

Join the
Labour
Party

Socialist ORGANISER

Break
links
with
Tories

Paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance No. 148 September 29 1983 25p Claimants and strikers 10p

Hackney and Bradford
workers say:

WE'LL FIGHT THE CUTS

TWO HAMMER blows fell on the NHS within a week. First the Tories announced their 1% cut — a cut of 1,800 jobs — and then a few days later another cut of 1,700 was declared.

At the same time the government has instructed the NHS to put domestic services out to contract.

In the latter stages of the last election campaign the Tories gave a clear undertaking to protect the NHS. Now the big lie is exposed for those who were taken in.

One London health administrator painted the picture that will soon face us if the Tories get their way. "There will be very little work done by the NHS itself," said Barbara Young of Haringey DHA. "The district authorities will become administering bodies, co-ordinating the services done by outside agencies and cleaning companies."

Even the usually very right-wing British Medical Association has joined the chorus of protest from trade union leaders and Labour MPs. This weekend the TUC is holding a meeting of union representatives to discuss opposition to the privatisation attack.

What is needed, however, is not a chorus of condemnation but organised mass working class action. At Bradford's Thornton View Hospital staff have occupied as part of the fight to save jobs and protect the health service. That is the kind of action that is being discussed in Hackney too following a big mobilisation against health service cuts.

Speaking at Thornton View, Neil Kinnock promised that Labour will put the NHS back together again. It would have been better if he had been able to pledge the active support of the local Labour Parties for the occupation that's going on now.

Those fighting at Thornton View and elsewhere do not start out, as Kinnock does, assuming the battle is lost because of the forces inside Parliament. They think their kind of action can beat the Tories and they're right.

Brent District Health Authority, part of the North West Thames Region which bears the brunt of the last announced round of job losses, has already stated that it will defy the government. It says that it will not carry out the cuts even if this means breaking the law.

That's the way to stop the Tories.

By
Andrew
Hornung

SO FRIGHTENED by the mood of the people in the public gallery was Louis Freedman, Chair of Hackney District Health Authority, that he did not dare use his casting vote last Monday. The Health Authority voted 8-8 on whether to close the four hospitals in Hackney.

This means they'll take the vote again at another meeting in a month's time, when, they hope, there will be less aggravation from hospital workers and from the local people who use the hospitals.

Escorted

Amidst chants of "Bastard", "Murderers" and "No cuts", Freedman, a property developer and stud farm owner of The Penthouse, Brook Street, W1, was escorted out of the room between Labour MP Brian Sedgemore and NUPE official Ian Barber.

Pressure from Hackney Health Emergency campaign



ANDREW WIARD (REPORT)

had forced the DHA to meet in the Town Hall and allow public debate on the proposal to close the four hospitals. Hundreds had attended a protest rally outside the Town Hall and heard speeches from Tony Benn, Labour MPs and national and local trade unionists.

Control

Opening the public debate, Andrea Campbell COHSE branch secretary, denounced the DHA for being unrepresentative of the people of Hackney.

Referring to the stand taken by Brent DHA, she called on the committee to break the law, pledging the support of local health activists if they did.

"The meeting showed," Andrea told SO, "that there is a real surge of feeling. We can make this a major fight against the Tories. It was a revolutionary meeting with ordinary workers voicing their feelings

and trying to take control."

The hundreds who demonstrated were supported by thousands of signatures from Hackney residents and local workers. With Hackney top of the government's official list of deprived areas, the closure of all of its existing hospitals is viewed with horror by most

people. The Tories claim that the new Hackney-Homerton hospital will be able to do what the four hospitals have been doing. But on the DHA they voted against a resolution calling for the four to stay open until the new hospital is fully functional. They don't even believe their own lies!



ANDREW WIARD (REPORT)

INSIDE: Letter from Long Kesh

Eight points for Labour, by Eric Heffer

IT IS VITAL that this leadership election becomes the springboard for socialist advance, that the Labour Party picks itself off the floor and begins the long march to power.

In order to do this we must have a clear plan of action. I propose eight practical steps that will revitalise our Party and re-create the trust between the Parliamentary leadership and Party members.

FIRST, there must be an *accountable leadership*. Members of the Party must know that the leaders will carry out Party policy, and not seek to invent a policy of their own and then foist it on the electorate. This is our biggest single task: rebuilding the trust and confidence between equals that has been so casually squandered in the past decade.

SECOND, we must *make socialism popular*. If it was right to support the alternative economic strategy, unilateral disarmament, and withdrawal from the Common Market on June 8, why was it *wrong* to do so on June 10? If we abandon our democratically-decided policies in the wake of the election defeat, the electorate will never trust us again: at every election they will say — can we trust them to do what they say?

THIRD, we must mount a blitz on the rapacious policies of the Tories. We must not be frightened to put down motions in Parliament supporting Party policy — for we have to *argue our case* in order to make socialism popular. We must not be frightened to support workers in struggle: we must support the British Telecom workers in their struggle against privatisation; we must support the health workers in their action against job cuts and hospital closures; we must support workers fighting the 3% pay policy. This means identifying ourselves with workers on picket lines, this means supporting extra-Parliamentary activity, it means not being afraid of the consequences.

FOURTH, we must have a leadership that will expose the hypocrisy and staggering elitism of the SDP. I have no compunction in attacking the policies of the SDP, for I disagree with them root and branch. There must be no "historic compromise" with the traitors in the SDP who have allowed Thatcher another five years of power.

FIFTH, we must accept that the really critical question for the next Labour government is the question of *power*. We cannot allow the powerful financiers in the City of London to dictate to us as they did in 1976, when they stopped buying gilts and forced the Labour government to introduce £8 billion of public expenditure cuts. If we are to take real power, an important component of our economic strategy has to be public ownership of the major companies and institutions that dominate Britain.

SIXTH, we must remember that Labour will never win power without the support of the 52% of the population who happen to be women, without the support of the ethnic minorities, and without the support of the gay community. We must implement positive action programmes; and if I were leader of the Party I would lend my full support to the proposals made to change the internal structure of the Party to give women power for the first time.

SEVENTH, we must rediscover our commitment to ridding Britain of poverty and low pay. There are now seven million people dependent on Supplementary Benefit and a further seven million on poverty wages. If I were leader, I would seek to implement a statutory minimum wage — which I have supported for over a decade — and major increases in social security benefits to lift the poor out of the morass of despair which Thatcherism has plunged them into.

EIGHTH, we must have real leadership and not empty rhetoric. The electorate can tell when leaders fudge and hedge: we must rediscover our socialism and fight for it.

From Eric Heffer's speech at Central Hall, Westminster, last Tuesday, 27th.

TORIES AGAINST THE TORIES?

THE LATEST Tory attacks on local government have not won favour with many Tories on local councils.

Although on a national level it is possible for them to rant about attacks on 'overspending' and 'extremists', locally Tories are discovering that it is not as simple as that.

The 'rate-capping' legislation represents an attempt to deprive local authorities of powers they have possessed in one form or another since the Poor Law passed in 1601 in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

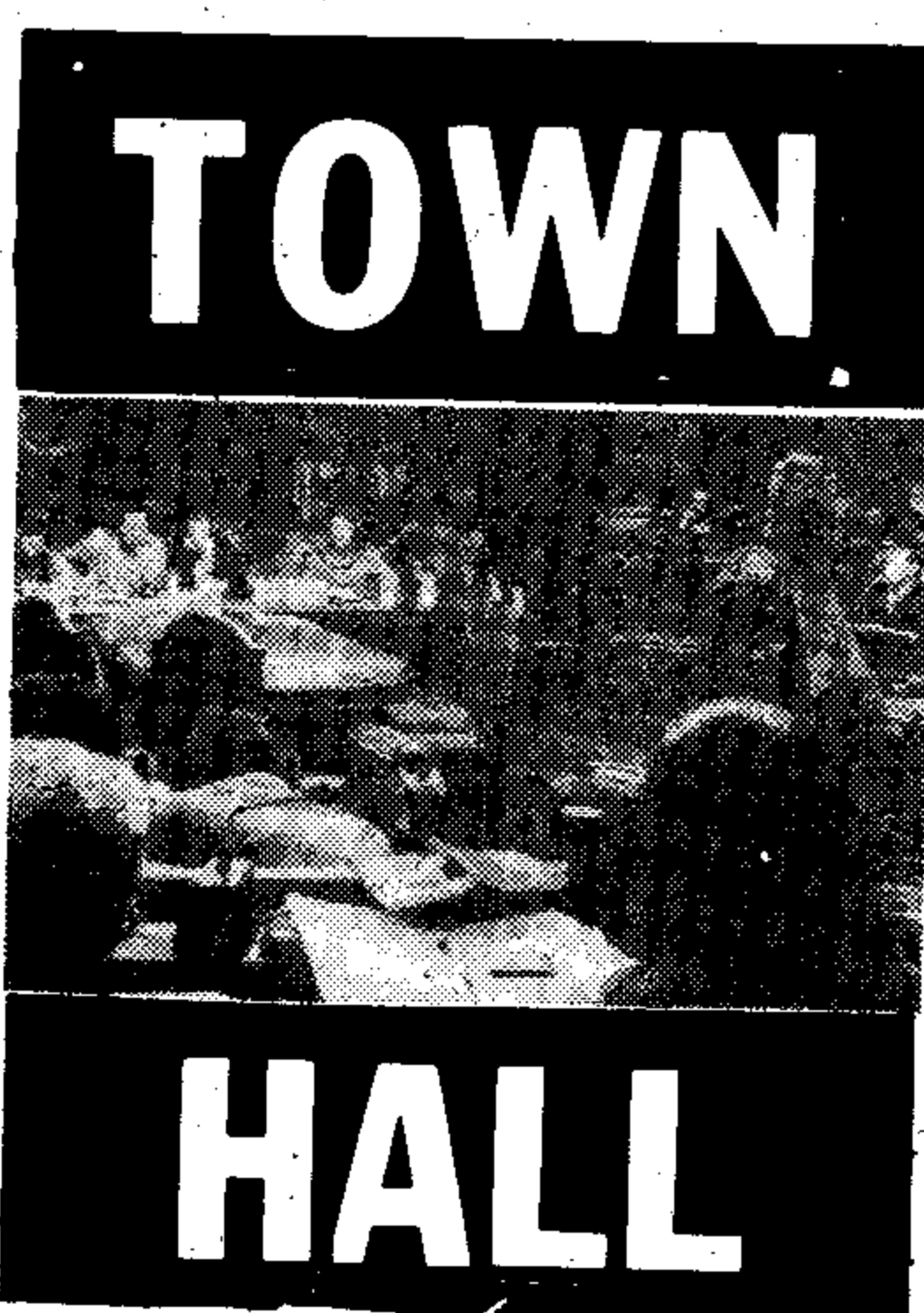
Tories in local government may be in favour of cuts, but they would prefer to choose the cuts themselves and not to have them dictated by a national government — even if it is Tory.

For this reason, the Association of County Councils, which is almost exclusively Conservative, has voted to oppose the legislation. They say they are defending 'freedom' and 'local democracy'. Tories in other local authority associations and in bodies that cover various services have even been prepared to support protests against the August White Paper threatening to enforce cuts in the services of local authorities.

Hostile

On the separate issue of the abolition of the GLC, the local Tories are even more hostile to what the government is attempting to do. This is not only because they have high hopes that they could inflict electoral defeat on the left wing leadership of the GLC.

It is also because they fear that if the functions of the GLC are given to other local authorities this will force up costs — and rates — even in areas they control, like outer London boroughs.



By Alan Clinton

(Chief Whip, Islington Council)

They are further unhappy, as indeed are Labour boroughs also, about how the Tory government would redistribute the £300 million per annum debt charges currently owed by the GLC. Knowing the record of Thatcher and Lawson, it can hardly be thought likely they would take on such debts themselves.

It is not surprising that the Association of Metropolitan Authorities has voted against the abolition of its constituent members and that the Labour-controlled Association of Metropolitan Authorities has opposed the steps to enforce cuts through 'rate capping' and the proposed increase in their own functions — probably with even less finance.

On the Labour side there have been those who have thought that the traditional means of 'consensus' in such discussions is insuffic-

ient for the savage cuts being threatened against us. This has been the reason for the setting up of the Association of London Authorities by those Labour authorities who see the need to confront the government more directly.

Parallel

There has been a parallel discussion on the Tory side in the London area. It was notable at the meeting of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities held in Newcastle last week (20-22 September) that only Tories from such places as Croydon and Wandsworth gave much support to the measures being proposed by their Thatcher leadership. People who live in these boroughs know that the desperate efforts to impose Thatcherite spending cuts and privatisation have had horrifying results.

Their children do not get meals at schools, their bins no longer get emptied. The old people and under fives in such places get no facilities at all.

The problem for the Tories is that however much they have succeeded in building a populist campaign against high rates which are basically caused by their policies, however much their press has attacked left wingers in local government, notably Ken Livingstone, the consequences on the ground are unpopular, undemocratic and unlikely to succeed in the way they want.

This may perhaps be the first chink in the armour of the Tory monolith since its second term of office under the extreme right wing leadership that has taken it over.

It is an indication however that in order to carry out the policies they presented to the electorate — and those in their 'secret manifesto' like massive cuts in the health service — they will confront massive opposition around which we can fight to eventually engulf them.

Facts &



Figures

SOCIALIST Organiser recently carried a review of the new book on white collar workers edited by Richard Hyman and Robert Rice [The New Working Class', Macmillan £7.95].

The book contains much interesting material on white collar workers, some of it from a Marxist viewpoint. There is one big gap, however: it has no overall figures for, or even particular studies of, white collar strikes.

The gap is not easy to fill. Official government figures give a breakdown of strikes by industry, but not by the occupation of the workers involved. And this holds not only for Britain, but also for other countries.

SOME information is, however, available from a detailed study done by the Department of Employment on the strike figures for 1966-73.

Period	Strikes per 100,000 workers	
	Manual	Non-manual
1966-68	12.8	1.1
67-69	15.2	1.2
68-70	18.8	1.7
69-71	18.8	1.8
70-72	17.8	2.0
71-73	16.7	1.7

Period	Strike-days per 100,000 workers	
	Manual	Non-Manual
1966-68	194	16
67-69	249	21
68-70	380	46
69-71	386	55
70-72	452	69
71-73	419	49

'Non-manual workers', in these tables, include everyone up to managing directors. Still, it seems clearly established that non-manual workers have a much lower strike rate than manual workers.

That's not the end of the story. More on this next week.

The other chap's point of view



By Patrick Spilling

ECSTATIC Liberals stood today and cheered as their charismatic leader, Mr. David Steel, told them to forget about preparing for government.

Mr. Steel, making the keynote closing speech at the Liberal Assembly, forecast that he would be going to Downing Street within four years.

But he told delegates that he doubted many of them would be coming with him.

In a speech where Mr Steel has elevated himself above narrow party interests to the ranks of a statesman, he called on delegates to shake off the shackles of the past.

"There are people who come here year after year," Mr Steel said, "and pass fine-sounding resolutions about civil liberties, united Ireland, and experiments on animals. We can no longer afford the luxury of passing policies just because a majority of you happen to believe in them."

Mr Steel attacked constituency members for expecting their opinions to count at national level. He said: "I always think that one of the greatest of all the Liberal virtues is a toleration for the other chap's point of view. In this case it is the other chap's point of view that is going to be party policy."

Dr David Owen, seated in the

shadows at the side of the hall, cheered in approval.

Mr Steel faced up directly to the fear that many Liberal Constituency Parties have that their SDP counterparts are a bunch of right wing fanatics who would have flocked to join Mussolini if they had been born in the right period.

He told them joint selection would mean Liberals vetoing one crypto-fascist after another, and that this could undo all the good work he has done in building up rapport with their leader.

Asked after the conference what he thought about Liberal calls to scrap Cruise missiles, abolish class distinction by abolishing executive toilets, and giving all animals the right to vote in local government elections, Mr Steel said "It is a firm principle of Liberal membership to let the members have their little votes. That is something the SDP leadership and I are agreed on."

Some commentators said that the fact that Mr Steel's standing ovation only lasted 35 minutes against a high of 37 minutes 42 seconds in 1982 meant opposition in the party was hardening.

However a motion calling for more public accountability by the leadership which was discussed in closed session — closed, that is, to the delegates — was said by astute Liberal watchers to have been defeated. Mr Cyril Smith vanished from the Party Presidium, leading to speculation that he was out of favour.

Mr Owen addressed the Assembly and was also treated to a standing ovation. He said he hadn't left the Labour Party to get caught up in another organisation where rank and file members expected to act like dictators against the MPs who alone had the elevation to decide what the mood of the nation was.

He pointed to the difference between the two parties on

defence policy but said they could decide on the outcome without personal rancour. This was because his side would win and the need for personal abuse would be diminished.

STOP PRESS: Labour's leadership election.

Mr Neil Kinnock denied a report today that he called Mr Michael Meacher "a gutless bastard who isn't fit to lick the shoes of Mr Hattersley."

Mr Kinnock complained that an article in the Mail on Sunday distorted his views: "What I clearly said was that some people might say that Mr Meacher is a gutless bastard who isn't fit to lick the shoes of Mr Hattersley."

He said: "Anyway, I thought the interview I was having with Jilly Cooper was for Tatler magazine, not for the Mail on Sunday."

In the interview Mr Kinnock allegedly said that Roy was a good bloke who would strengthen his hand against the left. He said yesterday that his remarks had been misinterpreted. "I never called Tony Benn a lunatic extremist. I merely said that some sane and honest people honestly believe he is a lunatic extremist. Personally I don't mind if my deputy is that nice chap Roy, or that gutless bastard Meacher."



TROOPS OUT NOW!

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

No sell-out on the bomb!

Joy Hurcombe, secretary of Labour CND, calls for the biggest possible turnout against the Bomb on October 2 — and a clear reaffirmation of Labour Party policy

LABOUR CND urgently needs people to come and support our demonstration at the Labour Party conference on Sunday October 2.

We are carrying on the struggle to keep the Labour Party to the policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Labour CND will continue to press for the full programme both in the Labour Party and in CND. We will not tolerate the sort of ambiguities that lost us the last election.

The object of the demonstration is to demand that the Labour Party stands firm on its commitment to scrap all nuclear weapons. We aim to draw attention to the importance of massive support for the unilateral resolutions at the conference.

This conference will be a crucial test for many of our socialist gains in the party. The party's commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament has been one of the few victories for socialists. It challenges all the basic assumptions of the capitalist state and presents a clear alternative to Thatcher's war games.

Trident

Yet despite the overwhelming support for scrapping nuclear weapons in the party, the right wing control of the election campaign resulted in a pathetically inadequate presentation of the issue of nuclear disarmament to the voters.

Labour Party policy was, essentially, not put to the voters. Clear Labour opposition to Cruise and Trident, Polaris and the US bases was thrown away

and never presented to the people. The right wing wrecked and sabotaged the support for disarmament built up by the peace movement and the grassroots — and then blamed the policies for our election defeat.

They will be looking for ways to retreat from party policy at this conference. We must not allow this to happen.

We need leaders who believe in the party's policies. We were sold out at the last election.

It is only weeks before Cruise missiles are due to be deployed in this country and in Europe. The international tension is used by Reagan and Thatcher to justify the cold war posturing and the nuclear arms escalation. The reality is that the nuclear arms race, in particular the decision to deploy Cruise missiles, is the main cause of the present threat of war.

Fudging

We are calling on the Labour Party to mount a vigorous campaign, starting now, against nuclear weapons. We are calling for no retreat from party policy and no fudging on Polaris or the US and British nuclear weapons and bases.

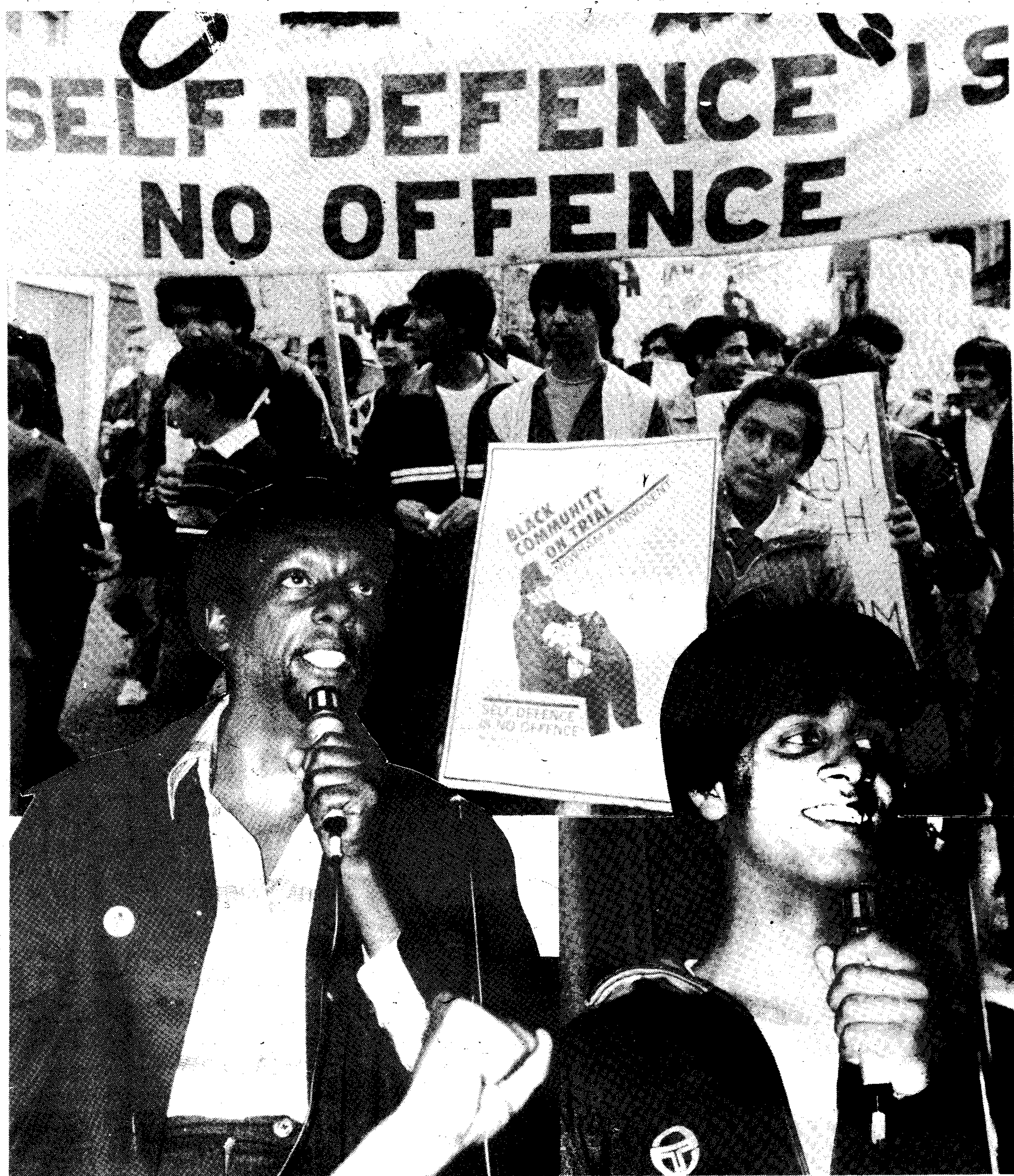
We demand that a clear mandate is given for a vigorous campaign, to start now, so that the people will have the chance to hear the arguments for unilateral nuclear disarmament. When the arguments are clearly presented, they will win votes.

People will not join us if our policies are confused and weak. Both CND and the Labour Party need to learn that lesson.

Please come to Brighton to the Labour CND demonstration. Support the disarmament resolution.

This has to be the biggest demonstration that the Labour Party has ever seen. It can only be successful if every Labour Party sends its banner and organises coaches and cars to bring their members to Brighton.

Time is short, but there is still time, if comrades start to organise now.



At the Newham Eight demonstration — Stokeley Carmichael (left) and one of the defendants (right)

RACIST attacks are part of everyday life in Newham, East London. White thugs attack Asian people when they can get away with it: when the victims are young school students, old people or the Asians are outnumbered.

In September 1982 the thugs went on the rampage. In one week there were three attacks on school students from the Little Ilford School. More attacks were expected.

The incident that followed is sub judice, but now, after the police have changed the charges, eight Asian youths, who defended themselves, face possible life imprisonment for 'conspiracy'.

The Newham 8 Defence Campaign organised a demonstration and rally last Saturday, 24th. By going through two busy shopping centres which the police tried to prevent, another 500 people saw the demonstration and joined in. The official slogans of the march were 'Self Defence is No Offence' and 'The only conspiracy — police conspiracy', both of which were too much for the LPYS contingent, which was probably the largest.

At the very noisy and enthusiastic rally representatives

from a host of black defence campaigns spoke. The theme was quite clear. Black people will defend themselves against racist attacks from fascists and the police.

Stokeley Carmichael told the meeting "You must be as determined as the Palestinians against Zionism and you must be better organised than the police."

Dave Nellist MP was very nearly howled down as his contribution centred on the Tories dividing the working class. The audience wanted to know why Labour governments had introduced racist immigration laws. Nellist said he'd come onto that in a minute. He didn't.

The black youth were not willing to put up with a lecture about unemployment, even though, as Nellist argued, the fascists recruit from unemployed youth.

Tony Banks was much better received as he said that black communities have the right to defend themselves against racist attacks.

The trial of the eight begins on October 24 at Snaresbrook County Court. Snaresbrook is a predominantly white, Tory area. People are needed to join the picket line outside the court.

A LABOUR CND DEMONSTRATION

NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE NO DEFENCE

Peace March

SUNDAY OCT 2ND

AT THE LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

ASSEMBLY 130 - THE LEVEL, B'TON

RALLY 2.30 - SEAFRONT (METROPOLE)

INVITED SPEAKERS AT RALLY INCLUDE

TONY BENN · KEN LIVINGSTONE

HELEN JOHN · CATHY ASHTON

RICHARD BALFE · LIZ FREUTHAL

KEN CAMERON & OTHERS

SUPPORT LABOUR'S POLICIES · NUCLEAR ARMS

NO CRUISE TRIDENT BASES · JOBS NOT BOMBS

Labour Party Conference meetings

SOCIALISTS FOR A LABOUR VICTORY Questions of Leadership

Ken Loach's series of films for Channel 4, now blocked by the powers that be.

With: KEN LOACH, REG RACE (SLV Chair) and other participants in the films.

WE HOPE TO SCREEN EXCERPTS OF THE FILMS

5.30pm. Monday October 3
The Preston Room Royal Albion Hotel

LABOUR AGAINST THE WITCH HUNT

Speakers: ERIC HEFFER, AUDREY WISE, KEN LIVINGSTONE, REG RACE, JEREMY CORBYN
Chair: ERNIE ROBERTS

6.30pm, Saturday October 1
At Apollo Hotel, 135 Kings Road, Brighton

Muhammad Idrish must stay! National march and rally, Saturday October 8. Assemble 11am, Booth St Recreation Ground, off Soho Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, and march to city centre for rally. Officially supported by the local authority workers' union NALGO.

Racist laws are a union issue!

by Simon Temple

FOR THE first time ever a British trade union has called a national demonstration in support of one of its members faced with deportation. The union is NALGO and the member is Muhammad Idrish.

Muhammad's case is a classic example of unfeeling state racism. He came to Britain from Bangladesh in 1976 to take a one year course at Bristol Poly. While there, he met and started living with a Scottish woman.

They did not marry immediately because she was waiting for the divorce from her previous husband to come through.

They married two and a half years later and Muhammad Idrish applied for permission to stay. It was granted for one year.

Then the Home Office began the process of "checking that the marriage was genuine". Official came round at 6 am to see if they were in bed together. There were repeated interviews, several of them at work.

They suggested to Carol Idrish that must be very odd living with an Asian man, with a Muslim: and didn't all that smell of curry make her feel sick?

Delay

At the end of 12 months Idrish submitted his application to stay permanently. There was a long delay. Then the Home Office claimed to have lost the form, and asked him for another one.

Now the whole process of interviews began again.

Not surprisingly, all this took its toll on their relationship. After five years of living together and two and a half years of marriage, the couple split up — although they have not divorced.

Within a fortnight of the split the Home Office ordered Idrish to leave the country. His appeal was rejected by the Home Office-appointed adjudicator and the Immigration Appeal Tribunal refused to hear his case.

Lawyers acting for the Defence Campaign are now appealing to the High Court on the grounds that the Home Office has acted unreasonably.

Friends

Friends and workmates of Muhammad Idrish began to organise a Defence Campaign in Bristol where he had worked as a voluntary social worker in the Bengali Community.

But by this time he was working at Dr Barnardo's in West Bromwich where he helped found the NALGO branch, so a further Defence Committee was set up in the West Midlands.

Since then, both committees have explained his case, held public meetings and organised pickets.

But our most successful work has been in NALGO.

In February the union's National Executive supported Idrish's right to stay and NALGO is underwriting his legal expenses.

But the big breakthrough came in June at the union's Annual Conference, where an emergency resolution, submitted by several branches, was passed.

It instructed the Executive to organise a national demonstration in Idrish's support and to ask other unions (such as the CPSA, SCPS and TGWU) whose members have to do the deporting to refuse to expel

Muhammad Idrish. Conference decided to organise a national day of industrial action, within a month of a deportation order being served.

The bureaucracy did not oppose the resolution openly. The motion was passed almost unanimously.

The question now is: will it be implemented? A poor turnout for the demonstration would give the NALGO leadership an excuse to ditch the rest of conference policy.

A bad sign is that though a large number of (quite reasonable) English language leaflets and posters have been produced, the promised Asian languages leaflet is yet to

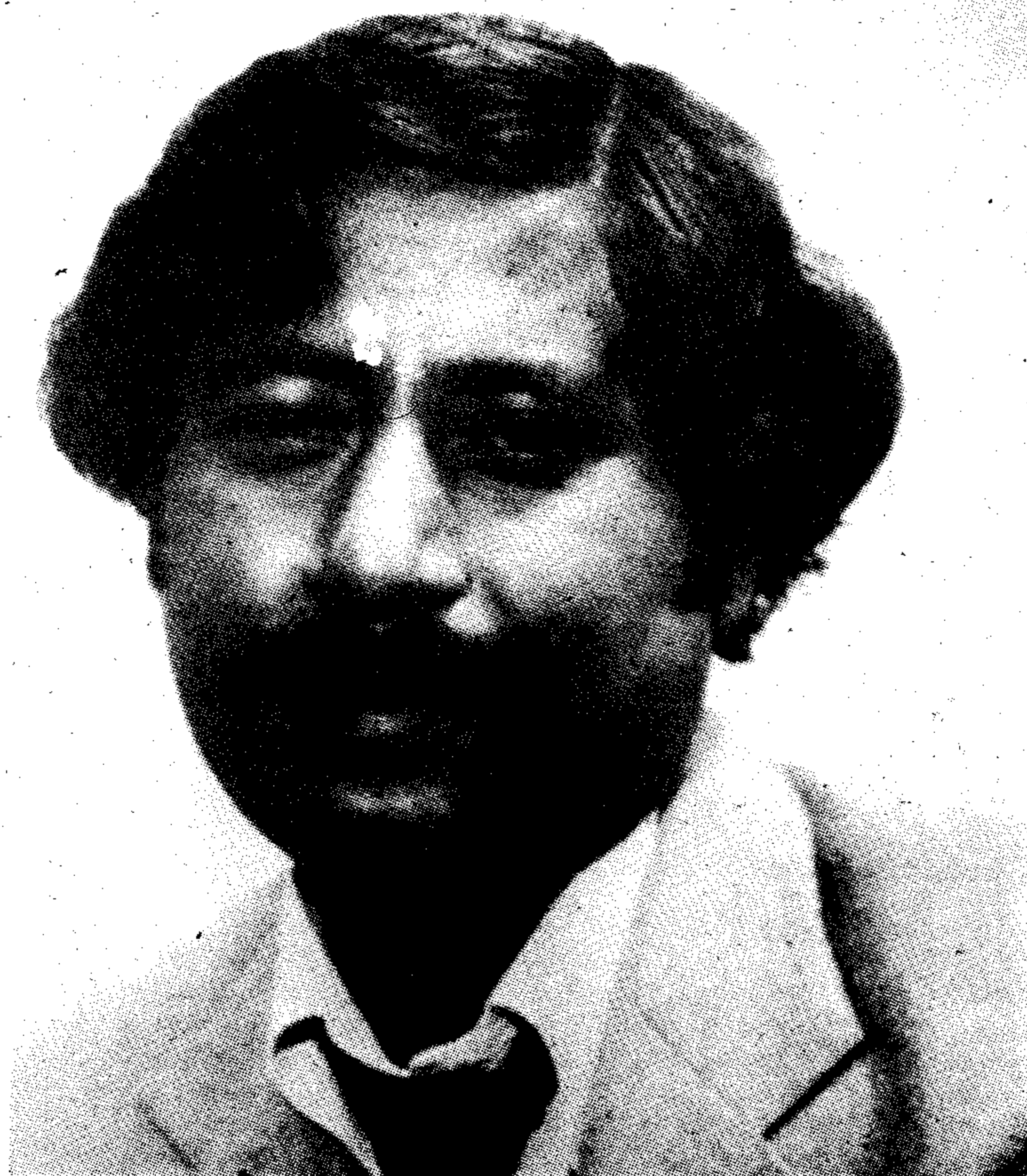
appear. Little attempt seems to have been made by the union leaders to mobilise districts and branches.

But energetic efforts have been made to build for the demonstration in London, the North West and the Midlands. It is up to all of us to see that this work is spread throughout the country.

One problem the campaign has faced is that most Labour MPs regard themselves as part-time social workers, rather than political leaders, when it comes to immigration cases.

They plead with Waddington, the hard-line Tory immigration minister, instead of helping to organise a political struggle against the immigration laws in Parliament, in the labour movement and in the community.

But Clare Short, the Labour



Muhammad Idrish

MP for Ladywood, has agreed to raise the case in the Commons. A paper is being prepared for submission to the NEC's Human Rights sub-committee, and an emergency resolution is being put to Labour Party Annual Conference. It condemns the NEC's failure to support the demonstration.

The Defence Campaign and Idrish himself have rightly stressed that we do not regard him as a special case, but as one more victim of racist laws.

Every deportation case that is won is a nail in the coffin of these laws. It is not just a question of the 250 people, who are

forced out of Britain every month.

Immigration laws hang over every black person in Britain — threatening those who stand up and fight for their rights at work and in the community.

They should be seen in the same light as Prior's and Tebbit's anti-union laws, as another attack on the ability of working class people to organise.

The Muhammad Idrish Defence Campaign says "Stop the Deportations", "Repeal the Racist Laws". We ask supporters of Socialist Organiser to join us in our struggle.

Rallying the student left

IT appears that the Left is not as active among students as it used to be. What do you think Socialist Student can do?

Karen: In many areas there is quite a lot of activity. But on a national level it's certainly true that it's quieter.

The Socialist Workers Party is receding from student politics and the Socialist League is disappearing. But we are hopeful that this new initiative will revitalise things.

NOLS is not very left-wing at national level. What's it like at rank and file level?

Jane: Clause 4, the dominant tendency in NOLS, has rocketed to the right in the last 12 months.

They've always prided themselves on being the representative voice of student activists — the people who don't give a lead but reflect what your average full time student union officer in your average university is thinking.

But your average student union officer in your average university isn't very similar to a kid in a tech, or to an average Labour Club activist. Clause 4 have created for themselves a culture of "sophisticated" student union bureaucrats, and that's caught up with them.

Closer

Karen: They're moving closer to the Left Alliance (Communist Party/Liberal).

Jane: But in the Labour Clubs there has been an influx of left wingers who have joined the Labour Party because of what's going on nationally. They're more politically sussed than he leadership of Clause 4, and more active in their local labour movement too.

There are not a lot of clubs that are dominated by Clause 4's politics. In those that are, there is now a growing current against

The first issue of a new paper, Socialist Student, is just out, published by Socialist Students in NOLS and the Socialist Student Alliance. Karen Talbot (a member of the National Union of Students Executive) and Jane Ashworth talked about it to Socialist Organiser.

them.

You've got a Socialist Students in NOLS day-school scheduled for November. What are your plans?

Jane: Primarily it will be about NUS conference. It won't be a rally-type event — instead it will break down into small working units to draw up our amendments and so on for NUS conference.

Karen: It's very important that we make sure our position is heard. That's why we need to get together and have those discussions on the issues coming up — so we can have a high profile at the national conference.

Jane: We'll also have to talk about the situation in NOLS. Last year a lot of delegates at NOLS conference — enough to tip the political balance were ruled out of order, sometimes by fair means but generally by foul. We'll have to make sure we get it together this year to avoid that happening again.

What sort of issues will you be raising at NUS conference? You've mentioned campaigning on cuts and privatisation. What about wider political issues?

Karen: I would guess the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) will come up. There's a possibility that peace will come up again.

Hasn't Poland been a big issue in the past, with the NOLS

leadership refusing to support the Solidarnosc student union unequivocally or to break links with the state-sponsored Polish student union?

Karen: I think if an international issue does get on the conference agenda, it's more likely to be the Middle East.

Not Ireland?

Karen: Not as yet. A lot of work has got to go into it before we get that debate prioritised.

How do you plan to organise around Socialist Student, apart from these conferences?

Jane: It's being sold in quite a lot of colleges already. It can be useful in consolidating Labour Clubs around us and setting up new ones. Comrades in Manchester, for example, are concentrating on one particular

tech and doing regular sales outside it.

Also, where your Labour Club is dominated by either Militant or Clause 4, and you can't get a look-in, a Socialist Student society or caucus is useful.

Will you be trying to get Labour Clubs to sponsor Socialist Student?

Karen: Yes.

Jane: I think provided that Socialist Student is seen to be open and democratic, it could become extremely big.

Karen: Yes. A national left student paper doesn't exist at the moment.

Jane: And the left press doesn't cover student issues.

Contact Socialist Students in NOLS, c/o Bryn Griffiths, 35, Quebec St., Brighton.

Build the campaign

1. Come to the demonstration. Your local NALGO branch/district may already be organising coaches.

Railing that, other union branches, Labour Parties, anti-racist committees or SO groups can organise transport.

2. Affiliate to the Defence Campaign [£5 organisations, £1 individuals] and send a delegate to its meetings.

3. Get the following emergency resolution to Labour's Annual Conference passed, and instruct your delegate to liaise with the Defence Campaign to fight for it to be discussed: "This conference condemns the NEC's failure to support the national demonstration in support of Muhammad Idrish, called by NALGO, which is to be held in Birmingham on October

8. Muhammad Idrish is just one victim of the racist deportation policy of the Tory government, which leads to 250 a month being forced to leave the country. As part of the struggle against this policy, we fully support Bro. Idrish's fight to stay in Britain, and call for the largest possible support for the demonstration."

4. Members of the unions involved in deportation work [e.g. SCPS, CPSA, TGWU]: send resolutions to your national executive opposing the deportation and asking for it to be blacked.

5. Let us know how you get on. Information and publicity material available from Barry Lovejoy, 30 Antrobus Road, Handsworth, Birmingham 21, telephone 021-523 8923.

SSIN Day school

County Hall, London
November 12 11am

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!

"Carry Greenham Home"

The video is available on Umatic and VHS format, colour, from the National Film and Television School, Station Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks HP9 1LG. Telephone 04946 71234.



"Carry Greenham Home" is a video about the Greenham women's peace camp. Made by Amanda Richardson and Beban Kidron, it is a 'participatory documentary', filmed from within the camp over seven months.

A substantial record of the camp's existence, it covers both the big public events — the 'Embrace the Base' action of

December 12 last year, dancing on the silos, the Easter blockades, the recent police attacks and so on — and also the more personal and private experience of the women who kept the camp going during the seven months Beban Kidron and Amanda Richardson were there.

Scenes include arrests and evictions, as well as camp meet-

ings and discussions with members of the general public. The symbol we know Greenham to be is there for the record, but the value of the film came across to me last Saturday when it was shown to an audience of women in Tower Hamlets. Everyone was affected.

As its makers say the video is about the power and strength of this form of opposition, the implications of non-violent protest and of living non-hierarchically in a women's community.

'Carry Greenham Home', by Amanda Richardson and Beban Kidron, will be screened on Thursday October 6 after the public debate, 'The Nato Question', at the Royal Albion Hotel, Brighton, at 6pm.

by
cllr Sue
Carlyle

It uses songs to emphasise and convey the experiences of the women. The dramatic highlights are the confrontations with police and press, but despite the emotional seriousness, the audience were at times splitting their sides at some of the scenes, for example the sight of the posh and dolled-up media woman having her TV scene ruined by an unruly Greenham woman doing cartwheels, and the sight of the carefully worked out police tactics going wrong.

It all adds up to a piece of video that you feel you could take to working class people and get some reaction — especially women in playgroups, tenants organisations and the labour movement, or just your neighbours invited round for a viewing and a chat.

It brings the need to organise to stop Cruise. It also begs many questions,

tragically illustrated by the camp meetings where people vent their despair and frustration. And as the bailiffs move in you feel your anger grow at the confrontation and the state violence that non-violence cannot overcome.

But platitudes about 'the labour movement' won't overcome it either and we shouldn't

console ourselves with mouthing them.

The Greenham women's isolation, despite their courageous stand, is a shameful reminder that it didn't labour movement that it didn't organise and, as a consequence, it now seems certain that Cruise will come to Britain.

This video can help us to rouse the labour movement.

Solidarity UNDERGROUND

'Solidarity Underground: Free trade unionism in Poland today' is a new pamphlet by Magda Zalewska, Henryk Gawinski, and John Taylor, published by the Polish Solidarity Campaign. 50p plus postage from PSC, 186 Avenue Road, London W3.

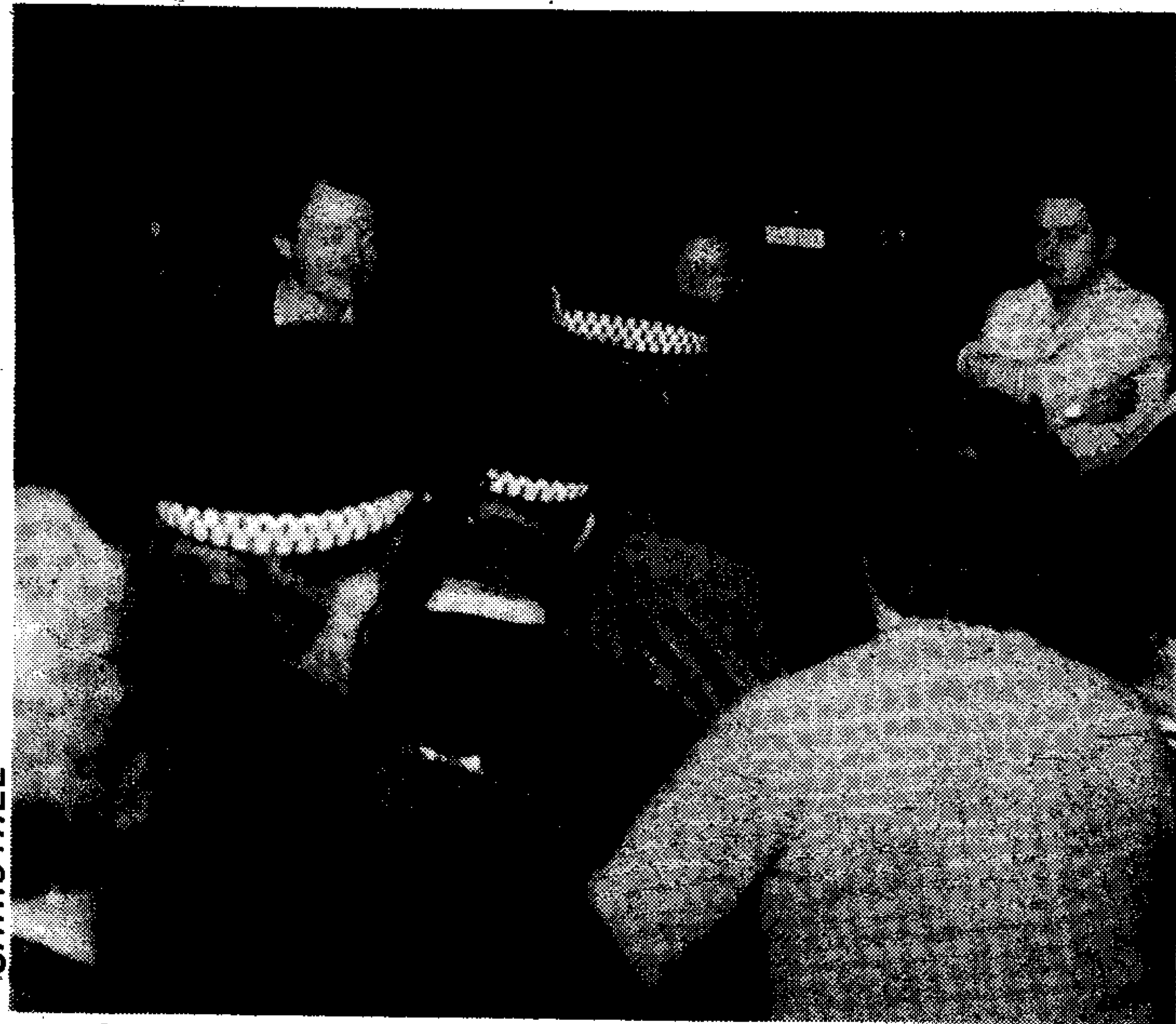
WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK

Women won't wait!

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

Authorities

Making links on Ireland



Loyalists swarmed outside the meeting

THE mass breakout by 38 IRA prisoners from Long Kesh prison in Northern Ireland is the stuff of which dozens of British World War II heroics movies were made in the 1950s and '60s, 'Colditz' and 'The Great Escape' being perhaps the best known.

But the British press has seen nothing heroic in the IRA's great escape. 'Killers on the Loose' was the message of the headlines which were accompanied by 'rogues gallery' police mugshots.

In fact Britain's IRA captives are prisoners of war, even though they have been tried and convicted in no-jury courts — some of them on the evidence of paid informers. Long Kesh is an internment camp not an ordinary prison.

Most striking has been the reaction in the South where the police and army were mobilised to round up any republican POWs who made their way down across the border.

Not too many years ago such men were treated as heroes in the South. Now the southern bosses' state takes on its full responsibility for policing the border.

Any republicans captured in the south will be sent back to the British internment camps north of the border or locked up in the south.

Callum McRae reports on an important meeting.

"IT IS important that the links between Irish Republicans and opponents of imperialism be kept alive and strengthened, since ultimately, your victory depends on our victory, and our victory will come with yours."

Eoghan Mac Cormac, writing on behalf of the prisoners in the H blocks set the tone at a meeting organised by the Edinburgh branch of the Labour Committee on Ireland. The letter, written in tiny script on a scrap of paper, had been smuggled out of Long Kesh for the meeting.

Outside, with a hysteria matched only by the national press the next day, a bunch of thirty or so loyalists had made a ritual attack on the meeting. In the past they have left Edinburgh activists requiring hospital treatment. On this occasion they had to be largely content with hurling themselves painfully against the door of the labour rooms where the meeting was taking place. Even when Ken Livingstone arrived they managed only a couple of blows.

Although a few people who had come for the meeting thought the better of trying to get through the loyalists, around seventy persevered and were well pleased to have done so.

Mary Pearson from Birming-



Ken Livingstone speaks to the 70-strong audience. In the chair, Callum McRae.

ham has been involved in raising the issue of Ireland in her union for many years. She spoke first and stressed the importance, and problems, of union work. "We can't insult our trade union comrades by simply reciting slogans. We have to continually argue and present the facts. Only by doing that in a reasoned manner can we win people to supporting British withdrawal."

Journalists who stayed through the meeting in the hope of some "newsworthy" aggro at the end, had to listen to Ken Livingstone making another reference to his remarks on Dublin radio about the 'Irish Holocaust'. This time he was not so widely reported. "Most school children in Britain are aware of the scale of the Famine even if the British press aren't."

He went on to attack "those like Peter Shore who say we should not be raising the issue of Ireland in the Labour Party."

"What did they do about the

discrimination against the Catholics in the sixties when Labour had a majority of around a hundred? They did nothing... and must take much of the responsibility for the violence now."

On the growth of Sinn Fein he said "They have emerged as the major force in the republican community. In areas with up to 80% unemployment and housing which makes areas of Glasgow look palatial they have articulated and represented the feelings of the community."

These remarks were echoed by a speaker from the floor. "Sinn Fein", he said, "has recruited and built a base in the republican community which would put any Labour Party branch to shame."

The meeting had to finish early because of the problem of getting the speakers safely away, but in other respects it was very successful. For many Labour Party members it was

the first time they had attended a meeting on Ireland.

With the speakers gone most of the loyalists also left. It was difficult to take seriously the pathetic group who remained outside to defend the faith against the 'poofs, patsys and murdering fenian scum' who had attended the meeting. nonetheless, the problem of loyalism in Scotland is a real one.

It had been touch and go whether the meeting would go ahead at all. Not because the loyalists had been near to physically stopping it, but because so many venues (including labour movement ones) had refused or hesitated about accepting the booking for a meeting about Ireland. The cause was a combination of the threat of loyalist violence and the fear by union officials (particularly the NUM) of a backlash led by their loyalist members.

LETTER FROM LONG KESH

Dear Comrades,

It is important that the links between Irish Republicans and other opponents of imperialism be kept alive and strengthened, since ultimately your victory depends on our victory, and our victory will come with yours.

I am writing this letter in mid-August.

At the time of writing, the main news concerns the 'shoot to kill' tactics of the RUC and the Army and the informer 'trials' at Belfast court. I was going to write 'sic' after that word 'trial' because believe me, those courts are a sick joke. When a system is so much rejected, so incapable of solving its problems that it must institutionalise the temporary, then the system itself has changed.

What we, in the north east of Ireland, are now living in is not the British system found in Edinburgh or Finchley, but a mutation of that system, with countless special features, none of which are normally acceptable in society.

The courts are but one example — juryless, they are under the direction of Orange judges and designed to make maximum use of paid informants, unacceptable in England but used without qualm in Ireland by the English government.

The shoot to kill policy is another example of the extension of perverted laws by British forces in Ireland.

Last week a young man in Belfast was shot dead by a British soldier. A week previously an 18 year old in Armagh was summarily executed by the Ulster Defence Regiment in front of several eyewitnesses.

What "crime" was committed by these unarmed civilians to merit death? Their crime was to

exist in a community which long ago refuted the right of Britain to dominate any part of our country.

British withdrawal is fast becoming a cliché, so let us examine in the light of present British occupation, what is meant by withdrawal. Perhaps the British people, so used to the British way of life, think we are some sort of savages trying to shake off British civilised society or order. But no, what we are trying to shake off, and what we

will shake off, is the legalised corruption, discrimination, and the murderous regime which is British occupation.

The difference between British society in England, Scotland or Wales, and the supposed British society in the six counties is almost infinite.

In Scotland no children have been butchered with plastic bullets. In England no citizen has been interned on remand on the word of paid informers. In Wales no-one has been executed on the snap decision of the local policeman.

I could continue to draw comparisons but it's only fringing on the main fact. The writ of British law does not run in Ireland.

What does run is a completely different writ, one geared solely for oppression, one designed to terrorise those who dare to say that the presence of British troops and their political masters in Ireland is immoral and unwanted, and must be removed as a prelude to peace.

So what do we want when we call for British withdrawal? Are we seeking the removal of the false cover, the special laws, the martial regime — and then a return to "proper" British rule?

No, and most definitely no again. We do not want a normalisation or an Ulsterisation of life

"In Scotland no children have been butchered with plastic bullets. In England no citizen has been interned on remand on the word of paid informers. In Wales no-one has been executed on the snap decision of the local police..."

Let the British get out of Ireland and let us get on with the task of uniting our people in a socialist republic".



North and South

here on British terms. Remember that prior to the introduction of the obscene 'emergency' legislation British rule had already effectively failed.

All schemes, plans and initiatives since the British came to Ireland have been based on one major misconception, i.e. that Britain will remain in Ireland to monitor the progress, and maintain the peace.

The truth is that while the British remain here they stultify progress and create the conditions for war. Let the one untried option be tried. Let the British get out of Ireland and let us get on with the task of uniting our people in a socialist republic.

In four and a half years time, Thatcher, if she is consistent will have turned Britain into one large nationwide dole queue. Possibly by then the Labour Party will have a leadership prepared to implement what it promises as its policy.

At present, however, republicans in Ireland can only view

the Labour leadership with hostility.

What Don Concannon didn't say in Westminster during the hanging debate should be known. He claims to have talked to the hunger strikers. I suppose that is one way of interpreting 'having words'. But when he entered the cell where Frank Hughes lay dying to gloat over another man's agony, Frank told him that if he didn't get out of the cell, Frank would rise and put him out. Concannon withdrew, and Concannon's troops will just as surely withdraw.

Labour in Britain should be a powerful force. But labour must organise itself and define specific policy and maintain a consistent line on that policy.

We are asking that the membership of the British labour movement actively support British withdrawal from Ireland. To do less is to give tacit support to imperialism, surely anathema to anyone purporting to be a socialist.

Eoghan MacCormac
H3 Long Kesh

Labour Party workplace branches Rooting politics in the workplaces

Socialist ORGANISER Industrial Special



by Jeremy Corbyn MP

NORMAN TEBBIT proposes to use the law to break the organic link between the Labour Party and the trade unions. By severing the link between Labour Party local constituencies and the workers on the shop floor he hopes to dissolve the greatest strength the party has and to tear the Labour Party out of its roots.

This is nothing less than an attack on the existence of the labour movement as we know it.

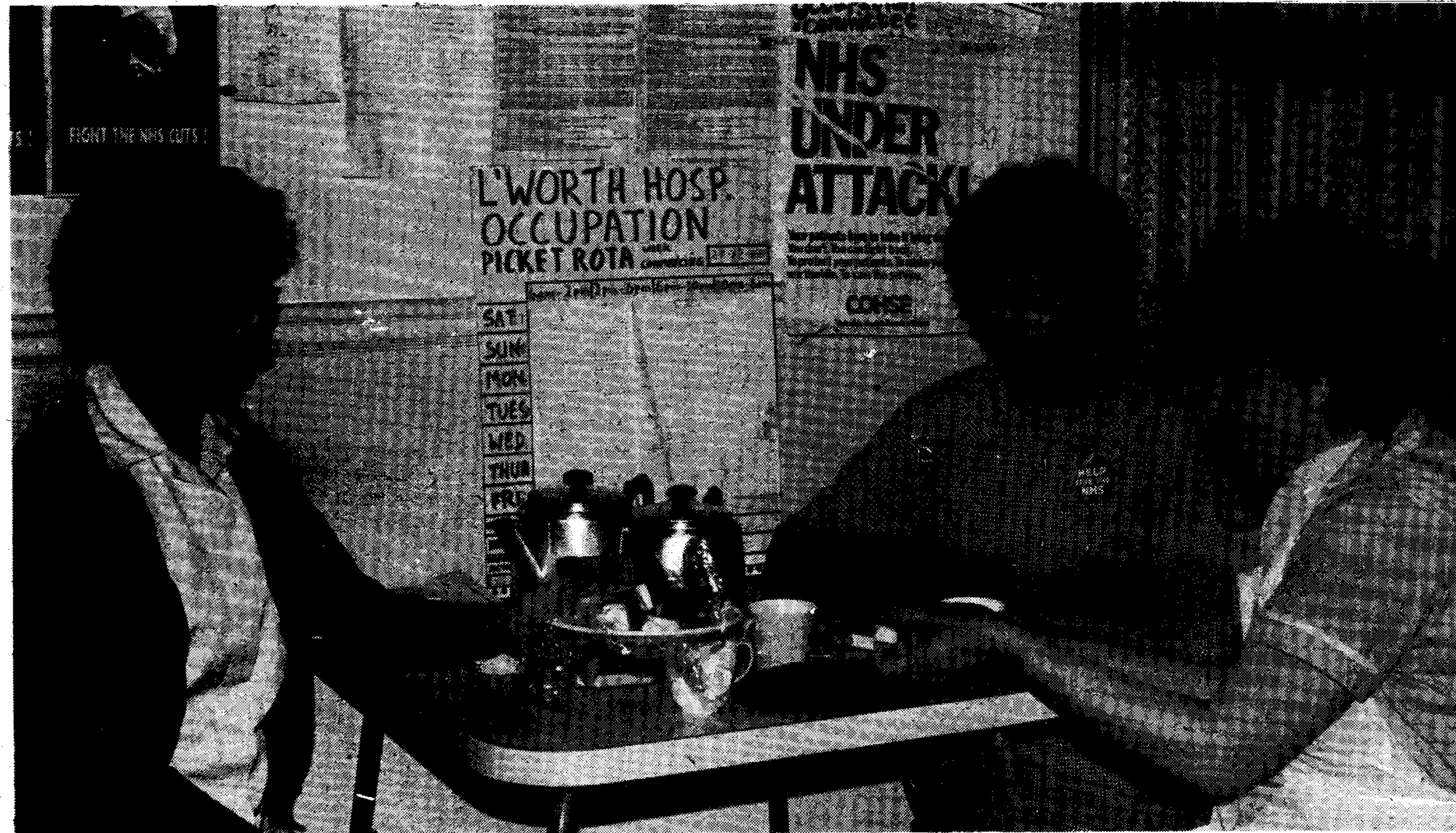
There have been other attempts in the past to break the link between unions and party — and, before that, to stop the unions creating a Labour Party.

Since the 19th century the bosses, their paid thinkers, their legislators and their state have tried to confine the unions to everyday economic concerns. They argued that the job of the unions was to represent their members' economic interests within the prevailing circumstances and that it was no business of the unions to engage in politics.

The establishment of the Labour Party — between 1900 and 1906 — marked a big defeat for the ruling class.

Since then the dream of the right in British politics has been to transform the Labour Party into a non-trade union force. After the defeat of the general strike they put the unions under legal restraints, to limit their power to finance the Labour Party. The 1945 Labour government restored to the unions the right to freely finance the Labour Party. Now this is being challenged once more.

But a major weakness throughout the 80 years the unions have been independently in politics has been the separation between political organisation at Labour Party constituency and ward level and work-



place organisation, which has been purely on a trade union level. For the first 82 years of its existence the Party opposed workplace branches. In 1982 all that changed and the party started to create workplace branches. The need to link the Party to the workplaces and to root it there has never been greater.

Norman Tebbit is the hatchet person for the Tories. His job is the breaking of the trade unions by legal means — in the same way that his colleagues in other ministries try to break them by cuts, privatisation and monetarism.

How can we build the campaign against Tebbit?

*We must make the leadership face up to the issue.

*We must explain to every member of the trade unions and of the Labour Party what is at stake, and why the Tories are

trying to break the link between the unions and the Labour Party.

*We must rebuild the basic link between the workplaces and Labour Party.

Workplace branches can provide a vital link with the local Labour Party. Members of all trade unions can get together to bring anti-Tory and socialist policies into the life of the workplace.

Crucially, they also provide a basis for campaigning for a political fund in all trade unions.

Tebbit is out to smash the trade unions. The fight back is a political fight and it can only be waged politically. Too many work places lack any political forum, organisation or leadership.

The political climate of today requires that we develop workplace Labour Party branches as rapidly as we can.

Eric Heffer

"One of the most important things we have to do is to build the Party in the factories and in the places of work."

"The idea of workplace branches has now become far more important. In the past you could rely on the trade union branches as being in many respects the voice of the Labour Party, but whilst that is still important, I think that the Party itself has got to have a real presence in the workplaces. We can do that by building up the workplace branches."

"We have to be seen in the factories and in the workplaces as part and parcel of the leadership of the workers in those workplaces in their struggles for better conditions, improved wages and so on."

Tony Benn

"We must build a mass party with an immediate target of one million members, drawn from among Labour voters known to us from our canvass cards."

"We must campaign for individual members in the trade unions. Workplace branches will be essential if the Government proceeds with its plan to introduce a system of 'contracting in'."

To start a workplace Labour Party branch is easy. You just need to get together ten Labour Party members and invite the regional Party official to a meeting.

The Labour Party membership of workplace recruits has to be processed through their ward branches but the workplace branch can send one delegate to the Labour Party GC in each constituency where it has at least ten members living.

That's the mechanics. But what about the political gist of it? In this supplement we try to show, by interviews and reports, how Labour Party workplace branches can open up new possibilities for working class politics rooted at the point of production.

Billy Hayes is chair of Liverpool Postal Workers Labour Party branch, and chair of the Communication Workers Broad Left. He spoke to John Bloxam and Lol Duffy.

The workplace branch creates

Billy: A few of us on the Left had been meeting occasionally, and we thought we needed some way for the Left to come out and organise in the workplace. We saw that our union's delegation to Labour Party conference had voted in favour of workplace branches, so that seemed the best way.

We put out a leaflet. On one side we had 'Labour News', and on the other side 'Tory News', with snapshots of Tory Britain, like unemployed people throwing themselves off buildings, benefit cuts, and things like that. It went down quite well. At the inaugural meeting there were about 15. That was almost a year ago.

The Labour Party often doesn't make it easy for people to join. But at the workplace branch we have different types of speakers. For example, when the privatisation issue came up [in the

local council], we had a speaker along from the [council] Joint Shop Stewards' Committee. We're also thinking of going in for video. We find that young people will come along.

If you're 18 or 19, and you're interested in the union, so you go along to the union meeting, you're likely to find someone saying, 'Well, we've met at COPOU level today, and the Central Committee is meeting tomorrow, and they'll report back, and we don't know what we'll do about these 552s, but we might be in an overspend situation...' What's the average young person going to make of that?

The workplace branch creates a political beachhead. It gives young people the political ideas, the encouragement, so that they can get through all that other gobbledegook you've got to learn.

Lol: In Lairds I'd been pushing for ages to set up a workplace Labour Party branch. I knew a lot of stewards were in the Labour Party, and it would be a good source for other people. It worked — we got them all coming along. What we're hoping to do now is to develop more stewards out of it.

Billy: In the trade union movement we've lived under a false assumption for a long time. Because some unions were industrially very strong, they thought industrial strength equals political strength. And that's been shown to be false. Now we've got to re-learn.

Our workplace is about 2000 people. We've got about 70 Labour Party members, though I was surprised to find it was so many. The workplace branch creates a network of contacts that you didn't even know existed

before. If you're an activist in the workplace, especially if you're a lefty, everyone thinks you're an oddball. It strengthens you to know there are other people in the workplace.

We tried to make the workplace branch as broad-based as possible. The secretary is a postman, the chairman is a PHG — which is a higher grade of postman — the vice-chairman is the secretary of the POEU branch, and one of the auditors is in the CMA, which is the supervisors' union. Politically, too — we try to argue with the right wing, not just browbeat them.

We usually get 15 to 20 to meetings, about once a month, 11.30 on a Saturday morning, in the Swan Hotel. It was 50 or 60 to the meeting before the General Election. We'd like to meet in work, but there's no chance of that. They let the Post Office Christian Society meet, but you

don't want to bring politics into it...!

If you're saying to people that they should join the Labour Party, the workplace branch makes it much easier. Otherwise you give them a form, and they'll get a reply six months later if they're lucky, and if their name's not Tariq Ali. Then if they go along to a ward meeting, often they find it a bit overpowering when they're not used to political activity.

They get used to the idea of formal meetings. And we get away from that thing in work — I don't know if you've noticed, but working class people, when they start talking seriously, feel they have to punctuate it with a few jokes, just to say, 'I'm not that serious...'

It encourages people to come along to meetings. It gives them the confidence to start.

John: How many new members have you recruited to the Labour Party?

Billy: About six, I think.

Lol: In our place, the majority of the 40-odd we got weren't Labour Party members before.

John: Have they been recruited now?

Lol: No. We pass them on to wards and constituencies, by they just get pushed under a mat or something. The fact that we're not allowed to take money off people and recruit them directly is one of the things that really needs changing.

You're relying on people who might not have the same commitment to get in people like we're trying to get into the Labour Party.

What they said on Sept. 17



Excerpts from the workshop discussion at Socialist Organiser's 'How to Fight the Tories' conference.

Cammell Lairds shipyard, Birkenhead: Lol Duffy

WE'VE got about eight workplace branches in Merseyside in various places — our shipyard, the Post Office, teachers in a Tech, local council housing workers, and a drugs factory.

In Cammell Lairds we have a shop stewards committee covering all the unions. But it doesn't take a political role, if you try to put politics across the

the shop stewards committee to the shop floor you get shot down.

We had tried to develop a Broad Left at Lairds. It fell down mainly because it was going to be based on the shop stewards and the craft consciousness is so bad that the craft workers won't even meet with the general workers union.

So we tried a Labour Party workplace branch. We put out forms around the yard saying that we need a fight back and that it's a political fight.

Now the Labour Party branch is really developing the stewards committee. We're trying to push forward from the workplace branch to positions in the stewards committee, and we've been quite successful in putting pressure on the stewards committee from the workplace branch.

We haven't got a bulletin from the workplace branch, but we have got a stewards bulletin going, and it basically says what the workplace branch says.

It was amazingly easy to set up the branch. People were crying out for something like this in Lairds.

We got a response from 40 or so people. About three of them were shop stewards, the rest were just from the shop floor.

JOHN STURROCK (REPORT)



20 or so turned up to the first meeting — during their dinner break, and it's not very easy to get people out in their dinner hour.

We had been trying for ages to get something going in the yard. We've had Socialist Organiser meetings, with five, or if we were lucky, ten turning up when it was an urgent issue like redundancies in the yard.

We put in quite a lot of work during the general election. We held factory gate meetings. We invited local MPs along and we allowed the shop floor to question them.

60-70 came, and it created a good interest throughout the yard. We had most of the Merseyside MPs, prospective MPs etc along at one time or another.

We organised transport to every marginal constituency in Merseyside and paid for it ourselves.

People also involved their mates, unemployed people, and got them to come along and help out.

That's a good spin-off. The most right wing Labour Party branch in this area is the Birkenhead branch, but from what we've done we've got ten new active members there.

I was invited through the workplace branch to speak at the Birkenhead constituency meeting the other week and I was able to put forward our criticism of Frank Field (the MP) going hand in hand with the Tory MP for Wirral and arguing that the workers in Cammell Lairds should be working harder and producing more for the boss. It got a good reception, and we've shown the people in Cammell Lairds who live in Field's constituency, that he's not the defender of workers' rights he says he is.

Basingstoke Post Office Workers: Alan Fraser

TO GET at the root of our workplace branch being formed, I think it is important to look first at the way the union branch was transformed.

In the last four years we've had three strikes. Before then we had never had a strike in the Basingstoke Post Office in its whole history.

This change wasn't due to three or four 'loony leftists' arriving in the branch all of a sudden. It was because there was a reactionary Tory government and the members clearly felt that there was a need for the apathetic leadership in the branch to be changed.

What precipitated the change was a strike in 1980 over victimisation.

From the strike, a new leadership emerged — a leadership that wanted to involve the rank and file. I was part of this leadership. Young people in the branch, in particular, started to come forward.

NHS dispute

But the membership in Basingstoke weren't just satisfied with fighting the local issues. More and more wanted something else.

The NHS dispute was important. On the Day of Action last year, 70 of our members stood on the picket line with the hospital workers. More and more we realised it was fine to be industrial militants and to beat management week after

week, but it wasn't enough. Something else had to be done. We had to draw those people further into the labour movement and politicise them more.

It was a natural expression of the rank and file when we set up a workplace branch. To do it was comparatively easy.

Recently we've had a dispute about victimisation — the management decided it was time to chop the leadership because the branch was becoming increasingly political, so they decided to dismiss me.

Unfortunately we lost the battle, thanks to the trade union bureaucracy. But the workplace branch played a tremendous role in the struggle.

We've got 14 members in the branch. That might not sound a lot, but if you get 14 people who are aware of the political fight that is going on in the country at the moment it can have a big effect.

By giving our membership the opportunity of becoming political activists the workplace branch has opened up a whole new door for them.

The SWP said that our branch was only being used for sending resolutions to the GC and so on and so forth, and we weren't getting involved in any workers' struggles. After the struggle in Basingstoke last week, an SWP comrade came up to me and apologised and said that they had been mistaken — they had never seen such a struggle in Basingstoke like it. I said I put it down to the workplace branch — the fact that there was a political organisation inside the union branch.

Now, even though I've been removed, there's still that political organisation in there. And they've learned tremendous lessons about the trade union bureaucracy from the dispute.

Local authorities: Mick O'Sullivan described the Haringey council workers' branch; and Louisa Blackwell mentioned some problems in the branch at GLC County Hall

I WORK at County Hall. We've had a workplace branch set up quite recently, but I'm completely confused as to what is going on. It's only very occasionally that you get to hear about a meeting coming up.

The main political influence in the branch is Militant.

It started with a YS workplace branch meeting. The meeting had 40 people there, and that was quite heartening.

But now, we're having a lot of trouble. Senior officers seem to control the meetings.

Break

Another problem is that the meetings are all an hour long. But the lower officers, like me, get skinned alive if we take more than 45 minutes for our lunch break.

We were told 'If you've only got 45 minutes, come in the second half of the meeting because then you might get to know of the decisions, but they are not prepared to shorten the meetings or have them after work.'

They don't really seem to build the branch. There aren't any posters for the meetings. It's done through an unofficial mailing list, and certain people like me don't get the mailings.

In the 1920's

"In the '20s, to the consternation of the liberal-minded Labour leadership of Henderson and MacDonald, Battersea North elected as their member of parliament the Indian Saklatvala. Not only was he an Indian but a Communist, and he was sponsored by the united Battersea labour movement.

The link that Saklatvala established with his worker constituents was not that of the proverbial surgery, "Can I help you", "Have you any problems?" At that time the entire working class had a problem: that of survival against the employers' lockouts, widespread unemployment, and the downward slide of the sliding scale of wages agreements.

Saklatvala spoke at factory gate meetings and introduced the

monthly report back from Westminster. There were great meetings. Long before the doors of the town hall opened, queues formed just like they used to at Stamford Bridge.

The platform was always crowded. Sak, as he was affectionately known, was flanked by the entire executive of the Trades and Labour Council and numerous representatives of Indian and colonial organisations...

These monthly report-back meetings on the doings in parliament stirred hundreds into activity. The Battersea labour movement pulsated with life and was united. Marxist classes held by the old Plebs League flourished. Trade Union branches were crowded...

Harry Wicks, 'The General Strike

a political beach-head"

Billy: I think the National Executive Committee should be developing some sort of beginner's guide to workplace branches.

John: Why do you think they're not doing it?

Billy: It's obvious, isn't it? They see the Labour Party in terms of winning elections. They don't see it in terms of building a fight back against the Tories — I mean a real fight back, not just resolutions.

In the workplace branch we try to encourage everybody to turn up, but the right wing won't...

Lol: It's the same in our place. They're lost. They just wouldn't have a leg to stand on if they came in and argued on politics. They're all right arguing the union rules, but in a political argument they'd be shot down — and it's in

front of the membership, as well, not in front of the other stewards, which they can handle.

Billy: We do have one right-winger in particular who is quite articulate. He has turned up once or twice. But I think the main reason why the right-wingers don't turn up is their political perspective — the way they see things.

For example, when we had the vote for the leadership, we said it should be a [union] branch ballot of the membership, like in NUPE. One right-winger said: 'What do you want argument and discussion for? You can tell what the candidates think by the telly'. That sums it up.

There are eight or ten workplace branches in Liverpool now...

John: You had a meeting last Saturday, and there's going to be

a conference at the end of October...

Billy: I think it's going to be October 29. We're hoping to get big-name speakers. A leaflet is going to go out to all the workplace branches, and also to shop stewards' committees and so on.

John: Perhaps the conference could sponsor a pamphlet which would be a beginner's guide to workplace branches.

Billy: Yes.

John: What do you think are the possibilities of the workplace branches making connections nationally? There are two ways to do it, and I think both can be done. If the Labour Party leadership compares workplace branches to Labour Party Young Socialist branches and women's

sections, then the obvious logical conclusion is that both youth and women have got their own conferences, so why can't you have a national conference of workplace branches?

Secondly, within a union, to organise the Left. In workplace branches you have a form of organisation which is recognised by the union. The union wants to set them up. Then you could have meetings of the workplace branches in unions like the UCW...

Billy: I think the right wing is a bit ambivalent towards workplace branches. On the one hand, they think it's good that there are more people in the Labour Party, but on the other hand they know that the Left will be there again...

In the union, I think one of the things we should be doing as a Broad Left is a drive to set up workplace branches.

Bridging union gaps on the shop floor

John Ledgerton, from the Flemming Rd., Garston (Merseyside) workplace branch, at the Dista factory, spoke to Socialist Organiser.

WE formed the branch in May of this year, prompted by the Labour Party national conference decision of 1982. Four of us started off by seeking others who might be interested.

A preliminary meeting heard a speaker from Laird's workplace branch and decided the date for the inaugural meeting.

We advertised the meeting by a leaflet posted on union notice boards. Our original name for the branch was Dista Workplace Branch but the company objected because, they said, they did not contribute to any political organisation. Dista is part of the multi-national Lilley Corporation whose President is George Bush, US Vice President!

We didn't get a very good response to the leaflet, only the bare minimum of ten members of the Labour Party.

Since then we have recruited six members. We organised a factory gate meeting during the election campaign and leafleted the local factories, including Fords.

We held a branch meeting on the reorganisation of the schools in Liverpool, knowing that it is

going to be one of the main issues of the city elections next May. We planned public meetings to counter the Tory press attacks on the council and socialist ideas.

Our aim is to get the Labour Party policies across to the shop floor. We are starting a news-sheet which will accept articles from the workforce as well as Labour Party branch articles.

We are sending a delegate to Garston GMC. The response of the stewards, apart from two of us, has been to refuse to become involved. They claim they are "non-political".

One of the problems in Dista is that there is no joint stewards committee. USDAW covers the process workers, ASTMS the labs, and the craft unions are UCATT, AUEW, EETPU. Even the craft unions don't have a joint stewards committee.

The workplace Labour Party branch covers most of the unions and the officers are treasurer-ASTMS, Secretary-USDAW and Chair-Craft. The branch is attempting to bridge the gap in the union relations on the shop floor.



Jaguar, Coventry
by a Jaguar Browns Lane shop steward

THE idea to set up a workplace branch came from a group of left wing shop stewards who began to set one up immediately after the two-year pay deal went through in November 1982.

They circulated a leaflet about the need to fight the Tories and asking people to join the Labour Party and help set up a workplace branch. 25 people expressed interest, the majority of whom were not already Labour Party members. Two informal meetings were held to explain in more detail what was involved and the idea of the thing. About 15 turned up to these.

The original group of stewards took the money and membership forms along to the relevant wards and CLPs. The great majority were in Coventry and there was little problem.

At the inaugural meeting, shortly before the election, the Regional Official told the meeting that he couldn't give them the go-ahead because Party work was suspended for the duration of the general election.

We did election work in the factory and recruited more people to the Party. We had been meeting informally in the Social Club on the plant and we now wrote and asked for proper meeting facilities in the Club. This request was vetoed by BL senior industrial relations management.

An important part of the preparatory work for the workplace branch was the connection with the joint shop stewards committee. The people originally involved were stewards, including two senior shop stewards, one of whom was the chair of the main TGWU branch. The work that was being done was regularly reported to the shop stewards committee, and passed back by stewards to their members.

The inaugural meeting was held on July 1, in the house of one of the members, just by the factory. 16 were there, half of them new members. The meeting was simply to set up the branch, but they decided to leave the choice of delegate to a CLP until Christmas and there had been the chance for more to join. We have been recruiting two or three new members each week since then.

Two meetings have been held since the inaugural meeting, in a Scout hut near the plant, at 3.30pm at the end of the Friday shift. The meetings have lasted only about three-quarters of an hour, which give us time only for short business items and one political discussion.

The branch put out a leaflet in August protesting about management's refusal to allow meetings on the plant, which went down well. This coincided with BL's victimisation of workers at Cowley and raised the same basic issue.

The branch decided to circulate a petition for the right to hold meetings on the plant, and this is still being circulated. One problem has been an intimidating effect of the Cowley sackings on some of the workforce.

There has been a problem about the time of meetings. The workforce of over 2,000 comes from all over North Warwickshire and many depend on lifts to get home — and so they find it difficult to stay at the end of a shift. And Friday afternoon is one of the main shopping times. Alternative times for meetings have been discussed — but there is only half an hour for lunch and if you had a rolling meeting over a series of lunch breaks it would have to be on plant.

Although there are 400 women in the factory, so far only one is involved in the workplace branch.

It's been tried before

ERNIE ROBERTS MP explains how workplace branches can help build a mass Labour Party, and recounts how it was done during World War 2.

This is not a new idea. It has been tested on a small scale. And it was a success.

During the 1939-45 war, the Party organisation collapsed in many areas, partly due to wartime collaboration between political parties. There was no organised collection of subscriptions, and very little official activity by the membership within the CLPs.

Such was the situation in Coventry, an engineering centre of the war effort.

I raised the question of creating a 'factory branch' of the Labour Party in the factory where I worked (Daimler Browns Lane). The Midlands Regional Council of the Party agreed to approach the NEC with the proposition, and eventually a Factory Branch came into being on an experimental basis.

I found it easy, as a Shop Steward, to make individual members of the Party in the factory, and I was able to collect their Party subscriptions at the same time as I collected their trade-union subs. Many of the new individual members were of course also contracted-in members of the Party, through paying the political levy to the Engineers Union.

Within a few weeks, there were about 100 individual members in this one factory. We held meetings in one of the coaches which brought the workers to the factory, and this was parked in the firm's car park.

It held 36 seated and about 12 standing, which was adequate for an average lunchtime meeting. We met once a week, and held discussions on a wide variety of political and trade-union issues, including the kind of Britain we wanted after the War.

We paid the membership subs into the Coventry Labour Party. We had no direct representation there, but we sometimes worked out resolutions and sent them to the local Party.

This factory branch continued for about a year, until I was sacked by Daimler as a Toolroom Shop Steward, and shortly afterward the branch folded up.

In my opinion, this was a valuable experiment in the building of the Party, and I am convinced that the same idea could succeed again, although on a regularised basis, with more formal links between the workplace branch and the local Party.

Such branches would be successful for the same reason that an on-site trade union branch is often more successful than an off-site one — people are at work anyway, available for meetings at, say, lunchtime or at the end of a shift, and they are less likely to be seduced away from political activities by television, family commitments, etc. than if they first go home and then have to set out for a meeting...

Such workplace branches would take the policies of the Party onto the shop floor. They would activate many more workers to take part in local and national politics... Thus every workplace could be made into a socialist fortress, a socialist school...

Excerpted from Socialist Organiser no.21

Socialist ORGANISER

LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE MEETING

BUILDING WORKPLACE BRANCHES

Speakers: BOB CLAY MP (Campaign Group)
ALAN FRASER (UCW. Chair, Basingstoke Postal Workers LP Branch)
LOL DUFFY (GMBATU. Secretary, Cammell Lairds LP Workplace Branch)
ROB DAWBER (NUR. Sheffield Hallam CLP)
Chair: ANN CROWDER (NALGO. East Nottingham CLP delegate)

(Speakers in a personal capacity)

KINGS HOTEL, 139/141 Kings Road, Brighton (5 minutes walk from Conference Centre)

5.30pm, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4

Socialist ORGANISER

Industrial Special

Revive the roots, renew the politics

THE LABOUR Party must renew itself or it will wither and die.

The renewal must in the first place be political renewal. It is the Party's politics — its real politics as distinct from politics to which mere lip-service is paid — which determine what it is and what it can hope to achieve.

The environment in which the old Labour Party flourished and achieved some reforms for the working class is changed and gone beyond recall.

Reformism is bankrupt. Even at his most 'left' Neil Kinnock does not dare commit himself, or the next Labour Government, which he hopes to lead, even to the full restoration of the Tory cuts. That's the measure of the bankruptcy of reformism, and of how well its representatives know that they are bankrupt!

We need to commit the Labour Party to a fight for socialism, *now* — for socialism as our immediate answer to Toryism and our immediate alternative to Thatcherism.

Working-class roots

Organisationally, too, the Labour Party must renew itself. The Labour Party is the mass party of the working class, but its branches are not mass organisations, and frequently they do not have much to do with the working class.

Union representation on GCs has, of course, sustained the links between the local parties and the workplaces. But all in all, working class involvement in the Labour Party has declined alarmingly — for decades.

To renew itself the Labour Party needs to revive its roots in the working class.

The 1982 decision to start Labour Party workplace branches can be the starting point for a tremendous organisational renewal of the Labour Party, and for the revival of the Labour Party as a force in working class life such as it has not been for decades.

By way of Labour Party workplace branches, many industrial militants can be drawn into activity in the political wing of the labour movement.

The influence of factory branches can help turn the rest of the Party outwards towards workers' struggles, at the same time as the factory branches bring anti-Tory and socialist policies into the workplaces.

Middle class ward members and single-issue activists in the Party may be forced by the activity of factory branches to think through the fundamental problem of how to relate the Party to the mainstream working class — without which no radical socialist transformation is possible — as it actually is.

The characteristic division of the British labour movement between narrow trade unionism — including militant rank and file trade unionism — in industry, and old-fashioned Labour reformism outside it, can be overcome.

The SDP's drive towards a continental-style political split in the unions makes this tremendously important, and urgent.

Left wing Labour Party workplace branches could help change the balance in the unions — and take the fight into the walled-off domains of the trade union leaders who have intervened so brutally into the affairs of the Labour Party in the last period.

The intervention of Marxists

Factory branches alone, in and of themselves, cannot, of course, guarantee anything other than a degree of closer Labour Party involvement in the workplaces. The right wing and soft 'left' was able to win political control before, when the Labour Party was closely integrated into working class life. It subverted the potential for socialism, and squandered the credit of the Party.

In this, as in every other area of the labour movement, the intervention and activity of Marxists will be of decisive importance in determining what happens. But factory branches will help Marxists defeat the right wing and its soft-left allies, and win people to our ideas about socialism — at the heart of which is the mainstream working class and its struggle.

We produce this supplement to help Labour Party activists turn to the urgent work of building workplace branches.



JOHN HARRIS

How we brought new people into politics and union activity

INITIALLY I suggested setting up a Labour Party workplace branch to some of the people who had been involved in the local Broad Left.

We all thought it was a really good idea. The Broad left in Coventry wasn't working — it was only a few people and we couldn't get others interested.

The only opposition we got was from the union officials. They don't like my politics, so they don't trust anything I get up to.

They said that the workplace branch would be dealing with union issues and would step on their toes.

I had to promise that it would have no connection with the union and that it would not deal with union issues. That's the rules, anyway.

In practice this will create quite a few difficulties. We want to invite Alan Fraser down to speak, for instance, and they'll step on that straight away.

We want to talk about things like YTS (the Tory Youth Training Scheme) and they'll say: No you can't. That's our business.

You can't really separate politics and union issues, but we'll just have to avoid clashes as much as we can over the next few months.

Mainly what we do at workplace branch meetings is just political education — with speakers and videos on various political issues like racism and sexism.

Then I think we will get people who come to the workplace branch meetings and say — why don't we discuss YTS? Why don't we discuss privatisation? And then the officials won't just have an argument with me — it will be with the workplace branch and all the members.

Have most of those who come to the meetings been active in the union?

No. The people who are coming to the workplace branch particularly the young people who haven't been involved in anything before, have had very little to do with the union. They haven't even bothered coming to union meetings.

I think the reason why they will come to the workplace branch rather than the union is that in the workplace branch we can have those discussions and speak freely. Those goes specially for the young women.

Jean Lane is secretary of the Coventry Post Office Labour Party workplace branch.

Union meetings are really intimidating for them.

If a young woman comes to a union meeting and stands up to speak, you'll get a lot of muttering from the blokes at the back, and then some bastard of an official will say 'Can you repeat that, love?'

She goes completely tongue-tied, sits down again and never comes to another meeting.

The effect of the workplace branch on me and other political people in the Post Office is brilliant, too, because it gives us a far wider audience to talk to politically. We can contact people we never knew existed.

I had one bloke come up to me after our first meeting and say — I'm sorry I missed your meeting, I'll be along to your next one. I had never seen him, I didn't know who he was, but he had been in the Labour Party for years.

In the normal run you just don't meet these people, you don't find out what their views are, and you don't get to talk to them.

I think the workplace branch will encourage people to start getting involved in the union and raising political issues.

I have heard people object to setting up workplace branches because it gives the union a let-out not to discuss politics because the workplace branch will deal with it.

But we've got the bureaucrats trying to stop political discussion in the union anyway. The workplace branch gives people a chance to discuss politics and encourages people to go and discuss politics in the union, knowing that there will be someone there who will back them up.

How did you start the workplace branch?

We put out a leaflet saying do you want to fight the Tories? and suggesting issues that ought to be discussed like cuts, privatisation, racism and sexism.

The response was very good. We've got 18 members.

We've had two meetings but the first one didn't work because the rules say we have to have ten

paid-up Labour Party members to set up a branch, and only six were at the meeting.

At the second meeting we had more people, and we elected the officers. We had a discussion on how to make contact with the rest of the Labour Party in the City, including the other workplace branches, and what sort of things we wanted to do.

One woman suggested we invite Amrit Wilson to speak on racism. Someone wanted to discuss El Salvador. Others suggested films — Rosie the Riveter and Harlan County, which is our next meeting.

Since our very first meeting we've got seven or eight new people to fill out membership forms to join the Labour Party. At the second meeting the majority were young cadets, delivery officers, aged 17 or 18.

But we had a good cross section as well. We had someone from the POEU and we had the secretary of the local Committee of Post Office Unions. We had people from the offices, and delivery officers, and drivers.

Most of the people who've been interested weren't Labour Party members before. I think they're joining, really, only because they want to come to particular meetings and discuss those particular issues. I don't know how active they will be in their wards.

The workplace branch is important because it gives people a way to get into politics.

I remember when we were trying to get a lot of Asian youth into the Labour Party after Satnam Singh Gill was killed. They would come to two or three ward meetings and then decide they would rather go to the football match instead.

It was completely understandable. Those kids were forming self-defence committees, talking about racism and fascists, and then the Labour Party meetings would be discussing the broken paving slabs down such and such a street or something that was going on in some committee or other in the council house.

With the workplace branch we can relate directly to what people want to talk about and want to do.

At our first meeting one of the women said it was one of the nicest Labour Party meetings she had been to for years.

Meeting times are a problem because the Post Office works 24 hours and there's always a shift at work. We're meeting at 7.30 on Monday nights, which isn't ideal. Saturday afternoon would be better but those who were initially interested couldn't make that time. We're meeting in a pub in town. No way would we get a room inside the Post Office.

What about involving women? Workplace branches should make the Labour Party more accessible, not only because they are more interesting but also because of the time and place where they meet.

Our meetings aren't at all accessible in that way, any more than any other Labour Party meetings are. But we have got quite a large number of women involved. Probably more than half the people who have joined are women. But they're all young, single post-women.

A lot of these young women have come because they know me personally, but also they know my politics and agree with most of what I say.

Do you think they would have come along if it had been three or four men from the Committee who had organised the first meeting?

No, they wouldn't, because they just didn't identify with those people anyway. Neither, probably, would a lot of the men.

It seems there have been no more than 50 workplace branches set up nationally. Perhaps that's an underestimate, but it is still not a lot. Do you find that surprising when it is so easy to set them up?

Not really. It is very easy to set them up, all you need is ten members. But with the way the union is organised and the attitude of trade unionists, people have forgotten their history, their roots. They have forgotten that the Labour Party came out of trade unions and they've forgotten the militancy that got trade unions set up in the first place.

Get ORGANISED!

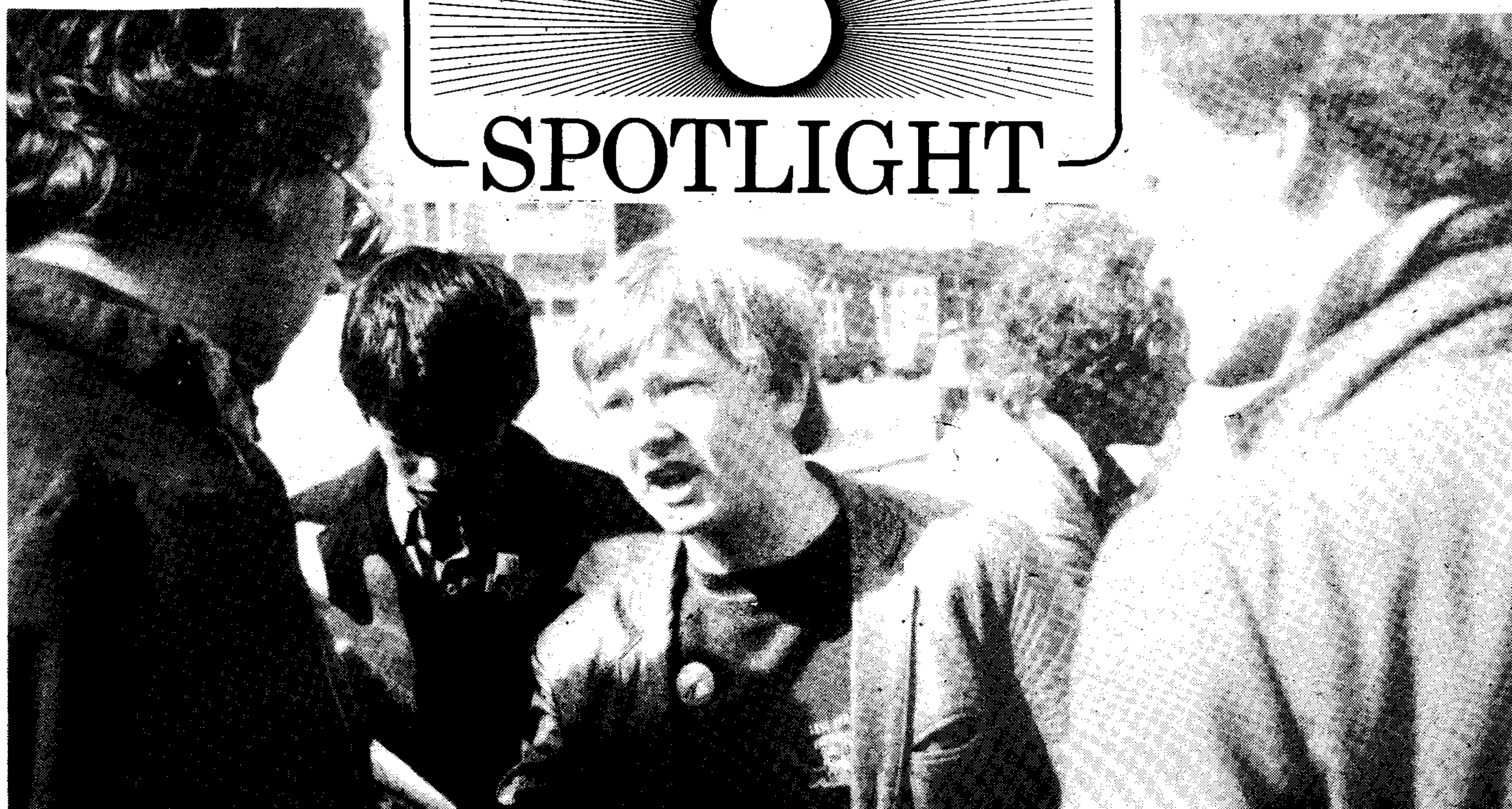
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Peter Cashman: a class view on unemployment

SPOTLIGHT

Two conferences, two classes.

I WONDER if, when Tories watch Ken Loach's latest production, "The Blue and the Red", they will fall about laughing at what they see as outlandish accents and ridiculous sloganising by socialists?

Will the noisy scrum of paper, badge, pamphlet and sticker sellers outside the Labour Party Conference, the attacks on leaders, the challenges to the chair and the nightly refrain of "what's it to be then fish'n chips or wimpy" only prove to these ladies and gentlemen that the lower orders are lower because of their failure to embrace sophistication, civilisation and sound common sense? No doubt. But then Ken

Andrew Hornung previews a Ken Loach film to be shown this Saturday, 1st, at 7.30pm on Channel 4.

Loach's film (subtitled "Impressions of Two Political Conferences") isn't meant to cold-shower the Thatcherites into compassion and conversation. It is a neat — and often hilarious — statement of just how far apart the class attitudes of the rank-and-file members of the two major parties are.

The prospective parliamentary candidate for St. Albans (now an MP) comes to the rostrum late and apologises, "My extremely efficient room-maid

placed my notes in the garbage at the Royal Crescent Hotel in interview. "I came into politics in reaction to socialist trends." "I'm a great believer in hard work and initiative," declares a Keighley Conservative. "Self-sufficiency is gift divine."

Meanwhile at the Labour Party Conference, Lol Duffy, a shipyard shop steward and delegate, from Wallasey CLP, analyses the run-down of shipbuilding and the failure of the Party leadership to fight for working class interests. Peter

Cashman, also from Wallasey, talks about unemployment: "I've worked 22 weeks in two years."

Will the Tory viewers be able to keep a straight face listening to Cecil Parkinson coo: "Harrogate? I'd love to. If I don't get to Harrogate once a month, I feel I'm missing out. Everything happens in Harrogate." Will they fail to be tickled by the sight of the formally dressed couples cha-cha-ing limply before a backdrop announcing "The Resolute Approach"?

More important — seeing that the film is being shown on the eve of the Labour leadership election — what will Labour viewers think seeing Kinnock do the intellectual twist at the Tribune meeting? Swerving like a dog-fish in the shallow water of his own argument, the next Labour leader defends witch-hunting by quoting Hobsbawm on unity! Kinnock is then riotously rubbished by Dennis Skinner, who is to political theory what Lowry is to Picasso.

At least it's all part of politics. The Tories "Blue Review" — the highlight of their week — is by contrast a dowdy mixture of village hall variety and undergraduate humour.

Perhaps even the odd Tory viewer will be struck by the way in which their co-thinkers can't think and don't even come close to bordering on a logical argument.

The voices are familiar: "Whatever happened to good manners?" No answers. "They come into our restaurant and buy T-bone steaks with their dole money. How many of you have had a T-bone steak?" Move on before they all stick their hands up. "What goddam right have they got to a pay rise?" Answers on a self-addressed postcard, please.

And some not so familiar: "These militant nurses, most of them are mental nurses" or "Napoleon despised the small businessmen and look where it got him."

If the contrasts throughout the film are stark, needing no commentary, two moments keep you guessing: a lavish hotel lunch and a quick view of a press room. In case you are wondering: the lavish lunch — in its atmosphere straight out of the Tory Party conference scene — is one given for Labour MPs (by Granada Television) and the two figures in the press room — one garulous, the other groaning — are both Tory journalists who used to work for pro-Labour papers.

Make sure you see this film. There's more class content in this than in our leaders' speeches and more class analysis than in most books on sociology.

Looking poverty in the face

RENE DUMONT is an expert on agricultural economics. In 1962 he wrote a book, "False Start in Africa", which said that the newly-independent African states were "marking time" economically, yet underdevelopment could be conquered within 20 years.

20 years on, underdevelopment is more deeply and disastrously entrenched, and that is what Dumont's new book, written with Marie-France Mottin, is about.

It is easy and true to say that Dumont's outlook is naive. He wrote in "False Start in Africa", "The greatest obstacle to progress remains the lack of elementary morality — work, honesty, and dedication to the

Martin Thomas reviews "Stranglehold on Africa", by Rene Dumont and Marie-France Mottin (Deutsch £14.95)

country — of a good percentage of political leaders."

In this new book, he denounces the corruption, inefficiency, and exploitation practised by the state bourgeoisies in Zambia and Tanzania, yet expresses the warmest sympathy with their presidents, Kaunda and Nyerere. The message remains a moral one — the need for equality, hard work, and cooperation.

But this sort of naivety also

gives the book great clarity and directness. And it certainly ranks it above a great deal of sophisticated theorisation on development. Dumont denounces both the complacent people of the rich countries, and the middle classes of African countries who cover up their own privileges with pseudo-Marxist theories ascribing all problems to imperialism and central capitalism.

The picture is stark. Grandiose 'development' schemes, jointly sponsored by imperialist 'aid' and the African state bureaucracies, which do much more to enrich the few than to relieve the starvation of the many.

Bureaucratic bungling, short-sightedness and self-interest, leaves the peasant majority in increased misery.

In West Africa, a potentially disastrous destruction of the country's natural resources, turning larger and larger areas into desert.

Dumont's alternative, argued vigorously and with many practical examples is a sort of peasant socialism, based on self-reliance and small-scale local schemes controlled by the producers themselves.

Peasantry

The peasantry, however, by its very nature as a class, lacks the cohesion and power to impose its own solution. That is why Dumont is left looking to saviours from above — Nyerere, Kaunda — and denouncing the lack of moral qualities of the bourgeois functionaries that surround them.

Marxism should give us a better idea of who can break the stranglehold, how. But not at the cost of losing the directness and urgency with which Dumont poses the problem.

SCIENCE

By Les Hearn

After the Bomb drops

UP TILL now, scientists studying the effect of nuclear war have tended to concentrate on the immediate effects of bomb blasts but recently scientists in Germany and the US have started looking at the long term implications.

The list includes months of darkness, near-freezing temperatures, even in the tropics, and world-wide crop failures.

A one megatonne (Mt) bomb, equivalent to one million tonnes of TNT, would throw tens of thousands of tonnes of fine dust into the air. If about 6,000 Mt of bombs were detonated, about half of current stockpiles, the atmosphere would be filled with dust, while the heat of the explosions would ignite vast forest fires in the northern hemisphere, filling the atmosphere with smoke. The result would be darkness at noon for up to four months.

Chemical reactions near the bomb blasts would result in the formation of great clouds of oxides of nitrogen, the ingredients of "photochemical smog", already found in Los Angeles, where sunlight causes irritating and harmful substances to be made out of air pollutants.

The effect of darkness on life would be devastating. The dust would prevent sunlight from reaching plants in the worst-affected areas. Photosynthesis (trapping the sun's energy in food) would cease in the sea and on land. Starvation of most animals, plant-eaters and meat-eaters, would follow.

There would also be a drastic fall in temperature which would stop all plant growth and kill off surviving animals.

This would mainly affect the northern hemisphere, assuming that most or all of the bombs were detonated there. This is because there is little mixing of air across the equator.

What would lie in store for any life that survived these few months?

Well, they would find that the amount of harmful ultra-violet radiation reaching the earth had increased ten-fold. This would be caused by the destruction of about half the ozone in the stratosphere. Ozone is a form of oxygen that absorbs ultra-violet radiation. This effect would be felt world-wide, due to easier circulation of air in the stratosphere, and would result in the death of a sizeable proportion of

the world's fish, increased rates of cancer and mutation and the blinding of large numbers of animals through the formation of cataracts. These would wander around starving.

The fall-out of radioactive particles would furthermore ensure that most animals and fish would be unsuitable for human consumption.

My reading of these theories is that virtually all life in the northern hemisphere would be extinguished, and in the south it would be set back quite considerably. Though a few humans would probably survive, life on earth would have been set back several hundred million years.

THE tale of doom in the previous item is obviously not convincing enough for the US Congress. They've just decided to "send a message" to Russia after the Korean jet disaster in the form of a vote to start making a new generation of poison gases for war.

These are the so-called binary weapons, which are stored in bombs or shells as two separate harmless chemicals. When the shell or bomb is detonated, the chemicals react to make a deadly gas. One type, GB or dichlor, is colourless, odourless and kills in one minute.

By the way, the gas is going to be stored in Europe.

TRISOMY is the presence of an extra chromosome. One of the 46 pairs of chromosomes in human cells becomes a triplet, usually with devastating consequences.

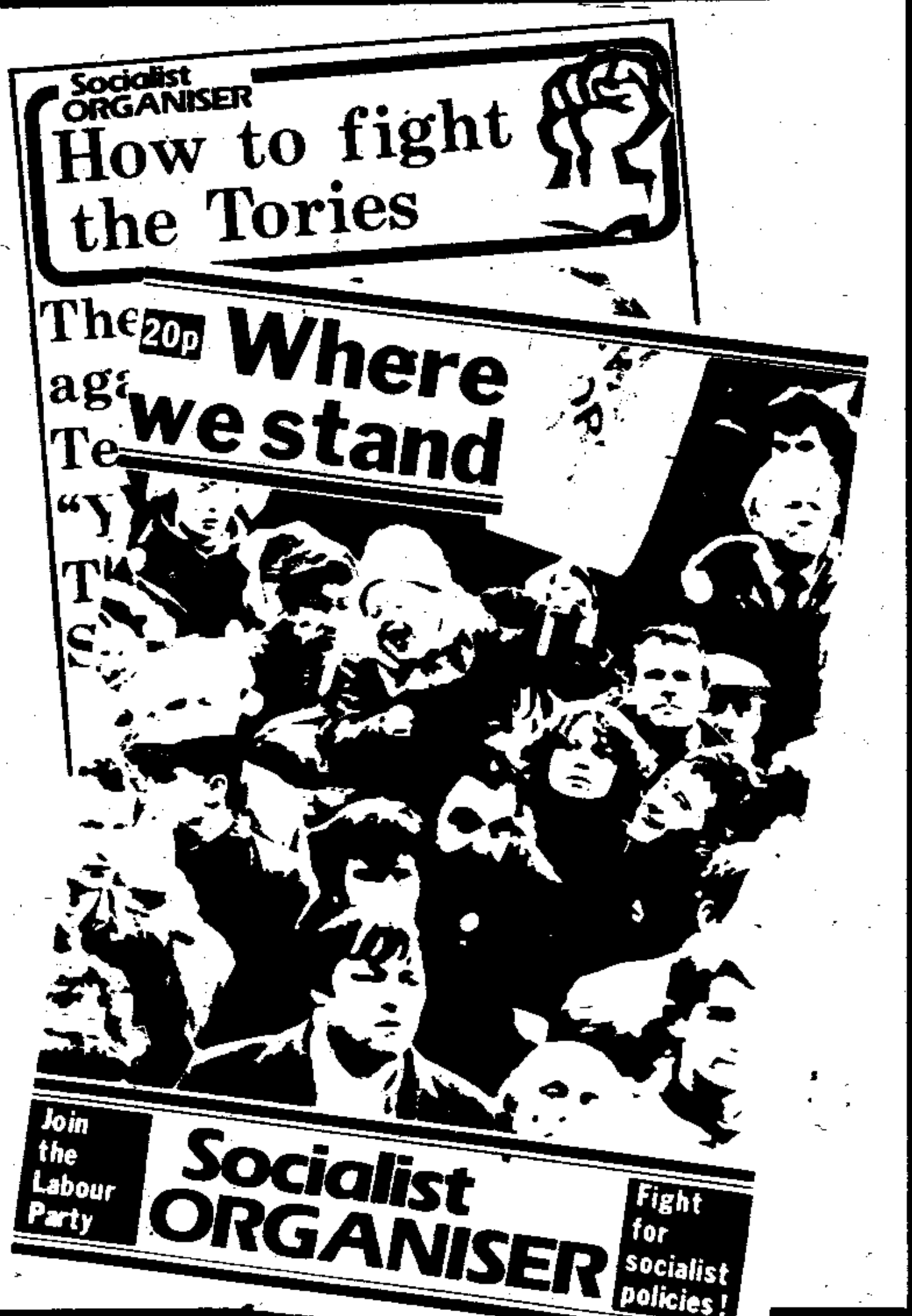
The most common type of trisomy is Down's syndrome.

Up to 97% of trisomic foetuses are spontaneously aborted by week 17 of pregnancy and a research group in New York, interested in possible environmental causes of trisomy decided to look into the lives of mothers who had miscarried at this stage of pregnancy.

The only environmental factor they discovered was tobacco-smoking around the time of conception. But while in older women, smoking increased the rate of trisomy, in younger women it decreased the rate!

So far, no explanation for this puzzling finding has emerged.

Two pamphlets summing up the ideas of Socialist Organisation. '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 Organisation, 28, Middle Lane, London N8.



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 blocking 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.

Round-up

THE government's savage cuts in the health service are being felt in Lewisham and North Southwark. In Bermondsey, St. Olave's is to close, except for a skeleton service. Hospital or ward closures are being considered for Sydenham and Hither Green hospitals.

The District Health Authority invited the 5 MPs whose constituencies are covered by the Authority to its meeting last Monday, but only Simon Hughes (Liberal) and Harriet Harman (Labour) turned up.

Hughes proposed 'reasoned' argument before ultimate capitulation, leaving it to Harman to oppose the cuts outright.

The most positive aspect of the meeting was the size and militancy of the audience.

OVER 1,000 workers took part in a demonstration through Castleford (West Yorkshire) against the closure of the United Glass works in the town.

Nearly 600 jobs are to be lost in this area of already high unemployment.

In Knottingly, Rockware glass, employing 380, is under threat of closure and a further 700 jobs are due to go with the closure of Redfearns plant in

York. United Glass's plant in Glasgow, employing 300, is also going to close.

There were strong contingents from the NUM behind banners from Kellingley and Wheldale pits.

At the meeting afterwards Councillor Pete Box, the president of Castleford Trades Council, called for a fight to save the jobs at the plant.

Unfortunately no call was made for the occupation of the plant and the action called for would not have any effect in stopping the closures.

It is important that the glass-workers now get together to work out a winnable strategy for securing their jobs.

AROUND 200 people met at the newly designated 'Caborn's Corner' in Sheffield to hear various speakers before moving off on an anti-racist demonstration. Organised by SCAR (Sheffield Campaign Against Racism), the theme of the march was one of solidarity against racism. The Bangladesh Citizens Committee and Sheffield and District West Indian Community Association were represented.

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.

YCND Truth Kit now out. Available from 126B St. Paul's Rd., London N1.

'JOBS not Bombs'. Day event organised by Southwark Unemployed Centre and Southwark CND. Saturday October 15, 10 to 3.45, Southwark Unemployed Centre. Workshops on workplace CND branches, new Civil Defence regulations, alternatives to arms production; NATO. Social in evening.

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, 8-11 at Lambeth Town Hall.

LABOUR CND public debate with Jo Richardson MP, Thursday October 6, 5.30pm, Royal Albion Hotel Brighton, followed at 8pm by a screening of 'Carry Greenham Home'.

those in danger of being caught up in the machine and the system.

Others referred to her clear, simple exposition of revolutionary ideas over many years, including notable interventions as a delegate at the 1955 and 1956 Labour Party conferences.

There were references also to her efforts to keep alive the traditions of revolutionary Marxism against Stalinism and to her struggle against the degeneration of Healyism (now embodied in the WRP), even though for a time it drove her from political activity.

Her comrades in the Socialist Labour Group, and particularly her comrade and companion John Archer, were able to claim her experience as part of their particular political ideas. However contributions from the Socialist League and the Workers Socialist League made it clear that her activity could also be seen as part of a wider stream of anti-Stalinism and revolutionary socialism.

As we looked out at the shimmering waters of the Thames we could see the river moving to a greater sea. We could see the small, dedicated and powerful contribution to a better and nobler society where human exploitation will be at an end.

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 Hawkeley 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 Camberwell Grove, London SE5. Business 7.30, discussion 8.30. Next meeting Oct. 12.

Orpington. Contact c/o South East London.

Tower Hamlets. Next meeting, Monday October 19, 7.30pm on the Labour Party conference. For details phone 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.

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.

Sheffield. Contact: Anthony

Stoke. Contact: Paul Barrett, 151 Broadway, Meir, S-O-T. (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, 521522.

Leeds. 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.

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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 Co-op market (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. Contact 348 5941 or 802 0771.

Islington. Next meeting Sunday October 9, 7pm at Caxton House, 129 St John's Way, London N19.

Labour Party conference: report from a conference delegate, plus discussion. Also business — campaigning on YTS, etc. Contact 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, Aislbie Rd, London SE12.

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



Official badge of the 'Save the Mole' campaign. 25p or £2 for ten.

Educating shop stewards

JOHN McIlroy documented the rise and fall of the shop stewards movement in Socialist Organiser (September 8). But he failed to stress the gain made by the shop stewards over the past twenty years.

McIlroy ignored the great strides forward made by trade union education.

He also ignored the fact that the traditional parameters of collective bargaining have

been extended.

Let's look at the facts. Since 1974, we have seen £80 million or so expended on trade union education.

185,000 shop stewards have attended courses. To date there are about 300 tutors working in education and thousands of day schools have been organised in the last few years.

Gains have been made in developing collective agree-

ments to increase health and safety facilities, new technology agreements, etc. The important work of the Lucas Aerospace Joint Shop Stewards Combine's 'Corporate Plan' has generated a revolution in the thinking of the traditional trade unionists view of his or her role.

An added social and political awareness has brought many trade unionists to the view that a company-wide, industry-wide

and National Plan is needed that can fit social and technological skills to the production of socially useful goods.

The GLC Enterprise Board and the Economic Policy Group have invested millions of pounds in helping workers draw up their own plans. It has equipped a number of workforces with the money and equipment to demonstrate practically that there is an alternative to the market.

Yet McIlroy misses out these very important developments in his supplement.

I know from my own experience in the North West, that shop stewards and tutors have fought together to challenge institutionalised sexism in the unions. Let me quote an important example of this.

A local official of a white collar union was continually bragging about the 'number of women he had had' etc., etc. This was discussed by tutor and stewards, who then confronted him about his behaviour.

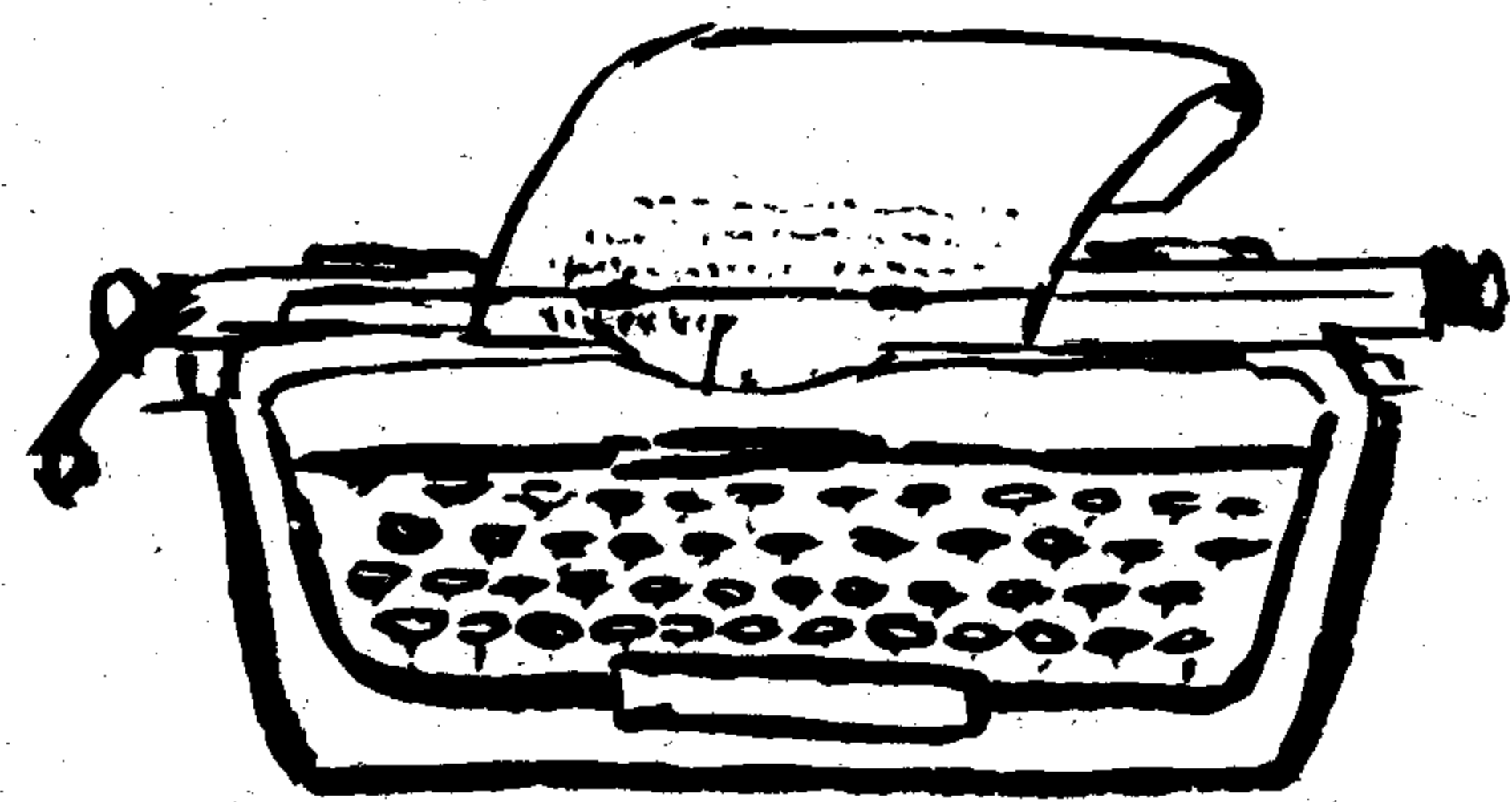
Finally he gave a solemn commitment that 'he recognised his behaviour was oppressive towards women and he would try to transform his attitudes'. So gains can be made!

But this is only because a number of politically aware and confident cadres have developed among the tutors who are willing and able to challenge the more disfigured and obscurantist people in the official union machinery.

Whether it is on the missiles issue; gay rights; redundancy and closures or what have you, the North West has been a forcing ground for the growth of a very important nucleus of socialist tutors who are able to take up practical issues both within the labour movement and with employers.

Yours fraternally,
DAVID BARNETT

Writeback



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

Is Nicaragua a democracy?

JEREMY Corbyn's report from Nicaragua (SO 144) brought out clearly the tremendous advantages most Nicaraguans have gained from the anti-Somoza revolution.

It is not for the US former allies and supporters of the vampire-like Somoza family dictatorship to lecture either the people of Nicaragua, or even the Sandinistas, about democracy.

Socialists, however, should concern themselves with democracy — and if we do, we need to differentiate between democracy and paternalism, even benevolent paternalism.

Uncritically

Jeremy rather uncritically described the 'consultation' and 'mass involvement' promoted by the FSLN as if it is democracy. For sure it is better than what the people got under the Somozas. But it is not democracy.

The FSLN forms a ruling political elite which, having smashed the Somoza state machine, is now master in Nicaragua. It is not in the final analysis under

any sort of democratic control. The elite itself decides what it will take and what it will leave from the suggestions, criticisms, and aspirations of those whom it consults.

Caste

The core of the FSLN is of course made up of selfless people who risked their lives in years of struggle against Somoza. Nevertheless a set-up like that in Nicaragua now contains the possibility, and in certain situations the inevitability, of the development of the elite into a permanent ruling caste which awards itself material privileges on top of its present political privileges and becomes, more or less completely, a self-serving Stalinist bureaucracy, or crystallises as a state capitalist class.

Right now the FSLN is far from having overthrown capitalism. For example, half the sugar production is controlled by one man.

But the FSLN elite has pretty full control. So far it has decided to let capitalism exist. It may let it continue indefinitely. It may reach an accommodation with

the USA. But probably it could decide to eliminate capitalism in Nicaragua.

Should this regime go 'the Cuban way' and become dependent on Cuba and the USSR — and survive US hostility — then the absence of democratic control would produce a Stalinist state like that of Cuba.

There is no reason to doubt Castro's bravery against the dictator Batista, or his sincerity and benevolence towards the Cuban people, to whom Castro's revolution has brought great benefits — but nevertheless Cuba, under the control of the 26 July Movement elite around Castro, became a totalitarian Stalinist state, receiving about \$8 million a day from the USSR.

Evolutions

Nicaragua today needs to overthrow capitalism, and to replace it with a system of socialism under the democratic control of the masses, led by the working class. That is not what it has now, or what any of the various possible evolutions of the elitist FSLN regime is likely to give it.

JACK CLEARY, Islington

Hong Kong: get Britain out

THE article in last week's Socialist Organiser on Hong Kong had a major error in the first paragraph — the Chinese government's intention is not to take control of 9/10th of Hong Kong; they want the entire colony back!

The article, however, correctly analysed the British position of economic blackmail in this latest round of talks which has just finished. Their refusal to compromise on the demand for a British administrative presence has created a deadlock in the talks, and sent the Hong Kong dollar and stock market plummeting still further.

The dominant economic interests since the war have really been Japanese and US imperialism, as well as the powerful local Chinese bourgeoisie, rather than Britain. They are increasingly exasperated and alarmed while the war

of nerves goes on between Britain and China. Each side is waiting for the other to crack first as the Hong Kong economy spirals downwards rapidly.

The urgent task for socialists in Britain is to campaign and demand that the British government withdraws from Hong Kong totally (i.e. no British administrative presence after 1997). This is the best way for the British labour movement to help the Chinese working class in Hong Kong and in China to settle accounts with the Hong Kong bourgeoisie and with their own government.

Fraternally,
CHEUNG SIU MING

*Editor's note. The Chinese government does want control of the whole of Hong Kong. But it is the nine-tenths of it known as the New Territories, whose lease expires in 1997.

A socialist manifesto for Europe

'EUROPE: saying no is not enough' is the headline of a major article by Michael Barratt Brown in the latest Tribune (September 23).

'Saying no' is, unfortunately, a fair summary of the Left's established wisdom on Europe. For many years Europe has figured in the Left's thinking only in the shape of the EEC

bureaucracy and as a problem to be got rid of.

Economic policies have been resolutely nationalist and isolationist. Internationalism has figured in the Left's thinking as an issue of solidarity with people fighting oppression elsewhere, quite unconnected with policies on jobs or cuts.

The undeniably international

At and around the Labour Party conference, starting on October 2, the EEC will be a major topic for re-thinking. Meanwhile local Labour Parties are well advanced in the process of selecting Euro-candidates for the June 1984 election. Martin Thomas looks at some Euro-manifestos.

nature of capitalism's current crises has prompted some re-thinking. Next year's Euro-elections have concentrated many comrades' minds. Barratt Brown's presentation of a draft Euro-manifesto for Labour is a welcome new contribution to this discussion.

Capitalism, Barratt Brown argues, is now highly integrated

internationally. No economic policy confined to a single nation-state can be adequate.

"When the wicked combine, the good must unite . . . (round a Programme for Socialist Unity in Europe."

Barratt Brown proposes:
*The EEC Commission should draw up a plan for concerted

reflation, to be considered by the Council of Ministers;

*Planning agreements between the EEC and multinationals or state concerns, with trade union involvement;

*A European nuclear-free zone.

Unfortunately, there is a tinge of 'Euro-chauvinism' in Barratt Brown's manifesto: reduced economic links with the US and Japan are also part of it.

Mainly, however, I think the proposals are at fault in being too timid. It's all a matter of nudging capitalist governments to be slightly more expansionist,

slightly more benevolent.

Nowhere is the idea that the united workers of Europe could actually take affairs into our own hands. And that, I think, should be the central idea of a socialist manifesto.

Below are some proposals for such a manifesto. They are not the sort of proposals likely to be accepted in 1984 by the established leaders of the big working class parties in the EEC — but the role of the Marxist left, especially on an issue where the broad labour movement is so ideologically befogged, is not to play the game of 'realism'. It is to blaze a trail.

*The labour movement should come out as the boldest campaigner for a united Europe. Leave 'little England' and 'national sovereignty' to the Tories!

In the last Euro-election, the slogan of a French revolutionary socialist slate was, 'Long live workers' Europe, without fatherlands or frontiers'. Something similar should be the heading for our manifesto this time.

*A united Europe means west and east. Solidarity with Solidarnosc and all real workers' movements in Eastern Europe, break links with the Stalinist state 'unions'. A united Europe will be created only by the overthrow of both capitalism in the west and the bureaucracies in the east.

*Immediately, our united Europe can only be a united European workers' movement to fight both the bosses' EEC and the bosses' national governments.

Workers' unity for:
— A 35 hour week throughout Europe.
— 'Levelling up' to generalise throughout the EEC the best conditions, services and rights won by workers in individual EEC countries.
— Work-sharing at full pay, to create jobs for all.
— A clause in all wage agreements to guarantee monthly pay rises in line with a working class price index.
— Defend all jobs. Open the books of all the EEC-wide operations of the multinationals. The trade unions in cars, steel and other industries should prepare for a European workers' government by working out their plans to develop and reorganise their industries throughout Europe. Fight for workers' control and for EEC-level public ownership, without compensation, of the main multinationals and monopolies.

*We should base our policies on the reality of international capitalist integration, rather than trying to turn the clock back. That does not mean approving the existing EEC institutions; on the contrary, we must put the fight against them on a proper footing.

Immediately — full sovereign powers for the EEC Parliament over the bureaucratic machinery of the EEC, annual elections.

*Replacement of the existing capitalist Common Agricultural Policy by a plan drawn up by workers' and small farmers' organisations, to provide low food prices and economic security for small farmers at the expense of the bankers and the bosses.

*European labour movement support for anti-imperialist and national liberation movements in Central America and elsewhere; opposition to overseas intervention by the armed forces of the EEC capitalist states. A socialist Europe should hand over the property in the Third World of EEC multinationals to the people of those countries, cancel Third World debts to EEC banks, and plan together with the workers of Third World countries for a massive programme of reparations and aid.

*Keep out Cruise and Pershing! Expel US bases, remove all nuclear weapons from Western Europe.

*End all immigration controls. Full voting rights for migrant workers throughout the EEC.

*For a European workers' government. No working class policy today can be a solution to the problems of any single European nation if it does not pose the working class reorganisation of the European economy (at least) and build European working class unity to achieve it.

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Industrial discussion from our Sept 17 conference

"Tories and employers are making a new turn"

SOCIALIST Organiser called the conference at this time — between the TUC and Labour Party conferences — because we thought it would provide a useful opportunity to discuss the political situation facing the labour movement. In the event it has come at a time of very important developments which must be discussed.

The first period of the Tory Government was characterised by three major factors:

1. The development of a massive offensive against the trade union movement, both at the level of government action such as Tebbit and by organising the employers themselves to take up the offensive against their workers. Mass unemployment, deliberately created, established the conditions for this.

2. The willingness of the working class to fight the Tories despite mass unemployment. Under these conditions the working class were strong enough to mount potential serious industrial challenges to the Government on at least six occasions — the steel strike, the BL strike, the ASLEF strike, the health service action, the miners and the Welsh miners (which should have developed into a national miners strike).

3. The crisis of leadership. In each of these strikes, with the exception of the water workers, defeat came as a result of the failure of leadership — either weak and vacillating leadership or downright cold blooded treachery, as with ASLEF when the TUC threatened to expel the whole union if they did not get back to work.

These are not leaders who are simply intimidated by mass unemployment and the conditions faced by the working class today — but leaders who are politically opposed to an industrial challenge to the government.

It was those conditions — plus the Malvinas war, which was a major political turning point in both the national and the international situation — which was a major factor in the Tory election victory. The election was largely lost even before it was called. Thatcher was able to project the "resolute approach" not only by winning the war but claiming that she had won virtually every industrial confrontation since she came to office.

Since the election the political situation has developed very



The concluding session at the September 17 conference

fast.

There were two main reactions in the labour movement to the Tory victory: the reaction of the TUC and the majority of the trade union leaders was "The majority of our members have voted Tory (which is not true) therefore we must recognise reality and talk to the government"; the reaction of Arthur Scargill and a few others — which we strongly supported — was "we have lost the battle in Parliament we must now fight them on the picket lines."

Since then, however, it has been the right wing who have pursued and won that argument. The TUC conference took a major turn to the right — it was a wholly negative conference. One of the first things it did was to formalise what has been their real position for the past four years. They voted that strikes against the government, as a government, are completely wrong at all times. It means presumably that the sell-outs of the last four years will now be official policy.

In coming weeks we'll be printing speeches and reports from discussions. This time: Alan Thornett's platform speech, and the health cuts workshop.

An important factor, which helped the TUC move to the right was the build-up of anti-communism immediately before the conference.

This started with the political victimisation of the Cowley 13. It created an atmosphere of McCarthyism which had a serious effect on the political situation. It was built up by the scale of the media intervention. This merged into the witch-hunting of Scargill over his Moscow trip and was followed by the witch-hunt over the shooting down of the South Korean jet. Anti-communism really took off. The first thing the TUC did was to support the Reagan condemnation of the Soviet Union. Then we had Chapple's anti-communist opening speech. Chapple who was seen as a right wing eccentric was now presented as one of the main leaders of the TUC.

The conference went on to loosen its ties with the Labour Party, enter into talks with Tebbit and implicitly drop unilateralism and accept Polarism. The only time the platform got excited was when they were attacking the left.

Cardowan

The stepping up of the employers offensive since the election has created, alongside this, a very important industrial situation.

The closure of the Cardowan Colliery in Scotland was a very major blow to the defence of jobs. It was the first pit to be closed with no attempt by the NUM to organise any supporting strike action of any kind. The pit was closed while Scargill was in Moscow and they were offered financial and financial support under conditions where the Cardowan could have

no impact themselves since their pit was being closed.

The backing of the Cowley 13 has an important industrial dimension. The boldness of Leyland's actions gives direct encouragement to employers everywhere to take a hard line. The victimisation of an activist of the UCW recently in Basingstoke by British Telecom is a reflection of that.

Ian MacGregor has now moved to the NCB in order to do what he has done in BL and steel.

The strike, over yesterday, at Highlands Fabricators on the Cromarty Firth is a case in point — it may be they have won a victory of some kind — although today's papers are not clear on it — there the employer presented a list of 21 changes in conditions of employment from stopping orange juice in the hot weather to canteen and travelling allowances to seniority agreements.

Possibly the current strike at the Monktonhall colliery in Scotland comes out of one of the harshest moves. There, management sent the whole workforce home because they were five minutes late on shift after a union meeting. That is harsh beyond even BL's normal standards.

But in some ways not as harsh as Birmingham NALGO. They took reprisals against the workforce by cancelling pay-roll deductions and then banning the collection of union money in working hours. In the factory I worked in management have not done that since 1963.

Now at the same time there is a major turn in the use of Tebbit.

At the Stockport Messenger the employer is not using the 1980 Prior Act but the 1982 Tebbit Act. There, they are interpreting secondary action as the refusal of the journalists to supply copy because the printers in the same firm are in dispute. It is said to be secondary because they

are in another union.

Perhaps an even more significant use of Tebbit — in advance of the implementation of that part of the law — is the incredible demand of the Water Board to demand the ending of the closed shop agreement. They are doing it similar to a BL move. First they want to renegotiate the bargaining arrangements and then under the cover of that propose the ending of the closed shop.

It is obviously a very major move from government level. There is no way the Water Board would make such a huge move alone. Such a decision is certain to lead to similar decisions in other parts of the public sector if they get away with it there. Given the important position of the closed shop in the British trade union movement it is a very major move indeed.

It is clear therefore that we are witnessing not just a major turn in the employers' offensive but also a major turn in the use of the Tebbit laws. It is a situation which has serious implications for the whole labour movement, the Labour Party as well, although I am not able to cover that aspect in this short speech. Other speakers will bring it into the conference.

Am I spelling out an entirely black picture? Of course not. This situation could change very rapidly indeed. The jailing of the leadership of the NUJ for example over the Stockport Messenger would in my opinion meet a massive response from the trade union movement — initially from Fleet Street. It would completely change the present political situation.

This conference can make a contribution by discussing what kind of leadership the workers need under these conditions. No one else is trying seriously to do this as far as I can see. No one is discussing the development of leadership at the point where the struggle is taking place. At the point of speed-up, in defence of agreements, at the point of confronting the employers' offensive. This conference can make a contribution to that process.

Fighting health cuts

THE workshop on privatisation in the NHS took place just as the Tories announced new attacks on hospitals and health care services.

Andrea Campbell, COHSE, said that we must not see the NHS cuts as concerning NHS workers alone, but as part of a wider attack on the living standards of the working class as a whole.

The present round of cuts stemmed, she said, from the failure of a successful wage struggle — which had encouraged the Tories to attack.

The Thornton View occupation, run by workers exercising a veto over management decisions, was an example of the need to fight now — but also served as a warning of the possibility of isolation and susceptibility to pressure from management's carrot-and-stick tactics.

She told the workshop that in Hackney, where the NHS is the biggest single employer, four hospitals are to be closed and replaced by just one, which will open in 1986.

It was, she said, important to explain to the community the consequences of such closures, of loss of hospital beds, increased waiting lists, loss of local services, loss of jobs and so on. Links should be made between labour movement organisations and workers and the community, but it should never be forgotten that the real strength of a fight back lies in the trade unions themselves. And a central demand must be for the opening of the books of health authorities.

Pete Keenlyside, one of the Manchester City Councillors from whom the Labour whip has been withdrawn, said that the Tories are proposing that local authorities be put under the direct financial control of central government. This is an attempt to scare councils into making cuts now. Manchester faces £25-30 million in cuts alone. There is a real danger he said of councils putting off any real fight 'until next year . . .', camouflaging their inaction by organising conferences.

He cited the recent conference in Sheffield attended by Labour councillors out of which no fight back came.

Lol Duffy said that in Liverpool the left could vote down cuts because they — including Militant supporters — were the majority on the council. Yet Liverpool was not, at all in the vanguard of concerted, effective action against the Tories.

Although Militant supporters now have control of various council expenditure committees, cuts in the present year are causing problems in related industries. Work has not been done in the trade unions and the policy of "no cuts, no rent and rate increases" has been shelved.

Coming soon!

Our Annual General Meeting is on Sunday October 30, 10.30am to 5pm in County Hall, London SE1

On the day before, Saturday 29th, there will be a Socialist Organiser day school also in London



Cardiff workers' reply to health cuts

STRIKE!

NUPE members among the operating theatre staff at the University Hospital of Wales have taken indefinite strike action from this morning against a gross shortage of staff in the operating theatres.

Staffing levels are so low that they have become a danger to the patient.

At the beginning of the week, a swab went missing during a cardiac operation and was not found until an hour after the operation. The patient had to be X-rayed to make sure that the swab had not been left inside

On Wednesday September 28 Cardiff hospital workers made their response to the Tory health cuts by walking out on strike. Geoff Williams reports.

the incision. If it had been, the patient would have had to undergo surgery again to remove it.

There was only one member

of staff on the theatre floor servicing the nurse. There used to be three.

Management has refused to increase staffing levels, despite representations from staff over the last six weeks. They have refused to spend more money in the interests of patient care — despite the fact that 60% more operations are being done this year than last.

Arrangements have been made to meet management to try to resolve the dispute. In the meantime emergency cover is being provided.

ESSO strike official

THE TGWU has decided to give official backing at national level to the four week old strike by 2500 contract workers at Esso's Fawley refinery, Southampton.

All indications are that other Confed unions are about to follow suit. This is an important boost for the strikers, who have fought the cops to a standstill in defence of their picket lines.

The dispute started over the

annual claim on pay, conditions and hours (see SO 146). Earlier this year Esso refinery workers accepted 9.1%. The key issues, though, remain:

- Contractors' resistance to casualisation of their labour,
- to the undermining of site agreements, and
- to the erosion of effective union organisation.

Their new-found militancy has

forced both employers and reluctant union bureaucrats to face facts.

Since the huge strike vote of September 5 a 24 hour picket had been maintained. However, the abject failure of Confed unions to declare the strike official had encouraged profuse scabbing by certain transport drivers.

On Monday September 19 a mass picket was held to counter this. Hundreds of pickets arrived, and after a fierce battle with the cops they totally blocked the main gate. A traffic tail-back of over 10 miles developed.

On Tuesday another mass picket of several hundred took place. The cops were out in even greater force, but determined picketing turned back a number of oil tankers.

The late arrest of two pickets dashed an already fragile truce. Scores of angry workers stormed into the TGWU regional offices in Southampton.

Only when strikers took possession of his office did John Ashman, the regional secretary, offer them a hearing.

Such was the pressure applied at this meeting that Ashman quickly agreed to a signed statement instructing all transport drivers not to cross Esso picket lines. The strikers accepted this, but made clear that it was a temporary expedient towards winning official status for their dispute.

Their action was vindicated on Friday September 23 when the strike was declared official.

The strike committee must now give a positive lead to the magnificent initiatives taken by these workers. The mass pickets will face great intimidation from cop strike-breakers. If strike leaders hold firm, they will have Esso over a barrel.

Donations to Fawley strike committee, c/o Transport House, London Rd, Southampton.



"We had to make savings somehow"

Why care workers are in dispute

What is the claim about?

Residential workers want conditions of service similar to those which apply already to the vast majority of local government APT and C staff.

It was five years ago that NALGO's 30,000 residential workers first submitted their claim for service conditions improvements.

These were sought to rectify the fact that residential workers are not only low paid, but that they have to work shifts, weekends, public holidays, and longer hours for almost no additional remuneration.

What has been the attitude of employers?

The attitude of the national employers on pay and conditions is symptomatic of their general approach to residential care. They are prepared to rely on the good will of residential social workers to prop up a caring service in the face of low pay, poor conditions, high stress, minimal training opportunities and appalling staffing levels.

They seem unmoved by the fact that these working conditions have resulted in a huge turnover of staff in the residential sector, and that sufficient numbers of high quality entrants are not being attracted.

Every attempt has been made to use the negotiating machinery to settle the claim. The claim has been discussed nationally seven times since early 1982, without the employers making a single concession. At a further meeting on 6 June, and in the knowledge that industrial action was being contemplated, the employers stated bluntly that "there is no room for compromise on any aspect of the claim" and that "the claim has no merit".

The staff side have stressed

NALGO and NUPE residential workers are presently involved in a national dispute in pursuit of a claim for 1) enhanced payment for shifts and irregular hours, 2) enhanced payments for weekend working, 3) premium payments for working on general and public holidays, 4) the reduction in the working week to 35 hours.

The action at present involves a ban on admissions and a ban on overtime. Socialist Organiser talked to Anne Crowder, NALGO Senior Shop Steward for residential workers in Nottinghamshire, (speaking to us in a personal capacity).

that the whole claim was open to negotiation.

How effective is the overtime ban?

The ban has been very effective and has highlighted the fact that residential establishments are minimally staffed, even in Nottinghamshire, which is generally recognised as a good authority.

Usually staff have to work long hours to cover for sickness, holidays and vacancies. With a ban on overtime it means that management throughout the country have to employ many extra staff.

In Strathclyde, for example, over 400 extra workers have been employed.

As the dispute goes on, an increasing number of "holes" are appearing in the shift rotas and alternative places for new admissions are drying up.

It is vital that no relaxation of the action occurs in this crucial period. Residential workers are standing firm and we have to ensure that this action will not be broken. Morale is high since

we have received support from all round the country.

What sort of conditions do residential workers work under?

Typical shifts for residential workers include working bank holidays, Christmas, weekends, with shifts rotating within the week, destroying all prospects of regular social life.

On top of this, we have to do "sleep-in" duties, which can mean we have to get up during the night to deal with emergencies. Some shifts start at 1.00 pm and go right through to 2.00 pm the next day!

What has been the attitude of the union nationally?

It is difficult to say what the union are doing nationally! It appears to be dragging its feet. Little feedback of the dispute is coming back to the branches. At present the vast majority of local authorities seem to have taken the decision to play it cool, and are struggling to cope with the effects of our action as best they can in the hope of an early national settlement.

Locally, we are trying to push for an escalation of the action. This is quite clearly the only way we can win the dispute. In Nottinghamshire we have attempted to involve our members at every level, and the calls for escalation of the action have clearly come from them.

We hold regular residential workers' meetings to discuss together how the dispute is going locally and nationally. We have visited as many establishments as possible and we are trying to contact each establishment as often as possible by phone.

We just hope that this feeling from the grass roots will be taken up by our union's leadership nationally. This is the only way to win the dispute.

Cardowan gives a warning

"Nice try lads, better luck next time round!"

This is the general tenor of an article by Mick McGahey (Communist Party member and President of the Scottish NUM) dealing with the recent closure of the Cardowan colliery, which appears in the latest issue of Scottish Miner, paper of the Scottish NUM.

McGahey rightly talks of the "heroic fight for Cardowan". But why did the miners who put up the heroic fight end up voting two-to-one to accept the closure? McGahey does not even ask the question, never mind attempt to answer it.

With equal accuracy McGahey talks of "the breadth of solidarity among the other Scottish pits". This refers in particular to the spontaneous strikes at the Polmaise, Polkemmet and Bogside pits, during the week of the NUM national conference, to prevent transfers of Cardowan men to these pits.

But what did the Scottish NUM Executive do to consolidate and further extend this breadth of solidarity? Nothing.

When delegations from Polmaise and Polkemmet turned up at the NUM national conference on the second day of their strike,

they never even got into the conference hall, never mind onto the conference platform.

McGahey continues by politely thanking all who supported the fight at Cardowan: "the Labour MPs, the STUC, the Triple Alliance, Strathclyde Regional Council, Strathkelvin District Council, the community associations, churches and political parties."

So impressed is McGahey by this support that he regards it as a model for the future: "This is the kind of mass backing which we are going to build for the whole Scottish coalfield in the coming weeks and months."

But there never was any campaign built to mobilise "mass backing" for Cardowan. When McGahey talks of the STUC or the Triple Alliance, he does not mean the hundreds of thousands of trade unionists who belong to these bodies. He means his fellow bureaucrats who run these organisations.

Instead of organising for confrontation (such as by building upon the kind of spontaneous strike action displayed during the fight over Cardowan) the union leadership maintains a purely propaganda campaign and seeks allies outside the labour movement

Socialist ORGANISER



"NORMAN SENT US... HE SAID IF YOU WONT DO THE JOBS, WE WILL!!"

Labour Party Conference VOTE HEFFER- MEACHER

Showdown in the pits

THE National Union of Mineworkers has called a national conference for October 21 to discuss ways of resisting pit closures. Miners' president Arthur Scargill said that the conference would "unite this union in a tight back against the Coal Board and the Government's policy of closing our pits and losing our jobs".

The two-week strike against redundancies at Monktonhall

colliery in Scotland has now been given official backing by the NUM. And as the Yorkshire miners whose strike paralysed the Yorkshire coalfield for three weeks go back to work, pending an inquiry, it is clear that battle-lines are being drawn for a stand-up fight in the coalfields.

More and more miners are well aware that the National Coal Board does have plans for extensive pit closures. The NCB

scarcely bothers to hide it any more.

The three-week Yorkshire strike showed what tremendous militancy the miners are still capable of showing. A miner at Dodsworth colliery was sacked for allegedly punching an overman and then given a job at another colliery, which he refused.

To get him his original job back, Dodsworth miners struck

and pickets spread the strike throughout the Yorkshire coalfield. 14,000 miners from 16 pits came out, stopping the area.

They have now gone back to work, on the orders of the Yorkshire area council of the NUM, to await the results of an inquiry into the alleged assault.

The new NCB chief, 'Butcher' MacGregor, fancies himself as the Michael Edwardes of the coalfields. The Scottish area of the NCB has given notice to 300 miners at Killoch colliery that it will sack them in two weeks if their production does not increase!

It is plain that on both sides the mood for a clash is building up.

Meanwhile the NUM executive has made the strike by 1500 Monktonhall miners against redundancies official.

From Yorkshire, John Douglas reports.

AFTER a meeting on Saturday of the Yorkshire Area Council which decided by 66 votes to 9 to call for a return to work by the strikers in the Barnsley coalfield, the branch committee of Dodsworth pit today recommended a return to work on the basis of an enquiry to be set up, binding on both sides, regarding the case of George Marsh.

The meeting held today in Dodsworth decided by a large majority to accept the committee's recommendation and will return to work tomorrow.

A member of the strike committee said: "We were fighting a battle on our own, without the support of the Yorkshire Area Council. We have had the army but not the generals."

George Marsh will sign on at Barrow Colliery, but will be suspended on full pay. The inquiry will be binding on all parties, and is expected to start in a few days time.

FUND-100%

End-of-the-month donations this week come to £143.90; so the September fund closes at £1,096.90. But a word of warning: it took 5 weeks to collect this, and we were helped by the £200+ collection at the Conference on September 17.

In October we'll only have four weeks. There's sponsored events which will help us: the Brighton swim by Pete Firmin (61); and Matthew Jones will be cycling from Coventry to Party Conference.

But all groups will need to double their efforts to keep our October fund on target. The grand total of fund contributions made in August, September and October will be published at our October 30 AGM. Some groups have already raised more than 100% of their targets, but who will raise the most? If we can find a cup bolted to a table somewhere, it will be presented to 'Fund-raiser-group-of-1983' at the AGM. Watch this space.

Meanwhile, we have received the following letter from Patrick Spilling, printed in full below. The Fund Column will be printing its considered reply next week. What do readers think?

"Articles appearing in Socialist Organiser under the heading Fund have suggested that Patrick Spilling would attend and report on a so-called sponsored swim by a Pete Firmin (various ages). Not since Peter Tatchell was accused of attending the Gay Olympics has such an orchestrated campaign of lies and vilification been run. If Pete Firmin (63) was being sponsored one way only from Brighton there might be some merit in considering sponsorship, but seeing as he has every intention of returning to shore I cannot see any purpose in throwing good money after bad by encouraging him. Nor could any self-respecting reporter be asked to cover this event without a substantial proportion of the money going to cover my expenses. If Socialist Organiser does not stop giving the impression Patrick Spilling will be present (and therefore inducing the vast mass of the population to go to Brighton out of season) I shall be forced to join forces with Vanessa Redgrave and pursue you through every court in the land. Except Brighton. Spilling."

Thanks this week to: Kevin Feintuck, £20; Bas Hardy, £20; Sarah Bryant, £10; Cardiff supporters, £35; Brent supporters, £28.90; Alan Smith, Nottingham, £10; Garth Frankland, £5; Leeds supporters, £15.

Group	August & Sept
Glasgow	20.50
Edinburgh	26.00
Liverpool	40.00
Manchester	101.00
Rochdale	33.00
Stockport	15.00
Wirral	20.75
Durham	11.85
Halifax	13.20
Harrogate	14.50
Huddersfield	
Hull	38.00
Leeds	32.50
Leicester	15.75
Sheffield	45.70
York	10.00
Birmingham	65.00
Coventry	166.10
Northampton	10.10
Nottingham	53.90
Stoke	23.40
Basingstoke	1.50
Oxford	108.24
Cardiff	165.47
NW London	53.30
Hackney	
Haringey	58.00
Hounslow	28.25
Islington	88.50
S/E London	48.60
E London	44.50
Southwark	79.50
Others	379.94

Donations to:
214, Sickert Court,
London N1 2SY.

CND MARCH ON OCT. 22!

11 am, Embankment,
London

