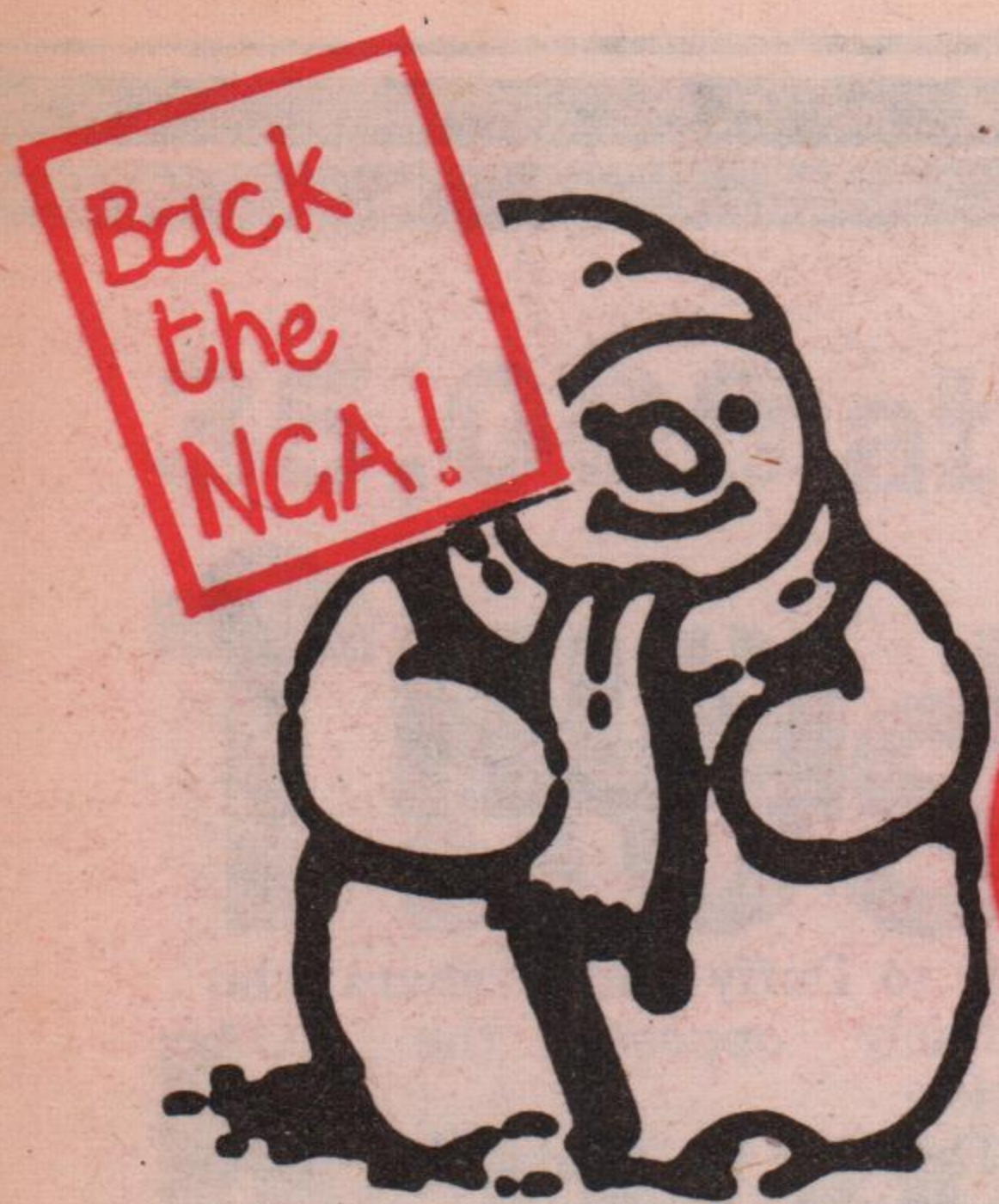
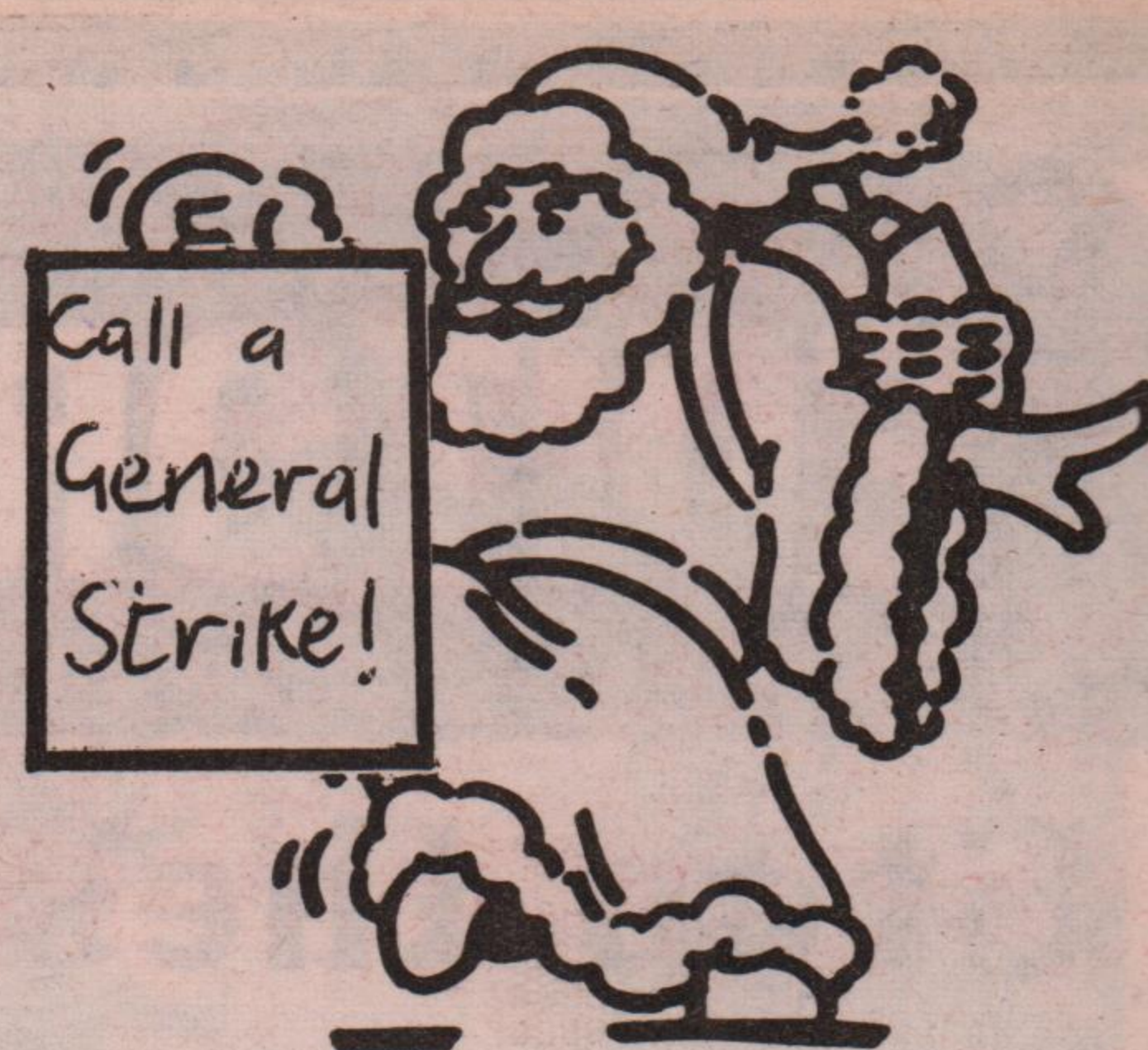
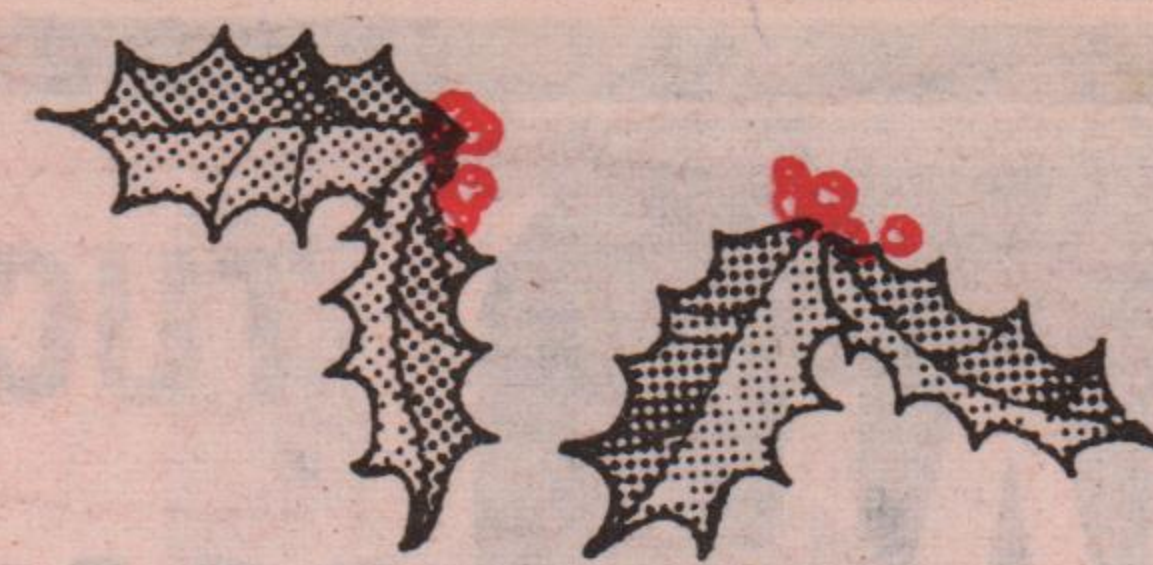




Socialist ORGANISER



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After Black Wednesday:

BREAK THESE LAWS

BLACK WEDNESDAY — the day the TUC betrayed the NGA and threw in the towel on the fight against Tory anti-union legislation. That's how Wednesday December 14 1983 will go down in the history of the labour movement.

By 29 votes to 21 the TUC General Council decided to 'refer back' — that is, throw out — the recommendation of the employment and policy committee to support the NGA. Instead the TUC is to set up a special commission to examine the NGA-Shah dispute.

The gutless, crawling, self-abasing policy of King Rat Len Murray dominated the councils of the official British labour movement. Instead of fighting back by every means necessary against naked class legislation, the TUC has decided to keep within the law.

"Don't break the law" is the catchphrase of the TUC right wing. Some have hypocritically offered the NGA 'support' — only insofar as the NGA carries out 'lawful functions'.

But under the Prior and Tebbit Acts, 'normal' trade unionism is *unlawful*! The NGA, POEU, NUJ and SOGAT have already discovered this — to their cost. You *cannot* defend the NGA or wage any serious fight without breaking some aspect of these laws. *In the Stockport dispute, even writing letters to advertisers notifying them of an NGA strike was ruled unlawful!* So swingeing are the laws that even High Court judges on the current NUJ case were plainly amazed at their scope.

But under the Prior and Tebbit Acts, 'normal' trade unionism is *unlawful*! The NGA, POEU, NUJ and SOGAT have already discovered this — to their cost. You *cannot* defend the NGA or wage any serious fight without breaking some aspect of these laws. *In the Stockport dispute, even writing letters to advertisers notifying them of an NGA strike was ruled unlawful!* So swingeing are the laws that even High Court judges on the current NUJ case were plainly amazed at their scope.

So when they say "don't break the law", the TUC right wing are in fact helping to break the NGA — and, by implication, any other unions which falls foul of the Tory legal straitjacket.

Since the June election they have abandoned any thought of fighting employers or government: they have made clear their 'reluctant acquiescence' not only to the Prior and Tebbit Acts, but to the *third* anti-union Bill, now before Parliament. They want to talk to the Tories — and their entry ticket to the talks must be bought at the expense of trade unionism itself.

Contrary to Murray's view, unions are *not* an apparatus of pin-striped officials and office buildings. Solidarnosc in Poland, Black unions in South Africa, and the early British unions — which all emerged in defiance of anti-union laws — all developed as fully-fledged unions *before* any such bureaucratic structures and excrescences like Murray emerged. *Unions are fighting organisations of the working class: if not, they are nothing.*

For rank and file members, the TUC unions are far more threaten-

before they

break our unions!

ed by the upholding of Tory laws than they are by the sequestration of union funds.

Think. If it came to the end of the line, and everything the NGA nationally possesses had been seized, but the *union* — as a body of workers — continued to defy the courts, then what could the Tories do? Jail every official, every FoC, every striker? Jail the whole union?

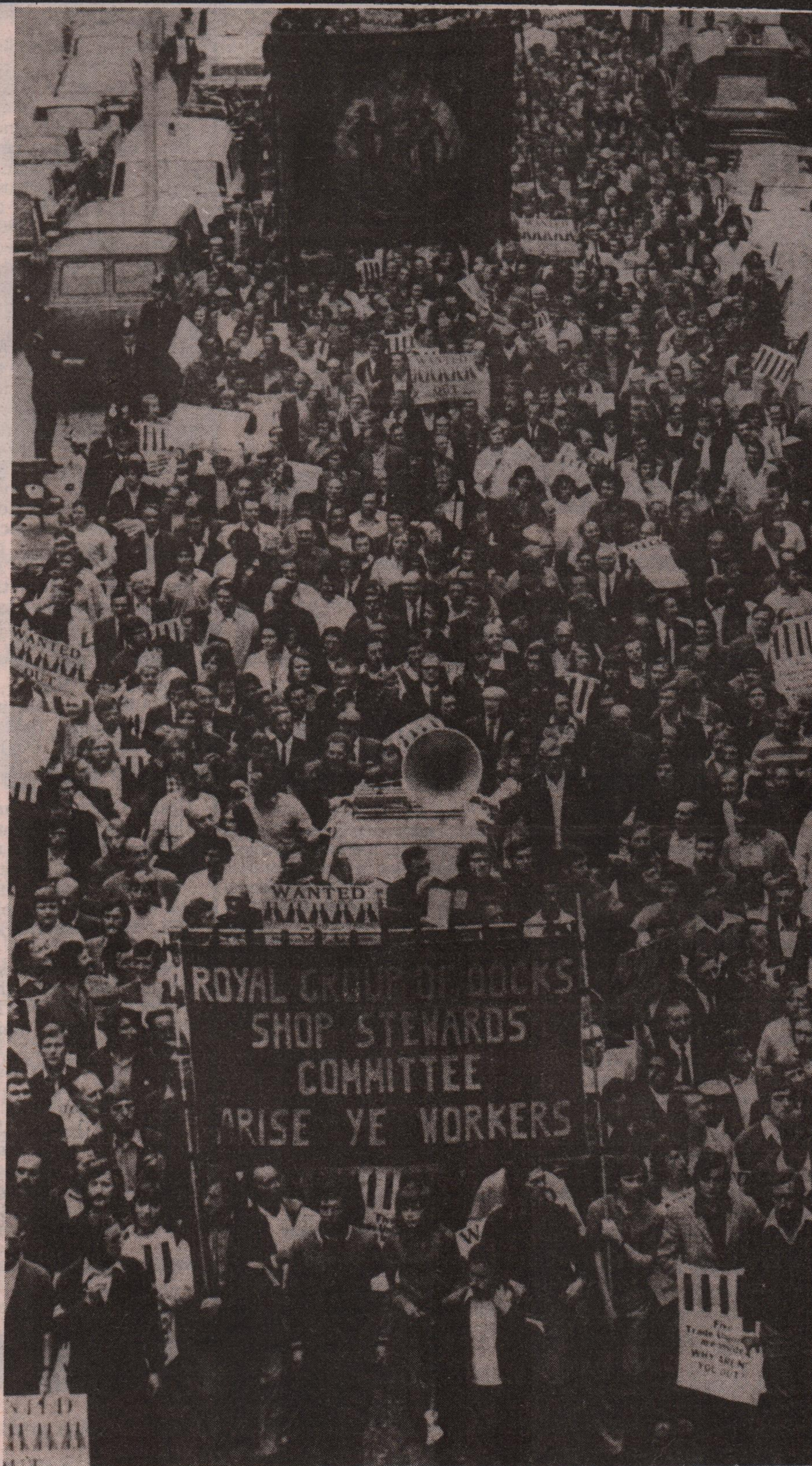
No! Long before that, a stand by the NGA would have brought home the issues to whole layers of workers who would — as in 1972, against the jailing of the dockers in Pentonville — push aside the worms who pose as leaders, and take action to defend the rights their forebears fought so hard to win.

Instead, isolated, daunted by TUC sabotage, the NGA leaders have retreated, first to a meagre 24 hour strike call, and now even retracted that. Their retreats have made matters worse — and helped Murray.

It is late, but still not too late to avert a disaster. By reviving the mass picketing, in conjunction with all-out strike action, the NGA could even now call on those TUC lefts who have given verbal support to turn their words into practice in the form of industrial action. They can appeal over the heads of the right wing leaders to the rank and file.

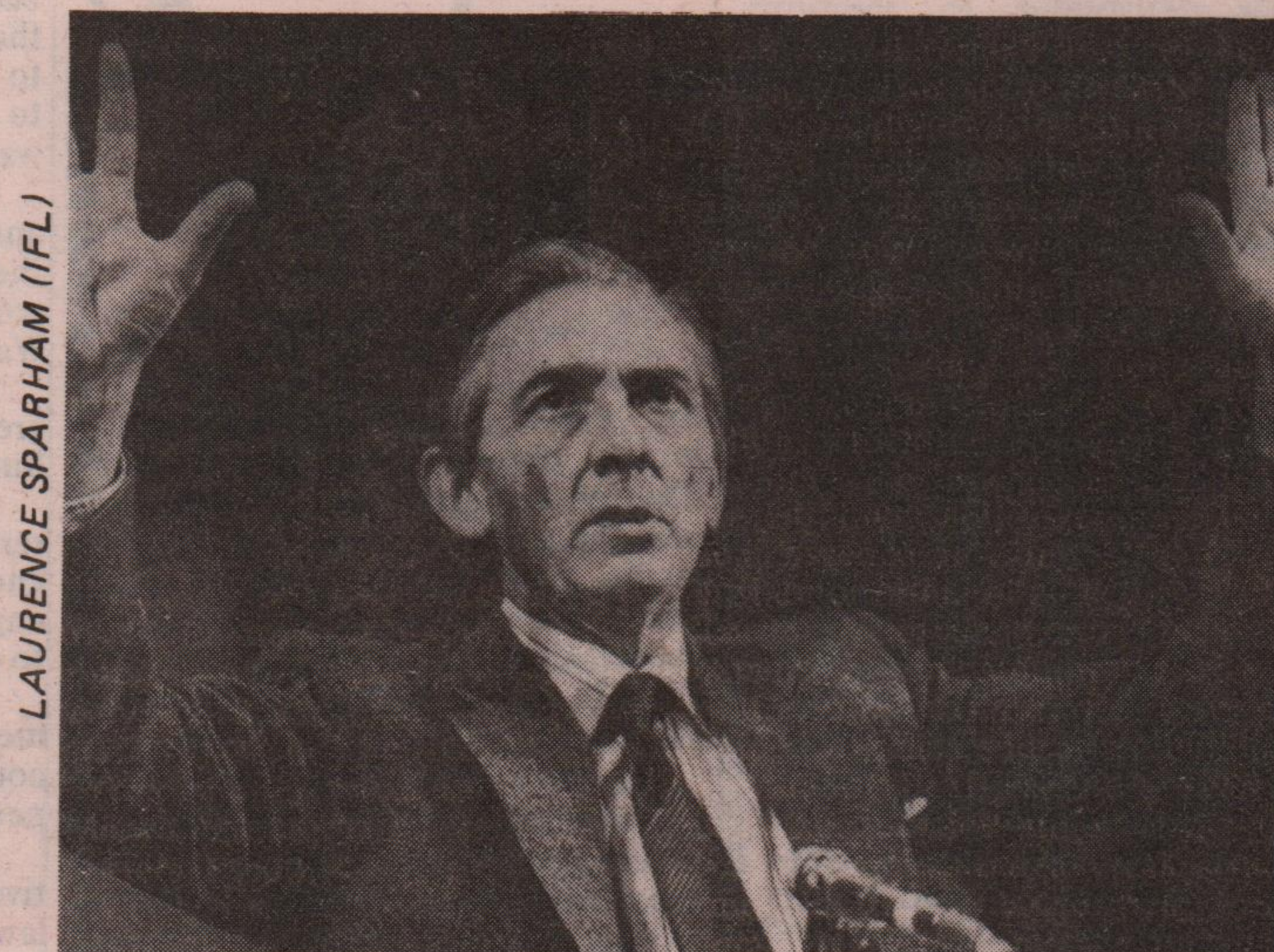
The demand must be for an initial 24-hour general strike: the focus must be concerted action to smash this legislation.

Let's see those who would act as the Tories' stool pigeons elbowed aside by those who are prepared to fight! Break these laws — before they break our unions!



1972: mass strike action freed jailed Pentonville dockers and broke Tory laws

INSIDE.
5 pages of
analysis &
background
on NGA fight.



King Rat Len Murray

EDITORIAL

Stop these obscene talks!

"QUESTIONED about the impact the [NGA] dispute could have on the TUC's tentative relations with the government, Mr Murray explained that it had no influence at all and the TUC would continue to see government ministers about economic matters, pensions and the political levy."

Guardian, December 3.

You'd hardly credit it, would you? The state has taken over the NGA's assets and fined the union half a million pounds and the man most people see as the leader of the British trade union movement blandly intones that it will have no influence at all on relations between that state and the trade unions.

But Murray is not only talking about talks with the government. Whilst thousands of NGA members fight back against sequestration, whilst hundreds of ordinary trade unionists have been struggling against Her Majesty's police on the picket lines at Warrington, whilst members of SOGAT and the NUJ are being attacked by Her Majesty's judges, whilst more and more employers get ready to use the law against other unions, whilst the government steers its phase 3 trade union legislation through Parliament — what is Len Murray doing?

Organising to help the NGA? Organising to help the NUJ? Organising to help SOGAT? Losing sleep to travel to the picket lines? Doing what you pay him to do?

Not on your life! When he is not sabotaging the NGA's fight, as he did this Tuesday, 14th, with his public denunciation of attempts to line up the TUC behind the NGA, Legless Len is sitting down, cheek by jowl, with the employers and the government, the same people who are directly attacking his members.

On Wednesday December 8, Len Murray and Moss Evans attended a meeting of the National Economic Development Council and agreed to further discussions which, according to the Guardian, "will represent the first tentative steps towards tripartism since Mrs Thatcher's election victory in 1979".

The Guardian went on to note "Mr Cassels (Director-General of NEDC) said there was a new spirit and a resolution to hammer out compromise where there would not have been compromise before."

The Financial Times reported: "The spirit of cooperation at the meeting produced a bilateral initiative. Mr Moss Evans, the left wing general secretary of the TGWU called for more top-level contact between unions and employers. Mr Murray said he thought it possible that the TUC and CBI might put joint papers to the meetings next year."

The meeting was to discuss a Treasury Paper called "Where will the new jobs be?" No they won't just be in Japan and Germany and, if the legal attack continues, in the courts and Her Majesty's prisons. Some, the government claims, will at some unspecified point in the future be created, but largely in the service sectors, not in the manufacturing sector. There won't be any trade unions in this sector, the government feels, and they don't think this is entirely a bad thing.

Murray and Evans went along to the meeting to argue that there should be at least a few trade unions and that there should be at least a few new jobs created in manufacturing industry.

Before the meeting, Murray announced that unless the government changed its policies there would be five million unemployed by 1990. He seemed to think they might care about that!

But at the meeting and at future meetings, the Guardian reports, "... all sides have agreed not to discuss specific issues on which fundamental disagreements are known to exist. This means that there will be no discussion of overall government economic policy as the TUC argue that reflation is needed to stimulate jobs."

That is the central point. Murray was not only betraying the NGA, and all trade unionists being battered by this government, when he attended these talks. In terms of trying to change Tory policies he was wasting his time.

But his attendance was very useful for Thatcher, Tebbit and Lawson.

It gives people the notion that something is being done. It distracts attention from the fact that nothing is being done to reduce unemployment now by focussing on future panaceas and cosmetics like the YTS.

It gives legitimacy to Tory policies. It shows how reasonable the Tories are.

It's got to stop, and it's got to stop now!

Stop talking to the Tories about what they are or are not going to do regardless of what the trade unions may say. Start organising to get rid of them.

The talks with King over the new Trade Union Bill are an obscenity while the last one is being used to smash up trade unions. The TUC presence on the NEDC is an obscenity whilst the government uses mass unemployment as a weapon to discipline the working class and actively considers cuts in unemployment benefit to force the youth onto YTS schemes.

A trade unionist should now repudiate their efforts to get the TUC to stop talking to the Tories and withdraw from all tripartite bodies like the NEDC and the Labour Commission for Training and Strengthening Tory policies.

Glasgow mass picket

A MASS picket is being held on 20 December at the Carousel factory in Glasgow's East End. The shop floor workers there have been on strike since the middle of July for union recognition, reinstatement and better working conditions.

The strike has been all but openly ditched by the TGWU, the union which the strikers joined before their dismissal. Though the strike is still official and the strikers receiving union strike pay, local officials are doing little apart from loaning them the rather dilapidated TGWU Scottish Regional banner.

As well as helping on the picket line, TGWU members must step up pressure on their own officials to stop them ratting on this dispute.

TUC right wing's trail of betrayal What makes Murray run?

By Harry Sloan



JOHN HARRIS

Murray

THE VICIOUS attack by Len Murray upon the limited but important show of support for the NGA by Monday's meeting of the TUC Economic Committee should come as no surprise.

As far back as October 19 the TUC's Economic Committee discussed the first injunctions granted to Selim Shah — one banning the NGA from writing to Shah's advertisers urging them not to patronise his papers; the other against secondary picketing of Shah's Bury and Warrington plants. The first injunction was granted under Tebbit's 1982 Act, the second under the earlier 1980 Prior Act.

The TUC decided to give limited, legal, and therefore verbal, "support" to the NGA — but to call on the union to end its mass picketing.

This stance has been maintained as the threat to the very essence of trade union solidarity action has become crystal clear.

On Monday November 28, following the two-day Fleet Street stoppage by NGA members, the TUC Economic Committee met: thousands of printworkers had been locked out by management, and the Newspaper Publishers' Association had made it clear they would seek damages of up to £3 million from the NGA: but TUC leaders decided to put off any decision.

Right wingers grouped around Len Murray, including CPSA leader Alastair Graham, GMBU leader David Basnett, Gerry Russell (AUEW), Eric Hammond (EETPU), Bill Whatley (USDAW) and Roy Grantham (APEX), had made it clear that they favoured withholding any support at all from the NGA so long as it remained "outside the law." This was also the view argued on television by Bill Sirs (steelworkers) and Terry Duffy.

But conspicuous among the silences has been that of the leadership of SOGAT '82, the other big print union, itself facing High Court injunctions from Labour Party member and millionaire Robert Maxwell's publishing firm BPCC.

SOGAT leader Bill Keys chairs the TUC Employment Committee: but his own union has made no public offer of assistance or solidarity with the NGA, and Keys himself has

simply stated that the NGA would receive support "from the TUC".

After staving off a decision on the Monday, the TUC inner circle came out on Tuesday night with a unanimous mealy-mouthed statement which amounted to a stab in the back for the NGA.

Amid vague calls for affiliated unions to "support" the NGA, it pledged TUC financial support "so that the NGA could carry out its lawful functions on behalf of its members."

This carefully chosen formula was a deliberate blow against the mass picketing, the sympathy strikes, and the defiance of the injunctions — all of which are obviously against Tory law.

Indeed, the TUC wording is a carbon copy of the initial appeal court ruling by Sir John Donaldson that not all the NGA's assets should be sequestered at first — but that the union should be allowed to retain sufficient money to 'maintain its lawful functions'.

The next day the High Court ordered the seizure of the entire assets of the NGA.

Seven national newspapers were also granted injunctions barring the NGA from any further walkouts along the lines of the previous week.

Tony Dubbins of the NGA pointed out that:

"If the print unions are defeated, the whole trade union movement is, too. If we can't defeat this legislation, nobody else can."

"If we pay, employer after employer will be coming to the courts to make sure we are impotent in every dispute."

True enough — but this has long ago been accepted by the TUC leaders, who above all wish to maintain their new "realistic" relationship with the Tory government, and in particular the talks with current anti-union boss Tom King.

Accordingly the statement drawn up for the TUC General Council meeting on Friday December 2 was vetted by legal advisors.

An explicit NGA appeal for the TUC to call on affiliated unions to mobilise for the mass pickets was rejected out of hand — in the event, the NGA was forced to send out its own appeal.

The High Court was becoming ever more arrogant. NGA auditors were ordered to disclose the whereabouts of union assets and told "It is quite irrelevant whether the officers do or do not consent."

The NUJ, too, was brought into the dock for its struggle with Dimpleby papers. As the NGA assets froze, so it became impossible to pay wages and salaries to union staff, or pensions and other benefits to union members.

Plainly the hidden hand of TUC arm-twisters can be seen behind the crazy NGA initiative for a "truce" on Friday December 2.

Pickets were called off for seven days in Warrington while an improbable deal was searched for with Shah. The court played ball, and a delighted TUC General Council met for a mere 20 minutes that evening, endorsing the statement and convinced they had bludgeoned the NGA into a climbdown.

Norman Tebbit, questioned that night on the "truce", declared that he detected the good sense of the TUC.

NGA leaders, however, would not openly attack the TUC role in the dispute. Tony Dubbins effectively withdrew from critical statements about the TUC, claiming that he had referred

only to Duffy and Graham who publicly opposed the NGA action.

There is no doubt that TUC sabotage has combined with the natural conservatism and narrowness of the NGA leadership to produce a succession of disastrous retreats that have encouraged the employers and emboldened the courts to inflict Friday's astronomical £525,000 fine.

The statements of support from a number of individual unions — seldom backed up by any officially organised action — have not been sufficient to counteract the organised, systematic and ruthless sabotage by the TUC right wing.

But while doing their best to isolate and ditch the NGA, TUC leaders have continued to trek meekly into their discussions with King and seek even to extend their links with the Tory government.

Last Wednesday saw TUC leaders sit down with CBI bosses and Chancellor Lawson in a routine meeting of the National Economic Development Council meeting — and agree to set up a new tripartite committee on unemployment.

The committee signifies nothing more or less than the TUC's servile attitude to the Tories.

It is plain that in their confidential backroom chats with King, Murray and Keys, the TUC's chosen delegates, have been told quite bluntly that further collaboration could depend upon them delivering the NGA's head on a plate as a token of goodwill.

Murray's fury at being partially cheated of this by the Economic Committee meeting's 9-7 vote to back the one-day national NGA strike call is an indication of how far he now sees his role as a policeman for the Tories.

If Murray and his pals get their way in the General Council meeting taking place as we go to press, we can be sure that the betrayal of the NGA will be merely a bitter foretaste of the treachery to come from the present TUC leadership. It is upon such leaders in the workers movement that the Tories pin their hopes of further victories in 1984.

A very severe wiggling

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

By Patrick Spilling

of me was severely subpoenaed by a barrister.

Some of the lawyers had clearly come prepared for trouble, wearing wigs and carrying briefcases. Police set up road blocks near Lincoln's Inn Field and several chambers of lawyers were turned back and prevented from reaching the area around TUC headquarters. But dozens broke through the cordons and hurled Latin abuse at the NGA members as they tried to go about their lawful business.

The lawyers are thought to belong to an ultra-militant and shadowy body, the Law Society, and are organised in chambers and Inns of Court.

Today the row spread to Parliament where several lawyers have infiltrated both the Tory and Labour benches.

One MP who protested against

excessive and blatant use of law was hurled from the Chamber by the Sergeant-at-Arms, strongly suspected of being a fellow-traveller.

The Lord Chief Justice this week said he would not rest until his ruthless supporters had extracted every last penny from the NGA and other unions.

Last minute negotiations broke down last night, dashing hopes that the dangerous constitutional crisis would be avoided.

The TUC's Organisation and Employment Committee met through the night at ACAS but they were unable to agree on a form of words which would satisfy the boss at the centre of the dispute, Mr Eddie Murray.

Mr Murray afterwards issued a statement saying he would never recognise the right of any union to take industrial action in any

circumstances.

"I am defending the right of ordinary trade unionists to have their unions, assets and leaders taken away from them," he declared.

After the final breakdown of talks, nothing stands between the NGA and the hordes of gangsters in pin-stripes who have come to seize their money and who have brought such terror into the hearts of ordinary, peaceable passers-by.

The Metropolitan Commissioner of Police was ashen-faced last night. "I can't see how we can stop them. We've faced dockers, miners and the women at Greenham Common. But nothing can match the blood-curdling terror inspired by these lawyers. This is the end."

Early today a lone figure was seen staggering from a building in Bedford. He was bleeding from every orifice and barely recognisable as the trade union leader of a month ago.

He peered around him like a man expecting a fresh attack at any time and then fell to the road. His lips made a last effort to speak. "Calling trade union solidarity. Hello. Is anybody there? Is anybody there?"

35,000 at Greenham Those women have done it again!

FROM 11 o'clock they started arriving. By 1 o'clock the din they made could have been heard in the Pentagon.

Those Greenham women had done it again. At least 35,000 women had arrived to make sounds at Greenham. As the first round of noises started, policemen and soldiers alike put hands to ears.

Foghorns, cymbals, saxophones, kazoos, drums, whistles, screeching and other noises poured out at a high rate of decibels.

This was a 'retaliation'. For many months at night both the army and the police have disturbed the women by revving up engines, shouting or throwing stones at tents, attempting to wreck us and demoralise the camp.

Fortunately someone has now bought a load of earplugs!

Visibly shocked

As the noise rippled round the perimeter from the mouths and hands of 35,000 women, many soldiers were visibly shocked.

Meanwhile, back in the forest between Orange and Main gates, next to the silos, some of us were plotting...

At 3 o'clock prompt the third round of noises sounded, and from the forest appeared a battalion of women with wirecutters. (Thanks to a 'Poison Girls' benefit gig which sent 90 pairs, supplies of wirecutters had been increased). As some of us cut, others held off the police and pulled at the fence.

In five minutes a section of fence was down. So we pulled out a carpet, threw it over the barbed wire, and charged up towards the silos inside the base, chased by very angry soldiers.

COMBINED forces of Labour abstentions and a rent-a-mob Tory turnout produced a 198-118 defeat for Jo Richardson's Sex Equality Bill on its second reading in the House of Commons last Friday. The Bill would have amalgamated and extended the provisions of the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts, and incorporated protection against anti-gay discrimination.

Socialist Organiser is taking a break over Christmas: the next issue will be dated January 5. (We need to have articles in by Saturday December 31 (for features) or Monday January 2 (for short reports).)

Last week we promised the third and final part of John O'Mahony's article on the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis would appear this week: but since then we have received the coverage on the anti-union laws, by John McIlroy, which we carry as a special pull-out and fold eight-page supplement in this paper.

We felt we had to give priority to the fight against the anti-union laws: so apologies once again for a further postponement of Sinn Féin, and of some other features.

By Judith Bonner

Somehow they couldn't catch me, so I had a while to add to the general chaos, shouting, running and charging about.

There weren't enough of us, though, so under threat of being thrown back over the fence we chose to make our own way out — only to start on a section further down.

General chaos

All along the fence similar actions were happening. The fence at many points was weak and didn't need cutting — we just pulled it down.

At one point near Orange gate soldiers looked on despairingly, unable to repair the fence as 300 women pulled on it, singing, 'There's a hole in your fence, dear major, dear major'.

Several times policemen's helmets flew in the air. 'Why don't you bloody shoot them?' said one officer as we got through the fence.

By 5 o'clock the scene was one of general chaos as the anxious soldiers and police defended the base.

'Surrender, you're surrounded', shouted one woman. Indeed they were surrounded, but surrender they didn't.

Despite the arrival of Cruise, Sunday's action indicates that Greenham will not fade away.

The women can still effectively hinder the work of the base. However, the sort of action we took on Sunday has its limitations.

There has been no major trade union campaign in support of Greenham.

The boycott of suppliers got no effective support either from CND or the trade union leaders who were approached.

Yet when the campaign to have Cruise declared illegal in the US courts was first brought about, CND gave it significant help.

'Symbolic'

This indicates how CND are only prepared to act on the merely 'symbolic' publicity stunts coming from Greenham — and not the proposals and ideas which could organise effective action to stop the base.

Greenham's actions will remain confined to token protests as long as no-one is prepared to organise trade union support for Greenham.

It is up to those of us active in the labour movement to organise this. Stopping the base at Greenham would be a major blow to NATO's and the Tories' plans for Cruise missiles. Any effective action against Cruise must be organised with Greenham as the starting point.

We must back the actions at Greenham by demanding the sort of action the Fire Brigades Union have demanded of the GMBU at Faslane base in Scotland: that trade unionists withdraw their labour at the bases, and that major suppliers like Tarmac are boycotted.



"There's a hole in your fence, dear major..."

Occupations hold up hospital closures

By Jane Goss

ON OCTOBER 25, workers at Hayes Cottage Hospital occupied to prevent the scheduled closure on October 31.

Hillingdon Health Authority had voted to "temporarily" close the hospital in a bid to save a paltry £53,000 in this financial year. The closure was part of a scheme designed to save £1 million in an effort to keep within cash limits imposed by the Tories.

On October 26, Northwood and Pinner Hospital, also in the Hillingdon Health District, occupied. They, too, were scheduled to close on October 31. Management have been reeling ever since, fighting a rearguard action to break the strength of the staff and supporters.

Both hospitals are small (30 beds) cottage hospitals — which means that the local GPs are responsible for treatment of the patients once they are referred. This cuts out the powerful consultants who are usually obstructive to this kind of direct action in defence of the NHS.

At both hospitals the GPs are supporting the occupation. Admissions have increased since the occupations started, and the hospitals are now nearly full.

The present round of occupations in defence of hospitals began in August with Thornton View in Bradford. Since then, enthusiasm and interest in occupations has grown.

Workers in Bradford helped with advice and support to Hayes and Northwood and now staff from those two hospitals are travelling around giving advice and sharing their experience with other hospitals which are threatened under the Tories' plans for mass destruction of the NHS.

At Hayes, a working class area of Hillingdon, community support has been tremendous. From the first night of occupation there has been a twenty-four hour picket.

The gate has been locked and no administrators have been allowed in. Most of the staff had never even seen the administrator "responsible" for Hayes. Within an hour of the occupation he turned up, demanding to be let in to carry out his functions (to close the hospital!). He was told to go away.

Despite a week of intimidation and harassment, staff stood firm and would not let him in. He took

writes against three workers but gave up trying to serve them after two weeks!

The strength and power of occupations is clearly shown in Hillingdon. Without this kind of action both hospitals would have been shut six weeks ago. Patient care in Hillingdon would have declined and jobs would have gone.

The workers, none of whom had taken any militant action before, have become politicised overnight. With the exception of two porters all the workers are women, many doing part-time jobs.

They had been 'promised' jobs elsewhere — but with so many strings and conditions attached that it was obvious the promise meant nothing.

The ancillary staff have led the way. They have given a strong lead and a lot of support to the nursing staff encouraging them to stand up to management and explaining to them why the occupation is so necessary.

Leading role

Two of the ancillary workers became stewards after the occupation began and are now playing a leading role in the new District joint stewards committee.

Regular meetings of staff and supporters are held in the hospital so that everyone is kept informed of the latest information. A well-organised occupation headquarters is based in an office in the hospital and is staffed by supporters and staff to organise the rota, publish leaflets, book speakers, etc.

The response of the unions has been predictable. Since the police raids which closed St. Benedicts and Longworth hospitals, militants in COHSE and NUPE have constantly pushed the bureaucracy in both unions into committing themselves to more support to occupations and to a policy of calling for strike action. Both unions have passed resolutions on occupations at their annual conferences.

Union officials do not like occupations. When workers take control of a hospital, going direct to top managers, the press, the doctors, and the health authority there is little 'negotiating' for trade union officials to do.

The very nature of an occupation threatens the cosy negotiating techniques of bureaucrats.

Occupations push workers to the frontline, making vital decisions daily. The slow rumbling union machinery is surpassed.

The consistent pressure of militants however has forced the hand of the union hierarchy. Thornton View, Hayes, and Northwood were made official immediately — whereas three years ago it took COHSE four months to make St Mary's, Harrow Road, "official".

The local NUPE official has been supportive and helpful. The local COHSE official has hardly been seen — but given his record of selling out occupations, perhaps this is a blessing.

NUPE national officer Roger Poole was speaking at a local health cuts meeting when Hayes was occupied. The workers went to the meeting directly after occupying with the news and a list of demands. They insisted that everyone should come back to the hospital.

Poole of course pledged support but when asked about helping to organise supporting strike action he said it was "too soon" and a "local issue"! How easy it is for the unions to pay the bills, give lip service to the workers fighting but still stay a million miles away from the kind of support which will keep occupations from being broken — supporting strike action.

The workers are now waiting for a District Health Authority

decision. In November a vocal lobby of the DHA which resulted in the police evicting the public — including two elderly GPs — forced the Health Authority to look again at the closures.

Public opinion is overwhelmingly against the hospitals shutting. The local Labour group have pledged support and have tried to raise the issue at every council meeting.

EMI workers are on the picket lines and take regular collections. It is hard to find anyone in Hayes who want the hospital shut.

The occupation has already kept the hospital open for six weeks. It is very strong and will only be broken now by a conscious decision of the District managers to raid the hospital using the police and private ambulances.

The way to stop that happening is by other workers in the district pledging that if one patient is removed there will be strike action which will bring the whole district grinding to a halt. The joint stewards committee discussed it at the last meeting and will be holding meetings in the local hospitals to raise the issue.

Bickerstaffe and Williams talk a lot about fighting the cuts and stopping the Tory rundown of the NHS. If they put half as much effort into organising and defending workers taking direct action, then the three occupations, Thornton View, Hayes and Northwood would already have promises of supporting strike action and the Tories' plans for the NHS would have begun to crumble.

Messages of support and donations to: Hayes Cottage Hospital Occupation, Grange Road, Hayes, Middlesex.

Campaign launched

ON December 12 a meeting was held in Nottingham to establish a campaign in support of the NGA's defiance of the Tebbit laws. The meeting — attended by 35 local trade unionists and unemployed — was addressed by local members of the NUJ and NGA.

It was called by Nottingham South Constituency Labour Party with later support from Gedling CLP and a number of other trade union and Labour Party branches.

The campaign will organise support for the NGA or any other union confronting the courts. It will also be campaigning for the TUC to call a one-day general strike.



BADGES 25p or £2 for 10 (plus 16p postage) from 'Mole Badges', 165, Liverpool Rd., London N1.

US bosses move in

FOLLOWING up the bayonet with the briefcase, as American troops pull out of Grenada, US businessmen are sizing up the chances of profitable exploitation from fresh investment in the island.

At a meeting at the White House, 100 executives were told that the Grenadian economy is "flat on its back", but that an initial study had revealed "a lot of interesting business prospects".

The devastation of the economy in the aftermath of the US invasion was also the theme of a speech by the island's Uncle Tom Governor General, Sir Paul Scoon.

Glossing over the fact that when Maurice Bishop's New Jewel Movement ousted the former dictator Eric Gairy in 1979 they found only £9.00 in the country's bank accounts, Scoon alleged corruption by the NJM. But far more damaging has been the suspension of an IMF loan of \$14 million negotiated by the NJM, whose credit rating was far stronger than the present stooge administration.

Interestingly, the island's US-installed rulers now intend to complete the Port Salines airport which the USA claimed was of no economic value, but a covert military base for "Cuban terrorism".

Now that any element of political independence has been stamped out in Grenada, the obvious value of the airport for the tourist trade can be admitted. And with the green light for exploitation, the departing US commander can say without irony: "We hope that in a couple of years we'll be able to treat Grenada the same way as the others in the Eastern Caribbean."

Veto on Salvador

SEEKING a way out of his half-yearly embarrassment at having to certify that there has been an improvement in "human rights" under El Salvador's bloody dictatorship, Ronald Reagan has hit on a new solution.

He has vetoed the Bill stipulating that such improvements are a precondition of US economic and military aid. Secretary of State George Schultz has gone even further and said that there is no prospect of an improvement on the "human rights" front in El Salvador.

The regime itself appears little concerned to whitewash its image for international consumption, even to please its US sponsors.

The President of the Constituent Assembly, notorious death squad leader Major Robert D'Aubuisson, ostentatiously boycotted a banquet laid



Reagan with Bush

on for a visit by American Vice-President George Bush.

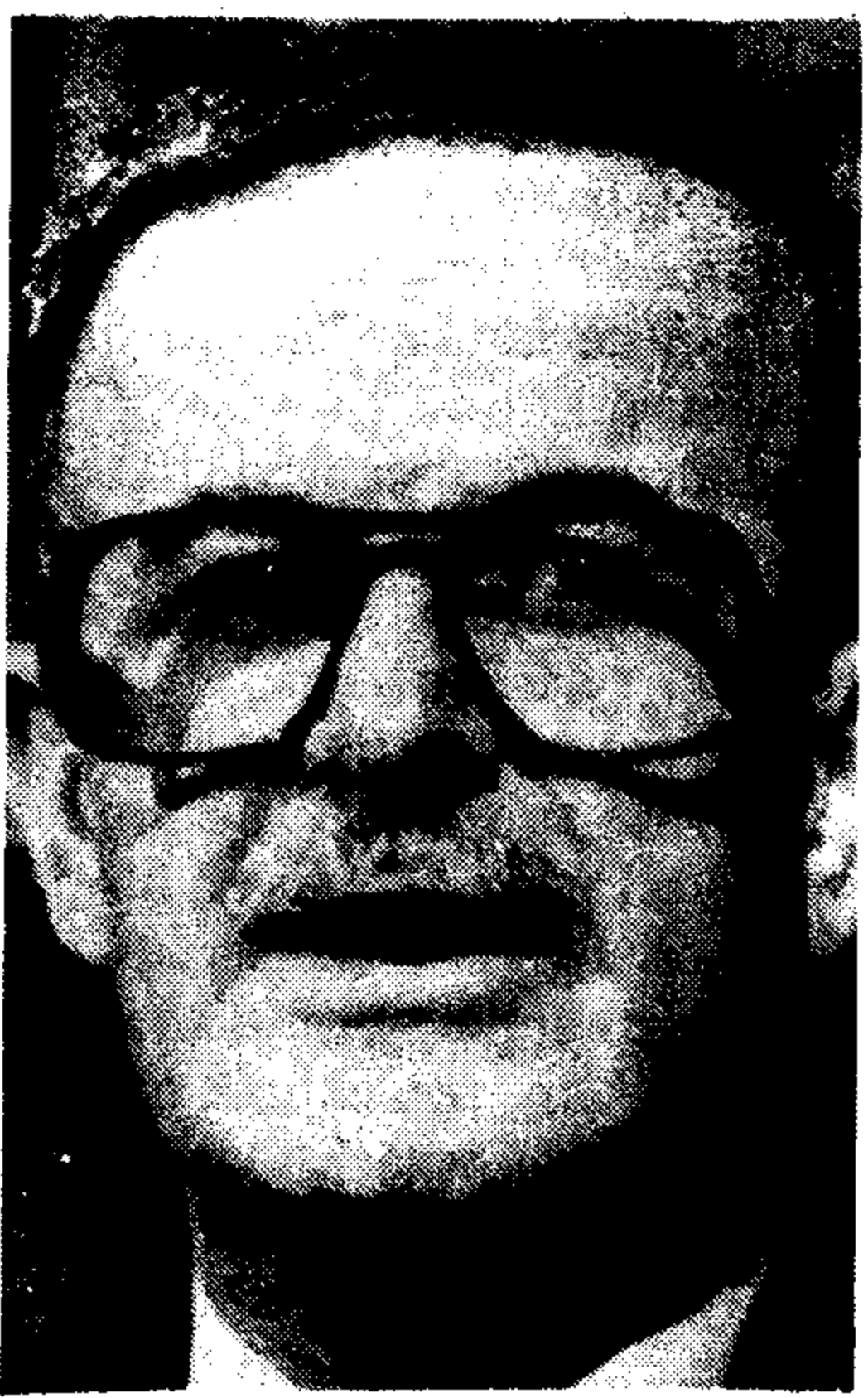
Bush's condemnation of the death squads, and his warning that their continuing toll of murders could lose the regime the "support of the American people" fell on deaf ears, coming after a deliberately provocative wave of killings targeting union leaders sponsored by the

American AFL-CIO, in conjunction with the CIA.

It is estimated that the death squads have killed anything up to 40,000 civilians in the last four years of the liberation struggle. But even this level of terror has not been sufficient to crush the fighting spirit of the Salvadoran left wing guerrillas of the FMLN, which has continued to make gains against an army which — according to State Department analysts — is teetering on the brink of collapse.

Further transfusions of cash and equipment are an obvious US response: FMLN leaders have warned of the imminent danger of US troops intervening.

But unless Reagan can find some way to gift wrap his grisly allies in San Salvador, he will have great difficulty embarking upon such an open-ended military exercise in election year.



Syrian President Assad

Syrian torture

SYRIAN security forces are responsible for systematic violations of human rights, including torture and political killings, says Amnesty International in a new report.

A network of Syrian security services act with impunity under the country's emergency decrees, and 'no-one can depend on the protection of the law'. Thousands of people have been harassed and wrongfully detained without chance of appeal, and in some cases tortured and even killed by security

forces.

Those arbitrarily arrested may be held without charge or trial for years. Amnesty says it has been working this year for the release of 17 people held in preventive detention for over 12 years and another 300 held for between two and nine years.

Hostage

The report refers to cases of relatives being held hostage while security forces sought political suspects. Such hostages, it says, have included wives and young children — and in one case three relatives were held in detention for nine years before being released in 1980.

Torture is often inflicted during incommunicado detention, and 'there is no clear limit to the length of time detainees may be held incommunicado'.

The report lists 23 methods of ill-treatment and torture reported by former detainees, including electric shocks, burnings, whippings with braided steel cable, sexual violations, and forcing detainees to watch relatives being tortured or sexually assaulted.

Extracts from testimony by 12 former detainees who alleged torture are cited. They include a 15 year old schoolboy who said he had been whipped and that his interrogator had threatened to gouge his eyes out if he did not reveal his father's whereabouts.

Torture chamber

Another former detainee describes a sound-proofed torture chamber in Aleppo equipped with 'torture tools', including electrical apparatus, pincers, scissors, a machine used for sexual violation, and an implement for 'ripping out fingernails'.

The security forces are also believed to be responsible for political killings of selected individuals or groups and to have assassinated several opponents of the government abroad, the report says.

It cites six cases of mass political killings alleged to have been carried out by the authorities between March 1980 and February 1982. They include the reported killings on June 27 1980 of between 600 and 1000 inmates of Palmyra Prison suspected of belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood.

The report refers also to thousands of killings in February 1982, when the authorities announced that their forces had crushed an uprising in the town of Hama. According to various estimates, between 10,000 to 25,000 people are reported to have died before order was re-established.

Soviet peace activist is sentenced

By Alex Simpson

ON October 7 1983 a Moscow court sentenced independent peace activist Oleg Radzinsky to one year's imprisonment and five years' internal exile.

He could have expected up to seven years imprisonment, but international solidarity by members of the Western peace movement clearly had an effect on the Soviet authorities.

Oleg Radzinsky had already spent a year before his trial in custody, first in Moscow's Lefortovo prison, then transferred to the notorious Serbsky psychiatric institute.

The Moscow group, despite official harassment, has been able to survive and carry out important independent peace initiatives.

On June 27 a petition addressed to Margaret Thatcher was handed in to the British embassy, despite KGB obstruction, protesting at the arrests at the Upper Heyford blockade. Four members of the group attempted to receive Mrs Thatcher's reply on September 5, but were stopped by police.

What Margaret Thatcher said in her reply to the group would make most interesting reading.

Coffin

This action must put the nail in the coffin of the allegation made by both the Soviet authorities and the right-wing opponents of our own peace movement that any independent organisations in the Soviet bloc are inevitably pro-Western and embrace imperialist justifications in the nuclear weapons debate.

On the evenings of August 6 and 7, seminars and poetry readings were held in the flat of Valery Godyak to commemorate Hiroshima. Up to 30 supporters attended, and there was only minimal KGB harassment. Obviously the close attention paid by some Western observers is inhibiting the Soviet authorities on occasion from clamping down on the group's activities as hard as they would wish.

According to the exiled group's leader Sergei Batovim, now in New York, the independent peace movement may have up to 2000 supporters scattered throughout the USSR. From the city of Rybinsk in the North, to Odessa on the Black Sea, and east to the city of Tyumen in Central Siberia, up to ten cities have independent peace groups.

Whether the independent peace movement can survive in the present political climate depends on the consistency and solidarity of socialists and disarmers in the West. The independent peace activists in Russia ask only to campaign for nuclear disarmament free from the bureaucracy and official orchestration by the state-run peace movement of the USSR.

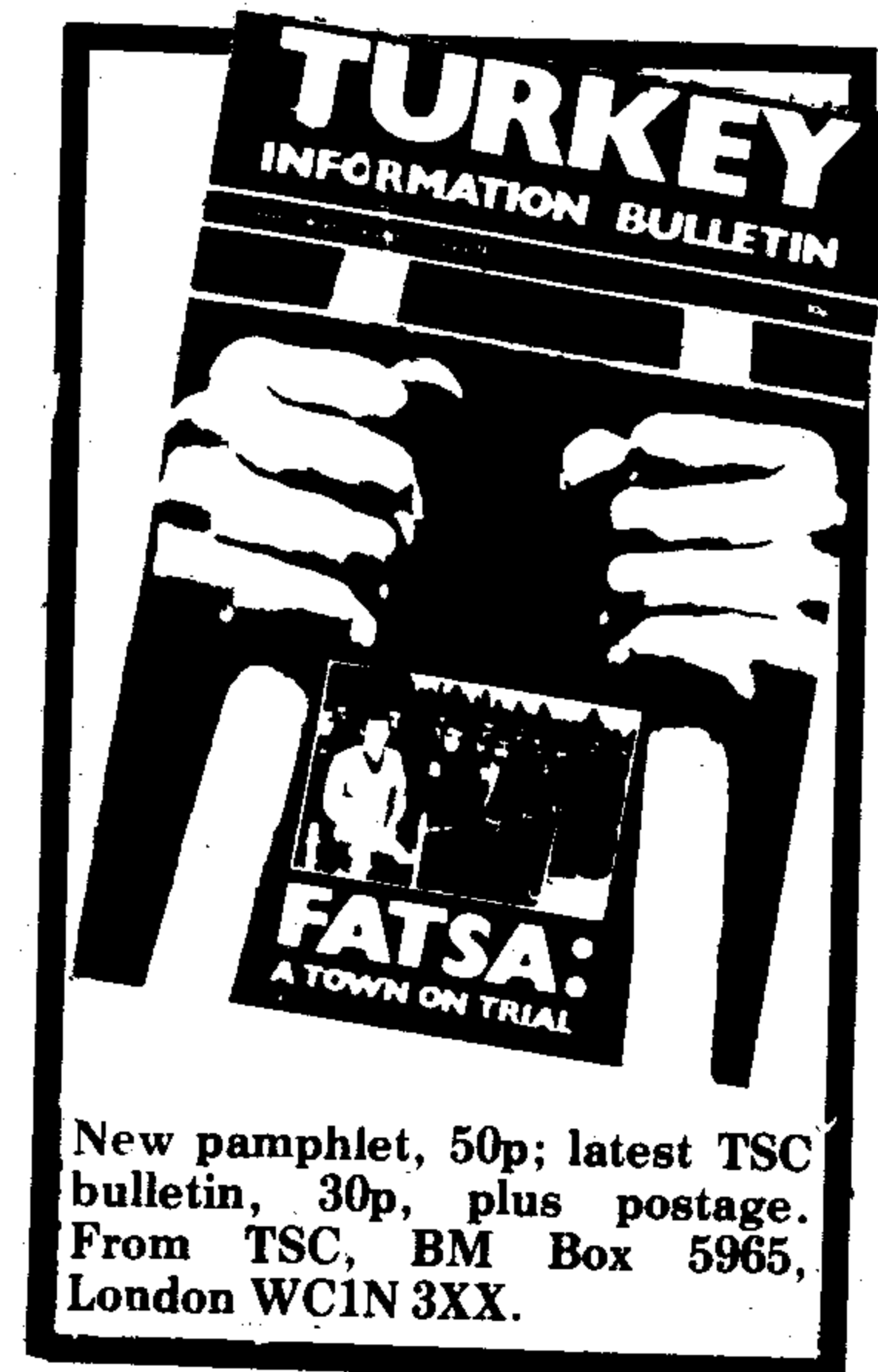
It is up to us to ensure that our fellow campaigners in the Soviet Union do not share the same fate as Oleg Radzinsky.

Protests

All protests concerning the unjustified imprisonment of Oleg Radzinsky should be sent to:

Mr Yuri V Andropov, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, The Kremlin, Moscow, USSR; or Mr Yuri Zhukov, Chairman, Official Soviet Peace Committee, Prospekt Mira 36, Moscow, USSR.

It only costs a 19p stamp for an act of vital and very worthwhile internationalism.



North and South

by Paddy Dollard

UDR charges

SEVEN members of the British Army's Northern Ireland-recruited auxiliary force, the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), have now been charged with involvement in the sectarian murder of Catholics in Armagh. Five others are in custody being questioned at the time of writing (December 14th).

It looks like the British authorities intend to do a thorough job of rooting out this particular pocket of organised sectarianism in their Army's Northern Ireland ranks.

But they don't deserve any credit for it.

They have taken action not in response to the rampant sectarianism in the UDR — the existence of which has long been a matter of general knowledge and public comment — but in response to the Catholic sectarian backlash it provoked in South Armagh.

Their motive for action came from the lurid atrocity at Darkley's Pentecostal church, not from the day-by-day routine atrocity the British authorities themselves perpetrate against the Catholics of Northern Ireland by setting the inevitably sectarian UDR force to 'police' their areas.

They are rooting out one pocket of UDR sectarianism in

Armagh so that this other atrocity can continue throughout Northern Ireland. It is therefore mainly a cosmetic exercise.

The energy with which the authorities pursue this nest of sectarianism is the latest example of the 'politics of the last atrocity'. The authorities tolerated the activities of the sectarian UDR in South Armagh until Darkley signalled to them that things were getting out of control.

So, they increased the activities of the SAS in South Armagh on the one hand; and on the other they are acting to remove the rampant sectarian provocation which the sectarian murder gang operating under cover of the UDR had become to the Catholics of South Armagh.

Sectarian force

But there are other organised sectarian murder groups in the UDR, and the UDR is everywhere a Protestant sectarian force — even when its members are 'disciplined' and refrain from inflicting freelance murder and mayhem on the 'Papist enemies of Protestant Ulster' who happen to make up 35% of its population. The UDR is nothing but a Protestant sectarian militia. All of it and every bit of it, everywhere in Northern Ireland.

Putting a few of them on trial for murder in South Armagh won't change that, and will in fact be used to hide it and pretend it isn't so.

Escalation

THE KILLING OF Edgar Graham, the Official Unionist spokesman on Northern Ireland Home Affairs, last week, led to predictable accusations from politicians and churchmen that the Provos are deliberately trying to incite civil war. Whatever the IRA's intentions, such actions do edge Northern Ireland towards civil war.

The polarisation between the Catholic and Protestant communities is now, according to commentators from all shades and stripes of opinion, extremely tight. The killing of a man such as Edgar Graham is a sectarian act. It will certainly be seen by Protestants as an attack on the Protestant community. It is one more incident in the escalation of sectarianism and its identical twin, 'counter-sectarianism'.

Graham was a lawyer and an advocate of repression against the IRA and INLA. He also had a reputation as impartially opposed to all paramilitaries, speaking out against Protestant gunmen and sectarian attacks on Catholics, in sharp contrast to most Unionist politicians whose denunciations tend to be limited to the IRA and INLA. He was an elected representative of the Protestant community.

If he was a legitimate target, then which Protestant — sharing his opinions or going further, as most of them do — would not be?

INLA has long rationalised a scarcely disguised Catholic sectarianism as political hostility

to 'pro-imperialists'. There is the same Catholic-sectarian logic in the Provisional IRA's recent decision to withdraw from the Protestant community recognition as a distinct part of the Irish people, and to substitute for it the 'political' redefinition long favoured by the INLA, that the Protestant community is just a pro-imperialist political group. Incidents like the killing of Graham bring out the sectarian logic — plainly.

What the Provos intend is probably to complete the wrecking of Prior's Assembly. The Official Unionists withdrew from it (leaving only Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party and Alliance) in response to Darkley. Graham's killing makes it much more difficult for them to return.

Tragically, the lesson some Republicans seem to have learned from the Protestant General Strike which wrecked the power-sharing executive in 1974 is that the Protestants, stoked up, or detonated by Republican activity, have the weight and power to wreck anything Britain tries to do in Northern Ireland. So it makes sense to stoke them up.

The Provos are right to want to smash the Assembly. But to do it by massively increasing the already lethal level of sectarianism in Northern Ireland is both short-sighted and, inevitably, counter-productive for the goals of Republicanism — not to speak of the goals of socialism.

There are millions in the same situation...

"There must be something better"

A short story by Jim Tolton

THE ALARM rings, it's 7.30 a.m. He knocks it off and drifts back to sleep, then wakes suddenly in a sweat remembering he has a job interview later that day. He recalls when he lived at home, "Graeme" his mother would call "are you awake - time is getting on."

Then he remembers waking a lot during the night. One of those restless nights that often occur now, before an interview.

Shall I shave? What shall I wear? Bloody hell, what does it matter, it's only a warehouse job!

He looks at the clock. It's ten to eight. Even though he's unemployed he still rises early to be outside the Job Centre fifteen minutes before it opens at 9 o'clock. But there's always one or two there before him.

Only today he's not going down the Job Centre, today is different. It's always different when he has a job interview.

This reminds him of the time he went to 'Tech'. Every day, bar Tuesday, there would be the unnatural horror of rising at 6.30 a.m., to be early for work, doing his apprenticeship. But on Tuesdays he went to Technical College, which meant he could lay in bed another hour. Then he would rise, shave, take a shower and dress smart in his second best suit, so he'd be ready for an early date that evening.

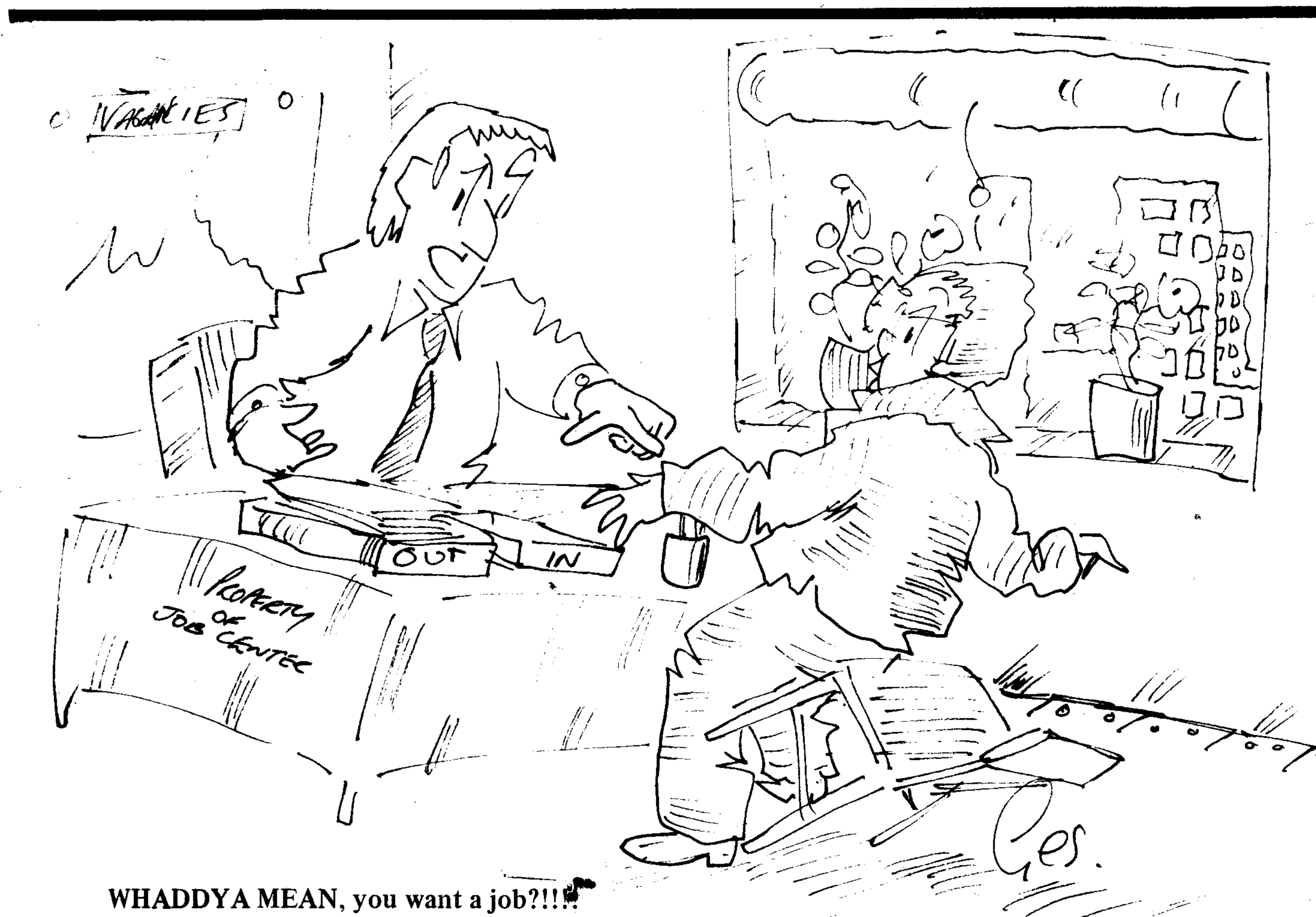
But he's not going to 'Tech', nor does he have a date. So why should he shave? He's been trying to grow a beard on and off for the last three months. So why shouldn't he have his interview with a week's growth on his face?

He remembers a conversation he had in the pub on the eve of his redundancy. This guy Joe said to him, "You want to know Graeme, you can't grow a beard on the dole." Graeme replied "Balls, what ya talking about?"

It's eight o'clock - thoughts of anxiety reappear. I'd better be getting up, but why should I shave and why should I cower down to their stupid values? Fuck them. Then again, I do need a job. But not this particular job. Who wants to work in a warehouse for the rest of his life?

He thought back to the day he'd had an interview for a seasonal job as a Courier in Spain. English speaking for English tourists.

It was a Friday. It had been



the subject of conversation, on and off, with his mates over a period of three weeks prior to the interview. The chance to travel, to get away. Accommodation with the job, so no worries about finding lodgings. No Catch 22 situation - no job, no digs, no address, no job.

He remembered the anxiety of preparing for that interview. He'd had no previous experience, but he had attended Spanish evening classes the previous autumn up to basic conversation level.

The job didn't call for any particular qualifications, only references. Therefore rare feelings of confidence were to be enjoyed. There was nothing much else doing at the time, nothing suitable of a permanent nature. So this was something to look forward to.

He borrowed money on the strength of this job, money that was needed for the return train fare to get to the interview. His dole only lasts him for about a week, so borrowing a few quid from his mates was the norm. This, despite the fact that he did the occasional "cash in hand" job to supplement his taxable unemployment benefit.

He spent some of the money on a 'piss-up' - after all it was one of those rare high periods. The prospect of a reasonable job made him feel good.

Only it wasn't just the one

'piss-up'. There was another. In fact he'd nearly blown the entire loan on booze and fags. And the high period was short-lived.

It was then that he decided to grow a beard, this coupled with sloth.

He attended that interview after scrambling enough money together, travelling by bus instead.

Returning that same evening, he dropped in at the pub.

He sees Joe and calls to him, "Hey Joe. Gizza pint, I'm skint."

prepared. Although he had been polishing up on his Spanish, he'd given little thought to any hypothetical questions relating to the requirements of the passengers.

Later his brother and sister-in-law had dropped in, bought him a pint and lent him a fiver. He felt amorous so he decided, it being Friday and him already dressed from the interview, to go to the Palais.

It turned out to be a disappointing experience. After he'd built up his "dutch courage" to dance, it only took the one

worth it.

He remembered last night's telly. The Money Programme. a car plant run by robots - spot welding and fitting components, and not a worker in sight.

He thought he'd like to have a robot to take his interview for him, rather than have to go through the ordeal of psyching himself up every time.

Though his trade was broken down and somewhat de-skilled and lacking in stimulation, it had its compensations. It was relatively well-paid, unlike the few crummy jobs that are on the

... returning home, he threw a brick through the Job Centre window and ran...

"Skint again, whatya spent it on this time?" Joe asks.

"Well, it's like this, I've just got back from that job interview I was telling you about and spent out getting there."

"You've not been to a job interview like that, have you?" Joe asks.

"Like what?" replies Graeme.

"You know what, with that stubble over yer face."

"Yeh, why not? Anyway Joe are you gonna gizza pint or not?"

Joe gives him a quid, "ere y're and don't forget the change."

Graeme's blase attitude belied his feelings of anxiety and doubt, but he didn't hide them from himself. He knew what he felt when he saw the down and outs on "Dossier's Triangle" - Town Hall Square, Market Place, Woolies Cafe.

When he returned with his pint Joe asked: "How was your interview?"

"Huh, not bad. There was a couple of sticky questions, they are letting me know within a week," he replied, realising now that he should have been better

refusal to put him in a transient mood, spending the rest of the evening drinking. Returning home in the early hours, he threw a brick through the Job Centre window and ran.

Within the week, as promised, he received a letter about the Courier job - and sure enough it was the all too familiar kind of reply. Regret to inform you... that on this occasion...

It was now half eight and he was thinking: Joe's right. You can't grow a beard on the dole. So he gets up and decides to shave. Feeling low he prepares himself for yet another interview.

Trade

His thoughts turned to his school days at the local Technical Grammar School and his father's words, "Son, take my advice, you won't go far wrong if you get a trade under your belt." He'd worked hard, passed the relevant 'O' levels, taken a craft apprenticeship, attained his City and Guilds. But the prospects of continuing his trade in the city were now dead. He wondered what went wrong and whether it was all

market at the moment, yielding only half to two-thirds of the wage that he'd been used to.

So his preparation for this warehouse job interview was without enthusiasm.

"Not suitable"

He felt it was all futile - being in competition with, maybe, a couple of dozen other wretched workers chasing the same job. Often he was "not suitable", because he didn't have the right qualifications. Sometimes he was "not suitable" because he was over-qualified.

Like the time he went after a job that was advertised in the Mercury for someone able-bodied. This job he really wanted, to enable him to clear some debts. He'd answered the application form correctly, declaring his educational qualifications. Consequently he didn't get the job, because it was thought that he wouldn't stick to it - he would leave as soon as he found something better (which was probably true).

After that disappointment,

he got a 'moonlighting' job on the market, two days a week.

He was conscious of it being unlawful, and bothered by that because of his moralistic upbringing - church on Sundays, Boy Scouts during the week. But due to financial pressure he took it.

Then he watched an episode of "Boys from the Black Stuff" on telly - the one where the principle characters were chased by the DHSS officials across the building site and one of them, panicked by the chase, falls and kills himself. After that he started having feelings of 'paranoia'.

So he packed up 'moonlighting' after he'd cleared his debts, only to be told that if he could hang on a little longer, there might be a permanent job.

Anyway, what's in front of him now is another interview.

He sits down to his breakfast, switching on the radio for some music to lift his spirits. 'Thought for the Day'. Then the news, announcing record unemployment figures, Thatcher's voice talking about the economy: "We've about got it right". "We are on target". Followed by the Opposition spokesman, extolling the virtues of Labour's Alternative Economic Strategy. It didn't sound much of an alternative to Graeme. He wipes his face, puts on his tie and his brightly polished shoes, puts on his coat, and steps out from his flat, to face yet another day on the dole.

It's raining, a typical Monday morning. As he waits at the bus-stop, thinking he must get himself one of those cheap-fare bus passes, he pulls up his collar and sinks his hands deep into his pockets to keep them warm. He discovers a folded newspaper which this guy tried to sell him but finally just gave him outside the Job Centre last week.

The bus comes, he gets on it, his mind now concentrating on the interview. It wasn't much of a job - but it was a job. He was looking smart. He felt he would do alright, despite his low attitude.

But it's early. He still has forty minutes to kill, so he makes for a cafe nearby, for a cup of tea. Outside a 'drop-out' asks him for 20p. Graeme has to turn him away, telling him that he's on the dole himself.

He enters the cafe, has a cup of tea, then makes for his interview. At the interview he is informed that he will be told the result after the rest of the applicants have been seen.

On returning to the street, a good feeling comes over him; the rain has stopped, the sun is out, the pre-interview anxiety has lifted.

He's walking by the Town Hall Square and notices quite a few people in there, so he makes his way over, sees the seats are dry, sits down. Reading the paper he'd discovered earlier, he hadn't been there many minutes when another 'down and out' plonked himself beside him. Only this time it was an offer - not a take. He offered Graeme a swig of cider, but Graeme declined, saying that it was a bit early for him.

Then the 'cider-drinker' shuffles off, mumbling something. Graeme is thinking, I hope I don't degenerate to that. There must be something better for both of us.

Turning back to the paper he reads something about an unemployment march from Scotland to London, passing through Leicester in a month's time. He realises that he's not alone, there are millions of others in the same situation, so he decided to find out more about it...

50p for a single copy, 40p per copy for 5 or more, and 30p per copy for 20 or more, from Employment Unit, Southwark CVS, 135 Rye Lane, London SE15. Cheques payable to Southwark CVS. Please add an amount for postage.

Diary of a People's Marcher and "How politics were kept out of the People's March" by Satinder Singh and Tony Purtil Introduction by Jeremy Corbyn, MP

Would there really be a 'Day After'?

By IAN SWINDALE

100 million viewers in America and 15 million in Britain are estimated to have watched 'The Day After', screened by ITV on Saturday night. The film depicts a deteriorating political and military situation in Europe leading to the seizure of West Berlin by the Russians and a conventional nuclear attack on West Germany.

NATO forces use tactical nuclear weapons to halt the advancing tanks and the escalation continues to massive nuclear exchanges between the US and the USSR.

This build up is shown from the standpoint of three families living in Kansas City or the surrounding countryside — a doctor and his wife; a black serviceman and his wife; and a farmer and his family.

Cruise and Trident are deliberately omitted as part of the film's scenario but the people who live in the countryside around Kansas literally have Minutemen ICBM silos at the bottom of their gardens.

Unwilling at first to believe that anyone could be made enough to use such weapons, they watch, horror-stricken, as all around them Minutemen missiles streak from their silos on their way to annihilate Russian cities.

The destruction caused by the incoming Soviet missiles is vividly portrayed. Human beings are reduced to mere skeletons in a fraction of a second and buildings disintegrate as if they are made of match sticks.

In the aftermath nobody escapes as the survivors succumb to radiation sickness. The doctor — himself to become a victim of radiation — works on with increasing futility in the only remaining hospital in the area, as hundreds of people slowly deteriorate around him, losing their hair and developing the most ghastly sores as a



JOHN HARRIS

Heseltine was shaken...

result of radiation. Outside, looters are executed by the authorities.

The film claims to present the facts of nuclear war and its aftermath, rather than take sides in the nuclear debate.

But when the President broadcasts to the few radiated survivors in the smoking ruins of what used to be America, the news that the US didn't surrender and stood firm for freedom and democracy, the obvious implication is that the price paid is too high and "freedom and democracy" will have no meaning after a nuclear war.

The general opinion seems to be that even so, the effects of nuclear war were greatly played down in the film. In a nuclear attack thousands of people would suffer the most horrific burns and medical services

would break down under the strain long before the symptoms of radiation sickness began to appear.

The scenes of ordered chaos seemed to minimise the complete breakdown of society that would actually result from nuclear holocaust.

Dennis Healey, in a discussion after the film, also pointed out that the film avoided the question of the 'nuclear winter' that scientists now believe would follow a nuclear war as dust enveloped the earth, blotting out the sun and causing temperatures to drop so low that it would be impossible to sustain human life. (Healey himself nevertheless remains completely hostile to unilateral nuclear disarmament).

A more difficult assessment to make is what impact the film

would have had on the millions of viewers not already committed to the unilateralist cause.

Peter Watkins, who made 'The War Game' for the BBC in the early '60s — a film which the BBC has refused to show right to this day — is quoted in Sunday's Observer criticising 'The Day After' as part of "an attempt to assimilate nuclear weapons into the Western social process. The film poses the question as to how we are supposed to differentiate between this film (and its subject) and all the countless other films using the same structural and psychological methods of presentation such as Dallas, Winds of War, Kojak, etc."

Harrowing

I certainly found Watkins' own film to be a far more harrowing account, both when it was first made and on a second viewing more recently, although it now looks very dated, particularly, I should imagine, for a young audience.

The Day After, however, was made primarily for an American TV audience which is fed a staple diet of soap opera and which has never in its history had to contemplate the destruction of its own towns and cities in wartime.

By depicting, even in a limited way, the implications of nuclear war for American working people, The Day After may well have begun to raise questions in the minds of millions of Americans about US 'Defence' policy that perhaps they were not asking before.

And to judge by Michael Heseltine's decision to rush round every TV and radio studio that would accept him in the 24 hours after the showing (so long as Bruce Kent wasn't anywhere in the vicinity), the film may have had a useful impact on British audiences too.



Boxing A Noble Art?

A discussion piece by Gerry Hoffa

IS Boxing compatible with socialism? Those socialists who saw the recent Marvin Hagler vs. Roberto Duran fight, in which both men picked up \$10 million each, would certainly have pondered on this. Would Boxing as "an example of the aggressive import of capitalist relationships" wither away in a socialist society rather like the State itself is expected to?

My own view is that Boxing has nothing to do with the competitiveness of capitalism, but is in fact one of the oldest of sports — what Byron called the "Noble Art" — and is something that socialists can consistently support.

The usual reply to this view is that Boxing is about big capitalists, Mickey Duff for example, pitting working class boys against each other and picking up rich pickings in the process. Of course this is all true. But doesn't this hold for every mass institutional activity that takes place within capitalism? Racing, football, tennis, darts — you name it — they have all provided lucrative careers for participants and parasites alike.

Even our own feminist movement has provided large profits for certain publishing companies who have seen market potential in it.

Indeed, the recent Howell Report on Sporting Agents shows the wide net that the Mark McCormack's cover in making their corn.

Boxing is no exception to this.

This does not, however deny the artistic and cultural importance of Boxing as a "primary human sporting activity". Maybe those hostile to the game could inform us which country won the most Boxing Olympic Golds in Moscow in 1980?

The answer is non-capitalist Cuba. A society not driven at all by the desire to market aggressive profit-making as a human value.

So is the popularity of the sport simply because it is good fun watching two guys (usually proletarian) bashing each other about? Is this Boxing's raison d'être?

Nothing could be further from the truth. The real appeal of the game lies in the contraposition of two fundamental drives that have characterised all preceding human societies.

In short, the aggression of the barbarian who wishes to achieve his goal through the bludgeon (the fighter) and the skill of the scientist who displays his expertise and finesse (the boxer) in order to tame the animal (the fighter).

Surely those who saw the

second Ray Leonard vs. Roberto Duran battle saw a classic cameo of this type of struggle. Leonard, the artist displaying a whole panoply of boxing technique, conquering the brute who wished to succeed through sheer aggression alone.

Moreover, such epics have been fought throughout the history of the game, and socialists have been involved too! In 1884 during the bare-knuckle days a member of the newly-formed Social Democratic Federation, 'Rapiere' Ray Attwell, challenged the then champion, John L. Sullivan, based in New York.

Before Attwell crossed the Atlantic, H.M. Hyndman wrote in "The Social Democrat" —

"It is typical of the abstemious Fabian lilies that they condemn 'the Noble Art'. Our champion, Attwell, represents a cultured athleticism that cannot be matched by Sullivan's thuggery. All socialists should support his quest."

Too small

In the event, the 5' 8" Attwell was too small for the American giant. But Hyndman was certainly right to draw out the connection between the Fabians' hostility to Boxing with their later hypocritical class pacifism.

It seems that even today the notion of struggle, whether in a physical and sporting sense or in a social class sense, is just too unpalatable for those elements who have absorbed the dominant ethos of a hypocritical liberalism.

Finally, there is no reason to doubt at all that Boxing will flourish even more under a socialist society.

CHRISTMAS WINES

By JAMES HABITAT-HOORAY

FEW of us in the Communist Party drink wines as regularly as we would like to, so we tend to think of even the most modest Christmas bottle of Chateau-neuf-du-Hobbsawm as a special class collaborationist treat.

Of course the delights of the crisp, light Vapohicella-Rowthorn would be entirely wasted upon many Party members, especially those beer swilling workers who support Mick Costello.

So what are the best recommendations for the discerning Euro-communist over the Christmas and New Year period?

For aperitif, a vintage Gramsci is the best, but it must be treated with care and only consumed in small quantities and out of context. Alternatively the sparkling Slipman at about half the price (a modest £15 or thereabouts) is commendable, and the Cremant de Becampbell from the same source, can be most amusing.

But the best value is undoubtedly a Saumur Jacques. Under-priced owing to over-production and a weak market, this 'cleans' the palate before a meal and makes a refreshing change from the tiresome, cloying, daily Chateau Chater, much favoured by trade union officials.

To accompany the meal, what could be more agreeable than a dry, stimulating Gorz, with which to toast the end of



JOHN HARRIS

"Recommendations for the discerning Eurocommunist" the working class?

Yugoslav mixed-economy

Riesling has its good points, but one would be ill-advised to touch anything else East European.

The Italian is always an obvious choice, especially Chianti Berlinguer, which is unlikely to upset even the most timid SDP supporter amongst your broad alliance of guests.

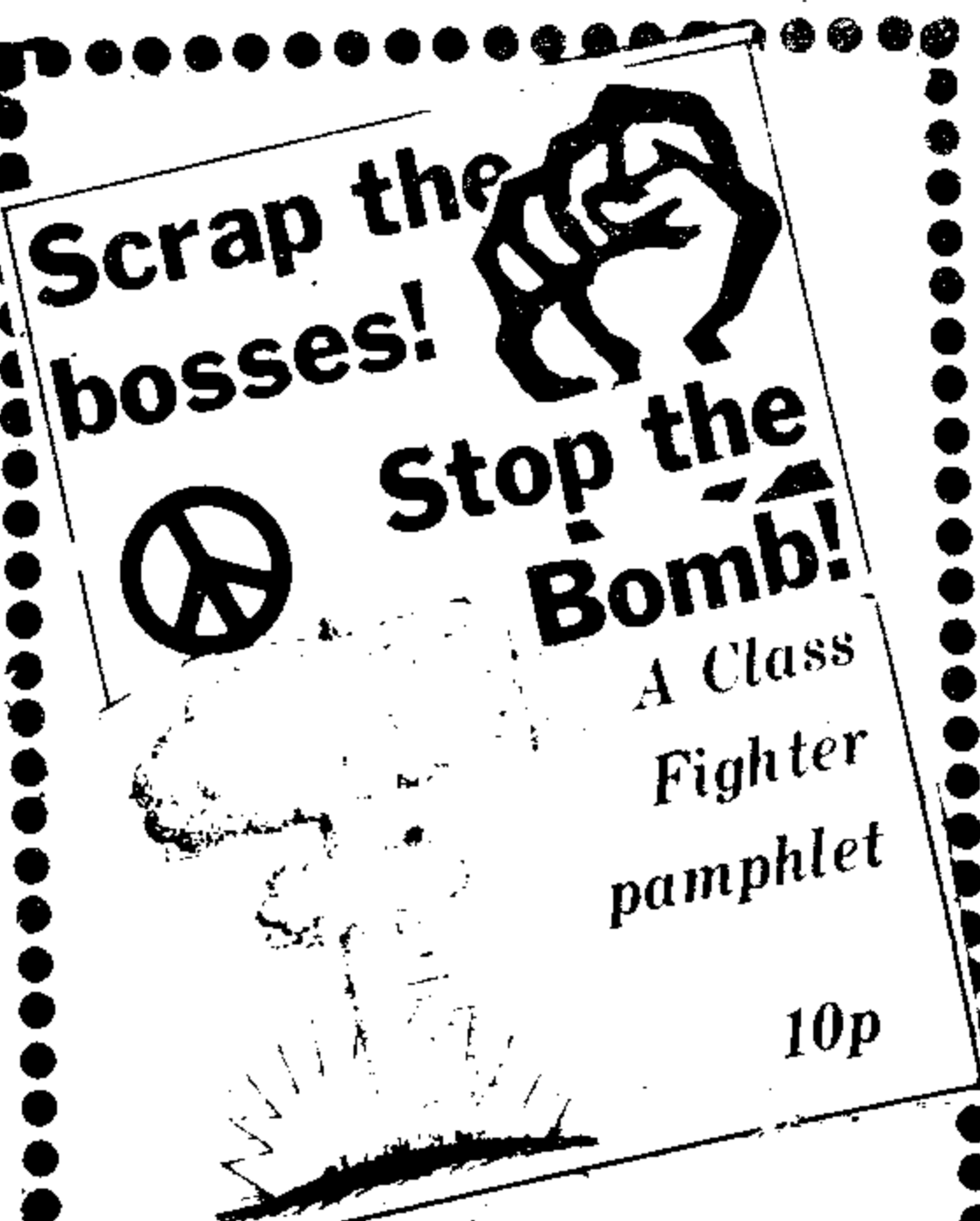
Mercieca from Vitry is good for the round but doesn't always travel well and may offend the sensibility of anti-racist vicars.

For dessert, the finest accompaniment is undoubtedly the ever popular Sauternes Dimitrov. This is inevitably expensive and a very attractive, cheaper alternative is Muscat-de-Bloomfield-de-McLennan.

This Christmas the most likely clarets are red, white and blue Jenkins' vintages from the years 1981 to 1983, or the more recent Hain offerings, mellowed concoctions in pleasing contrast to earlier, more acerbic vintages.

But be sure to lay-in early to avoid the proles panic-buying just before Christmas. The table wines will also benefit from a rest before corks are drawn on the 25th.

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10p plus postage from 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.



New issue now out! Heffer and Kinnock on the Middle East. The fight in Fatah. 10p plus postage from LMCfP, 28 Carlton Mansions, Holmleigh Rd., London N16.

Handbook on the World

'World View 1984'. Pluto Press £7.95.

LIKE two previous issues this is a useful and handy reference book.

It gives basic economic and social statistics for almost every country in the world, short articles about most countries, and regional maps.

A few words of criticism, though. This year's edition is slightly larger and more expensive than last year's. But the extra space has been given mostly to expanding the range of short articles in the book — on issues ranging from world banking to African influences in popular music — rather than expanding the statistical information.

I would have preferred it otherwise. Some of the articles are good, some are poor, but practically all would be better placed in a magazine than in a reference book. A reference book should either give bare facts and figures, or provide fairly comprehensive summaries, encyclo-

paedia-style. The articles in this book fall between two stools.

What the book gives in the way of facts and figures could be improved, too. The choice is very conventional.

Most of the figures given can be found (more cheaply, rather better presented and together with a lot of others) in the World Bank World Development Report. Wouldn't it be worth making an effort to provide the sort of facts and figures which take much searching to find in the standard official reports?

The stocks of foreign investment in various countries; statistics for multinationals and for particular industries, as well as for nation-states; shares of profits in national income; trade union membership in various countries; wage rates; indications of whether big factories or small dominate in different countries; systems of land tenure and figures for distribution of land; long-term historical comparisons as well as figures for recent years...

A yearbook including all that would take a lot of work to compile. But it would be immensely valuable to socialists.

Socialist view on Hong Kong

Gregor Benton, 'The Hong Kong Crisis'. Pluto Press £3.50.

HONG Kong is probably the most important remaining colony in the capitalist world: 5½ million people (more than Ireland); more foreign trade than China proper or Brazil, and much more than India; a major financial centre for East Asia.

Yet the issue of Hong Kong has hardly been discussed at all in the British labour movement. Only the fact that Britain's lease on the greater part of the colony's territory expires in 1997 has sparked any concern.

Gregor Benton's book attempts to establish a socialist view.

Hong Kong under British rule, he reports, is run as a not-very-enlightened despotism. It "is a society of several thousand multimillionaires and tycoons — and of millions who live from hand to mouth, with only the barest security."

Three-quarters of a million people live in shanty towns. Workers are paid by the piece, with no minimum wage and practically no unemployment benefit.

Medical services are "cheap but appallingly bad" for the majority. "The proportion of Hong Kong's 'national' income devoted to education is still among the world's lowest."

There is no form of elected self-government. The language of 98% of Hong Kong people — Chinese — has been an official language only since 1974, and is still rarely used in government councils or in courts of law.

Despite all this, most Hong Kong people are "inclined to compromise with British rule in

the colony and to oppose a return to mainland administration."

It was not always so. In 1925-6, the workers of Hong Kong fought a tremendous general strike against their British rulers. After World War 2, "there was widespread support for the communists (Maoists)..." and for a while sections of workers became very militant...

Sympathy for the mainland regime remained even up to the early 1960s. It began to vanish as starving refugees and desperate appeals for food came out of the mainland in the wake of the crash collectivisation drive of the Great Leap Forward. It drained away as the chaos of the 1970s was followed by the suppression of the democracy movement in the early 1980s.

At the price of a few meagre reforms, the colonial administration has been able to win social peace and a decline of trade union membership and activity in the Hong Kong working class since 1977.

So what should socialists argue? Gregor Benton reports that the Hong Kong Trotskyists are campaigning for a democratically elected sovereign assembly in Hong Kong. The people of Hong Kong should decide their own future. British rule should be ended. Reunification with the mainland should be linked with the fight for socialist democracy (i.e. for an anti-bureaucratic revolution — though Benton does not use the word revolution).

Benton also describes the policies of the mainland Chinese government and of different sections of the Hong Kong bourgeoisie. Beijing's line is that Hong Kong should be brought under its sovereignty, but with local autonomy so that "absolutely nothing" will change there socially and economically.

Modern theories of imperialism

'Historical Capitalism', by Immanuel Wallerstein, Verso £3.95. 'The Geometry of Imperialism', by Giovanni Arrighi. Revised edition with a new afterword (the first edition was in 1978): Verso £3.95

A review of two new books, and a contribution to the discussion in Socialist Organiser about imperialism and how to fight it

By Martin Thomas

BOTH GIOVANNI Arrighi and Immanuel Wallerstein are well-known Marxist or neo-Marxist writers on imperialism and underdevelopment.

Arrighi has written most notably on class structures in Africa; Wallerstein is the author of a large-scale historical work on 'The Modern World System'.

The two books reviewed here are both short summaries of conceptual debates.

A large part of Arrighi's book is, in my view, wrong-headed. Much of it is certainly difficult to understand.

Some of the most essential points are made as passing comments, while relatively minor issues are discussed at length.

Wallerstein's book is lucid and well-constructed, but very abstract and probably difficult to understand without prior knowledge of the debates it comes out of.

Bodies

Both books, however, contribute a lot to clarifying the terms in which 'imperialism' is discussed among the Left.

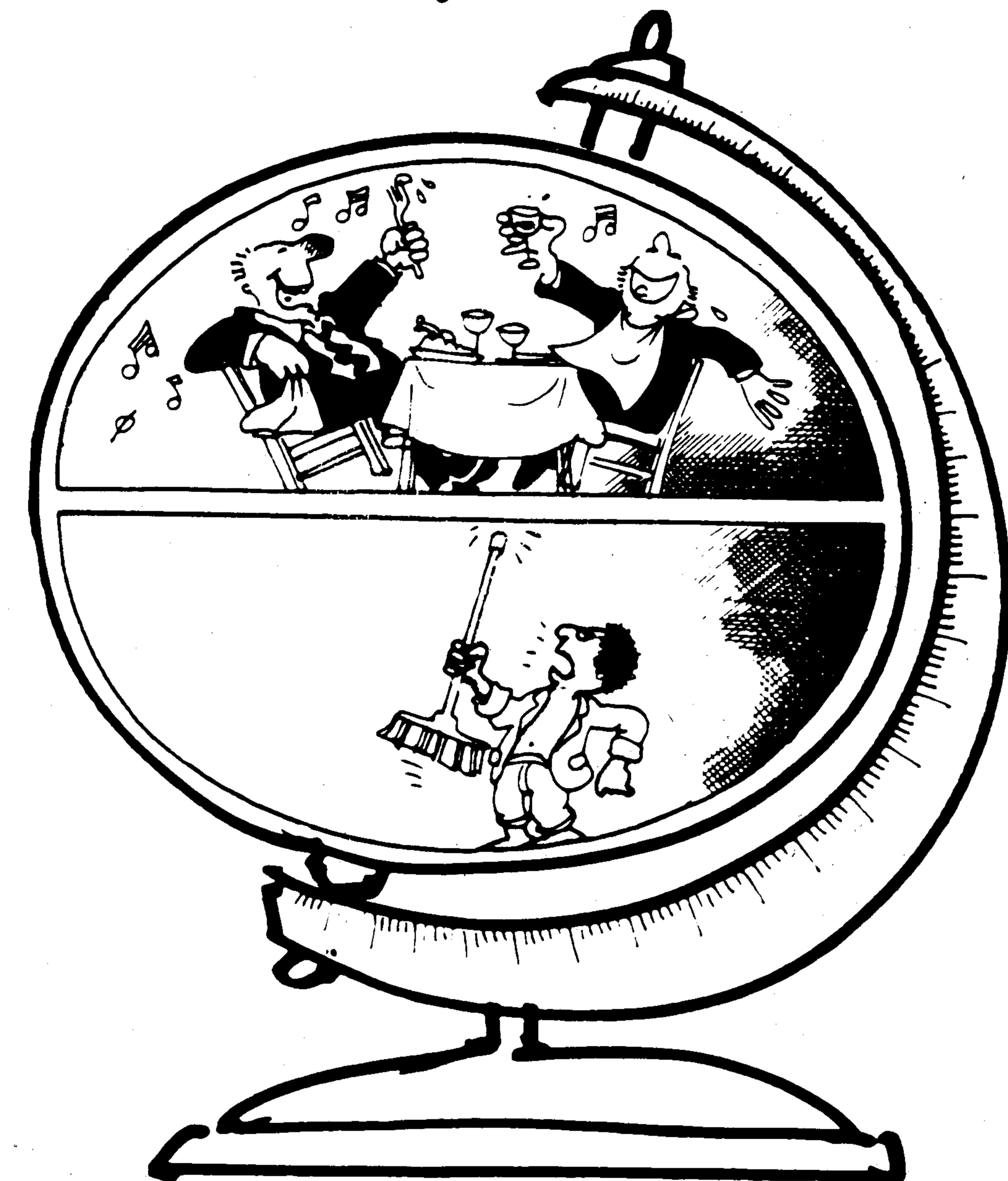
"By the early 1970s", Arrighi points out, "two main bodies of analysis had developed, which were quite distinct in their premises but confusingly lumped together under the label, 'theories of imperialism'."

"The first body of theories, produced from the beginning of the century up through the First World War, had a common object of analysis: the growing competition between capitalist states over territory..."

"There was a second body of theories..."

"... Political and intellectual opposition to past and continuing relations between the evidently developed and the evidently much less developed countries, grew. And so did theories expressing this opposition and explaining historically and analytically why such relations... enriched the rich and exploited the poor among the countries of the world..."

One body of theory — Hilferding, Bukharin, Lenin — focused on the export of capital from advanced capitalist countries and its consequences in terms of inter-imperialist rivalry, militarism, and war. It recognised the plunder of poor countries by rich (which had been going on for



centuries) but focused on what was new in the 'Third World'.

For Lenin, for example, what lay behind the 1911 Revolution in China was that the country was 'on the eve of a gigantic capitalist development' which would produce many cities 'teeming with capitalist riches and proletarian need and poverty'.

Revolutionary conclusions followed from the contradictions within capitalist development, and the contradictions between capitalist development and pre-capitalist or colonial institutions.

Another school of thought — represented by more recent writers like Wallerstein and also Baran, Frank, Amin, Emmanuel — focuses on the export of revenue from underdeveloped capitalist countries. It draws its socialist conclusions not from capitalist development in the Third World

but from the alleged impossibility of such development on any serious scale.

Class relations, for this school of thought, are subordinate to or subsumed in the web of economic flows from Third World 'periphery' to US/West European 'core'.

These flows are the essence of world capitalism. Apparently 'pre-capitalist' forms are in fact only part of the capitalist world system.

Distinct

The two bodies of theory are quite distinct in the questions they ask, the answers they give, and the concepts they use. Both could agree broadly that 'imperialism is the world system of monopoly capitalism': yet they would give very different meanings to these words.

"As a result", as Arrighi puts it, "much of the debate on imperialism that developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s was vitiated by basic misunderstandings over the very object of the debate."

Today, too, many comrades will present a picture of the world with a fixed division between a unified imperialist 'core' and a 'semi-colonial' periphery, the essence of the system being the exploitation of the periphery by the core. And they hotly insist that this is Leninist orthodoxy, to be defended against 'revisionism'.

In truth their picture is derived from those elements of the Wallerstein-type analysis which have become 'accepted wisdom' on the Left, and is quite different from Lenin's, in which inter-imperialist rivalry and the fluidity of relations between different countries were central. "Capitalism is growing with the greatest rapidity in the colonies and the overseas countries. Among the latter, new imperialist powers are emerging (e.g. Japan). The struggle among the world imperialisms is becoming more acute" (Lenin).

To defend Lenin is one thing. To propose a rival theory is another. But dogmatically to defend the rival theory in the name of Leninist orthodoxy is something else again!

Further confusion has been added by the ideologists of the 'end of imperialism' — whose arguments, as Arrighi notes, "stood in evident contrast to the 'imperial' role assumed by the United States on a world scale after the Second World War."

These ideologists attacked Lenin's theory: and on the other side of the argument, many who wrote to prove the continued existence of imperialism assumed that what they meant by 'imperialism' was the same as what Lenin had meant, when in fact it was not.

The confusion was accompanied, and facilitated, by a persistent blurring of concepts.

Immanuel Wallerstein's book unravels the confusion one way:



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by clarifying the concepts of the Baran/Frank tradition (in which Wallerstein stands), and showing that they define capitalism itself quite differently from classical Marxism.

Capitalism, for Wallerstein, has never been historically progressive. It does not rest fundamentally on wage labour, but on 'semi-proletarian' labour, moreover, its chief economic relation is unequal exchange (unequal because of power relations), not exploitation of labour through formally equal exchange.

Working-class movements and Third World nationalist movements are fundamentally the same sort of movement against the system of unequal exchange and of concentration of riches at the centres of power.

All of this is argued powerfully and boldly. It is in effect populism turned into high theory.

Arrighi proceeds instead by trying to clarify the classical Marxist terms of reference. Starting from a remark by Bob Sutcliffe that "ambiguity" about the very word 'imperialism' "lies at the root of misunderstandings" on this question, Arrighi sets out to reconstruct exactly what Lenin and his contemporaries understood by the word.

Confusing

He mainly discusses J.A. Hobson, a radical-liberal writer from whom Lenin took a great deal.

Here it gets confusing. Arrighi isolates four variants of 'imperialism': colonisation by settlers; international free trade and free enterprise; a stable world hierarchy dominated by a super-power, or world rivalry between powers, tending towards war. All are different forms of expansion of the nation-state.

In a series of geometric diagrams, he discusses how the 'imperialism' of various powers at various times has moved between these four poles.

The gist of this argument seems to be Arrighi's thesis that the finance capital of the earlier 20th century and the multinational corporations of today produce different movements between the four poles.

High finance, he argues, was fed by excess savings at home (because of 'underconsumption'

— the low level of workers' consumption) and the flow of interest and dividends from abroad. This led to a glut of money-capital, interested in new areas to flow to and in military spending (which gave opportunities for profitable loans to the state). Thus the system tended to gravitate to the pole of inter-imperialist rivalry and war.

Savings

But those very inter-imperialist wars produced changes in the system. Modern state spending drains off excess savings. The multinational corporations of today are interested in an international planning of the process of production, rather than just international flows of money. Hence the system gravitates to an imperialism of free enterprise.

Arrighi argues that up to the late '60s the capitalist world system was primarily an institutionalised formal hierarchy led by the US; since then US domination has continued, but in a more informal, purely economic variant, which is fairly stable.

Much of the attempt to slot all aspects of capitalist world economics and politics into the chosen four variants is necessarily very formalistic, and the argument is often very unconvincing.

Why shouldn't the imperialism of high finance operate solely through free-market relations, without colonial conquests and inter-imperialist wars?

Couldn't the multinationals produce a system of rival imperialist blocs — each with its own internal internationalisation of production — rather than a relatively unified world system?

Concepts

Arrighi's argument seems to me to be too far from concrete analysis — he has a selection of empirical facts, five or six general concepts to slot them into, and nothing in between. But he does open some questions to think about.

His conclusion is that Lenin's theory of imperialism is "irrelevant" today — precisely because it predicted trends in its own time so well, and those trends (inter-imperialist war, national liberation struggles) have now changed the world.

Arrighi's focus on change is useful: Wallerstein, in contrast, sees the shape of the world economic system as essentially unchanged since the 16th century or thereabouts. The basic structure of core and periphery is the same: everything else slots into that.

This, perhaps, is the central flaw of Wallerstein's theory. Undoubtedly his theory does give some picture of the facts of the world economy — and does show up the classical Marxist view of capitalist development in the Third World as rather simplistic, unilinear and 'over-optimistic'.

But Wallerstein focuses on the relatively timeless contrast of rich and poor, rather than the dynamics of class relations — which show the possible paths and agencies of revolutionary change.

Arrighi points to change. But his conclusion that the capitalist world today has moved outside

the 'grid' of tendencies and patterns analysed by Lenin also depends, I think, on something else. His concern with Hobson has led him to focus on one of the weakest aspects of Lenin's pamphlet on imperialism, one borrowed from Hobson.

This is the concept of imperialist expansion as being caused by a glut of capital which lacks domestic investment opportunities.

The idea of a permanent glut of capital arising once capitalism has reached a certain level was a constant theme of bourgeois economists from Adam Smith to Keynes. And it is attractive to socialists because it seems to point to a breakdown of the system

Not permanent

But it is not tenable. Capitalism can always create scope for more capital investment. A glut of capital is an effect of a periodic crisis, not a permanent cause of crisis.

Capital can be 'excess' or otherwise only relative to the current condition of capitalism, not to any absolute standard. Poor countries may well have greater 'excesses' of capital, more often, than richer countries.

Besides, foreign investment is not an overflow. It is not something that happens after all domestic investment opportunities are exhausted.

Now the 'glut of capital' theory can be found in some pages of Lenin's 'Imperialism'. The need to export capital arises from the fact that in a few countries capitalism has become 'over-ripe' and (owing to the backward state of agriculture and the poverty of the masses) capital cannot find a field for 'profitable' investment."

Some people have taken this to be the gist of his theory. If they are right, then Lenin's theory is largely irrelevant after World War 2 — and, moreover, unless some compensatory fundamental change in capitalism is shown to have happened (for Arrighi it is increased state spending), then it is impossible to explain why decolonisation and the geographical contraction of the capitalist world market after World War 2 did not lead to US/West European capitalism choking on its uninvestible riches.

Expansion

But also in Lenin's 'Imperialism' — and, with much less addition of the 'glut of capital' theory, in Bukharin's writings — is the idea of the root process being the expansion of the productive forces to the level where nation-state units have become outdated and too small.

That idea is certainly not "irrelevant" today. An analysis of how the contradiction between productive forces and national frontiers has developed could perhaps give substance to Arrighi's 'geometry'.

It could also create a broader synthesis, embracing Lenin's theory of inter-imperialist rivalry and integrating elements from the Wallerstein theory of underdevelopment into a framework of class, not populist, analysis.

The day of the Great Betrayal

Colin Foster reviews: Carl E. Schorske, 'German Social Democracy 1905-1917: The Development of the Great Schism'. Harvard University Press £6.50.

MOST socialists who know any dates at all from the history of the labour movement know August 4, 1914.

On that day the Social Democratic representatives in the German Parliament voted for war credits, thus supporting their own capitalist government in World War 1.

It was one of the greatest acts of apostasy and betrayal in human history, a watershed event in shaping the world history of the last seventy years. It opened the 'Great Schism' in the labour movement between reformists and revolutionaries.

Just the events of the few days before August 4 shed much light on exactly what happened. Fearing wartime repression, the Social Democratic Party leaders on July 30 had sent two officials to Zurich with the party treasury. But the Social Democratic unions had sought to protect their funds differently.

They went to the government to seek guarantees — and got them, at a price.

On August 2 they called off all strikes pending or in progress.

They suspended all strike pay for the duration of the war, and reached an agreement with the employers' associations to ban all strikes and lock-outs for the course of the war.

All this happened before the Social Democratic Party parliamentary representatives had even met to decide their vote.

Schorske's brilliant book — long out of print before this reprint — shows how this pattern of events was the logical culmination of many years' development.

The ideology of the Party — a mechanistic form of Marxism — determined a stance of pure but passive opposition. The writings of its most prominent theorist, Karl Kautsky, were 'remarkable for the passive role which he assigned to the working class and its party ...

The dynamic element in (the socialist revolution) would be the ruling class which, through its inner contradictions, corruption, and loss of self-assurance, would hurtle the existing order to destruction. The proletariat would be the passive beneficiary of the process thanks to having maintained its oppositional integrity.

Where Luxemburg (a leader of the revolutionary left wing) viewed the proletariat as an irresistible force, Kautsky seemed to see it as an immovable object. In the revolution itself, Social Democracy would stand as an island of morality in a turbulent sea of iniquity; when

the storm had exhausted itself, its surviving victims would take refuge on the island."

On the terrain of trade unionism, this outlook determined an ultra-cautious tactic. A structure of trade union officialdom grew up for which ultra-caution was not a tactic but an axiom.

Then the loose, all-embracing structure of the Party played its role: the revolutionaries were swamped; the apparatus had great autonomy and independence; whole layers of the amorphous party were ignorant of the normal guiding principles of the party, etc.

For example, the revolutionary left wing called for the use of mass political strikes. The trade union conservatives said no: such action would endanger their carefully-constructed organisations, for no certain tangible result.

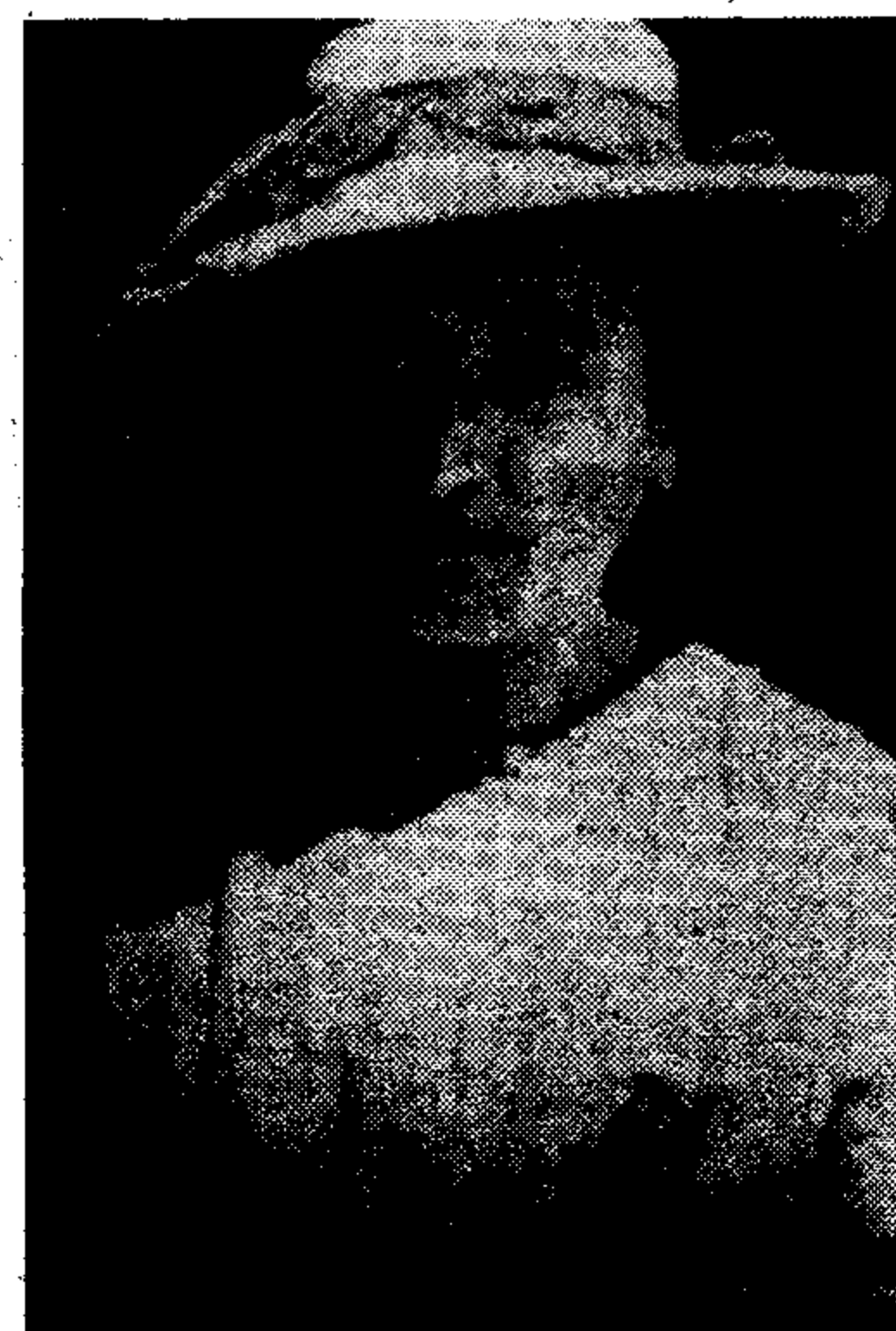
Trading on the movement's powerful desire for unity, the Party leadership rallied the majority round a position which supported the use of mass political strikes in principle, but counselled inaction for the immediate future.

New recruits to the leadership were chosen above all for being good conciliators, closely identified neither with the right nor the left.

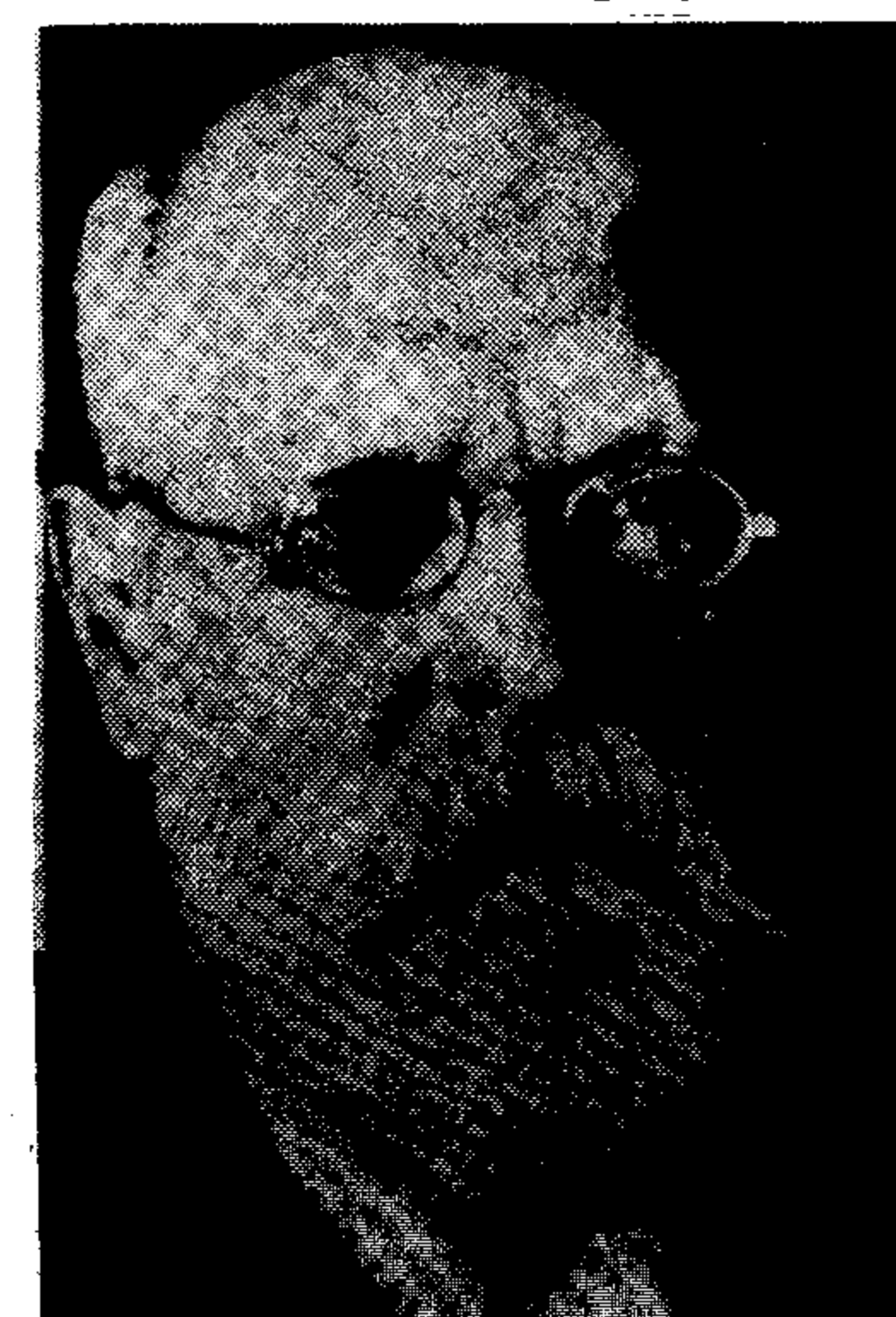
Through a series of such political conflicts, the Party was ratcheted away from revolutionary politics. The official ideology became more and more empty — more and more a scholastic exercise in reconciling passive accommodation to the system in practice with pure opposition to it in principle. The bureaucratic structures hardened.

With a wealth of detail, Schorske describes the subtle intertwining of these processes in the years 1905-14.

Schorske is a US university professor. Though plainly sympathetic to the revolutionary left wing, he is no revolutionary himself. For all that, his book is a fine work of historical-materialist analysis, and well-written too. Every socialist concerned to know how and why the labour movement in the advanced capitalist countries got into its present sorry state should read it.



Luxemburg



Kautsky

Chinese revolutionary

Garth Frankland reviews a valuable autobiography

The autobiography of Wang Fan-hsi — 'Chinese Revolutionary. Memoirs 1919-49', published in 1980 by Oxford University Press — is now available in Remainder Shops throughout Britain for around £2.50.

The book, which originally cost £15, did not achieve the wide sale that its importance merited. In contrast, Chinese, German and Japanese editions have sold many thousands of copies.

Wang joined the Trotskyists while at the 'Communist University for the Toilers of the East' in the USSR during 1928. From then he never wavered in his determination to defend the interests of revolutionary Marxism. Despite years in jail under the Kuomintang and the massive repression caused by the Japanese invasion of China, he continued to fight to build a revolutionary Marxist organisation in China.

Despite the enormous difficulties in carrying out a struggle simultaneously against the Stalinists, the Kuomintang and

the Japanese invaders he and his comrades built an organisation of several hundred cadres.

They were dogged by the splits and divisions of the sort that plagued the rest of the world Trotskyist movement. But of course these divisions were those of small harassed groups of comrades trying to face up to huge events.

Wang himself deals with some of the theoretical problems

involved in these intra-Trotskyist disputes and comes up with some new insights which may be of value in today's struggle.

But although challenging some of the 'orthodox' positions of the Chinese Trotskyists he rooted his politics deeply in the theory of permanent revolution.

Comrades should go out now and buy this book. There are many things to be learnt from it.

Trotsky on Stalinism

The classic Marxist analysis of Stalinism is Leon Trotsky's 'Revolution Betrayed: What is the Soviet Union and Where Is It Going?' Available via Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8: £2.50 plus 50p postage.



Lenin



THE 1,400 TGWU process workers at Shell UK's biggest refinery, Stanlow (Cheshire), voted on Thursday (December 8) to reject a recommendation by shop stewards to continue their eight-week strike, and accepted the company's 4.5% over 15 months basic pay offer package.

This follows the acceptance by the 1000 AUEW craft workers at the refinery on Wednesday of a similar deal, and by the workforce at Shellhaven (Essex), who settled at the weekend.

Workers at the three other refinery and chemical sites, Teesport (Cleveland), Ardrossan (Scotland) and the Carrington complex near Manchester, who have been operating overtime bans and work-to-rule procedures seem certain to accept comparable settlements.

However, Shell's 1,750 TGWU oil-tanker drivers and depot workers have still not formally finalised their settlement due to legal snags arising over possible breaches of existing contracts of employment.

The decision at Stanlow to return to work ends this round of strike action and secondary picketing against Shell, and concludes the oil industry's most serious dispute since the end of the 1970s.

AFTER re-opened talks between the TGWU and Ford UK management on Thursday [December 8], the 7.5% pay offer made to the company's 44,500 hourly paid workforce was accepted.

Ford made no concessions to union proposals for a shorter working week and improved pension schemes, despite the union argument that last week's plant-by-plant vote [covering 24 plants] in favour of accepting the offer disguised the fact that a substantial majority of workers [24,000 to 16,000] had actually voted against the company's deal.

TWO announcements were made in the Commons this week by Tory ministers concerning privatisation plans. Norman Lamont, Minister of State for Trade and Industry, said that parts of British Leyland — particularly the most profitable parts for instance — would begin to be handed over to private ownership during 1984.

And the Transport Secretary, Nicholas Ridley, said that the first steps to the privatisation of British Airways would begin on April 1, 1984, when it would become a public limited company, ready for the flotation of its shares to the private sector early in 1985.

A SERIES of regular meetings between the TUC and the CBI were announced last week to take place probably early next year at a range of issues. Senior officials — and top level contacts between Les Murray and Sir Terence Beckett (the CBI Director General) — will discuss the value of exploring possible areas of accord such as health and safety, education and training. This step will complement the already existing collaborative links that exist between the TUC and the Tories — namely the NEDC and the direct talks with the Employment Secretary.

Flogging off the National Health?

By Dewi Lewis

AFTER the collapse of the fight against the privatisation of British Telecom, the next target for the Tories will be the NHS.

Last January, the DHSS issued a circular calling on District Health Authorities (DHAs) to put catering, cleaning and laundry services out to tender, but the whole issue was sat on in the run up to the General Election.

Now, claiming a new mandate for privatisation, the re-elected Tory government has lost no time in sending out instructions for DHAs to come up with a timetable for privatisation by mid-April 1984. With the bit between Tory teeth, it is likely that the crunch will come sooner rather than later for most Districts.

The response to this from the TUC has been disastrous. After telling the Post Office engineers to accept a court injunction to stop 'blacking' of the private Project Mercury, their advice to health workers is not much better. They suggest we try and get as much publicity as possible and if that doesn't put the Tories off, compete for our own jobs with the private contractors!

This masterplan has just been issued by the TUC Health Services Committee with the agreement of all the NHS unions.

Basically, it consists of two sections, the first of which, two pages long, calls for a public campaign against privatisation.

Quite sensibly it suggests the re-establishment of the local NHS co-ordinating committees set up in the last pay dispute, but the high spot of it all is to be a series of meetings and marches! Apart from a vague mention of 'other action', there is no mention of strike action and, important though meetings and marches are, it is only strike action that will prevent privatisation on a large scale. British Telecom is the best lesson for us all.

The TUC's campaign is to focus on the threat to the 'quality of staff and service' and the 'standards of care and treatment' and nothing else. Again there is no doubt that a privatised NHS would have lower standards and the labour movement must be alerted to that. However, by far the most immediate threat is to the pay and conditions of health work-

ers. Any campaign that is rooted in the workplace must take account of this.

The DHSS circular allows for 'reviews' of bonus schemes and the government has recently abandoned its Fair Wages Resolution — contractors can now pay their staff what they like.

Where services have already been contracted out there have been drastic cuts in staffing levels. These hard realities bring the situation home to health workers far better than all the moral arguments about profiteering from illness.

The clue to the TUC's real intentions is in the 14 pages of the second section of the document which contains a guide on supervising the tendering process. 'After the publicity fireworks let's get down to the real job and make sure these tenders are drawn up properly!'

We get page after page of useful advice about clauses protecting pay, conditions, trade union membership, negotiating rights, sick pay and so on.

All this is vital if it actually comes down to putting a department out to tender, but it is no substitute for a real fight. What it does is take the initiative out of the hands of the members and leaves it with the full time officers.

This strategy reinforces the idea that the government and the contractors can be beaten at their own game as long as the rules are 'fair'. It encourages health workers to cut back on their own pay and conditions by accepting bonus reviews, unfilled vacancies and new working practices.

In the absence of a strong national campaign which can come up with realistic answers, the feeling is growing that 'we must make ourselves as efficient as possible so we can compete for our own jobs'. This is something that is anticipated by the DHSS in their circular — heads you lose and we privatise, tails we win and staff are cut.

Unless the rot is stopped quickly the ancillary services will be easy meat for the

Pritchards and Grand Met sharks next spring. The fight back can start if action is taken now against unfilled vacancies and bonus reviews, but defensive action is not enough.

It is likely that particular departments and particular hospitals will be targeted as guinea pigs for contracting out — in this case the rest of the hospital and other hospitals in the District must be prepared to take immediate action in their support.

We must not allow the contractors to 'case the joint' — a walk-out is the only answer if they are given any guided tours by management. It is only when health workers themselves are taking action that we can expect others in the labour movement to support us. It is then that the public campaign set out by the TUC will be useful.

Health Authorities in Wales have already made it clear that 'they do not welcome the possible disruption that privatisation may bring to patient services'. In other words they are going to steer clear of any department or hospital that is going to make life difficult for them. It is our job to make them wish they never heard of privatisation.

Fowler's fiddled figures

NORMAN Fowler has claimed that he has won a 1% real increase in health spending next year, enough to cover the growing needs of the elderly.

He has assumed that health workers will take a 2% real pay cut, and that health authorities can find ½% 'efficiency savings'.

He has ignored the growing costs of medical technology, the continually rising demands on the family practitioner service, and the need to restore this year's cut to get planned spending back on course.

When we take these factors into account and question Mr Fowler's unjustified assumptions, his 1% real growth turns into a 2½% real cut amounting to nearly £400 million.

*Prices are expected to rise by

5%. Cost: £344 million.

*Pay must rise by at least 5% if the living standards of NHS staff are not to be cut. Cost: £433 million.

*Growing numbers of elderly people require an increase in spending of between 0.7% and 1% a year. Cost: £163 million.

*Advances in medical technology require extra spending of ½% per year to keep pace. Cost: £82 million.

*Growing demands on the family practitioner service, possibly due to rising unemployment, have caused a 10% rise in spending this year (£100 million above target). Likely 'extra' spending next year, on top of factors above is: £125 million.

This gives a total extra cost of £1147 million.

We must also take into account Chancellor Nigel Lawson's cuts in cash limited spending of 1% on current spending and 2% on capital spending.

So when Norman Fowler announces that health spending next year will increase by only £800 million, this amounts to a real cut in NHS services next year of £390 million — nearly 2½%.

The government has claimed that health authorities can achieve 'efficiency earnings' equal to ½% of their spending each year — or £53 million.

Even if these savings are allowed for, the November statement effectively offers real cuts in health spending next year of £340 million.

From a NUPE document

Registry strikers return

By Chris Watkinson

THE LAND Registry civil service strike is over after 4½ weeks. The members have accepted an agreement between the section strike committee and management.

Clerical officers had been asked to take on extra responsibility, doing work previously done by executive officers (the next grade up), without extra allowances or trade union agreement.

According to the new deal, for the next eight weeks clerical officers will work to contract. After eight weeks the situation will be reviewed.

Many members regard the situation as vague. In some branches they wanted to reject the offer, but the section officers recommended acceptance — and members received the return-to-work arrangements and dates before many of them had voted on the offer.

The main feeling is resigned disillusionment, although the section officers regard the deal as a victory.

It remains to be seen what happens at the end of the trial period. Whether members will have the stomach for further action at a time when the union is occupied with pay negotiations, also remains to be seen.

CPSA officials should say that this is not an outright victory, and acknowledge it as a compromise.

ON THURSDAY (December 8) 900 AUEW members at Sellafield (formerly Windscale) nuclear reprocessing plant passed a vote of no confidence in British Nuclear Fuels. This follows the contamination of local beaches with radioactive waste discharge, for which the workers hold management responsible. The union has said that there have been no acceptable assurances made by BNF that such contamination would not happen.

AN 18-month pay offer of 5.14% on basic rates made to 4,700 TGWU manual workers employed by the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority was rejected last week, and brings for the first time the possibility of strike action at the UKAEA's seven sites.

Where to find Socialist Organiser

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: 63 Dixon Avenue, Glasgow G42. Paper sales: Friday lunchtime, Glasgow School of Art; Saturday afternoon, Springburn Shopping Arcade; Tuesday morning: Maryhill UBO; and Glasgow Bookshop Collective.

NORTH WEST

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Contact: Accrington 395753
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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.

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Contact: Ross, 713606.

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

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SOUTH

Basingstoke.
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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.
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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.

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, 7pm at the LSE, East Building, 1st Floor, room E196.
Discussions on Imperialism Thursdays, 7pm, at 214, Sickert Court, London N1.

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].

Socialist ORGANISER

Chapple's parting shot

THE general tenor of last month's EETPU conference was set by Frank Chapple's traditional tirade against socialist activism inside both the Labour Party and trade unions.

Of the 158 motions on the agenda, no fewer than fifty-one were composited or withdrawn, five were invalid because their movers failed to appear, while the executive committee won remission of a further thirty resolutions.

General policy statements in opposition to Tory anti-union laws and against EEC withdrawal were unanimously carried. As regards the former the EETPU is now formally committed to an "active campaign of opposition to all forms of anti-trade union legislation".

Unemployment and public sector cuts were opposed with an implicit demand to defend threatened workplaces through a policy of occupation. Conference also carried a further motion calling for trade union control of Youth Training Schemes.

Shipbuilding delegates pressed for an emergency debate on the volatile situation at British Shipbuilders but were refused amid angry exchanges.

Terry Duffy could raise little enthusiasm for a proposed fusion between the AUEW and EETPU. A more sinister visit was that of the 'fraternal' delegate from the American "AFL-CIA".

The final session dealt with 75 rule amendments and proved controversial both for rule changes and the undemocratic rulings of conference chair, Tom Breakell.

One EC motion proposed to delete payment of accident benefit from the EETPU. Although delegates voted this down, the conference decision was over-ruled by Breakell. The following day this ruling, too, was overturned. Instead, Branch general purpose funds were reduced from 2% to 1% of total union revenue.

Increased weekly subscriptions of 20p a week were also scheduled to compensate for a decrease in membership of 20,000 over 1983.

This should at the very least stabilise cost-of-living pressures for 152 full-time appointed officials.

There were two other significant EC sponsored rule changes. Firstly, shop stewards will now be elected for two year terms, while full-time officials will now have carte blanche to appoint shop stewards to union industrial conferences. This was blandly claimed to facilitate the democratic representation of union members.

Left-wing demands for an end to political bans and proscriptions were defeated as were those calling for election of all full-time officials: the right wing simply reminded conference of Communist Party activity during the ballot-rigging era of 1960. Using such methods they also ditched proposed democratic changes including calls for the union leadership to be bound by conference decisions.

One significant feature of this conference was the extent to which white-collar EESA sections predominated. This "union within a union" was able to fund some 40 delegates representing just a few hundred engineering staff.

Contrast this with the combined membership of two large EETPU branches such as London Central and Southampton.

Together these represent some 10,000 members yet at conference they were entitled to just two delegates between them.

Residential workers Vote YES to 9-5 action!

FIFTEEN weeks of growing action, and still no movement from the national employers. No discussions. No recognition of our just claim.

The present attitude of the national employers is despicable. They appear deaf, dumb and blind to the actions of more than 10,000 angry workers who attended the lobby in London last Wednesday, the 800 who demonstrated in Glasgow, the 100 or so in Nottinghamshire and many elsewhere.

They are playing a waiting game and have shown no scruples in using all forces in their favour, media manipulation of public opinion, playing down the public debate, providing magic money for private placement, Tebbit's law and siege tactics.

The shop stewards conference in Essex on December 6, was well attended, giving direct feedback, representing residential workers, from all over the country.

There have been many indications throughout this dispute that NALGO's national leadership have been very weak. Now they have clearly gone against the interests of residential workers. The NLGC went to ACAS to try and arrange a Christmas 'truce' after the national delegate

By Anne Crowder

conference clearly mandated them not to approach ACAS at all.

Using conferences like the shop stewards conference we must ensure the rank and file have control of this dispute and the officers act in our interests.

The leadership have also failed to build any support amongst the rest of NALGO's membership. Their support is vital, particularly if we win the ballot to implement 9 to 5 working only, and our action from there is effective, thus forcing management to put pressure down on the workers rather than upwards to the employers, as has been shown throughout the whole of this dispute.

The 9 to 5 action has many limitations that we cannot ignore. We must meet any suspensions or blocking of pay with strike action. In many authorities there has already been support shown by many NALGO members and we must build on that.

Some authorities are very supportive of our claim. Liverpool, for example, has called on



Demonstrator led off during last Wednesday's one-day strike

the national employers to abolish split shifts, implement a 36 hour week immediately with a reduction to 35 hours next year and pay the remainder of our claim in full.

It certainly shows that councils can come out and fully support the claim, and even go

further than the present claim!

We must bring pressure, particularly on the Labour authorities, through the Labour Parties, to ensure that they come out in full support of our claim.

There will be another shop stewards' conference on 15 December, the day after our

ballot closes. It is vital that residential workers mandate their delegates to vote for the implementation of the 9 to 5 ballot immediately and to meet any victimisations with all-out strike action.

POEU must pick up the pieces

"BRITISH Telecom management have cleared a room in the basement of an exchange and called it the sheep-dip", reported a London Post Office Engineering Union (POEU) member from BT International division at a meeting of militants last weekend.

The 'sheep-dip' is the room where engineers have to report before resuming work, 'to be cleansed and shorn bald of militancy'.

Some engineers are being moved from their place of work and redeployed. Changes are

By Ricky Houston

being made in working conditions, drastic wage cuts are being made, and long-standing agreements, some covering rota shifts, are being imposed on returning strikers by a BT management confident that the local branches are isolated now that the POEU leadership has made its deal with BT.

Circular

During the first week of December BT International management issued a circular which states: "The letter will point out the employees' contractual obli-

gation to work normally as directed, etc. And war that any subsequent refusal or industrial action as part of a campaign against privatisation or interconnection may be regarded as a repudiation of contract, leaving BT free to regard employment as terminated without going through the running procedures adopted hitherto."

Commenting on the state of

the POEU's campaign following the end of industrial action, the circular states: "Privatisation — for better or worse — is still going ahead; the union has been ordered to accept interconnection; the members are not returning to the status quo".

London branches are incensed at the conditions their members are having to return to work under, as they face BT manage-

ment's offensive which has developed since the sell-out over the Mercury injunction in November.

Only a small number of branches voted to defy the NEC and the injunction, although it is fairly certain that the conference would have followed the leadership had they recommended defiance.

Following that decision, it has taken only a month for the National Executive Committee (where there is a majority for the Broad Left slate) to agree to the ending of industrial action against the privatisation Bill. Four of the NEC members elected on the Broad Left slate voted to comply with the Mercury injunction, thereby giving the Right a majority which it has followed up.

BT management are now preparing BT for privatisation and increased competition in a more direct and determined manner. A full-scale attack on job conditions and job security can be expected. Even the right wing General Secretary, Bryan Stanley, admitted at an international telecommunications conference that BT's modernisation programme will devastate jobs in the industry.

The task facing the left in the union is now to pick up the pieces and reassess, in the light of experience, the whole strategy and tactics which have led us to defeat. The fight to mobilise the membership in their own defence has to go on.

The recent decision of the Broad Left to kick the four who sold out off next year's NEC slate is an indication that it is beginning to do this.

London City branch has put out a letter calling on branches to support a call for a special conference to debate the strategy needed to win the privatisation battle, noting "the disastrous results... [achieved by] the pursuance of a policy of selective industrial action".

The need has never been greater.

Students angry

By Jane Ashworth

THE National Executive have managed to outrage almost every section and sector in the National Union of Students.

Twenty months have gone by since the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) took the leadership of NUS, and although it is an improvement on previous Execs, the strategy they have pursued is now falling apart, and being seen to be falling apart.

Last week's NUS conference was the first "reformed conference".

Instead of a continuous plenary where policy was debated and the Executive Report questioned, conference broke into "commissions" which are supposed to discuss the Executive Report in detail.

The three sectoral conferences (Further Education, Universities and Public Sector Higher Education [PSHE]) were also held as part of the full NUS conference.

Angry

The new arrangement was a flop. Delegates wandered around the coffee bar and stalls rather than go into the sectoral conferences or commissions. The reduced plenary time meant that there were only four policy debates and much of the Executive Report was moved formally.

Because delegates were fed up with the sectoral conferences

(where nothing positive was decided but the FE and the Universities national committee reports were referred back), and because the National Executive has not satisfied most sections, the plenary was extremely angry.

NOLS, and therefore NUS, are following Neil Kinnock. Demanding negotiations with Thatcher, bleating when they are ignored, and denouncing direct action.

Neil Stewart, in his opening President's address, denounced the picket against Keith Joseph at Warwick, and rounded on the 'far lefts' who seek 'confrontation'.

NOLS do not have a strategy to fight the cuts, bar helping to continue Joseph to fight in the Cabinet.

Nor is there a strategy for building up the FE sector, or even implementing the policy for FEs passed some three years ago. The FEs revolted. They showed their united disgust by walking off the conference floor together and fielding a candidate for the Executive in a by-election who only lost to NOLS by 55 votes, beating the Left Alliance into third place.

Unless the Executive is able to organise a lot of students in a lot of productive activity by Easter, then NOLS could well lose overall control of the Executive.

UCW leaders lash out

THE Executive of the Union of Communication Workers (UCW) has chosen to make a national issue out of our criticism of the union officials' handling of the September postal section strike in Basingstoke.

The week-long strike to reinstate Alan Fraser — postal section secretary, South East organiser of the Communication Workers' Broad Left, and a Socialist Organiser supporter — was sold out by national full-time officers Gerry Casey and John Taylor.

Since then the postal section members in Basingstoke have drawn the lessons of the sell-out and spread them to many areas in the form of an official branch circular. Socialist Organiser supporters have produced a pamphlet, 'Solidarity Betrayed', which explains how the rising consciousness of the branch

was seen as a threat by both management and union bureaucrats alike, and gave them a common interest in getting Alan out of the Post Office.

The bureaucrats have now responded with a lengthy and laughably hamfisted document signed by general secretary Alan Tuffin. Tuffin tries, by a combination of distortion, omission and inaccuracies, to discredit Alan Fraser, Socialist Organiser, and by direct implication the members of the UCW who struck to support Alan.

The document has apparently gone to every UCW branch in the country.

The issue is now much bigger than different views of a local strike. The New Year will see a national battle on the questions of union democracy and on the clear failure of the union's current leadership to take a fighting stand in defence of its members.

Labour Party

Witch-hunt in Blackburn

THE witch-hunt is now threatening to turn into a purge at Labour Party grassroots level. Six Militant supporters will be expelled from Blackburn Labour Party if the party's executive gets its way. On December 4, the EC decided to recommend their expulsion to the next meeting of the GMC.

The national witch-hunt, the



Behind Kinnock's "unity" bandwagon roll the tumbrils of the witch-hunt

expulsion of the five members of the Militant editorial board, the attempt to ban sales of Militant at Labour Party events — all this has set up a framework within which any local group of determined right wingers feels free to try to organise its own local burning of alleged witches. In Blackburn the right and soft left supporters of Jack Straw MP have got together to purge Militant and head-off any challenge to Straw at reselection time.

The EC's procedure was scandalously undemocratic. The accused were not allowed either enough time or adequate facilities to answer the charges brought against them.

Allegations

These charges were laid by one Michael Gregory who rejoined the local party in 1982, pretended to be a Militant supporter for five months and then produced a document containing a welter of allegations about the "Militant conspiracy". Yet the Executive refused the accused the right to circulate to members of the GMC who had already received Gregory's accusing document, a written point-by-point reply.

Not just witch-hunters, but tinpot despots, too. Labour Party members should raise a storm of protest against what's going on in Blackburn.

NUJ solid for defiance

By Harry Sloan

THE Executive of the National Union of Journalists voted unanimously at the weekend to defy a High Court injunction against the strike by 13 members at Dimbleby Newspapers, who are boycotting work to the scab T. Bailey Forman printers in Nottingham.

The correct call for defiance, however, was not coupled with the necessary commitment to take additional industrial action if necessary to defend the Union and its assets against any further court action.

At present litigation has come to a "pause" while Dimbleby's owner, broadcaster David Dimbleby, ponders the consequences for his career should he return to court demanding measures which could result in the sequestration of the NUJ's total assets.

This weakness from the NEC was also reflected by the decision to call a Special Delegate Meeting of the Union on January 21. The meeting is unnecessary — since a clear

mandate for defiance of the Tory anti-union laws has been given by the last two regular Annual Delegate Meetings, and there is no evidence at all of a backlash in the union against the policy. On the contrary, even the BBC TV news chapel has voted 2-1 to back the NEC stand, and 3-1 against a right wing motion to stay within the law.

The calling of the SDM — which is likely to provide strong support for the NEC, though in five week's time — will in the meantime create needless uncertainty, and further divert from the need to prepare for industrial action to defend the Union.

In any event the NUJ's firm stance in defiance of the Courts is a crucial rallying point in the struggle of the labour movement. Members must ensure that the motion adopted by the SDM spells out a fighting policy, including specific demands for support from the TUC.

Music, Dancing, Private Bar till late.

All proceeds will go to the Islington Advisory of the NGA.

Islington NGA
Xmas Benefit
Mon 19th December
The Florence 8pm
Florence Street, off Upper St, N1.
£2.50
Unwaged £1

Socialist ORGANISER



Mass picket outside the Body Plant during the 1981 strike

Ballot shock for BL Cowley right wing

By Bill Peters

THE biennial elections for convenor/branch secretary and branch officers in the BL Cowley Body Plant have produced a remarkable advance for the left, although the right wing cling on to office.

After 50 years of stable right wing leadership, challenger Tony Richardson, a welder on the Rover body build line and a steward for eight years, gained 942 votes in a shop floor ballot for convenor and branch secretary against 1121 votes for the right wing candidate, Woodstock magistrate Alex Morton.

For many years a strong right wing apparatus has presided over a militant membership which showed its mettle in the 1981 strike and has been prepared to do so on many other occasions.

Isolated

The small forces of the left in the plant have been kept isolated on the stewards' committee by a convenor and branch officers all of whom are magistrates, and one a worker priest; they have exercised strong bureaucratic control.

In this election there was a strong mood for a change sweeping the factory. Traditionally the elections for branch officers, who are also the convenor and deputy convenors of the plant, were elected at branch meeting AGM.

A few days before nominations closed, the right wing panicked and had the method of election changed to a shop floor ballot.

When nominations closed there were two distinct slates of five for the leadership positions. The problem however was to get a democratic ballot. There have been two ballots in the plant (for Regional and National union positions) that have been invalidated for voting irregularities.

The five candidates on the left slate made a number of demands for democratic procedures — that the left slate be

after widespread pressure from the shopfloor, one was conceded — the ballot boxes would be held by works security. But these procedures remained very far from satisfactory.

For the main position of convenor/branch secretary in the 60% poll Alex Morton got 1121 and Tony Richardson 942.

For chair, Tony Williamson got 1384 and Howard Lloyd 754. For vice-chair Roy Edney got 1465 and Stan Armstrong 671.

For the two positions as branch auditors, which were also hotly contested, Dave Evans got 1531, Roger Sealy 1378, Dave Thomas 602 and Medicotte 460.

It was a remarkable result. Tony Richardson is well known as a Trotskyist and a Socialist Organiser supporter in the plant.

Every member of the left slate received a very creditable vote. They were seen in the election and are now established as a clear alternative to the right wing leadership of the plant.

It is a result, however, which left many members dissatisfied. Many militants had been convinced that Tony Richardson was going to win and the refusal of the right wing to concede basic democratic procedures in the voting has led many workers to question the result.

FUND

AS four groups move up the chart and another one joins it for the first time, the week's donations to the fund come to £64.11.

That's the best week this month, but there's still a long way to go to reach our £3,000 target.

One encouraging sign is that many groups have told us about fund-raising events they are planning. Xmas socials, parties and dinners are being planned; and there are plans for raffles and jumble sales.

Many groups are planning to ask readers for Xmas donations to the fund. Socialist Organiser is taking a two week break over Xmas; so if you buy the paper regularly, why not give your SO seller an extra 50p for this copy? Or £1? Or if you are employed, why not a donation of £5 or £10?

The next Socialist Organiser will be out on January 5. Groups should make sure that proceeds from Xmas events reach us by January 3 at the very latest. After January 5, there will be only three more weeks to reach the target — so let's see every group well on the way to raising their targets by then!

Send donations to: 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

GROUP	% OF TARGET REACHED
Brent	107
Chelmsford	33
Leeds	31
Southwark/Lambeth	29
Sheffield	27
Cardiff	27
Nottingham	15
Harrogate	13
Hull	13
Tower Hamlets	9
SE London	8
Halifax	6
Islington	2
Coventry	1

Thanks this week to: Nik Barstow £25; Sheffield supporters, proceeds from a party, £13.33; Southwark supporters, £10; Garth Frankland, £7.50, York supporters, £4; Richard Moore, £3.35; Tower Hamlets supporters, £1.03. Total this week: £64.11. Total so far: £470.75 (16%).