's Conference and to agree the constitutional safeguard already proposed by the National Executive Committee's office."

Mohammad must stay!



NATIONAL MARCH AND RALLY-OCTOBER 8

STOP THE DEPORTATION OF MOHAMMAD IDRISH CALLED BY NALGO

Assemble 11am, Booth St, Handsworth, Birmingham

How to get there:

Public transport: 74 or 79 bus from City Centre.

By road: Take the M5 to junction 1 (sign-posted West Bromwich). Turn left at roundabout and follow signs, 'A41 Birmingham'. Booth St is about 1½ miles on right. Coach parking available.

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK

Women won't wait!



Latest issue — 10p plus 12½p postage from 10B Landseer Road, London N19

International news

Let the people of Hong Kong decide their future!

Britain and China have been discussing the future of Hong Kong for over a year. The Chinese government has declared its intention to take complete control of nine-tenths of Hong Kong's territory when the lease on which it is held by Britain expires in 1997. By the time the third round of talks began in Peking this week, the Hong Kong dollar had lost one-third of the international value it had a year ago.

Hong Kong is still a British Crown Colony. It is a speculators' paradise and an oft-cited model of free enterprise capitalism.

Britain has been in control since the 19th century, when it imposed unequal treaties on China giving Britain Hong Kong island, the Kowloon Peninsula and the hinterland known as the New Territories. These territories make up the Crown Colony today.

The People's Republic of China has never accepted the unequal treaties and has consistently claimed that Hong Kong is Chinese territory, to be reclaimed "when the time is ripe", though no attempt has ever been made to take back Hong Kong.

Peking and London have both benefited economically from the prosperous colony. It has been Stalinist China's main economic gateway to the world, and today as much as one-third of China's overseas earnings come through Hong Kong.

Now, when the "lease" on the New Territories (without which Hong Kong is probably unviable) has less than 15 years to run, a new arrangement has to be worked out for this "Borrowed place living on borrowed time".

The first round of talks was a Thatcherite blunder. Fresh from her victory over Argentina, she took the bluntest possible political stance when she visited Hong Kong and Peking for talks.

Her attitude drove the Hong Kong stock market plummeting and caused such offence that Deng responded with a sharp, uncompromising statement on China's sovereignty over Hong Kong.

Thatcher has now been persuaded that China is not Argentina by the British Foreign Office mandarins and the powerful capitalist class in Hong Kong. The British attitude now is to agree to leave the question of sovereignty aside, and negotiate for a British administrative

By Chan Ying

presence after 1997.

In order to understand the background to China's proposals we must look briefly at the changes within Stalinist China in the last few years. Its dependence on the capitalist world market has grown massively.

Government agricultural policy in China today — dismantling the Communes set up during the Maoist era, encouraging family farming on private plots — is rapidly creating a layer of rich peasants, like the kulaks in Russia during the late 1920s.

Industrial

On the industrial front, the shift away from heavy industry into light manufacture, the introduction of material incentives, the attempts to increase the range of consumer goods, and the partial decentralisation of control over foreign trade contrast sharply with the Maoist policies of emphasising heavy industry, voluntarism and austerity, and minimal import of foreign technology.

Most importantly, there has been a massive encouragement for overseas capitalists to invest in Chinese industry, with the creation of Special Economic

Zones.

On the political front, the Constitution has been amended to create Special Administrative Regions (SARs). Into this category the Chinese government has placed Hong Kong as well as neighbouring Portuguese-administered Macao, and Taiwan. These regions have, according to the Constitution, a high degree of autonomy.

About Hong Kong China says:

1) Chinese sovereignty over Hong Kong is not for negotiation.

2) The SAR formula is to apply with Hong Kong but with the retention of the present capitalist structure. "One nation, two systems".

3) "Let Hong Kong people run Hong Kong".

4) "Maintain prosperity and stability".

In the second round of talks the central disagreement was over Britain's insistence of retaining an administrative role after 1997. This proved to be a major obstacle, and the second round came to an abrupt end after four sessions. The fact that the final communique did not have the words "useful and constructive" sent the stock exchange tumbling yet again.

The fundamental situation however is that British imperialism has the upper hand.

Peking has depended heavily on Hong Kong to earn its foreign exchange over the past three decades and will continue to do so.

The disastrous Maoist policies beginning with the Great Leap Forward in 1958 have long ago destroyed any belief Hong Kong people may have had that Stalinist China is socialist or even that life is better there.

The flight of refugees, the naked corruption (though it is no worse than in Hong Kong), and the real economic hardship of relatives on the mainland have disillusioned most Hong Kong workers with 'Communist' China.

What the Trotskyists say

AS THE Thatcher government and the Chinese bureaucracy discuss the future of Hong Kong over the heads of the people of this British colony, socialists in Hong Kong have come out with their own demands on this question.

The statement we print here is translated from 'Combat Bulletin', paper of the Revolutionary Marxist League. 'October Review', the other Trotskyist publication in Hong Kong, has come out with a similar line.

They oppose continued British colonial rule; they also oppose imposition of the rule of the Chinese bureaucracy. They call for an elected sovereign assembly for Hong Kong; for 'truly democratic self-rule'; for a 'joint effort' of the Hong Kong workers with the labouring masses of China to strike for the status of real masters of the country, and thus for Hong Kong to be 'incorporated into workers' China' with the overthrow of the bureaucratic dictatorship.

1. Hong Kong is a part of China's territory. The British in Hong Kong should unconditionally withdraw from China's soil.
2. Sir Edward Youde (the British-appointed Governor of HK — translator's note)

has no right whatsoever to represent the Hong Kong people in the present talks with the Chinese Government. His claim has no reasoned nor legal basis.

3. The people of Hong Kong should seize control of their own destiny. They should overthrow colonial rule, and strive for democratic self-rule of Hong Kong by its own people.

Masses

4. The Hong Kong masses must organise quickly to fight for working people's rights, benefits and living standards in the area of social and economic policy; on the political front they need to raise the demand for democratic rights, and fight for an all-powerful elected local assembly representing all Hong Kong citizens.

5. The local assembly should be Hong Kong's highest authoritative body — it will give birth to a people's government which will implement political, economic and social changes in favour of the working people, as well as determine the relationship with mainland China.

6. As a result of the Chinese Communist Party's bureaucratic misrule, Hong Kong

The harsh suppression of the Chinese Democratic Movement has shattered illusions that Deng's regime is any improvement on the Gang of Four.

Peking would have grave problems in assimilating these six million indifferent or hostile people to its political rule, especially if the local economy takes a nosedive. For all these reasons Peking adopted its position of "one nation, two systems" and "self-rule for Hong Kong".

British negotiators can threaten Peking with the "collapse of confidence" in Hong Kong. Large overseas capitalist investors will of course be able to pull out, leaving Peking with a broken ricebowl.

They have insisted that a British administration is essential to maintaining a capitalist system there after 1977.

British imperialism is also aware that Peking's strategy of undermining the Kuomintang regime in Taiwan and bringing about a peaceful reunification of China depends heavily on the propaganda value of regaining Hong Kong without economic chaos.

The only social force which can transform the situation lies dormant at present — the Hong Kong working class. It has long forgotten its record of struggle in the 1920s at the height of the second Chinese Revolution.

Most workers are not unionised. The trade union movement is split three ways — pro-Peking, pro-Taiwan (now very small), and an independent strand with a large white-collar presence. Peking no longer has the ability, even if it dared, to arouse Hong Kong workers to rise up against colonialism.

That historic task falls on the shoulders of the small Trotskyist cadre in Hong Kong. Their campaign for an all-powerful elected Local Assembly for Hong Kong should be supported by all socialists and labour activists in Britain.

people must struggle vigorously for democratic self-rule, while initiating and strengthening co-operation with all Chinese people in conquering bureaucratic rule, building a democratic socialist system, & completing the re-unification of China.

7. The Chinese government must abandon the policy of secret diplomatic talks. They should adopt an open and democratic policy of reporting to and consulting Hong Kong people before and during all negotiations. All negotiated agreements must be subject to receiving Hong Kong people's full consent before implementation. The Chinese government must vigorously support Hong Kong people's struggle for democratic rights and benefits, and defend their living conditions. The Chinese government must grant Hong Kong people the greatest possible right to self-determination — allow Hong Kong people to establish an elected local assembly and a people's government, allowing the policy of democratic self-rule of Hong Kong to be made a reality.

COMBAT BULLETIN
REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST
LEAGUE
10th July 1983.



North and South

Trial by media in the North

OVER 350 people have so far been charged or sentenced under Britain's "informer system" in Northern Ireland. Hilda MacThomas, a writer for An Phoblacht/Republican News tells the story of the latest "supergrass", Robert Lean. The article has been slightly shortened.

A MASSIVE psychological operation was launched by the RUC on September 6, hours after the dawn arrests of 15 West Belfast nationalists. After announcing that they were acting on the 'information' provided by Robert Lean, whose family was now 'in protective custody', the RUC launched a series of leaks to the media, destined to frighten or demoralise the people of West Belfast.

Simultaneously, the frequency of British army/RUC road-blocks rose sharply, with Brits peering inside cars at each and every passenger, to create the impression that they were looking for people to arrest.

Throughout the week, the RUC fed systematic lies to the press as to: the number of people arrested — 28 according to the Irish News of September 8, even more according to certain British tabloids; the alleged high rank of Lean in the IRA — "Belfast's second in command", it was reported; the extent of information allegedly provided by Lean, who, according to press reports, had given 60 names; the names and alleged ranks of two of the people detained in Castlereagh, before they had even been brought to court; the RUC boast that Lean would help them to "wreck West Belfast Sinn Fein".

Throughout the week, the Irish and British media tripped over themselves to print and broadcast the 'hot gossip' churned out by the RUC, showing themselves willing accomplices in the RUC's campaign.

While all of Sinn Fein's offices were fully staffed and working as usual, the press was reporting wild allegations of "panic spreading through West Belfast" (Irish Times), of scores of republicans "on the run" or "having fled over the border" (Evening Press).

The Times of September 9, and other British newspapers the next day, named two of the arrested as being the 'IRA's Belfast O/C' and its 'Northern chief' or even 'Chief of Staff' — an unashamed attempt by the RUC to further prejudice an already biased court system.

However, this overkill on the part of the RUC and the media predictably caused some unease in otherwise silent quarters. The two bishops of Derry, Bishop Edward Daly and the Church of Ireland bishop Dr James Mehahey, voiced their doubts as to the use of "uncorroborated evidence by accomplices." In a Radio Ulster interview on Friday September 9, Bishop Daly said such measures were "bringing the law into disrepute", while Mehahey called them "morally questionable."

At the weekend, British Labour MP Martin Flannery likened the Belfast show trials to the "show trials conducted by Hitler and Stalin."

Meanwhile, it was announced on Friday September 9, that four British barristers were to come to Belfast to investigate the RUC's use of alleged accomplices' evidence, the tactics of 'protective custody' for their relatives, and other matters linked to the show trials.

Protests by local solicitors have been so scarce in the last 14 years that it is worth noting the unattributed quotes which found their way into the columns of some newspapers, where lawyers were reported as being "worried" at what they see as a "purely political exercise", and concerned that there is automatic "presumption of guilt" for those accused by hired perjurers (Irish Times, September 10). In the Sunday Times, SDLP member and Belfast solicitor Paschal O'Hare even described the show trials as "a farce".

As 16 people were charged solely on the word of Robert Lean, seven of them on Saturday 10 September and the other nine on Monday September 12, solicitors for the accused denounced the RUC leaks, and what amounted to a 'trial by the media'.

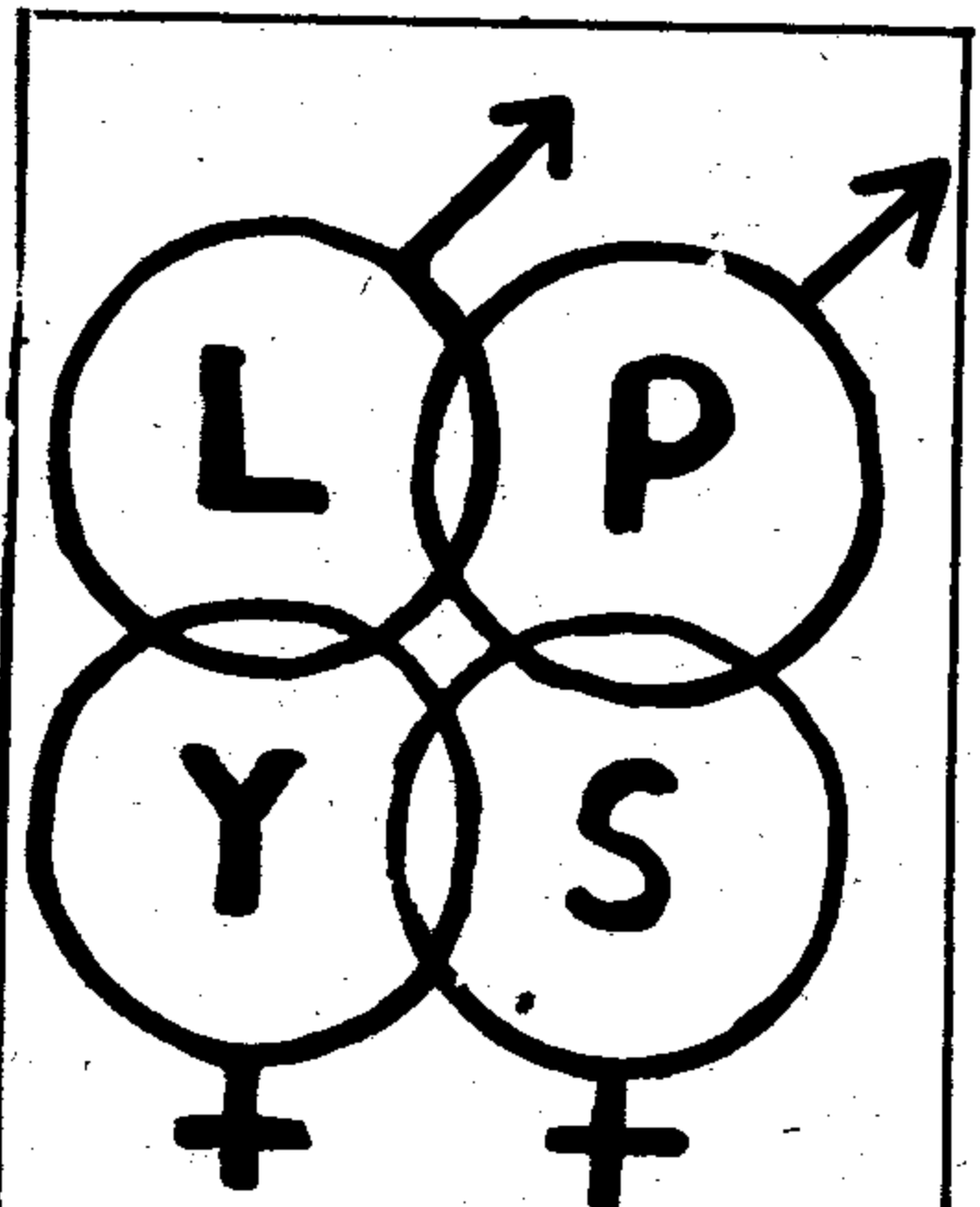
"Lean is cast as a top member of an illegal organisation", solicitor Pat Finucane declared, explaining the RUC strategy "as a sort of master-spy, according to the latest reports. Therefore he is in a position to know accurate and reliable information, therefore his allegations are correct, therefore these people must be guilty."

After the trial involving UVF informer Joseph Bennett, OUP and DUP politicians, under pressure from local loyalist organisations, had 'unanimously' decried the use of hired perjurers. However, after last week's arrests, Official Unionist leader James Molyneux could no longer contain himself, and announced on Monday that he had changed his mind and now approved of the RUC tactics.

DUP deputy leader Peter Robinson was quick to attack his rival, and the next day called him "a fool" and "naive", while making a bid for the support of Belfast loyalists by questioning the use of perjurers.

Meanwhile, British direct-ruler James Prior played a perfect Pontius Pilate to the assembled press on Monday, declaring that "the use of informers" was a matter entirely for the courts, and that he was "distancing myself from it."

He was later slammed by West Belfast MP Gerry Adams, who said: "Mr Prior supports a corrupt process where the witness is offered immunity, given inducements, and coaching in what to say in court. The law courts in Belfast are about as independent of James Prior as the show trials in Russia were of Stalin."



Gay YS would like to send a speaker to your YS meeting, please invite us.

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International news

Fascist victory in local election

WARNING TO FRENCH LEFT

by Martin Thomas

RACISM is on the rise in France. Fascists have reaped where the leaders of the Socialist Party and Communist Party have sown.

On September 11, three members of the French National Front — roughly similar in politics to the British group of the same name — won seats on the town council at Dreux, west of Paris. One of the new councillors is Jean-Pierre Stirbois, general secretary of the National Front.

They won their seats as part of a joint slate with the mainstream right-wing parties, the RPR and the UDF. In the first round of the election, on September 4, the RPR/UDF slate had won 43% of the vote, the Left 41%, and the National Front 17%. The right wing and the fascists

then agreed on a joint slate for the run-off.

It seems that the NF votes came mainly from working class areas. 25% of the population in Dreux are immigrants (who do not have the right to vote), and the former Socialist Party mayor was blamed for 'giving preference' to them.

Socialist Party and Communist Party leaders voiced their horror. But only a few days before, on August 31, the SP/CP dominated government had announced new measures against 'illegal immigrants'.

The election of the left government in 1981, was followed by a liberalisation in immigration law. But now the govern-

ment has changed its tune. More staff will be employed to chase 'illegal' immigrants, they will be deported faster, and they will lose their right to appeal unless they can afford to pay their fare back to France for the hearing.

The main union federations, the CGT and the CFDT, supported these measures. And even before 1981 the Communist Party had been agitating about 'too many' immigrants in CP-controlled municipalities. One CP mayor led a gang of thugs who smashed up an immigrant workers' hostel.

With the main left parties thus helping to promote the idea that immigrants are 'a problem', is it surprising that some of the most desperate and hard-pressed French workers turn to

the fascists, who promise real action against this 'problem'?

The Dreux result confirms a pattern of rising support for the fascists. In March this year, National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen won 11% of the vote in a working class area of Paris.

This does not mean that fascism is round the corner in France. Although only one major leader of the RPR/UDF — Simone Veil — has publicly dissociated from the Dreux alliance, the RPR/UDF leaders have repudiated any notion of an overall national alliance. And the NF remains a relatively small force.

But racist attacks are likely to increase — unless the French labour movement heeds the warning of the Dreux result.

Nuclear arms 'useless' — US warmonger

INSIGHT into the dangers of the escalating arms race came last week from an unlikely source — Robert McNamara, one of the chief instigators of the 1960s missile build-up.

McNamara, writing in the US magazine Foreign Affairs, lifted the lid of mystery on the crash of a nuclear-armed B-52 bomber in North Carolina 22 years ago.

The falling bomber dropped two 24 megaton nuclear bombs — each potentially 1,800 times more powerful than the one which destroyed Hiroshima.

One broke apart on impact; the other was prevented from exploding only by the final stage of seven safety devices — after six had been triggered.

Until now US sources had suppressed this information on how close the USA had come in 1961 to reducing itself to 49 rather than 50 states.

Among those struggling to hold back the facts was the then Secretary of Defense in the rabidly anti-Soviet Kennedy administration: Robert McNamara!

Kennedy had strongly attacked the Eisenhower administration for allowing the emer-

By Harry Sloan

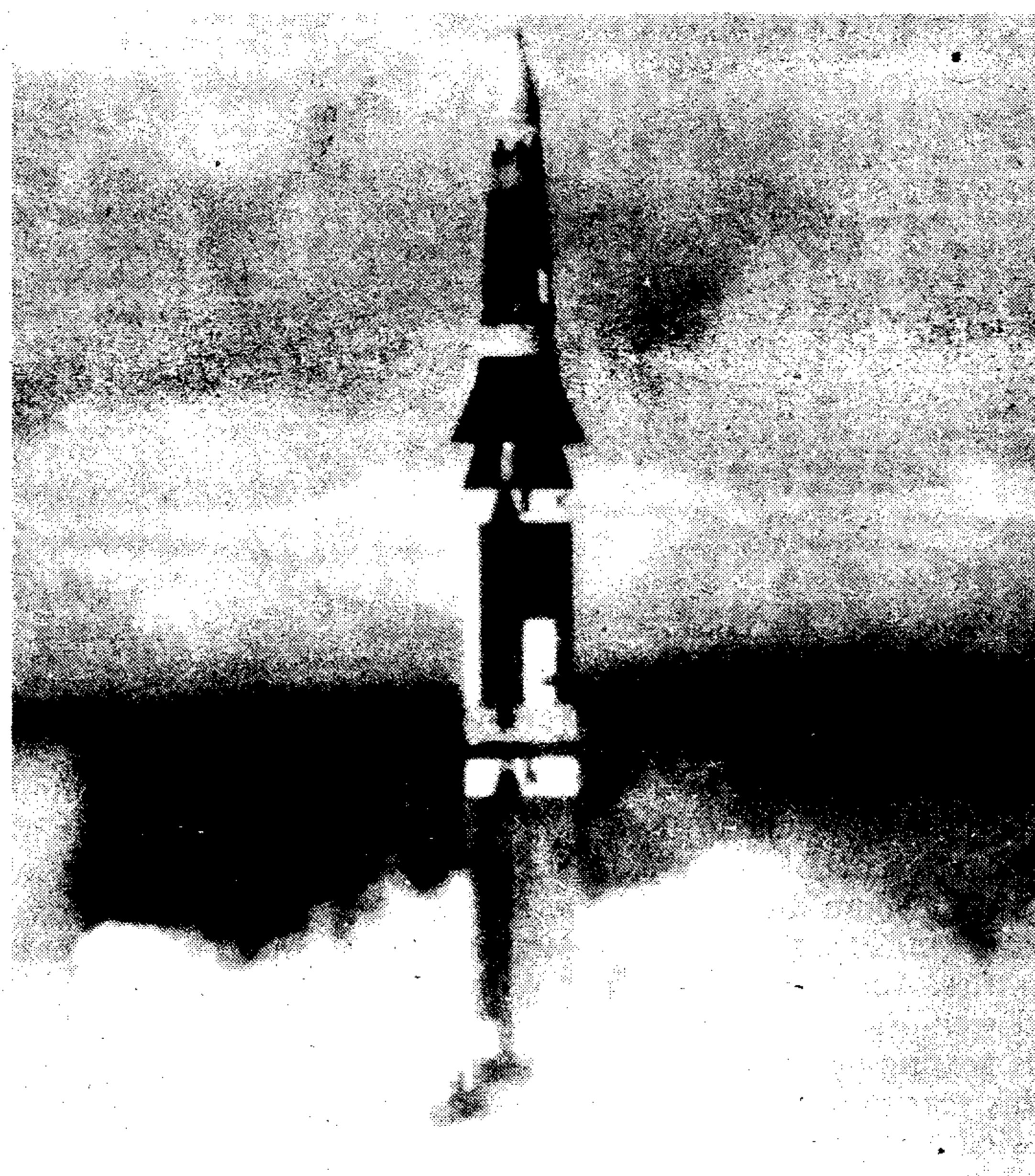
gence of a 'missile gap' leaving the USA lagging behind the USSR.

Yet when he took office in 1961 McNamara discovered — if he didn't already know — that this 'missile gap' was an elaborate fiction, encouraged by US airforce chiefs, who wanted a permanent 'first strike' superiority over the USSR.

McNamara — a leading executive from the Ford Motor Company — forged ahead regardless, authorising the deployment of 1,000 intercontinental 'Minutemen' missiles and the development of the Polaris submarine missile system.

It was under McNamara that development work on the Multiple Independently-targeted Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) warheads began in earnest; and to McNamara must be attributed the first moves towards Trident and MX missiles.

It is of course interesting that this man who has contributed as much as any living individual to



No military purpose? Why did he spend billions on them, then?

the dangers of nuclear war should now declare as he has done in 'Foreign Affairs' magazine that 'nuclear weapons serve no military purpose whatsoever.'

But perhaps one reason for this limited degree of enlightenment flows from McNamara's intervening years of work in the World Bank, where he had to devote his energies to extracting the maximum profits from the labour of workers and peasants in Third World countries.

In such an enterprise — or indeed in last year's Malvinas war — nuclear weapons are little use. McNamara advocates a strengthening of NATO's 'conventional' forces, and the establishment of a 'nuclear-free zone' in Europe.

With touching confidence which few will share, his article also assures the world that:

'It is difficult to imagine any US President under any circumstances initiating a strategic strike except in retaliation against a Soviet strike.'

'No' to missiles

AS tens of thousands of anti-war activists in West Germany prepare for mass demonstrations this autumn against the stationing of American Pershing missiles, there are signs that a November special conference of the Social Democratic Party could well overturn its present policy and declare against the missiles.

Schmidt

Former SPD Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, a staunch upholder of NATO strategy and the US alliance, has apparently gone to earth, and is making little attempt to stem the tide of opinion away from support for the deployment of the

Pershings.

Meanwhile an SPD regional conference in Baden-Württemberg has voted unanimously to resist the missiles.

Stung by this breach in the 'bi-partisan' line of support for US imperialism, Christian Democrat leaders have arranged a massive series of party rallies across the country to counter the show of strength by the peace campaigners.

Stiff new restrictions on demonstrations have been introduced by Chancellor Kohl's government, who are now incensed at the fact that many of the demonstrators will be able to take advantage of hefty reductions through block bookings on German railways.



Cuban troops in Angola

UNITA moves in

AFTER years of undeclared South African intervention and sustained sabotage and guerrilla activity by the pro-imperialist forces of Jonas Savimbi's unita, the Angolan regime is currently struggling to hold on to power and control over large areas of the country.

Foreign diplomats have been warned that their safety cannot be guaranteed if they venture more than 15 miles from the capital, Luanda.

Savimbi's systematic sabotage of communications and other economic targets — inflicting an estimated \$6 billion of damage — has combined with the slump in crude oil prices to devastate the weak Angola economy, which is still linked to the major oil monopolies.

It is partly the attempts by the Dos Santos regime to mend its bridges to the USA, the other imperialist nations, and South Africa, which have laid it open to the current military offensive.

A condition of 'normalised' relations with the USA and South Africa is the withdrawal of an estimated 20-25,000 Cuban troops, who have remained in Angola as a prop to the MPLA, since they helped defeat imperialist-backed FNLA and UNITA guerrillas in 1976.

While the Angola regime has flirted with the idea of a Cuban withdrawal it has effectively paralysed any military response to UNITA by the Cubans; and this same vacillation has minimised possible Soviet military and economic aid. All the time, Savimbi has been drawing increased South African and imperialist support.

The longer Dos Santos prevaricates, the more the odds swing in favour of Savimbi and his Western backers toppling the MPLA and establishing a pliable, pro-Pretoria regime, which would ride roughshod over the workers and peasants of Angola.

Slaughter in Peru

PERUVIAN security forces have summarily executed hundreds of Andean Indians in massive counter-insurgency operations launched this year, according to Amnesty International.

Since January 1983, 'disappearances' and extra-judicial executions in a nine-province emergency zone under military rule 'have been perpetrated with impunity and are increasing in number.'

Army statistics put the number of people killed by security forces this year at over 500. All the dead are said to have been guerrillas but officials give few details, Amnesty International said. Military communiques on operations in remote rural areas rarely report that prisoners have been taken, it added.

According to evidence collected by Amnesty International, many of the unnamed victims have been killed after being detained, wounded or tortured by military units and recently established civilian anti-guerrilla groups.

The security operations, now covering the Andean areas of Ayacucho, Huancavelica and Apurimac, are a response to killings of hundreds of peasant villagers by the guerrilla group, Sendero Luminoso, The Shining Path.

Examining the killing of eight journalists on 26 January in the Andean community of Uchuraccay, Amnesty International cited evidence that they were detained and summarily executed on the authority of the Teniente Gobernador, the most senior local official appointed by the central government.

Uchuraccay authorities said they had been given military orders to interdict all movement on trails in the region to block guerrilla routes, said Amnesty International.

A resident, Saturnino Ayala Robles who was in Uchuraccay at the time of the executions, said troops had ordered the killing of all strangers passing through the area and had instructed the locals to 'do so with great cruelty, to torture them and mutilate them'.

No escape

IN THE so-called German Democratic Republic people are regularly jailed for even mild criticism of official policies.

For example, those who have difficulty in getting exit visas and talk about it can be sent to prison on charges of 'treasonable passing on of information'.

The law makes such actions an offence even if the information is accurate and not an official secret. Amnesty, the world wide human rights organisation, says (in the September issue of Amnesty International Newsletter) it has yet to learn of a single prisoner brought to trial on such charges being acquitted.

Argentine strike call

IN A renewed surge of working class action, the two major union confederations in Argentina have threatened a general strike if their package of wage demands are not conceded on September 21.

Already public sector workers are to stage a 24-hour strike on Thursday September 22, with a further 48 hour strike next week if their demands are not met.



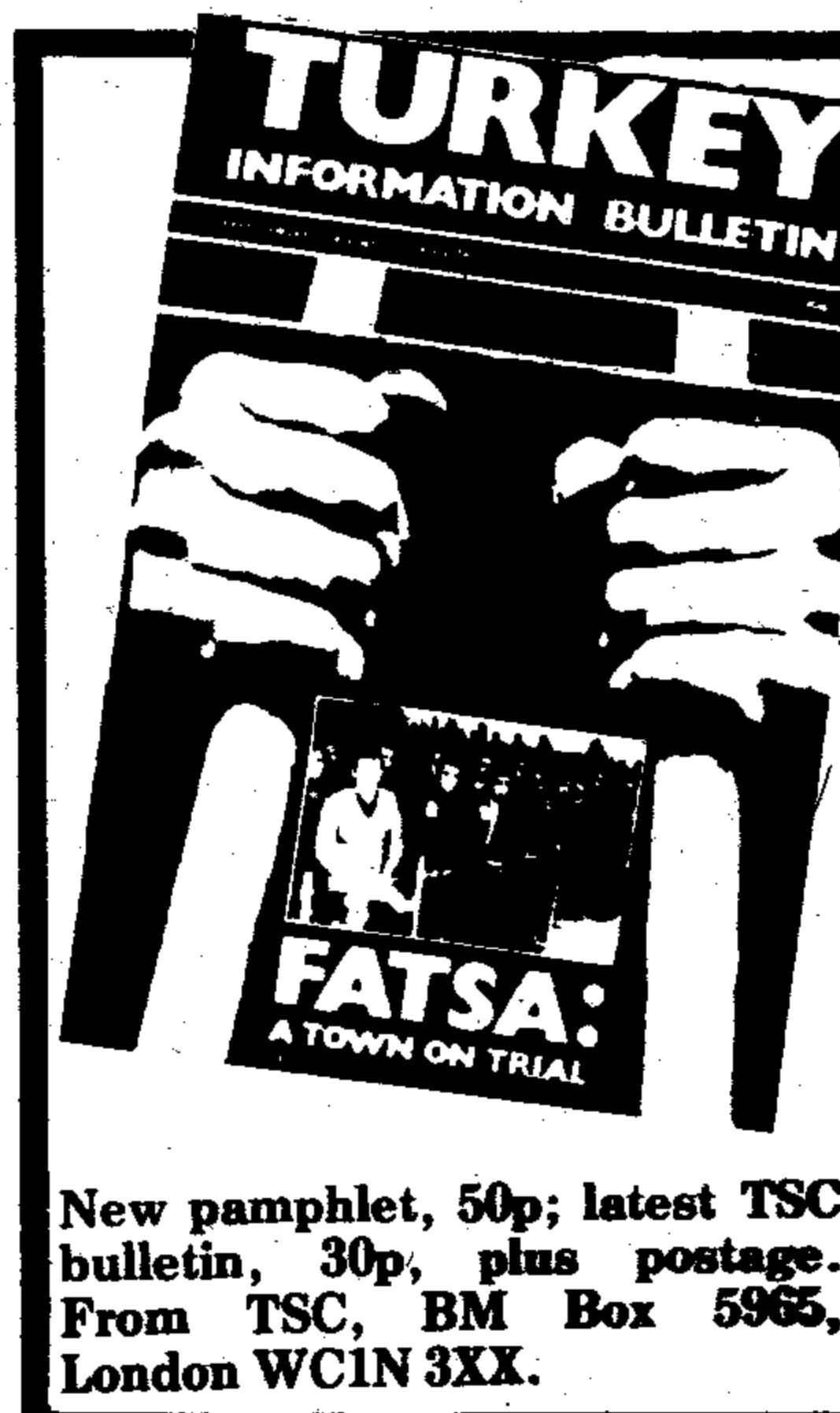
It seems that the Tories' Nationality Act has effects outside of Britain as well. In recent months 700 black people using 60 hour identity cards were turned away by French immigration because they 'feared' many of them had no right to return to Britain. This time a trip to France for underprivileged children is likely to be

an all-white outing for fear that black children will be turned back.

Obviously the French customs officials are being racist by specifically singling out blacks but essentially the responsibility lies with the British government and their racist laws.

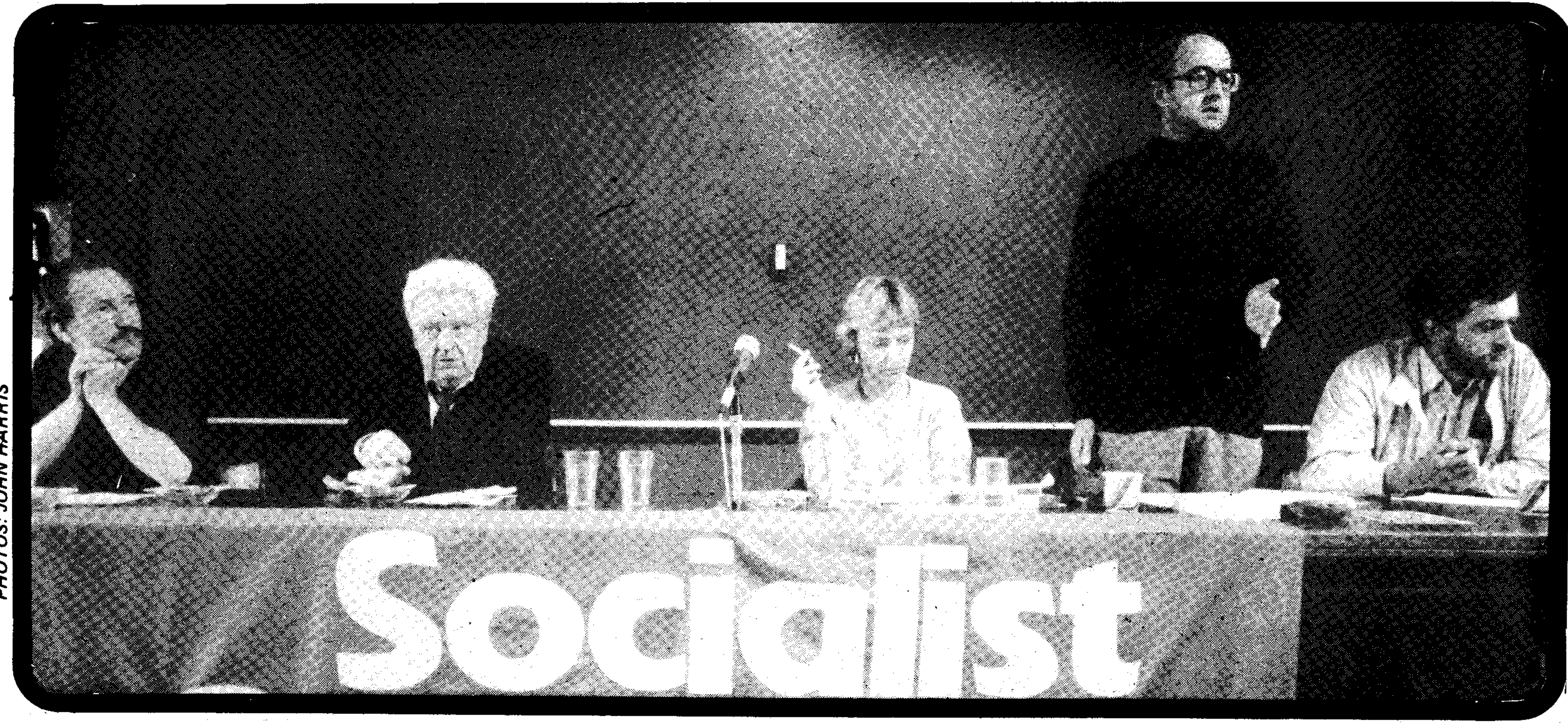
It is a general trend throughout capitalist Europe to use immigrant workers as scapegoats and the West German and French states are actively trying to repatriate immigrant workers. In France one union leader has called for all immigrants who have been in France for less than ten years to be sent home.

In Germany the Christian Democrat government is trading under the slogan 'Germany is not a country of immigration' and it plans to reduce its immigration population by 2-3 million by 1990.



New pamphlet, 50p; latest TSC bulletin, 30p, plus postage. From TSC, BM Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX.

PHOTOS: JOHN HARRIS



Socialist Organiser conference discusses Gearing up against Thatcher Ma

"HOW TO fight the Tories" was the theme: but in the light of experience since 1979 much of the discussion and debate inevitably centred on how — and why — the leaders of the labour movement have sabotaged any such fight.

And the same inescapable lesson emerged in each case: the need for an organised, concerted struggle inside the unions and the Labour Party to defeat the right wing offensive, and offer a clear and principled lead in the struggles which continue to develop.

Socialist Organiser's September 17 conference — called in the aftermath of the June 9 disaster, and designed to provide a focus for political discussion and clarification — proved to be well-timed.

One reflection of this was the turnout of over 300, and the constructive spirit in the workshops and plenary sessions, which discussed almost every aspect of the fight against the Thatcher offensive.

Following hard on the heels of a disgraceful TUC Congress, the SO conference offered left-wingers a chance to take stock of the industrial and political struggle in advance of the Labour Party conference.

While drawing a sober balance sheet of the setbacks inflicted on the workers' movement by the Tories, with the assistance of right wing and spineless 'left' trade union leaders, speakers pointed at the same time to the tenacity of struggles — such as the occupation of Thornton View hospital in Bradford and the fight against privatisation of British Telecom.

The opening session of the conference was chaired by vic-

Harry Sloan reports on the September 17 'How to Fight the Tories' conference.

timised BL Cowley militant Alan Thornett (whose speech we will carry next week).

CoHSE Broad Left activist Andrea Campbell spoke of the bureaucratic obstacles in the path of those health workers — such as those occupying Thornton View — who take action to halt the Tory bulldozers.

Colin Talbot spoke of the struggle in the POEU, on the eve of the union's special conference on privatisation.

The conflict between rank and file and the established leadership is not restricted to the unions: it runs through into the Labour Party, as Alf Holmes of the disaffiliated Wythenshawe CLP vividly described.

He recounted the struggles between the leftward-moving rank and file in Manchester and the bureaucratic leaders at Walworth Road, backed up by their trade union cronies — and stressed that Wythenshawe may be down (and disqualified from this year's Conference), but is certainly not out.

The disbanded CLP continues to operate unofficially while pursuing the fight.

Joy Hurcombe of Labour CND told the conference about the recent attempts by the CND leadership to move away from unilateralism.

The more general question of what policies and what kind of leadership can reach and mobilise the millions of workers who did not vote Labour on June 9 was taken up by Reg Race and by Jeremy Corbyn MP.

Race quoted, as a vivid example of how Labour governments have operated, the secret decision by a tiny cabal of Labour ministers in Attlee's 1945 government to begin development of a British nuclear bomb.

The last Labour government continued the same pattern, with its secret decision to develop the 'Chevaline' update for Polaris. How, then, could today's Labour leadership hold any credibility in arguing a unilateralist policy?

Race argued forcefully for a

campaign in support of Eric Heffer and Michael Meacher as the best way to fight for a change in the Party.

Jeremy Corbyn took up a similar theme — pointing to the two-faced attitude of Labour's right wing. On the one hand, they claim that the Party is 'losing its appeal to ordinary working people'; on the other, when reminded that Labour's most solid support has come from the working class families, black people, and youth in the inner city areas, they argue that the Party must not become 'ghettoised'.

A turn to organising unemployed youth, and active involvement in trade union and other struggles — such as the Newham 8 campaign — is vital to the

Platform speakers included Colin Talbot (above, far right), Joy Hurcombe (centre), Jeremy Corbyn MP, Reg Race, Alf Holmes, John O'Mahony (from right to left in left-hand picture), Alan Thornett and Andrea Campbell (not pictured). We'll be carrying more of the speeches in later issues of Socialist Organiser.

mobilisation of the Labour Party, he argued.

John O'Mahony from the Socialist Organiser editorial board was the final speaker. He argued that the Socialist Organiser Alliance had a central and irreplaceable role to play, and called on those present to join the SOA and help build it.

Broad

IN THE workshop on Broad Lefts there were contributions from ASTMS, USDAW, TGWU, AUEW, and NUT.

Colin Talbot of the Post Office Engineering Union pointed out that British Telecom — unlike other industries — is highly profitable, and growing.

The workforce is very confident, having made gains with little struggle. After Communist Party control collapsed in the early '50s, however, this situation had produced a right wing leadership.

Now the threat of privatisation to jobs, wages and conditions has roused the membership to place the Broad Left in power. The Right had shown itself incapable of leading a fight.

The POEU Broad Left today, Colin said, is unlike the Broad Left of the past. It is open and democratic, and includes all left tendencies save those who exclude themselves. There are open and honest differences — but policy is decided by majority vote.

The Broad Left does not concentrate exclusively on union elections.

However, the Broad Left

TACKLING THE CITY

COULD a Labour government control the City if it really wanted to?

Some comrades in the 'Alternative Economic Strategy' workshop thought it could — and moreover that exchange controls must be a priority measure for any radical Labour government.

Most speakers disagreed. So long as the basic framework of capitalism remains intact, they pointed out, the multinationals have dozens of channels to evade exchange controls. And so long as a Labour government restricted the mobilisation of the working class to merely 'controlling' the institutions of capitalist power — rather than overthrowing them — the entrenched power of the bosses and bankers would surely win out in the end.

Besides, what is the rationale of exchange controls in isolation from comprehensive socialist measures? Many on the Left say that the billions invested abroad by British capital are a 'waste' — but by what nationalist quirk is investment by British capital in Britain progressive, and investment by British capital elsewhere wasteful? The argument must be put on a class, not a nationalist, basis.

Tony Dale from Manchester argued that the central problem of the AES is not so much nationalism as the fact that it is a strategy 'from above'. Martin Thomas, who had introduced the workshop, argued in reply that this is only half true.

All versions of the AES confine themselves to influencing the capitalist nation-state rather

than overthrowing it. Most versions of the AES stress pressure on the state 'from above' through Parliament. But there are also versions stressing pressure 'from below', through trade union and community organisations.

For example, Mike Cooley and Mike George (both closely associated with the Lucas Aerospace Workers' Plan) argue for 'economic and industrial planning firmly based on activism at

the grassroots', but in the framework of 'an economics for social needs (much as in the Second World War, and in Dalton's immediate post-war budgets)'.

One aspect which we failed to discuss, but which looms increasingly large in the labour movement, is the other sort of 'AES from below' — the 'local government AES', as practised by the Greater London Council and other left Labour local authorities.

More than tokens

MANY Labour Party and trade union organisations will now pass resolutions on lesbian and gay rights. That's a step forward — but one that usually falls far short of action on the issue.

This problem was the centre of the discussion in the workshop on 'Gay Rights' — coming out in the labour movement.

Bob Cant, introducing the workshop, pointed out that while on many issues the labour movement challenges prevailing values as a matter of course, generally it continues to accept conventional heterosexual relations as a norm.

A comrade from Coventry cited a striking example of the often tokenistic nature of labour movement support for lesbian and gay rights. In the discussion on conference resolutions in her constituency Labour Party, a lesbian/gay rights resolution

was carried almost without controversy. But when it came to deciding which resolution would be the one that the CLP is entitled to send in for conference, overwhelming preference was given to another — advocating more capitalist investment in the Third World as the road to development there.

And when the City Council had prevented a Gay Festival from taking place locally, there had been no effective response from the Labour Party.

The lack of resolutions and amendments for Labour Party conference this year on lesbian/gay rights shows that these are not untypical experiences.

We still have a lot of work to do to convince the labour movement that lesbian/gay liberation is an issue demanding more priority than occasional conscience-salving resolutions.

STUDE

"FE COLLEGES are different", said Y don't focus on the college. They have animal welfare was the most political in."

The workshop acknowledged that F organise in.

But Tony Dale, a member of the National Students national committee, thought to analyse FE students as students around the Comrades in Manchester had sold quite week, he said.

Karen Talbot, a member of the National, said that cuts, privatisation, and Y should be pushing. Unfortunately NUS to be up to activists in the colleges to get annual grants march is not going ahead.

Dave Bebin from Nottingham University helping college staff set up Labour Party branches could become really important more into the front-line of Tory attacks.

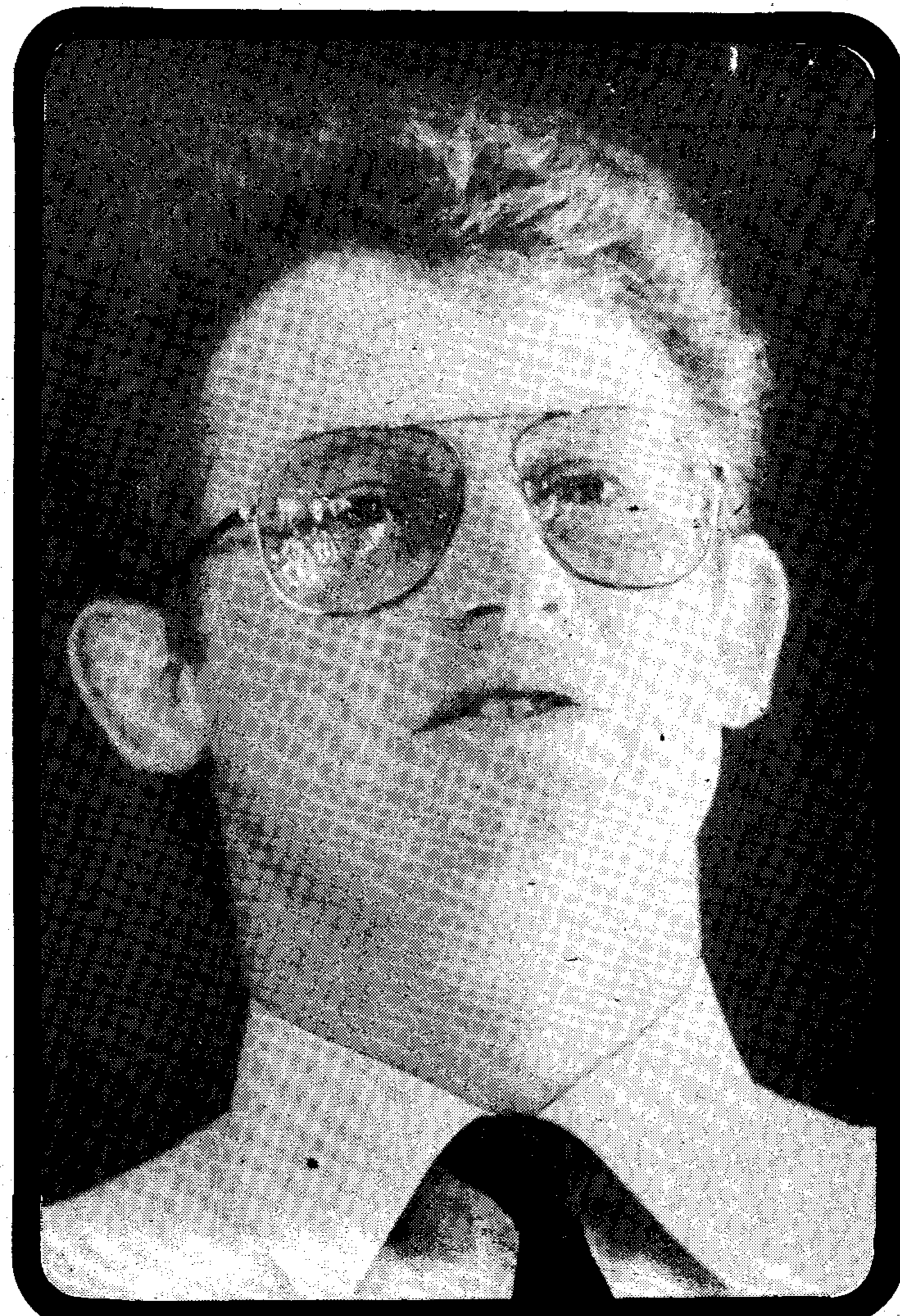
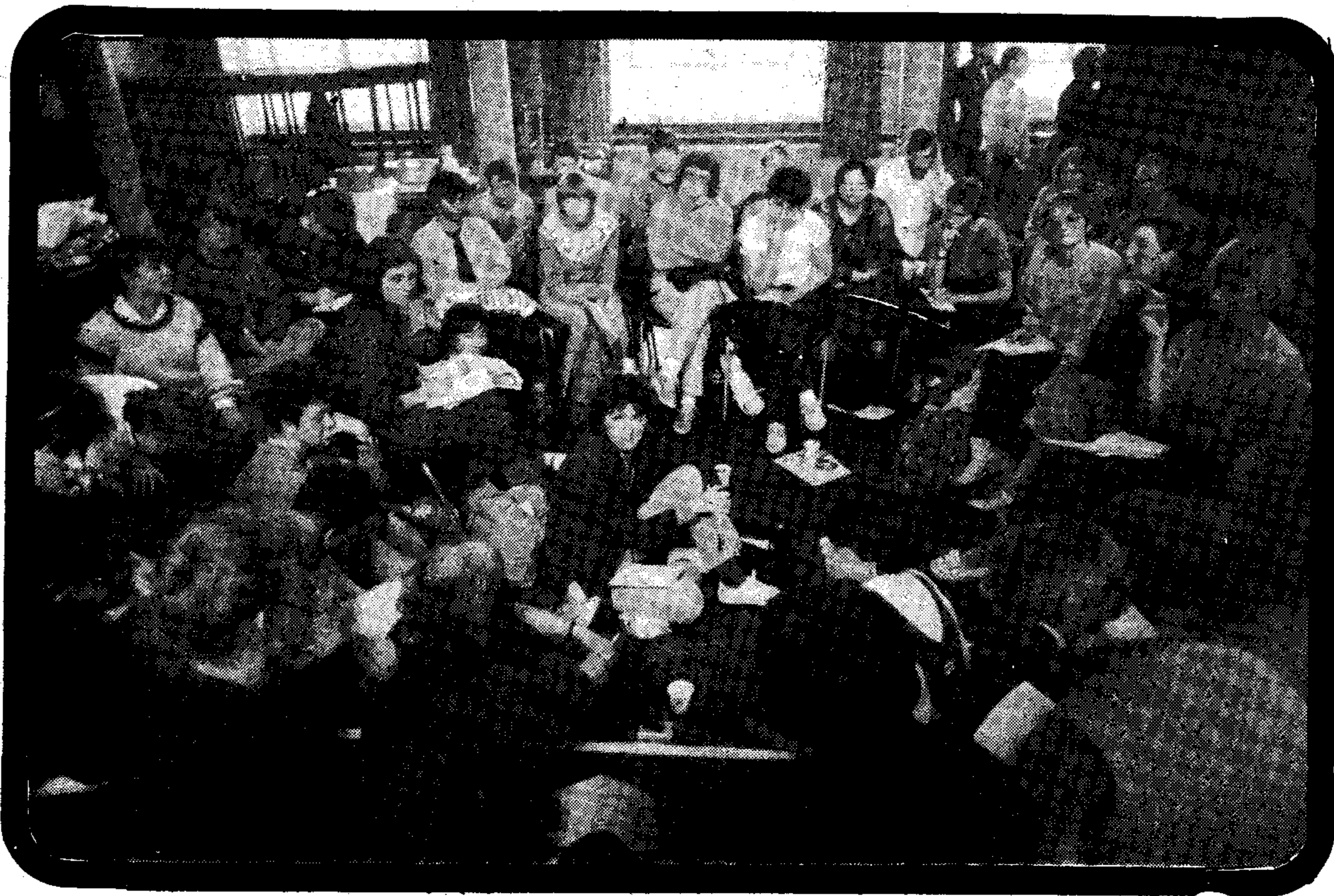
Gerald James from the London School was a danger that we could end up forcing exclusively on labour movement but he accepted that student union against privatisation, for instance, on the movement isn't just an ideologically 'con necessity for students if state education extended.

Socialist ORGANISER

LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE MEETING

Socialist Organiser's Labour Party conference meeting this year will be on building Labour Party workplace branches and the fight against the Tories. Speakers will include activists who have had direct experience of building workplace branches.

TUESDAY OCTOBER 4, 5.30PM
KING'S HOTEL, BRIGHTON



'WOMEN and the Labour Movement' was a very well-attended workshop, and the few outlandish interventions from ultra-left sectarians did not prevent positive and thoughtful discussion.

In her introduction, Liz Philipson said that while the move to increase the representation of women on the Labour Party National Executive had won backing from the Constituency Labour Parties, it still had to get support in many trade unions. We have to persuade women to be active in trade unions, and to convince men that they, too, need to fight for women's rights. And we have to use the most imaginative methods of getting our ideas across — not just the usual leaflets, but also such forms as theatre.

One sister spoke of the current NALGO residential care workers' dispute. The role of women in 'caring jobs' has led them to see the need to preserve those jobs.

Mary Corbishley said that she was afraid that issues of special concern to women, such as sexual harassment at work, will be squeezed out under pressure of a push from men for a united fight to get a Labour government re-elected. But for many women the choice is to put up with sexual harassment or to lose their jobs. Such issues cannot be ignored.

Jenny Fisher reported on the work being done to unite the struggles of black and Asian women with the Labour Party in East London. On a recent demonstration against deportations, one third of the participants were Labour Party members.

Gerry Byrne commented on how many women were frightened of getting involved in trade union and Labour Party politics because of the constant threat of violence by men at home and in the street.

Colin Talbot of the POEU pointed out that telecommunications is a fast-growing industry. If the miners' economic position is getting weaker, he said, telecoms workers will have to take over as the shock troops of the labour movement.

rk 2

Lefts

Why is there a downturn?

Supporters on the union's National Executive Committee have moved shaky under pressure from the full-time bureaucrats.

Stephen Corbishley said that the CPSA Broad Left has some similarities with the POEU's. Unlike the old Broad Left which met secretly to fix deals, it is an open organisation, though the Socialist Workers' Party excludes itself.

The CPSA Broad Left has pushed for more union democracy, with considerable success, but (because of Militant's influence) it is very bad in its policy on women.

Unlike the POEU Broad Left, the CPSA Broad Left has to be organised in many different sections of workers. This leads to different policy emphases in different areas, for example, opposition to the Tories' Youth Training Scheme not being pushed strongly among Manpower Services Commission workers.

Recently, Stephen said, debate has declined in the Broad Left. Militant supporters are now just over 50% of the Broad Left, and therefore, do not need to worry about arguing to win support.

ENTS

Anne from Sheffield. "Students outside interests. At my tech subject people were interested

colleges can be very hard to

ional Organisation of Labour that it would be possible to organise paper 'Socialist Student', few outside tech colleges this

nal Union of Students executives were the issues which NUS isn't doing that, and it's going to lead. It looks like even the

ity stressed that we should be workplace branches. These as colleges are drawn more and

l of Economics said that there student issues and focus-

cannot hope to win fights won. Turning to the labour 'spect' slogan, it is an immediate is to be defended, let alone

JOHN O'MAHONY, editor of Socialist Organiser, summed up at the end of the conference. He addressed himself to the mood of depression in the labour movement after June 9.

All around us is massive devastation, by the slump and by the Tories. What does the working class need as an answer to this? Socialism: the socialist revolution.

True, it was unlikely that a socialist revolution would be the first response of the British working class to the slump. A whole period is necessary in which the working class reorganises and reorients itself.

But what was possible was a radical Labour government which tried to serve the interests of the working class, and which depended for its ability to act on working class mobilisation. We didn't get that. What was also possible was an explosive trade union fightback. We haven't got that, either.

What we have got is a Tory election victory — Thatcher Mark 2. We have a TUC veering to the right, unable even to be decent trade unionists, and now talking to hangman Tebbit about what rope he should use.

Worse than the collapse at the top has been the collapse of rank and file militancy. For two decades the rank and file had been able largely to ignore the top union bureaucrats and to defy and even defeat governments. This rank and file militancy collapsed just when it was most needed.

There have been industrial victories — Michelin, Firth Derihon, Greenings, the Financial Times — but all in all industrial militancy is at a low ebb.

Reason to be depressed? Yes. But there is no reason to give in to the cosmic gloom and despondency which has overwhelmed sections of the Left.

The sun rises and sets, and short of nuclear annihilation it is equally certain that the class struggle will revive. Even devastation like that inflicted on the Chilean workers ten years ago

could not indefinitely prevent a revival of the class struggle.

Most important, and decisive for the future, is to learn the lessons. We often talk about the class struggle in military images. An army must analyse and study its defeats and setbacks.

Why has the labour movement lost ground?

The visible and obvious reason is the slump, which undermines the strength of the labour movement through mass unemployment. But slumps produce varying effects. After the initial shock was over, the slump in the US in the 1930s spurred the workers to create mass industrial unions for the first time.

The reason why the slump has had such a bad effect so far on the British labour movement is to be found in what went before. The Labour government's betrayals in office opened up workers to despair and disillusionment. In 1973-4, tremendous industrial militancy pushed out the Tories and led to the Wilson-Callaghan government — as the only thing the labour movement had to put in place of the Tories. And the result was attacks on the working class, cuts in real wages and in public services.

Why did it go like that? Because of the limitations of the labour movement itself, and especially because of the limitations of the rank and file militancy of the '60s and '70s. What is happening now has to be seen in the perspective of the last 20 years.

The rank and file militancy was tremendously effective on wages and conditions. Its strength and success there was also the root of its political weakness. It did not have to concern itself very much with the problem of the official leadership structures of the unions, or with the political wing of the labour movement, the Labour Party.

The labour movement was sectionalised, chopped up into segments. The rank and file was without a socialist perspective into which it fitted its own activity. In this it differed markedly from the shop stewards' movement of the 1920s, which saw itself as one wing of a revolutionary socialist movement.

When the shop stewards'

movement and the rank and file militancy were at their peak, what was going on in the Labour Party? Very little.

But by the time the struggle for internal democracy was shaking the Labour Party, the slump was already dragging down the rank and file industrial militancy.

The Labour Party struggle for democracy was, of course, itself a result of the experience of Labour in government in the '70s and of the industrial struggles. Yet the two currents, the industrial militancy in the trade unions and the movement within the Labour Party, never properly cohered. They never united their strengths. The Left has had setbacks in the Labour Party because it has failed to win in the unions.

Over the two or more decades before the present downturn, the labour movement was powerful, effective (for limited purposes), but incoherent. Its different strands — and in the first place its political and industrial strands — were not united into any integrated and coherent class strategy.

That's why we could not handle the Labour government which rode to power on a wave of industrial militancy in 1974. That's why the movement has reacted as it has to the slump.

The official leaders have always played a bad role. The slump, the entrenched leadership, but above all the disappointments and limitations of what the movement was and did in the period of its greatest power and strength — these are the reasons for the downturn.

The limitations of the rank and file movement, in turn, are to be traced back to the limitations of the Left — its confusions, divisions, and small numbers.

The class struggle will revive. Our job is to be ready for it.

The Tories are stepping up their offensive. The TUC wants to live with Tebbit's laws. But maybe they won't be able to. There is still tremendous strength in the labour movement.

What do we need to do now?

1. Repair the ravages to shop floor organisation, only this time on a higher political basis. The

shop stewards' movement must be equipped with socialist perspectives and a programme for trade union democracy which also concerns itself with the broader labour movement.

Is it whistling in the dark to talk like this in the middle of a slump? Remember how the Minority Movement, the most effective, integrated, and comprehensive rank and file movement ever, started! It was launched amidst the collapse of militancy in the early '20s, and was effective thanks to a strong political backbone.

2. Continue the fight in the Labour Party. The Labour Party is still the political arm of the labour movement. There is no serious alternative to continuing this fight.

3. The entire labour movement must be regenerated and renewed, and given the objective of taking power, in place of its old, merely reformist, objectives.

4. The struggles in the Labour Party and in the trade unions, the struggles of sections like blacks and women, must be linked together and integrated into a movement with a coherent strategy, not only against the Tories but against capitalism itself.

5. We must organise and regroup the revolutionary socialists in the labour movement. This is the precondition for everything else.

'Build the revolutionary party' has become one of the most discredited of the sectarian catchcries. Those who counterpose this slogan to the existing labour movement, and to the task of changing it, deserve to be discredited.

But still... the Labour Party is a 'broad church', the trade unions are vast and politically heterogeneous organisations. The only agency that can overcome the fragmentation and political incoherence of the working-class movement and the movements of the oppressed is an organisation of socialists with a clear-cut, comprehensive strategy.

The Socialist Organiser Alliance has made some impact in the labour movement. If we had been better organised, we could have made a bigger impact. To prepare for a new upsurge of working class struggle, we need to build and strengthen the Socialist Organiser Alliance now.

Those not already organised supporters of the paper should consider joining the SOA.

Get ORGANISED!



Become a supporter of the Socialist Organiser Alliance — groups are established in most large towns. We ask £1.50 a month minimum (20p unwaged) contribution from supporters.

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

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

Gay candidate's campaign OPEN AND POSITIVE

The anti-gay savaging of Peter Tatchell in the Bermondsey by-election might well have intimidated gays from standing in elections lest they get the same treatment. The Bermondsey experience was bound to make Labour Parties cautious and to give a 'reasonable' disguise to anti-gay bigotry. The story of how an openly gay candidate won a local government seat in Nottingham is therefore an important and an inspiring one.

Gay activist Richard McCance was selected as a Labour local election candidate in Nottingham for what seemed an unwinnable seat. The branch seemed to have no difficulty accepting his gayness until suddenly the seat began to look winnable. Then an unsuccessful attempt was made to ditch gay rights.

Later Richard McCance's right to be 'open and positive' about his sexual orientation in his personal statement to the electorate was challenged. This is Richard McCance's story of his election campaign.

THE divisions and conflicts that arose from the campaign meeting of the branch took a few days to superficially heal; those on the Left who had sold out on gay rights faced the wrath of those who had held fast, knowing that by doing so we might lose both seats, but that it was important to start the campaign as we intended to continue it, and not begin by compromising.

However, I did agree to change 'lover' to 'partner', which had connotations of Wimbledon and the Skaters Waltz. It was in this spirit of compromise that my agent, who had resigned, was persuaded by intermediaries to re-enlist.

Asian

I was not sure that the word 'gay' would translate positively into Asian languages. There appeared to be no self-defined word, only very negative ones, so it was omitted from our Asian language leaflets. I had just heard of a case of an Asian youth caught stealing whose rather strict father wanted to chop off his hand, but for the timely intervention of a more progressive Asian community leader. I pondered over what might happen if I chanced upon their doorstep!

It was now time to take a fleeting look at the contenders in this election line-up and a profile of the ward itself.

There were the two Tory councillors, who had surfaced in the ward, almost for the first time in four years, to present their calling cards, one Liberal candidate replete with orange beret, double-barrelled name and country seat, who had already worked the ward with murf-laden leaflets like there was no tomorrow.

When 'Suzie' as she liked to be called, wasn't posing knee-deep in shit and broken glass she could be seen ascending the bulldhall steps, petition in hand, pointing heavenwards.

By Richard McCance

Then there were the two Labour candidates, a young local Anglo-Arab community worker with an English name, and myself, a white middle-aged gay social worker who lived and worked outside the ward.

Forest Fields bears the familiar signs of an area in transition — and it now seems in a hurry to smarten itself up. The area escaped the bulldozers in the early '70s and the rows of small, neat terraced houses bear evidence of modernisation. There are also many large gabled houses, some still in multi-occupation, others more recently colonized by professionals. Small shops abound, bringing the produce of tropical gardens to the street corner, presided over by names like Singh and Khan, now as familiar as Smith or Brown.

Press

Good old-fashioned paranoia began to take hold of me, as I looked for further evidence of impending treachery. And when our personal statements were found to need reprinting because of typographical errors, I firmly believed that this was a plot to stop the statements appearing at all!

I wondered what some of the other workers might be thinking. For despite my track record on a range of issues, I think some people still half-expected me to cause an avaricious news-hungry press to descend Bermondsey-style on the ward. Even if I wasn't about to run



Anti-gay bigotry helped sink Peter Tatchell. But Richard McCance's campaign showed that this bigotry can be fought successfully.

wild in a frock I just might rock the boat and issue a press release on the newly constituted Gay Giro Users Association/Gay Liberation Front.

But the predicted collective doom just did not happen. Neither the press nor the other political parties responded apart from a small article in the local Tory rag which had me admitting that I was gay, but then went on to accurately quote from my personal statement on Equal Opportunities.

I was later able to identify the 'sudden unease' of my running mate on the day of my 'admission' who went into overdrive, rushing round canvassing at the double. No-one mentioned the press release, though it had clearly been known about by my agent.

Five days before the election the new statements were ready for distribution.

Canvass

We were now into our third canvass and some returns were indicating that whilst the Labour promises were generally holding firm, some split or single voting would occur. Some people now made it clear on the doorstep that they would not vote for a homosexual, no way.

There was the African family whose vote we lost, and the irate letter which began: "Dear Mr. Gay... we can do without your kind... go back to where you came from, London no doubt... and take the blacks, pimps and muggers with you... to think you boast about being a youth leader and school governor... enough is enough mate!" (The other candidate was the youth leader and school governor.)

Elsewhere a student social worker said she could not bring herself to vote for the gay candidate as she was a Christian and it was against God's will. When I introduced myself as suffering from that unfortunate affliction she giggled nervously and blushed as she closed the door rapidly.

Another Labour candidate enthusiastically relayed back to me that the local Leftie-patronised pub owner had openly declared that she would not vote for a homosexual.

The evening before polling day the agent and the other candidate tried some subtle pressure on me to reduce my gay profile.

Sacrifice

The argument went like this. My agent would sacrifice wearing his CND badge — after all it was important not to discourage voters and to win. Then we would have four years to put our policies into action. Therefore it would be logical not to wear any badges, although my pink triangle would be alright (I wonder why?).

When they realised this would not work they dropped it.

An eve of poll final fling by the Liberals galvanised us into action and at 6 am on a cold, wet election day twenty supporters drenched the ward with leaflets which showed Tories and Liberals shaking hands.

During the day I had several good-luck calls including one from one of the members who said that whatever the result I had maintained my integrity and he was proud to have been associated with the campaign.

Towards the close of poll a young man whom I had thought to be gay, arrived at the committee rooms in a panic because he wanted to vote but couldn't find the polling station. It was clear there was an urgency for him to record his vote.

At the count the voting pattern clearly showed that whatever prejudices existed, 85% of the Labour votes were cast for the slate of two. Both the other candidate and myself got a significant number of split and single votes. My split votes were predominantly Tory/Labour and his Liberal/Labour.

More importantly, there was only a difference of two votes between the other Labour candidate and myself. (One

of the Tory candidates, incredulous at his defeat [at the hands of a pervert?]) dissolved into tears).

Reactions to my win were varied and ranged from euphoria to incredulity. One friend broke down and cried when she heard the result — another phoned me twice, he couldn't believe it. A phone-call from a lesbian mum forecast a gay takeover of City Hall!

The campaign was remarkable for its lack of visible homophobia — individual prejudices which may have been strong were not united by any orchestrated anti-gay campaign, as in Bermondsey.

From the start my supporters and I set the terms of the campaign which helped determine its outcome. Too often we are put on the defensive when we should have the right to raise gay rights on our own terms as and when we choose.

John Shiers, writing in Gay News, said: 'We should not have to deny our gayness in order to be taken seriously as Socialists'. And that is basically what it is all about.

The straight candidates would offer what they considered to be their passport to acceptability — '2.4 children, happily married, Rotarian'. I was seeking the same opportunity to say that I was different and perhaps to

rouse some otherwise apathetic people to vote for me.

What was clear was that gay rights was not a vote loser — our seats were the only two Labour gains in Nottingham with a 13% swing from the Tories. However, gay rights was by no means the only determinant in motivating people to split or switch votes.

As a candidate I was 'out' as gay from the start, rather than 'found out', and so any media coverage would have had to begin on my terms. That was in contrast to Peter Tatchell's decision not to come out, which gave most press releases and features the appearance of near-exposes or confessionals.

However, he was standing for Parliament in a by-election with a news-hungry media plotting his downfall, with active connivance from the right wing of the Labour Party. I was but one of fifty-seven candidates in a local election, and not yet generally perceived as a threat to the moral order of Forest Fields.

At the selection meeting for the June elections the agent for the constituency, who predicted doom for the ward if I came out, publicly stated that he had been proved wrong by the election result and went on to suggest that not only should we perhaps consider an ethnic women's leaflet but we might think about a gay leaflet as well.

When pressed to authorise £5 from his campaign funds to pay for the LCGR election leaflet he declined, but offered us yet another meeting! (He had previously met with Nottingham gays because LCGR posed a threat and he was despatched by the leader of the Labour Group of Nottingham Council to meet and mollify us).

Withdraw

We reacted by withdrawing our canvassers who were gay and went to work for Ken Coates in Nottingham South who was prepared to back LCGR's initiative.

At our first branch meeting after the local and general elections a motion was carried unanimously which said that in any future campaign the Branch reserved the right to stand a member of an under-represented group if it chose to do so. But when discussion was invited no-one spoke. The story continues.

From the start we travelled an uncertain road. Although painful at times, there are no villains in this tale except our own fears and what they can do to us.

From issue no. 8 of Gay Socialist, journal of the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights.

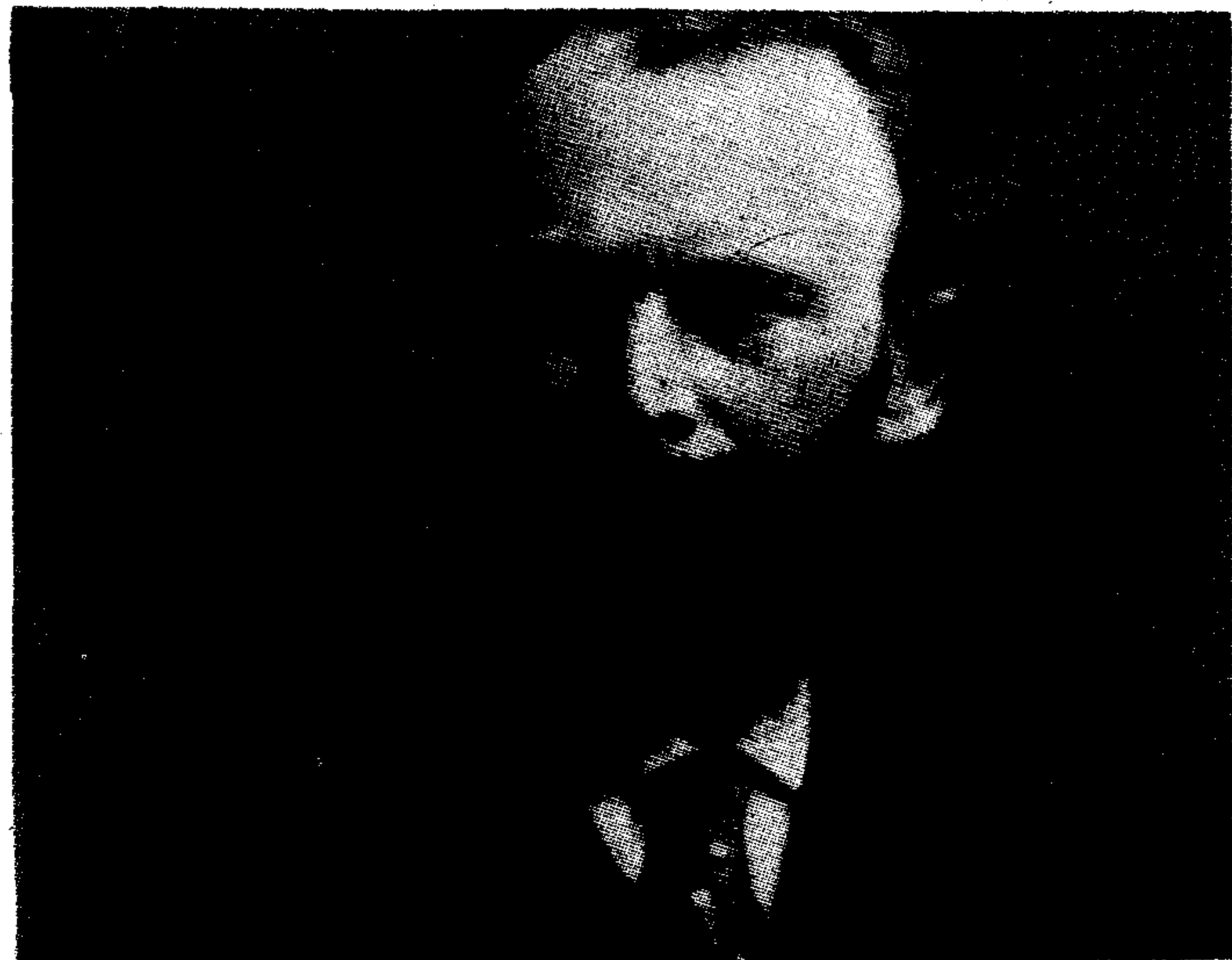


To join or affiliate, write to Chris Richardson, 21 Devonshire Promenade, Lenton, Nottingham NG7 2DS. £5 for individuals, or for affiliated organisations, per 1000 members. £2 for low-waged individuals. £1 for unwaged. Add 50p if you want the special issue of Gay Socialist.

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SPOTLIGHT



Manet's art Revolutionary realism

To mark the centenary of the death of Eduard Manet (1832-83) a small exhibition of his work ("Manet at Work") is on display at the National Gallery until 9 October.

Manet was a revolutionary painter, strongly influenced by the "Realist" movement in 19th century art. Realism was a reaction against the conventions of the past: against Romanticism, philosophical idealism, religion and superstition.

It had political implications especially in France (its centre) and grew up in the radical climate after the 1848 Revolution. Realism was not just a movement in painting but also influenced literature including the work of the French bourgeois Balzac and the Russian anarchist Tolstoy.

Courbet and Degas were known as "plebeian realists" as they painted ordinary people. Millet concentrated on peasants. Manet, however, painted the bourgeois society of Paris.

Values

Realism was revolutionary in its day as it called on art to portray the world as it was, not as tradition dictated it. It was also highly individualistic and reflected the values of expanding and progressive 19th century capitalism.

Manet's art was later influenced by the Impressionists and their obsession with painting the world as it appeared rather than (as for the Realists) how it was.

In this exhibition Manet's Impressionist phase is represented by "The Banks of the Seine at Argenteuil" (1874), a standard Impressionist-style riverscape. Far more interesting are his earlier (Realist) paintings.



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

By Albert Ross

Perhaps Manet's most famous painting, "Olympia" (1863) is unfortunately not on show in this exhibition. (It is well worth a visit to the Jeu de Paume in Paris to see).

However, Le Dejeuner Sur L'Herbe (1862-3), which caused an equal stir in the art world at the time of its first showing, is here.

This painting (adapted by Malcolm McLaren for the cover of the first Bow Wow LP) challenged all classical artistic conceptions by painting a naked but proud and natural female figure, alongside two fully-dressed men. The traditional role of nude women in painting was to fulfill male erotic fantasies: so women conformed to an oppressive and passive stereotype. Manet's woman stares confidently and challengingly out of the canvass (as does his "Olympia").

Also on display is Manet's most famous political painting, "The Firing Party". Manet was a bourgeois radical and republican who despised the Emperor Napoleon III. The Firing Party depicts the execution of Napoleon's Mexican protegee, the Emperor Maximilian.

However, one of the executioners has Napoleon III's face — a comment by Manet on the Emperor's treacherousness and self-interest.

The exhibition contains some of Manet's works depicting the bourgeois Paris of the 1860s. "The Waitress" shows a typical Parisian nightlife scene, and "Music in the Tuileries Gardens" (1862) shows rich and stylish Parisians (including Manet himself) in all their opulence.

This is a small but important exhibition commemorating a crucial figure in the history of modern painting. Manet's art reflects the changes that European society saw in the 19th century. He is a modern painter, painting the modern world we all know.

Sraffa and Robinson

Subversive professors

By Martin Thomas

PIERO Sraffa died recently. He was not famous, and most Socialist Organiser readers will not have heard of him.

Yet he was one of the most important and influential intellectual figures of this century.

He was the closest friend of the great Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, the most celebrated philosopher of this century (in the English-speaking world, at least) credited his most important ideas to discussions with Sraffa.

For J.M. Keynes, who wrought a revolution in bourgeois economics, Sraffa was also a major influence — one of five or six people who helped shape the 'Keynesian' critique of what was capitalist ortho-

doxy up to the 1930s.

And Sraffa himself also initiated a whole new school of thought in economics.

Sraffa was so cautious about committing himself that he wrote very little.

His revolution in economics is contained in a small book, 'Production of Commodities by Means of Commodities', published in 1960. It took him over 30 years to write. It has been followed by tremendous controversy both in academic

economics and in Marxist economics. Throughout these controversies Sraffa was silent. No one knows what his opinion was on them.

Sraffa was born in 1898, in Turin, Italy. As a student, he became a socialist, then a sympathiser or member of the Italian Communist Party.

By 1924, however, he was slipping into the academic reticence in which he would live for the rest of his life. In a letter which Gramsci printed and replied to in the Communist paper Ordine Nuovo, Sraffa wrote:

"The working class is totally absent from political life... there is nothing to be done (about the political situation) except to wait for it to pass... I do not feel that my (opinion) is incompatible with being a Communist (though a non-active one)..."

Gramsci did not mince words: 'This letter contains all the necessary and sufficient elements to liquidate a revolutionary organisation such as our party is and must be... But the two men remained friendly. When Gramsci was in Mussolini's jails from 1926 to 1934, it was Sraffa who most regularly corresponded with him, sent him books, and pressed for his release.

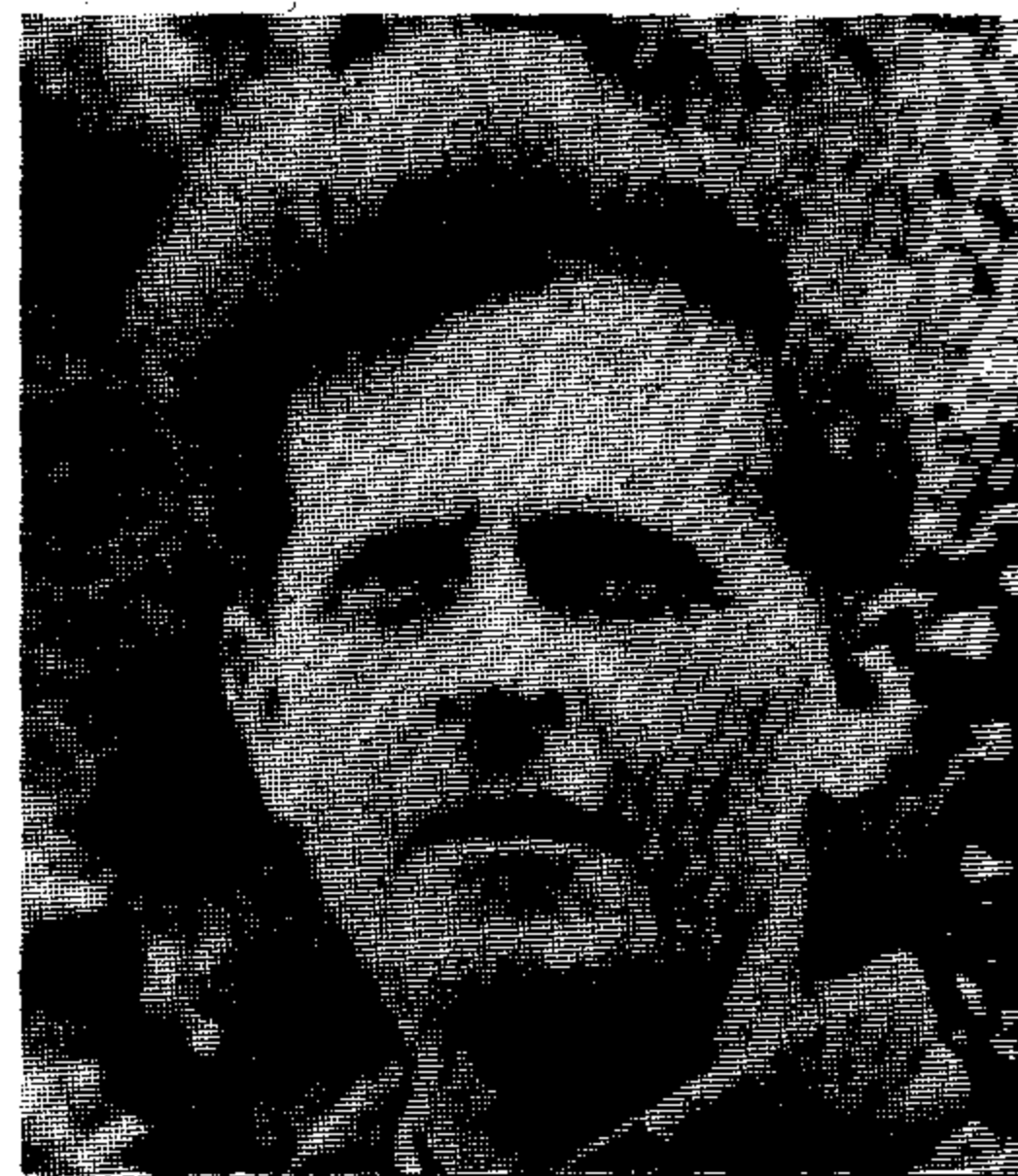
Meanwhile Sraffa had moved to Britain in 1927. From then until he died he was a lecturer at Cambridge University, where he met Keynes and Wittgenstein.

His 1960 book — as its subtitle, 'Prelude to a Critique of Economic Theory', indicates — was intended to undermine orthodox academic economics. By a rigorous technical analysis of prices and profits, he aimed to show that the orthodox idea of profits as the natural reward of capital and wages as the natural reward of labour cannot be made into a logical, coherent theory.

Sraffa himself, typically, did not spell out the implications. That was left to others — and perhaps most notably Joan Robinson, who also died recently.

Joan Robinson, also a Cambridge academic, had many intellectual and political similarities to Sraffa. But she was a tireless, prolific writer, and a vocal enthusiast for all sorts of causes — particularly Maoist China.

In the world of academic economics, where she spent



Wittgenstein: he said discussions with Sraffa made him feel "like a tree from which all branches had been cut..."

all her life, she was a gadfly — helping to shape and promote every critical, radical idea that came along, from Keynes's to Sraffa's.

In her 'Essay on Marxian Economics' (1942) she argued that many of Marx's ideas were useful but his basic theory of value was wrong.

More recently, some would be critical Marxists have used Sraffa's ideas to argue the same conclusions against Marx's theory of value. Sraffa's technical analysis of prices and profits (so the argument goes) can replace value theory without damage to the rest of Marxist economics, and in fact shows the value theory to be metaphysical and imprecise.

Whether Sraffa himself agreed with this use of his ideas is unclear. Joan Robinson wrote in 1977, 'Piero has always stuck close to pure unadulterated Marx, and regards my amendments with suspicion'.

Were Sraffa and Robinson victims of the Stalinist regression which for a whole epoch stymied official 'Marxism' and cut off the possibility of a fruitful interaction between the militant workers' movement and the most critical, enlightened strands in bourgeois thought?

I'm not sure: it is difficult to see how even the most healthy workers' movement could have integrated them into a real dialogue.

Their careers do however illustrate how false the idea is that Marx completed the critique of bourgeois theory 100 years ago and nothing new is to be expected from that quarter.

SCIENCE By Les Hearn

Loving spoonful?

MANY humans are partial to sweet things and there is a vast industry devoted to encouraging and satisfying that liking. There is also a lucrative industry devoted to producing chemicals that mimic sugar.

Sugar substitutes are chemicals that can fool the taste buds. They may be hundreds of times sweeter than sugar, so the amount you need to sweeten your tea is not enough to make you fatter. This is a strong selling point for the incredible number of slimmers in the Western world who still crave sweetness.

Unfortunately for the substitutes industry saccharin (the only permitted sweetener till now) has an unpleasant after-taste. However, after \$250 million in research, G.D. Searle have just launched Aspartame, with "the clean, sweet taste of sugar" and no after-taste... and expected sales of \$500 million a year in the US alone.

But how safe is Aspartame? Aspartame is chemically related to proteins rather than carbohydrates like sugar. It is made of two amino acids (building blocks of protein) — aspartic acid and phenylalanine (Phe).

The makers probably thought they were giving their customers a bonus, because Phe is essential in our diet — our bodies cannot make it. Unfortunately Phe can actually be dangerous in large amounts.

About one in 20,000 people suffer from an inherited disorder phenylketonuria (PKU), in which they cannot completely break down surplus Phe. PKU is so called because sufferers have a substance called phenylketone in their urine. Babies born with PKU appear normal at birth, but by age one they are severely and irreversibly mentally retarded. However, if PKU is diagnosed and the baby fed on a low Phe diet, it will develop normally!

If PKU sufferers start drinking cans of coke laced with Aspartame, instead of sugar or saccharin, they would undoubtedly suffer damage, but this danger is small since they would already be on a strictly-control-

led diet.

However, PKU carriers, some one in sixty people, may be at risk. Carriers only have half the amount of an enzyme essential for breaking down Phe a normal person has. This is enough for an ordinary diet, but no one knows what the effect of a high Phe diet would be. And no one knows how to detect a PKU carrier.

Another danger G.D. Searle should have known about is that a high level of Phe in the blood of a pregnant woman can cause abnormalities in her baby, e.g. microcephaly and mental retardation.

Other research recently published suggests that Aspartame may actually cause a craving for more sweet things.

Such evidence emerged after the British Government's Committee on Toxicity had approved Aspartame, but the evidence on the threat to the unborn has been in textbooks since at least 1981. The Committee seems only to have taken evidence from Aspartame's makers.

As a result we are about to find ourselves part of a gigantic experiment to find out the effects of a high Phe diet.

A SOCIALIST SCIENCE POLICY FOR THE LABOUR MOVEMENT.

An informal meeting will take place next Sunday in London to discuss how a socialist science policy can be arrived at and promoted.

Topics which may come up are the following:

A class policy on labour-saving innovations.

Affecting the direction of science under capitalism.

Using science for our class.

A class policy towards the environment.

Agriculture: chemical vs. organic?

Energy: coal, plutonium or something else?

Winning the labour movement to a socialist science policy will also be discussed. The meeting will be held at 55 Innis House, East Street (Old Kent Road end), London SE17 at 2.00 p.m. on Sunday 25 September.

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Socialist ORGANISER

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 rent 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, MI5, 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 bosses.

Build for the AGM!

THE discussion at the Socialist Organiser delegate meeting on Saturday, September 3 in Birmingham was both very useful and productive.

Comrades felt that there should be more basic socialist propaganda in the paper. It was agreed that lately the paper had improved in this respect and that this trend should be continued. It was also felt that some of the series of articles which have appeared should be reproduced in pamphlets, e.g. the Democracy articles and the articles on the industrial situation in Japan. Also, it was thought that a pamphlet should be produced explaining how to set up Labour Party workplace branches.

John Bloxam led off a discussion on the general political situation which centred on the witch-hunts taking place in the Labour Party, CND, and against militants in the Trade Unions. While the connections between the witch-hunts were noted it was felt that they should not be seen as separate parts of one big conspiracy.

On the Labour Party Conference it was agreed that daily SO briefings should be put out along the same format

as at previous Conferences. Also, all available SO supporters were urged to go to Labour Party Conference to help produce the daily briefings, sell papers, etc.

A discussion took place on the Heffer election campaign. It was agreed that articles in the paper supporting Heffer should continue to be written from a distinctive critical standpoint.

The arrangements for the September 17 'Fighting the Tories' Conference were finalised. With only a week left a big push is needed to ensure as many delegates and observers as possible are sent to the Conference.

The latest Tory offensive on local government was reported on. The alternatives facing Labour councils were increasingly becoming total surrender to the Tories or an all-out counter-offensive and fightback.

The discussion was introduced by Pete Keenlyside, one of the Manchester councillors still excluded by the right-wing dominated Labour group. He stressed the importance of organising a fight this year — if not, 'there won't be a fight because the Tories

will already have got half of what they want'.

It was agreed further meetings between councillors were required in order to look at the problems of winning Labour councils to our perspective of a total fightback against the Tories.

With the European parliament elections next year the process of selection of Labour Party candidates is already underway. It was agreed that Socialist Organiser should see the elections as an important arena for building opposition to the Tories. It was also felt that it was an important opportunity to raise the internationalism of SO's politics.

Although the delegate meeting was poorly attended, all the delegates agreed it was useful and it was hoped that future delegate meetings would be better attended.

The meeting agreed the following dates for the AGM:

Monday, October 17 — deadline for receipt of resolutions.

Friday, October 28 — deadline for receipt of amendments and nominations.

Sunday, October 30 — SO AGM, County Hall, London.



Two pamphlets summing up the ideas of Socialist Organiser. 'Where We Stand' — 20p plus 15p postage. 'How to fight the Tories' — 10p plus 15p postage. Or the two together, 45p including postage. From Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Agenda

LONDON CO-OP Political Committee: International Social for Solidarity with the struggles for peace and freedom in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America.

Sunday October 2, from the end of the Labour Party conference session to 1am, at the Sussex Room, Bedford Hotel, Kings Road, Brighton.

Admission £1, late bar. Organised by the London Co-Op Political Committee in conjunction with 18 international solidarity groups.

AGENDA for the peace movement: meeting organised by the Bertrand Russell

Peace Foundation. Saturday October 1, 7.30, at the Queens Hotel, Kings Road, Brighton. Speakers: Tony Benn, Fenner Brockway, Ken Coates, Tam Dalyell, Stuart Holland, Michael Meacher.

LABOUR movement conference on Ireland: Peace Through Democracy. Saturday November 26: speakers include Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone, Clive Soley.

JOHN Archer invites all who sympathised with and wish to commemorate the work of Mary Archer to come to her Memorial Meeting on

Saturday September 24, in Room 152, County Hall, London SE1, at 7.30. International speakers. Discussion. No charge for admission. Collection for memorial publishing fund.

SOCIALIST Science policy: an informal discussion meeting, 2pm Sunday September 25, at 55 Inns House, East St, London SE17. More details to follow.

LONDON Cuts conference organised by the Southwark Campaign Working Party: Sunday November 6, at County Hall, London SE1. Contact: Southwark Campaign Working Party, Town Hall, London SE5.

LONDON Labour Campaign for Gay Rights now meets regularly every four weeks at

Marchmont Community Centre, Marchmont St, WC1, at 6pm. Next meeting October 9. Gay Young Socialists meet at Gay's The Word at 6pm. Contact: London LCGR, Mike Haran 659 2938 or Chris Beer 785 9515. GYS: Martin Goodsell

LAMBETH Labour Campaign for Gay Rights: open meeting on Lambeth council and the local gay/lesbian community, Friday September 23, 8-m at Lambeth Town Hall.

NORTH STAFFS Labour Against the Witch-hunt public meeting with Peter Tatchell and Stephanie Grant, Friday September 23, 7.30 at the Guildhall, Newcastle-under-Lyme.

A MEMORIAL meeting for Jonathan Hammond, former President of the National Union of Journalists, will be held on Wednesday September 28 at Bishop Creighton House, Lillie Road, London SW6, starting at 8pm.

The following are invited — Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group, Socialist Organiser, Troops Out Movement, Fulham Labour Party, Hammersmith and Fulham Trades Council, National Union of Journalists, Fulham CND, Turkey Solidarity Campaign, Writers' Guild, and all organisations and individuals who shared Jonathan's life and political activity.

Messages to be read out to the meeting, from those who cannot attend, should be sent to James Ryan at 49 Hawksley Rd, London N16.

Where to find Socialist Organiser

SCOTLAND

Glasgow.

Contact: Stan Crooke, 34 Garturk St, Glasgow G42. SO is sold at West End bookshop, Rutherglen shopping arcade (Friday lunchtime), Coatbridge shopping arcade (Saturday lunchtime), and Maryhill dole (Tuesday morning).

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

NORTH-WEST

Rochdale. Next meeting Monday Sept. 26, 8pm at the Castle Inn, Manchester Rd.

Manchester. Contact Tony, 273 5691. SO is sold at Grass Roots Books, Newton St, Piccadilly.

Stockport. Meetings every Sunday, 7.30pm: contact 40 Fox St, Edgley, Stockport. SO is sold at Stockport market every Saturday, 11 to 12.30.

Wirral. Contact Lol Duffy, 3 St James Court, Victoria Rd, New Brighton, Merseyside.

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

Brighton. Contact: According to 1983

Stockport. Contact: Paul Barrett, 151 Broadway, Man. S-0-1, (328198).

YORKSHIRE AND NORTH-EAST

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

Harrogate. Meets every other Sunday evening: Contact Mark Osborn, 522542. SO is sold outside the market, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday lunchtimes.

York. Contact 414118 (98 Hull St). 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.

Sheffield. SO is sold outside Boots in Fargate (Saturday 12 to 1) and at the Independent Bookshop, Glossop Rd. Contact Rob, 589307.

Durham. SO is sold at the Community Co-op, New Elvet. Contact Andy, 64088.

Halifax. Contact 52156. SO is sold at Hebden Bridge Books.

Leeds. SO is sold at Books and Corner Books, Woodhouse Lane. Contact Garth, 423322.

Hull. Meets every Wednesday 8pm. Details from SO sellers. Childcare available.

WALES AND WEST

Cardiff. Contact 492988.

Bristol. Contact c/o 28 Middle Lane.

Taunton. Contact c/o 28 Middle Lane.

MIDLANDS

Birmingham. SO is sold at the Other Bookshop, Digbeth High St. Contact Godfrey Webster, 169 Barclay Road, Smethwick.

Coventry. SO is sold at the Wedge Co-op, High Street. Contact Keith White, 75623.

Leicester. SO is sold at Blackthorne Books, High St. Contact Phil, 857908.

Northampton. Contact Ross, 713606.

Nottingham. Meets every Thursday evening, 7.30 at the International Community Centre. SO is sold outside the Victoria Centre (Saturday 11 to 1) and at the Mushroom Bookshop, Heathcote St. Contact Pete Radcliff, 585640.

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 Rd.

Basingstoke. Business meeting Friday September 23, 7.30 at Chute House.

LONDON

North-West London. Contact Mick, 624 1931.

Haringey. Next meeting Thursday September 22, 8.30pm at Harringay Grove Community Centre, Denmark Rd, N8 (near junction of Wightman Road and Turnpike Lane). Speaker from Labour Campaign for Gay Rights.

Islington. Next meeting Sunday September 25, 7pm, Caxton House, St John's Way, N19. Debate on the Common Market. Details: ring Linda, 278 1341.

South-East London. Next meeting Thursday September 29, 'Fight Tebbitt's laws'. Speaker: Wendy Mustill (Labour Research Department — in personal capacity). 8pm at the Lee Centre, Aislilie Rd, London SE12.

Hackney. Contact Andrew Hornung, 76 Carysfort Rd, London N16.

Richmond. SO is sold at Richmond Quadrant every Saturday, 11.30-1.30. Further details, contact Nick De Marco, 876 6715.

Southwark/Lambeth. Meets every other Wednesday at Lansbury House, 41 Cambewell Grove, London SE5. Business 7.30, discussion 8.30. Next meeting Sep. 21.

Orpington. Contact c/o South East London.

Tower Hamlets. Next meeting Sept 26: 7.30 Business 8.30 discussion on Iran. Further details from Susan 377 1328.

Hounslow. SO is sold outside All Saints Church, Hounslow High St., Saturdays 10.30 to 12. Contact Chris, 898 6961. Harlow. Contact c/o 28 Middle Lane.

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



SO badges 25p each, or £2 for ten. From: N. Barstow, 165 Liverpool Road, London N1. Cheques payable to N. Barstow.



Official badge of the State of the Mind campaign. 25p or £2 for ten.

Esperanto the answer ?

Post Office militant sacked

Story of a victimisation

ALAN FRASER was victimised and sacked because he was a leading militant in the post office at Basingstoke. His workmates had no doubt he was being victimised and they knew the reason why. So they struck and put a mass picket on the Post Office.

They enlisted the active support of other Basingstoke workers, who joined the picket line and raised money for the strikers.

The willingness of the workers to fight and their determination to win grew and developed as the strike continued. The Basingstoke Post Office workers could have won a clear victory, like the workers at Greenings and Michelin did recently.

There was no way management alone could have broken this strike. It took the leaders of the Union of Communication Workers (UCW) to break it for them.

They did break the strike, bringing to this task a singlemindedness and determination that would have been better employed helping the workers who pay their wages win the strike.

The UCW officials turned victory into defeat by confusing, misleading and finally demobilising the striking postal workers. This was a classic case of highly paid full time union officials acting as visiting firemen for the bosses and as a scab against striking workers.

Basingstoke Socialist Organiser supporters tell the story.

FOLLOWING the sacking a mass meeting of 120 immediately voted to strike, with only one vote against.

The strike began on Saturday September 3.

It was Monday before the Union of Communication Workers (UCW) Regional Office could be contacted, but pickets had already convinced Sunday night's shift to join the strike.

On Monday, Joe Payne, Regional Secretary, urged the Regional Post Office to lift the dismissal on grounds of a procedural technicality. The Regional PO couldn't comment at that stage but agreed that if there was a technical error it would back the lifting of the dismissal.

The branch had the second of what became daily mass meetings, and the first strike bulletin was issued.

On Tuesday, Gerry Casey, (UCW Regional Officer), arrived. He had little knowledge of what the dispute was about, and admitted that his brief was to end the strike.

All day, three-way phone calls between Casey, the UCW National Officer John Taylor, who was at the TUC in Blackpool, and the Regional Post Office HQ built up hopes. The mass meeting that day again voted to continue the strike.

The management agreed to the appeal being brought forward to Wednesday, in Basingstoke. Casey told the strikers he was confident of winning.

Hospital workers, members of GMBATU, had for the second day joined the picket line, bringing with them a donation from the NHS Hardship Fund with a promise of more to come.

The picket lines remained heavily manned from 4.30 am until after midnight.

Other Post Offices around Basingstoke were now refusing to handle Basingstoke mail and Securicor's union MATSA (a section of the GMBATU)



Alan Fraser

refused to cross the lines, bringing the Giro to a halt.

The spirit on the picket line was high. As the appeal was heard on Wednesday, a second bulletin was prepared.

But that confidence turned first to a sinking feeling and then anger as the appeal was bungled by Casey.

He just went through the motions of defending Alan. He seemed to be under pressure. Management went off to lunch giving no answer.

At 4pm the membership, having been kept waiting for three hours, were told by Casey that the appeal had failed.

He urged them to return to work and said that the only hope now was to write to the Post Office HQ, asking for Alan's job back on humanitarian grounds!

The strikers denounced him for selling them out and voted again to stay on strike.

From that point on picketing became even stronger. Wednesday night's picket was 40 strong until after midnight, sustained by an enterprising hot-dog seller who stationed himself permanently on the picket line.

Hopes were raised yet again on Thursday with the news that Taylor was coming on Friday, having persuaded Regional PO



The branch: 'growing militancy after 1980'.

road and they had to return to work.

The local officials, confused by the sudden change, were helpless as a second vote narrowly overturned the first.

They had made the mistake of believing Taylor was willing to fight with them and they were unprepared for this treachery.

Emotion, frustration and exhaustion broke, and as Angela Fraser finally managed to reach the platform to say that if they had voted to continue they would win, many broke down and wept openly.

They knew we could have won.

THE BROAD LEFT

Growing militancy in the Branch after the 1980 strike led to the election of Alan and Ron to their present positions. 1980-81 saw an attack on the working conditions of postal workers with the introduction of a productivity deal leading to speed-ups and job losses. This productivity deal was made nationally with the total collaboration of the union.

Branches which refused to accept the deal had visits from UCW Executive members. Basingstoke was one of the rebel branches.

The decision to reject the productivity deal and our increasing criticism of UCW leadership marked Basingstoke UCW out as an opposition branch.

Over the last year Alan Fraser has been active as Regional Organiser for the Broad Left, and had begun to take a leading role.

WHAT LESSONS have Basingstoke postmen learned from the fight to reinstate Alan Fraser? We asked five of them to tell us.

Alan Bryant [postman]. "I believe that the real reason for the sacking was not Alan's sick record but because Alan Fraser was an effective trade union official who had fought to create a vast improvement in our members' working conditions."

"In my opinion the whole of the membership in Basingstoke have recognised that Alan was victimised by the Post Office for carrying out our democratic wishes."

Ron Rodwell [Branch Secretary] "The strength and solidarity shown by our members during the week of the dispute was in direct contrast to shameful goings-on by the union leaderships at the TUC conference. If the UCW leadership had shown the same spirit as our members I believe Alan would have kept his job."

"I am sure our members will learn a number of lessons from this dispute, especially the fact that we must not have an isolated leadership of two or three individuals who can then be picked off by a ruthless management."

"I believe that this struggle will lead to a strengthening of the rank and file, and the determination to make sure that this

type of victimisation will never be allowed to happen again."

Brian Reeder [postman].

"It is clear to me that our members were prepared to take action against a blatant victimisation whereas our union leadership at a national level had no desire to take the action further. I am sure all members in any future disputes can rely on our own strength and not union bureaucracy. We feel we have been sold out."

Brian Lowe [postman].

"All of us feel that Alan Fraser has not only been victimised by the Post Office but that the top union officials have played a major role in our failure to get Alan reinstated. It appears to me that our union leadership have acted as policemen against us in this dispute (in other words, don't rock the boat)."

G. Garret [postman].

"In offering Alan Fraser a cash settlement it proves to me the Post Office's real reason in dismissing Alan was because of his role as an effective Branch official. The lesson I have learned is that the local membership showed its solidarity in support of Alan, whilst the national leadership completely sold him out rather than taking on the fight."

Four years of struggle

JUST four years ago Basingstoke's UCW [then UPW] was one of the all too familiar ghost branches. Branch meetings were seldom held and badly attended. Without the closed shop agreement, the average Basingstoke postman probably wouldn't have chosen to hand over money to this dead organisation.

Following the retirement of the old Branch Secretary, new younger officers came forward — among them Ron Rodwell, current Branch Secretary, and Alan Fraser, Postal Section Secretary.

The UCW began to come alive; the new committee set out to involve the membership. Meetings were more regular and made more interesting with guest speakers and film shows. A regular bulletin was produced.

Earlier this year Labour Party activists within the UCW set up Basingstoke's first workplace Labour Party Branch. The UCW also took up its full delegation entitlement to the Trades Council and CLP, adding considerable weight to turning the Labour Party outward.

Alan Fraser in particular won considerable rights for the 12 young postal cadets and in 1980 there was a four day strike when a 19 year old postman was dismissed. He was subsequently reinstated.

It was the Basingstoke Postal Workers who were first to appear, 70 strong, on hospital picket lines during last year's NHS dispute. This action led to strong links between the UCW and GMBATU hospital workers. GMBATU stewards spoke at packed UCW meetings and the UCW spoke at NHS workers' rallies in the town.

It is no coincidence either that in the last year the GMBATU Health Branch has nearly doubled in size. The cross-feeding of ideas and the level of political consciousness in these two unions are the proof of the power of revolutionary ideas. To change a labour movement which, without them is all too often suffocating and passive.

Britain's

BRITAIN'S workers have entered the 8th week of their strike to reduce working hours from 50 to 49.

Last Friday management refused to guarantee that no victimisations would take place when they finally return to work. The majority of workers are still solidly behind the strike.

13 people who were arrested for obstruction (one is charged with double assault) are due to go to court. Shop steward Mr Ali says that while most of the unionised drivers refuse to deliver to Britain's, private vans are being paid double rate to scab.

Donations to the strike fund should be sent c/o TGWU, 205 Fore St., Edmonton, London N18.

A CAMPAIGN OF VICTIMISATION

Despite the Post Office claims that he was sacked because of a bad sickness record, the truth is shown by the many previous attempts they had made to victimise Alan. These included:

1. Forged signatures on Late Attendance slips (for which he later received an apology).
2. Several attempts to dismiss him on charges of leaving letters behind. (Again an apology was made to him).
3. Putting him on a six-day week of 5 a.m. starts for eight months.
4. Frequent mistakes in wage packets.
5. Attempting to add two days more on last year's sick record by changing dates.

NALGO strikes to stop sacking

2,500 members of NALGO employed by Labour-controlled Haringey council are out on an indefinite strike. The strikers demand the reinstatement of Les Butler who was summarily sacked in contravention of agreed procedures.

Les Butler is a probationary employee in PELAW (part of the council Public Works section). On Friday September 9 he was sacked, given a month's pay in lieu of notice and told to clear his desk and go. When Les's fellow workers heard this they walked out.

Les had received nothing in writing of the reasons for considering dismissal. Prior to his sacking he was invited to a disciplinary review on September 8 but was given no details of the allegations against him and therefore was not in a position to defend himself. A request to suspend the hearing was refused.

by Mary Corbishley (Haringey NALGO)

The Chief Personnel Officer admits the Code of Practice was not followed. But he said, "I see no grounds for reversing or suspending the decision".

The Labour Council have gone along with the decision to sack, supporting the Chief Personnel Officer against over 2,000 NALGO members.

The Council ignore the facts and condemn NALGO members for striking against such a 'good' Labour authority.

Some councillors, leftists among them, have said that NALGO isn't a proper union anyway, that we're all overpaid, lazy bureaucrats and that some jobs and services should be dispensed with.

This divisive and backward campaign to undermine the strike has been extended to Labour Party members and other Council unions.

Despite this, NALGO's members are strong for the strike. At a mass meeting on Monday 19 September the vote was 2-1 to continue. The fighting mood is unprecedented in the branch. But everyone is aware of the threat to jobs in the future and feeling is running high that if the employers can tear up one agreement, then they can tear up others also — and no one's job will be safe. The strike is official and members are to be given full strike pay, 60% of gross earnings.

Cracks are beginning to appear in the ranks of the Council. Labour councillors who have to date not been involved or properly informed have called a special Labour Group meeting. At the Labour Party's Local Government Committee there is an emergency resolution in support of NALGO's demands.

Unfortunately the shop stewards have now agreed to the Council's request that ACAS be brought in, albeit with the proviso that their decision will not be binding. But there will inevitably be pressure from some sections to accept an ACAS decision and this could well break the unity that now exists.

We must now allow that to happen. We can and we must win this dispute and go forward strengthened, for the battle over cuts in services and job losses that is yet to be fought.

Nigg returns

A MASS meeting of the 2,000 strikers at the Highland Fabricators yard in Nigg voted last Friday to return to work.

Six of the yard's stewards were summoned to London prior to the mass meeting, where union officials, headed by John Baldwin of the AUEW, demanded acceptance of the agreement they had arrived at with management.

The deal involved a return to work at midnight on Sunday, followed by the immediate opening of discussions between management and local union representatives on a 21 point "survival plan" for the yard — cutbacks in the workforce and worse working conditions.

Rab Wilson, the shop stewards' convenor, stressed that the dispute was not necessarily yet at an end: "It's been a fifteen-round fight so far, but there may be a few more rounds to go yet."

To underline this point, the strike fund has been kept intact, for future use.

Town Hall left organises

LAST weekend's conference (17 September) on privatisation was the best thing to happen in NALGO for some time.

It was called by Leeds NALGO and initially shunned by NALGO officialdom. But it attracted 300 delegates, and in the end some National Executive Committee members and union full-timers did attend.

The conference brought together militants to form the basis of a national Broad Left, with the number one aim of fighting

privatisation.

The most impressive speakers were Ian Stephenson from Bury NALGO and David Blunkett, leader of Sheffield City Council.

Stephenson described the fight against privatisation in Bury, which has succeeded in mobilising council workers and working class community organisations and defeated privatisation plans so far by industrial action.

Blunkett described his conception of the way in which council,

workers and community should stand firm against the government. He stressed the need for aggressive, innovative policies rather than a stonewall defence of the flawed welfare state of the last 35 years.

However, while his contribution was both intelligent and left-wing in terms of the status quo, his perspectives extended right up to the barrier of what can be done by administrative policy within a capitalist society, and no further.

Workers fight double-cross

"WE HAVE been conned, but we'll stay out for a decent wage", said Peter Woods, the shop convenor at Quick's Garage.

60 workers have been on strike for three weeks at the depot in Old Trafford, Manchester. They came out when management broke a wage agreement 'settled' three months ago. After the new 'A' registration cars had been finished and delivered, the bosses announced that the deal was off.

They have since said that as early as July they intended not to honour the agreement.

The workforce reacted by walking out immediately. The strike is solid, and the depot is being picketed seven days a week.

Sales staff and office workers, who are also in the TGWU, have refused to support the strikers, despite likely redundancies soon in their sections.

Another Quick's depot in Manchester has come out in support, and the Bury depot is

on a work-to-rule.

Management want to bring in the government arbitration service ACAS, but the workers are unwilling to hand over control of the strike to the TGWU full-timers.

Although the strike has been made official, no strike pay has come through yet. Money is needed. Support is also needed especially from Ford: Quick's is one of their main dealers.

Donations and messages to: Peter Woods, 11 Hazel Bank Ave, Withington, Manchester 20.

Carousel strikers: 'We go on till we win'

Workers at Carousel ice-cream wafer factory have been on strike for union recognition since late July. They are now in the ninth week of their strike. They were sacked in early August. Stan Crooke spoke to some of them about the dispute.

What is your strategy for winning this dispute?

We need to get more people down here on the mass pickets. We had quite a lot down last Tuesday, but not enough.

The mass pickets are just one day a week. Even if they were 100% effective, that would still leave the problem of supplies and scabs going in all the other days of the week.

As far as stopping supplies is concerned, it's all right, provided that the firms are unionised. The problem is stopping the scabs. When the mass pickets are on, they come in the back way. But if we had enough people we could picket that as well.

But there have been cases of

deliveries being made even by firms that are unionised, such as the flour delivery — a fortnight ago.

That was brought in at six in the morning when no-one was here. It was one of Sandro's (the factory owner) dirty tricks. We need to get on to the suppliers and tell them that the dispute is still on.

Letters have been sent out by the union to appeal for blacking. But maybe the letters have just been read and ignored, so we need to go round the factories making the supplies ourselves.

Laird's has already blacked supplies of cardboard boxes. And the union members there put us in contact with other factories he gets supplies of boxes from.

How do you think the mass picketing can be made more effective?

Tell more people how important it is to get down here. At first we were going to hold the mass pickets on a different day each week, to keep the police and Sandro guessing, but we couldn't get the word round quick enough. So now the mass pickets are on the same day

each week.

What support have you had from the Glasgow District Committee of the TGWU?

They have notified all branches and sent delegates down to the pickets. All TGWU District Committee Secretaries have been informed, and it's coming up at the Regional Committee next week. The dispute has also been raised at the TGWU Women's Advisory Committee and the Youth Committee.

But what has it actually done to build for the mass pickets?

Members of it are going round the factories before the weekend to get a turnout for the next mass picket, and other large factories around Glasgow are also being contacted about it to get more support.

Has support from the Labour Party been just at the level of donations or have Party members been turning up for the picketing?

There's been quite a few people down from Labour Party branches, particularly the local ones, Easterhouse and Shettleston.

How about support from unem-

ployed groups, like Unemployed Workers Centres and Claimants Unions?

They've been down as well, from Whitevale, the local centre, and also from Castle-milk and the Maryhill Claimants Union.

What impact have you had so far on production in the factory?

Sandro certainly isn't getting as much done as he used to. The wafer machine used to operate from half eight to four. Now it just runs from ten to half twelve.

We also went down to Booker Cash and Carry, to try to get him to black Sandro's stuff. But he said he hadn't received any supplies from him for three weeks anyway.

In winter the main work is a bulk order from Saudi Arabia. But we're going to see the dockers to get it blacked, when we find out which docks it goes through.

How long do you think the dispute will carry on for?

We're prepared to carry it on as long as it takes to win.

*Send donations and write for speakers to: TGWU, 216 West Regent St., Glasgow.



Administrators bundle a patient into a car during a raid on the Princess Mary hospital work-in, April 1980. Thornton View workers are preparing to counter any such moves against their hospital.

Ready for Fowler

THE occupation of Thornton View Hospital continues to run smoothly, with picket lines still strong for 24 hours a day.

The picket lines are staffed by the local labour movement and community as well as by hospital workers, with the Labour Party taking responsibility for a block of the picketing rota. There is a supporters' committee, distinct from the occupation committee, which organises sympathisers who don't work inside the hospital.

The occupation committee has tightened up management access to the hospital. Until last week lower management could come and go at will, providing they gave notice. Now they are restricted to two days and one night. All senior management are banned and have given up trying to get in.

The hospital is waiting for Fowler to make his final decision. Hazel Ward, a NUPE steward for the nurses says that the occupation will continue to "make sure the hospital isn't run down" even when Fowler does insist on the closure. "It will be up to them to move in and evacuate the hospital. St. Benedicts Hospital occupation in South London ended with a raid. The police herded nurses into a room to make way for private ambulances to move out the patients. That could happen here. We will have to wait and see."

The same Regional Health Authority (Yorkshire) is trying to close the Shipley Hospital which is a special unit with 23 pre-convalence beds. It's a centre for X-rays and houses a physiotherapy unit.

A LABOUR CND & DEMONSTRATION

NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE NO DEFENCE

Peace March

AT THE LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE ASSEMBLY

SUNDAY OCT 2ND

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Yorkshire, Scotland

Socialist

The NUM ORGANISER

strikes back!

NEARLY 11,000 miners in the Barnsley coalfields are out on strike. The strike began two weeks ago at the Dodworth Colliery when George Marsh was sacked after 21 years at the pit for allegedly pushing an overman.

All but two of the 16 pits in the coalfield are involved in the dispute.

The strike is in defiance of the regional NUM which defeated a motion from Dodworth calling for an all-out strike involving all the Yorkshire pits. The men were told to get back to work and the strike was made unofficial.

Flying pickets

NCB officials blame "heavy illegal picketing", the flying pickets, for spreading the strike.

Up in Scotland, 1000 miners at the Monktonhall colliery are on strike. Miners were locked out after a union meeting ran five minutes over time. When the men working down the pit heard about the lock-out they stopped work in support. Monktonhall seems to be on MacGregor's hit list.

Already the NCB is demanding voluntary redundancies. At a press conference yesterday MacGregor threatened that the pit would be run down to a "care and maintenance basis" if the strike was not over soon.

Mick McGahey, the Area President, is demanding that the strike be made official and for every NUM branch to give Monktonhall pit moral and financial support. McGahey is

looking to call an emergency meeting of the Triple Alliance to discuss effective support action and take up an offer from the Scottish TUC to convene a

special conference for the whole Scottish labour movement about the crisis in the pits.

"I met some wonderful people down there. It's a pity I'm going to have to sack them."



Mass strike hits cuts in Belgium

TRANSPORT workers, postal workers, teachers and many other public service workers are on strike against government spending cuts in Belgium.

The movement began on September 8 with a local rail strike in Charleroi, and spread spontaneously, though it is now being officially supported by the Socialist and Christian unions. The effects of the strike movement are increasing; steelworks in Liege have now been shut down.

Belgium's right wing coalition government says it may use troops as scabs if the strike continues.

The government wants to cut public spending by cutting wages and bonuses, paying wages a month in arrears rather than in advance, and demanding higher social security contributions. It says it will negotiate on the method of making the cuts, but not on the principle and not even on the amount.

The background to this move is Belgium's huge budget deficit - estimated at 11.5% of national income. (Britain's deficit, about which the Tories make such an outcry, is less than 3% of national income). Belgium also has a huge foreign debt, and 15% unemployment.

Before this strike wave, the labour movement response on the issue of cuts had been weak. Belgium has two Socialist Parties - Flemish and Walloon - and the Flemish Socialist Party has supported cuts on the grounds that too much money is being spent in the Walloon (French-speaking) areas!

Now Socialist union leaders in Wallonia are calling for a general strike.

WORKERS in West Germany, too, are adopting militant tactics to fight back against cuts.

On Monday 19th, 2000 workers at the AG Weser Groepelingen shipyard in Bremen occupied the yard after they had been addressed by the government Economics Minister, Count Otto Lambsdorff. The Christian Democrat/Christian Social Union government is backing plans to close the Groepelingen yard as part of a drastic restructuring of shipbuilding.

Already another shipyard in Hamburg is occupied by the workers in protest against plans to lay off 1354 of them.

The Social Democratic provincial government in Bremen has said it will consult experts before deciding whether to support or oppose the restructuring plan.

POEU stays solid

by Ricky Houston

Last Sunday, 18th, the Post Office Engineering Union voted 81,000 to 49,000 at its Special Conference to continue industrial action against the Tories' plan to privatise British Telecom.

Though the vote was more than three-to-two for continued action, activists who want to defeat the Privatisation Bill will have to step up the campaigning among the mass membership, pushing for branches to demand that the National Executive immediately escalates action.

The National Executive report which was adopted merely mandates the NEC to continue a campaign, without specifying how to strengthen the struggle.

The right wing 'Mainstream' faction lost control of the Executive in June, but is still entrenched in the union's head office, among the full-time officers. They are well organised and were well prepared for the conference.

They scored a victory when they got the conference to censure the Broad Left dominated Executive's refusal to re-nominate John Golding, a prominent witch-hunter and a full-time officer of the POEU, to the Labour Party National Executive.

The tone of the conference was set in the debate on an amendment to the National Executive report tabled by the Leicester Internal branch. The amendment, if carried, would effectively have ended the union's fight against privatisation.

In the debate it became clear that the union, as yet, is not prepared to go further than selective industrial action. Left activists still have to convince the members that to defeat the Tory Bill all-out action will eventually be necessary. The Swansea branch had raised this before the conference.

A number of propositions calling for specific action now were never reached because of an amended conference timetable proposed by the National Executive. Obviously the NEC wanted to avoid reaching proposals which would have tied them down to immediate and specific escalation.

This indication of uncertainty will be exploited by the right wing of the union and (almost certainly) by BT management and the government.

The membership must be alerted and mobilised now. Broad Left supporters must argue in their branches for an immediate escalation of the fight.

For immediate action against the Bill, by blacking government department lines and equipment.

For an escalation of action against Project Mercury and its financial backers.

So far the action has been confined to small groups of members in London. The maximum number of members throughout the country must be involved in effective industrial action so as to create a fighting mood throughout the union.

NUJ puts down a marker

THE battle between at least part of the trade union movement and the government over anti-union laws reached red-alert this week.

The battle was called off at the last minute when ten journalists at the Stockport Messenger refused to obey an instruction

from their own union.

The instruction - from the National Executive Committee of the National Union of Journalists - was to carry on supporting a strike by the NGA and thus defy a High Court injunction.

Despite the backlash by the chapel, the NUJ has put down an important marker in the fight against the Tebbit laws and set an example to the trade union movement. The most relieved people in the labour movement were the TUC leadership.

An NUJ appeal to the TUC for support was to be considered this week by the Employment and Organisation Committee, the very body now responsible for opening talks with Tebbit.

As reported in last week's Socialist Organiser, Manchester High Court issued an interim injunction against the union under the 1982 Employment Act, in favour of the owner of the Messenger group, Mr. Selim Shah.

The injunction showed the laws in all their barbarity. Journalists on the Stockport Messenger were taking the most simple form of solidarity action: refusing to break a strike by another union.

There is nothing secondary about such support except in the twisted logic of Tory legislation, which seeks to reduce each union to an isolated rump of atomised individuals.

The Tebbit laws compel those who obey them to break strikes. They compel TGWU members to break strikes by AUEW members in the same factory, clerical

workers to break blue collar strikes, industrial workers to scab on office workers. They turn the word solidarity into impenetrable Polish, incapable of translation.

As it prepared to fight, the NUJ took soundings at the Trade Union Congress. It was immediately made clear to them that the General Council would not support any motion brought onto the conference floor.

Worse, the TUC passed a resolution which spelled out in advance that the NUJ and other unions would fight alone.

Congress empowered the General Council to give financial support to unions attacked under Tebbit's laws, if and only if the General Council had first given permission to defy the courts.

In the week following the TUC, the NUJ again came under pressure to back down but Bill Keys of SOGAT 83 and Tony Dubbins of the NGA both promised some form of support.

In the light of this pressure, the NUJ Executive last Saturday took a historic decision to fight. An all-day meeting voted 11-7 to defy the courts and turn to the whole trade union movement for support. The Executive also said that it was prepared to reconvene the NUJ conference in its defence.

It was a battle with some unlikely heroes. The left could not have won alone. But general secretary Ken Ashton and Scottish Executive member Harry Conroy both urged defiance and swung the centre-right to support

a resolution from Provincial Newspapers representative Bob Keogh and Book member Simon Collins.

A right wing resolution from Fleet Street and TV was defeated. Typically it linked pious expressions of support for solidarity action to a clear call to climb down.

The Stockport chapel had challenged the Executive to reissue its instruction and show it was serious about defending the union. But after deciding to comply with the instruction, the chapel caved in under pressure from the employer.

The Stockport chapel gave as its excuse for backing off exactly the reasons for fighting. FoC Simon Howarth said "We were ten journalists supporting eight members of the National Graphical Association but as a result our whole union faced bankruptcy."

The chapel's decision is not so important as the Executive's decision to fight. The NUJ has put down the marker. Which union will pick it up?

The way in which a small dispute blew into a test case against the Tebbit laws on secondary action shows that the law is bound to be put to the test soon.

FUND

WITH the collection at our "How to Fight the Tories" conference last Saturday raising £201.64, and other donations bringing this week's fund total to £388.00, we had to buy new batteries for the office computer. September's total is £953.00.

Thanks this week to: delegates and observers at the September 17 conference who gave a total of £201.64 (including £5 donations from Bruce Robinson, Chris Hickey and Kate Williams) to Ian Swindale and Terry Smith on the coffee stall, £10, and Siu-Ming Cheung and Les Hearn on the food stall, £22.81. Thanks also for donations to: Manchester supporters, £42; Martin Thomas, whose sponsored bike-ride with Islington supporters has brought in a further £29.20; Rochdale supporters who raised £33 at a social; Stockport supporters, £15; Durham supporters £11.85; Halifax supporters, £3.20; Jayne and Kelly Dempsey, £5; South East London supporters £2.60; Steve Hall, £1.50; Southwark supporters, £3; Siu-Ming Cheung, proceeds from serving refreshments at a meeting, £3; and Oxford supporters £5.

Donations to: 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY

SELF DEFENCE NO OFFENCE!

NEWHAM 8 INNOCENT

SMASH POLICE CONSPIRACY!

Demonstrate in support of the Newham 8: Saturday September 24, assemble 1pm at Plashet Park, London E12.