

Break
links
with
Tories

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TUC weak link in solidarity ALL OUT TO BACK NGA!

THIS is the crunch — for the trade union movement, for the Tory anti-union laws — and perhaps for the Tory government itself.

The courts are attempting to translate the Prior-Tebbit anti-union legislation into punitive blows against striking workers and their unions.

The printing bosses and the government are attempting to drive the NGA to the wall.

The full might of the state has been brought into play to defeat, cripple and bankrupt the print-workers' union.

The courts have already sequestered £200,000 of print-workers' money, in fines and costs.

Up at Warrington, massed ranks of baton-wielding police have been deployed against pickets to back up the private thugs of Mr Salim Shah.

The ban on secondary picketing is in flat contradiction with the basic principle of trade unionism — working class solidarity. Industrial action, says the present Tory government, is legal if it is confined to isolated units or to narrowly defined national action.

The only legal labour movement that exists in Britain now, according to the law, is a movement that is willing to agree to atomise itself in action.

Any other sort of labour movement — the one that actually exists — faces financial ruin at the hands of the law courts and the violence of massed ranks of police thugs if it tries to act according to

"The legal system (is) not in practice even-handed as between employers and unions; current functions put the courts almost entirely in the business of restricting or penalising the latter, and not of remedying their grievances".

Sir John Donaldson, Master of the Rolls and former president of the National Industrial Relations Court

By John
O'Mahony

its own fundamental raison d'être.

Scenes like the violent clashes between the cops and pickets outside Shah's printing works last Tuesday night haven't been seen in Britain since the Grunwick battles six years ago.

Twenty-one pickets were injured and 70 were arrested. The police behaved with savage aggressiveness, repeatedly baton-charging peaceful pickets. They had a policy of physically beating up, rather than arresting pickets.

But this isn't Grunwick. The Battle of Warrington occurs under the Tory legislation which out-

laws mass picketing.

Though mass picketing at Grunwicks went on for many months, the union, APEX, was safe from the law.

In this fight, the courts will impose a series of ever-more-severe penalties on the union, and, if they can get away with it, the police look set to inflict ever more savage violence against pickets.

To save the NGA, the labour movement must act quickly and decisively.

Same laws

In this fight, the NGA represents the interests of the entire labour movement. Every group of workers every union, in every struggle is subject to the same laws as are being used now to hit the NGA.

Every future dispute of every trade union in Britain will have to come up against the legal frame-



NGA leader Tony Dubbins speaking to Warrington pickets

work the government gets 'operational' in the present dispute with the NGA.

If the NGA goes down now, the entire labour movement will be massively diminished. It will be rendered much less effective than it has been for many decades.

Dazed by the slump and by mass unemployment, the labour movement, under its do-nothing, (or scabbing) leadership, has allowed the new anti-union laws to get on the statute books.

For the government, these laws are now being tested in the courts. In fact, the decisive test is the one on the streets.

An attempt to cut down and shackle the labour movement may

begin with blatant class legislation in Parliament, using the law courts as its instrument. But the decision will be made on the picket lines.

That's where the issue was decided in 1972 and after.

That's why this is the crunch for the fight against anti-union legislation.

Continued back page

"THE TUC should now understand which side it is on, and call on all trade unions to take part in this historic battle and call on them to defy the judgments which have been made against working people".

Dennis Skinner MP

EDITORIAL

In the Six County bear pit

THE REPUBLICAN paper An Phoblacht said it well: "Sectarian murder has been the weapon of the Loyalists seeking to maintain supremacy in the North, not the weapon of those who justifiably fight to free their people from foreign oppression".

The headline in the Irish Times came close to saying it all: "Bells did not toll for Daniel Rouse". Daniel Rouse was a 51 year old Catholic with three children who was beaten to death last Friday night. It seems to have been a 'retaliation' for the Darkley killings.

Hours after the Darkley killings, a Catholic taxi driver was shot and seriously wounded outside his home in the Catholic Kilwickie estate. The day after Daniel Rouse was killed, a Catholic was seriously wounded by shots from a car as he walked along a Catholic street in mainly-Protestant Portadown, Co. Armagh. The stolen car was later found burned out in the Loyalist Corrain estate.

Where is the outcry? Yet it would be wrong to use such facts to dull our awareness of the significance of the massacre last Sunday in South Armagh.

South Armagh is Catholic territory, with pockets of Protestants; it is to the Protestants in the Six Counties what Antrim and Down are to the Catholics. Some of the most terrible events of the last 15 years have occurred in South Armagh.

On September 1 1975, for example, five Orangemen were killed at Tullyvallen, near Newtownhamilton.

On January 4 1976 five Catholics died in two separate incidents at Whitecross in South Armagh and at Ballydugan, near Lurgan. Within 24 hours, ten Protestant workers, travelling home from work, were murdered at Kingsmill. Shortly afterwards Protestant members of the Ulster Defence Regiment (a section of the British Army) killed three Catholic members of the Miami Show Band on the highway. (Some of them accidentally blew themselves up at the same time).

IRA killings of part-time members of the UDR and RUC in the Border region have been going on for over a decade — killings seen as sectarian by the Protestant community. A number of individual Catholics and individual Protestants with no UDR or RUC connections have also been killed.

The horror at Darkley could mean a new escalation of sectarian tit-for-tat slaughter.

The polarisation between the communities was, of course, already drum-tight. Nevertheless, things can get a great deal worse.

On another page we carry what information we have been able to glean about the current state of affairs in the Irish National Liberation Army, which, officially or unofficially, carried out the Darkley massacre.

The mentality of the sectarian killers is expressed with chilling clarity in the statement they issued the day after. The deed, the statement said, was done "in retaliation for the murderous sectarian campaign [sic] carried out over the past two years by the Protestant Action Force, who are operating under the protective umbrella of the UDR and recruiting moral support from the two main Unionist parties, which, by their silence, have condoned attacks [on seven men]. By this token retaliation — in which we could easily have taken the lives of at least 20 more innocent Protestants [sic] we serve notice on the sectarian PAF-UDR to call an immediate halt to their vicious indiscriminate campaign against innocent Catholics, or we will make the Darkley killings look like a picnic".

This is the authentic voice of the self-aware but unashamed politics of community against community. It comes from people calling themselves the 'left' wing of the 'Republican movement'!

Where does it come from really? From the Northern Ireland bearpit. To point to the conditions that give rise to incidents like Darkley is not to excuse the killers or to pretend that they are not themselves responsible for their actions. But it should help us understand.

If Protestant workers can countenance sectarian killings, and if Catholics subscribing to the great ideals of Republicanism and even socialism can carry out or tolerate Darkleys, it is grim testimony to what the sectarian bearpit Britain set up in Northern Ireland does to its people.

Catholics and Protestants alike are locked into permanent conflict within a political unit which broke down a decade and a half ago and which has been sustained since then only through British military rule.

The Catholics are locked into a unit which they know to have been imposed by British power, and within which they have been treated as aliens and second-class citizens. The Protestants feel threatened, insecure, bitter in their desire to win back their 'Protestant state for a Protestant people'.

Far from ensuring peace, British rule is preparing bloody sectarian civil war of Lebanon proportions. Either the fundamental social/political framework will be changed, or at some point there will be a massive explosion of civil war proportions.

The lesson of Darkley for the British labour movement is that we must commit ourselves to undo the work that Britain has done in Northern Ireland.

The Six County entity must be scrapped and abolished. Britain must withdraw from Ireland. The labour movement must fight for British withdrawal, and at the same time attempt to help the workers in the Six Counties and throughout Ireland to overcome the sectarian animosities and agree to a rational and democratic reorganisation of Ireland.

This can only be the full exercise of self-determination by the Irish people as a whole in relation to Britain, and as much autonomy as is possible within that for the distinct Protestant community: a united, independent Ireland with some form of federal system.

What they say about the NGA

STATEMENTS of unequivocal support for the NGA's stand against the High Court fines and in defence of mass picketing have been thin on the ground since the dispute hit the headlines.

Conspicuous silences have come from miners' leader Arthur Scargill — whose own standing in the NUM was based on the militant mass picketing that helped win two miners' strikes in 1972 and 1974 — and Labour's 'dream' leader Neil Kinnock, who eventually emerged from the closet on Monday to denounce the Tory laws but stay silent on support for the NGA.

Meanwhile Kinnock's 'dream' deputy Roy Hattersley and his little-known employment spokesperson John Smith were making statements which headed in rather a different direction. Smith urged new talks to wind up the Stockport dispute, but declared that Tory laws will have 'ultimately to be accepted by those affected by them'.

Hattersley, too, stressed this capitulationist message.

'The general principle on which I stand, and on which the Labour Party stands, is that the law must be respected. Those of us who believe the law to be wrong have to change it rather than break it. Industrial disputes have to be conducted without violence, and within the law.'

As a counterweight to this, Eric Heffer, newly appointed to Kinnock's Shadow Cabinet, made a prepared statement to

the press, stating that:

'I believe that now is the time for all Party members to spring to the defence of the trades unions, and to give every practical support we can, both inside Parliament and in the labour movement as a whole.'

Labour NEC member Dennis Skinner MP added a statement focussing on the evasive role played so far by the TUC leaders.

'The government has for the first time in just under 5 years begun to show signs of crumbling at the edges. This is not the time for the TUC General Council to give it any opportunity to score further victories over the working class.'

But of course this was precisely the trajectory of the TUC leaders, headed once again by that most influential of nobodies, Len Murray, who has never held any elected union office, and is now spearheading efforts to reach a deal with Tory union-buster Tom King.

Backing Murray's bootlicking campaign are CPUSA leader Alastair Graham and of course right wing veterans Terry Duffy and Bill Sirs, both of whom have in effect told the NGA to pay the fines, by telling them to get 'within the law' if they want TUC support.

Surprisingly forthright in its support of the NGA, however, has been the NALGO Executive, which urged all its members and branches to support NGA picket lines and give financial support to the NGA.

Court blow to Dutch struggle

THIS week has seen a dramatic change in the fortunes of the Dutch action against the proposed 3½% cut in the salaries of public sector workers and in welfare benefits.

Using a tactic already tried successfully in this month-long dispute, the Dutch centre-right coalition government has seriously weakened the strike movement by the use of courts to declare strikes illegal.

The latest court decision was directed against post office workers who were told that it was illegal for them to use strike action while the unions and government were engaged in talks aimed at resolving the dispute. As a result, most of the action by the post workers was halted.

As the Dutch socialist paper Class Struggle pointed out, it is a crazy state of affairs. Post office workers will strike against the government and take no notice of government ministers, yet will listen to the declarations of a judge who is only an agent for the same interests as the government.

This is a serious blow to the action against the government's attempts to impose an austerity programme on the Dutch working class.

The government has scored another victory this week. It has managed to put a divide between the 'Christian' right-wing unions and the 'Socialist' unions. The Christian CNV has called for an end to the work-to-rule by rail-

workers — the first time they have taken action since 1903 — arguing that the public must not be antagonised.

The signs are that the movement against the cuts is collapsing rapidly, with the possibility of a general strike further and further away. Financial 'experts' have this week been more and more confident about the future of the Dutch economy.

There are murmurs that a settlement could be reached this week. The 'Christian' unions have already stated that they are prepared to make further concessions, possibly involving a shorter working week (but the same amount of work to be done).

The 'Socialist' FNV, on the other hand, have said that they step up action if there is no sign of compromise from the civil service minister Koos Rietkerk. But it seems an empty challenge. The leadership of the FNV lacks the determination to win, and indeed shares the government's view that the Dutch working class must accept some cuts in living standards. Only one of the union leaders, De Schur, has talked in terms of class struggle.

There is still a possibility, small though it is, that the angry and more determined government workers in Amsterdam and Rotterdam and parts of northern Holland could yet provide the focus for a renewed struggle against the proposed cuts.

But, far more likely, it seems as if the struggle will now be sold out either this week or at the beginning of next week.

LAW will fight on against witch-hunt

THE witch-hunt is still alive and kicking. That was the message coming through loud and clear at the first annual general meeting of Labour Against the Witch-hunt (LAW) on Saturday 26 November.

The 'business' side of the AGM was unfortunately, to say the least, tedious, not least in view of the attendance, only 36, of which only four were women.

There was some discussion on how this could be rectified.

John Bloxam, Press Officer, (Bow and Poplar CLP), suggested the campaign should be more positive in passing on information about new developments in the witch-hunt.

Other comrades pointed out the low level of trade union involvement and suggested that affiliation from workplace branches was the obvious link to be made here.

Of more pressing interest was the agenda section entitled "Witch-hunt reports" — six in all.

Astonishing

Alf Holmes gave the first report as chair of the still disbanded Manchester Wythenshawe CLP. He reported on the astonishing events at Wythenshawe's long-awaited AGM on November 4, where no membership check took place on the door, on the instructions of the Labour Party National Agent David Hughes! The meeting was eventually abandoned by the same character two-and-a-half hours later after a

Richard Paine, delegate from Coventry SE CLP, reports on the LAW AGM.

number of right wing delegates had been challenged and expelled from the meeting for amongst other things, not being members of the Party!

Dianne Minns, secretary of Hornsey and Wood Green CLP reported on the possible responses by her Constituency to the expulsion of Tariq Ali.

The AGM unanimously resolved to support Hornsey should they refuse to carry out the expulsion, so challenging the right of conference to trample on democratic rights of individuals or groups of socialists, particularly Tariq Ali, where the only justification given was his political views.

The AGM took a similar decision in relation to Islington South CLP, should they refuse to expel Ted Grant and Peter Taaffe (two of the five members of the Militant Editorial Board). The problem here is the attitude of Militant itself, at best confused, but at worst a downright refusal to be defended.

Similar problems were reported from Hammersmith North CLP which had just decided not to implement the conference decision to expel another Editorial Board member, Keith Dickinson.

Further examples of the

corruption increasingly endemic in Labour's right wing, came from an erstwhile member of the Acocks Green ward in the Birmingham Yardley CLP, who reported that she and three other new residents, two already party members, are being currently refused membership of the ward on the grounds that they were "the first batch of 30 Trotskyist infiltrators".

But perhaps the most astonishing report, though not really a witch-hunt, came from Mick Woods of Brent East where two members had been expelled by the CLP for publicly supporting the SDP in the General Election.

The two then appealed to the Labour Party National Executive, which had turned their appeals down, but still instructed the constituency to reinstate them as members.

These reports, in many ways, typical of events up and down the country, really set the tone for conference. LAW has a tremendous responsibility as the only remaining campaigning body against the on-going witch-hunts. Militant seem to have finally called it a day with their own Labour Steering Committee Against the Witch-hunt.

Speaking to a series of proposals from the outgoing secretariat, Reg Race urged all delegates to go on the offensive, recognising that the answers aren't constitutional but consist simply of beating the right wing.

The expulsion of Tariq Ali simply for his political views, ne argued, is the ideal stick with

which to attack the right and win. Secretariat proposals already encompassed in the mood of the meeting and a resolution from Wythenshawe CLP were passed unanimously. They include:

*A national campaign in defence of Wythenshawe and the suspended Manchester councillors.

*A campaign to defend the rights of CLPs to determine their own membership.

*Campaigns against expulsion and in favour of readmission of socialists to the party.

*Regular reports on witch-hunts in LAW mailings.

*A membership drive.

The task now is for LAW to turn its vision into reality. The need has not been greater.

Labour Group for Human Rights in Sri Lanka

PUBLIC MEETING

TONY BENN
JEREMY CORBYN, MP
Rajes Balsubramaniam
(Labour Group/Tamil Women's League)
John Chowcatt (ASTMS)
Speaker from EELAM
Solidarity Campaign

THURSDAY, Dec 1, 7pm
Hampstead Town Hall
Haverstock Hill, NW3
(opp Belsize Park tube)

CND Conference

Time to stop the retreat!

THIS year's CND conference occurs with the disarmament movement facing a major crisis of direction. The most dynamic and radical sections of the campaign are confronted with a CND leadership which is determined to isolate and defeat them.

This explains why the conference is likely to be very bureaucratic.

Conference is supposedly the sovereign body of CND, but in reality the CND leadership, in particular the clique around Bruce Kent and Joan Ruddock, function without any democratic mechanism to limit their power.

For instance, last year's conference passed a very clear resolution on the need for labour movement action to stop the bomb. The response of the leadership was simply to sit on this policy, using their control over CND Council and Executive to make sure that nothing was done to implement it.

By maintaining control of Goodwin Street, the leadership can control CND.

Conference, for them, is a public relations exercise (it starts off with a Bruce Kent rally). Their aim is to keep the lid on any opposition.

Activists in CND should organise against attempts by the CND leadership to carve up the conference.

We have to make sure that three basic issues are high up on the agenda, and open to full and democratic debate.

Freeze

First, the attempts of the CND leadership to close down Labour CND and Youth CND, the most radical sections of the campaign.

Secondly, the question of the nuclear freeze. We should support the Greater Manchester emergen-

cy resolution, opposing the idea of ditching unilateralism.

Finally, conference must address itself to the vital need to continue the fight for and organise labour movement action against Cruise missiles.

This means backing the resolution from Vauxhall Labour Party:

"Conference recognises that massive support for CND's policies inside the labour movement has been mobilised in action to only a tiny degree. We believe our efforts to stop the nuclear rearmament plans of the British government and its allies will involve mass action, on a scale not yet seen, involving millions in opposition to the government's plans."

"Millions of trade union members in particular do have the power to prevent nuclear rearmament."

The resolution goes on to detail a whole series of concrete steps to realise this aim.

So CND conference is going to be a watershed. Either the CND leadership will be checked and forced to take account of the militant activists in the campaign, or the CND leaders will further tighten their grip on the campaign.

The first result would at least provide the basis for developing and extending the fight against Cruise and all nuclear weapons. The second result would make CND increasingly distant from the real struggles going on against the Bomb.

T. Bailey Forman the publisher. But his connection was with T. Bailey Forman the printer.

Same office, same letter heading, same directors, same holding company, same shareholders. But a separate company, and therefore the subject of secondary action.

At the time of going to press, this is being appealed against.

Dimbleby is notoriously anti-union. A paper he part-owns, the Wandsworth Borough News, is one of the few print organisations to recognise an outfit called the Printing Trades Association, a scab outfit much less cosy than its initials.

Meanwhile the leadership of SOGAT has climbed down to a court injunction against the 'blackening' of publications from Robert Maxwell's BPC empire, which has sacked striking SOGAT members at its Park Royal works.

NUJ faces injunction

AN INJUNCTION against the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) has been granted in favour of David Dimbleby, to stop the union picketing the Richmond head office of Dimbleby newspapers.

The TV current affairs expert sacked his NGA members and transferred production to T. Bailey Forman in Nottingham.

This is the firm which sacked all NUJ members in 1979 for taking part in the national pay strike.

The NUJ members objected to being part of this scab operation. Dimbleby suspended them, and went on to seek injunctions to try to stop the union picketing.

The ruling seemed to extend the provisions of the Employment Act still further. The judge ruled that it was legitimate for the union to have taken action if Dimbleby's association was with



Youth focus on solidarity

CLASS Fighter reaffirmed its sponsorship of Socialist Organiser at its conference last weekend. Nearly a hundred youth met in South London to decide on the course for Class Fighter in the next 12 months.

Judith Bonner, re-elected as National Secretary, opened the conference. She told us how Class Fighter was centrally involved in the fight to regain Youth CND's independence, and how Class Fighter was involved in many other campaigns and struggles.

She emphasises the importance of our rejection of traditional left sectarianism towards the women's movement, peace movement, etc. As revolutionaries we cannot abstain from these struggles. We must build them, and in doing so win people over to revolutionary politics.

The plenaries and workshops attempted to come to grips with exactly how we can build these campaigns and fight for our politics within them.

In the women's workshop, Denise Fowler argued that we should reject once and for all the crude notion that women's oppression is simply economic, and that rape, heterosexism, and sexual harassment — 'ideological' questions — are secondary and will be solved automatically once economic structures are changed.

Apart from perpetuating the false division between economic and ideological oppression, this view ignores the fact that men benefit materially from the subjection of women. If we ignore this, we will make ourselves and our politics irrelevant to the mass of women.

In the Central America workshop, led off by Paul Muddle, we discussed our attitude towards liberation movements such as the FSLN in Nicaragua and the FMLN in El Salvador.

Our orientations towards the FSLN, a ruling party, and the FMLN, a mass organisation in struggle, cannot be identical. The consensus seemed to be that the struggle for Trotskyist

Jane Ashworth and Lyn Ferguson report on the Class Fighter annual conference.

leadership must be carried out within the FMLN in El Salvador — to do otherwise would be dead-end sectarianism.

In Nicaragua, the mass organisations set up the Sandinistas would be the place for this fight to take place.

But in both cases socialists need to organise, with whatever tactical arrangements, to fight for a programme going way beyond the cross-class nationalism of the Sandinistas and FMLN. Workers' power, based on workers' councils and a drive for international extension of the revolution, must be our goal.

We also discussed the problems of solidarity work in Britain. Too often Central America demonstrations and pickets are 'paper-sellers' jamborees, with little or no mainstream labour movement participation. We must work for a clear labour movement orientation in these solidarity campaigns.

The Ireland workshop reaffirmed our commitment to the Labour Committee on Ireland, and stated our willingness to work for issues like the banning of plastic bullets, while always pointing out the role of the British state in the six counties and fighting for 'Troops Out Now'.

Resolutions were discussed on the NGA dispute, the government's Youth Training Scheme, and other issues.

The women's resolution stressed the importance of Greenham Common, where women are daily facing the armed might of the state.

Tony Dale from Manchester Central YS spoke about the importance of the NGA dispute with Messenger Newspapers in directly challenging the Tories' anti-union legislation.

The combativity of the NGA rank and file, the willingness to



(Top) Part of the audience at the conference. (Above) Jane Ashworth addresses the conference.

fight (so far!) of the NGA leadership, and the level of support the dispute has generated, make it possible to argue for the TUC to call a one-day general strike and to prepare for an indefinite general strike.

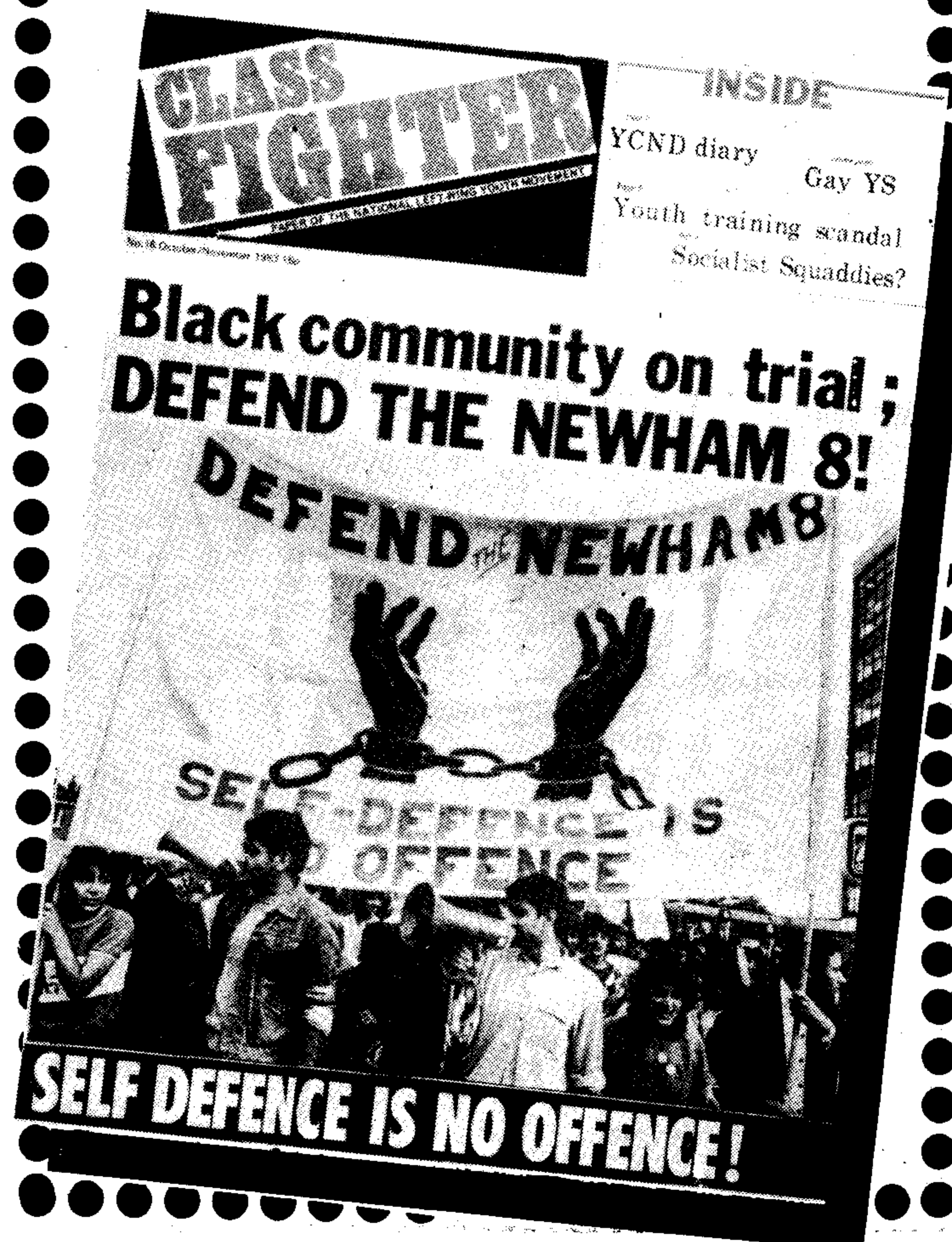
Members of Workers Power (an anti-Socialist Organiser group in Class Fighter, who have now left) argued that we should demand an indefinite general strike now, and that to do otherwise was unprincipled. Tony Dale, in reply, pointed out that, given the defeats that the working class has suffered over the past four years, and its consequent demoralisation, a one-day general strike would

be an enormous step forward — as a preparation for all-out general strike action, and not as an end in itself.

To demand the TUC calls an indefinite general strike immediately would be to disregard the present state of consciousness in the working class, and to make our agitation a 'blank shot'. The conference supported Tony Dale's original resolution.

Closing the conference, Judith Bonner said that we had now to put our decisions into action — to enter into the struggles of young workers, women, black youth, and the unemployed, and to convince them to fight alongside us for a mass socialist youth movement.

New issue of Class Fighter now out — 12 pages for 15p plus postage from 214 Sickert Court, Essex Road, London N1 2SY.



Heffer backs defiant Merseyside Unite in action to get Tories out!

From the platform of the Liverpool anti-cuts demonstration two weeks ago, Eric Heffer made the following points.

The 7 point programme upon which the Liverpool Labour Party fought and won the Municipal Election earlier this year is perfectly reasonable and

sensible. Surely no one in their right mind could object to improving public services and creating jobs, cutting Council house rents — which in Liverpool are among the highest in the country — and embarking on a Council housebuilding programme?

Here in Liverpool, because of past Tory/Liberal policies and Tory Government policies, no new Council houses have been built for a number of years.

Hattersley - wait till 1988!

BETWEEN 1979/80 and 82/3 Government grant in the West Midlands has been cut by 16.7% in real terms whilst total Local Authority income has fallen by 9.6% in real terms. The difference has largely been made up from rent increases said Norman Flynn, opening a Regional Labour Party conference on local government.

Contribution to the Housing Revenue Account has remained more or less static whilst rents have increased over the same period by 30%.

Figures were also given for the effect on jobs. Full time employment has increased slightly in Dudley, Walsall and West Midlands County, but fallen dramatically in Birmingham. Part time employment on the other hand has increased dramatically as teachers, etc., have been taken on as part timers on short-term contracts.

In addition the MSC will have £1 billion to spend on YTS, which could otherwise have been used by Local Authorities on education. This is an attempt by the Government to bring in a back door curriculum change.

A session on "Privatisation" introduced by NUPE national officer Alistair Macrae lacked any mention of the many struggles up and down the country which his members have been waging to oppose privatisation by industrial action.

In the workshop on "Finance for Council Housing", Clive Betts, Chair of Sheffield's Housing Committee, outlined what has become known as the 'Sheffield Scheme'. The idea is to have differential rents for council tenants in order to benefit from the Government's Unified Housing Benefit.

In Sheffield, rents have gone up £3.55 less than the Government requested. Because the Government pays the rent for those receiving housing benefit, Sheffield is effectively sub-

ARTHUR BOUGH reports on a West Midlands conference on local government.

sidising the Government by £3.55 for each of its tenants on benefit.

The proposal therefore is to increase their rents by £3.50, so that the tenant will be no worse off, but the Council will receive the extra £3.50 in UHB. In return the Council will promise to do minor repairs that normally they do not carry out.

A number of delegates pointed out the administrative problems with such a scheme but the main problem with it is that it is mere tinkering with the real problem.

In effect, like rate rises, it acts as a diversion from the real task which is mobilising Labour Councils, unions and tenants to confront the Tories with a refusal to cut or raise rates/rents, and to then go bankrupt demanding the Tories pick up the tab.

In the afternoon workshop on Repairs, Dave Church, formerly chair of Walsall Housing Committee stressed the importance of encouraging tenants' collective control over housing management.

He went on to talk about Walsall's policy of decentralisation. Under the scheme wages had increased by approximately 50%, he said, and productivity by over 100%.

The final session of the conference was a speech by Roy Hattersley.

There were a few revealing Freudian slips like "such and such will not happen while I'm writing the Party's policy".

For years people on the left in the Party have been calling on the Party Leadership to organise a national campaign to resist the Tory cuts, and for many years they have failed to do so.

Is it therefore a coincidence that at a time when Liverpool City Council looks like going bankrupt early next year and becoming another Clay Cross, and on the same day that a demonstration was taking place in Liverpool in support of the Council, that Hattersley announced that a national campaign is to be set up?

Yes, Hattersley said, he was in favour of linking up with trade unionists, tenants and local working class communities; but the right time to link up was in five years time on polling day and not before!

That is causing real hardship to those who want a home and cannot afford to buy one.

The Labour Council is also quite right to say that there should be No redundancies amongst the Council workforce; The truth is that because of past Council policies and Government policies over the years thousands of Council workers have lost their jobs in an area with over 20% unemployed.

The Liverpool Labour Party has said it would not agree to the privatisation of public services. That is also the policy of the Labour Party nationally. That is why, in Parliament, the privatisation of British Telecom is being resisted so fiercely. On Monday, because of the fierce resistance we are putting up against the Bill, the Tories are going to guillotine it — that is to limit the time for discussion and force it through by sheer weight of Parliamentary numbers.

With regard to rate increases, I understand from your local Council leaders, that some rate increases to improve services would be acceptable to them, but rightly they are not going to put up the rates by something like 150% to meet Government cuts. They will take a stand against policies of forcing Local Authorities to keep their spending within certain limits,

because that would mean deliberately cutting down on services thus causing even more unemployment and generally making life worse for working people.

I am with them over this and so is the Labour Party Conference.

The resolution also said the Party should:

1) Uphold the principle of local authorities providing a good level of services to the community.

2) Mount a major campaign to publicise the effect of financial controls over local government.

3) Oppose, through all available channels, further legislation against local government.

4) Commit the next Labour Government to repeal repressive legislative measures, grant local authorities the right to determine their own aggregate level of expenditure, and indemnify Labour Councillors defending local government, and

5) Initiate and support any campaigns to defend local authority services under immediate threat.

I fully support that resolution, and believe that the demonstration today is fully in line with it.

The Merseyside County Council, which has done a good job, to keep fares down, and



Eric Heffer



There is talk at Westminster that the Government is preparing plans to take over Liverpool and put in Government Commissioners. If that is so, it is a serious threat to local government and smacks of authoritarian rule. Such a move must be resisted by

every means available, inside and outside Parliament.

This Government's policies must be fought. The package of financial proposals made by Lawson on Thursday will not add up to one job.

They allow cruise missiles in Britain under US control without a protest, in fact they encourage our subservience to US policy.

They undermine our National Health Service and our Social Security system.

They slice up our public industries and hand them over to their pals to make money at the public expense.

They cut down on housing and force our local authorities to cut back on education.

They are cutting university expenditure and our teachers are being faced with the dole.

Generally they are bad news.

Here on Merseyside we above all others understand just how evil and destructive this Government is.

We must unite to get them out, as early as we can, both by Parliamentary and extra-Parliamentary action.

United we collapse

Daily Mail
Press EXPRESS Gang
FINANCIAL TIMES
The Daily Telegraph
Sun
By Patrick Spilling

historic meeting of the Newspaper Publishers Association.

There with our friends and colleagues who publish the other daily purveyors of information, we took a solemn and binding promise that we would stand together until the end.

All for one and one for all.

Principle

It is a fundamental principle of being a newspaper owner that in the name of free competition we all stand together. And fight together. An injury to one is an injury to all. We also planned what action to take against other unions.

It is true those other unions are not directly involved. But in this game you have got to get your retaliation in first. We decided that if the NGA would not sign our fair and reasonable terms, we would have no option but to sack all union members.

Suggestions that this is secondary action on the part of the employers are mischievous and misleading.

At 4.00pm this afternoon, with our historic agreement in our pockets we proprietors prepared to face up to the wreckers.

We called in the NGA officials. We showed them our

terms.

The father of the composing room chapel replied to our reason with verbal violence. He offered to insert our statement into one of our bodily orifices.

WE DID NOT GIVE IN TO SUCH THREATS!

We told the NGA men that since they had not signed, they were sacked.

At 5.30pm, as we were watering the Judas plant in the corner of our seventh storey suite of offices, a ghastly message greeted us.

The Daily Mail was starting to print.

Glum news

At 5.35pm more messages of similar glum news. The Telegraph was rolling. The Financial Times was preparing to print.

Messengers were sent out. Their return confirmed our worst fears.

THEY HAD GIVEN IN TO BLACKMAIL.

This newspaper was prepared to stand alone. Then our advertising manager appeared in my office. He said that a rep from the Mail had asked him to send over all our ads scheduled for the edition, since all the firms had transferred to the competition.

In this game there is one thing

that stands above abstract principles. It is called money.

By 5.51 we had our splendid NGA stalwarts back at their posts. We explained that the statement had been a purely optional form of words.

By 5.59pm the first of those little lead words were clattering off their quaint old machines.

It is true of course that we shall drag the NGA chapel through the courts. This was always our intention. We are satisfied that the Fleet Street proprietors are now all acting in accord and together.

We are each looking after number one.

It is the only way we know how. We would like to stand together. We would like to stand shoulder to shoulder. But no-one can force us to show solidarity. However much they threaten. After all. We are the ones who won't give in to blackmail.

**LABOUR MOVEMENT
CAMPAIGN FOR PALESTINE
NEWSLETTER**

New issue now out!
Heffer and Kinnock on the Middle East.
The fight in Fatah.
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To join or affiliate, write to Chris Richardson, 21 Devonshire Promenade, Lenton, Nottingham NG7 2DS. £5 for individuals, or for affiliated organisations, per 1000 members; £2 low-waged individuals, £1 unwaged.

December 9 deadline
for Bill

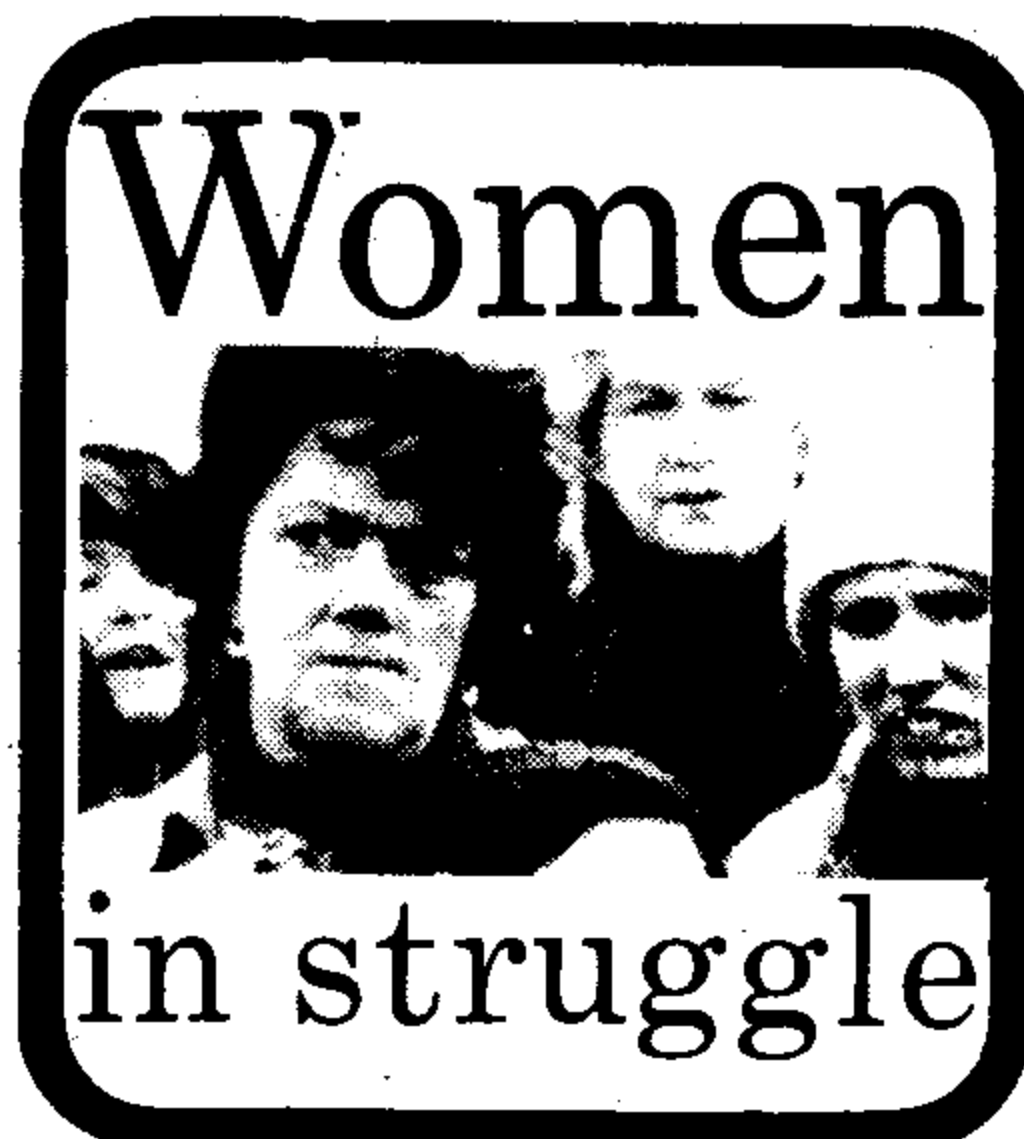
Striking new blows for sex equality

AS ATTENTION focuses on the Sex Equality Bill, due for its second reading on December 9, we reprint below extracts from the detailed Briefing on the Bill, produced by the NCCL. The full Briefing is available, 75p plus 20p postage, from NCCL, 21 Tabard St., London SE1 4LA.

The Sex Equality Bill, introduced by Jo Richardson, will fill the loopholes in the present sex discrimination law and introduce new rights to fight inequality and discrimination.

The Sex Equality Bill will:

- *Allow part-time workers to claim equal pay (proportionately) with full-timers.
- *Put a duty on government departments to promote equal opportunity policies.
- *Put a duty on government departments to review existing and draft legislation to conform with the Sex Equality Bill.
- *Make paternity leave a right for all fathers.
- *Extend the powers of the Equal Opportunities Commission.
- *Introduce equal pay for work of equal value constructively.
- *Make it unlawful for private clubs to exclude women members from using facilities.
- *Allow homeworkers to claim equal pay with other workers.
- *Stop occupational pension schemes giving different bene-



fits to women and men who are members of the same scheme.
*Oblige employers to inform women of their rights under the Sex Equality Bill.
*Make discrimination against homosexual people at work unlawful.
*Introduce stronger measures for positive action at school and at work.
*Make sexual harassment at work unlawful.

Amalgamate two Acts

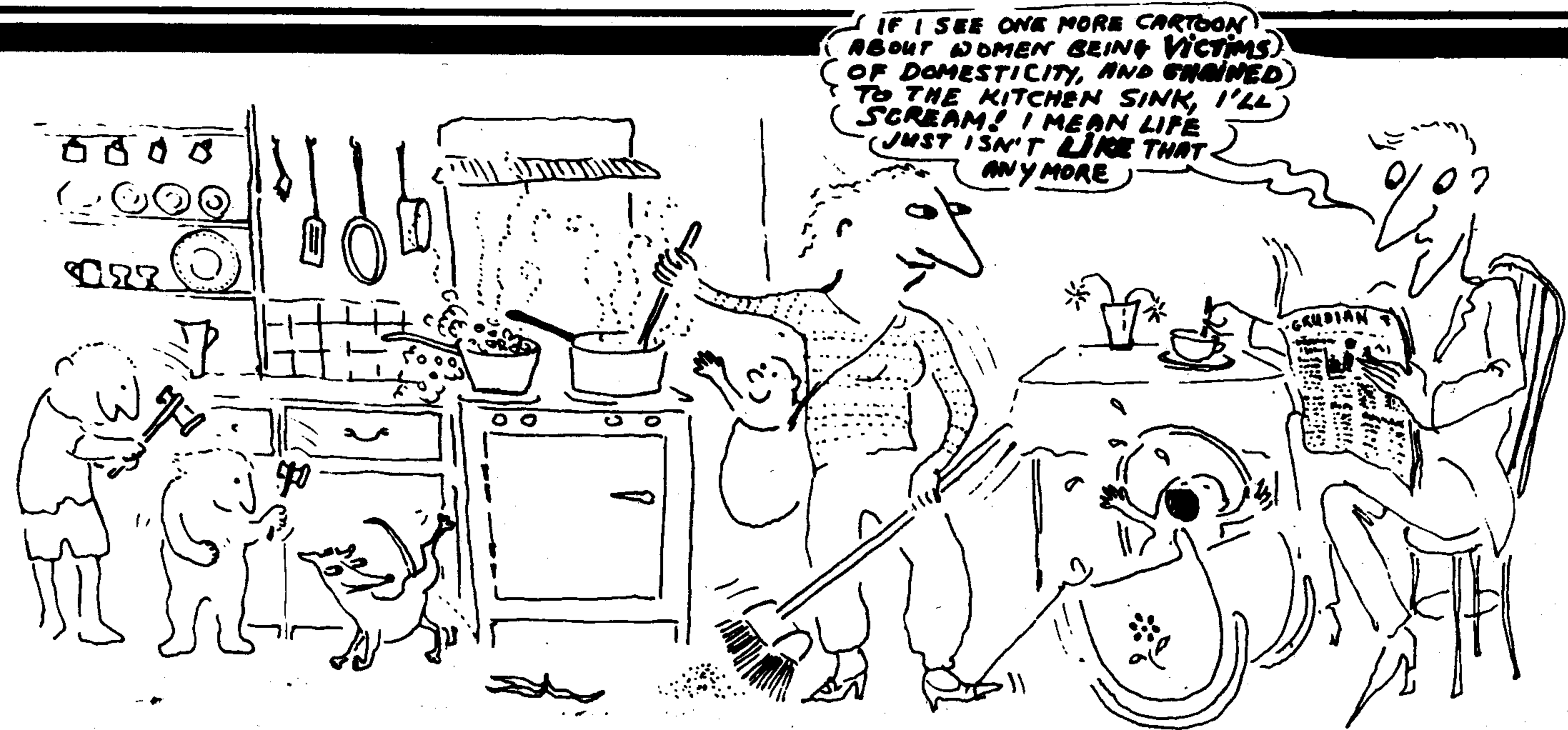
Among the proposed amendments and new additions to the present Sex Discrimination Act and Equal Pay Act are:

Amalgamation of the Equal Pay Act 1970 and Sex Discrimination Act 1975. The idea behind the amalgamation of the two Acts is to:

- a) simplify the legislation.
 - b) Bring the concept of indirect discrimination into pay.
 - c) Bring the concept of the 'hypothetical man' into pay.
- a). Practical problems have been encountered by women who thought they were discriminated against at work, in deciding which Act applied to their circumstances. Broadly, contractual matters relating to

employment are covered by the Equal Pay Act, whilst the Sex Discrimination Act covers recruitment policies, promotion, dismissals and redundancies, fringe benefits and other non-contractual matters.

As the procedures for testing whether discrimination has occurred are different under the two Acts, the question of deciding which one to complain under is crucial. For example at present a complaint about equal pay before employment has commenced would be made under the Sex Discrimination Act; a complaint about equal pay after employment has commenced will come under the



This cartoon is reproduced from 'Women Draw', published by Women's Press at £2.95



Rally for women's right to work



Jo Richardson

Equal Pay Act.

Amalgamation will mean the problem of deciding which Act to use will not arise.

b. The concept of indirect discrimination is extremely useful in dealing with 'hidden discrimination'. It occurs where a requirement is applied to a mixed group but fewer members of one sex can comply with it than the other.

If the requirement cannot be justified it is unlawful.

In one case, *Clarke and Powell v. Eley Ltd*, it was found that the redundancy agreement which made part-time workers redundant before full-timers and full-timers redundant on a last-in-first-out basis, was unlawful. All the part-time workers were women and they could not comply with the condition of being full-time in order to be part of the last-in-first-out arrangement.

However, indirect discrimination is only covered by the Sex Discrimination Act and cannot be used in a claim for equal pay under UK law. This has had a serious effect on the ability of part-time workers to claim equal pay and conditions pro-rata with full-time workers.

Amalgamation of the two UK Acts will mean that a part-time



Tory Minister Tom King

worker might be able to claim that she had been indirectly discriminated against in pay and in other terms and conditions of work, such as access to pension schemes, sick pay schemes and so on.

Women

c) The Sex Discrimination Act allows a woman to compare her treatment with that of an actual man or with how a man would have been treated in similar circumstances. Under the Equal Pay Act a woman must find an actual man doing the same or broadly similar work or have had her job evaluated as the same or broadly similar in order to claim equal pay.

The extent of job-segregation means that the Equal Pay Act excludes vast numbers of women who work in women-only jobs. Amalgamation of the two Acts would introduce the concept of the 'hypothetical man' into pay and open up the possibilities for dealing with women's low pay.

It would be most useful in providing a statutory back-up for trade union negotiations who need to argue that the 'rate for the job' should be what a man would get if he did such a job.

New duty imposed

Duty to eliminate discrimination

The Sex Equality Bill contains a new duty on government departments and local authorities to promote equal opportunity policies and to review those policies in order to ensure they are achieving their purpose.

It also requires government departments to review existing and draft legislation so that it conforms to the policy and objects of the Sex Equality Bill.

This is necessary as at present the Sex Discrimination Act exempts from its ambit all legislation passed before the date when the Sex Discrimination Act came into effect in Decem-

ber 1975.

The effect of this is that important areas of our lives are not covered by the provision of the Sex Discrimination Act and therefore discrimination in these areas is quite lawful — for example tax, where the married man's allowance makes a mockery of the equal pay provisions; social security law where married women are treated quite differently to single women and immigration rules where the foreign husbands of some British women are banned from living in this country whereas the foreign wives of all British men can legally live here with their husbands.

Paternity leave

Research commissioned by the Equal Opportunities Commission has shown that over the last few years fathers consider it of increasing importance to be at home around the time of the birth of their baby.

Since there is no statutory right to paternity leave, fathers have to make alternative arrangements to take time off work.

The Equal Opportunities Commission research found that most men took annual holiday leave at the time of the birth while others were forced to adopt a variety of informal arrangements such as sick leave or unpaid leave for which penalties were often incurred.

Paid leave

The Sex Equality Bill will amend the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978 to allow fathers to take two weeks paid leave at the time of birth. It will also amend the EP(C)A so that with the woman's consent the father will be entitled to take 13 weeks maternity leave and to be reinstated in his job up until 29 weeks after the date of birth.

The father's paternity leave should start not before sixteen weeks after the date of the child's birth and if he takes up the right to maternity leave, the mother's right will be extinguished.

The Sex Equality Bill will also amend the EP(C)A so that the qualifying period for maternity rights will be reduced from two years to six months. Many organisations and individuals concerned with maternity rights have been calling for a reduction

in the qualifying period for maternity pay and reinstatement.

The experience of most women at this time in their lives is that they are employed by the same employers for relatively short periods of time and many find it extremely difficult to build up the two years qualifying period.

Research has shown that a very small percentage of women use the right to reinstatement after maternity leave because they want to stay at home with their baby or they have difficulty making child-care arrangements or because there is no right to return to work on a part-time basis.

But all women need the right to maternity pay. This is crucial for women and must be made more widely available.

It is understood that the Maternity Pay Fund has reserves that are not being used for maternity purposes because of the lack of take up of maternity pay. It should therefore be possible to support an increased demand that would result from a reduction in the qualifying period.

The Sex Equality Bill will repeal the section of the Employment Act on maternity leave which puts unfair and unreasonable pressure on a woman at this stage of her life. It should be enough to require the woman to inform her employer of her intentions before taking leave so that he can provide for maternity replacement and for her to confirm the date on which she plans to return without deadlines and consequent loss of reinstatement rights.

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK 10p

The nightmare arrives, but the fight goes on.

New Women's Fightback now out. 10p plus 16p postage from 10b Landseer Road, London N19.

WE SAY NO

URGENT: Calling All women!

Sunday 11th December '83

Come to Greenham Common to embrace the base and show your opposition to Cruise.

For details ring Greenham office 01-251 3133 or your local CND or women's group.

International news

INLA chief admits involvement with Darkley killings

DOMINIC McGlinchey, chief of staff of the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), admitted INLA involvement in the Darkley sectarian killings, in an interview last week with the editor of the Dublin Sunday Tribune, Vincent Browne.

Browne, who used to edit Magill magazine, is something of a specialist in the internal affairs of the Republican movement.

Speaking to Browne at a secret meeting last week, McGlinchey admitted that he gave a gun used in the Darkley massacre to an INLA member for use on a member of the Protestant Ulster Volunteer Force.

McGlinchey condemned the killings and said that the INLA man who organised it must be 'unbalanced'. Surprisingly, he came close to identifying him by saying that he was someone whose brother was killed some time ago in a sectarian attack. The RUC will presumably be able to put a name to McGlinchey's description.

Of the killings McGlinchey said: "They were entirely innocent hillbilly folk who had done no harm to anyone. There is no justification for the incident. I absolutely abhor the killing of these innocent people, there is no justification for it".

Inquiry

There would, he said, be an INLA internal inquiry. He did not, however, think that the man was likely to face execution 'because of the pressure the lad was under'.

Since the RUC had already connected the INLA to the killing by way of the gun, the fact of McGlinchey's admission of the INLA link does not necessarily add credibility to his 'explanation' of it. More significant is the strange combination of strong words against the deed with tender regard for the man responsible — at the same time virtually identifying him.

The INLA, especially under McGlinchey, is not usually a tender-minded organisation.

The Irish Times on November 22 carried a seemingly well-informed article by Andrew Pollak and Jim Cusack on McGlinchey and the present INLA. McGlinchey is not named, but there is little doubt as to who is being talked about as 'the man'.

Pollak and Cusack tell the fol-

lowing story. McGlinchey was part of the Provisionals' South Derry unit, 'believed during the early and mid '70s to have killed up to 50 people, including security force members and civilians, ranging from children to the elderly'. The leader of the group was Francis Hughes, who died on hunger strike last year.

Widespread

McGlinchey joined the INLA in the late '70s.

"The man came to power in the INLA at a time when it was involved in fairly widespread action in Northern Ireland. Last year the organisation was responsible for about 29 killings and a variety of other injuries and attacks.

This year it has been responsible, before the Darkley killings, for the deaths of only two members of the security forces in Northern Ireland, but has killed four of its own members or people associated with it. The changeover from attacks on the security forces in Northern Ireland has coincided with this man's assumption of leadership.

Earlier this year the man, who had previously been voted on to the 'Army Council' of INLA by its members, declared himself chief of staff. Within a short period he also imposed what was termed direct military rule, or 'DMR'.

DMR was apparently dreamed up as a regime by Republican prisoners some years ago. Under such a regime in a paramilitary grouping, the old rules of hearings and court martials for misdemeanours were done away with. Almost any indiscretion, from freelance theft to informing, is punishable by death without recourse to any form of appeal. The punishment is ordered by the chief of staff and carried out swiftly.

The last of the four men killed under the DMR system was Gerard Barkley, of Belfast, who was a high profile INLA member in Belfast. Former associates angered by his summary execution held a military funeral for him when his remains were returned to Belfast at the end of last month.

Barkley is known to have been lured from Belfast to Dundalk by the organisation's leader with the specific intention of killing him. He was unaware that this was the intention because in the previous set-up within the organisation the indiscretion of which he was accused, in this case carrying out a robbery on his own behalf, would have led to only a warning or a beating.

The freelance robbery transgressed the DMR line and he was shot in the head."

Freelance robbery is now a capital crime. Organising sectarian mayhem is — to go by what McGlinchey said to the Sunday Tribune about the likely punishment of the INLA man responsible for Darkley — a mere misdemeanour!

"Barkley's killing finally estranged the bulk of the previous organisation, who began to be appalled at their new leader's behaviour. Stories circulated about Barkley being shot, stripped and buried so that no evidence would be left of the crime...

The body was eventually disinterred and dumped, still without clothes, at the Border on October 27 last, several days after the killing had occurred.

The fact that Barkley, who had full funeral INLA honours including a volley of shots, was also supported to have been executed by the same organisation, displayed the extent of the divisions which had occurred.

According to some sources the new leader has reverted to the modus operandi popular with the Old IRA Flying Column and the South Derry Brigade of sleeping rough in the countryside, emerging only for swift attacks. Such an operating style makes him and his small organisation very difficult to locate.

In two years, the INLA has, therefore, gone from being an organisation with an estimated membership of between 150 and 200 to a group now estimated at containing no more than 20 members who are centred around this new leader...

The INLA claimed in July, 1982, that... reorganisation had resolved an internal dispute which had led to the attempted assassination of two leading members of the IRSP, the brothers Sean and Harry Flynn, earlier that year.

In the second half of 1982, this reorganisation started to show itself in yet another stepping-up of INLA attacks, many of which were of a particularly reckless and indiscriminate nature. In June, an INLA bomb on the back of a parked motorcycle decapitated a 16-year-old south Belfast boy. In September two more young boys, along with a British soldier, died when an INLA pipebomb exploded in Divis Flats in west Belfast.

Then last December it carried out its bloodiest attack to date, and the second worst atrocity in terms of the number of victims in 15 years of the Northern 'Troubles', when a bomb killed 11 off-duty soldiers and six civilians at a disco in a public house at Ballykelly, Co. Derry.

By this time, the INLA, and particularly its new and more violent leadership in the Belfast area, had started to suffer the full brunt of the RUC's new strategy of using supergrass evidence to imprison paramilitary activists. From early 1982, half a dozen alleged INLA members had given information to the RUC which led to charges against at least 50 of their erstwhile colleagues.

The most serious allegations were made by a former leading Belfast activist, Harry Kirkpatrick, who last June was himself given concurrent life sentences for five murders and 72 other offences.

The Kirkpatrick affair forced



by Paddy Dollard

Sinn Fein's response

most of what was left of the organisation's Belfast membership to flee to the Republic, where earlier this year the former IRA man from south Derry, now based in the Dundalk/Castleblaney area, had forced the INLA's 'Army Council' to accept him as their new chief of staff at gunpoint."

One important part of the present 'INLA phenomenon' came out at a recent Belfast trial — the degree to which it is infiltrated by the state security forces.

Last week at Belfast Crown Court, Lord Justice Gibson dismissed charges brought against seven men on the testimony of 'supergrass' John Grimley, a former INLA leader. Two were released, but five still face other charges, including Harry Kirkpatrick.

Lord Justice Gibson described Grimley as a habitual criminal and a habitual liar. In the course of the trial it was revealed that Grimley, a long-time police informer, had been working for the RUC inside the INLA, which he had joined to do police work.

In the course of that work he had set up a unit of the INLA in Craigavon, turning over the names of those he recruited to the police and gathering or inventing information for them at £25 a time!

Relations between INLA and the Provos are now so strained that armed clashes may not be far away. A number of Armagh Catholic businessmen, kidnapped for ransom by INLA are said to have appealed to the Provisional IRA for protection.

The Provos told the INLA people that they would shoot them if the gangsterism didn't stop.

Two weeks ago Sinn Fein's assemblyman in Derry, Martin McGuinness, took the unprecedented step of publicly criticising and denouncing INLA for exploding a no-warning car bomb outside a public house in Strabane.

"While Sinn Fein supports the right of the Irish people to wage war on crown forces, we believe that Friday night's no-warning INLA car-bomb in Strabane is both militarily and politically indefensible. No-warning car-bombs in residential areas do not distinguish between civilian and legitimate military targets.

THE hypocritical howls of loyalist politicians which have followed the sectarian killings at Darkley in County Armagh are matched in insincerity only by the hand-wringing, guilt-mongering of Irish establishment prelates and politicians.

The former want to use the tragic, indefensible, deaths as an excuse for extensive nationalist or Catholic blood-letting, whilst the latter want the whole nationalist population to take on the guilt of the act and capitulate to the British occupier to show true sorrow.

But the nationalist people of the North know better than anyone what it is to lose innocent relatives through sectarian assassination and understand better than anyone the grief of those bereaved at Darkley.

Because the truth of the matter is that sectarian murder has been the weapon of the loyalists seeking to maintain supremacy in the North, not the weapon of those who justifiably fight to free their people from foreign oppression.

The republican struggle has no part for the indiscriminate sectarian attack such as took place at Darkley, and republicans have not hesitated to say so. But that does not mean that republicans have to forget the constant sectarian war which has been carried out at various levels of intensity by loyalists in and out of uniform over the last 14 years; or the pogroms against the nationalist population which have taken place intermittently since the foundation of the Northern statelet; or indeed the centuries of sectarian hatred deliberately engineered by the Orange Order, set up for that very purpose by those in whose interests it is to create and maintain divisions.

It was apt that on Wednesday this week, a bereaved nationalist mother should, in the Irish News, criticise both James Prior and Cardinal O Fiaich over their flippant claims about Darkley

from 'An Phoblacht'

being the first attack on a place of worship.

Mrs Gretta Ballantine reminded them that her 18-year-old son, Kevin, was shot dead by loyalist gunmen in the porch of St. Brigid's Church in Belfast along with a friend, Gerard Kiely from Dublin, as they left evening Mass in February 1975 — a year when loyalist sectarian attacks took place almost daily during an IRA truce.

The people of St. Matthew's parish in the Short Strand are not likely to conveniently wipe from their minds the fact that their church has been a constant target of loyalist attack over decades — and a memorial marks the spot where a parishioner died in the '20s when loyalists attacked Mass-goers.

Nor are the people of Ballymurphy likely to forget their local priest, Fr. Mullen, who was shot dead by British paratroopers as he gave the last rites to another of their victims on internment day in August 1971.

And there was little or no outcry then from those who howl or hint now:

"Croppie lie down!"

The nationalist people decry the Darkley killings and understand the grief of the bereaved because they know only too well what the evil of sectarianism is like. They are not foolish enough, however, to do as Prior, O Fiaich and the rest of them would like and accept the blame for it or pretend that history has not happened.

The blame for Darkley, as for all the other deaths in the North, ultimately rests with the British who created, armed and maintained the sectarian state in the North — a state which could not exist without officially sponsored sectarianism.

And the only answer remains for the British to get out, not for the nationalist people to capitulate to that sectarian monster either through fear or ill-placed guilt.



TROOPS OUT NOW!

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

International news

Arms talks collapse No tears from Nato as Reagan cruises on

FEW will have been convinced by President Reagan's rehearsed statement of "disappointment" at the Soviet walk-out from the Geneva talks on European nuclear missiles.

By deploying the first of the 572 Cruise and Pershing missiles in Britain, Germany and Italy, Reagan has taken a step towards strengthening NATO's nuclear superiority in Europe and at the same time has wrong-footed the Kremlin bureaucrats.

Despite the endlessly repeated claims by Thatcher and other European cold-warriors that the new US missiles were simply a lever to force the USSR into talks on disarmament, it was never possible that this escalation of the arms race could do other than provoke a Soviet retaliation.

Cruise and Pershing are first strike weapons — the one a lethal low-level missile, the other a high accuracy, high speed ballistic missile, basically a rocket-propelled artillery shell — which were planned and developed long before the Soviet deployment of SS20 missiles.

SS20s have only a slightly longer range than the SS4 and SS5 that they are replacing; they are far less accurate than Cruise and Pershing; and they are not first strike weapons.

The triple-warhead SS20s represent an increase in warheads but an actual reduction in Soviet missiles deployed against NATO — they were an attempt in the late 1970s to redress a long-standing imbalance of Soviet nuclear forces as against NATO.

When Reagan, Thatcher and other warmongers sought to justify the new US missiles by calling for a "zero option" in which deployment of Cruise and Pershing would be abandoned in exchange for a dismantlement of SS20s, they knew that they were demanding the impossible; an acceptance by the Soviet Union of a long-term, consolidated nuclear inferiority in Europe.

We should remember that NATO was founded on the basis of a strategy involving first use of nuclear weapons — a strategy it still holds to this day.

But by using the "zero option" propaganda ploy, the NATO hardliners knew that they would be assured of a pretext to force ahead with deployment, regardless of the USSR.

And they also calculated that once the new US missiles were installed, the Soviet bureaucracy would be forced to take damaging steps to retaliate — walking out at Geneva and deploying their own additional missiles — handing fresh exploitable propaganda to the NATO chiefs and confusing and demoralising sections of the peace movement in Europe.

By Harry Sloan

Now, delighted that their scheme has worked, these war chiefs are also relieved to see that European NATO governments have in the main held firm against the peace movement, and tied themselves even more slavishly to the USA and its nuclear armoury.

With the Geneva talks aborted, and the Soviet delegation carrying the immediate blame for it, there is no longer any clear focus for the more timid NATO leaders to press for concessions or negotiations; and the US strategists who dream of being able to fight World War 3 mainly if not solely in Europe, after the models of Wars One and Two, have taken another step towards their objective.

For the increasingly decrepit leaders in the Kremlin, however, the walk-out was a gesture of weakness rather than strength.

Their bluff has now been called, and the Soviet Union will need to finance and politically prepare the installation of its own new missiles in Eastern Europe and deploy additional submarine and ship-based nuclear weaponry targeted at the USA.

The spread of Soviet nuclear weaponry to new bases in Eastern Europe will intensify pressures already evident within the Warsaw Pact, where creaking, bureaucratically distorted economies are already straining to sustain existing military budgets and — certainly in Poland — contain working class opposition.

The Soviet bureaucracy, with its invisible President and Party leader, will find it hard to both carry through these moves and retain its cultivated image as a 'peace-loving' leadership.

The reality is that behind their talk of 'peace' lurks the brutal repression of vicious military regimes, which will use the most



Reagan has successfully increased NATO nuclear superiority

horrific nuclear hardware to preserve their own balance of terror with the imperialist governments of the West.

Yet Soviet bureaucrats remain at the same time wedded to a counterrevolutionary strategy of "peaceful coexistence" which in practice assists in preserving capitalist rule and imperialist oppression across the majority of the earth's surface.

The ageing veterans of Stalin's purge era who now hold the helm in the Kremlin pose no threat to bourgeois rule in Western Europe; and evidence of their reluctance to support radical and anti-imperialist movements or push for any overturn of capitalism can be seen in the agonising insecurity of the regimes of Nicaragua, Angola and Mozambique, all of which are under fire from counter-revolutionary guerrillas which could be decisively crushed with Soviet backing.

Congress S. Africa sanctions

RONALD Reagan will scarcely be pleased that his chosen allies in the apartheid regime of South Africa have been singled out by Congress for economic restrictions on two fronts.

A bill providing US money to the International Monetary Fund was amended last week to insist that before any loan to South Africa is agreed, the US Treasury Secretary must certify that the cash will be used to benefit the majority of the South African people.

And a further proposal would outlaw future US dealing in Kruggerands, and place demands on US firms in South Africa to guarantee equal treatment for all workers, black and white.

It is this second policy which is likely to prove the most potentially damaging to US/South African trade: and it will also prove very difficult, as Presidential elections loom ever closer, for Reagan to be seen to obstruct it.



Up and up — the megatonnage and US military spending

Sandinistas retreat

By Terry Smith

If Nicaragua is demanding that the Salvadorean junta should negotiate with the FMLN/FDR opposition, argues the Reagan team, then they too must negotiate with their "opposition" in the CIA camps across the border in Honduras!

Significantly the Sandinista retreat takes place at the very point where leaked reports from the US Congress indicate the view that the "contras" stand no chance of overthrowing the regime in Managua, and where the crumbling morale of the Salvadorean army is forcing the US war chiefs to reassess their options.

To focus now on a negotiated settlement in El Salvador and a regional peace with the USA is to allow the fight to be taken onto the ground most favourable to Washington and the European imperialist governments and social democratic leaders which have always pressed for a negotiated deal that would stabilise capitalist control in the region.

The struggle for the unconditional defence of Nicaragua against imperialist attack, and for full backing to the struggle of the guerrilla and left wing forces in El Salvador must not be restricted to the search for stop gap treaties with the White House and its flunkies: the liberation of the workers and peasants of Central America can only be completed with the revolutionary overthrow of capitalist exploitation: and Reagan will never agree to that.

MASSIVE US military intimidation of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua appears to have borne fruit in a number of significant concessions to American demands.

Nicaragua's Interior Minister Tomas Borge has embarked on a visit to the USA seeking talks with the Reagan's administration: 1,000 Cuban advisors have been asked to leave Nicaragua, along with Salvadorean guerrilla leaders; and Nicaragua has signed a 21-point draft document put forward as the basis for a Central American peace treaty, part of which calls for a withdrawal of all foreign advisors and aid to insurgents.

If implemented, this would commit Nicaragua to renouncing Cuban military advisors in the defence of their country, and to break off aid and support for the FMLN guerrilla fighters currently striking heavy blows against the vicious ruling junta in El Salvador.

Needless to say, Reagan's team are not satisfied with even this substantial climbdown by the Sandinistas. They are reportedly now demanding that the Nicaraguan rulers who successfully ousted the hated Somoza dictatorship after a prolonged guerrilla war in 1979 should now open "negotiations" with the 10,000 American armed and CIA-led mercenaries currently conducting murderous raids across the border into Nicaragua.

Prominent amongst these "contra" thugs are former members of Somoza's notorious National Guard.

Solidarnosci

A REPORT presented by the Temporary Regional Commission 'Hutmen' (a metal production plant with a workforce of more than 4,000) in Wroclaw, based on information and financial statements from the Temporary Factory Commission (TKZ) and the Strike Committee, states that:

*Approximately 80% of union members have been paying union dues — ranging from 50 to 1,000 zl per month — since the introduction of the state of war. Payment of dues was standardised at 200zl monthly in early 1983.

*Between December 1981 and April 1982 90% of the funds

collected was spent on assistance to internees and their families; the remaining 10% was earmarked for organisational activities. Since May 1982, 45% of the total has been allocated for union work. Expenditures include the purchase of printing equipment and chemicals; the funding of independent publishing activities; and costs related to underground union work. The report notes that in 1983, new books were purchased for the underground library, more printing equipment was acquired and that close cooperation has been established with a small printing shop.



Voice of Solidarnosc is published fortnightly by NSZZ Solidarnosc. Subscription rates are £8 for six months [UK]. Cheques payable to NSZZ Solidarnosc: send to NSZZ Solidarnosc Information Office, 314-320 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP.

THE appointment of a pliable team of benevolent Englishmen, businessmen and selected Grenadian Uncle Toms to hold the fort after Reagan's invasion of Grenada has proved more difficult than at first imagined.

Not only has the invasion continued to inflame the anger of Third World rulers — not least the African leaders at the Commonwealth summit — but



Sir Paul Scoon (left) with US goon



Lessons of past struggles

Tory anti-

union laws: how to fight them...

IN THE summer of 1972 a long-smouldering dispute by dockers against job-cutting containerisation blew up into a full scale confrontation with the Tory government's new Industrial Relations Act and its special Court. The Court instructed TGWU officials to discipline docks stewards who ignored instructions to lift the "blacking" and picketing of container firms. When the TGWU failed to stop the action, it was fined £55,000. Eventually five London dockers were arrested for contempt of court and held in Pentonville Jail. The imprisonment unleashed a massive spontaneous strike which forced their rapid release — as the paper 'Workers Fight' reported.

AT THE jailing of the five, the dockers came out nationwide, even in the small ports. The lorry drivers who had had differences with the dockers were out too. Their leader said "as trade unionists, we must fight the Industrial Relations Act together."

Print workers in NATSOPA were also on strike, first on Fleet Street and spreading right across the country, shutting down most major newspapers.

There was growing action on a local scale.

In London, container workers, warehousemen, market workers, ship repair workers, busworkers, and Tower Hamlets municipal workers struck against the jailing. Heathrow Airport was shut down by industrial action. And train drivers and ticket collectors on the Southern Region at Waterloo voted to strike.

In Liverpool, 8,000 lorry drivers came out on strike. Action was also taken by building workers on a number of major sites, factory workers at Fisher Bendix and Krafts, and Cammell Laird ship repairers. In St Helens, transport workers struck and militant building workers formed a mobile picket to bring factories out.

Spread

Building workers in Manchester had a half-day strike and demonstration of 2,000 — on their claim but also on the Act — on the Wednesday. Construction workers at Shell Carrington were out on strike, as were factory workers at Platt International, Oldham, and Churchills, Altrincham.

In Birmingham, as elsewhere, many major factories were on holiday, but SU Carburettors struck.

Construction workers on Teesside, and in Scotland, miners at a number of pits and Glasgow Corporation electricians, also took action.

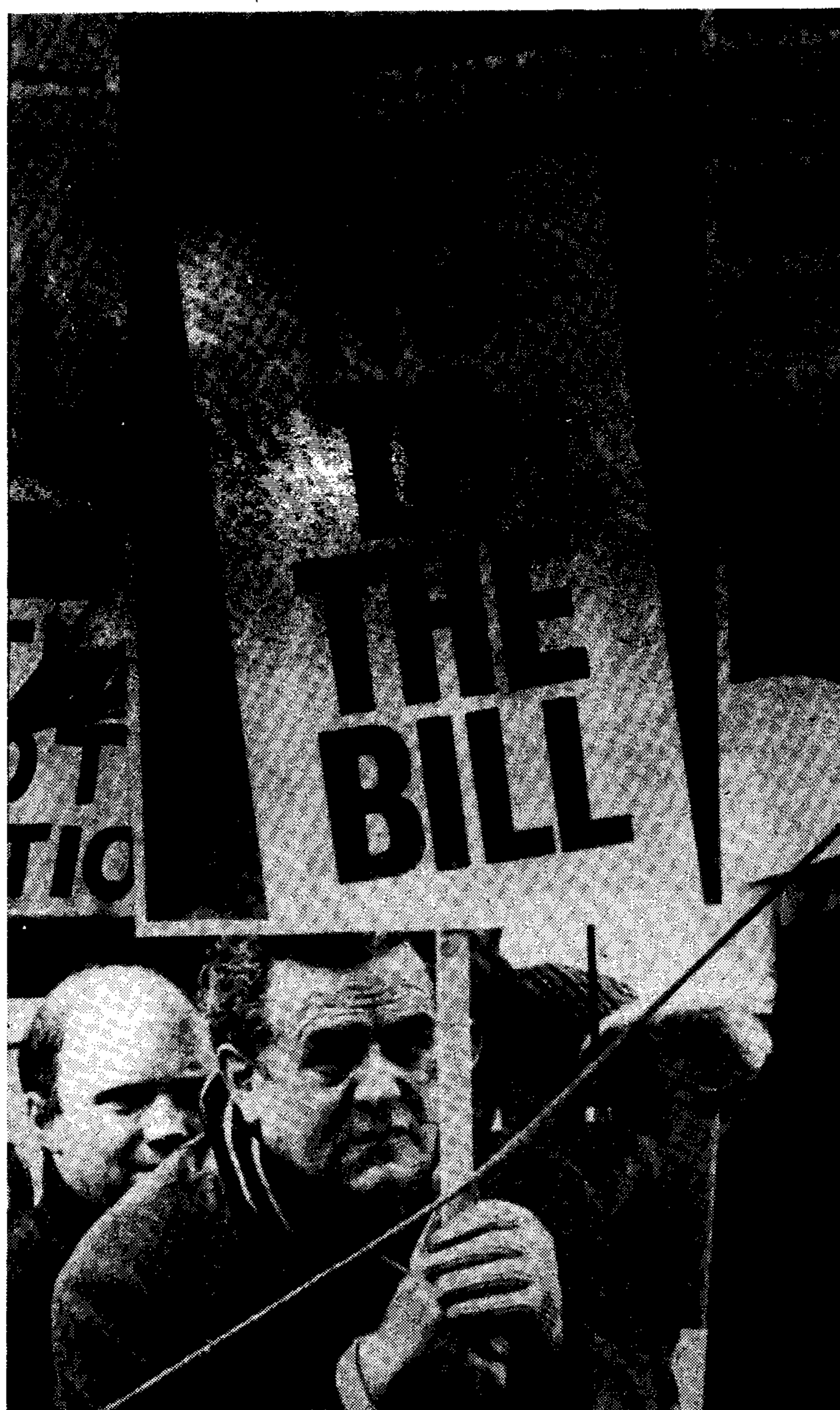
The movement would certainly have spread further if the Tories hadn't freed the five on Wednesday 26 July. Even on Wednesday morning, a mobile picket organised by militant workers in Kirkby, near Liverpool, brought out several small factories on the Kirkby industrial estate.

A number of factories, including militant car factories, were due back from holidays the following Monday, and many would have voted to strike. Even in the less militant areas where there was no strike action, such as Bolton, the feeling of ordinary workers was moving substantially in support of the dockers.

Bolton engineering union leaders were pressured into calling on the TUC to organise automatic strike action in the event of any fines being extracted or unionists jailed under the Industrial Relations Act.

And, of course, if the official trade union leadership had done anything to justify the title 'leadership' — then industry would have been at a standstill.

But the first few days alone showed a solid phalanx of leading sections of the labour movement standing up against the Tories. The basic mechanism of trade union solidarity is in good working order.



Printworkers were among the first to walk out in support of the Pentonville 5.

1972

General strike! Build

IF THE release of the 'Pentonville Five' in the face of mass strike action represented a victory for the working class, it also showed how much more could be achieved if the TUC leaders were really prepared to fight. The lessons drawn out of the situation by Workers Fight in 1972 remain valid in today's substantially different conditions, where union leaders are, if anything, now more reconciled to acceptance of Tory anti-union laws, and opposed to mass resistance.

ACCORDING to the legend the Hydra was a monster with a peculiar constitution: when one of its heads was cut off others grew in its place.

The Hydra was a myth. But there is nothing mythical about the Tory Industrial Relations Act.

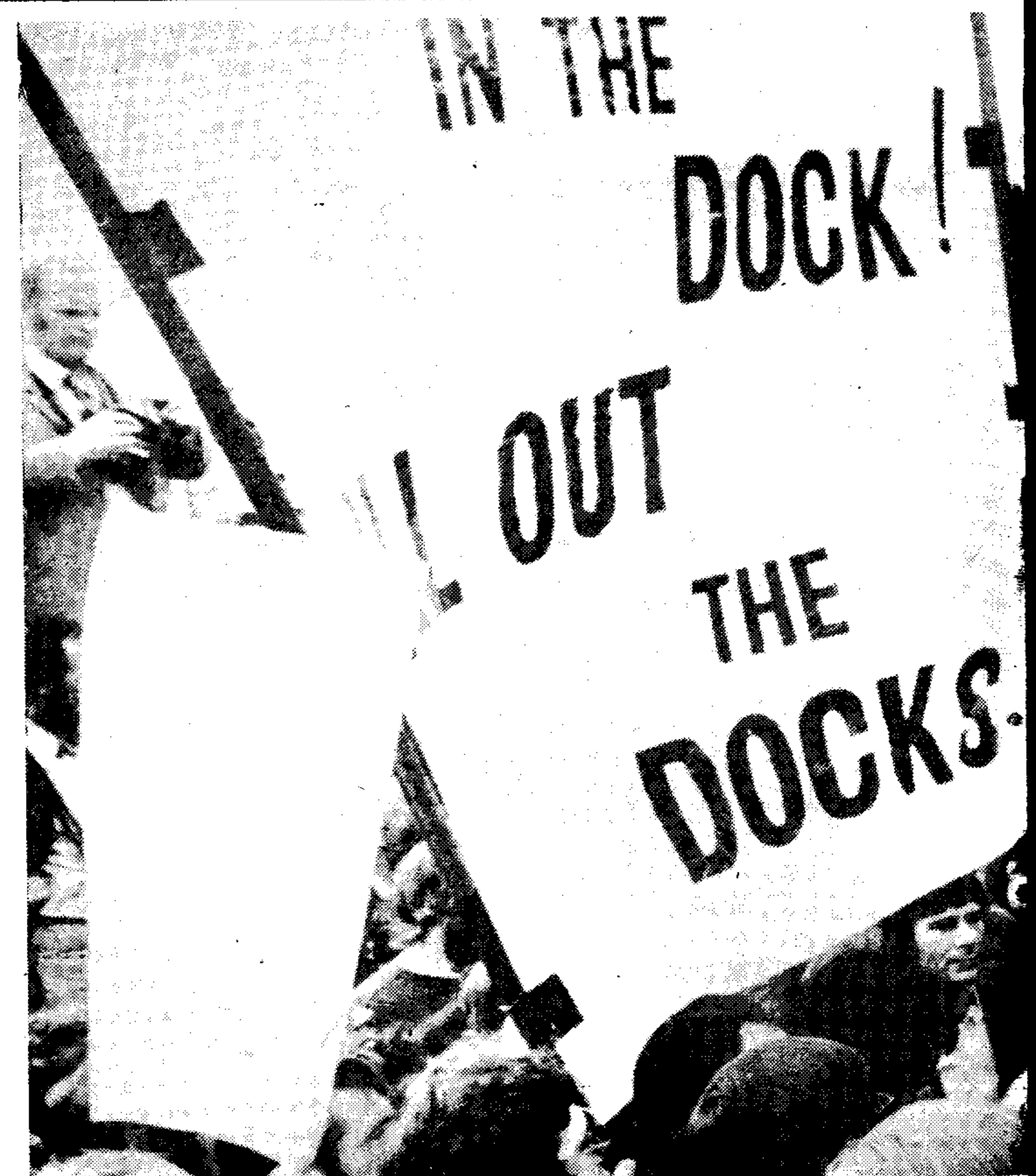
At the very same time as it stepped down in the confrontation over the jailings it spawned another challenge. The House of Lords reimposed the £55,000 fine on the T&GWU

— with an added £25,000 for costs.

This means that it is the Trade Union leaders who are back in the firing line, and the Industrial Relations Act is operating according to its original intention.

They never planned to jail shop stewards. Now they plan to use fines and other pressure to turn the union leaders into efficient policemen against the working class.

Their goal is the complete



... and h

THERE were some extraordinary scenes at the special TUC Conference of union Executives which on April 5 1982 adopted an 'Eight point plan' effectively winding up any fight to prevent the Tebbit anti-union Bill becoming law.

Predictable left speeches from Arthur Scargill and Moss 'not a penny of this money is to pay fines or legal fees' Evans were followed up by a bloodcurdling show of militancy from Terry Duffy — who claimed the credit for the historic AUEW sympathy strike that enabled the NUM to win the 'Seige of Salfley Gates' in 1972! His right wing pal, Roy Grantham of APEX, echoed Moss Evans, declaring that the 'fighting fund' should not be frittered away on legal costs, while NALGO's Geoffrey Drain — scarcely a firebrand of proletarian struggle — invoked the memory of the strikes to free the five Pentonville dockers in 1972!

It was left to Len Murray to keep the feet of the Conference on the floor, insisting that 'nothing we decide today will stop the Government from putting its Bill on the statute book this summer.'

And lest anyone take seriously the ranting declarations of solidarity from the General Secretaries, Murray insisted:

'The General Council will, as they always do, deal with unions, not with individuals or groups of workers. And the support they give cannot be unconditional: there will be no black cheques... So unions can have confidence in the General Council, both to give firm and positive leadership and to act in a responsible way... There may well be situations from which we will have to extricate unions: that would not be the first time that the General Council have had to advise a union to draw back from a no-win situation [!!!].'

Since then ASLEF strikes and others have seen close up just what the General Council's 'positive leadership' consists of: the NGA itself, now at the forefront of the fight against Tebbit, this year won a pay battle with the Financial Times only in the teeth of bitter TUC resistance and obstruction.

Yet these decisions of April 1982 were the last recorded resolutions of opposition to Tebbit's Bill; this is why NGA General Secretary Wade has been carefully referring back to this Special Conference and avoiding the capitulationist policies adopted in the 1982 and 1983 TUC Congresses.

This was how Socialist Organiser no. 78 summed up the TUC's 'action' plan:

emasculatation of militant trade unionism. The Economist, militant ruling class weekly, contemptuously explained what they really want to do with stiff-necked working class fighters like Bernie Steer, Vic Turner, and the rest of the Five:

'In any sensible industrial system the right sanction against the likes of them is not jug, but the sack. If they persist with their unlawful industrial practices, they should be dismissed from the trade union whose rules they will be flouting, and then from the docks where they will be steadily rendering all jobs uneconomic: arguable with due compensation for the loss of those jobs, but more arguably not.'

To do that they need the active support of the union leaders. They need the sort of trade union structure that, for example, existed in the docks section of the T&GWU before the breakaway union movement of 1954 started.

A closed shop existed by virtue of an agreement between employers and trade unions. It was used by both union and bosses, hand in hand, to sack workers who refused to bend the knee.

In the '30s, '40s, and '50s, many unions hardened into semi-totalitarian bodies working hand in hand with the employers and their state. One of the foremost examples was the T&GWU under Arthur Deakin. (The ban on the Communist Party was lifted only four years ago).

In the post world war 2 boom the power of the bosses was gradually eroded, as the central trade union machine became less important in determining wages and conditions. The shop floor became the focal point of the struggle, the shop steward its leader, the direct action of the rank and file, almost invariably unofficial, its effective weapon.

The bureaucratic strait-jacket came to fit more loosely

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





ow not to!

THE '8 point plan' put to a conference of union Executives at Wembley Conference Centre on April 5 contains a call for action of any description. The TUC's proposals are:

1) 'Affiliated unions should affirm their commitment to conduct a campaign among their own members to highlight the dangers in the Employment Bill.'

—In other words a few circular letters to branches and perhaps a few leaflets: even badges, posters and pickets, but no action.

2) 'Affiliated unions shall not hold or participate in secret ballots on union membership agreement under conditions laid down in the Employment Bill.'

—But will affiliated unions press a determined unionisation drive and fight to establish closed shops in the traditional way in defiance of the Tebbit plan? The TUC formula amounts to in fact to an abandonment of the fight to establish 100% trade union membership — just what Tebbit wants to achieve. And no proposals are spelled out for the defence of existing closed shops against Tebbit's plan for imposing regular ballots.

3) 'Affiliated unions shall observe Congress policy and not seek or accept public funds for union ballots under the 1980 Employment Act ballot funds scheme.'

—The TUC is deliberately vague about what would happen to a right wing union which did accept funds — as it appears to be the case now with the actors' union Equity. Will they be expelled from the TUC? But, possibly more important, the TUC leaders raise not a voice in defiance of the traditional methods of workers' democracy — shows of hands at mass meetings — in opposition to the Tory strategy of balloting individual members by post — in the isolation of their own homes.

4) A call for 'closer working between Unions' in disputes. 'The further aim, wherever

possible, should be to co-ordinate and concert negotiations and industrial action'.

—This poses as a challenge to the moves by Tebbit and Prior to render 'secondary' strikes, picketing and blacking illegal: but all of the evidence of recent 'close working between Unions' has been of General Secretaries ganging up against the rank and file workforce to sell-out struggles on pay, jobs and conditions.

Socialists of course support inter-union solidarity and the spreading of strikes: but the fundamental problem in achieving this is to win the solidarity of union officials for the struggles conducted by their members on the shop floor. There is no reason to believe this would be greater after Tebbit's Bill becomes law than it is now.

5) Empowering the General

MAY 14 1980 was the last time the TUC organised any concerted action against Tory anti-union laws. But in the run up to this 'day of action' a witch-hunted Len Murray and other union bureaucrats spent most of their time denying it was a day of strike action and attempting to restrict workers to lunch-hour meetings. Despite this, Fleet Street newspapers were halted by a printworkers strike and the day proved to be a massive show of industrial resistance across the country.

LEN MURRAY and SOGAT leader Bill Keys have been given a blank cheque by the TUC General Council to engage in back-room talks and seek out some form of deal with Tory Employment Secretary Tom King on the next set of anti-union legislation.

They will no doubt go into the talks tooled up with persuasive arguments designed to shake the Tories' confidence. Their main line of approach? TUC right wingers have castigated the King Bill, with its extensive provision for compulsory ballots before strike action, as 'a Trots' Charter' which will hand increased power to unofficial shop floor leaderships and make it harder for full time union bureaucrats to intervene and sell out strikes!

Council, on receipt of a request from a union faced by legal action, to:

i) co-ordinate action by other affiliated unions in support of the union in difficulties, including, if necessary, calling for industrial action against the employer concerned, or more widely.

ii) to provide financial assistance to a union which experiences severe financial problems as a result of damaging actions.

—But this whole, militant-sounding proposal relates to unions under attack after Tebbit's Bill becomes law! This is not so much a fight against Tebbit but dishing out aspirins for the wounded after the fight has been lost.

6) Financial assistance for unions faced with legal action for pursuing existing TUC Dis-

putes Principles and Procedures.

—Once again conceding that Tebbit's Bill will be put on the statute books, and that the main beneficiaries of the TUC's 'action' programme will be the legal profession pocketing fat fees.

7) 'No trade union member of an industrial tribunal or the Employment Appeal Tribunal should serve on cases arising from the application of a union membership agreement or arrangement.'

—In plain English this means that union bureaucrats will continue to sit on Industrial Tribunals and a whole panoply of collaborationist bodies with management and government representatives right up to the NEDC level — while the bosses



Uncompromising: Thatcher

sharpen the knife for use against the shop floor.

8) A financial levy of 10p per member on all affiliated unions to set up a 'Campaign and Defence Fund'.

—This is to pay the armies of lawyers who will take over negotiations and to finance a stream of ineffectual leaflets and posters justifying the TUC's inaction.

Yet this bankrupt package of surrender is being vaunted by 'left' bureaucrats as a recipe for struggle against Thatcher!

d councils of action

the way the unions operated changed.

Now the pressures of international capitalist competition leads the bosses to demand that union leaders join them in reasserting control over the shop floor. Do you want to see the model trade union the ruling class are aiming for? Look at the EPTU. The union machine is a major weapon in the hands of the employers. Electricians who don't want to have their cards revoked and lose their jobs can only protest at the scab leaders of their union if they wear masks to prevent being recognised! The bosses want that throughout the labour movement.

For the union leaders there is no half-way house between surrender and struggle — a fight to defend trade unions, and therefore, ultimately, against the system that demands the subordination of the unions. To see preserving the union as the major consideration is a recipe for surrender. It

leads to a policy of paying up when fines are imposed, and of disciplining militants, for fear of having heavier fines put on or union assets seized.

But the union treasury — so seldom used to aid militant struggle — is the God of the union bureaucrat. Already Jack Jones, one of the most left wing of union leaders, has been prepared to pay the Tory court's fine.

Trade Unionism, as a fighting organisation serving the interests of the rank and file, must be protected from the union bureaucrats as well as from the Tories.

We need a major offensive against the Industrial Relations Act from the rank and file — and the militant rank and file itself will have to organise that offensive.

Councils of Action, linking up militants in each area, are necessary. In some localities, Trades Councils or local Liaison Committees may be able to fill the functions of a



Jones: paid fine

Council of Action. If not, an independent Council of Action must be organised.

Had an organised, nationwide, militant rank and file movement existed last week there need have been no demobilisation when the Five were freed. We could have continued the fight — and we would have smashed the Act and the Government, too.

Now we need a drive for Councils of Action, an effort to develop a programme of

preparation, of action, and of struggle for democratisation within the labour movement.

There can be no compliance with any union leadership which revokes the credentials of a militant steward on the say-so of the bosses' Court. Strike action is the normal response to victimisation of militants.

As for the seizure of union funds — if they seize union funds, workers can seize factories. If the leaders won't fight, the rank and file must.

We must fight for an understanding in the Labour movement that the Tory monster will continually sprout new 'heads' or regrow old ones until we hit it at the heart and smash the system, replacing it with a working class socialist system. It is capitalism which is attacking trade unions. We must settle with capitalism, and arm the movement to defend trade unions with the understanding that it is either the laws of capitalism that are smashed or the unions.

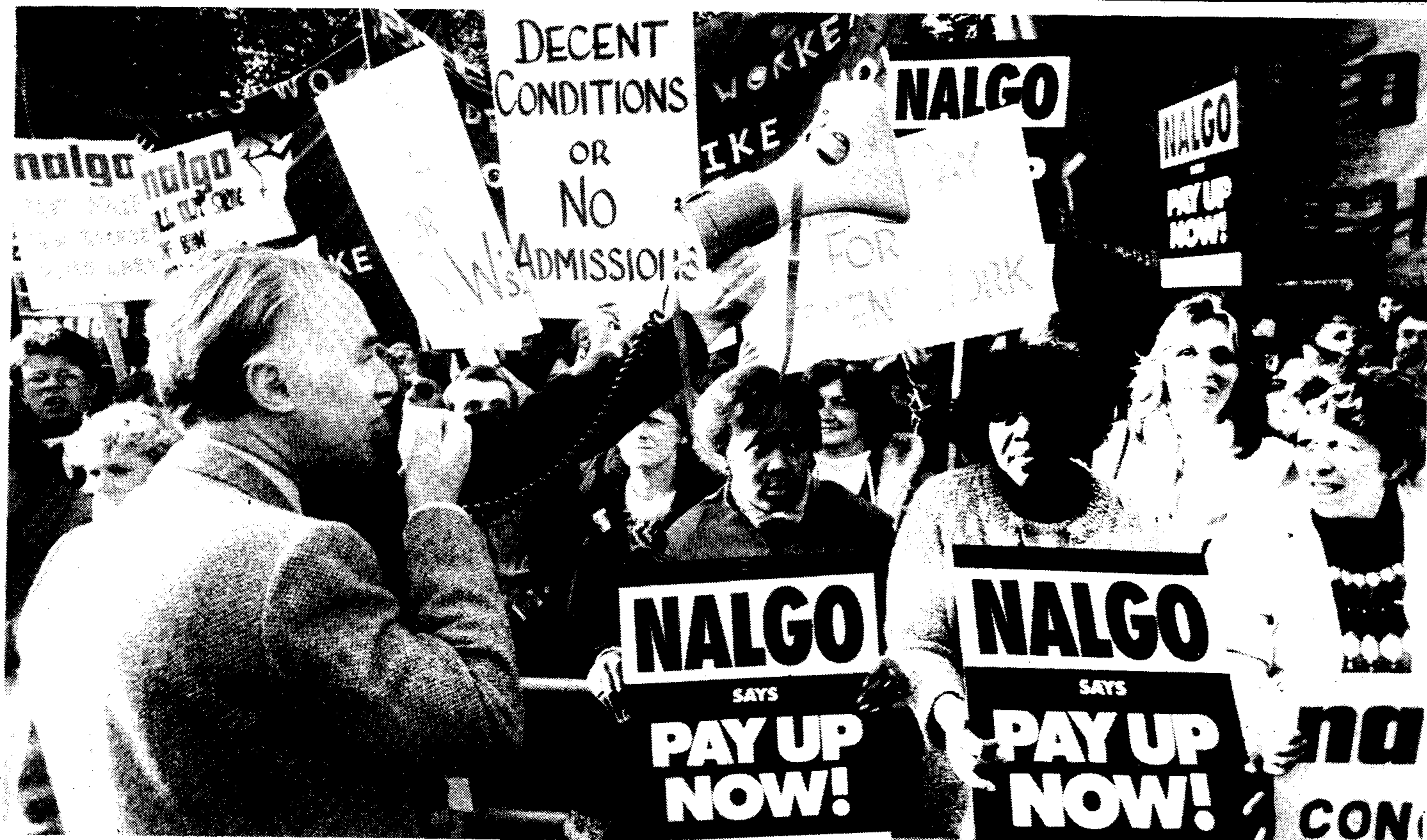


THE Cause of Ireland is the best left wing documentary on the Northern Ireland conflict. Perhaps uniquely among pro-Republican accounts of the Catholic revolt, it does not rely on the gross oversimplifications common to the pro-Republican left. The Cause of Ireland attempts to deal with the complexities and problems for revolutionary socialist politics in Ireland created by the Protestant working class's hostility to nationalism. The uncensored version of the film is to have its London Premiere at the Brixton Ritzy on Wednesday 7 December.

The film was shown by Channel Four on October 3, 1983, after the Independent Broadcasting Authority had ordered four cuts to be made. The uncensored version was shown at the Tyneside Film Festival, where it was awarded first prize — the Tyne Award. Geoff Bell and those involved in making The Cause of Ireland, will be present to discuss the issues raised in the film.

*'The Cause of Ireland' and 'A Free Country', at the Ritzy Cinema, Brixton Oval, Wednesday 7 December at 7.30 pm. £2.00 (plus 30p membership), £1.50 with UB40 or student card.

Discussion: The Left councils and council workers



The miserable record of many Labour councils in the residential social workers' dispute flows from the transformation of Lefts into administration

ISLINGTON

The GLC elections in May 1981 were followed by a concerted effort, organised around London Labour Briefing, to secure left borough councils in London after the elections in May 1982. The effort was fairly successful — most so in Islington, which since May 1982 has been probably the most left wing council in the country ('Fortress Islington', for London Labour Briefing).

But yet again the 'local government left' settled for a posture of general defiance, rather than a hard-headed fighting strategy.

Old guard

Islington had previously been the seat of the most hardened old-style right-wing Labour municipal corruption. New applicants to join the Labour Party were told that it was 'full up'. Nevertheless, new members did join, and eventually ousted the right wing after a battle through the 1970s. In the process, practically all the left-wing activists in the borough were drawn into the Labour Party. It culminated in the majority of the Labour councillors, and all three of the borough's Labour MPs, going over to the SDP. The Islington Labour Left was by no means incapable of fighting — so far as its politics permitted.

The 51 Labour councillors who swept the SDP out in May 1982 were almost all leftists, many of them leading figures in campaigns, trade unions, and tenants' organisations in the borough. A good many of them would consider themselves revolutionaries — a fair number quite close to SO.

But in the debate on the council manifesto, the 'no rate

In this second part of a discussion article, MARTIN THOMAS analyses the record of the Labour left in local government.

rise/confrontation strategy (moved by SO supporters) had been defeated. The manifesto eventually said (and this is not to caricature it) that Labour would not make cuts; that Labour did not like big rate rises; and if it came to the crunch, well then, there would be a problem, wouldn't there?

In July 1982 a joint meeting of the council Labour Group and of the Local Government Committee (the joint committee for council affairs of the Constituency Labour Parties within the borough) voted for a 'no rate rise' motion put by an SO supporter. Over the following months we struggled hard to build an effective confrontation strategy on the basis of that vote. It was soon clear, however, that most of the people who had voted for the motion did so as a gesture, and in reality saw rate rises as inevitable. In spring 1983 the local Labour Parties voted overwhelmingly to reject our confrontation strategy and support a 29.8% rate rise.

Council leader Margaret Hodge stressed:

Widespread

"The strategy we recommend is for this year only. What we do in future years will depend on which party is in government. We feel we can recommend a

rate for this year, but the return of a Labour Government will be critical for our future, as people democratically elected to implement a socialist manifesto. With a Tory Government returned, we may have to consider other strategies."

Gay rights

With a Tory government returned, however, in fact the Labour councillors have retreated into a defensive, cowed posture, with no strategy at all. Stands like the council's refusal to delete union-labour-only clauses from its contracts have been dropped. The council leadership talks about the need to concentrate on the council's 'respectable' achievements in areas like housing and play down issues like gay rights.

Among the dozens of leftists elected to the council in May 1982, by spring 1983 only two would still argue with conviction against rate rises. The council has become a school in reformism for the Islington new left.

It would be false, however, to think of the retreats as being imposed on the local labour movement by a bureaucratic elite. The discussion on the 1983-4 budget was pretty democratic. We were not suppressed. We lost the argument.

Nor is it a matter of the local Labour Party members being resolution-mongers rather than campaigners. Not so. If they see their way clear politically, the Islington Labour Parties are well capable of campaigning, as they did for example around the NHS pay dispute.

The problem is the lack of ideological clarity running through the whole labour movement, including the left.

THE GLC AND BRIEFING: 'STRIKING THE FLAG'

Meanwhile, within a year of the May 1981 election, the Labour GLC's fighting stance had already crumbled.

Two episodes were crucial: the GLC coming out against London Transport workers demanding a wage rise, and the GLC voting for a budget which included the fare increases ordered by the Law Lords.

Collapse

Again, the most serious thing was perhaps not the council's capitulation to the Tories. It was the capitulation of whole sections of the Labour Left to the council. Capitulating councillors can be dealt with. A moral collapse by a big chunk of the Left weakens the labour movement much more fatally.

Socialist Organiser wrote an open letter to London Labour Briefing:

"Against your own better judgement, you are now again allowing your policy to be decided for you by those who are — however reluctantly —

trapped in local government administration. This is no way to build and sustain a serious Labour Left.

"You talk about doing better next time, in a different fight later. But if the GLC left will not fight for its major manifesto plank, what will it fight for? Comrades, the class struggle is always now. The struggle now is decisive for organising and training a serious Left that can secure the socialist future.

"Pass up that struggle, strike your flag in deference to the established leaders who are refusing to give a militant lead, confine yourself now to talk of what you will do in another fight in the future, and unavoidably you contribute to perpetuating the vacuum of militant political leadership in the labour movement."

THE POLITICS OF GESTURE

Speaking to Socialist Organiser in June 1983, Ken Livingstone struck a very different note from in 1981.

"The GLC has a very limited range of responsibilities and powers, and nothing that the Labour GLC does challenges the structure of society. It raises issues, it promotes campaigns, it makes small shifts in wealth — they're all things that a Thatcher government could live with if the truth were told..."

"Local government is not going to bring down central government. It never has been a possibility. At the end of the day you run into the problem that if you openly try and challenge the law, your officers won't carry out your instructions..."

"There's a very limited amount you can do."

Ireland

Likewise, Graham Bash of London Labour Briefing, questioned by SO (6.1.83) on his balance sheet of the GLC, argued that:

"The GLC campaign has been a success. The GLC is generally seen to be under the control of the left. Ken Livingstone's role on the Irish issue, for example, has been absolutely crucial."

Ken Livingstone's willingness to speak out on issues like Ireland and gay rights does him credit, and is of benefit to the left. But it is radical-liberal politics, not socialist politics. In its heyday the Liberal Party had a fair number of radical mavericks prepared to speak out on such issues. It makes little sense to condemn such radicals bitterly for not being Marxists, or to deny the positive effects of their assaults on the establishment. It makes even less sense to accept such activities as a substitute for socialist politics.

The labour movement should not accept responsibility for running the bourgeois structures of local government on

the basis that by doing so it gets a chance to make a few radical gestures. For the movement to do so is to renounce socialist, class-struggle aims in favour of radical liberalism.

Moreover, the logic that led from the concept of the GLC as "a bastion of power for the labour movement" to the concept of it being essentially powerless but a good platform for political gestures, leads further still. From the gestures justifying the councillors' existence, the next step is for the councillors' existence to justify dropping the gestures. This logic can be seen operating in the GLC's decision to invite Royalty to open the Thames Barrier, for example.

THE LEFT COUNCILS AND COUNCIL WORKERS

Some of the radical-liberal stances taken are courageous and deserving of full support. But some are not.

The local government left's strategy, logically spelled out, is one of local councils creating a string of 'fortresses' or 'bastions of power', eventually to be crowned by an AES-type left Labour government, which will erode the power of capitalism in favour of 'popular planning'.

Industrial action

Industrial struggle does play a role in this strategy. Indeed, local government leftists sometimes give it an exaggerated role (to draw the conclusion that there is nothing much they can do unless the industrial 'big battalions' move first). The point, however, is that industrial action is seen as important in this strategy only to the extent that it promotes the creation of the 'bastions of power' — bringing down Tory governments, sustaining Labour governments, supporting councils and their initiatives, etc.

Industrial action that does not fit into this schedule can be, and sometimes is, regarded with hostility — as primitive trade-unionism disrupting the more important political fight for socialism. Left Labour councils' attitudes to their own workers — for example, the attitude of Haringey council to the recent NALGO dispute there, and the attitude of most left Labour councils to the residential care workers' dispute — illustrate this.

The logic is as follows. Until the industrial big battalions sweep away the Tory government, the Labour councils have to operate within limited resources. They should use those limited resources as best they can to the benefit of the working class. But under-fives, or old people, are more deserving claimants for these resources than reasonably well-waged council workers. Therefore, oppose the council workers.

In 1979 Camden council did make a separate settlement with its workers on their £60/35 hour claim. Ken Livingstone asked in SO, "Should Labour councils surrender their rights to negotiate wages to Tory-controlled national bodies?" But the left Labour councils have continued to do just that.

"General good"

And in July 1981, as mentioned above, the GLC came into direct conflict with LT underground workers over their pay claim. SO commented (11.7.81):

"The Left council has chosen to administer London Transport for the 'general good' (i.e. by cutting fares) and to cut loose from the interests of the tube workers who say that such improvements should not be at their expense..."

"Have Ken Livingstone and all the rest done a political about-turn? Have they swung to the right?"

"No. They are no different from what they were when they were elected. The Manifesto contains many good policies, many pro-working class measures, and a statement of the GLC's intention to take on the Tories. But the fact that it could all disappear like this when the tube workers' claim came up reveals a lack of a clear set of principles behind it."

"The issue is the same in essence as that involved in the decision of Lambeth, Camden, etc., to go for rate increases which cut living standards as a supposed way round a confrontation: the same choice is involved of administering an area as benevolently as possible within the limits and terms set by the Tory government. Choosing to be administrators, the Left are set on the road to ceasing to be militants."

Here the local government left strategy comes into direct opposition to class-struggle socialism. Socialism cannot be won by building up Labour bastions within capitalism, but only by the revolutionary overthrow of the profit system. The preparation for that overthrow comes principally through the self-education of the working class in struggle, not through the enlightening efforts of left-wing municipal administrators. The self-mobilisation of the working class cannot, and must not, be subordinated to the predetermined schedules of a 'political' elite.

Bastions

Trying to be 'bastions of power for the labour movement' within the limits granted them by the established arrangements, the GLC and other left councils have gone in heavily for local AESs, council aid to cooperatives, and decentralisation of services.

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GLC clashed with tube workers on pay: this lays no basis for union action on Tory fares policy

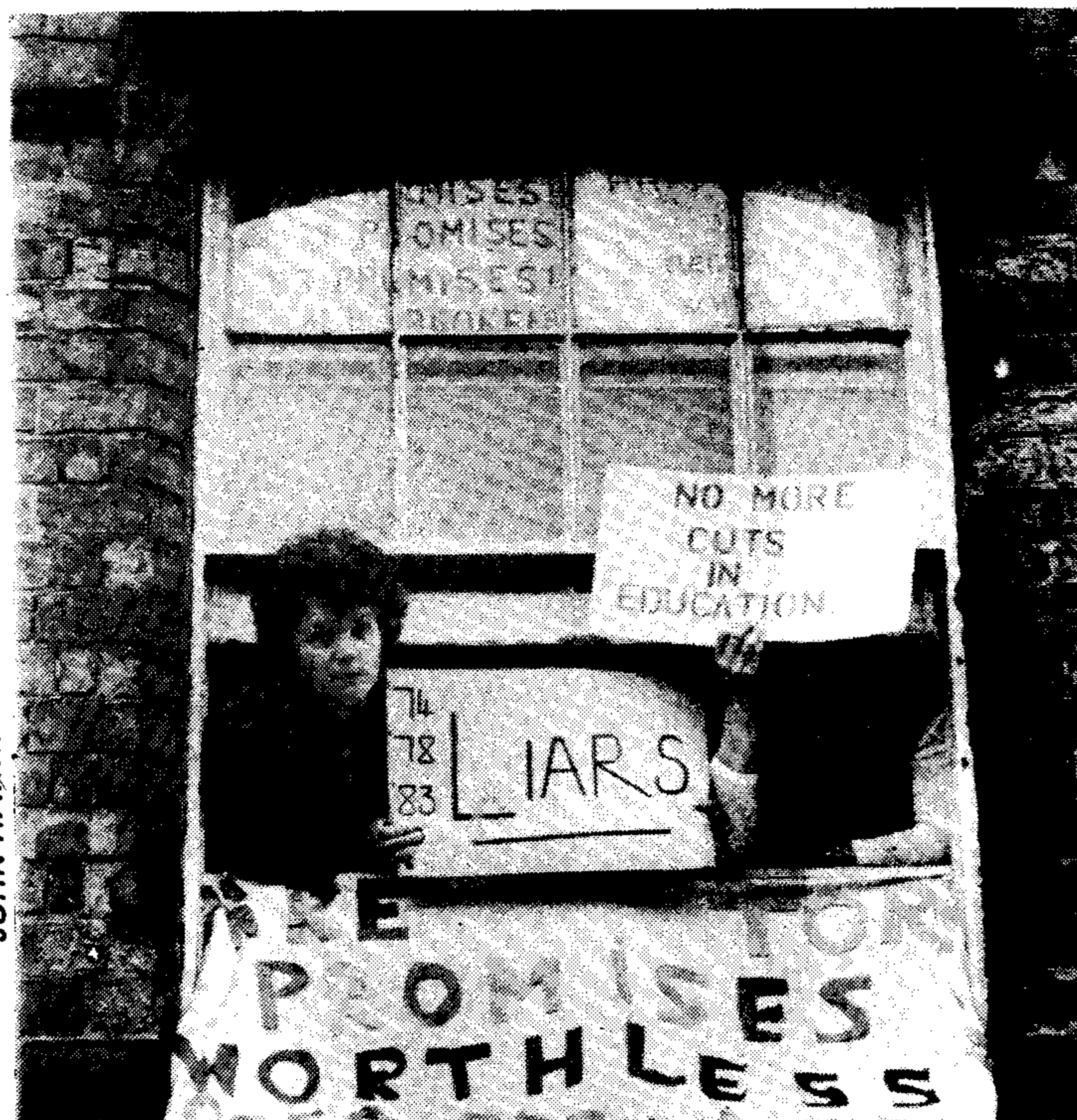
The practical effects of the 'local AESs' as regards jobs are minimal. Islington council has proudly plastered the borough with posters claiming to have created 125 jobs. A sign above the town hall entrance informs us that there are nearly 20,000 unemployed in Islington! The GLC's claim is even more derisory — 500 jobs created in the whole area.

This practical criterion is not all-important. Marxists have always argued that the immediate material gains of a struggle are not as important as the political gains, in terms of self-confidence, organisation, and awareness of the working class. No such gains have come from the local AESs. On the contrary.

The GLC's 'Greater London Enterprise Board' is based on a naive, ill-defined push for more 'worker involvement in management'. They deplore the fact that in this respect, 'British industry is backward... compared even with countries such as Japan (!)... lags far behind European industry. The GLEB concept of Enterprise Planning attempts to remedy some of these deficiencies by offering employers an incentive to enter into joint planning with their employees...

It also, of course, offers employees an incentive to enter into joint planning with their employers — to cooperate in redundancies and wage cuts for the sake of saving some jobs with GLC aid — or to become employers themselves, through a co-operative, and make their own redundancies and wage cuts.

In a recent polemic in Socialist Review, GLC officials John Palmer and Hilary Wainwright offer as their best example of how the GLC jobs strategy can work, Lee Coopers in Romford, where 140 women were sacked... but ten of them formed a co-op with GLC help. That's a claimed success. The admitted failures include the Third Sector co-op in Willesden. This co-op was formed with less than a third of the previous workforce when the previous owners, GEC, wanted to close down. It



Tory councils cut services: 'Left' rate increases cut living standards

then collapsed in a welter of corruption.

To improve services in their 'bastions' or 'fortresses' of socialism, the left councils have gone for decentralisation. Done within a strictly limited budget, this is likely to lead the councils into conflict with the unions.

Decentralisation is desirable. (For that matter, co-ops are not always to be condemned out of hand). But the left councils propose it, not as a part of a programme for improved services which has as its centre a serious class struggle for more resources, but as an alternative to that struggle. Some leftists explicitly define decentralisation as a preliminary to the fight against central government: the existing services, they say, are so bad that no-one will defend them; therefore, they must be improved first before we can confront the Tories. For the council workers, this generally comes down to the message: you must work harder if your jobs are to be saved. Not a very socialist message.

In contrast to their frequent impatience with their lower-paid workers, the left councils have been very respectful to their top-paid permanent officials. Their usual way of dealing with them is to create more £15,000-a-year jobs and fill them with socialists. Unless these new socialist officials are put onto the high salary scales, the councillors explain, they won't have the necessary authority. The irony of paying people £15,000 a year to promote socialism, and this at a time when the councils are being far from generous to their lower-paid workers, seems to escape them.

Essentially the leftist councillors are applying an attitude to the top officials of 'if you can't beat them, join them' — and dragging a lot of socialist academics and intellectuals into that attitude with them.

Nowhere has a left council sought to develop a joint campaign of agitation with the council unions against the power of the senior officials — for measures of workers' control within the council departments, for equalisation of wages, etc.

The left councils have also developed a virtual new bureaucracy on the fringes of the labour movement: law centres, unemployed centres, permanently-staffed community groups of one sort or another. On the basis of these, a 'community politics' has developed which largely consists of these paid officials talking to each other. To have the paid officials is desirable, just as it is desirable for trade unions to have paid officials. But a struggle against bureaucracy is necessary too, just as in the trade unions.

Continued next week

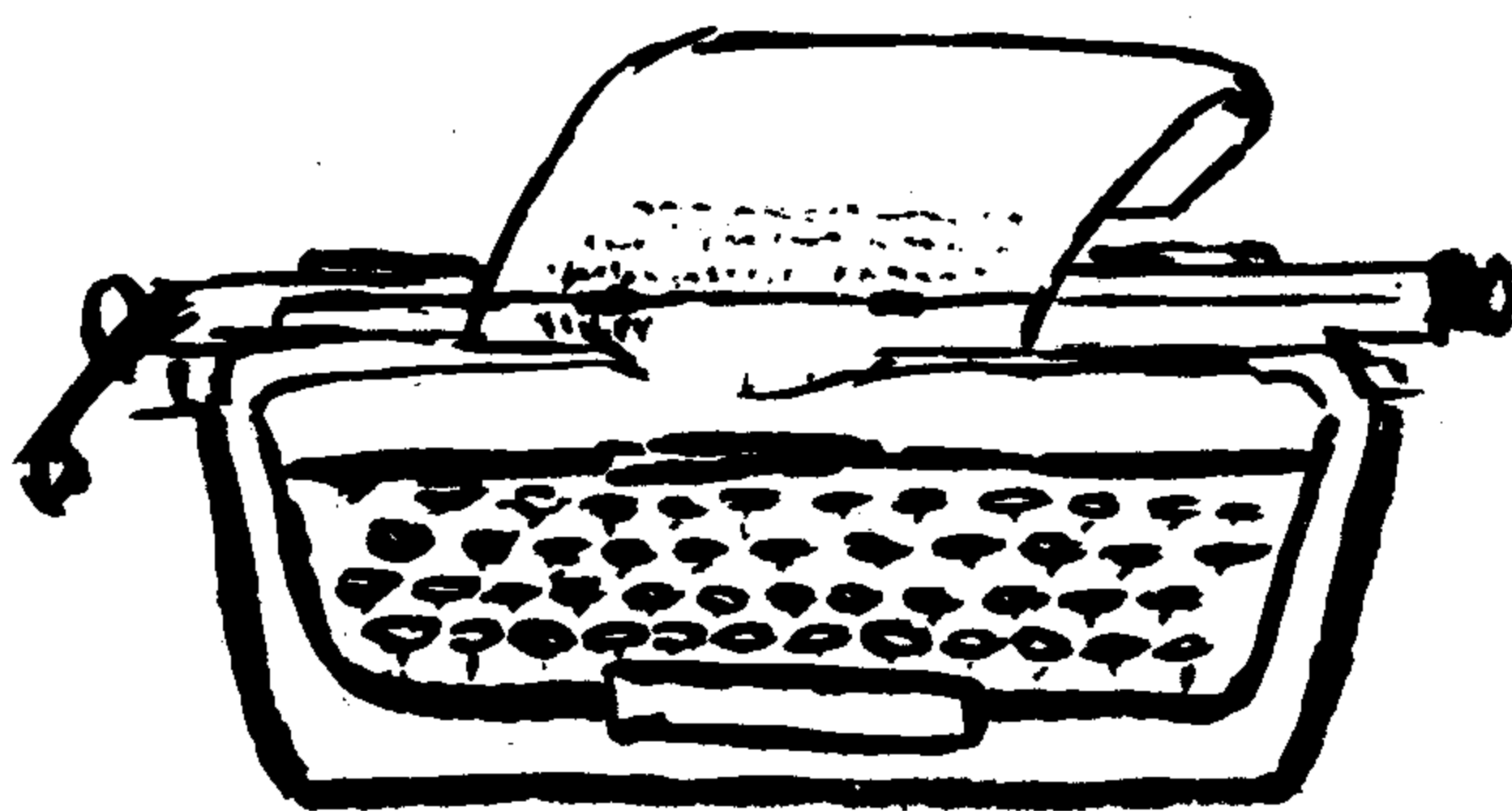
Diary of a People's Marcher

50p
How politics were kept out of the People's March

by Satvinder Singh and Tony Purtil
Introduction by Jeremy Corbyn, MP

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Writeback



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

Tribute to Peter Sedgwick

ON Saturday November 19, about 70 of Peter Sedgwick's friends gathered in Leeds to pay tribute to him.

Peter had from his earliest political days at Oxford possessed a huge shambling intellect livened by flashes of gentle wit. His tragic death robbed the British labour movement of one of its most original and humane thinkers.

His articles on George Orwell provided many in the Marxist movement in the late 1960s with a new vision of that great writer, rescuing his works from the hands of the anti-communists.

In his translations of Victor Serge and in his struggles to

bring this strange libertarian communist figure more to the centre of the Marxist stage, Peter was positing his own vision of the struggle for socialism.

Peter Sedgwick was an enemy of humbug and rhetoric. He took on many of the puff adders of fashionable socialism, in particular in the field of psychiatry, and effectively exposed them.

Although for many years a member of International Socialism (now the Socialist Workers Party), he was never a party hack. He once stood up at a public meeting to congratulate Tony Cliff on the publication of his second volume on Lenin, saying that it was the best piece of autobiography that Tony Cliff had ever written.

Unions

Many at the meeting paid tribute to Peter from the trade unions, the universities, and the women's movement.

I will remember him last a few short months ago on the Aire Valley Yarns demonstrations. He always had a kind word for his many friends in differing political movements. He will be sadly missed.

GARTH FRANKLAND, Leeds.

World wide class struggle

JOHN Lowery (SO156) does a great service to those of us who have long sought in vain for any clear political basis to the incoherent tirades of SO's "anti-imperialist", "internationalist" critics.

Comrade Lowery spells it out: "To focus on the relationship between the working class and the capitalist class in Argentina is to miss out the whole role of imperialism..." At last we have it.

The crucial question in Argentina (and, presumably any other supposedly "underdeveloped" country — which Argentina isn't anyway, but that's another matter) is not the class struggle between labour and capital, but the relationship between nations of the "developed" and "underdeveloped" worlds.

That's what is meant by "an analysis of the struggle worldwide", and "a struggle on the world scale against imperialism".

This sort of pseudo-internationalism has nothing to do with Lenin or Trotsky, who started from a world overview, but invariably focused their conclusions on the class struggle within both imperialist nations.

Lowery's approach has much more in common with "development" theoreticians like Baran, Frank and most explicitly Wallerstein. It leads directly to popular frontism (often under the guise of the "anti-imperialist united front") and is ideally suited to Stalinist/State Capitalist "solutions" for the third world.

It is precisely this kind of "anti-imperialism" that Stanley C. Raptis was debunking (SO155) and methinks Harry Sloan (SO 156) doth protest too much.

JIM DENHAM
Birmingham

No point in struggle?

THE letter by Colin Foster in SO 155 states that "the 'balance of forces' in Argentina depends entirely on the development of the socialist working class movement — and on its ability to focus ruthlessly on its own class interests and programme, rather than subordinating those to the 'balance of forces' between camps in world politics" — these camps being categorised earlier as 'imperialism' and 'the masses'.

He also states that it is not sensible to try "to deny the boost that the war gave to the Tories by saying that a working class comeback is still a threat to them."

Therefore, following his own reasoning, there is no point in struggling in any way on a national or international level against one's own ruling class or against imperialism — a concept he seems to deny in its entirety.

He describes a situation frozen at one point in time with a mere possibility of mobilising at a national level to better the situation by replacing military dictatorship by bourgeois civilian governments.

Does he not realise that both these forms of government represent the capitalist ruling class? (Or does he deny the existence of capitalism?)

What he offers is nothing but reformism — he describes in

Fulham tenants' fight

COUNCIL tenants on a housing estate in Fulham, which the local council proposed to sell off voted last week to stay on the estate and continue their campaign to force the council to modernise it.

Hammersmith and Fulham Council proposed last week to sell the estate with vacant possession to a property developer and use the capital receipt to finance improvements on another run-down estate in the Borough.

The Tenants' Association discussed the proposals at a packed meeting attended by 70-80 people on Monday night and voted overwhelmingly to stay on the estate and fight for the modernisation they were promised as long ago as 1981.

Local Labour Councillor Ian Harrison, told the meeting that the sale would not benefit any of the residents of the estate.

They would be moved off to other estates, many of which suffer similar problems, and it would take five to ten years to find them all new homes given the severe housing shortage in the Borough.

He quoted from a Housing Committee report which stated that the demolition of two blocks on the estate (and there are 9) "would mean the loss of 69 units and would probably require two years to decant, during which time the large sections of boarded up units on the estate would have a very depressing effect."

Councillor Harrison condemned the proposals as "an attempt to gentify Fulham". He said, "The Tories are saying there is not enough money to provide decent homes for the ordinary working people of Fulham but there is enough to provide expensive flats for the Chelsea set, who they would like to see moving in. It's a sort of class apartheid and it is not surprising the tenants will have no truck with it."

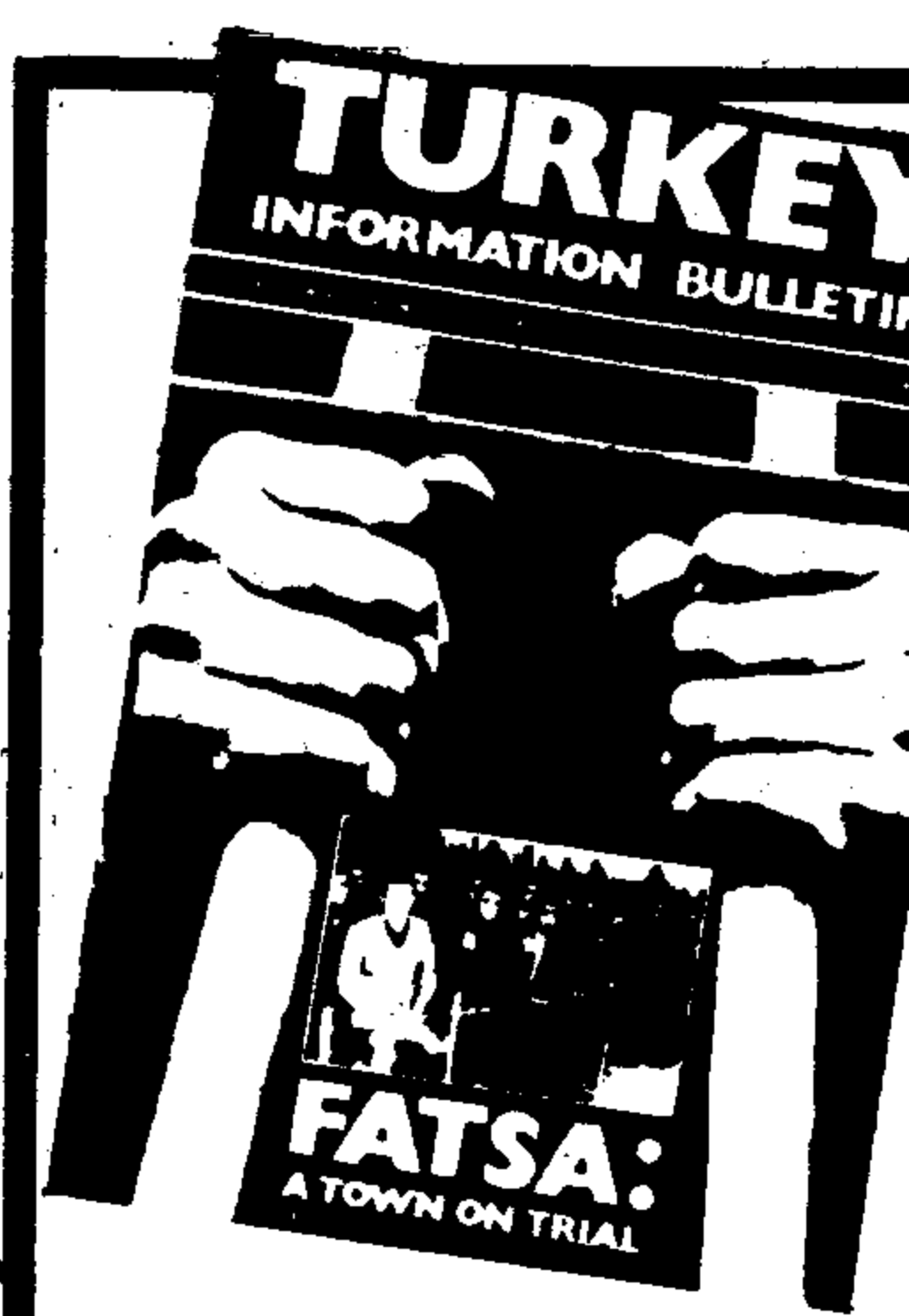
Labour will be calling for the resignation of Tory Housing Chairman when the issue is discussed at the Housing Committee this Tuesday and at the full Council meeting on Wednesday.

IAN HARRISON

order to accept. He embraces a form of nationalism which by not subordinating its own interests to the needs of the masses at an international level is no better than the bland statements of any of the right wing hacks of the Labour Party's Healeys or Hattersleys.

His arguments are mere casuistry and should be rejected out of hand.

RON HOGG
Garforth



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

Socialist ORGANISER

Where we stand

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Freeze rent and rates.

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

*The capitalist police are an enemy for the working class. Support all demands to weaken them as a bosses' striking force: dissolution of special squads (SPG, Special Branch, MI5, etc), public accountability, etc.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Platform of Cannon-Trotsky faction

RECENTLY Socialist Organiser reported the launching of Socialist Action, a public faction of the American Socialist Workers Party in opposition to the bureaucratic SWP leadership (headed by Jack Barnes) and its headlong abandonment of Trotskyism in favour of Castro's Stalinist politics.

In this situation it may be useful for readers to see how other opponents of the Barnes leadership have voiced their criticism of the SWP's trade union orientation and international politics. One grouping which raised such positions in particularly sharp form - and were summarily expelled in 1982 for the 'crime' of forming an (internal) faction - is based in Minneapolis around veteran Teamster militant Harry De Boer.

We reprint here the declaration of the 'Cannon-Trotsky Faction'.

1. We call for a return to party democracy and an end to the repressive methods carried out by the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party against the membership. Such methods should not exist in a revolutionary party.

National Committee elections are rigged. Opposition political tendencies are outlawed. Policy decisions are determined by the leadership in secret and not submitted to the members for approval. Critics of the leadership's policies are driven out of the party, threatened or put on

trial. All key local branch decisions are made by the national leadership rather than by the branches.

The control commission, which is supposed to defend party democracy, is used by the leadership to terrorise and silence any opposition.

We call on the party leadership to lift the threats made at the February plenum against the 12 party members who were told they had forfeited their right of membership. We call for a massive effort to re-recruit the working class fighters who quit the Socialist Workers Party over the last five years, largely because of the party's policies in the labour movement and its methods of treating comrades.

2. We believe in the need for a socialist America and world. We are supporters and defenders of the Fourth International. In the current world economic crisis, there are growing opportunities among our co-workers, but because of the leadership's policies, those opportunities are being squandered. The party leadership has dropped the transitional programme. It is in the process of revising Lenin, and it is abandoning the theories of Trotsky. We call for a return to revolutionary theory and method.

3. We advocate that the party fight on behalf of the workers. The party's methods in the labour movement today are self-defeating. The leadership encourages members on the job to quickly reveal their membership in the party, leading to wholesale victimisations. The leadership counsels party members to abstain from participating and leading on-the-job struggles, further isolating our members.

The leadership encourages members to lecture co-workers on the party's policies, which only antagonises workers. The party leadership systematically yanks members out of workplaces before they can get established, transferring them from city to city so that they have no bases anywhere and little understanding or connections with the class they seek to organise.

Loyal party members and long time party builders who do not take industrial jobs are driven out of the party. The party leaders have little understanding of trade union principles. They advocate crossing picket lines and did so themselves during the strike by the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organisation (PATCO). A party member who advocated using union buses for a union demonstration was expelled.

The party leaders no longer seriously promote a labour party in the United States. Despite the worsening layoffs, the party leadership does not have a plan to organise the unemployed.

Today, the party leadership has lost confidence in the workers. Under the leadership of the party's founder, James P. Cannon, the party had a reputation as a fighter for the working class. We call for a return to that tradition.

4. We call for a return to workers' internationalism. The party leadership opposed demonstrations in support of the Polish workers, at a time Solidarity desperately needed such support. We call for unconditional defence of the Cuban revolution against American imperialism, but we oppose the party leadership cover-up of Cuba's major shortcomings.

Cuba supported the Polish bureaucracy's crackdown on the Polish workers and the imposi-

tion of martial law. Cuba's internal regime is undemocratic. The party leadership's practice of cover-up betrays the Cuban revolution.

5. We call for an end to sectarianism in the Socialist Workers Party. Sectarism put their own narrow interests above the workers. The party leadership is more interested in pushing its sectarian line on Cuba than building a mass anti-war movement opposed to US intervention in the Caribbean, including Cuba. The party leadership follows a sectarian course in the trade unions, women's rights movement and the movements of the national minorities, including Black, Chicano and Indian.

6. The grouping responsible for the party's disastrous policies and methods is led by Jack Barnes. These policies continually zig-zag. The grouping is a clique, loyal to Barnes rather than a political perspective.

It is a secret faction that has never spelled out its positions before a convention, merely carried them out afterwards.

The Barnes faction has no experience or base in the labour movement and none of its leaders have proven themselves in a working class battle. Virtually all of the party's older leadership are in opposition to Barnes. These older members are the ones with trade union experience who have been tested in struggle. Not surprisingly the Barnes leadership is trying to drive them out of the party.

7. It is time to fight back. Despite the party crisis, we are confident the American workers and the world working class will win. If you believe in the need for building a revolutionary party, we encourage you to join our faction.

Agenda

LABOUR Campaign for Gay Rights. Contact: Mike, 659 2938 or Bob 341 0666.

GAY YS. Contact: Martin, 263 9484.

STOP Privatisation of BT. Public meeting called by Islington Labour Parties. Monday December 5, 7.30pm. Central Library,

Fieldway Crescent, N5. Speakers include Jeremy Corbyn MP, Jack Campbell and POEU Executive member.

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

Saturday 17 December. Coventry Socialist Organiser Christmas Party and video showing of 'Framed Youth'. Vauxhall Tavern, Days Lane, Hillfields. 7.30pm Video and discussion. 8.30 pm Buffet and Disco. Bar Extension applied for.

HOUNSLOW Socialist Organiser day school. Sunday December 4, 12.00-5.00 at Hanworth Labour Hall. Includes: 'Politics of SO', The Parliamentary Road, The AES, and The Working Class and Revolutionary Politics.

SCOTLAND

Edinburgh. Contact: Dave, 229-4591. SO is sold at Muirhouse (Sat. 10.30-12.30) and at the First-of-May bookshop, Candlemaker Row.

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

NORTH WEST

Hyndburn. Contact: Accrington 395753

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

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

Rochdale. Contact: c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Stoke. Contact: Paul Barnett, 328198.

Stockport. Contact: 40 Fox St, Edgley. SO is sold at Stockport Market. (Saturday, 11.00-12.30).

Where to find Socialist Organiser

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

YORKSHIRE AND NORTH EAST

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

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

Harrogate. Contact: Mark, 522542. SO is sold at Harrogate Market (Wednesday, Friday, Saturday lunchtimes).

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

Hull. Contact: c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

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

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

Glossop Rd. Sunderland. Contact: c/o Durham.

York. Contact: 414118. SO is sold at the University (Friday mornings), Coney St. (Saturday mornings), the dole office (most mornings) and at Community Bookshop.

WALES AND WEST

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Cardiff. Contact: 492988.

Taunton. Contact: c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

MIDLANDS

Birmingham. Contact: Godfrey Webster, 169 Barclay Rd., Bearswood, Smethwick. SO is sold at the Other Bookshop.

Coventry. Contact: Keith, 75623. SO is sold at the Wedge Bookshop.

Leicester. Contact: Phil, 857908. SO is sold at Blackthorne

Books, High Street. Northampton. Contact: Ross, 713606.

Nottingham. Contact: Pete, 585640. SO is sold at the Victoria Centre, (Saturday, 11 to 1) and at Mushroom Bookshop, Heathcote St.

SOUTH

Basingstoke. Contact: c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

SO is sold at Good News Bookshop, London Road.

Oxford. Contact: c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8. SO is sold at Tesco's, Cowley Rd., (Fridays 5 to 7), Cornmarket (Saturdays, 11 to 1) and at EOA Books, Cowley Road.

LONDON AREA

Brent [and NW]. Contact: Mick, 624 1931.

Camden. Contact: Mike, 267 4806.

Hackney. Contact: 348 5941 or 802 0771.

Hounslow. Contact: Chris, 898 6961.

Islington. Contact: Nik, 278 1341.

Orpington. Contact: Siu Ming, 691 1141.

Putney. Contact: Tom, 789 7587.

Richmond. Contact: Nick, 876 6715.

SE London. Contact: Siu Ming, 691 1141.

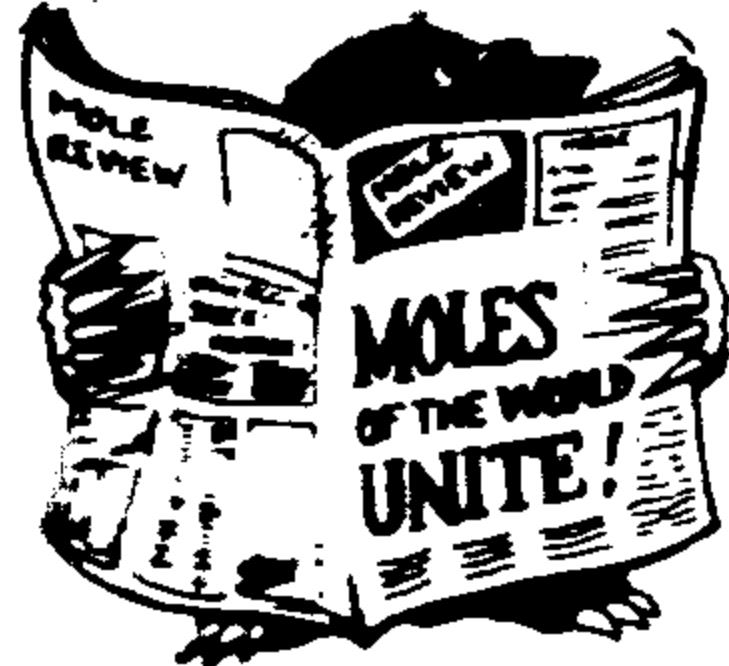
Southwark Lambeth. Contact: Jeff, 635 8468.

Tower Hamlets. Contact: Susan, 377 1328.

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

London Educationals: State and Revolution; The Russian Revolution; The USSR and Stalinism; Ireland: Why is the left divided? The above are a planned series taking place on Fridays, 6pm at the LSE, East Building, 1st Floor, room E196.

Discussions on Imperialism Thursdays, 7pm, at 214, Sickert Court, London N1.



Official badge of the 'Save the Mole' campaign. 25p or £2 for ten, from N. Barstow 165 Liverpool Rd, London N1.

'Standard' review shows why 'Nasties' Bill is not so Bright!

Censorship is bad, but 'video nasties' are worse. That's the attitude of many people whose normal stance is libertarian.

The revelation in a recent poll that four out of every ten children have seen a 'video nasty' has added weight to the demand for strict control. For it seems to be self-evident that video nasties inevitably corrupt and brutalise people, acclimatise people to the unspeakable; that a diet of horrors must dehumanise to one degree or another. Video nasties are the modern equivalent of Ancient Rome's savage gladiatorial games.

The reaction against 'video nasties', however, threatens to inaugurate a new age of general censorship in Britain. Graham Bright's Bill, now before Parliament with government backing, will bring in general censorship. Isn't there a better way to control the video nasties?

When Alexander Walker, the respected film critic of the London Evening Standard, raised the alarm about this last week, he found himself subject to censorship. His article appeared in the first (early afternoon) edition of the Standard last Thursday, 17th, but was ripped out of the subsequent editions by order of the top bosses.

We reprint Walker's piece here because it is an important article and because we share his alarm.

SO YOU think "The medium is the message", if you think at all, that is, these days of video overkill when pictures are all that fill the minds of the people.

But "The medium is the monster" is the revisionist message that David Cronenberg's new horror film 'Videodrome' brings to the big screen, even though I guess it's also available in a cassette format you play at home on your small screen.

If so, the message will be reinforced, for Videodrome is all about the power of cassettes not only to corrupt and deprave, but to melt, eviscerate, digest and otherwise do serious damage to the health of the viewer.

Fortune favours the exploitative. And the very week after the Graham Bright Show in Parliament, when MPs gave convincing evidence of how little they know about moving images and how much they fear, here is a film-maker's timely argument in favour of one of the most restrictive and least necessary Bills ever considered by a British Parliament — the Video Recordings Bill that Mr. Bright is sponsoring.

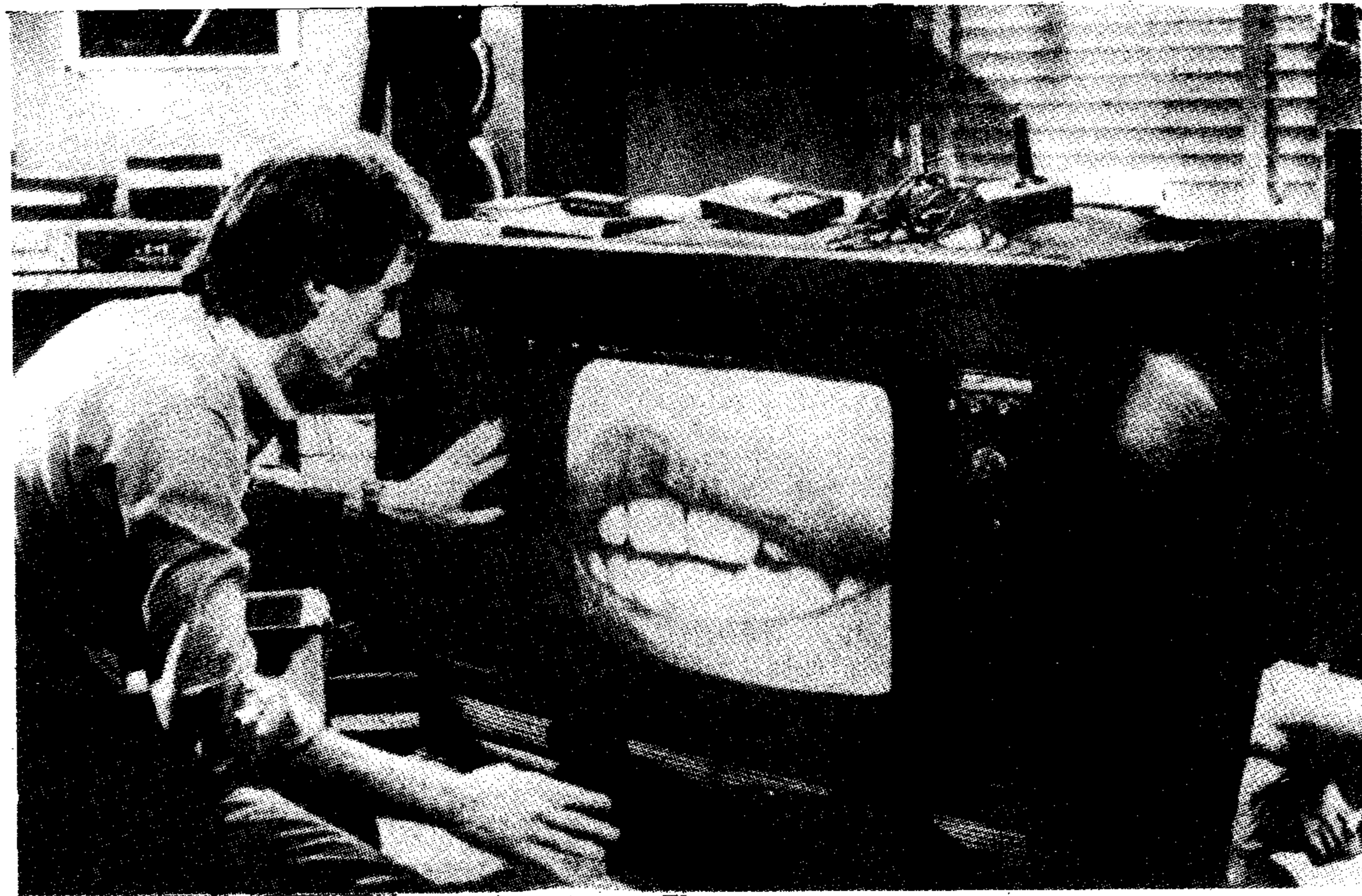
Hero-victim

Thrills first, arguments later. The hero-victim (James Woods) of Videodrome is a Canadian cable TV operator doing what sounds like very responsible work with a service relayed to TV watchers called Civic Vision. His own home life, though, is a mess; his morality is even grubbier.

To boost revenues, he scavenges through the satellite transmissions from other countries looking for new video shows to buy, lease or, preferably, steal.

Up comes a show called Videodrome, apparently

A scene from "Videodrome" — ironically not released on video cassettes; the style is anarchic, the argument reactionary; but should it be censored?



Debbie Harry in 'Videodrome'

become fearsome as well. For the cable operator gets hooked on video cassettes of Videodrome and starts hallucinating, imagining he's a human VCR and slipping a cassette into an aperture that appears like some obscene stigmata in his tummy.

Yes, we're into familiar Cronenberg country here. This film-maker feels homeliest when next to the mortuary slab, poking and pulling at the innards and stirring up the viscera. The hero is soon stashing a gun inside his guts — and pulling it out, all gobby and gooey, when he goes berserk and starts a moral clean-up of Those Who Would Take Over Our Minds.

Like so many of these horror movies made by cult directors, the style is agreeably anarchic, the argument disconcertingly reactionary.

Not so disconcerting, though, as Mr Bright's Bill to impose a super-censorship not only on video cassettes in Britain, but on film shows in the cinemas too.

For make no mistake: this Bill, a measure being rushed through Parliament in reaction to an artificially created moral panic about what children saw, see or might see on video cassettes, is not going to differentiate in its effects, whatever its intentions, between what we can currently see in public cinemas and what we might wish to show in the privacy of our homes.

Reputable

The British Videogram Association, a reputable trade body, anxious only to keep their counters clean for selling the goods across them, have succeeded in calling into being all the latent desires endemic in the English national character to impose one's own moral outlook on one's neighbour's private habits.

There were originally only

TV review

Milking the stereotypes

Alan Clinton, (Chief Whip, Islington Council), reviews 'Struggle' (Channel Four TV, Sunday evening, November 27).

SUPPOSE that the national government was taken over by a group of humourless ideologues dedicated to an experiment in social engineering which included the large-scale transfer of resources from poor to rich, and the building of armaments up to a suicidal level?

Suppose this group expressed its philosophy only through clichés derived from the justly neglected works of the long forgotten economist Adam Smith, as interpreted by dubious living academics such as Friedman and Hayek?

Suppose that all this was combined with the deliberate inducement of mass unemployment and the exacerbation of social misery and repression?

Suppose that the mass media greeted all these horrifying policies with virtually unanimous support and described all those who argued for active opposition or for other policies as evil or stupid or violent?

What do you think would be the response to this of the enlightened Guardian-reading (and writing) elements of our society? How would they confront such an appalling prospect?

Yes, you've guessed it. They would launch a relentless attack on any political ideas or actions that suggested that there might be alternatives to Smith and Hayek.

First of all they would attack them as dangerous and subversive. They would try to persuade the average tertiary-educated mortgage holder that though the yellow press was crude, those who they attacked were dangerous and subversive, making it impossible for people to sleep easy in their beds.

If these methods did not prove entirely efficacious, they would try to reinforce the ideas they had established by using the merest nod to reactionary prejudice in order to fan the flames of ridicule and satire.

Such is the basis of the new 'sit com' series on socialists in the 'Town Hall' by Peter Jenkins. Through it the enlightened and the cynical — prepared no doubt with a few hand me down bits of reaction — are invited to laugh at the earnest and the committed.

Of course it cannot be denied that there is plenty to laugh at. There is always something faintly ridiculous in seeing the middle class and the educated trying to 'do good'. There are plenty of gestures made by those who started as student activists which

are silly and incongruous, but do little harm.

Those of us who hold up all our political activities and ideas to public gaze do sometimes make stupid mistakes which can be subject to ridicule of the sort exploited by Mr Jenkins.

After this I suppose we must expect to see every tiny faux pas developed out of all recognition. Every single error can then be adapted into a system of prejudices and attitudes not normally thought acceptable in the media, perhaps especially on Channel 4.

So in this series we see as Council Leader a rather half-witted person in a college scarf and cloth cap who talks in left wing clichés and knows nothing either about the working class or the concerns of rate payers, tenants and the like.

His followers include a humourless feminist, and an anti-racist black character who cannot possibly be taken seriously. There is even a pet ideologue and an old Labour stalwart, confused but loveable.

All other working class characters having this mediated to them through the Sun and the Mail regard everything left-wing councillors do as wicked or stupid beyond belief. This applies particularly when they want to change anything.

Chauffeur

Thus the Leader's chauffeur wants to retain his servile status and the old lady protests with mute incomprehension when he is deployed to delivering her meals on wheels.

This disgust at left wing councillors who attempt to reverse the true order of things is stated by the only articulate working class figure to appear so far, who of course is the leader of the Council's Tory group.

This set of notions could easily develop through a further set of episodes. Every possible stereotype could be developed and milked dry.

There is a lot more to be made out of the assertion that left wing councillors have no concern whatever for rate payers. There is of course much to be said on relations with the trade unions, who make up ludicrous demands just in order to see councillors squirm in satisfying them. Issues like anti-racism and gay rights are certain to raise a laugh when they are just mentioned.

Of course it is not easy for a socialist councillor to respond to all this. We must be able to laugh at ourselves, and we cannot possibly deny that many of the jokes at our expense are by no means wide of the mark.

Yet will we just be accused of being humourless ideologues ourselves if we complain that satire and ridicule has been added to all the weapons ranged against us?

Equal Opportunities Day
for Lesbians and Gay Men
in Nottingham
Saturday 3 December 1983
9.30am - 4.00 pm
International Community
Centre, Mansfield Road
Admission free
Creche provided

SCIENCE

By Les Hearn

ANTIBIOTIC drugs have probably saved millions of lives since their discovery, but nevertheless they have their drawbacks.

Firstly, they affect organisms that may be harmless or even beneficial, as well as disease-causing ones (pathogens). Secondly, pathogens can often acquire resistance to antibiotics, a fact which can endanger the patient and others.

It would therefore be nice to know that other defences against infection existed, and it now seems that one of those defences may well be the viruses — objects of fear in their own right.

Viruses are the simplest forms of 'life'. They consist of only a few types of molecule, albeit large ones. One molecule is the DNA (or sometimes RNA, unlike all other living things) that carries the code for the handful of protein molecules that make up the rest of the virus. These protein molecules form a protective coat for the DNA by fitting together to make regular geometric shapes, so that viruses are more like crystals than any other form of matter.

All viruses are parasites which operate in a very effective way. They enter a 'host' cell and take over its protein-making machinery, so that it starts making the virus's proteins. The virus's DNA is also copied many times.

Proteins

The proteins and DNA then assemble themselves into new viruses, rather like crystals forming in a solution. The new viruses are then released from the dying host cell to infect new cells.

Viruses cannot infect just any type of cell. Each species of virus has a single or main species of victim, though some can also infect other species. Thus, there are many different animal viruses, plant viruses, and... bacterial viruses.

These last are called the bacteriophages (bacteria-eaters) or 'phages'. Soon after their discovery in 1915, research was under way to see if they could be used to combat infections.

This research was rather inconclusive, and the arrival of the antibiotics drew attention away from phages, but now some of that research has been repeated under more reliable conditions (reported by H W Smith and M B Huggins in the Journal of

General Microbiology).

Smith and Huggins looked at viruses that attacked certain pathogens of the gut. These were strains of E. coli, a normally harmless bacterium that inhabits our guts in billions.

Such strains, known as E. coli-K (for 'killer') can cause a severe, even fatal, diarrhoea in animals and humans.

This they do by producing a poisonous chemical in their outer coating which causes a severe reaction in the body of their host.

Smith and Huggins identified phages which attacked only E. coli-K and then gave these phages to calves and piglets together with E. coli-K in doses high enough to cause death. But whereas animals given just E. coli-K died, the ones given phages as well recovered quickly from their diarrhoea.

Two other important discoveries were made at the same time.

It was found that, like antibiotic treatment, phage therapy sometimes encouraged the development of resistant bacteria, but these were much less dangerous to the host than ordinary E. coli-K. This is probably due to the way the phages attack the bacteria.

They seem to recognise E. coli-K by the very same toxic molecule that causes the illness of the host. Change that molecule slightly, and the phages no longer recognise it, but neither will it affect the animal's body in the same way as before.

Antibiotic-resistant bacteria are usually just as deadly, though.

The second finding was that samples of faeces from phage-treated animals did not cause illness in other animals, even though they contained enough E. coli-K to cause a fatal infection. This was because they also contained the phages that could deal with the bacteria.

So, unlike antibiotic therapy, where each infected animal must be treated separately, phages can spread just like the original infection.

The only drawback with phage therapy is that each species of phage is effective for only one strain of pathogen. So we will have to discover lots of phages, or even make them (a job for the genetic engineers).

But if phage therapy can be applied to other types of infection, it could even prove more revolutionary than antibiotics.

Now, all we need are viruses against viruses...

TGWU must back Carousel struggle!

By Stan Crooke

AT THE time of writing, the NGA, one of the smallest unions in the country, faces fines of at least £175,000 for breaking the Tories' anti-union laws, confiscation of its assets, the possibility of being sued by half a dozen newspapers, and court cases against many of its members for alleged offences on the picket line.

In stark contrast to this, Britain's largest union, the TGWU, is failing miserably to provide anything like adequate support for the strikers at the Carousel factory in Glasgow's East End, who have been fighting for over

five months now for union recognition, better working conditions, and reinstatement.

Last week, TGWU officials informed strikers that they could no longer use a local shop as their strike headquarters, on the grounds that the union could not afford the bills.

Millions

The TGWU has millions of pounds in assets. The shop was rent-free. Rates were only £17 a week, and those may be waived by the local council.

But now the TGWU officials have withdrawn the keys to the shop. Not that the strikers ever had these keys in the first place.

The lease for the shop was not taken out in the name of any of the strikers, but of a member of the local TGWU Youth Advisory Committee.

On the picket line, the situation is no better. The most recent of the weekly mass pickets had four shop stewards from Yarrow's plus three others. TGWU officials are no longer seen at the picketing at all.

Rank and file trade unionists and Labour Party members are not a very frequent sight there either.

On the issue of blacking, no

progress has been made, despite the fact that the TGWU recently came into possession of a complete list of all outlets for Carousel products. A local union official says that he has lost the list.

An East End support committee to organise backing for the strikers. One of its main achievements was to organise a demonstration in support of the strike in early October. But the TGWU is not prepared to have anything to do with the committee.

The MP for the constituency covering the Carousel factory is David Marshall. He is TGWU-sponsored, as is Hugh Brown, MP for the neighbouring Provan constituency. Yet Marshall's involvement in the dispute has been low-level, while Brown's has been invisible.

There can be no doubt that the TGWU officials are now looking for the first semi-favourable opportunity to ditch the dispute. Labour Party and trade union members in Glasgow and elsewhere need to be organising regular delegations to the picket line, and raising finance for the dispute on a regular weekly basis (and taking it direct to the picket line).

And TGWU members must ensure that, instead of dropping the dispute, the union gives it the backing it deserves.

Scargill proved right

THE NUM claim, highlighted by Arthur Scargill, that the National Coal Board has embarked on an escalating programme of pit closures and job losses was confirmed last week (Wednesday 23 November) by figures released by the NCB.

In the current financial year ending in March, between 18 and 20 pits will have been closed — more than twice last year's figure of nine, and more than the 1980-81 figure of 11 pits.

The latest pit to be affected by closure is Crompton, Lancashire in the NCB's Western Area, which employs 500 miners.

Already eight pits have been closed with five more agreed for closure as well as one merger and another to take place shortly.

The current workforce of 188,000 has seen 18,000 job losses so far this year — the reduction in 1981-2 being 10,000 — and with the above plans for further closures, this figure will be substantially increased.

The NUM is now in its fifth week of operating an overtime ban in furtherance of a 15% pay claim which is causing the NCB the loss of more than 350,000 tonnes of coal per week. Yet this action so far appears to be having little effect on the NCB to improve their offer of 5.2% — and leaves untouched MacGregor's closure and contraction plans.

Five weeks on strike

THE CIVIL SERVICE Land Registry strike entered its fourth week on Monday November 28, with 502 workers on indefinite strike over downgrading of work.

Management began preliminary negotiations last week, and were set to meet the CPSSA and SCPS trade union reps on Tuesday 29th.

The bosses have been faced with absolute solidarity among the strikers, and among the colleagues supporting them who are not affected by the downgrading issue.

In Durham, staff blacked out in a key area for a day until threatened with immediate suspension. In Nottingham, where 105 are on strike, workers in key sections, mainly clerical grades, organised a lightning one-day strike that had management completely in disarray.

Vospers lead

TWO thousand workers in the Vosper Thornycroft (Woolston) shipyards walked off the job on Tuesday 22 November in the first militant action against British Shipbuilders' national 'survival plan'.

The one-day stoppage brought warship production in the Solent area to a complete standstill.

Sell-out

Although the strikers later returned to work, they remain intent on further action against the sell-out deal proposed by BS management and union leaders.

In this deal BS initially insisted that it would not pay any annual wage increase to its 62,000 workers but finally con-

ceded an extra £7 a week after unions had threatened them with a national strike.

As this payment is conditional upon the workforce agreeing to effect huge productivity increases, yard closures and further job losses, it was clearly going to be faced with rejection in the yards at local level.

Bert Brown, secretary of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee at Woolston, pointed out that 60% of the BS workforce were already in receipt of some form of state benefits because wages were so low.

But defence of jobs at Vospers will require more than a single stoppage. And the situation at BS urgently requires workers' occupation of the shipyards as phase one of a determined fight-back.

Arnott victory!

ATTEMPTS by Arnotts to sack its cleaning staff and replace them by contract cleaners bit the dust last Tuesday (22nd November), when management was forced to withdraw the dismissal notices. Arnotts is the second biggest store in Glasgow and part of the House of Fraser empire.

Cleaners at the store, along with other trade unionists and Labour Party members, had begun picketing the store on the previous Friday.

There was a good response from passing shoppers. 6,000 signatures opposing the sackings were collected in three days, and many former contract cleaners stopped to explain the slave-labour conditions operated by private cleaning firms.

But the local Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW) officials were clearly dragging their feet and were not prepared to respond to the cleaners' demands for official all-out strike action.

This became particularly clear at a lunchtime meeting between the cleaners and USDAW officials on 22 November, where the cleaners were told that immediate strike action was not on because "these things take time", and that leaflets which they had had printed calling for a boycott of Arnotts could not be distributed since they had not been individually stamped with the union stamp.

After the lunchtime meeting,

the cleaners, angered by the union officials' attitude, decided to take matters into their own hands by agreeing to begin a strike on Friday, 25 November, and informing the union officials of their decision at a second meeting with them.

Just two hours later, another meeting, the third that day, was held, attended by cleaners, union officials, and management representatives. It was at this meeting that management announced the withdrawal of the dismissal notices.

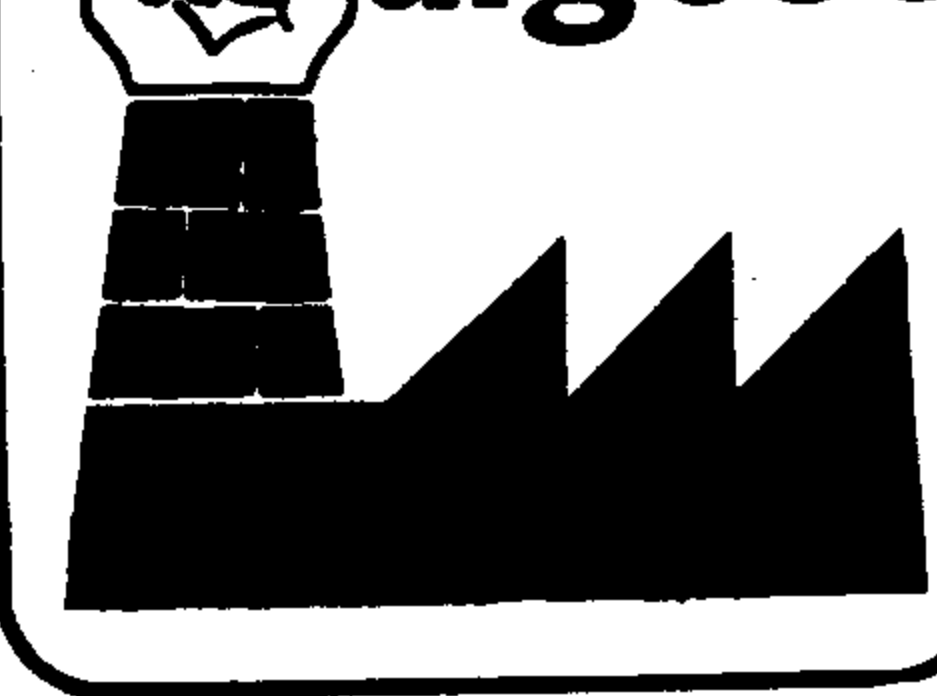
Two things in particular stand out about the dispute. Firstly, the conservative role played by union officials, who, with gritted teeth, could just about tolerate the cleaners picketing and petitioning after their working hours, but did not want any escalation of the action.

Secondly, that the determined opposition displayed by the cleaners succeeded in maintaining their jobs and keeping out private cleaners.

But the situation at Arnotts itself is far from settled. The attempted sackings have also raised other issues, such as Christmas holiday working, low wages and under-staffing.

And whilst management was defeated this time round, it will certainly soon be attempting, both in Arnotts and other shops, to replace their own cleaners with contract cleaners.

Industrial digest



HADFIELDS, the Sheffield steel maker which scabbed on 1980's three-month-long steel strike, is to be closed in March next year with the loss of 730 jobs.

The company's latest controlling shareholders, the British Steel Corporation and GKN, who each bought 37.5% stakes in the business from Lonrho in July this year, announced the closure, the latest in a rash of closures among private steel companies, last Friday November 25.

A 'FIVE-YEAR plan' for privatising nationalised industries is to be decided upon early in the New Year by the Government. An aim of the Treasury will be asset sales in each financial year of up to £2 billion, with the overall target of raising between £8 and £10 billion over the full five years.

The first of the big utilities to be floated, on present plans, is British Telecom, with 51% of its shares being sold in one operation on a partly-paid basis. In order to help private buyers the Government will stagger payments over perhaps a year to 18 months to ease cash-flow problems involved in the £4 billion sale.

THE 2800 manual workers involved in the five-week strike at Rolls Royce Motors at Crewe return to work this week [Monday November 28], following acceptance at a mass meeting on Friday of a new pay offer.

Added to the original and 'final' offer of 4 per cent on basic rates is a lump sum of £150, together with the promise of £2 per week on the basic adult rates from next July prior to the next scheduled wage settlement due in August.

There are various additional proposals to 'harmonise' the working conditions of manual workers with those of white-collar staff.

A RISE in workplace deaths and accidents is shown in figures to be published next year by the Health and Safety Executive — the first official rise after years of steadily falling numbers of fatalities.

In the 'core' industries of factory and construction work, figures show that for 1981, 127 deaths occurred in factories, rising to more than 140 for 1982, and (it is anticipated) even more this year; and in construction there were 98 deaths in 1981, rising to 102 in 1982. Fatalities for this year are already known to be worse.

The TUC say much of the blame for these increases must lie with the Government, who since taking office in 1979 have cut back on HSE staffing levels by 15%, with further cuts foreshadowed in the Chancellor's autumn statement.

LAST Friday, about 30 London building workers went to the Cuban Embassy to extend their condolences and solidarity with the Cuban building workers killed by Reagan's marines in the US invasion of Grenada.

The delegation organised by the London Joint Sites heard speeches from a number of leading activists and from the Embassy's First Secretary who made a very moving speech about the need for international solidarity.

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TGWU

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Kent's appeal to

POEU to wind up fight?

THE Post Office Engineering Union's industrial action against privatisation of British Telecom looks like being reduced to a token or ended completely.

The industrial action has been endorsed at three separate full conferences. The union membership specifically rejected the approach of the old right-wing majority on the National Executive Committee, confined to token action and publicity. They elected a new Broad Left majority.

But as we go to press, the NEC will be discussing a formula for the return of work of all engineers suspended or on strike except for those locked-out in International Services (which is being maintained by management scabs).

The formula has been worked out by right wing general secretary Brian Stanley with British Telecom management. There are, however, some conditions attached which may block an agreement or a return to work.

Ten London branches have called a meeting, inviting every branch in the country to attend, in an attempt to prevent a sell-out. This is to be held in London

By Ricky Houston

on December 7, as a follow-up to the first national meeting called by the same ten branches on November 21.

The letter from the ten branches complains that no consultation with branches has taken place over a return to work, though consultation was promised. It also argues that no members should be returned to work without others being immediately called out on effective industrial action.

It is uncertain whether any of the branches currently taking action will refuse to return to work if the NEC instructs them.

The Broad Left has also issued a new broadsheet. It urges branches to write to the NEC calling for defiance of any injunctions which may be brought against the POEU under the anti-union laws. It states: "The recent attempt

by the Executive to de-escalate the action in the inland regions compounded the errors made over Mercury at the [latest union] conference [which endorsed an NEC decision to obey a court injunction against industrial action over Mercury]. Effective action was to be revoked merely on the basis of cost.

"If the action is costing too much, then the Executive should have gone to the members for finance. Effective action must be maintained".

The broadsheet also comments on the collapse of some of the Broad Left executive members over the injunction. "If we had resisted the injunction, then we could have joined the NGA and mobilised the trade union movement in our defence, turned off Mercury, and paved the way for the defeat of the Tories' privatisation proposals. The NEC missed a perfect opportunity to pursue our campaign to a successful conclusion".

At the NEC, the broadsheet reports, an amendment to the first proposal for a return to work which called for the effective action in London to continue and for the levy to be increased was defeated 15 votes to 8. (That

return-to-work failed principally because an ultra-hard line by BT management made it inoperable).

The Broad Left executive members relied for too long on selective action, based on sustaining strikers on full pay through a levy of the membership. The simple financial arithmetic of it meant that such action was inherently limited to a very small minority of the membership, and thus was vulnerable when BT responded by suspending those taking action.

Together with the right wing's skill at manoeuvring, manipulating and using their allies throughout the labour movement, this has led us into a bleak situation.

Even at this late hour, the Left must break through the limitations of the levy and organise defiance to any sell-outs.

Otherwise the campaign may easily slide back into reliance on publicity and parliamentary filibusters.

Such methods have already been effectively dealt with by the Tories' introduction of Madame Guillotine to the Bill's passage through Parliament.

And they were decisively rejected at the June annual conference.



Shell pickets arrested

By Bryan Edmands

POLICE arrested four TGWU shop stewards last Thursday (November 24) from the Shell-haven refinery, picketing outside the Shell oil tanker depot at Heathrow Airport for an alleged offence against airport bylaws.

This is the latest incident of intimidatory action carried out by management and the police to disrupt the picketing of Shell UK oil refinery workers from Stanlow (Cheshire) and Shell-haven (Essex) in pursuit of their pay claim.

So far, one-third of Shell's 33 depots are being picketed by strikers from the two refineries, with overtime bans and work-to-rule actions in force at Teesport (Cleveland) and the Carrington chemicals complex (Manchester).

However, with Shell pursuing pay negotiations on a plant-to-plant basis (which has the effect of acting to divide the workforce), it seems that senior TGWU officers at Shell-haven will be recommending a new pay offer later this week, described by the company as 'full and final' to their 500 process worker members there, made at talks on Friday and Saturday by management.

The basic pay offer of 4.5% is not increased, but a consolida-

tion of £2.50 per week of allowances, together with remaining allowances being increased by 4.5%, and a one-off payment of £50 per head, is now being put forward by Shell to make up a 12-month deal backdated to October 1.

This is similar to an offer made to Shell's 1,750 tanker drivers, and seems likely to be extended to the craft workers at Shell-haven and the 2,400 workers at Stanlow.

Yet on Friday (November 25) Stanlow union negotiators rejected a deal worth 6.2% over 19 months because, they said, it represented only 4.5% on a 12-month basis. They are insisting on a 12-month settlement and a higher offer on basic rates.

If the workers at Stanlow (on strike now for six weeks) and those at Shell-haven (on strike for four weeks) continue their action in solidarity with each other and in pursuit of a higher basic rate pay offer, by continuing and extending their secondary picketing, and by demanding that the Shell TGWU tanker drivers respect their picket lines, along with extending this call to BP and ESSO tanker drivers, then Shell's "full and final" offer can be broken down and an acceptable pay increase won.

Learn lessons of UCW sellout

IT IS just over three months since the Basingstoke postal workers took strike action in support of Alan Fraser, postal section union secretary and a Socialist Organiser supporter, who was dismissed for his alleged poor sickness record.

If there had been any doubt as to the validity of management's reasons for sacking Alan, that doubt was removed by the reactions of the membership. In their opinion it was a clear-cut case of victimisation for trade union activities, and they were prepared to back that opinion with strike action.

But, as reported in previous issues of Socialist Organiser, the solidarity and comradeship displayed by the membership during that week of struggle was to be sold out thanks to the treacher-

Angela Fraser reports on the follow-up to the recent Basingstoke victimisation

ous role played by Gerry Casey, EC member, and John Taylor, assistant secretary of the UCW.

However, the lessons of how the UCW bureaucracy betray workers in struggle have been learned quickly by the postal workers in Basingstoke, and they have set the right example by sending a resolution to UCW headquarters condemning the conduct of the national officials involved.

A factsheet produced by the postal workers, outlining the causes of the strike and the eventual sell-out, has been distributed to many UCW branches. The branch has also supported the Communication Workers Broad Left campaign, by agreeing to appear on the platform at Broad Left meetings to speak on the strike.

This shows that the branch are prepared to carry on the fight to bring to the attention of all UCW members the shameful and hypocritical action of the UCW leadership during that week of struggle.

On Saturday November 26 the Broad Left held a meeting in Coventry where the platform speakers were Alan Fraser and Bill Willoughby, who was dismissed from the Post Office earlier this year, again under dubious circumstances.

Bill Willoughby, who is not a member of the Broad Left, gave a detailed account of his victimisation, which seems to have been based solely on his response to a call from his members to chair a meeting called by them.

He went on to inform the meeting that he had recently been publicly castigated by Alan Tuffin, the UCW general secretary, in a letter printed in the Branch Officials' Bulletin.

The letter, which incidentally Bill had not even been given time to reply to, referred to a leaflet that the Broad Left had produced to advertise the November 26 meeting. Tuffin assumed that Bill must have had a hand in this leaflet, and warned him that such publicity could jeopardise his relations with the UCW head-

quarters, who will be giving assistance to him at his industrial tribunal in the near future.

During the meeting, Gerry Casey and Frank Osie-Tutu, both EC members, entered the room and took part in the debate - though the meeting was supposedly illegal under union rules. There can be much speculation as to why they attended, but it became extremely clear to all present that Gerry Casey felt the need to try to justify his and John Taylor's actions during the Basingstoke postal strike.

Casey opened up by saying that he had to be very careful as to what he said, as Socialist Organiser had a presence at the meeting. He did not believe himself to be beyond criticism, but SO had produced an unprecedented full-page spread on the Basingstoke strike in which scurrilous attacks had been made on him and John Taylor.

He considered that the EC had done their best, and that it was up to comrades to ensure that they did not give management the rope they needed to hang them.

During that week of struggle it was said many times that it was obvious that Alan Fraser was being victimised, but that unfortunately victimisation was one of the most difficult cases to prove and there was no proof. Yet here was Casey disclosing to a Broad Left meeting that John Taylor had been able to persuade the Post Office to offer Alan a cash settlement of £6000 - approximately one year's wages - with only one condition: that Alan Fraser did not attend work for that year.

Along with other attempts to victimise Alan reported in previous Socialist Organiser articles and the fact that 200 members were on strike because they recognised the victimisation - proof enough, surely.

The response by the postal workers in Basingstoke to the actions of Gerry Casey and John Taylor is stated in no uncertain terms in this paragraph of the fact sheet produced by them:

"The message for us is clear. The existing leadership have sold us out. The way forward must be to launch a fight to bring that leadership to account. If need be, we must replace them with a leadership that will truly fight for the needs of the members".

Shipyard pay

From back page

ards to decide what action to take.

Henry Robb in Scotland have seen their last vessel go out on Tuesday 22 November and management has put, from Friday 25 November, 150 of the 189 manual workers on short-time working.

Kincaids is in a similar situation, as are Clarke Hawthorn and Goole.

The combine committee was unanimous in its condemnation of the SNC - especially the Chair and Secretary, Jim Murray of the Boilermakers and Alex Feiry of the AUEW. Swann Hunter stewards have passed a vote of no confidence.

The combine decided to campaign for all-out action on January 3 if BS and the SNC come back with offers like the survival plan and no basic wage increase and with forced redundancies.

The decision of the last national lay delegate conference was to give the SNC the power to call action, up to all-out strike action and occupation if there was no change in British Shipbuilders' position.

The SNC is doing everything it can to delay and avoid action in the hope that the yards will get tired of waiting and accept anything.

The SNC is wrong. Lay delegates returning from the SNC meeting where the £7/survival plan was agreed in principle, were told by their stewards committees that they were totally out of order.

The mood in most yards is that the survival plan and redundancies have got to be rejected and that rejection backed up by action. The combine feel that January 3 is tactically the right time to start the action.

Murray and Ferry plan to meet BS on Wednesday 30 November in private. The combine, the SNC lay delegates and the yards are agreed that this is British Shipbuilders' last chance to come up with the goods.

Shipyard workers should beware of attempts to use Christmas bonuses and delayed implementation of the survival plan to get agreement.

The demands must be: No enforced redundancies! No survival plan! For a substantial increase in wages for April 1983 to April 1984! Plans should now be made for the 1984 claim to be implemented on the anniversary date, not twelve months later.

New!

Solidarity betrayed

LESSONS OF THE BASINGSTOKE POST OFFICE WORKERS STRIKE

This new pamphlet tells the story of the victimisation of Socialist Organiser supporter Alan Fraser and how the fight to defend him was sold out by the union officials. 25p plus postage from 75 Freemantle Close, Basingstoke.



A FREE news-sheet published by the Coventry Health Campaign (made up of the joint health service unions) and supported by the Labour Party National Health Service Defence Committee (initiated by Coventry South-East and South-West CLPs) is being distributed to all households in Coventry by trade union and Labour Party activists.

Entitled, 'Coventry's Health in Crisis', it highlights planned local cutbacks and closures, together with general information about the necessity of the NHS and about health care provision in other countries.

This is just the start of a much-needed public campaign in Coventry to mobilise opposition to the reduction of the NHS. In order to bring together wider support a public meeting has been organised where it is hoped more offers of help - of time, activity and money - will be given to contribute to the future of the campaign.

For details, copies of the news-sheet, or to send offers of support and financial assistance, contact: c/o Lloyd Randall, Union Office, Walsgrave Hospital, Clifford Bridge Road, Coventry.

PUBLIC MEETING

Saturday December 3, starting 7.30 prompt at the Central Methodist Hall (City Centre).

Speakers include: member of Bradford Occupation Committee, Alan Fisher (former general secretary NUPE), Paul Noone (chair of Hospital Consultants' Association).

Shipyard sellout halted

ON 26 November, shop stewards delegated from most of British Shipbuilders yards attended a national combine committee meeting in Carlisle.

The meeting came after a period when it looked like the SNC, the national negotiating committee, had come to an agreement with British Shipbuilders to accept a deal which involved an attack on trade boundaries and working conditions, with an inevitable loss of jobs.

The deal involved a payment of £7, conditional on the full acceptance of flexibility, productivity proposals, which had not even been worked out when the SNC supported the deal, apart from saying it should be based on management's survival plan, which follows a long tradition of survival plans — a direct attack on jobs, wages and conditions.

The combine committee heard reports from yards who have had redundancy notices issued.

The Barclay Caledon ship stewards issued the following statement to the combine:

"To all trade union members in British Shipbuilders. The manual workers and staff of Barclay Caledon Ltd have been forced to take strike action against compulsory redundancies and in defence of the Blackpool agreement.

"On 4 November 1983, the company gave notice to ten employees that they were surplus to requirements and would have to leave by 18 November 1983. No offer of alternative employment elsewhere in British Shipbuilders was made.

"The Joint Shop Stewards Committee failed to persuade the company to defer these notices

**By Lol
Duffy**

until the end of December, to try and investigate the possibility of transfers.

"A mass meeting of all employees agreed that if the compulsory redundancy notices were not withdrawn by noon on 17 November 1983, the workforce would take this action.

"The Barclay Caledon workforce has always supported the SNC, the Blackpool agreement and the Tynemouth resolution. We supported the action on behalf of the Robb Caledon workers. There are a further 56 redundancies in the pipeline and do not forget there are another 2,000 surplus in the industry at the year's end according to British Shipbuilders.

"By helping us in our struggle you will be defending your own jobs and the Blackpool agreement. We need your support and we need it now."

Barclay Caledon workers went back to work on Monday 28 November, with the understanding that the Clyde confed would attempt to get a meeting with management to fix up alternative work for the four still under threat. Six accepted the redundancies.

If the issue isn't sorted out by Thursday 1 December, there will be a meeting of the Clyde stew-

Continued page 15

Socialist ORGANISER



PHOTO: ANDREW MOORE

**Self defence is no offence
— defend the Newham 8!
Mass lobby outside the
Old Bailey next Monday
December 5, from 9am.**

All out behind NGA!

From front page

The TUC must mobilise the entire labour movement to go on the offensive to rip up Tory anti-union legislation. It should call a one-day general strike immediately, in preparation for a full-scale general strike if the government does not back down and abandon its attempts to legally hamstring the trade unions.

Instead the TUC drags its feet.

The decision of the Employment Committee of the TUC to recommend to the General Council support for the NGA so long as it remains within the law is timid, fearful, cowardly and in the circumstances grossly inadequate.

It shows no fight. No guts. No proper sense of urgency. It is pusillanimous even by the TUC's own standards in such matters.

For there is no way we can fight the Tory anti-union laws and stay within those very same laws.

The Tories have a big, inflated, unrepresentative but stable majority in Parliament. Our decisive strength is outside Parliament. The decisive strength we can throw into the scales — mass industrial action for political purposes and in solidarity with other workers who take on the Tory government — is now illegal.

The labour movement is thus faced with the choice: to fight or put its hands up in surrender. The TUC knows that and in its own shuffling, shambling way tries to avoid a choice.

The NGA knows it and is facing up to it.

The militant rank and file must insist that the entire labour movement faces up to it and chooses to fight for the rights of the labour movement.

Neil Kinnock and Shadow Employment Secretary John Smith should stop talking out of both sides of their mouths and support the rights of the NGA, instead of prattling about our duty to 'obey the decisions of the courts'.

The basic rule for the labour movement is this: no law that

attacks the labour movement should be obeyed if we are strong enough to resist it. All such laws are vile and unjust class legislation.

The labour movement has the right to go all-out to resist them and to make them unworkable, as we made Edward Heath's anti-union laws unworkable.

To preach the message that we have a duty to obey such laws is nothing less than treason to the labour movement.

The labour movement is neither dead nor dying despite the whimpers of faint hearts on the fringes of the labour movement, and some within it.

The organised labour movement still has tremendous reserves of strength.

But we cannot rely on the TUC leaders. If they lead even a timid movement — good. Insofar as they lead, follow. Push them as far as you can. But at the end of the day, the rank and file of the unions can only rely on ourselves — especially in a life and death question for the labour movement like the defence of the NGA.

The NGA needs immediate

solidarity strike action. Workers from many industries and from all over Britain have been on mass picket duty at Warrington — organise solidarity action.

Shah is getting supplies. Apply effective blacking to stop him producing.

The logic of backing the NGA is — as the TUC well knows — full scale confrontation by the labour movement against the Government, which culminates logically in a general strike.

If the only alternative to such a confrontation is surrender, then militants throughout the labour movement will face up to their responsibilities. Even a defeated general strike would do less damage in the long run to the labour movement than would a peaceful surrender of our rights.

But we could win a general strike.

London Labour Briefing has called a meeting next Monday, December 5, 7pm at the House of Commons (room booked in the name of Jeremy Corbyn), to discuss what Labour Party members can do to support the NGA.



Anti-picket violence

ARMED with tear gas cylinders, Manchester's Tactical Aid Group, backed by nearly 2,000 baton-wielding police, went on the rampage to break up the picket lines at the Stockport Messenger dispute.

Shah prints his papers on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and the NGA is calling for pickets from Tuesday morning to Friday morning.

The factory is on the Winwick Quay Trading Estate in Warrington (Exit 9 off the M62, just after the Burtonwood Service Area).

Four thousand pickets almost stopped the art-work getting into the print works, but police reinforcements, and pickets having to get home in time for work, meant the finished papers finally got out with little trouble.

By the time the vans came out at around 5 am the mass picket had been dispersed by police charges, which pulled out pickets and sent them through a gauntlet of police batons and boots, before they were thrown back into the crowd.

Split

Poor stewarding and a reluctance by many pickets to hold the line, split the picket in half. Police cleared a path for the van an hour before it was due to come out by indiscriminate runs at the pickets.

The picket, by now cordoned off away from the route of the van, continued a running battle with the police for two hours.

We might have stopped the vans leaving if there had been more pickets there, which there might have been if the police hadn't stopped coach loads of pickets on the M62.

And the pickets would have been better stewarded if the police had not smashed up the NGA van with the megaphone in it and sealed it off on the instructions of the Chief Constable of Cheshire.

The poor stewarding left the initiative with the police, who were repeatedly given time to regroup and carry out their presumably pre-arranged tactics like reversing at full-speed along a crowded road and smashing up cameras and cameramen.

Monthly Fund

AFTER last week's lowest-ever figure, this week's donations jump to the dizzy heights of...£41.

That's a far cry from the £250 or so we need each week.

This week sees the unstoppable Brent go over their target: 107%, so far! But there are only 11 groups who have even started tackling their targets: the others have yet to start.

It is not just a matter of 'catching up with Brent'. It's a question of supporting the Socialist Organiser Alliance in its efforts to produce a weekly 16-page paper. All groups would claim to have a commitment to seeing that paper produced... But commitments in words must be turned into practical support if they are to mean anything.

We know that Nottingham plan a social and a market stall; Stockport a meal and a raffle; Manchester a social and a raffle, and Stoke a raffle. What about the rest of you?

Send donations to: 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

Brent	107%	Cardiff	13%	Tower Hamlets	7%
Chelmsford	33%	Hull	13%	Halifax	6%
Southwark	19%	Leeds	13%	Nottingham	5%
Sheffield	16%	S.E. London	8%	Coventry	1%
				Total so far	14%