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BRIGHTON '81

After Brighton, Left must organise

BY John Bloxam
and Martin
Thomas

OUTSIDE Brighton conference centre last Sunday night, Labour Party leaders emerged after the vote on the deputy leadership into the crowd of delegates and visitors.

First Jim Callaghan came out, to a loud chorus of boos and jeers. Then Michael Foot: a little scattered booing, mostly uncertain silence.

Tony Benn followed — to meet noisy acclamation and cheers. John Silkin — no-one paid any attention.

But what of Dennis Healey, the victor of the day? Apparently he sneaked out the back way!

Scraped

Six months ago the right wing's aim was to keep Tony Benn's vote down to less than 30 per cent, or even force him to withdraw. They wanted a 'vote of confidence' in Healey and his record, and clear support for him as successor to Foot.

Instead Healey barely scraped in, even after winning the NUPE vote. Despite their massive support from the press and the ruling class, the right wing failed.

We won a 49.6% vote and opened the way for new advances.

Healey's victory did underline how huge our tasks are. After two years of ferment, after repeated left-wing victories, the labour movement still approved as its deputy leader a man who declares that he will not serve in a Labour government carrying out conference policy, and who reaffirmed only a few days before conference that he would not be bound by the movement's decisions.

Destiny

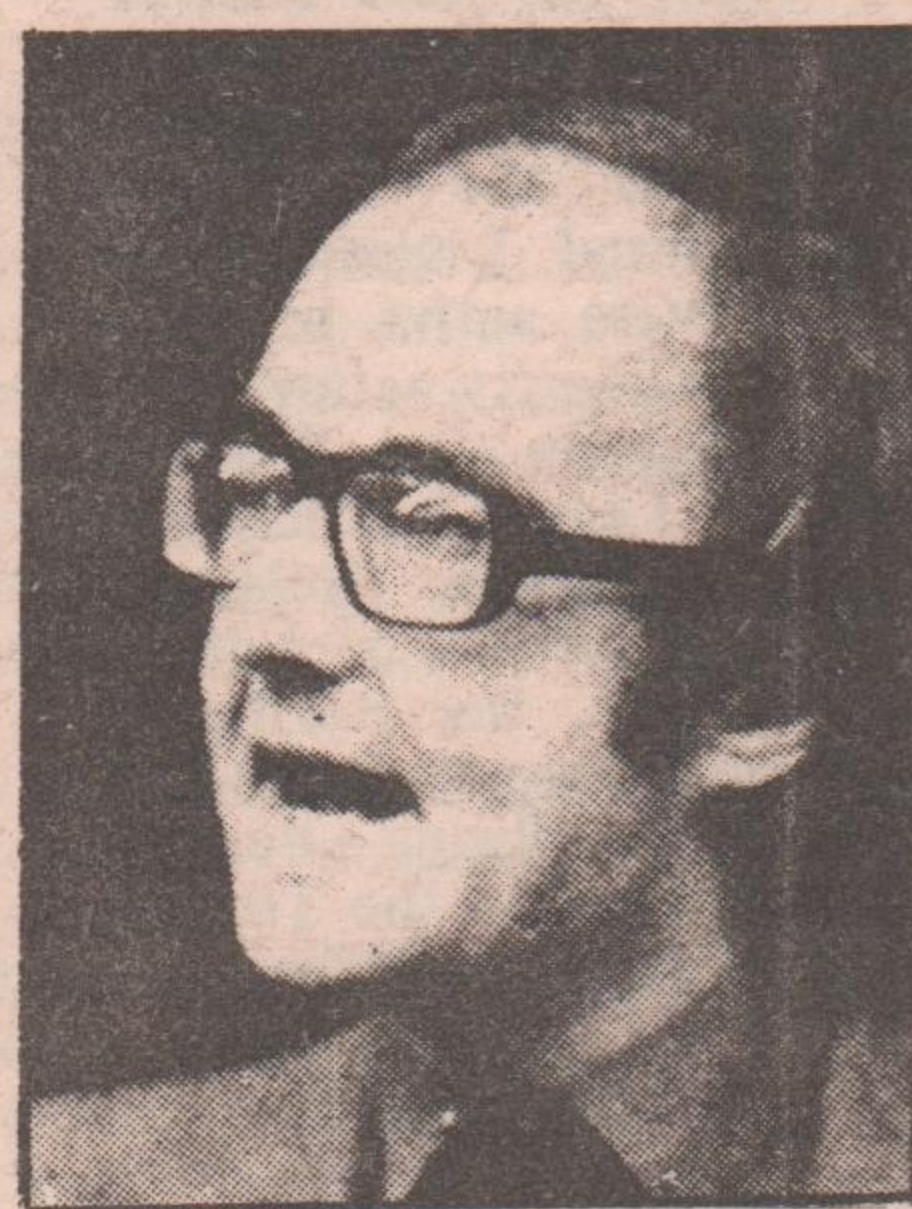
We still have an enormous job to create a fighting left-wing that can rouse the labour movement and inspire it with the will and the confidence to control its own destiny — and then the destiny of society.

The pre-conference meeting of the mis-named 'Labour Solidarity' shows that the right wing has failed to strike roots in the constituencies.

The audience was so well-heeled that it could have been a Tory or SDP meeting.

But they got their 50.4 per cent. And, through the weight of the block vote, they have swung round the NEC so that the right wing and the Foot/Kinnock/Lestor centre now have a majority. They may well go on the offensive against

TAKE THE FIGHT INTO THE UNIONS!



After Tribune MPs helped get Healey elected, Reg Race MP called for a new socialist group in the Parliamentary Labour Party. See page 5

for years they have been represented by people who never fight the right wing, people whose dismal wisdom is: 'Not all is lost if Dennis wins'.

Now, for once, a leader of the Labour Left, instead of just making occasional speeches, has directly challenged the right wing — and stood up to the outraged hail of abuse, hysteria, and press smears.

Instead

Indeed, Benn's personal role has been much stronger than the policies. The policies — which are not just Benn's, of course, but the whole movement's — have many weaknesses.

Instead of a direction towards international socialism, there are import controls. Instead of a clear determination to win common ownership, there is vague talk of planning agreements and 'a new partnership between capital and labour'. Instead of a policy to replace the police and the hierarchical armed forces — the backbone of state repression against the workers' movement, dominated by hard-bitten Tories — with a popular militia, the main proposal to deal with the State apparatus is 'increased ministerial control'.

But the political opening-up of the labour movement through Benn's campaign creates the best conditions for debating the issues. As Tony Benn rightly says, there has been great educational work done in the last six months.

continued on page 5

The fight goes on. We need an organised left wing, fighting with the same tenacity as the right wing — but seeking to enlist the backing of the rank and file.

Our greatest weakness is the lack of an active mass membership in the Labour Party.

Only the Left can generate the energy and enthusiasm that can draw millions of workers into the Party, and into the discussion to hammer out policies for the socialist reconstruction of society.

Tony Benn's call for a re-founding of the Labour Representation Committee could not have been more timely.

Abstain

We need a left wing that fights to win; one that also fights against those who talk left, but who wind up on the other side when it comes to the crunch. Like Neil Kinnock and the Tribune MPs who ensured Healey's victory by abstaining.

Those MPs justified themselves by saying they supported 'the policies but not the personality'. In fact it is precisely because Tony Benn's personal role that he most deserves support.

The policies are indeed common currency — but



The new de facto alliance: Healey and Kinnock

the serious left.

The right wing still have great sources of strength. And however much we may wish for peace and unity in the Labour Party, they will have 'peaceful coexistence'

only on their terms.

Right now, the leadership, the deputy leadership, and the NEC, are all in the hands of outright opponents of Party policy or of people who will not fight for it.

And the rank and file is not so tame and miserable that we will passively tolerate a leadership that openly organises to obstruct the movement's policy on the Bomb, on wage controls, etc.

At the Solidarity meeting Roy Hattersley stressed that the right wing would fight for 'month after month' and would make sure Benn was challenged if he won the deputy leadership.

Conference — reports and comments from Bob Cryer, Reg Race, Nigel Williamson, William McKelvey and Ken Livingstone — pp.3,4,5.



Bani-Sadr

More Khomeini killings

LAST WEEK, three groups each of about 50 Mojahedin supporters, converged at a point on Tehran's Taleghani Avenue. There they chanted slogans against the regime and overturned a bus to form a barricade. The protestors were soon

confronted by a troop of Revolutionary Guards, and although the Mojahedin were better armed than usual — machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades — the pro-government forces inevitably triumphed. If victory could be won

by totalling martyrs — and the mystique of martyrdom is certainly very powerful among the Mojahedin as well as among the Islamic Right — the opposition to Khomeini would have won long ago. However, the Mojahedin

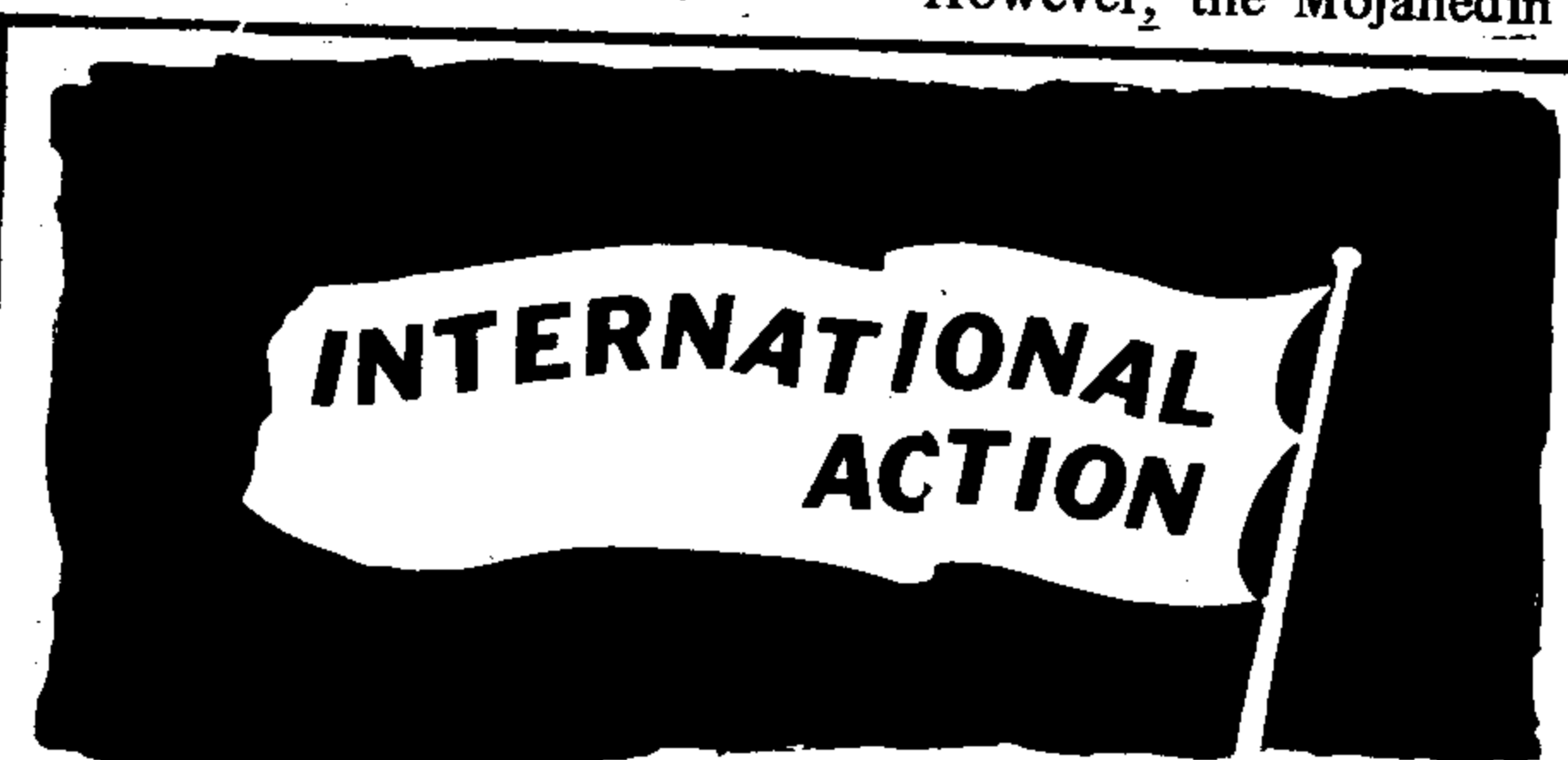
have thrown in their lot with the supporters of ex-President Bani-Sadr, subordinating their own (mystical-utopian) programme of a future classless Islamic society to his vague and cynical promises of democracy and national salvation.

The previous days brought their customary quotas of executions: 22 on one day, 23 the next. And Khomeini gave yet another unmistakable proof of the regime's unrelieved backwardness, announcing the need to purge schools — even primary schools! — of "corrupt elements... who pretend to be Islamic scholars, but really don't know anything about Islam."

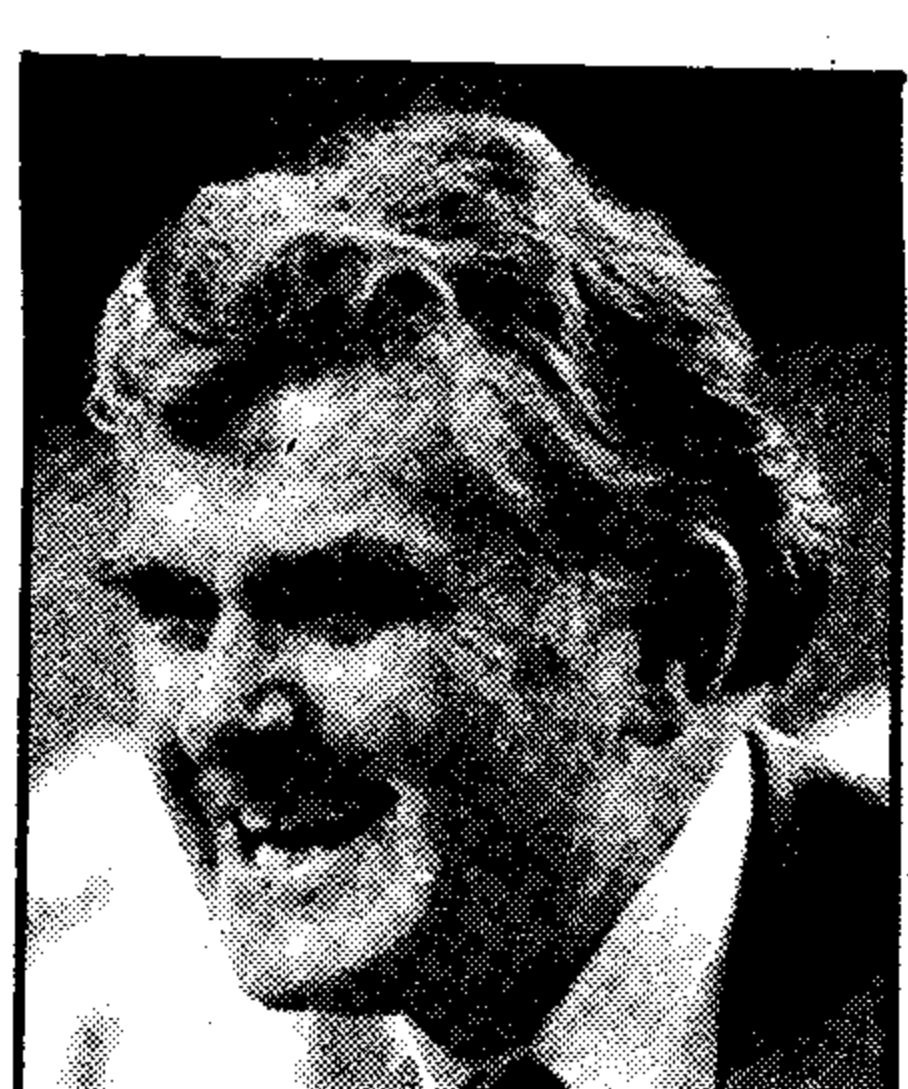
He warned "they would be ready to serve the United States or the Russians... they will lose the benefit of being able to go to school..."

What could however signify a serious deterioration in the situation is the as yet unconfirmed news that the government forces have crushed the Kurdish opposition along the Turkish border. If this is the case it could mark the end for a whole period of the mass armed liberation struggle of the Iranian Kurds.

ANDREW HORNUNG



Sirs and Duffy: who's in the dark ages?



STOP THIS TRIP!

by Bruce Robinson

BILL SIRs and Terry Duffy are planning a visit to South Africa with a delegation from the International Metalworkers Federation.

This visit flies in the face of the TUC and Labour Party policy of "total isolation" of South Africa, which the ISTC and AUEW both voted for. Sirs explained that the TUC resolution wasn't relevant.

The visit has been condemned by SACTU, one of the main black union federations in South Africa.

Sirs justifies this by claiming that the visit will be aimed at giving advice to black trade unionists. With (at best) unfortunate phrasing he said:

"We have black affiliates who desperately need our assistance. The objective is to pull them out of the dark ages and provide the sort of training shop stewards have here."

(Steelworkers and engineers might be forgiven for thinking that Duffy and Sirs are living in the dark ages and could learn a thing or two from the determination and courage of black trade unionists in South Africa).

Duffy mentioned that they were also planning to

offer "the appropriate advice" to white trade unions. These unions are racist from top to bottom and aim to preserve the privileged position of white workers. Any friendly advice to them simply legitimises their claim to be proper unions.

Duffy and Sirs try to justify their planned trip by saying that they will only go if black unions want them to. They also say they want to visit BL and Smiths Industries factories to see if guidelines on black workers' pay are being kept to.

Yet their visit can only be turned to advantage by the South African government and supporters of apartheid. If Sirs and Duffy really want to help black trade unionists, they could make a start at home.

When BL workers went on strike in South Africa, Duffy didn't lift a finger to call solidarity action in Britain.

Such action can really be effective in helping black workers organise and fight the pro-apartheid multinationals. It is worth infinitely more than the sort of education they are likely to get from Duffy and Sirs.

Jewish lawyer sacked

BRITAIN'S second-largest property company, MEPC, sacked the chief of its legal department because he is Jewish.

That was the finding of an industrial tribunal earlier this month. It seems the sacking of Anthony Simmons was linked to MEPC's negotiations for a loan from the oil-rich, reactionary Arab statelet of Kuwait.

The tribunal reported: "We could not speculate on whether Arab pressure induced MEPC to dismiss Mr Simmons because he was a Jew, or whether this was a voluntary boycott — a way of getting rid of the only Jewish officer of the company before... the transaction."

Socialists should be unreserved in our condemnation of this discrimination. That Anthony Simmons is a member of the wealthy classes is beside the point. The struggle against Zionism — against a state which makes racial discrimination its basic principle — must be combined with absolute opposition to all anti-Jewish prejudice or discrimination.

ITALY, USA: opposition to Turkish junta

TO mark the first anniversary of the military coup in Turkey, sections and supporters of the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee were active in fighting for solidarity action.

In Britain the Workers Socialist League participated in the Turkey Solidarity Campaign's Week of Action. In Italy, the Bolshevik-Leninist Group took the initiative in mobilising a demonstration outside the Turkish Airlines offices in Milan.

Token

The small demonstration was supported in token fashion by the centrist Proletarian Democracy group (PD) and the USFI Italian section (RCL).

The demonstration was however attended by a large squad of police. GBL demonstrators carried posters calling for "workers' and peasants' government in Turkey", and "for the right of self-determination of the Kurdish people."

The GBL has also been

seeking ways of raising the Turkish repression in the European parliament in a bid to block EEC aid to the junta.

Their members have been calling on Communist Party activists to contact Communist MEPs, and made a direct appeal to one Euro MP, Mario Capanna.

It appears that Capanna has already raised the issue of Turkey three times at the Parliament, but that there is no longer the opportunity to raise discussion on individual death sentences.

However the threatened death sentences against 52 jailed leaders of the DISK union confederation may well be a different issue.

Euro-MP

The new term of the Euro-Parliament opens in October, and Capanna has agreed to plan further interventions on the Turkish question.

He is asking if any left wing Labour MEPs would be prepared to support such an intervention.

Meanwhile in the USA, militants of the newly-fused Revolutionary Workers League played a leading role in convening a successful

100-strong solidarity meeting in Berkeley on the anniversary of the Evren coup.



SAVE DOGAN TARKAN!

CAMPAIGNERS supporting Turkish socialist Dogan Tarkan have been active this week at the Labour Party conference.

Dogan, a former trade union official, faces a threat by the Home Office to deport him to Turkey — where he would be jailed and tortured by the military regime there.

Several constituency Labour Parties, as well as Labour MPs, Trades Councils, trade union branches, and trade union leaders, have already signed Dogan's petition. But the campaign is still urgent.

Contact: Friends of Dogan Tarkan, BM Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX.

WATCH COMMITTEE?

MANCHESTER police chief James Anderton can't be accused of having a one-track mind (indeed there are those who wouldn't accuse him of having a mind).

He has other obsessions besides stockpiling advanced weaponry — like freeing the area of the gay menace. During 1980, over 200 people were convicted of "homosexual offences" in Stockport alone.

So keen are Greater Manchester police to crack down on this kind of behaviour that they've had holes drilled through doors and walls in public toilets in Stockport precinct for easy observation. There's a word for this kind of behaviour...



Anderton

WHY SIRs RUNS

ALL becomes clear... Fitness freak Bill Sirs, interviewed on "Woman's Hour" explained how the over-fed, under-exercised life style of the majority of trade union leaders held no great attractions for him. Given the choice he would rather go for a run than have a big meal.

So steelworkers, demanding action on job losses and frozen wages will understand perfectly when Bill tells them... to go for a run.

BITING THE HAND...

THE effects of Tory education cuts are now so savage that Margaret Thatcher is even getting a mauling from people who should be her staunchest supporters.

John Thorn, headmaster of Winchester, one of the most exclusive "public" schools had harsh words for what the Tories are doing to the state education system:

"The education of 94% of the nation's children is being allowed to languish and decay through an appalling and criminal lack of resources."

As if that weren't enough of a kick in the teeth, the cuts in the amount the University Grants Commission can dish out have not all fallen on the Northern, industry-oriented Universities. Even the great seats of privilege are feeling the pinch.

Students at St. John's College, Cambridge will only have their beds made once a week and their rooms cleaned every other day. And, horror, they can no longer rely on university servants doing their wash-

ing up. A similar fate befalls the students of Jesus College whose rooms will only be cleaned every two days. It's a harsh world, but this is what we call "equality of sacrifice".

US AGENT HIT G.I.s

THE American government has just admitted that many more US troops may have been exposed to Agent Orange than had previously been supposed.

12 million gallons of Agent Orange, which contains the deadly chemical dioxin, responsible for the devastation of Seveso, were sprayed on Vietnam as a defoliant.

The latest revelations, that spray planes in distress dumped their poisonous cargoes over or near US

bases and military installations, are causing great alarm. Health Secretary Richard Schweiker, who is in charge of the government's working group on the question said:

"I don't think anyone foresaw that we would be dumping this stuff on our own people."

It's apparently OK for generations of Vietnamese who may not even have been alive at the time of the spraying to grow up deformed and damaged. But "our own people"? Whoops!

Trans-Pennine march

"I FULLY support this march. But marches are not enough. We need a Labour Government as faithful to the working class as this Tory government is to the ruling class."

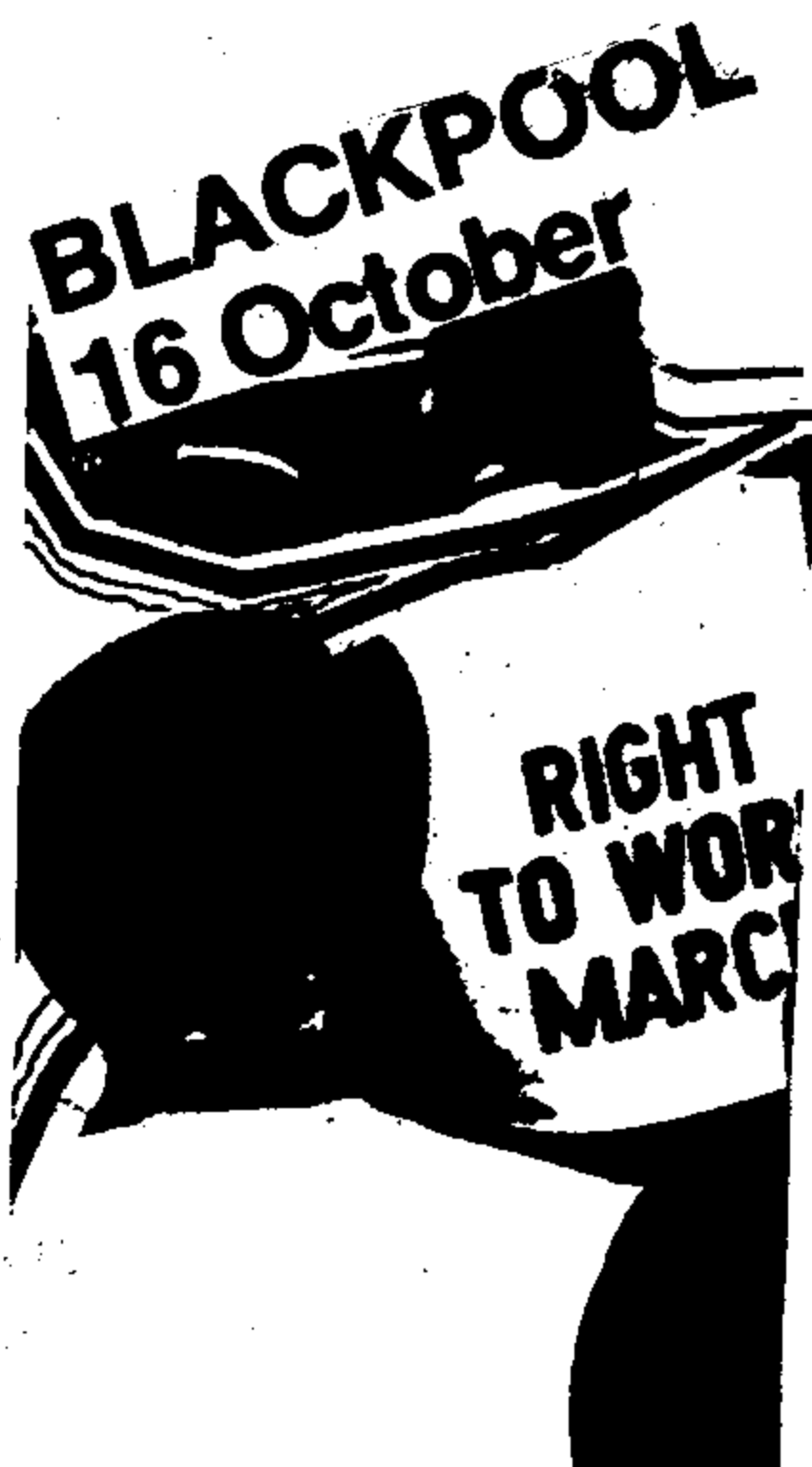
Barry Hines, author of 'Kes', was speaking at a press conference in Sheffield on Wednesday September 23 to launch the Trans-Pennine March. This march, part of the TUC's 'Campaign for Jobs', will start from Sheffield on October 7, join up with the Right to Work march from Liverpool for the later stages, and arrive in Blackpool to lobby the Tory party conference on October 16th.

Kevin Barron was also at the press conference to give

backing to the march from the area NUM. He said that the Yorkshire miners had already sponsored some 60 marchers to Blackpool.

Socialist Organiser supporter Dave Ayrton was one of the speakers at the press conference from the march steering committee. He recalled his experiences on the People's March, and argued that the working class must lead the way to fight for jobs.

Information: Arthur Bedford, Transport House, Sheffield (phone 71323), or Bill Innes, 40 Park Lane, Leeds (458442). For the Right to Work march: 265a Seven Sisters Rd, London N4.



Stock market jitters

A SYSTEM OUT OF CONTROL

AFTER the last world slump, in 1974-5, the major capitalist governments pulled their economies back up again by increased state spending.

The new spending did produce some recovery. But it was very limited – indeed, in Britain, hardly noticeable. And inflation ballooned, prompting real fears of a terrible collapse of the world monetary system.

This time round, all the leading capitalist governments, except France's new Socialist administration, have resolved to sweat it out, with 'tight money' policies designed to restrain inflation and to shift the balance of income from state spending to private profit.

Thus the world downturn that began between summer 1979 and spring 1980 has continued much longer than 1974-5's slump. And it could very well lurch into a new, more drastic, decline.

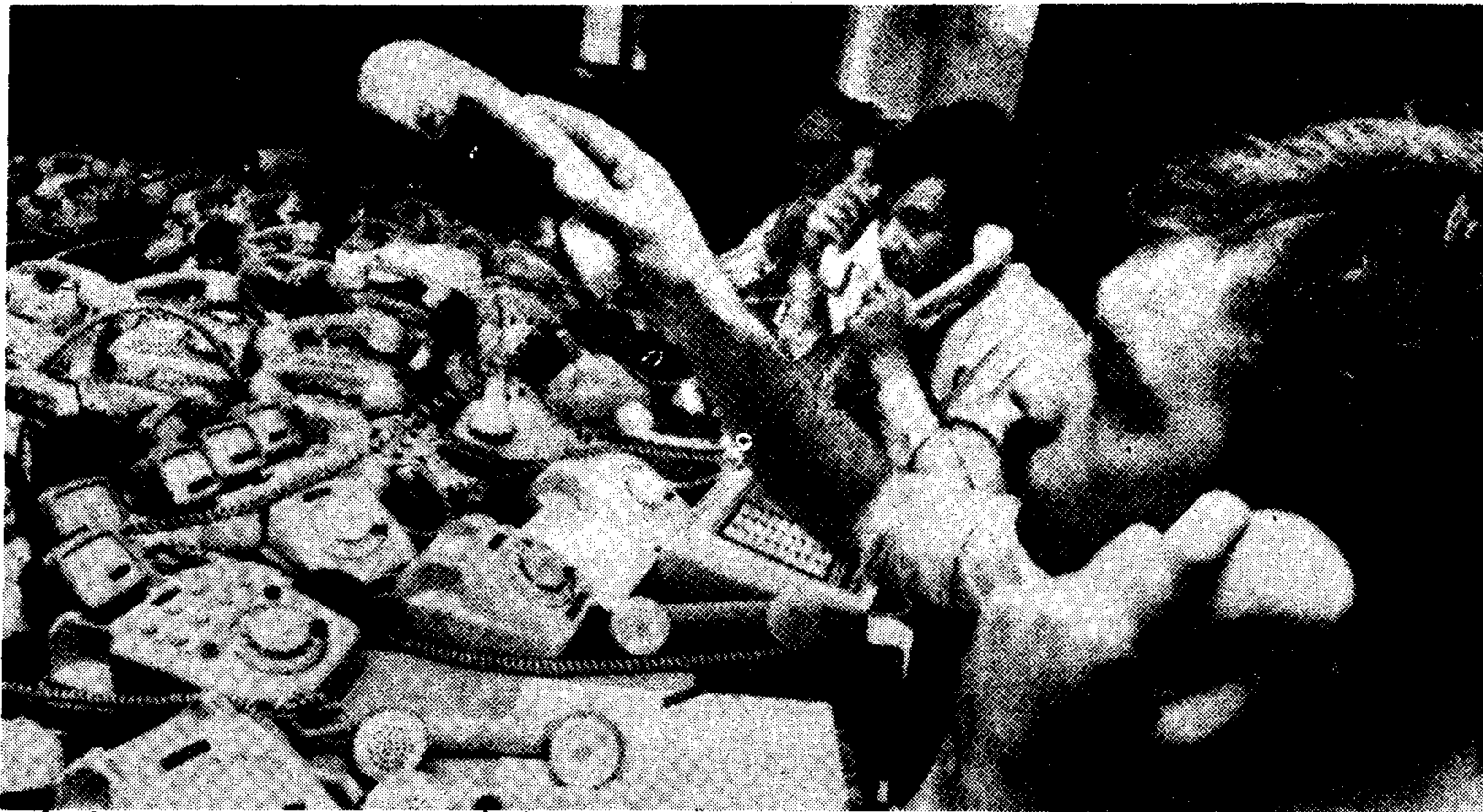
Wall Street shares have been falling since June. At the beginning of September the London stock market started falling, too – and fast. Over the last week or so the fall in prices has given way to sudden, alarming, plunges, not only in the US and Britain but also in Japan, Germany, France, Canada, etc.

The fall in share prices goes alongside high interest rates. The real interest rate (i.e. after allowing for inflation) in the US is the highest since the 1930s. Throughout advanced capitalist countries real interest rates are often much higher than the real rate of profit.

In other words – the people with the money are sitting on their hands. And instead of easing credit, or making new investments themselves, the governments are sitting tight too.

Part of the drop in share prices, or the rise in interest rates, may be a 'bubble' created by speculation. But such is the blindness of the capitalist market system that a 'bubble' can well turn into a real slump.

Capitalism does not produce goods for people's needs, but only for cash. If credit and cash flow dry up sufficiently, then the whole economic process can falter. We slide into chaos – with no cash in the hands of the unemployed workers who need what the idle factories could produce, and no effective demand for goods sufficient to make the money-



men promote production.

The capitalists and their governments cannot control their crazy system in any serious way. Their 'tight money' policy, designed to curb inflation and state spending, has in fact (via higher interest rates) left inflation high and budget deficits huge.

But not only that. At present the main capitalist governments will not even try to forestall the threat of slump.

For Reagan and Thatcher the recession has its advantages. They aim to use it to drive down real wages, cut jobs, and enforce speed-up. That is the real meaning of the code-words 'war against waste', and 'battle against inflation'.

In the US, output per worker rose in the first quarter of this year at an annual rate of 6%. In Britain, it rose at 9% between the first and second

quarters. In many industries the speedup is much greater than average: BL, for example, increased output per worker by 30% last year.

Unemployment is 12% in Britain, 5½% in West Germany, and over 7% in every other major capitalist country except Japan.

Wage cuts

Real wages are falling both in the US and Britain. The public sector 4% limit, the wage freeze declared by British Steel, and the straight money-wage cuts by Pan Am, British Airways, and Hoover, are intended to increase this trend. And if the stock market slump continues and spreads, that will mean even harsher attacks on workers' stan-

dards.

The way Reagan and Thatcher see it these attacks are the groundwork for restoring profits. And restoring profits is the number one aim. All else is secondary.

So workers' jobs, lives, hopes and happiness are tossed like corks on the stormy seas of the capitalists' attempts to revive their rate of plunder.

But these attacks can be defeated. The obscenity of the livelihoods of millions depending on the moods and calculations of stock market sharks can be ended.

We should fight for control over our living standards and our jobs.

Labour movement committees should calculate the true rate of inflation for working class budgets, and the unions should fight for a clause in every wage agreement guaranteeing monthly cost-of-living rises in line with that index.

The work available should be shared out among all those seeking work, on the basis of shorter hours with no loss of pay.

Against speed-ups and 'rationalisation', we should fight for workers' control, to reorganise production on a more rational basis.

For the British labour movement, these demands, directly counterposed to Thatcher's and the bosses' new attacks, point towards a confrontation with the government. Hundreds of thousands of workers will come up against the new wage-curbing policy in the next few months: we should fight to link the car-workers, the miners, the local authority manual workers, etc., organising to develop a general strike and to defeat the Tories.

And the fight to kick out the Tories must be linked to a fight for a positive alternative. We need a government that will enforce workers' rights against the rights of profit – one which will nationalise without compensation the banks and financial institutions, and will develop a major programme of useful public works.

Such a government – willing to take measures against the bureaucratic and military power that protects the privileges of profit – must be a workers' government, a government based on and accountable to the labour movement.

LABOUR CONFERENCE

CALL TO ACTION AGAINST

A STRONG intervention from Lambeth council leader Ted Knight forced through an emergency motion calling on Labour's NEC to coordinate the struggle of Labour councillors against Heseltine's planned legislation on council spending.

by John Lister

It was this debate which came the closest to discussing real action to combat what every speaker routinely described as vicious and savage Tory policies.

Speakers prior to Knight had strongly opposed both cuts and also rate and rent increases.

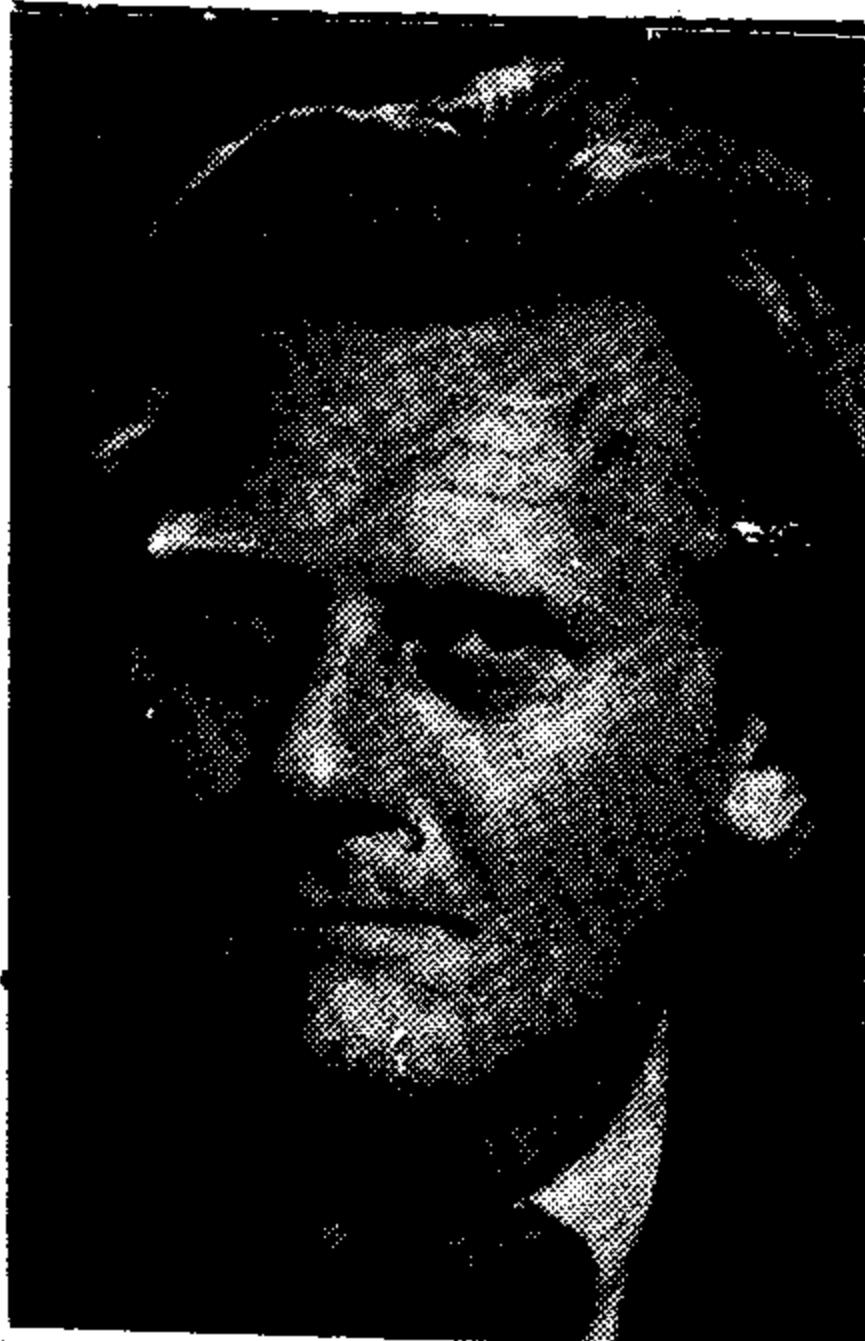
"Whatever stance is taken – cuts or rate increases – it is the working class that has to pay," argued the Toxteth CLP speaker.

Rates

Rate increases offer no alternative. Savage rate increases produce widespread indignation while still not preserving services," stressed the Sunderland delegate, seconding composite 40.

The composite was opposed by the NEC however, and was defeated on a show of hands despite securing the support of the TGWU.

Knight of course has been one of those who have set the pace in using large



rate increases in a bid to compensate for Tory cuts in rate support grant and thus preserve services.

His appeal for action against Heseltine's new plans to force councils to go to a

HESELTINE STRAITJACKET

referendum or fresh elections before increasing rates was therefore an appeal from the heart. Heseltine's policy is aimed precisely at cutting off his chosen line of retreat.

And as he stressed, the issue is an immediate one facing Labour councils.

"We can't wait until the next General Election: every Labour council must make its budget for next year under the terms of this legislation if we don't defy it."

It means they must either decide to make massive cuts at the expense of working class families or decide they cannot carry out Heseltine's dictates.

We must say to Labour councils: you cannot be mere administrators of Tory policy!

We must say to Heseltine that Labour councils are not going to balance their books at the expense of social services...

Unions

And Knight correctly pointed for the need for trade union action to defeat the new laws:

"If we are going to protect jobs in local authorities – and Heseltine wants us to sack 250,000 – then we must call on the unions to stand firm and back councils that fight Heseltine."

A number of speakers pointed out Heseltine's attack on local democracy, and attempt to make new Labour councils repudiate their mandate. As one West Midlands councillor pointed

out:

"Heseltine means we must either turn round to the electors and say 'we lied' or we must fight."

Plainly the Shadow Cabinet, the NEC majority and sections of union leaders would have preferred the first option. But when the emergency resolution from Norwood was put to the vote it was decisively carried.

It commits the Party to "mount a major campaign to defeat the proposed legislation. Should this fail, Conference believes that Labour councillors must refuse to make the cuts that will be needed to balance the books."

Conference, therefore calls on the National Executive Committee to co-ordin-

BRIGHTON '81



This year's biennial delegate conference mandated the T&G to fight cuts by industrial action

ate the struggle of Labour councillors making this stand, and calls on the trade unions, who face thousands of their members joining the dole queues, to use their strength to defend Labour councils in this fight."

The task now both in local Labour Parties and in local authority unions is to ensure that this formally correct policy is carried out in practice.

After getting Healey elected What next for the Tribune Group?

THE spectacle of 17 members of the Tribune group easing Healey's path to victory in the Deputy leadership ballot has raised a new question mark over its credibility.

Of course Tribune has for years proved organically incapable of offering a consistent or coherent opposition to the right wing. Under the Wilson and Callaghan governments, Tribunes failed time and again to wage any struggle against the introduction of anti-working class policies.

Rank and file

But the latest betrayal — led by Neil Kinnock and Joan Lester — takes place under different conditions. There are strong moves to the left among the Party's rank and file.

Benn's campaign for democracy and accountability and against the policies of the right wing has helped attract thousands of new members and won the enthusiastic backing of the vast majority of the Constituencies.

Kinnock's betrayal this time takes place *not* in the seclusion of the Parliamentary lobbies but under the watchful eyes of thousands of activists.

The immediate drop in constituency votes for Kinnock (down 61,000) and Lester (down 121,000) is an initial gauge of the anger that will continue to grow within Labour's left wing. And Kinnock is by no means to the right of the 'mainstream' Tribune group.

Right wing

Some are even more openly committed to perpetuating the control of the right wing — even holding dual membership of Tribune and 'Labour Solidarity'.

Perhaps therefore Kinnock's latest bid for a secure place as Labour's 'man for all seasons' has been executed at the expense of dealing a belated death blow to the Tribune group.

'He has to stand again'

NIGEL WILLIAMSON, (Benn Campaign Committee).

"Tony Benn showed that he is the only candidate for the deputy leadership with a broad level of support in all sections of the Party. He actually had the support of over one-third of the PLP whereas Healey has a miserable one-sixth of the constituencies.

Mandate

I believe that Tony Benn has to stand again — he has a mandate to do so from 500 constituencies — but that decision remains to be taken and must be taken on the basis of the broadest consultation.

There also needs to be wide debate on the whole future of the Labour left, the Tribune Group, and the relationship of the Parliamentary left and activists in the unions and constituencies.

If this Conference convinces people of the urgency for us to regroup and organise, then, despite the setbacks we have suffered, this week can be used to advance the left in the Party."



Delegates and MPs spoke to Socialist Organiser after the deputy leadership election about the lessons for the Left

Assessing the election result

J.K. O'Reilly, National Officer, NUAAW:

"It's a defeat but it's not a disaster. The result was close enough to prevent the right wing rolling back the policies. Our delegation was split 8-4 in favour of a vote for Benn, but the union's executive had opted for abstention. In the end the delegation followed the executive's line.

The fight now is for union democracy — but democracy based on the branches, not on some kind of postal ballot that would hand control over to the Tory press.

We need branch discussion and involvement, more political education of the membership.

It's shown where people stand. That bastard Kinnock..."

Eric Clarke, NEC, Scottish NUM:

"I think it was a hollow victory for Healey. Particularly when he started out the clear favourite with the media right behind him. Benn was only kept out by the unions protecting Healey.

But it was clear that Benn had the support of the vast majority of the rank and file members in the hall.

One good thing is that the recorded vote will put all the PLP on the spot. Many of them obviously went against their constituency parties."



Willy McKelvey MP

"Has the Tribune Group a future? Well the question is really whether the PLP has a future. When I came to Parliament I was appalled at the PLP. It's a farce. And I was disillusioned by the Tribune Group.

It's an intellectual discussion group — it binds nobody to anything.

Some MPs use their membership of the Tribune group like a badge — just as some shop stewards carry copies of the Morning Star.

This election has at least exposed some of these Tribunes for what they are.

I think the result was just about ideal. If Benn had won by 0.002% or something the press would have gone berserk, condemning it as a fix. Now they are forced to accept the result."

'Some fake lefts exposed'

said BOB CRYER, MP

"Well it's a victory for the media. Tony Benn has been branded as responsible for the crash of the Stock Exchange and for the bubonic plague.

But a lot of people have been exposed for what they are.

What disgusts me in particular has been the role of the Tribune Group — Kinnock and

the others.

It does question whether the Tribune Group has a future. Perhaps we should try to start up a Socialist Group in the PLP.

Look at the coverage given to Kinnock's article in Tribune — nearly two whole pages. Michael Meacher was only given half a page to reply — and I wrote a letter

answering Kinnock's article which they didn't print.

I think some fake lefts have been exposed today.

You wonder who you're talking to now in the Tribune Group. After all, some of them are in Solidarity as well. They can sit in on our discussions and then head on down the road to help

oppose us.

I don't know whether it would be right to run again next year. We have to think about that. Maybe it depends on Healey's attitude. On Wednesday we seem certain to get the unilateral policy passed. If Healey will argue for it — and other conference policies — then perhaps the best tactic would be

to hold him to it: if he won't, then we may have to fight to remove him.

With the pressure of another election coming up, then it is possible that another fight next year might actually consolidate Healey's lead.

We have to find the best way to press the advantage."

H-Block appeal to conference

from the Republican prisoners on protest at Long Kesh. (The text has been abridged)

WHEN THE State of Northern Ireland was founded, its borders were designed in such a fashion as to ensure a permanent and perpetual pro-Unionist majority in the Stormont Parliament.

As a result the nationalist populace — forced by Britain to exist within the confines of what they regarded as an illegitimate and alien state — suffered great persecution in almost all spheres of life... job discrimination, housing discrimination, gerrymandering, multiple votes for Unionists, emergency repressive laws, a sectarian police force.

We protesting Republican prisoners in H-Blocks believe it is important for you British socialists to realise and accept that for fifty years British governments tolerated and bolstered this regime.

How could it have been allowed to live so long in its prejudiced, polluted and blatantly sectarian form?

No party, Labour, Tory or Liberal cared about the estranged minority in Northern Ireland.

No party wanted to rock the boat. It was convenient and politically expedient to turn a blind eye and to adopt the policy of 'no policy' that one's predecessor adopted.

But it wasn't very pleasant being doomed to a lifetime of unemployment, social hardship and slums.

Lack of concern, lack of thought, lack of courage, all are the ingredients of bipartisanship, and right up to this minute bipartisanship fuels the sense of second-class citizenship felt by the minority in Northern Ireland.

The present conflict finds its roots in this legacy of injustice and bipartisanship. Only in a socialist Irish Republic will the historical and social divisions that plague the Irish national be eradicated and replaced with true justice and peace.

But nowhere is the 'hear, hear' policy more evident than on the H-Block issue. The British Labour Party should not allow itself complacently to adopt the bankruptcy that infects other British political parties' thinking.

Is it not embarrassing when the Labour Party spokesman for Northern Ireland can effectively dismiss the political non-jury Diplock Courts with the absurd cliché, 'We accept the Diplock Courts are unorthodox, but what is the alternative?' Or is it not embarrassing when the British Labour Party allows draconian laws through Westminster without even a facade of opposition?

Victims

Can you not see that the men dying on hunger strike to retain their honour, dignity and self-respect are the victims of these iniquitous, totally politically-

oriented, undemocratic measures? We are the people Amnesty International spoke of when they said that torture was a commonplace practice in Castlereagh — torture the purpose of which was to extract a written confession for production as damning evidence at the Diplock Court.

We prisoners are very aware of the fact that those who bear initial responsibility for the initiation of the ignoble 'criminalisation' policy are present at this conference today.

They know and everyone here knows that the inception of the criminalisation policy was a tactical rather than a moral decision.

They are the men who sanctioned the use of brutality and degradation here in H-Blocks. They are the men who shout 'hear, hear' the loudest when Maggie Thatcher allows another Irish Republican Socialist prisoner to die in

H-Blocks for his dignity and beliefs.

We appeal to those of you who are concerned about the horrifying spiral of death both inside and outside the prison genuinely to seek a just and practical solution to this impasse.

We appeal to you to condemn the Tories for their bloody vindictiveness. We appeal to you to study carefully our policy statements in which we clearly showed that we sought neither elitist nor preferential treatment, nor the right to control the prison.

Lastly, we appeal to you to think of your ten comrades who gave their very lives for their integrity and of your socialist comrades who face death at present on hunger-strike.

You can be instrumental in saving the lives in Long Kesh and in the streets of Northern Ireland, and not only we, but a united nationalist population in Ireland, pray you do so.

Unions veto 'troops out'

UNION leaders in a show of strength wheeled out their card votes to crush a motion on Ireland which called for an end to Labour's bipartisan policy with the Tories.

Milder

The motion — the milder of two composites and which also one-sidedly condemned "terrorism" and "violence" — secured the support of the vast majority of the CLPs and appeared carried on a show of hands. But the call went up for a card vote and it was heavily defeated.

Also defeated was a motion calling for support to the Irish hunger strikers.

Brent delegate Merle Amory stressed how "the heroic deaths of Bobby Sands MP and subsequent hunger strikers finally brought the issue home to the people of Britain.

Later, a packed meeting of the Labour Committee on Ireland, addressed by anti-H-Block MP Owen Carron, demonstrated the growing commitment of the conference rank and file to the Irish question, which must be taken firmly into the trade unions.

A socialist group in PLP?

"PERHAPS we should try to set up a Socialist Group in the Parliamentary Labour Party", said Bennite MP Bob Cryer after Tribune MPs had helped Denis Healey into the deputy leadership.

And this week in Brighton, Reg Race MP, chairperson of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee, was also pushing the idea of a 'Bennite' group of MPs.

Unlike the Tribune group, this group could be linked to, and accountable to, an organised left wing in the Labour Party and the unions. Cryer's

and Race's appeal is thus a big step forward — and should be coupled with plans to set up a new open, democratic, and activist movement of the rank and file Left.

As we go to press, Reg Race is due to speak at Thursday's Socialist Organiser Brighton fringe meeting on 'Organising the Left'. The meeting will discuss Socialist Organiser's appeal, two weeks ago, for Tony Benn and his associates to call a democratic labour movement conference to set up a new left wing.

Backtrack on control of manifesto

THE old left wing (or supposedly left-wing) NEC went out, not with a blaze of glory, but with an inglorious whimper.

Its last action was to switch its line to oppose NEC control of the Party manifesto. After this switch — decided on the casting vote of acting chairperson Judith Hart — there is a good chance that Michael Foot may be able to retain the leader's veto on the manifesto, used by Harold Wilson to throw out nationalisation of the top 25 companies, and by James Callaghan to delete abolition of the House of Lords.

The conference debate is on Wednesday afternoon.

Democracy

On the other big issue of Party democracy before the conference — reforming the Standing Orders of the PLP to enable its decisions, and voting on them, to be properly recorded — the NEC had already decided to recommend against reform.

But the victories for Party democracy so far have been won with very little help from the NEC. New victories can still be won, if the Left organises and takes the fight into the unions.

Setbacks in NEC elections

AFTER their pyrrhic victory in the deputy leadership elections, the block votes of right wing union leaders have produced some real setbacks for the Left.

A switch of votes by the AUEW ousted five left wingers on the NEC and handed a built-in majority to the Healey-Foot-Kinnock right wing coalition.

Installed

Eric Varley was installed as Party treasurer in place of left winger Norman Atkinson; in the women's section, Renee Short and Margaret Beckett were removed and replaced by right wingers Shirley Summerskill and Gwyneth Dunwoody.

And in the trade union section, left wingers Bernard Dix and Charles Kelly went out, their places taken by COHSE's David Williams and Roy Evans (ISTC).

The right wing was cock-a-hoop — and quick to spell out to drooling r-women their latest plans for a purge of left wing opponents in the party's leading committees.

The popular press was of course over the moon at these victories by opponents of conference policies.

All of a sudden the allegedly "extreme", red-revolutionary Labour Party which they had pilloried for the past six months was reinstated as a possible acceptable government — quoted as 13-8 favourites to win the next election!

Jubilant

The Tory commentators jubilantly hailed the first 'achievements' of this right

wing bloc — the now routine conference rejection of motions calling for troops out of Ireland and nationalisation of the banks, and the entirely predictable applause for Michael Foot's first speech as Party leader.

But this is because they have scented the hope of blood to come.

NUR leader Sid Weighell who has led a call for proscription of left wingers, immediately declared his optimism that the new right-leaning NEC will endorse his witch-hunting proposals.

REG RACE MP:

"The right now have a clear majority on the NEC and this must be a major setback. They will now attempt to derail the policy of Conference and the constitutional changes that have been agreed. The next crucial step for the left is to organise effectively so this cannot happen again."



Indeed Neil Kinnock among others has long declared his view that Trotskyists and even supporters of the harmless Militant tendency should be expelled from the Labour Party.

Grandiose

But while union bureaucrats spell out grandiose plans, they cannot act with a completely free hand. Benn's campaign won over 80% of the support in the constituencies of the Party — indeed his vote in the NEC elections went up still further this year, to an astonishing 530,000 out of a possible 631,000 votes.

To confront and crush the movement behind Benn, the bureaucrats would need to virtually dismantle the active party apparatus in many areas.

The right wing, even bolstered by the fake 'left' is not invincible. The fight must be redoubled to build a mass base of organised socialist opposition to their manoeuvres both in the unions and the Labour Party.



NOW TURN INTO THE UNIONS

from p.1

Progress is uneven. 83% of the CLPs voted for Benn, but only one third of the trade unions.

In many unions, discussion on the election was confined to top officials and committees. But in some — ASTMS, NUM, NUPE — it got out to the conference and the branches, stirring political life.

That was positive — even where the end-result was pro-Healey, as in NUPE.

NUPE's vote was a shock. But better that shock than continued passive reliance on a union leadership that talks left and does nothing.

There were some NUPE branches — like South Glamorgan County — that had their votes cast for Healey by the secretary without a branch meeting. But that does not explain the result. Thousands of NUPE members did vote for Healey, because they accepted the press story about Benn being a dangerous extremist.

Reservoir

Among workers fairly new to labour movement politics or even to trade unionism — as many NUPE members are — there will usually be a reservoir of support for the right wing. But what made that decisive was the disillusionment of NUPE members by their 'left-wing' leadership's complete failure to lead any action against wave after wave of cuts in the last two years.

Also, the NUPE leaders gave no lead on the deputy contest: Alan Fisher commented afterwards that Benn should not have stood. Yet this NUPE leadership has long been a prop of the campaign for

democracy in the Labour Party.

The lesson is this: put not your faith in un-elected trade union officials.

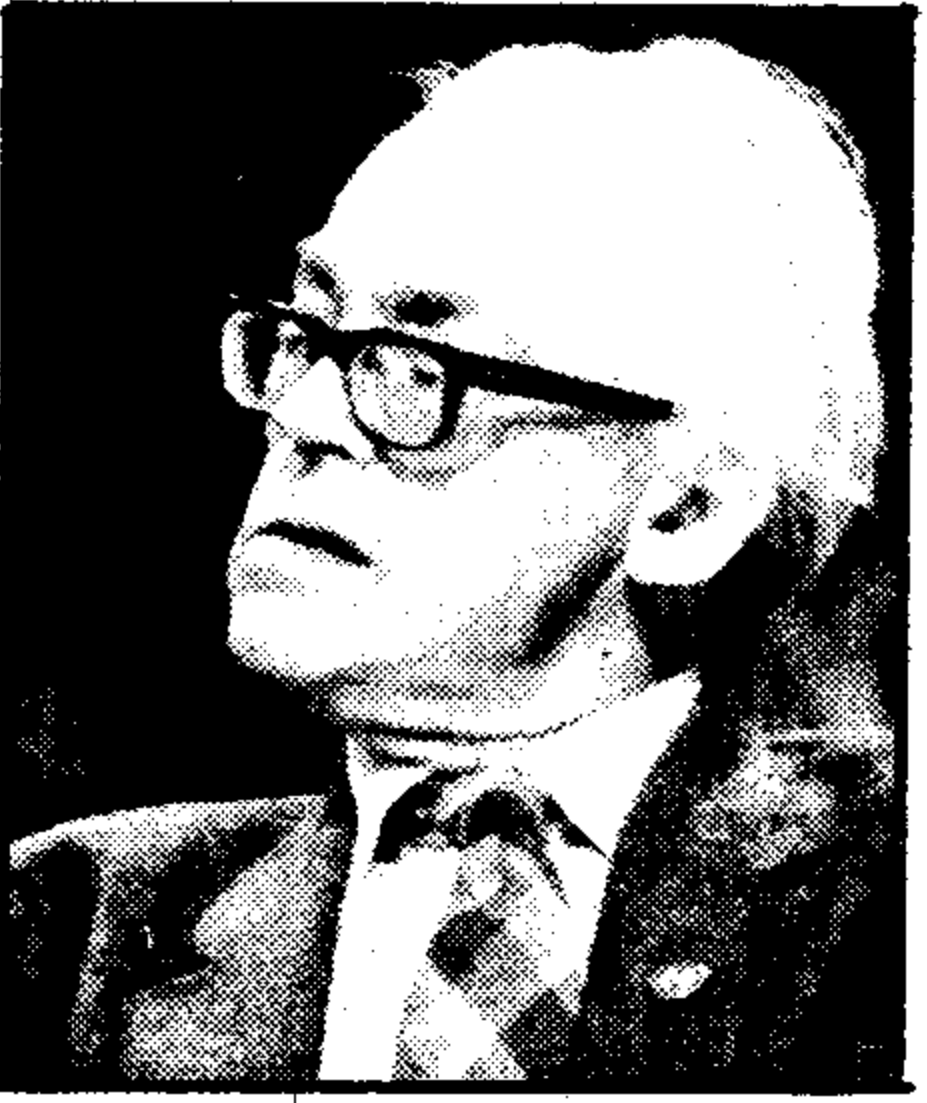
With strong alternative left-wing leadership in NUPE, the members can be won over.

We must step up the fight in NUPE and other unions, fighting the right wing on the issues the way they can best be fought — with thoroughgoing socialist arguments and policies. In the course of doing that we can clarify and strengthen the right wing.

One of the most important policies to fight for — and also an essential condition for the fight for other policies — is union democracy. We must overturn the right wing's humbug about the silent majority, by going out to organise that majority, and making it the vocal and controlling majority.

For its part, Socialist Organiser is calling a labour movement conference, within the next few months, to draw together the experiences of the Labour Party democracy fight and to rally forces for a new advance — for union democracy.

Help us, join with us in organising the conference. What's happened so far is small compared to the possibilities ahead.



Commitment to repeal racist laws

THE Labour Party is now committed to the immediate repeal of the Tories' Nationality Act and the 1968 and 1971 Immigration Acts.

The NEC was also instructed to launch a campaign of demonstrations, meetings, etc., in cooperation with the TUC.

Socialist Organiser supporter Simon Temple who moved one of the successful resolutions, on behalf of Handsworth CLP told us:

"The commitment to repeal the 1968 and 1971 Acts is an important one and we must make sure that it is carried out. But the Conference also backed a call for non-racist immigration controls. We still have a major job to convince the party that immigration control is by definition racist and in practice is bound to discriminate against workers, women and above all, black people.

Action

The fight against racism and about immigration control are not just matters for polite discussion in Labour Party wards. It has to be carried into the rank and file of the trade unions, on to the shop floor and the dole queues.

In some ways the most

important part of our resolution was the call for a campaign. This should not just be an excuse for windy speeches from Roy Hattersley and assorted trade union bureaucrats.

The Labour Party, at ward and constituency level, should make a defence of the Tories' victims a major

priority for their work.

Declamations against the Nationality Act aren't worth much if we aren't prepared to defend women like Anwar Ditta and Jaswinder Kaur. This is also the only way we can overcome the bitter disillusion that the black community feels about the Party."

Wind of change in Pollok

THE DRASTIC upheavals in the Labour Party nationally have at last penetrated Glasgow, the bastion of safe Labour seats, where, as they say, the votes for Labour are weighed not counted, and right wing MPs and councillors have maintained their grip in many parts of the City, and North and South of the Clyde right wing MPs face the threat of rejection at reselection conferences.

In the North lies Springburn where Michael Martin, a Healey devotee, faces a challenge from Benn supporter John Chatham, nomin-

ated to run against Martin by the Robroyston ward. In the South anti-abortionist and political non-event, James White, MP for Pollok, faces a more formidable challenge in Davie Dick, CLP Secretary and Militant supporter.

Already, before the contests are barely underway, the right wing are shouting "foul" and slinging mud in all directions. They are claiming that the meeting in Robroyston was invalid on the grounds that some people say that they were unaware that it was taking place and so were unable to be present.

In Pollok a well orchestrated witch-hunt is underway with an article in the Daily Express on Saturday

last beginning, "A Scots MP (White) returned from a three-week Austrian holiday last night to learn that a bid had been made by a Left-winger to oust him."

Nothing could be more ludicrous than an attempt to portray White as a surprised innocent. He has been well aware for a long time of the intense dislike in the CLP towards his opinions and has been actively trying to shore up his position.

The occasion of White's latest outburst has been the decision of David Hughes, the Party's national agent, to remove Davie Dick from his duties connected with the re-selection procedure. This was occasioned by a letter from Michael Keating, Secre-

tary of the local Fabian Society, claiming that Dick was abusing his position to secure his own nomination.

The same Keating recently supported a motion in his own ward for a ban on factions in the Labour Party. Presumably the Fabian Society does not constitute a faction.

CLPs in Glasgow and throughout the country must rally to the defence of Chatham, Dick and any other contestants who face such underhand machinations by right wing forces, for it is those forces which fear democracy and an open debate on policies.

Ian McCalman



GLC Labour leader Ken Livingstone hailed the Benn vote as an advance

"It's a major achievement for the left. Three years ago Healey was the next Labour Prime Minister — now clearly he's a spent force.

At the start of the campaign we were told that Benn would get one-

third of the vote, and even the left comrades organising the campaign underestimated his support in the trades unions and the CLPs.

The transformation of the Labour Party into a socialist party is clearly irreversible now that process has begun."

Letters



Writeback to
Socialist Organiser
28 Middle Lane
London N8



Fascist threat

If you find this piece of information interesting as a sample of police investment into fascist attacks in British justice.

In April, Satwinder (president of Acton Union) was hit by three skinheads in Ealing Hospital. He landed to the ground with initials NF and his name were carved into his back.

Police were informed by Sonah, but by officials who saw him coming through his car, he was hit and taken to hospital.

After nearly six months, the police have a youth in relation to the event. The police took Sonah, the to court and charge him with wasting police time and making false reports to

Magistrates agreed Sonah had faked the (nobody has and why he would one this) and fined him £350.

Again, the State is using the fascists. Perhaps will help some to realise that to defend communities and our movement itself we can rely on ourselves.

growing confidence in fascists, and their attacks, fire bomb increasing spate of can only be stopped by blacks and labour unions uniting to drive off the streets.

An illuminating example of the response of the leadership of the labour movement to the fascists came at the Chile Solidarity Rally in Trafalgar Square on Sunday 20 September.

While Foot, Scargill and a host of other speakers correctly pointed out the danger of the menace of fascism in Britain, they ignored a group of about 40 fascists in the rally.

Although they were told at the beginning of the rally and it was quite obvious from their swastikas, union jacks and BM initials on their jackets who they were, the organisers did nothing about them.

Despite the healthy response of many at the rally to confront the fascists, there were no warnings about them; no appeals to drive them off; no attempt, except to tell a 'Republican News' seller to calm down at shouts of 'terrorist scum'.



to resolve the situation.

If the policy of no platform for fascists is to be taken seriously and implemented, rather than as so many times before to be compromised due to disorganisation and police presence, we need to create anti-fascist squads.

The process of political agitation and education for the need for such squads must be linked now to the physical training and recruitment of such squads.

This is not an appeal for a kamikaze Red Squad, but for effective and efficient force capable of stopping the fascists confidently marching around, walking through our rallies and picking off people at the end of demonstrations.

The left must not see this as an alternative or a substitute for genuine workers guards, based on the council estate and the workplace. However, if we are to recognise the real situation we need to stop the fascists' confidence growing. Instead of the tolerant, pacifist attitude, and the rot on the left of 'talk to them' and 'they don't know what they are doing', we need such a squad.

The struggle to defeat the potential danger of fascism, needs to be put into its place in the general struggle against the Tories, and of building an alternative revolutionary leadership within the labour movement capable of such a task.

Yours fraternally,
Everton Williams

Spot the Marxist!

"SOCIALISM can never be established through the ballot box. Those who control the wealth will never let those who don't vote it out of their hands".

Tomlinson himself quotes Ted Grant of the Militant as envisaging 'a peaceful transformation of society through winning a Marxist majority in the trade unions and the Labour Party'.

"It would of course be a disastrous error, an outright deception, to assert

that the road to socialism passes not through the proletarian revolution but through nationalisation by the bourgeois state of various branches of industry and their transfer into the hands of the workers' organisations".

The first quote is from Kevin O'Donoghue of Provisional Sinn Fein, interviewed by Ian Swindale in Socialist Organiser. The second is from Lynn Walsh, indignantly defending the Militant against

claims by John Tomlinson in his recent book that they might have anything to do with violence (Militant, April 5).

The third quote is from Ted Grant's alleged mentor, Leon Trotsky, apparently casting doubt on his disciple's view that the nationalisation of the 200 biggest monopolies etc etc can lead to a peaceful transformation to socialism.

Spot the Marxist?

JOHN KELLY

Carras caught out?

FOLLOWING the article in Socialist Organiser two weeks ago entitled 'Know Your Rights', I am writing on behalf of Ware and Hertford LPYS to set some facts straight for the benefit of your readers.

The comrade who wrote the article (Alexis Carras) has never been to Ware and Hertford YS, and although the YS do not mind being written about by people who do not know the facts, they do not like being lied about.

The article mentions 'Class Fighter' supporters in Ware and Hertford YS being told that they could not sell their papers. The truth is that Class Fighter supporters sell Class Fighter in the YS and that they were merely told that Militant supporters would not stand with Class Fighter supporters or sell papers with them during street paper sales.

In no way is Ware and Hertford YS undemocratic. Recently a Class Fighter supporter from Woolwich visited some YS meetings as a guest. He was allowed into the meetings and was not asked to leave even after he tampered with the YS Minute Book.

Perhaps Socialist Organiser would be interested in the actions of Welwyn and Hatfield YS — a YS where Class Fighter supporters hold the majority viewpoint.

Sales of Militant have been banned along with Militant speakers. Will Socialist Organiser be reporting this in its next issue.

Because of Socialist Organiser's article I was asked to write this letter. The vote was unanimous, including the three Class Fighter supporters.

Socialist Organiser can prove its democratic principles by printing this letter in its next issue without omissions or additions.

Yours fraternally,
DAVID HERINCX

A DAY ON THE INSIDE...

WHAT THE Tories want to see most is youth under control, respecting their elders and the authorities.

They have had the chance to set an example with the youth that the police arrested indiscriminately during the recent riots.

I was one of those arrested and was sentenced to 24 hours in an attendance centre.

The centre is in a state school and manned completely by police.

On your first visit they show you who's boss with a short sharp talk from the inspector. You have to stand listening to him drivelling on for an hour with your chest sticking right out and your shoulder blades touching (try it!) — because 'that's how a man should stand'.

You have to pay attention to him because every two minutes you're supposed to answer his question saying 'yes sir' or 'no sir'. If you don't, it's twenty press-ups.

The three-hour sessions are split up into three

parts — one hour drill, one hour 'education', and one hour PE.

The best part of the 'education' is the 'social studies' class. It is supposed to teach you how to behave in society.

The teacher just plays games to show you what criminals you are. He invited three of us to play cards, giving all of them money. He had the lowest hand and he took the money.

After the protest, he asked them how they felt. Of course they felt he had cheated them. 'Now you know how it feels', he said.

Then he asked me how many control knobs I could see on a projector. I said none. He asked a lad at the other side, and he said eight. He asked me if I would take his word, and I did.

"Ah, but he's looking at that projector from a different side. Just like a policeman looks at the world from a different side. Perhaps you will take the policeman's word next time".

When we asked him

what social studies was, he didn't know.

The PE consists of running around a circle for an hour, only taking the odd break for press-ups and sit-ups. They're a bit softer in PE than the other groups — you're actually allowed to be sick. "I don't want no stiffs on my hands", the instructor said.

When you come out of the attendance centre, you find yourself saying sir to people. That's Tory justice for you.

All this happens, of course, while the labour movement sits back and does nothing. While the labour movement gives no lead, more youth are going to become disoriented, and rather than the Left growing it will be the fascist forces that swell.

I'd like to have done an interview with someone in there, but if you're caught talking it's twenty press-ups and doubles each time, and although I respect all that Lenin said about physical fitness I'm not quite up to it.

SIMON HUNT

Scientists who don't know their salt



trouble for the US power industry. A quarter of the 74 power stations in could be put out of for up to 12 months cost of \$6 billion.

Problem is rusting in steel pipes carry radioactive in the reactor core (PWRs). In PWRs are two cooling

The primary system (PCS) cooling water considerable press-temperature (up or 315°C) around core. The thousand tubes in the are cooled by the secondary system (SCS). The PCS were to last as long as of the power be 40 years, but become unusably in only 8 years.

are two problems caused use — first, cause leaks of active water in the SCS and the outside, and, could cause a coolant accident (Island style) of a 'melt-



But they didn't allow for the tubes going rusty....

What has caused this unforeseen situation, which is likely to be a financial disaster for Westinghouse, who built 15 of the 17 plants involved? It stems from the use of brackish or salty river water in the PCS.

Any motorist in the northern US knows that salt (used to melt ice on the roads) and water together cause rapid rusting of steel, but this elementary fact seems to have been unknown to the highly-paid designers and engineers of America's nuclear industry.

In fact, the process is hastened by increased temperature and pressure. It makes you wonder what other elementary factors are unknown to these 'experts'.

TOXIC TIP BLOWS UP

Arthur Bough of Sandford and Goldenhill Action Group and Stoke Socialist Organiser tells me that the toxic waste tip situated only yards away from his

home (see Socialist Organiser no.47) blew up last Saturday.

Luckily the explosion took place at the bottom of a 30-metre pit, but even so houses were shaken. No-one seems to have been hurt, even though when fire-fighters sprayed the resulting fire with water it blew back at them.

Action Group members had already complained to the council about a delivery of forty 200-litre (45 gallon) drums of liquid. The tipping licence states that all liquids must be in containers of less than 2½ litres (½ gallon).

The council reportedly said not to worry as the drums contained cashew nut oil. However, like any oil, this is inflammable and something in the tip must have ignited it.

The tip is now closed until an inquiry has reported, but Action Group members are determined that the closure be permanent. Full details next week.

This explosion comes only three weeks after the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology issued a critical report on dangerous waste disposal. After sitting for nine months and hearing evidence from hundreds of witnesses, the committee says the government has no clear idea of what is being dumped where.

It does not know where dangerous wastes are being produced, who produces them, what they are, and what happens to them.

The Department of the Environment thinks that 3.7 million tonnes of hazardous wastes are disposed of each year. The committee says the figure is 4.4 million tonnes.

Government regulations controlling disposal of wastes particularly harmful to humans do not even include things like mercury.

The committee proposes changes to make central government responsible for overseeing hazardous

waste disposal, to tighten up regulations and to make industry pay the full cost of disposing of its waste. But the strictest laws will remain unenforced by a big business government or the sort of reformist forelock-tugging Labour government we have seen in the past, which falls over itself to offer tax concessions and benefits to any capitalist who will consent to exploit a few workers.

At the moment there is no alternative to the labour movement and community groups establishing our own control and veto over the dirtier side of modern industry.

Information from Guardian and New Scientist.

Hurry up with those entries for the new logo — the suspense is killing me. Also, I'd like more feedback from readers — requests for articles, explanations, criticisms, praise, information (like that from Arthur Bough) or pieces for the column. It's your paper, so use it!

Women in struggle Manchester moves towards equal opportunity

by John Shiers

"IN recognition of the additional problems caused by discrimination towards women and minority groups in access to council employment", a new employment policy should be drawn up by both the Labour controlled City Council and County Council according to a recent decision by Manchester City Labour Party.

After much discussion, delegates from the eight Constituency Labour Parties in Manchester and affiliated unions passed proposals for:

1. Positive discrimination for women and ethnic minority groups in recruitment policies.

2. Employment protection for gay women and men to prevent any discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

3. All City and County Council job advertisements to state that "This Council is an equal opportunity employer, whose jobs are open to all regardless of sex, race, sexual orientation or disability."

The motion called on the City Party to discuss implementation of the policy with the City Council immediately, and for the inclusion of the policy in next year's Labour election manifesto for the City Council elections.



Equal pay is one side of it - and women need real equal opportunities, too

While a bid to amend the motion to exclude any reference to "sexual orientation" in the statement of policy in job advertisements was roundly defeated, another amendment to remove any reference to which groups would specifically benefit from the new policy was passed by a sizeable majority.

The job advertisement will now simply read that: "The council is an equal opportunity employer."

Manchester Labour Party has therefore supported the

implementation of a very progressive employment policy but does not want to publicly acknowledge it in its job advertisements.

Sabotage

Meanwhile, an attempt was made by the Labour right wing to sabotage the policy being passed by the City Party. The same day it was due to be debated at the City Party meeting, the Evening News carried a front page news story with

banner headlines "Job Rights Plea for Town Hall Gays".

The story focussed almost exclusively on the demand for employment protection for lesbians and gay men, mentioning positive discrimination in recruitment policies for women and ethnic minorities only briefly at the end.

It also linked the motions to the Labour left in Moss Side constituency which had, it said "two homosexuals amongst the 50 or so Management Committee"

and "self-confessed homosexual MP George Morton supporting it."

It carried a strong attack on the motion from Ken Franklyn, Deputy Leader of the Council, the National Union of Teachers and Joyce Hill, Tory Councillor (and "mother of two", so the article illuminatingly informs us).

Beginning

24 right wing Labour Councillors have recently been dropped by the City Party as candidates for next year's elections after refusing to agree to carry out the Election Manifesto.

A spokesperson for the North West Labour Campaign for Gay Rights said:

"We very much welcome the passing of this motion, though we regret that it was weakened by the Party coping out of declaring its policies in job advertisements. This is only the beginning, however."

The Labour Councillors currently in office in Manchester are unlikely to be prepared to implement this policy.

"They do not consider policies drawn up by the City Labour Party as binding on them to carry out. We are writing to all the Town

Hall unions, informing them of this motion and to arrange meetings to gain their support for this policy."

"We are also working within Manchester Labour Party to make sure that the candidates who stand for Labour in next year's election are prepared to carry out the Manifesto commitments. Unless we succeed in this, our efforts will all be wasted. We need more feminists and gay activists to work within the Party to push it to take a stand on these issues."

The County Labour Party, made up of delegates from all of Greater Manchester Constituency Parties also recently discussed this motion and rejected it. This is a sign that while attitudes may be changing in Manchester itself, much needs to be done to increase awareness of the problems facing women, ethnic minorities and gays in employment, in Greater Manchester as a whole.

French laws: not enough

MITTERRAND's government is planning to implement a number of major reforms for women's rights. They cover abortion, employment and a law outlawing sexual discrimination.

On abortion, Yvette Roudy, the minister for women's rights, is planning three laws. One will allow abortion to be paid for out of social security funds, one will extend foreigners' rights to obtain an abortion in France and one will ensure that abortion is available in all public hospitals.

The ministry is also preparing a national information campaign on contraception.

On employment, there will be extension of opportunities for training through positive discrimination in favour of women.

Roudy has also encouraged women to fight for equality in employment through the courts.

The measures the French government is taking put to shame the actions of past Labour governments. The Socialist Party has also been much bolder in promoting women within the party.

Since 1973 there has been a scheme of quotas for women throughout the party, though there is still discrimination in selection of parliamentary candidates as there is no requirement to shortlist any women candidates.

But the British Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts show that it is not enough just to pass laws to end discrimination. If women don't fight against employers who fail to implement them (and, in France, against the Catholic Church which will try to sabotage any liberalisation of abortion), the reforms of the Mitterrand government will simply remain pieces of paper.

Liverpool strike "turned women into fighters"

On Tuesday September 22, 200 angry shop stewards representing manual workers employed by Liverpool City Council, turned up for a meeting with Liberal boss Sir Trevor Jones.

They were angry because they weren't getting paid, due to a typists' dispute.

When they arrived at 11 am, they found that Jones had shifted the meeting to 2 pm.

The council workers retired for three hours and returned even more angry.

A great effort was made by leading stewards to prevent the delegation from physically confronting the anti-union boss of the council and giving him more than just a verbal seeing-to.

Manual workers in Liverpool realise that the typists' dispute is just the start of a general attack on all council employees as the Liberals with their Tory allies attempt to implement Heseltine's cuts in local authority spending.

The Liberal clique which runs the council thought the confrontation with the 400 women typists would be an easy victory. What they have done instead is to radicalise a traditionally conservative section of low-paid women workers.

The typists' dispute started in October last year when NALGO put in a regrading claim which would give typists similar pay to clerks. At present the basic



the words of typists' spokesperson Audrey Moore, "The Liberals have turned non-militant women into determined fighters."

Manual

Unfortunately this militancy has not been shared by other sections of NALGO. Some NALGO members are bosses who left the union after the strike began. The bosses have generally put pressure on other NALGO members to vote against the typists under threat of losing their jobs.

Members of NALGO who have refused to handwrite letters have been suspended. The union leadership has also come under criticism. It has reduced strike pay from £25 to £20 a week and has been slow to call out other sections in support.

This is in stark contrast to the attitude of manual workers. When typists' pickets turned up to prevent Securicor delivery of manual workers' wages at a council depot in Dingle, the depot workers actually joined in the picket saying, "Now at last we can actually do something to support you."

Manual workers have also said "We tell our members not to cross picket lines only to find NALGO members doing it. We want to have a levy to support the typists but we can't expect our members to support this unless NALGO have a levy also."

Typists' leaders are of the opinion that the Branch Executive in Liverpool

pay for a newly-qualified typist is on a scale of £2,500 to £3,600 per annum. A qualified typist cannot expect to get above £4,000 a year. This contrasts with chief officers' salaries of between £16,000 and £25,000. The regrading claim, essentially one for equal pay, is modest. For example a newly qualified scale of £2,600 to £4,000 per annum. The whole claim could be paid for by 1/4p on the rate over the next four years.

Sackings

The pay claim was ignored for eight months so a work-to-rule began. This led to some sackings for refusing to type council minutes.

A meeting of typists was held and on rank-and-file initiative a strike of typists was decided upon.

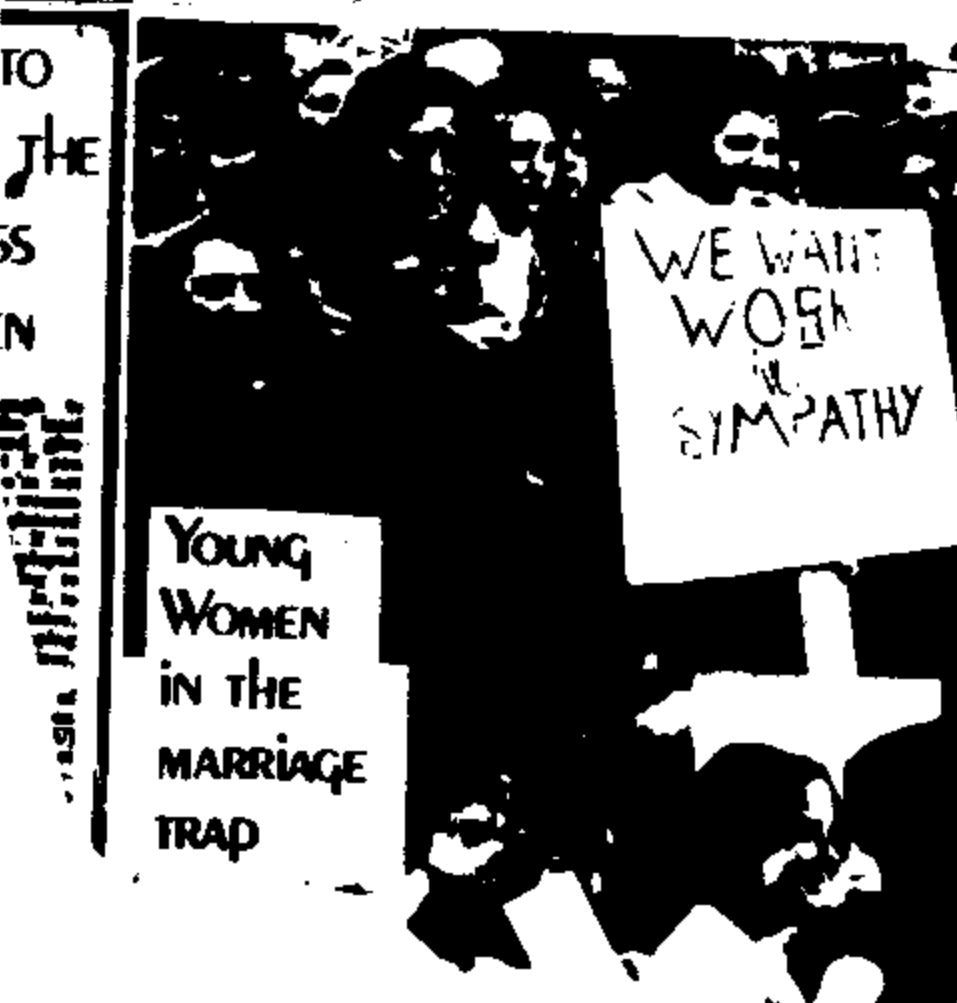
Many of those who voted against the strike are nevertheless out with the rest. In

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK

10p

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Labour Women Make Politics



The new Women's Fightback 10p plus postage from 41 Ellington St, London N7.



WHAT'S ON

St Mary's Hospital, London W9.
DAY OF ACTION
against closure
Saturday October 3:
assemble 11am at the hospital for demonstration.
3pm: rally at the hospital, Ken Livingstone speaking and Health Minister Gerard Vaughan invited to defend his closure decision.
4.30: Theatre group and music.
7.30: Disco (tickets £1).
Poster and picture exhibition throughout the day.

Anti-Apartheid Movement
Conference: Sunday November 1, 10 to 5.30
at Westminster Cathedral Conference Centre, Morpeth Terrace, SW1.
Open to all AAM members: details, AAM, 89 Charlotte St, W1.

Socialist Organiser
North-West day school
Sunday October 4, from 11am at UMIST student union, Sackville Street, Manchester.
Agenda includes: the Tory offensive; Ireland; women's liberation; the AES; the cuts fight; and organising the left in the Labour Party.
Registration £1 (50p unwaged).

More details: D. Lunts, 78 High St, Atherton.

DEMONSTRATION
"Stop the deportation of Nasreen Akhtar"
Saturday 17 October
Assemble 2 pm at Church Stile, behind Town Hall

Scrap the Bomb!
CND demonstration
London, October 24



LAMBETH SOCIALIST ORGANISER
Educational Programme
October 25: Labour Theory of Value
November 29: State and Revolution.
December 20: The Russian Revolution
January 31: Stalinism.
February 28: The Origins of the Labour Party.
All meetings start at 7.00 pm. For further details phone 609 3071.

Right to Work
march from Liverpool to Tory party conference in Blackpool:
October 8 to 16.
Details: c/o 265 Seven Sisters Rd, London N4.

Soldiers' Charter '81
Founding Conference: Saturday October 3, at Response, Old Brompton Rd, London SW5.
Contact: John McMullen, 1 Nevern Rd, London SW5.

Messages/money: c/o NALGO branch, Duchy Chambers, 24 Sir Thomas Street, Liverpool 1.



WORKERS AGAINST R

by Henry Phillips
in Washington

EVERYONE agreed on one thing at least about Solidarity Day (Saturday September 19): over a quarter of a million marched in Washington.

And that was even bigger than the great 1969 march which helped to undo Nixon's policies in Vietnam — or the 1963 civil rights march which was a major influence on desegregation in the 1960s.

In fact, very few of the quarter of a million actually did much marching, since the demonstration was so huge that soon there was no space left at the finishing point for those still at the starting point to march into.

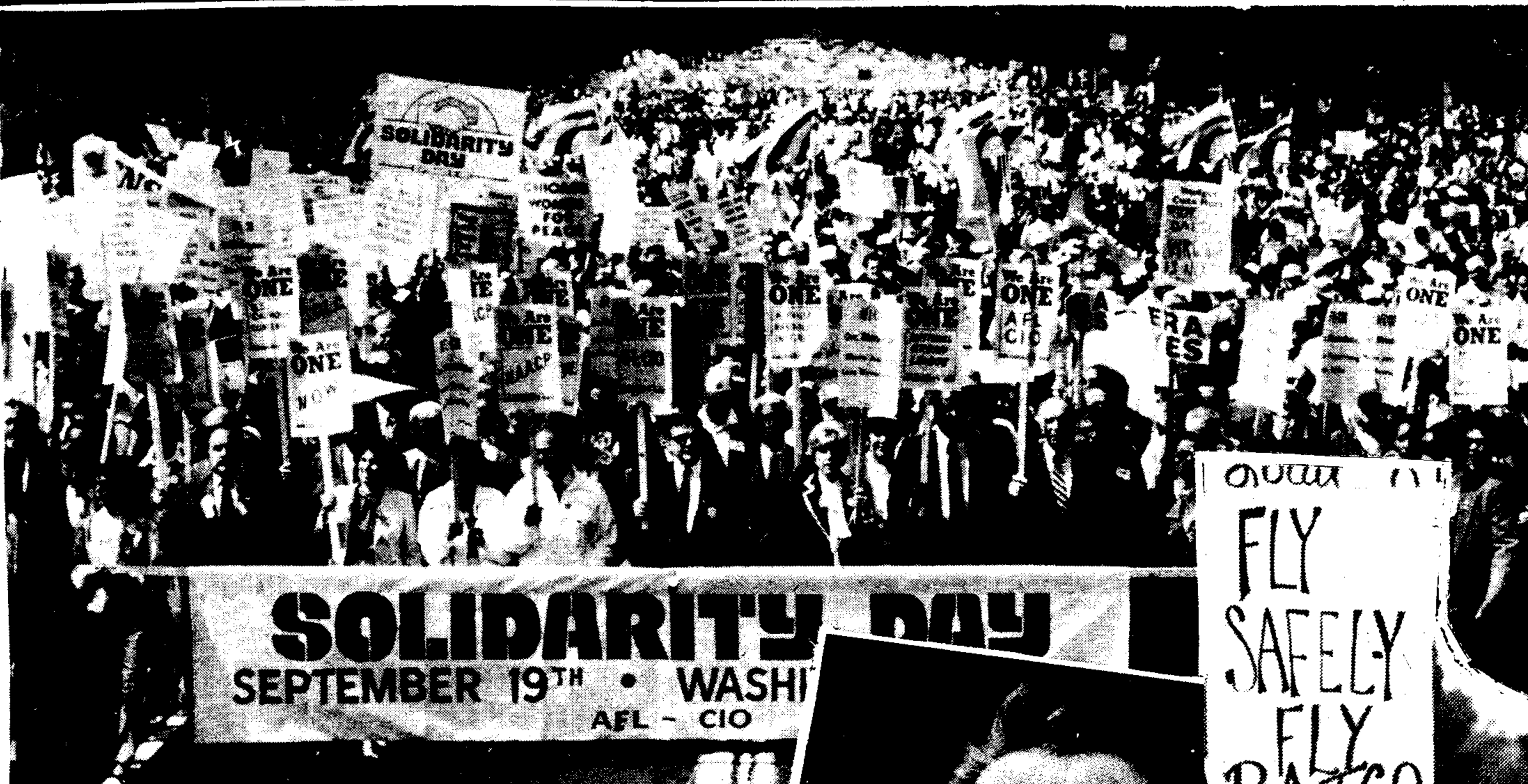
The vast crowd simply filled up the great open space between the Washington Memorial and the foot of Capitol Hill.

New experience

If in its size Solidarity Day resembled the Vietnam and civil rights marches, in other ways it was a new experience in post-war Washington. Because, though many groups and parties supported the demonstration, it was overwhelmingly a demonstration of organised labour.

It was the largest demonstration of trade unionists ever seen in Washington.

A primary reason was that it was the first major demonstration to have been organised for decades by



the AFL-CIO, the federation to which most of America's main unions belong.

George Meany, the arch-reactionary who dominated the AFL-CIO during the post-war period, was completely opposed to demonstrations, or indeed to almost any kind of labour mobilisations.

The younger generation of labour bureaucrats who have succeeded him — led by AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland — have not fundamentally broken with any of Meany's methods.

They still see their main political role as negotiating with administrations of either main political party, and not as mobilising their members.

But the fact that they felt obliged to seriously build the Washington demonstration certainly marks a change of key in American trade union strategy.

What are the reasons for it? One of them is the declining strength of the unions in the past few years, which springs from the failure of the leaders to use organised labour's strength for the benefit of the members.

At the latest count only 24.5 per cent of non-farm workers were organised in unions in the USA, which is more than two percentage points down on the 1978 figures.

Union leaders have finally woken up to the fact that they must be prepared for some mobilisation of their members, or else they may have no members left.

No protection

But the waking up has not been spontaneous. They have been shaken out of their lethargy by a membership which has found increasingly that union membership is no protection in today's America against declining wages, cutbacks in public services, and union-busting.

Last year real average income in the US fell by five per cent — more than in any year since 1947.

And now Reagan's all-out attack on federal government spending threatens new problems — for the users of welfare services and in particular for federal and local government employees, who are

already facing massive layoffs all over the country and have seen Reagan restrict their wage rises to much less than the rise in the cost of living.

This was simply done by edict, without even a semblance of negotiation with the unions.

That explains why public sector workers came in such strength to Washington on September 19, and why their unions are tending to take a more leftist stand against the government.

The largest single contingent of workers came from the million-strong American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, who brought 60,000 to Washington — a fact which gave their president, Gerry Wurf, the right to be one of the main platform speakers.

If Reagan has been disdainful towards public sector unions in general, his contempt for the air traffic controllers' union PATCO has so far been complete.

PATCO

But the most widely sported badge in Washington was one showing support for the PATCO strike, which remains strong and solid.

And union leaders from the platform all had a good word for the controllers. Unfortunately none of them proposed any concrete solidarity action to black airlines and bring the whole strength of organised labour behind the most vulnerable section of the movement.

Even the strong and excellent speech by the PATCO member whose photograph, in chains and held by federal marshals, has become a world-wide symbol of union-busting, ended by thanking other unions and the AFL-CIO for their support.

When so many obvious blacking measures could immeasurably strengthen the strike overnight, PATCO's gratitude shows just how low are the expectations of inter-union solidarity in the US.

That is the shameful political tradition of George Meany and his fellow labour leaders of the post-war period, which their



successors still continue.

For all the very strong words of condemnation of Reagan on September 19 — more uncompromising than against any president in recent history — the trade unions are not turning to build their own independent political alternative.

A noticeable minority of the demonstration (not only Trotskyist organisations) carried placards calling for

the building of a labour or workers' party in the United States.

The AFL-CIO, however, has matched its opposition to Reagan with a deeper than ever compromise with the Democratic Party.

With the exception of the Teamsters, who supported Reagan and didn't support Solidarity Day, the main unions have used the period since Reagan's

election to increase their weight at the top of the Democratic Party.

They are hoping that, by becoming its financial mainstay, they can get a pro-labour platform and candidates in the 1982 (congressional) and 1984 (presidential) elections.

Their reaction to political pressure from a section of the bourgeoisie is to run to another section of the bour-

geoisie for protection rather than support an independent alternative.

A number of aspects of Solidarity Day revealed just how deeply bourgeois ideology is embedded in the US unions.

Aside from the nationalist policy slogans (UAW members wore caps with 'Buy American' printed on them), speakers went on of their way to assert the

US workers need a Labour Party

By Martin Thomas

THE USA is the only advanced capitalist country without a mass political labour movement. The reasons for this go back a long way.

In 19th century Europe the working class began to move and live politically through being mobilised by the middle class in the struggle against old feudal institutions.

But the American Republic, though oligarchic, racist, and founded on genocide against the Indians, had no hangovers from any feudal past. And it had a very large class of small property-owners. The westward expansion of the US provided ever new opportunities for many workers to become small property owners.

In the later years of the 19th century, as huge capitalist corporations began to develop, the working class started organising. By 1912



the Socialist Party was able to win a million votes in the presidential election. Strikes were fought with great ferocity and courage.

But the movement was still weak. The American Federation of Labour was composed of lily-white craft unions, run according to the principle of 'business unionism'. The Industrial Workers of the World, a mixture of

half-formed revolutionary party and militant trade union, had its hard-core membership among the numerous workers who wandered from job to job across the whole country.

Immigrants

Socialist politics were strongest among particular immigrant communities, like the Germans.

Savage anti-socialist repression during and just after World War I, followed by a huge boom, stymied further socialist development. The IWW withered. A Communist Party was formed from the best elements of the SP and IWW, but was limited by early sectarianism and then by the

grip of Stalinism.

The boom collapsed suddenly in 1929. Within a few years the working class was organising to fight back on an unprecedented scale. A new union federation, the CIO, broke away from the AFL and began to organise the mass production industries for the first time. Black workers poured into the labour movement.

Revolutionaries began arguing for the union movement to go further by setting up a new political party based on the unions, as opposed to both bourgeois parties.

Diverted

But the movement was diverted — by the bureaucrats, and perhaps crucially by the small but significant Stalinist party, which directed the new working movement into an alliance with Northern liberals and Southern racists, beh-



Lane Kirkland

REAGAN



it was not 'un-American' to oppose Reagan's budget cuts.

There was no mention of any solidarity with international struggles, and some march organisers tried to squeeze out groups with 'political' slogans such as those many which called for the US to get out of El Salvador.

AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland and other union leaders are participants in US imperialism and anti-communism in a more naked way than their equivalents in Britain.

Even Len Murray would not call on 250,000 workers in an anti-government demonstration to stand and sing the national anthem — but that is what happened on September 19 in Washington.

The one international struggle which made itself felt strongly in the demonstration, however, was the workers' movement in Poland.

The AFL-CIO leaders had their own anti-communist reasons for

boosting Solidarnosc, but it was clear that thousands of rank and file workers identified strongly with the workers of Poland.

The Washington Post the next day said quite baldly that "The protest was inspired by the Polish workers' movement".

That was a bit oversimplified. But the Polish inspiration was everywhere to be seen, on T-shirts, placards and banners which drew out every possible visual and political parallel between Solidarity and Solidarnosc.

The AFL-CIO did make a real effort to link their protest with the fight against racial and sexual discrimination.

Composition

The leaders of the main reformist black and women's organisations, the NAACP, the Urban League and the National Organisation of Women, all spoke from the platform.

But more important than that was the composition of the demonstration itself, which included a very high proportion of black and women trade unionists.

The broad and representative base of this vast demonstration may already have begun to have an impact on US politics.

Two days after it, congressional leaders told the White House that Reagan's latest \$16 billion additions to the budget cuts for 1982 will not pass Congress.

If that is true, it will be the first reversal in Reagan's long line of good fortune.

Will US labour leaders now use the power of the movement they head to make this reversal a real turning point?

If not there will be far more than a quarter of a million people who will want to know the reason why.



Exporting the crisis to the Third World

JOHN LISTER looks at Reagan's policies for the poorer nations.

THE economic crisis of US capitalism stands behind Reagan's attacks on the American working class. But it also drives forward the aggressive role of US imperialism on a world scale, and is forcing new burdens of poverty and oppression upon the masses in the 'Third World'.

Last week saw a closed conference of financial chiefs of the world's ten richest capitalist countries conform to the proposition from the US government that no steps be taken to alleviate the chronic debts and crisis of the so-called 'developing countries' in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

24 such countries had called for a \$4 billion increase in the IMF's pool of loan capital available to assist them in resolving their increasingly desperate

situation.

But US Federal Reserve board chief Paul Volcker came out of the group of ten meeting happily declaring that "There is pretty much unanimity that nothing will be done."

Non-oil producing Third World countries face a combined balance of payments deficit with the imperialist nations in excess of \$100 million next year — forcing workers and small farmers into growing poverty and bringing fragile economies to breaking point.

For Reagan and Thatcher, however, the monetarist medicine is for consumption both at home and abroad: and while it has already produced a relapse in the British and US economies it could finish off some weaker economies altogether.

US SET BACK IN CENTRAL AMERICA



FMLN guerrillas in training

FMLN guerrilla command now control twice as much territory as they did before, and have suffered no serious defeat since early 1981.

Worse still, the military-Christian Democratic junta of Napoleon Duarte has been openly opposed by the governments of France and Mexico. They have issued a joint statement recognising the opposition coalition as a "representative political force" with whom they urge negotiations.

"I personally think we've lost El Salvador," one gloomy official told Newsweek magazine two weeks ago.

Worse

Since then things have got worse. The Senate, convinced that in backing Duarte's flagging junta Reagan is throwing good money after bad, voted last Thursday to cut military aid until Reagan certifies that the regime is 'protecting human rights', moving to control the armed forces, and implement other reforms.

Since the junta's tenuous grip on power rests precisely upon wholesale intimidation of the working class in the towns through right wing murder squads, and the slaughter, mass arrest and ill-treatment of peasants in the countryside, the Senate's request is beyond Duarte's scope.

The death squads are attached to the armed forces. In the first two weeks of July they slaughtered no less than 316 people — mostly men between the ages of 16-35.

In the province of San Vicente, where FMLN forces recently stood their ground and fought off an attack by the army, the junta has engaged in wholesale

slaughter — pouring 105mm and 120mm shells into unprotected villages.

Talk of arranging "elections" in the future has been followed up by the stipulation that parties should each present the names and addresses of 3,000 members in order to qualify for the ballot — an open invitation for the right wing death squads to wipe out prominent leftists!

Meanwhile Salvadorean army chief Gutierrez has been on a visit to the vicious Uruguayan dictatorship, stopping over in Chile to present El Salvador's highest military medal to General Pinochet. And it has become clear that the Salvador National Guardsmen responsible for the much publicised slaughter of four American nuns will be released without trial by the end of the year.

In throwing his full resources — a colossal \$126.5 million in 'economic aid' and \$35 million in military aid — behind this butcher regime, Reagan has painted himself into a corner.

Without this material support, the junta's days are numbered. Yet Duarte's other main backers are a bloodstained gang of dictatorships in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Guatemala, Honduras and Brazil, together with pro-US "democracies" in Colombia, Venezuela and the Dominican Republic. Hardly a plausible group of guarantors of "human rights"!

Crisis

Elsewhere in Central America, too, Reagan's plans are in crisis. The brutal regime in Guatemala which Reagan would like to bolster with added cash, continues a daily slaughter, torture and repression of opponents that has seen it branded as the

most repressive regime in the world.

Attempts by Secretary of State Alexander Haig to prod the Guatemalan junta into adopting a more respectable public face with offers of military aid have met no response.

In Panama, the death of pro-US dictator Omar Torrijos has brought to office Aristides Royo, who has denounced the US role in furnishing "arms, training, technical and logistical assistance and war material" to the junta in El Salvador.

In Costa Rica the formerly pliable government has run into acute economic crisis following the slump in coffee prices: yet Reagan's refusal to offer economic assistance offers the regime little room for manoeuvre.

As Reagan's diplomatic-military house of cards falls apart in Central America, however, there is an ominous warning that imperialism is preparing to take desperate action.

Manoeuvres

Joint US-NATO manoeuvres under the title 'Ocean Venture 81' have been taking place in the Caribbean in what appears to be a dress rehearsal of an invasion of the island of Grenada.

The petty bourgeois nationalist regime in Grenada, headed by Prime Minister Maurice Bishop has formally protested at the exercises, pointing out the reasons why they regard them as a threat to the island:

"1. The country subject to invasion in the manoeuvre is code named Amber and the Ambergines which clearly refer to Grenada and its sister islands in the Grenadines, namely Carriacou and Petit Martinique.

2. An amphibious landing of forces took place on the South-eastern tip of Vieques. There is in fact an area on the Southern tip of Grenada called Amber which is in close proximity to a security zone and the site of the new International Airport.

3. Vieques like Grenada has a mountainous terrain. A combat unit of "rangers", specially trained for warfare in such rugged conditions was used in the manoeuvres.

4. As part of the manoeuvre, the 75th Ranger Battalion was flown from the Norton Air Base in California, non-stop to Vieques, covering approximately the same distance needed to attack Grenada.

5. The reasons for invasion of the islands code named Amber and the Ambergines are similar to propaganda themes used consistently by the Reagan administration against Grenada. These are:

a) to take power from the Amber government, which is described as "unfriendly".

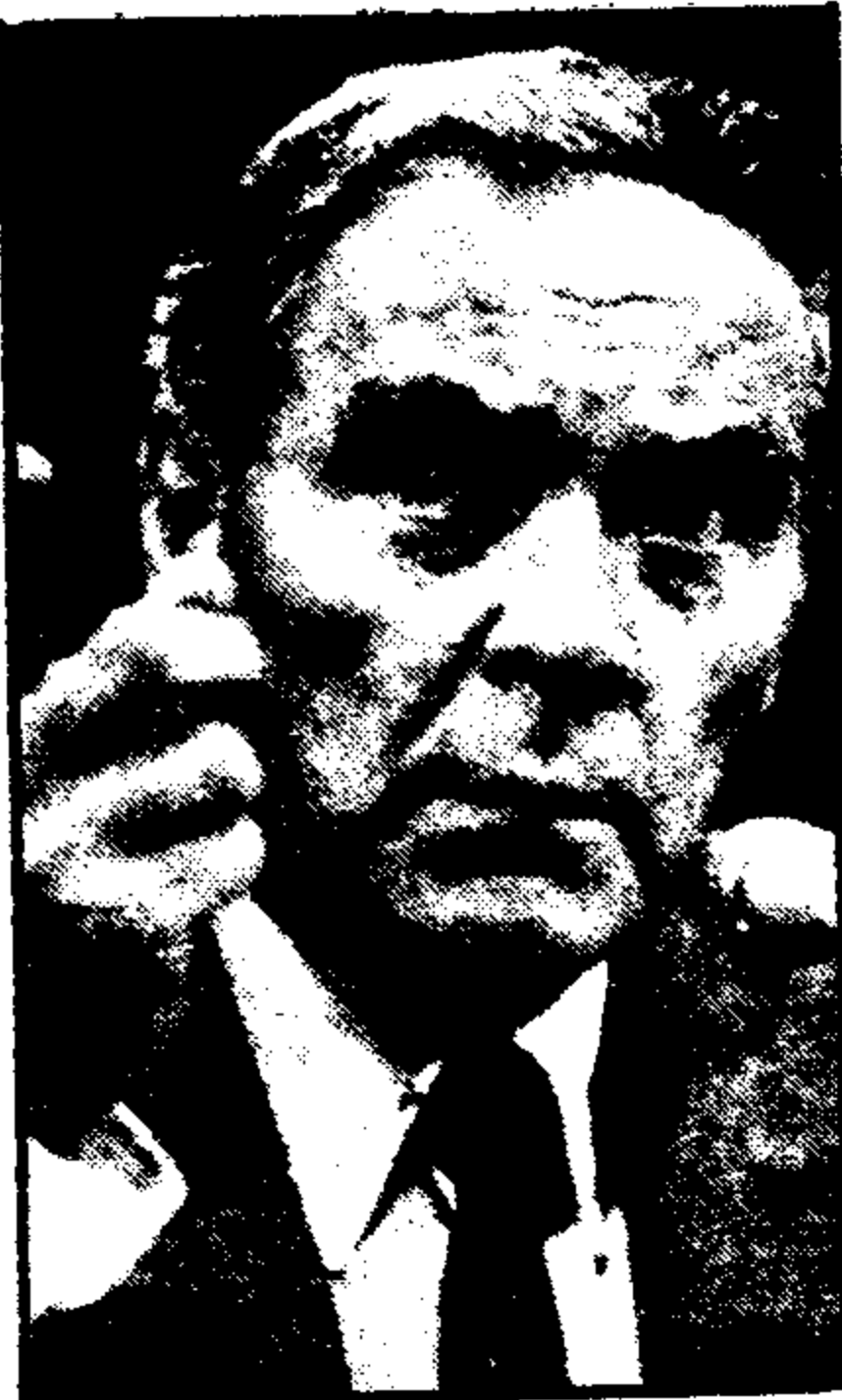
b) To station troops in the island until an election is called.

c) To install a government favourable to Washington's brand of democracy."

The Reagan war-machine is not invincible: but neither is it being constructed simply for show. Still less is it being constructed simply to pose a threat to the Soviet Union.

The workers' movement must be prepared to combat the open use of US military force in an effort to prop up tottering dictatorships and a system of cruel exploitation.

Reagan's America is a belligerent, bullying imperialist power: only the revolutionary action of the working class in the USA and internationally can end such aggression.



Ignored: Haig

bour

Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Democratic Party.

After World War 2, there was another labour upsurge, with a huge strike wave in 1946-7. But once again repression — McCarthyism — followed by boom, set back the movement.

Dignity

Now new opportunities are opening up for an awakening of American labour. The US's world supremacy is rapidly decaying. Its economy is slumping and stagnating. Colonial liberation struggles have roused the US's black population to a new sense of their dignity and power. Women in the US are more confident to fight for their rights. And the Vietnam war has shaken up the whole political structure.

After Solidarity Day, the fight is on for a labour party to overthrow imperialism in its chief stronghold.

Battle of ideas

SOCIALISM – OR NATIONAL LIBERATION?

Tony Benn's proposal for a British national liberation movement is – as we shall see – a proposal to turn away from socialism as the immediate goal of the struggle against Thatcher, and towards a new Labour government which will essentially be like those that have gone before. He does not seem to recognise this, and for sure his rank and file labour movement supporters do not.

That is why we must pay careful attention to what he is now saying and promote discussion on it in the movement.

Tony Benn promises that his proposals will liberate 'colonial' Britain. But, as we saw, they cannot – even if Britain comes out of the EEC.

And the whole project leads away from socialism, away from working-class internationalism, away from the task of 'refounding' the Labour Representation Committee on a better political basis, and towards a nationalist-populist blind alley.

Socialist Organiser has argued that the labour movement needs to arm itself with the perspective of an immediate struggle to replace the Thatcherites, not with an old-style Labour government, but with a workers' government – a government militantly committed to the working class, responsive to the labour movement, and, at least to a serious extent, under its control.

The great importance of the Labour Party reforms like re-election of MPs and democratic election of the leadership is that they are steps to making this possible. We have fought for Labour Party (and labour movement) democracy in the spirit that they are central to gaining what we need above all else now – a working class answer to demolition-squad Toryism, a workers' government that may open the road to socialist revolution.

However, socialism is not possible in an economically isolated Britain. It is not possible now. It never will be possible. A revolutionary workers' government could only go a limited way towards setting up a stable working-class alternative to capitalism if the revolution remained isolated, confined to Britain and to British resources.

It is as essential to be clear on this as on the need to fight now for a workers' government. Otherwise we get everything out of perspective. Either we get the needs and the possibilities of the immediate struggle out of perspective; or we get the goals and conditions for the socialist success of the British workers' struggle completely out of perspective.

Socialism is international, not national

Socialism is a system in which the basis of capitalism has been superseded and suppressed – in which, that is, wage-labour exploitation will be overthrown together with its historical twin, private ownership of the means of production and exchange (including ownership by a state which is 'owned' by another class and acts as its agent or 'locum'). Profit, the regulator and goal of capitalism, will be replaced as the economic mainspring by planned production according to the needs of the people.

For the working class to take power and control out of the hands of the ruling class is necessary and decisive, but it is not sufficient for the creation of socialism. Socialism is only possible on the basis of the great progressive achievement of capitalism in history – the development of the forces of production.

Socialism as an ideal is, after all, thousands of years old. The Marxist perspective of socialism presupposes the possibility that the means of production, having been taken out of the hands of the ruling class, can be reorganised to provide abundance at least the staples of life for everyone.

Only on that basis can the spontaneous division and re-division of society into classes of oppressors and oppressed, owners and chattels, lords and serfs, owners and wage slaves, exploiters and exploited, be eliminated. The organisation of society on formally socialist lines amid economic backwardness would inevitably see the resurgence of such divisions – as Marx put it, "all the old crap" will inevitably reappear.

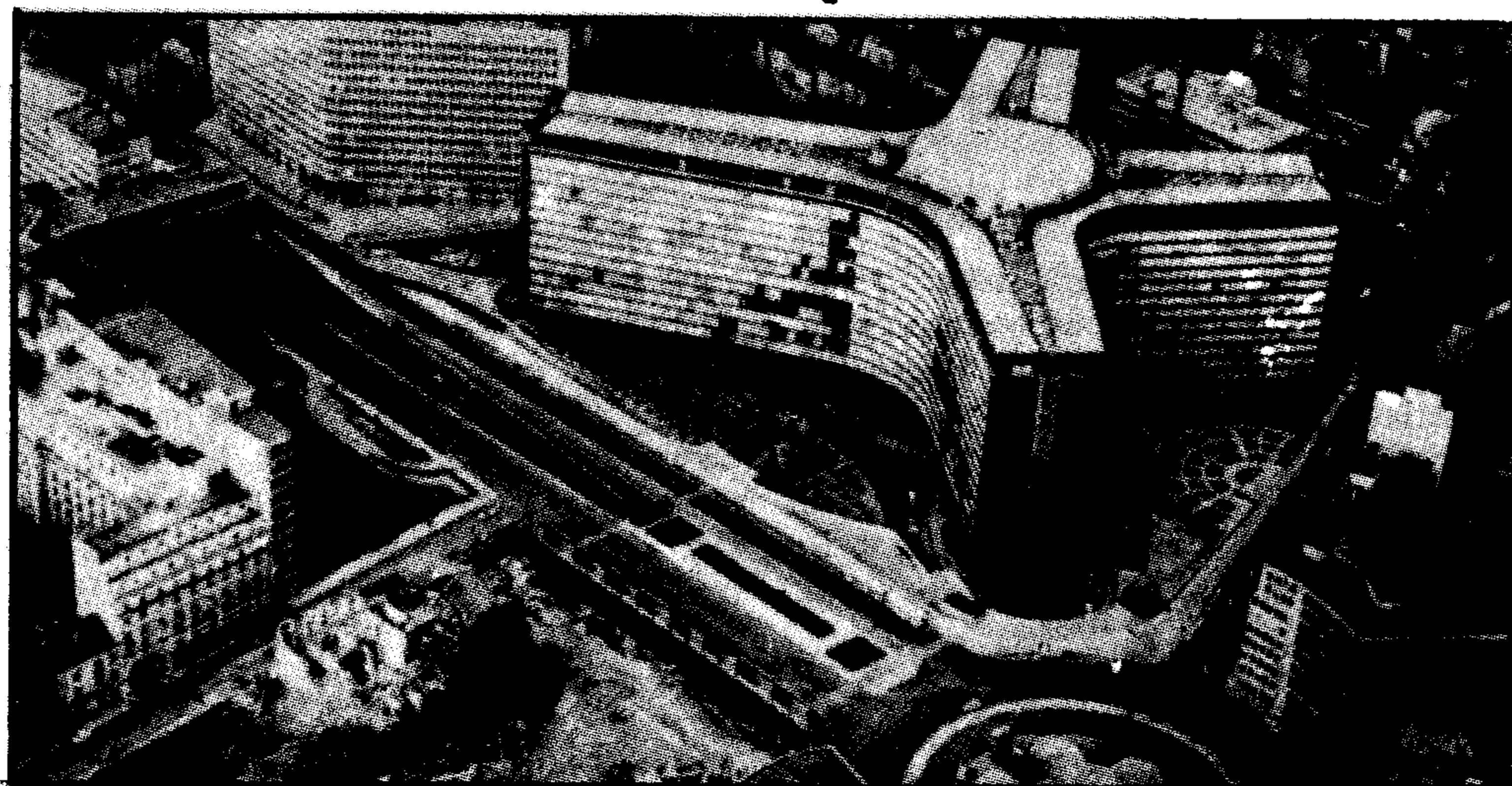
Russia in 1917 became ripe for the taking of power by the workers, but it was not ripe for socialism. The taking of power in Russia was seen by the Bolsheviks as the first act in the world, or at least the European, revolution.

But the risings of the West European workers were betrayed by the Social Democrats, and crushed. Russia was left isolated, and all "the old crap" re-emerged within the socialised economy set up by the revolution.

In the Marxist perspective, socialism supersedes capitalism, and capitalism is a world system. The sisterhood and brotherhood of all people and of all peoples can only become possible in a material order based on the resources of

A new crusade for 'national liberation' – that is what Tony Benn proposes as the radical mission of the labour movement in his recent article 'Britain as a Colony'. Through US domination and entry into the EEC, Britain, he argues has itself become a colony.

In this third part of a discussion article, John O Mahony argues that the radical-sounding rhetoric would in fact lead to 'a new version of Labour's subordination to the national interest'.



EEC headquarters: imperialist partnership, or conspiracy against the British working class?



'National liberation' in the rich capitalist countries is an old line of the Stalinists. This French CP poster says: 'I love my country – so I'm joining the French Communist Party.' Another says: 'No to a German Europe'.

the world economy developed by capitalism, seized, democratically planned and integrated by the working class to serve popular need, eliminating the rule of market forces operating blindly through the profit motive.

The free international capitalist market virtually collapsed in World War 1 and after (and this, together with the consequent collapse of production, was the decisive index for the view of capitalism that Trotsky held at his death). In the late '40s and early '50s, capitalism, having defeated the workers' revolutions with the aid of the social democrats and Stalinists, gained

a new lease of life and re-knit an international economy, pulling down the tariff barriers and the bilateral quota system that had expressed imperialist rivalries and prepared for World War 2.

This took place, and was probably only possible, under the hegemony of US imperialism (which only began to break down in the later '60s and '70s).

The existing capitalist world economy – out of which and on which we must build socialism – depends on a tremendously advanced and complex level of international integration. In the viewpoint of international working-class socialism, the

idea of a retreat to a nationally self-sufficient economy is a nonsense. To set it as a goal is necessarily to opt for something other than working-class socialism.

Today, socialism is possible on the basis of the existing level of the British economy. But Britain's economy is completely enmeshed in the world economy and (by many extra ties) in the European economy. It is sheer illusion that there exists such a thing as British economy apart from these arteries, nerves and sinews of the world economy which feed the British economy, take off its products, and in the final analysis regulate it.

British industry as a whole could not exist for a mere British market. If it declines under pressure of EEC competition, then it would also decline if the major links with the world economy were severed or attenuated to wall off competitive pressures.

What could a British socialist workers' government do about reorganising the economy? What could it do about the EEC, IMF, international capitalist companies, etc.? It could expropriate the British bourgeoisie and capitalist assets in Britain. Through state control, it could manipulate trade and the pressures of capitalism in the interests of the working class.

However, if a British workers' state were isolated, the cost in economic and social terms of severing its existing economic links would be tremendous. The possibility of a qualitative economic advance beyond capitalism would be pushed back and probably disappear for the duration of Britain's isolation.

In fact, though, it is highly improbable that the British workers' state would remain isolated. The general conditions that would lead to revolution in Britain would be sufficiently similar throughout Europe to make wider movements possible. And in any case, if the British workers were the first to take power (something not at all preordained), it would be an inspiration to the workers of France, Italy, Belgium, Ireland, Germany, and so on.

The prospect of socialism in Britain, in the most minimal sense, would depend on the movement catching and spreading in Europe.

Why Benn's proposals are at odds with socialism

It is from this point of view that Benn's notion of a British national liberation movement is at odds with what the British labour movement must do if it wants to make itself ready to fight for a socialist alternative to Thatcher.

The arguments against Benn's proposals can be summarised:

* Britain is an imperialist country, with big overseas investments, and a semi-colonial relationship with many countries. It is still one of the ten leading countries in the world.

* Voluntary agreements entered into by the ruling class, like the EEC and the US alliance, do not make such a country a 'colony'. These are the results not of formal surrenders of rights, but of the real changes in the economic weight of imperialist Britain. The basic relationships will not and cannot be reversed or seriously changed to Britain's advantage as a result of formal political, institutional changes within the bourgeois order.

Benn confuses Britain's formal relationship to the EEC with the basic conditions which led to those arrangements. He thinks the EEC links create the weakness, whereas it was the weakness that led – initially against the ruling class's will – to the links.

* It is possible to describe Britain as a colony of the EEC, rather than perhaps third partner in ten, from one point of view only – that of British nationalism, for which British separatism is a supreme goal.

* The thoroughgoing reorganisation of our society under workers' democratic power and workers' direct control, with a democratically operated collectivised economy replacing capitalism with its profit mainspring – that is the minimum condition for even the beginning of a regeneration of the British economy. In the foreseeable future anything less would be tinkering with it.

We need a workers' government. Such a government would of course not let the EEC, IMF, etc. stand in its way.

30p plus postage from Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8



THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM FOR SOCIALIST REVOLUTION
LEON TROTSKY



'Britain one nation', like Harold Wilson (left), or a united fight for common class objectives, like the shorter working week, by European workers?



It would as necessary repudiate the Treaty of Rome and appeal over the heads of the rulers to the workers. But that would be a means to an end, not the goal: for Benn, as for the broad Left generally, breaking the EEC links is a goal, and a goal that now, in the proposal for a national liberation movement, must displace the goal of creating a radical socialist alternative to Thatcher.

The socialist goal must be the maximum link-up with the workers of the world, and first of all of Europe.

'National liberation' means 'national interest'

Benn does not propose the sort of radical measures to expropriate capitalism that a socialist workers' government would take. As far as I know, he emphatically rejects such measures for the 'next stage ahead'. What is possible for giving the working class maximum control over its own destiny within the overall situation defined by Britain's economic weakness, Benn rejects.

Given Benn's quite tame proposed reforms, and despite his call for the British labour movement to take the lead in the national liberation struggle, what the focus on liberating colonial Britain inevitably means is that something else is being put forward instead of an immediate struggle for a socialist answer to the collapse of British capitalism and to Thatcherism.

The only possible practical conclusion is that the labour movement must politically subordinate itself to that task, and shape and mould itself to it. It is a new version of Labour's subordination to the national interest.

To leave capitalism intact and try to command it — as Benn proposes — is to be a Canute trying to command the waves and the tides. Subordination to the national interest will be subordination to the capitalist interest — whatever Tony Benn wants.

The policy of national liberation means explicitly that the labour movement ties itself to the 'national interest' collaborating with 'patriotic' capitalists to regenerate British industry. This — whatever Benn might think or want — is no more than a continuation of mainstream Labour government policies from the past. National liberation is Harold Wilson's 'white heat of technological revolution' adapted to a far more decrepit capitalism.

Michael Meacher in the New Statesman has filled in one version of the 'Alternative Economic Strategy' that Benn supports — wage controls for two years, and two million still unemployed at the end of five years.

Benn's speech at the TUC conveyed the idea that he opposes incomes policy. Realities will prove stronger than wishes. Under a Labour government 'liberating' Britain as Benn proposes, Michael Meacher would prove to be the true prophet. Such a government would have to use incomes policy to cut living standards, with or without working-class agreement.

The substance of 'national liberation' could only be import controls

A national liberation struggle to liberate 'colonial Britain' is in fact only the positive presentation of the anti-EEC crusade, ideologically packaged in the inappropriate garb of the terms and images of Third World struggles (many of which took place against Britain!).

Its positive substance could only be import and exchange controls, plus renegotiated relationships with the EEC — which would remain Britain's main trading partner.

This 'national liberation' is a chimera,

something insubstantial — probably an attempt to find a media image to help us reverse the steady post-1951 erosion of Labour Party support and to recreate a broad 'national coalition' Labour Party capable of gaining a 1945-size majority.

Necessarily chauvinist, it sets restoration of an independent Britain as the goal of British socialism, when the goal must be the integration of Britain with Europe and collaboration with the workers of Europe to make it a workers' Europe.

The core of Benn's policy to 'liberate Britain' can only be an attempt to build up British industry behind tariff walls. Now even if, for example, tariffs on steel might make a difference, lessening the destruction of working class communities in Britain, in the final analysis high tariff walls could not protect the entire range of British industry and allow it to develop.

Ability to compete would still determine the possibilities open to the economy, even behind tariff walls: international competition would set strict limits to what one country could achieve in the way of job creation. Should the major capitalist powers all go for protection, there would be general economic catastrophe worse than anything we have now.

Behind high general tariff walls British industry would probably stifle. Unless it could become competitive it would continue to decline, relative to the EEC and perhaps absolutely.

This is not prediction, but history.

From 1959 to 1972, Britain was the centre of a looser trading bloc, EFTA, set up to counterbalance the EEC. But the members of EFTA found that, despite the arrangements consciously entered into at government level, they developed stronger trading links with the countries of the EEC than with their EFTA partners. Economic strength and power, not government arrangements, were the determinant. That was a Britain still in possession of trading arrangements with the Commonwealth severed or altered a decade ago, and a Britain far more powerful than it is today or would be immediately on leaving the EEC.

Benn's reformist limits and the 'national liberation struggle' under capitalism offer no way out of this situation. EEC withdrawal would almost certainly lead to an increase of real dependence. Only the replacement of the EEC by the Socialist United States of Europe can radically change things for the better for the working class of Europe, including Britain.

Benn's proposals can't restore Britain's power

Here a delicate, out essential, point has to be made.

On the basis of leaving capitalism intact, the Labour Left cannot — barring some science fiction style miracle — restore Britain's previous level of self-determination or its real basis, Britain's world pre-eminence. We can't do it on the basis of building a working-class socialist Britain, either.

The focus on British independence must therefore have primarily a demagogic content, even granted that Benn is speaking with complete integrity and sincerity.

The historic basis for the national independence of Britain and the countries of Europe has long ago vanished. Economically they cannot exist within their own boundaries, each its own market. In a way Benn understands this:

"These global corporations — in oil, engineering, and minerals — have long since outgrown nation states...."

This situation produced two world wars, and between the wars produced massively destructive tariff and quota wars which prepared the way for real war.

66 years ago, in response to this situation and in the middle of the First World War, revolutionaries like Leon Trotsky

raised the call for a United States of Europe. After World War 2, which destroyed one third of the productive capacity of Europe and killed 17 million outside of the USSR, the European capitalists themselves sought ways of breaking down national barriers.

30 years ago they created the Iron and Steel Community. Eventually they set up the EEC. Whatever their foreign policy concerns were, the EEC is not a conspiracy by either the European or the British ruling class. It develops organically out of the fact the productive forces of the major states had outgrown their national base, and this had led within 30 years to two terrible wars in Europe, the second of which brought even the European victors close to ruin.

It is the development of a European capitalist market, superseding the limitations of the previous national boundaries within which economies had stifled and world wars germinated.

Reversing the bosses' limited attempts at European integration?

For the capitalists of Europe, the Iron and Steel Community and the EEC have been the continuation of World War 1 and 2 by other means. Today the economy of the EEC is as integrated an economic unit as the USA.

It was the defeat of the workers' revolution and socialism in Europe after World War 1 and then 2 that led to this task, proclaimed for their own by the revolutionaries two-thirds of a century ago, being partly carried out by the ruling class. They have organised Europe, of course, in their own capitalist way. The EEC is riddled with the irrationalities, the inhumanities, the crying stupidities, the waste and destruction and the squandering of human potential that is inseparable from capitalism and its mainspring, the search for profit as the supreme good.

The EEC's irrationalities are history's revenge for the belatedness of the workers' revolution: but it is not a capitalist conspiracy against the working class. And the working class needs more to answer this concentration of capitalist political and economic power than a shallow conspiracy theory and the foredoomed and reactionary project of trying to rebuild an isolated capitalist Britain.

Britain's independence was irredeemably undermined and its 'surrender' to the EEC was prepared by the combination of the knitting together of the European economy in one market and Britain's decline outside it. Not even a radical socialist revolution can restore Britain to its former 'greatness' or real independence. What socialism has to offer is the reorganisation of the economy on a different mainspring, which means planned international economic integration to eliminate the vicious stupidity of competition between South Wales and Ruhr steelworkers. This integration would have to be at least on a European level.

The dangerous logic of nationalism

The slogan of British independence, is organically right wing — irrespective of what Tony Benn wants or means to do with it. It we rouse up a nationalist crusade, we cannot satisfy it on any level: not as workers' socialists, and not as reformers of British capitalism.

We will fail and disappoint nationalists, including (and especially, even) those whom we have roused, enthused and inculcated with a belief in the need for British independence. What then? The political 'process' won't end. A national liber-

ation struggle launched on the unclear slogans and ideas of Benn will (if not now, then at the second stage) inevitably degenerate into a merely nationalist campaign. Nationalism has its own power and logic, which is very different from the high-minded purposes Benn has in mind for it.

It will very easily turn hostile to the labour movement, as something 'sectional' and inimical to the national interest. Even in the comparatively benign form of Wilson's government in the '60s, serving the national interest led to an attempt to shackle the trade unions. And British politics — as Benn has reason to know — is becoming less and less benign.

There is evidence in 'Britain as a Colony' of a hankering for the days when Britain was strong enough to steer a relatively independent course because it dominated large areas of the world. It is coupled with a more or less developed theory of conspiracy and treachery in high places as the explanation for Britain's loss of independence.

Benn implies without stating it the myth that Britain can stage a recovery by returning to old legalities and forms — ignoring and denying as mere ruling-class propaganda the carumal fact that economic decline is at the root of what he calls the 'surrender' of independence.

All this is not the stuff from which the labour movement can be prepared to attempt the socialist reconstruction of society. It fits much better into a right-wing populist view of the world.

British nationalism is 100% reactionary

Existing nationalisms fall into roughly three categories. For subjugated and oppressed peoples, forcibly deprived of self-determination or identity, nationalism is the demand for elementary democratic rights — not voluntary exclusiveness or chauvinism.

In formerly subjugated and oppressed countries which have partly achieved their democratic national rights, the tendency is for the nationalism to lose its democratic rationale and grow racist and chauvinist.

The third category is that of imperialist countries, oppressors or former oppressors of other nations. Here nationalism has no democratic content. It subsists on trampling on the democratic rights of other peoples, and gloried in the deeds of imperialist conquest, plunder, and oppression.

For centuries British nationalism was self-defined against the 'inferior people' of the Empire and against the competitor empires. Today it is naturally allied with the racist chauvinism of the NF. It lends itself to racialism now.

The labour movement will inherit and develop the great achievements of British civilisation, cleansed of the integument of capitalism and the crimes of British imperialism. British nationalism however is in its proper place in the hands of the National Front and racists like Enoch Powell.

The struggle for national liberation for Britain is an old idea in the British labour movement. It has been the stock in trade of the CP since the late '40s. It originated in a cynical decision by Stalin to sow divisions among his enemies by fomenting anti-Americanism among the weaker imperialisms (though it was also, of course, a continuation of the Popular Fronts of the mid-'30s). That this corrupted the labour movement was a bonus from Stalin's point of view. It had the advantage of being a stages theory for the advanced capitalist countries, by way of which communist and socialist workers might be persuaded to agree that socialism was not immediately on the agenda.

First national liberation, then socialism, was and is the message: and thus the Stalinists applied the old Menshevik stages

theory for underdeveloped countries to some of the most advanced societies on earth!

A blind alley for the renovation of the labour movement

Benn does not need to go to the Stalinists directly for this policy: it is the logical summing up of the nationalism that is certainly the predominant strain in the whole mainstream labour movement Left.

Socialism, workers' power, and, immediately, a workers' government which will begin to break the power of the military, the civil service, the banks and the capitalists, is on the agenda. It is the only answer for the British labour movement. It is the only way to begin to break out of the festering limitations of British society and to hope to inspire the European workers to join us in creating the United States of Europe.

Benn is helping rebuild the Left and even the labour movement itself. Neither for the bourgeoisie nor the working class are his ideas the decisive thing now.

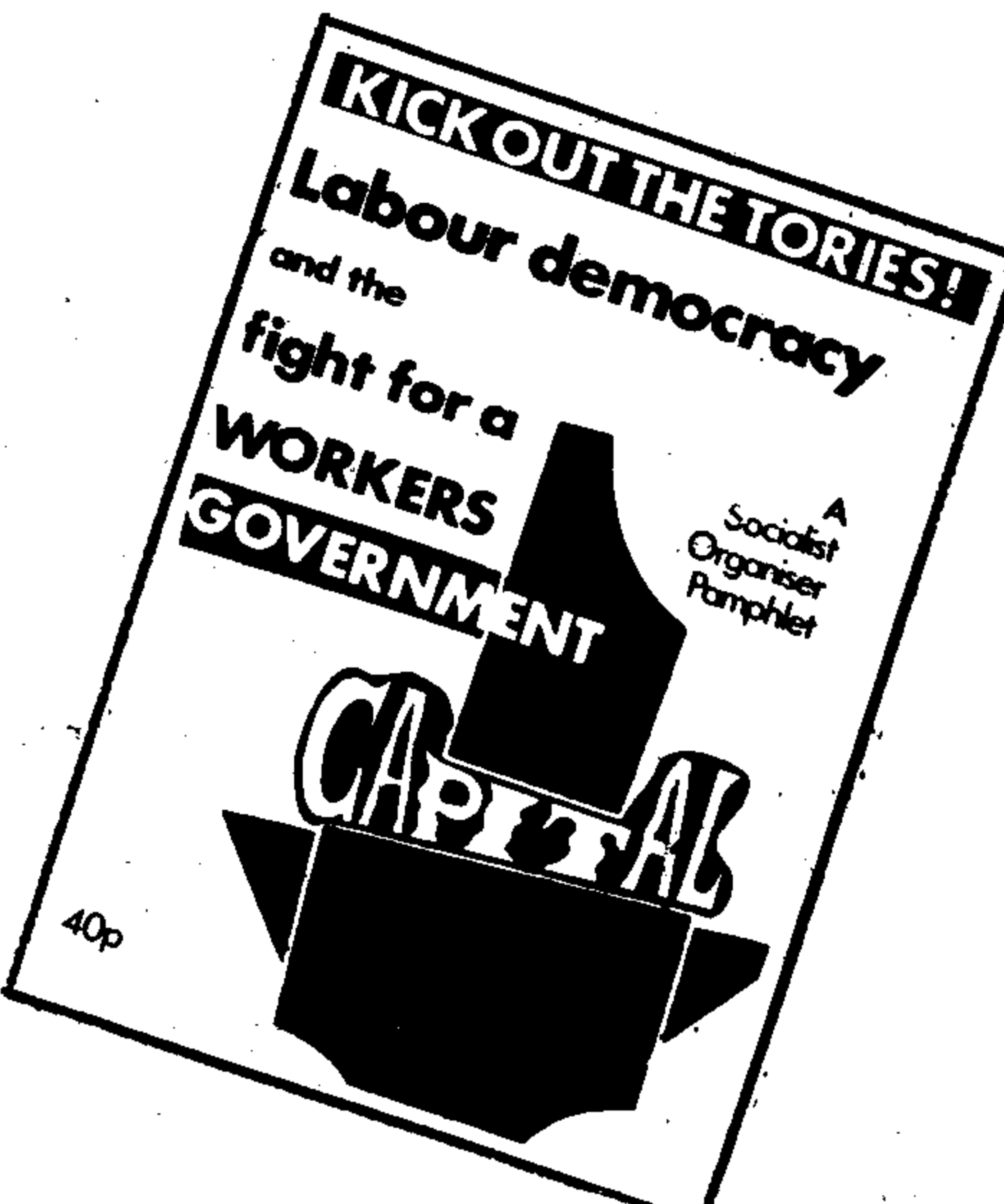
Yet in the end ideas, and the programme of the re-born labour movement, will prove decisive to determine whether we will be able to remake British society.

Tony Benn is right to talk about refounding the Labour Representation Committee — but it must be on a new political basis that will not end in a reformist or nationalist blind alley, or simply drives deeper into the one we are now mulling about in.

The labour movement has the choice of fighting for a workers' government or for a Labour government essentially of the old sort, with the banner of 'national liberation' instead of the old one of 'national interest'.

Michael Meacher's New Statesman article should be a warning to class-conscious workers (and perhaps to Benn himself, who has not rushed to endorse it). There is a distinct danger that the lapse into populist nationalism will divert the organisational and political renewal of the labour movement into a cul-de-sac, and towards derailment and wreckage.

Much will depend on whether or not the Marxists can convince the labour movement of this, and convince it to turn its face away from British nationalism and towards international socialism.



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'GET BACK TO WORK' - McGAHEY

Tory 'plan' for youth

by Stan Crooke

"BACK to work, the lot of you!" This was the piece of advice which Mick McGahey, President of the NUM in Scotland and leading member of the Communist Party, had for the 640 workers at the Bedlay colliery in Lanarkshire last week, when they went on strike to defend their jobs.

The strike began when National Coal Board (NCB) officials announced at a meeting of the pits' consultative committee on Thursday 17 September, that the pit was to close in two months time.

None of the workers at Bedlay had had any warning that this announcement was to be made, and shop stewards on the consultative committee had not even received an agenda for the meeting. But the miners were unanimous in the opinion that McGahey had had advance warning of what was coming up.

"McGahey must have had a backhander and a case of whisky before the meeting - it's a pity it wasn't a case of whisky over his head," said one of the canteen women at Bedlay, expressing the feelings of the rest of the workforce there.

The NCB officials claimed that Bedlay had to close because reserves of coal there were near exhaustion, and because there were "severe geological problems" with the faces now being worked.

But if reserves of coal

were running out, why wasn't Bedlay on the Tories' hit-list of 26 collieries produced in February of this year? And why did management, only a few months ago, say that reserves there were large enough to guarantee jobs till 1986?

Vote

A mass meeting was held on Monday 21 September after the consultative committee meeting. The vote to strike was unanimous, supported by all members of all unions at the colliery: NUM, NACODS (colliery overmen and deputies), SCEBTA (tradesmen, engineers, and electricians) and COSA (office staff).

An NUM member at Bedlay summed it up:

"With near enough three million on the broo, every job is needed. We can't afford to let 640 jobs go. This pit can take on local labour, but only if we keep it open. There's enough unemployed in the country without us adding to it as well."

McGahey seemed to be of a different opinion. Having failed completely to argue against the proposed closure at the consultative committee meeting, he now came out in open opposition to the strike and called for a return to work.

"McGahey sold us down the river," explained the steward from Bedlay. "We got in touch with him but he didn't want to speak to us. He just said that the pit had to close and that we

should get back to work. In February he said that no nit with workable reserves would be shut down, but now he's for letting Bedlay be shut down."

But the Bedlay miners were in no mood to follow McGahey's advice. Flying pickets were sent out to other pits in Lanarkshire and Ayrshire, Sorn, Highhouse and Barony came out straight away, and there was a partial response at Cardowan.

On the third day of the strike, miners from Bedlay, Cardowan and Polkemmet (where miners had by then also come out in solidarity) lobbied the meeting of the Scottish Executive of the NUM in Edinburgh.

One of the Executive members turned up late because he had been to a funeral. "Not McGahey's, by any chance?" the miners asked hopefully.

Early

McGahey didn't turn up late though. He had arrived 1½ hours early to avoid the lobby. McGahey, too, tried to slip in unnoticed, but failed. He promised the same as all the other members of the Executive cornered by the miners on their way into the meeting: "to do everything possible to prevent the closure."

After the meeting, to which none of the strikers had been admitted, Executive member Jim McCafferty addressed the miners. In the face of a constant barrage of



McGahey: miners in no mood to follow his advice

jeers and heckling, McCafferty stressed the need for a return to work.

"That's the smart thing to do. You've shown your anger, you've proved you're opposed to the closure. So go back to work now and let us get down to negotiations with the NCB," he told the miners.

Return

McGahey and the rest of the NUM Executive got what they wanted. The day after the lobby the Bedlay miners voted to return to work in exchange for promises that NCB engineers and NUM engineers would look into the possibility of opening up new seams in the mine. The threat of closure, therefore, still hangs over the colliery.

Faced with a rapidly snowballing miners' strike, McGahey, despite his left posturing, acts no differently from any other union bureaucrat. He lined up with the employers to get the strike stopped. McGahey's role in this strike must not be forgotten.

Rolls Royce sackings

by Stan Crooke

IT WAS only a fortnight ago that the Scottish papers were full of the news that Scotland was in the forefront of an economic boom, sweeping the country!

But for workers at Rolls Royce, Hillington, in Glasgow, there was a demand from management for 500 voluntary redundancies, on Wednesday 23rd.

A Rolls Royce shop steward told us: "They want 400 voluntary redundancies on the shop floor, and 100 staff."

They called the works committee upstairs on Wednesday and told us then. There was no chance for any discussion. The notices about the redundancies were stuck up before we'd even got back down the stairs.

They must have been planning it for a long time - the posters and the booklets explaining how much you'd get if you went for redundancy had already been produced. The wage claim is due to go in any week now, and the redundancies are designed to undermine that as well.

Orders

Management say the reason is lack of orders and the general recession. They've had a lot of work going out to sub-contractors and now they can't get the orders back. But even if we did get them back, it wouldn't help unemployment. You'd just be putting another factory out the door.

We are imposing an overtime ban. Strike action just isn't on because of the low morale in the factory.

But no-one believes the '500 will be the end of it'.

Lifts staff fight victimisation

by Steve Akers

SIXTY-EIGHT members of TASS at Evans Lifts, Leicester, have been sacked. This was the management's response to the TASS members' claim for a closed shop agreement, a shorter working week and a wage increase in line with inflation.

Management claim that TASS members have broken their contract by working to rule and therefore have dismissed themselves.

They informed the sacked workers individually that they should come in and sign a letter stating that they would work normally. There was no way to read this before actually going in to sign. Only one person has now done this and is scabbing on the rest.

All the others have resist-

ed this intimidation and started picketing on Friday 11 September.

On the Monday they occupied the canteen but were evicted by court order 24 hours later.

Gates

Picketing immediately resumed on the gates and has been kept up ever since.

The last three years, union negotiators have entered the disputes procedure with management to resolve their claim. This year, however, Evans management, in an attempt to weaken trade union organisation, has clearly gone on the offensive, demanding settlement on

their terms alone.

TASS, who have sole negotiating rights for staff in Evans, have made these workers among the best organised and best paid in the district, with members playing leading roles within the unions. Management are offering TASS jobs to the shop-floor (AUEW Engineering section) and a few have applied. The AUEW District Committee, meeting this Tuesday, has sent instructions to members not to take these jobs.

Need

Carmen Wootton, the Divisional President of TASS and one of the sacked workers, told Socialist Organiser: "We need, and are looking to the District Committee for support, especially an instruction to the shop floor not to do work issued to them by management, who have brought wives and friends in to help them produce TASS members' work."

The attempt to break TASS organisation at Evans is a concerted attack on trade union organisation in the district and as part of the employers' offensive, should be resisted both locally and nationally.

"Our members are determined. It's either all back or none back. And now the picket is going to be strengthened until we win and get full reinstatement," said Miss Wootton, who won this year's TUC Youth

Award.

It remains to be seen what the trade union leaders will do to defend the Evans workers. The first step can be taken locally by AUEW stewards in all the engineering factories locally, (Bentley's, Marconi, Jones and Shipman) linking together in the jobs fight.

Messages of support and donations should be sent to: Mr. B. Bixam, 42, Elmfield Avenue, Birstall, Leicester. Make cheques payable to Evans Lifts Ltd AUEW/TASS Staff Fund.

NEXT WEEK

Next week's issue of *Socialist Organiser* will restore many of the features squeezed out this week by our Labour Conference coverage.

There will be a centre page feature on the fight for union democracy; a round-up of US policy in the Middle East; reviews, our controversial Rock column, and much more.

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Thatcher outside London.

This scheme will largely affect those employed by small firms, which are usually not unionised and therefore have no negotiated wage rate.

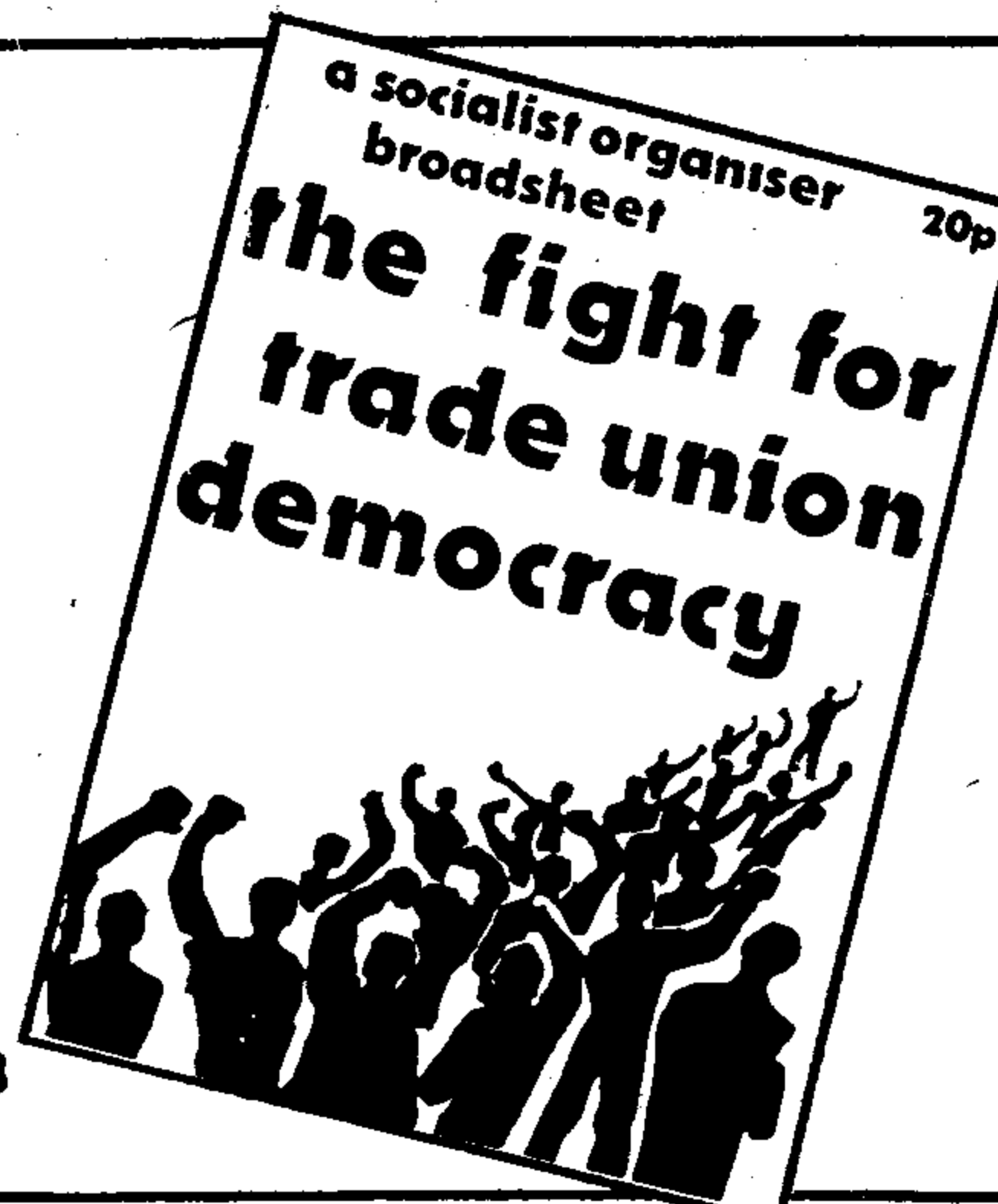
It will particularly affect London workers where wages have always been higher than in the provinces. The scheme will come into effect on 4 January next year.

Under the previous youth employment subsidy introduced by the Wilson government, each employee under 18 was subsidised by £10 a week - a considerable amount in 1973 when the scheme ended - regardless of wage levels.

It is evident that the Tories are reintroducing the scheme with a twist in order to reduce the wages paid to young employees to make them cheaper than adults.

After all, older unemployed people get precious little media coverage and they do not riot.

It smacks of the usual capitalist tactics of divide and rule - even down to dividing the dole queues.



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Industrial News

Oct 3 ST MARY'S DAY OF ACTION

DETAILED plans are now being made to defy management's plans to close two more wards, reduce casualty facilities and further the run-down towards closure of St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road, London W9.

The feeling for a fight among the workforce has never been stronger. Auxiliary nurses meeting last week decided to refuse to allow 15 of their number to be transferred to other posts, and to stand firm and stay at their jobs.

Group

And the sisters will not agree to meet management individually to hear their plans for redeployment. They have shown a very encouraging degree of solidarity and have acted together as a group.

Meanwhile a meeting called of consultants in the hospital and local GPs to assess the amount of support for providing the necessary medical cover for patients turned out very positively. Although the turn-out of consultants was poor, the GPs gave enthusiastic support to the fight to defend health provision in the District.

It was even revealed that years ago when the idea of closing W9 was first mooted, many of them had signed a petition offering their

services to provide emergency cover in the hospital.

They are talking of organising a statement to the press highlighting the attack on local provision being spearheaded by the Minister of Health, and knocking down the idea that it is merely a "rationalisation" of resources.

The patient work which has been put into the fight

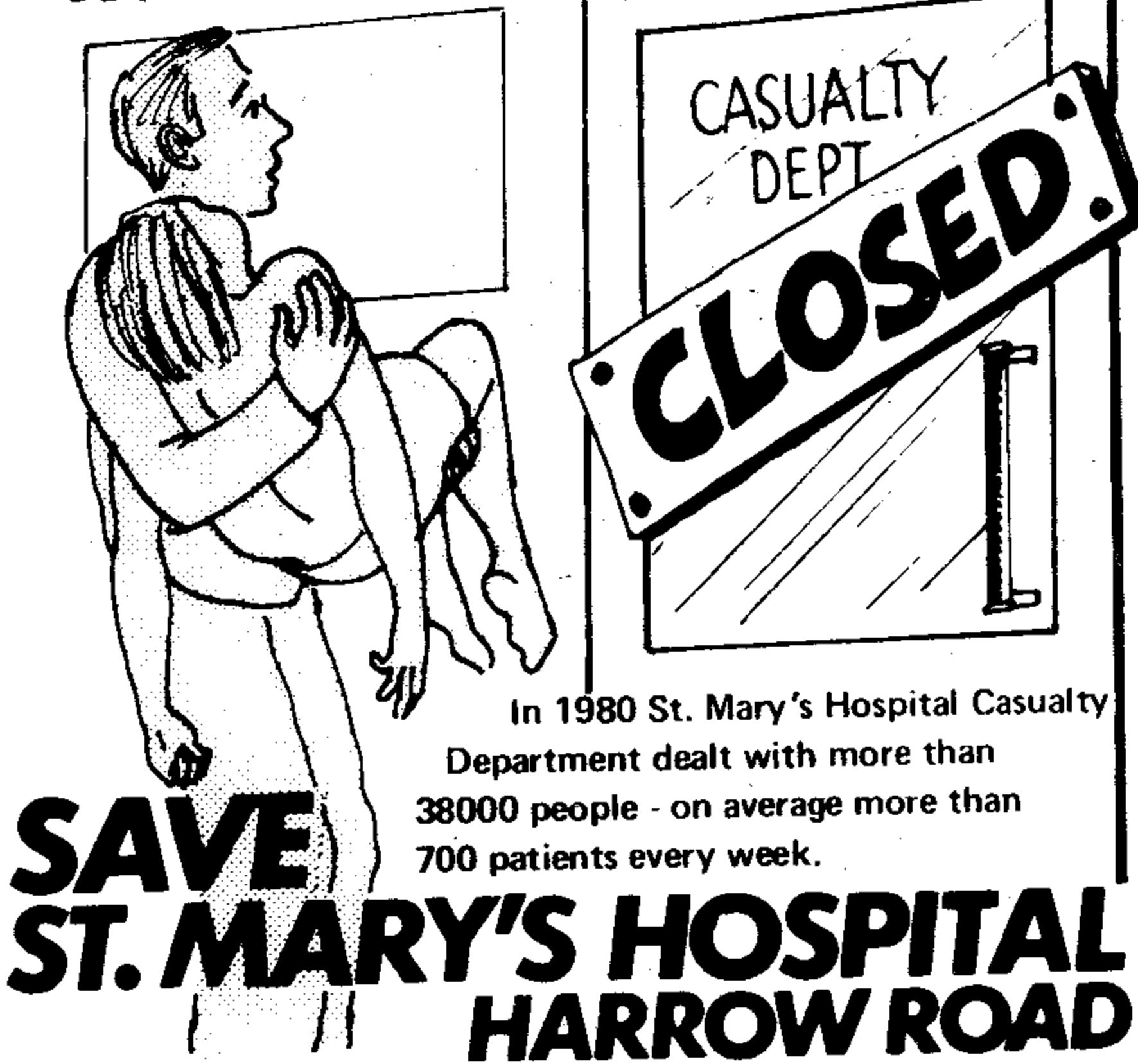
to save W9 over the years will now need to be escalated and put into top gear. The magnificent stand of the ambulance workers who have refused to carry out the instruction to stop bringing patients in from 19 October to allow the beds to be emptied must be backed up.

A real picket line will have to be maintained to stop the removal of patients.

And the struggle will have to be supported by action from other workers to break any isolation.

The Day of Action needs to provide the starting point for mass involvement and commitment from workers and the local community.

THREAT TO CASUALTY!



In 1980 St. Mary's Hospital Casualty Department dealt with more than 38000 people - on average more than 700 patients every week.

St Mary's Hospital, London W9.
DAY OF ACTION
against closure
Saturday October 3
assemble 11am at the hospital for demonstration.
3pm: rally at the hospital, Ken Livingstone speaking, and Health Minister Gerard Vaughan invited to debate his closure decision.
4.30: Theatre group music.
7.30: Disco (tickets £1).
Poster and picture exhibition throughout the day.



Time to picket Mining Supplies

by Carol Hobbs

OPENSHAW is Coronation Street country. On a rain-sodden day, you pass the pub on the corner where a wedding reception is taking place in the saloon bar, the small shop selling everything from Daz and Fairy Snow to cigarettes and pies and sandwiches to take out, and the rows of gloomy terraced houses, to reach the Laurence Scott factory.

The only colour is provided by the 'Tony Benn for Deputy' badges that most of the pickets are wearing.

As usual, the convenor Dennis Barry is there on the picket line.

There's nothing extraordinary about Dennis. He's a quiet and decent man who has worked at Laurence Scotts since the 1940s. When his wife died, he patiently brought up his three sons, and is proud of the fact that they all went to university.

Like millions, he thought a better world had dawned, only to find himself thrown onto the dole queue in his late fifties with little prospect of ever working again.

His natural determination and understanding of union principles pushed

Dennis to the forefront when the speed of events proved too much for former convenor Bob Penchion, and he has carried out the job effectively, taking the cause of the Laurence Scott workers from one end of the country to the other, and learning a lot of lessons in the process.

Had the recent invasion of the factory by 20 armed scabs, who broke through the picket line to remove some of the valuable machinery inside, disheartened the strikers?



Boyd

"Look around", says Dennis. "You've spoken to them. Everybody involved is more determined than ever. We've been shown how the gaffers never give up. We won't either."

Dennis feels that there is still a possibility of a breakthrough in the AUEW.

"The Manchester North stewards' quarterly voted unanimously to call on the executive to make the dispute official once again. The Final Appeal Court is meeting on October 12th."

"Even the right wing in our union has always had a bit of respect of the rule book, and if you look at it then it's absolutely clear that the executive had no authority to disown us."

"Once the dispute is official again, then I reckon that we'll have sufficient support to picket Mining Supplies at Doncaster [the parent company] again".

Control

But isn't this putting the fate of the strike in the hands of a union body over which the strikers have no control? What if the appeal court finds against the strikers or fudges the issues?

Isn't time precious? Why isn't an effort being made to picket Doncaster right away?

"I think we need 250 people to go across there and stay for a week at a time", says Dennis.

Rota

"Now that takes an awful lot of money and resources. We are down to

about that number on our total rota, and the money flowing in has dropped off a little.

I just don't think it's viable at the moment.

"If we pull too many people out of Openshaw, just now, then [Mining Supplies boss] Snipe can strip the whole factory".

But what about more support from other Manchester factories? Wouldn't a few pickets from each provide the potential for a foray across the Pennines?

Dennis replies that support from other workplaces has been good as far as finance and good wishes are concerned, but many senior stewards are reluctant to go further.

Gutless

"Take GEC Openshaw, with its strong tradition and its leading stewards in the CP. They place tremendous importance on whether the dispute is official or not, even in terms of financial support."

"There's nowt more gutless than the CP faced with a real fight to help another factory. Be careful. Don't go too far. Look to the longer term - you know the guff."

"That's why they are losing members and paper sales."

"The other problem is that it is Boyd and Duffy who are stiffening Snipe and telling him not to negotiate with us locally."

"If they can be turned around in the union, that's our opportunity."

As we talk to some of the other pickets, workers who have had no strike pay for six weeks, we think about Arthur Snipe spending 102,000 guineas on a yearling at the St Leger Sales and the similar obscenity of Terry Duffy addressing the Labour Party unemployment demonstration in Birmingham, mouthing clichés about the evils of the dole queue.

Blacking

However, they'd better watch out. As one of the lads says, "I'm quite willing to bring in the New Year standing outside Laurence Scotts if that's how long it takes to beat Duffy and Snipe".

It need not take that long if the labour movement rallies around - particularly in Manchester - to provide enough cash and bodies to picket Mining Supplies. It just requires a little solidarity and commitment.

All workers should move resolutions in their unions calling for the blacking of all Mining Supplies and LSE products, and for a labour movement inquiry into Laurence Scotts and associated companies.

Meanwhile, keep donations rolling in to: George Fryer, 20 Round Croft, Romilly, Cheshire.

Copies of the new Laurence Scotts strike bulletin can also be obtained from that address.

ROBB CALEDON WORKERS SIT TIGHT

By the time this issue of Socialist Organiser appears, the sit-in by workers at the Robb Caledon shipyard in Dundee will be entering its third week. Although the workers have already won widespread support for their fight for jobs, there is nothing to suggest that they will win a speedy victory.

The shop stewards' convenor at the yard, Bob Barty, told Socialist Organiser of the extent of the support:

"We've had letters and telephone calls from all over the country. Only the other day we had a letter from Duncan McNeill, convenor in Scott Lithgow, pledging the support of all shipyard workers on the Lower Clyde."

Letters have come from Cammel Laird in Birkenhead, from Govan, Yarrow and elsewhere and we even had a phone call from Grigg Marine down in Lowestoft.

Members of the local trades council have been down to express their support and so too has the Lord Provost, the leader of the Labour administration in Dundee, various other local councillors, and both the local MPs, Ernie Ross and Gordon Wilson.

Wilson said he would try to arrange for a delegation from the yard to meet Francis Pym and the Prime Minister as well."

The Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Unions (Confed) has organised a national ban on overtime and weekly one day strikes in all yards which started on Monday 28 September.

According to the Confed the one-day strikes will continue until an agreement satisfactory to the workers has been reached.

Measures

Bob Barty reckoned that these measures, for the time being at least, were adequate:

"We congratulate the Confed for the overtime ban and the one-day strikes. The last time we had a fight with British Shipbuilders, over redundancies, the Confed imposed an overtime ban and after only a week the redundancies were withdrawn. So by calling one-day strikes this time the Confed has stepped up its action."

There are 70,000 in the industry so the overtime ban and one-day strikes should be really effective. The

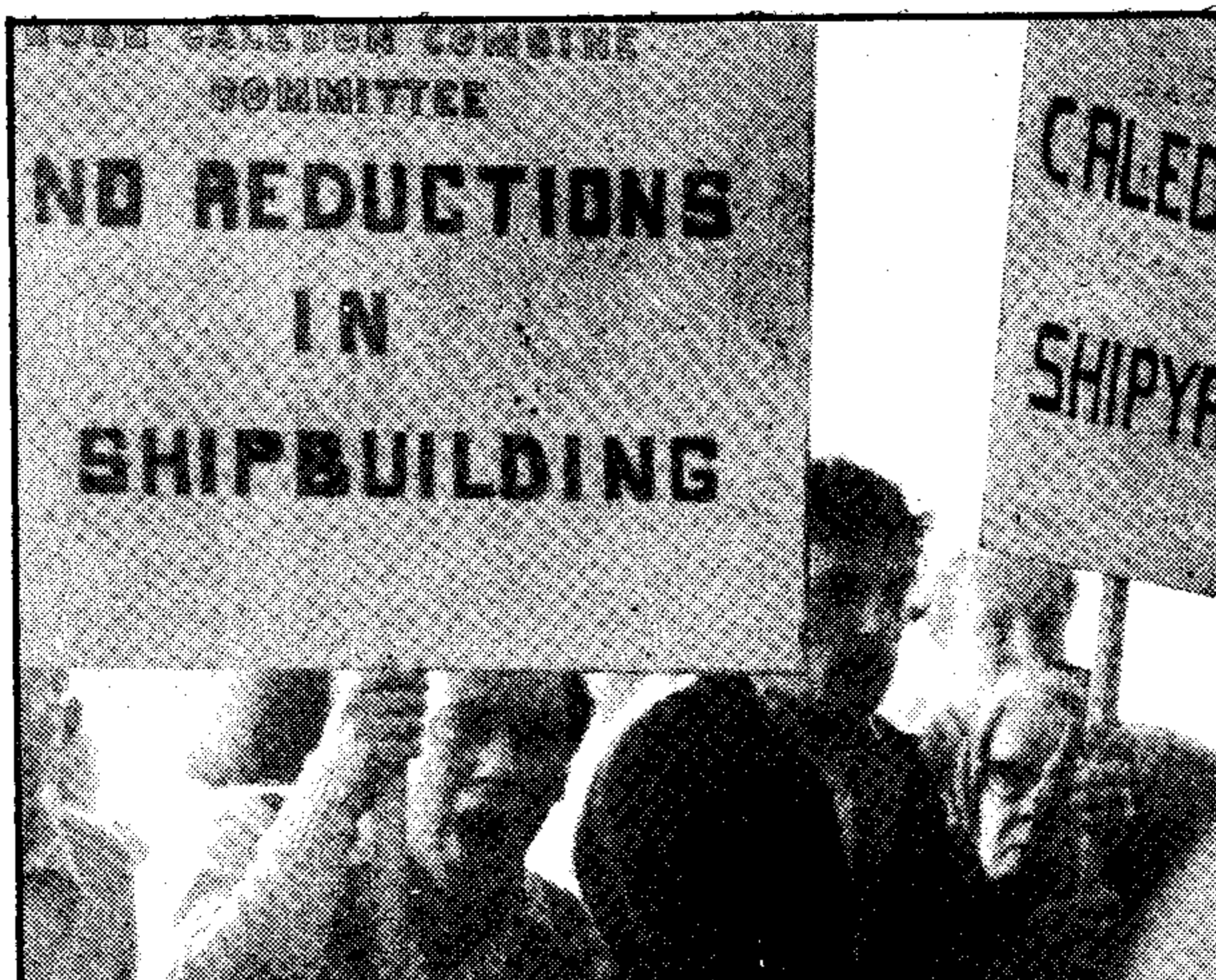
Confed isn't organising a levy of its members to help us, but we haven't asked them to. Workers will be sacrificing money by not doing overtime and by striking each week and that's enough to ask of them."

Previous disputes, particularly the engineering dispute in 1979, have shown that the tactic of one-day strikes does as much to confuse and demoralise workers as it has impact on the bosses.

The Confed's plan of calling workers out on strike one day and sending them back to work the next, is more likely to defuse militancy than it is to develop it.

And in shipyards which are low on work, one-day strikes could even help management, by going onto a four-day week without having to pay out for short-time working.

On 28 September, when the first of the one-day strikes are due to take place, none of the shipyard workers in Glasgow can go on strike anyway as it is a public holiday.



The takeover of the yard by Kestrel Marine remains a possibility but not a very likely one.

Neither British Shipbuilders nor workers in the sit-in have had any discussion with Kestrel Marine although national union officials have.

Robb Caledon workers are not keen to see Kestrel Marine take over the yard anyway since they would prefer to remain part of British Shipbuilders.

The offer by British Shipbuilders to the workers of jobs in Leith, near Edinburgh, is even less acceptable to them, since it would mean that they would have to move home.

The next stage of building support for the sit-in is a meeting being held in Dundee to give up to date information to people, particularly those not directly involved. Local MPs, union officials and shop stewards have all been invited to attend.

Unfortunately there are no plans to use the meeting to launch a broad support campaign in support of the sit-in: "We are not planning anything like that at the moment," said Bob, "although someone may suggest that at the meeting."

Donations should be sent to the Finance Committee, c/o Bobby Jones, Robb Caledon Shipyard, Dundee.

VAUXHALL WORKERS MUST LEARN FROM

PAST

by Chris Erswell

THE current developments surrounding the Vauxhall pay review highlight some weaknesses in the trade union organisation and bargaining structure.

As at BL, the national negotiating body, the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) is an unrepresentative, bureaucratic body dominated by officials and full-time convenors from the three plants Ellesmere Port, Luton and Dunstable.

It would seem reasonable to consider, therefore, raising the demand for a national conference of Vauxhall shop stewards to determine claims democratically and to vote on all offers before the final vote at mass meetings.

Such a body could elect a lay negotiating committee on a proportional basis and recallable at all times.

Vague

A significant feature of the claim adopted by the unions this year as previously, is the vague and uninspiring demand for an unspecified "substantial increase". This not only commits the union negotiators to nothing and leaves the door wide open to manoeuvre and sell-out but also is an unsatisfactory basis for rallying the membership for a determined struggle. How can you expect the members to take the review seriously when the leaders haven't even got a reasonable claim with a definite figure?

An across the board demand to compensate for erosion in buying power linked to a cost of living clause determined by the members themselves would be something for the membership to get their teeth into. But who the hell wants to go on strike for a "substantial increase"?

This weakness in the claim reflects not only the bureaucratised bargaining machinery, but also the ideological shortcomings of a substantial layer of the stewards organisation.

Under conditions where the company has been pleading poverty for years, many workers actually believe that there is no hope of obtaining an offer big enough to compensate for lost earnings. After all, how can the company pay up during a recession? Won't this simply drive the firm out of business?

Books

Socialists clearly have to deal with these questions by demanding the right to see for themselves the company's books. Do we accept the management claims at face value or do we demand proof?

If the management refuse this right then they must have something to hide, and the members are entitled to believe that the company is able to pay up.

On the other hand completely free and unfettered access to the books by elected union committees and sympathetic financial advisors would reveal the financial juggling by the multinational firm, the profiteering of suppliers and bankers, the overall company rationalisation plans and the need for a combine-wide fightback, the drive for greater exploitation necessary for survival in the capitalist market.

Control

Just as a private buyer would need to examine the books before taking over a company, the unions need to examine the firm's books as the condition for then exercising control over management strategy.

Such a perspective implicitly lays the basis for the eventual ousting of management and the instituting of workers' management.

ment; for the nationalisation of firms unable to survive in the capitalist market along with other firms in the industry; ultimately to the complete socialisation of the economy.

Whilst the demand for a reduction in the working week to 39 hours, and the call for an increase in days with full lay-off pay from 5 to 20 a quarter are obviously necessary, it is even more important to also raise the demand for work-sharing on full pay, administered by elected trade union committees.

This demand is particularly clear and unequivocal to all workers both employed and unemployed. We must surely present some perspective for meeting the needs of the three million unemployed.



Grenville Hawley

The last strike at Ellesmere Port was left isolated by the national officials and right wing and Stalinist convenors at Luton and Dunstable.

The Ellesmere Port workers mounted a highly effective mass picket of the Harwich docks where

Cavalier engines are shipped from the Continent for assembly at Luton. It was so successful that national official Grenville Hawley sent strict instructions for the immediate removal of the picket! At the same time, squads of thugs from the Essex "Force Support Group" laid into the pickets, hospitalising two stewards.

The picket was eventually called off after a number of exhausting weeks, supposedly because of the threat to the jobs of 20 Silcock and Colling drivers, who had been laid off by the picket, although this seemed to be a less than satisfactory pretext at the time.

It is still unclear whether it was a retreat in the face of impossible odds, or a climb-down by the leaders.

A few weeks later a mass meeting drew the logical conclusion from this retreat and voted down a stewards' recommendation to continue the strike.

The track workers then had to suffer the humiliating experience of being recalled to work section by section, and a smug lecture from their foreman. Several stewards were sacked, mobility off the section was severely restricted, and the canteen bar was closed as a spiteful reminder of defeat in case the message had not been driven home sufficiently. Needless to say, the working conditions on the tracks deteriorated sharply.

The crucial mistake was, it would seem, to call off the Harwich picket. From that point onwards the strike seemed to lose impetus and collapse even though the show-rooms were picketed afterwards. A much stronger picket was needed against the police goons. Greater efforts to mobilise the local

labour movement might have paid off in repulsing the police. There was no evidence of this being carried out.

Hawley should have been confronted at Transport House and an occupation of the building mounted to publicise the sell-out, until blacking of the Company was carried out, a regional levy was sanctioned, and forces were mobilised in support of the picket. Instead Hawley was allowed to get away with it scot-free.

Action on this year's review must come up against these and similar problems. The unions must not make these disastrous errors again.

Car industry round-up



BL: "We can't afford not to fight"



by Jim Denham

ACROSS THE five manual grades in BL, the average wage is £94 before deductions. There is a bonus scheme on top of this, but payments vary dramatically, and often seem to be determined by the tactical decisions of the company, rather than productivity.

At Cowley Assembly plant, for instance, the bonus payments dropped from £12 per week to £1.85 with no disputes or noticeable drop in production!

And when the payments at Longbridge recently rose from about £10 a week to a record £18, few workers doubted that it was a deliberate (and temporary) ploy to head off militancy over the wage claim.

Even after a good week's bonus, most BL workers are lucky to take home anything over £85.

As a Longbridge T&G steward told Socialist Organiser, "Our wages are so low now, we can't afford not to fight this year. The only question is, will the officials support us, or at least not stab us in the back again".

After the repeated sell-outs of recent years, BL workers have good reasons

to distrust their union leaders and the unrepresentative, unaccountable Joint Negotiating Committee (LCJNC).

In 1979-80, the workforce voted overwhelmingly in a secret ballot to reject the company's insulting offer (5% plus 92 pages of strings), and 20,000 workers in a dozen plants struck despite the AUEW instructions to work as normal and no call for action from the TGWU. Edwardes only succeeded in imposing the deal after Moss Evans reached an 'understanding' that gave BL everything it wanted.

In 1980-81, it was much the same story, with workers voting at mass meetings across the company to reject the 6.8% offer. The convenors gave five days' notice of strike action. Then Edwardes

called in Duffy and the other general secretaries to save his bacon.

Longbridge and Cowley then passed resolutions of no confidence in the bureaucratic and unrepresentative LCJNC. But this year, after manoeuvres by T&G automotive industry official Grenville Hawley, that same LCJNC is back in business.

The company has not yet formally replied to this year's £20 wage claim, but BL bosses have made it clear that they intend to offer no more than (and perhaps less than) four per cent.

Such an offer will be met with great hostility in the plants. The job now is to make sure that hostility is translated into effective action this year, and not sidetracked again by the top officials.

Ford: make up for lost time!

AFTER suffering severely last year, in the US car industry's worst-ever slump, the international Ford corporation is now making profits again.

Unlike Vauxhall, the loss-making British subsidiary of

General Motors, Ford Britain also turns in tidy profits.

Ford workers are therefore in a stronger position than the other car firms. And the last three years have reflected that fact.

In 1978 Ford workers led



Ford led the fight against the 5 per cent in 1978

the fight against Dennis Healey's and Jim Callaghan's disastrous 5% pay limit. After a nine-week strike they were shepherded back to work by the officials with a deal only marginally different from what they had rejected two weeks before - but it was way over 5%.

The deal was 9.75% on the basic and various supplementary payments including a £4 'attendance allowance'.

In 1979 the Ford bosses wanted to avoid a strike. They quickly increased their offer to 21.5% - £15 for the basic 'B grade' workers - and that was accepted.

Last year, too, the wage review went through without a fight - thanks to the union leaders. Ford's final offer was 9.5%. Mass meetings rejected it - and the union leaders did nothing except wait around then go back to mass meetings with the same offer. With the help of some

lay-offs provoked by the bosses, the offer was accepted second time round.

This year the Ford workers face a management intent on achieving "Japanese" speed-up and manning cuts in the factories. They will not come close to the claim - for £20 across the board and a 35 hour week - without a fight.

Ford workers have the advantage over other car firms of a full national shop stewards' conference to decide their claim. But the negotiations are still mainly in the hands of full-time officials.

If those officials have their way, then the Vauxhall and BL workers' pay battles will come and go with Ford still at the negotiating table. But these divisions cannot be afforded at a time when the Tories and the bosses are gearing up for major cuts in real wages all across industry.

MARTIN THOMAS

Cowley walk out

THE proof of the militancy in BL plants is shown by the continuing action at the BL Cowley Body Plant.

The 3,500 TGWU members have been on an overtime ban for the past month. They took this action because of a drop in their bonus and they wanted to fight on this issue separately from the November pay review.

During last week's holiday shutdown the company used contractors to do work of the "heavy-gang" in order to overcome the effects of the overtime ban.

As a result, this group stopped work on Monday, and were followed by the rest of the factory who went home for the rest of the day, thus laying off workers in the adjacent Assembly Plant.

GET ORGANISED!

Socialist Organiser Alliance

To make **Socialist Organiser** a real campaigning paper that can organise the left in the movement, it needs its own organised activist support - and money.

Local supporters' groups have been established in most big towns to build a real base for the paper.

Supporters are asked to undertake to sell a minimum of six papers an issue and to contribute at least £1 a month (20p for unwaged). So becoming a supporter helps build our circulation and gives the paper a firmer financial base.

If you like **Socialist Organiser**, think it's doing a good job, but realise that it can't possibly do enough unless you help, become a card-carrying supporter.

Fill in the form below and send it to: **Socialist Organiser**, c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

I want more information ☐ / I wish to become a **Socialist Organiser** supporter ☐

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Industrial News

Support Glencroft mass pickets!

by Ian McLeish

AFTER two months there is very little change on the picket lines where 15 women at Glencroft Knitwear, Glasgow, are fighting sackings.

National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear officials say that they are 'happier this week'. It is difficult to work out why. The union

officials see 'everything as hinged on the possibility of an ACAS tribunal', but Glencroft boss Leon Newman refuses to have anything to do with ACAS.

And whatever the findings of a tribunal, it has no power to restore the jobs. We cannot afford to have any illusions in ACAS.

Initiatives

Fresh initiatives are long overdue. There has been no new delivery of yarn this week, but everyone suspects that Newman got two weeks' supply last week. He is able to continue production with scab labour.

The women have received strong support when speaking at various union meetings, but the NUHKW is still failing to take the initiative to organise more meetings.

Blacking at airports and the washing plant is central to winning the dispute. So far airport unions have only 'promised every assistance'.

and the women need more than promises.

The workers who wash the yarn for Glencroft are still refusing to support the women. The difficulty is that the washing plant is in an area of high unemployment, and there have been recent redundancies there.

This should be countered by the union by organising a fightback against redundancies and linking that struggle

to the one at Glencroft.

Newman is now calling in the police for the least thing, like where the pickets stand. And the police are more ready to cooperate with Newman.

More people are still needed for mass pickets, which are continuing, probably weekly.

Messages/money: Glencroft Knitwear dispute, c/o NUHKW, 44 Kelvingrove St, Glasgow G3 7RZ.

Sunday Times locked out

by Clare Russell

Rupert Murdoch, new boss of the Sunday Times and Times, has taken his cue from the Financial Times.

Recently the FT bosses faced down an NGA machine room dispute by threatening to lock out all its printworkers and produce the paper elsewhere. Now Murdoch has responded similarly to an NGA dispute in the Sunday Times machine room.

The NGA members, who are pursuing a claim for pay rises and better manning levels, refused to give a guarantee that they would not work to rule or take similar action. The Sunday Times then made a pre-emptive strike - locking out all its 1400 workers before the NGA machine minders had a chance to take any action.

Closure

NGA members on the Times then respected the picket lines of their fellow members on the Sunday Times, so the Times did not appear either.

Murdoch is now threatening suspension or total closure of both papers.

As at the Financial Times the leaders of the bigger print union NATSOPA are showing no solidarity at all. NATSOPA leader Teddy O'Brien announced that members of NATSOPA and the other print union, SOGAT, would be willing to cross the NGA picket line. And he denounced Tony Benn for speaking out in support of the NGA members.

Print workers sit-in to save jobs

THE workers at Barnes Flexible Packaging, Cheetham Hill, in North Manchester, have occupied their factory in an attempt to save 236 jobs. Barnes manufactures plastic wrappings and containers and is part of the multinational Smurfit group.

Alan Grounds, FoC of the NGA chapel, explains the background to the sit-in.

"Earlier this year management came to us with a 'revival package' which included productivity measures, staggered meal breaks and 40 redundancies.

This was supposed to keep the firm going for at least the next 12 months, so the unions reluctantly accepted the proposals.

Imagine how we felt when the management came back to us in April demanding even more redundancies throughout the plant, wage cuts and demanning, this time as part of a so-called 'survival plan'.

Funnily enough, investment on the part of the company never figured in either of the redundancy packages. As these new proposals meant breaking national agreements there were three months protracted

negotiations, but it became increasingly obvious that management wanted Barnes Flexible Packaging to close altogether. In fact we received our redundancy notices even before talks finally broke down.

On August 28 the factory was taken over by all the unions involved - NGA, SOGAT, EETPU and AUEW. Since then we have kept up a 24 hour presence. NGA and SOGAT have made the sit-in official. Now we are very strong and we hold mass meetings every Friday and support from other factories and unions is coming in now.

Profits

So far there has been no attempt to get us out or move plant, stock or machinery, but obviously we are waiting for them to try.

We are intent on saving our jobs. Smurfit is a multinational corporation making huge profits and this particular firm had £1¼ million of orders at the time of closure.

If we take this lying down it will have repercussions throughout the Smurfit group."

Another worker on

picket duty said:

"It's ridiculous closing down this factory when there's £1¼ million worth of orders on the books. It's a case of divide and rule. They will use us as an example to clobber other Smurfit factories who try and fight back. They'll say 'look what happened at Barnes's. They lost all their jobs so you'd better agree to these proposals for your own good.' In that way they can force redundancies and wage cuts on them."

Another picket said: "I feel so bitter when we agreed to what they wanted at first and then they came back and kicked us in the teeth. Whole families have got the sack. Most of us have been here for 10-20 years." "We'll stand and fight until we've saved our jobs. The more of us that's on the dole, the more it drives wages down. That's what Thatcher's up to."

Donations and messages of support to: Len Hughes, 163 Argyl Street, Heywood, Lancs.

joint action between the railworkers, miners and steelworkers.

Sid Weighell of the NUR responded by saying, "We would not go to the barricades on a minor issue, but on something like this, where such a threat exists, it would be used."

Hoovers and British Airways have also told their workers that their pay will actually be cut and that there will be no pay rises for some years. BSC is following suit. This is part of a new, more aggressive phase in the bosses' offensive.

MacGregor said that wage improvements might be con-

ceded at local level if productivity deals involving even further cuts are concluded. This is one of the things that has stung the union leaders: together with the direct balloting of members, this reduces the role of the central union leadership to little more than collecting dues and making ritual speeches against Tony Benn.

The Triple Alliance idea is an important one. The threats can be resisted.

But given the record of the union leaders - in particular the rail and steel leaders - the Alliance can only become a fighting reality if the rank and file of these unions organise.

'MORE OF A FESTIVAL THAN JUST A MEETING'

Socialist Organiser spoke to Pat O'Malley, one of the organisers of the Workers Socialist League's forthcoming Birmingham rally.

What is the rally intended to achieve?

We know that more and more people are recognising the need to fight back against the attacks of the Thatcher government.

But they are frustrated in their attempts by the present leadership of the labour movement. This month's TUC saw a whole week of empty 'debate' in which not a single resolution was tabled proposing action against the Tories.

At local level union officials stand by while jobs are slashed, vital services cut, real wages eroded and now even calls for cuts in actual wages.

Many recognise that a political answer is needed to these bureaucrats: hence the growth of membership and shift to the left in the ranks of the Labour Party.

But there are very real limitations too in the politics of Labour's left wing. Their "Alternative Economic Strategy" offers no coherent challenge to capitalism, and often boils down to little more than a nationalist plea for import controls to protect 'British' capitalists.

While we of course support the progressive element in Benn's campaign - his call for the accountability of leaders to the rank and file membership and his challenge to the policies of

the last Labour government - the Workers Socialist League sets out to build a conscious revolutionary leadership within the labour movement as a whole.

We hope that the rally will attract many of those who have fought with us in trade union struggles and the Benn campaign, and show them the importance of being part of a revolutionary movement.

Socialist Organiser has agreed to run a workshop on 'Organising the Labour Left' and London Labour Briefing is doing one on Labour councils and the cuts. We hope to see many Socialist Organiser supporters and readers there.

Facets

So the rally isn't just for WSL members?

No indeed - we will be especially attempting to show the relevance of Trotskyist policies and the work we have done to every kind of struggle within the workers movement.

There will be workshops on such topics as the fight against wage controls, organising rank and file movements, organising the unemployed, women in the labour movement, and youth against racism and fascism.

There will be displays, illustrating many facets of our fight for revolutionary politics - exhibitions on hospital occupations, Women's Fightback, the National Left Wing Youth Movement and other campaigns - as well as your own Socialist Organiser exhibition.

International solidarity will be a prominent aspect - with displays on Namibia, South Africa, Ireland,

Turkey and El Salvador. The Trotskyist International Liaison Committee, to which the WSL is affiliated, will be represented by a comrade just back from Poland.

There will be films - and we hope theatre from the Broadside theatre group.

And the speakers for the afternoon have been invited to give a broad and varied view of the kind of politics we are fighting for.

Fusion

What is special about this particular event?

The present Workers Socialist League is the result of a fusion during the summer of the old WSL with the International Communist League.

The combined organisation now has members of supporters in most major towns - and far greater opportunity for work in the labour movement.

We think that the political gains embodied in this fusion should be known by other activists in the movement.

We hope that when they see and hear the kind of work we are doing and have in view many comrades will decide it is time to join us and help build a really powerful Trotskyist party in Britain as part of an international movement.

That's why we've made the rally more like a festival than a meeting: we hope that people will take the chance to get to know us talk informally, and see for themselves that the WSL is the only serious revolutionary organisation on the British left.

Double blow from BSC

by Andrew Hornung

British Steel Corporation has dealt its 109,000 employees a two-fisted blow. According to BSC chief MacGregor there will be no pay rise for them in 1982. On top of that 20,000 more jobs will have to go.

The leaders of the main steel union, ISTC, complained that he had broken an agreement with them to negotiate a wage rise in 1982.

But it should have been no surprise: it is the spineless performance of the ISTC leaders (as well as the leaders of the other steel unions) that have demoralised the workers in the industry and

made management more brazen than ever.

Earlier this year BSC decided to defer an already negotiated 7% pay rise until the summer. The ISTC leaders opposed this move, but MacGregor went over the heads of the bureaucrats, balloted the workers, and got agreement.

Now BSC is threatening to do the same again. It's straightforward blackmail: "Give up the wage claim or give up your jobs!"

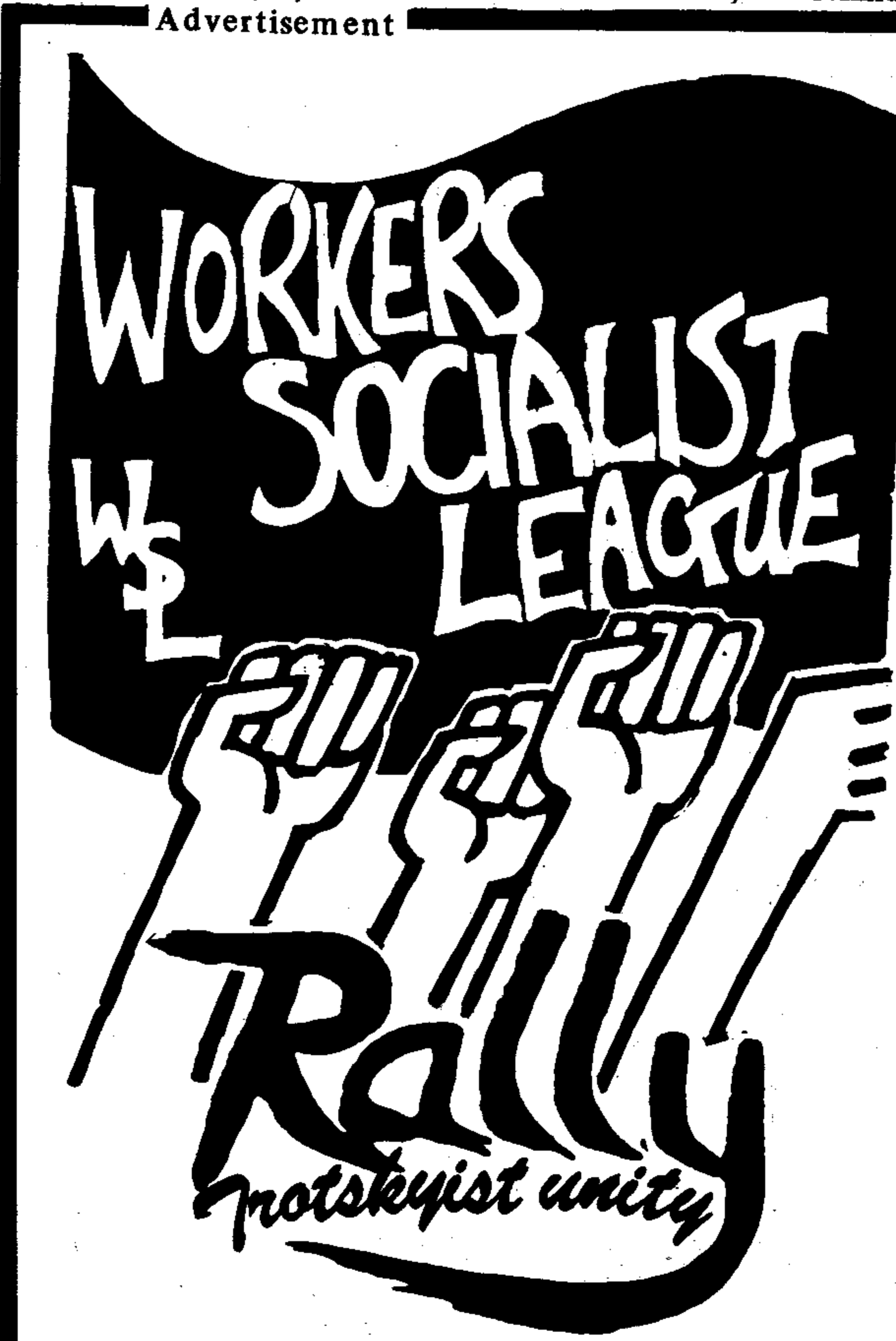
Steel union leaders have responded by saying they will call a national strike unless the double threat is withdrawn. They are talking of invoking the Triple Alliance - the agreement on

joint action between the railworkers, miners and steelworkers.

Sid Weighell of the NUR responded by saying, "We would not go to the barricades on a minor issue, but on something like this, where such a threat exists, it would be used."

Hoovers and British Airways have also told their workers that their pay will actually be cut and that there will be no pay rises for some years. BSC is following suit. This is part of a new, more aggressive phase in the bosses' offensive.

MacGregor said that wage improvements might be con-



RALLY: 'Bring down the Tories! Fight for a workers' government! Build a revolutionary leadership!' Saturday October 10, from 10am at Digbeth Halls, Digbeth, Birmingham

10am-noon and 1-2.30: workshops. 2.30: rally session, with speakers including a representative from Solidarnosc, a Trotskyist just back from Poland, Dennis Barry (Laurence Scotts), and possibly Owen Carron MP.

Tickets £1 (50p unwaged). Transport available from most areas.

More details: WSL, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.



FOLLOWING the strike at BL's Cowley Body Plant (see report, page 14), anger has also boiled over at the neighbouring Assembly Plant.

The Princess and Honda tracks had been laid off during the Body Plant dispute — and refused lay-off pay,

under BL's new procedure document, although the lay-off was in no way due to any action by the Assembly Plant workers.

On return to work on Wednesday 30th, section meetings were held on the Princess and Honda tracks, and most sections decided to walk out. As

Socialist Organiser went to press, strong picket lines were being consolidated outside the plant.

This action shows the potential that exists in BL now for ripping up Edwardes' new document and going forward to win the full £20 claim this year.

Socialist Organiser

LECH WALESA VERSUS THE RADICALS

THE second part of Solidarnosc's National Congress opened in Gdansk on 25 September.

Before the 900 or so delegates lies the task of ironing out the union's political programme.

A fight can be expected to break out between the more moderate and radical tendencies within the union over many of the formulations of the draft political programme. Unclear and imprecise references to economic reforms (by whom and for whom?), elections (local ones are approved — but what about to Parliament?) will no doubt be openly debated out.

Already the Congress has seen a sharp exchange on the question of workers' control. But it has not only been within the Congress that this issue has exploded. Several days earlier the Sejm (Polish Parliament) witnessed a veritable revolt by MPs belonging to the Democratic, Peasant, Neo-Znak Pax and two Catholic Groups.

Although these MPs exist in Parliament, only thanks to the tolerance of the Stalinist PUWP in its attempt to provide the illusion of political pluralism, for the first time in living memory they have violently defied the government.

The government of Jaruzelski wanted to basically renege on a recently arrived-at compromise with the union on the election of factory managers — and revert to previous proposals more favourable to the PUWP.

But if the government was getting a rough ride in the Sejm — many observers have called it the most "significant Parliamentary event since 1947" and "Solidarnosc's parliamentary debut" — the moderates around Walesa have been

getting a rough ride from the more radical tendencies at the Congress.

For even the compromise, which the government wants to renege on allows tremendous privileges and power to the PUWP, which previously held the unquestioned prerogative of nominating its lackeys.

The union negotiators agreed that not all nominations for factory managers are to be made by the workers' committees in the enterprises and in return the government has agreed that a

list of factories whose managers could be nominated only by the government/Party would be negotiable.

Radicals

Walesa in supporting this compromise attacked the radicals by saying:

"It's not difficult to avoid taking a decision. What's difficult is to make such a decision even when it is unpopular. Would you like to take over the management of the entire country? Well, let's be honest — we won't get there."

After references likening workers' control to a small infant which had to be gradually nurtured until it came of age, Walesa threw down a challenge to the Congress: if they rejected the workers control compromise "After all this, we would be more totalitarian than the party".

The response of Parliament to the government's attempt to renege, stemmed from the threat that they felt such a hardened attitude would pose to initiatives for a "National Front" of some sort.

Nation

Given increasing isolation of the Party in the nation as a whole, even previous hard-line Politbureau members like Stefan Olszowski (one of the prime supporters in the ruling circles of the Katowice Forum hardliners who presented their challenge to Kania's "sell-out" politics with Russian backing last June) has publicly proposed on TV some kind of Front including the PUWP, Solidarnosc and the Church.

"The time has come," he said, "to cease this fratricidal struggle for and against the state. By helping out the constitutional authority we protect the continued existence of the nation."

These proposals for a national political front even



have the full backing of the PAX movement — a powerful political and economic concern in Poland — a hard-line supporter of the Stalinist regime, whose roots go back to the fascist movement before the war.

A premature hardening of government attitudes on workers control would jeopardise any possibility of such a Front coming into existence.

It would also endanger any possibility of the Walesa-Catholic Church wing of the union convincing the remaining sectors of Solidarnosc to enter into such a Front.

But the stormy beginnings to the second part of the Congress — would suggest that any such initiative has no chance of success at the moment.

Cops

The isolation of the PUWP and the government leading circles is such that even its cops and gendarmes are abandoning it to its own devices.

The baton-wielding thugs of yesterday, under the enormous pressure of the workers' movement who des-

pite 10 years of murders, clubbings and imprisonments refused to be broken, are now rushing to join the ranks of the workers.

Union

Zbigniew Dudziak, delegate of the unofficial police union denounced by the government, was warmly received by the Solidarnosc representatives. He claims that over 40,000 cops have applied to join the new union.

In the light of these developments, the government's boastful claim two weeks ago that it had enough police and security forces at its disposal to retake control of the streets sounds a bit hollow.

In the last instance the armed bodies of men would have to come from other Warsaw Pact countries.

As a clear overture to the Kremlin, the KOR (Social Defence Committee), founded in 1976 to protect sacked and victimised workers after the Ursus riots of that year, announced that it was winding up.

Apparently Solidarnosc is now sufficiently well organ-

ised for KOR's role to be no longer anything but superfluous.

Possibly more than any other organisation in Poland, the KOR and Jacek Kuron, its leading intellectual, have been the most vilified and denounced by the international Moscow-aligned Stalinist press.

But worries nurtured by Moscow that KOR was an embryo political party competitor to the PUWP linked to a substantial part of the Solidarnosc-organised working class — must now have been laid to rest after KOR has publicly repudiated any such role or ambition.

And yet in the final instance the failure or success of the Polish workers' struggle will be determined by the recreation of genuine workers' parties willing to take the lead in accomplishing revolutionary change. KOR's decision is a step backwards.

In next week's Socialist Organiser: review of Andrzej Wajda's new film 'Man of Iron'

MONEY TO ORGANISE!

SOCIALIST ORGANISER believes that the left in the labour movement needs to be organised. We believe that the support for Benn among Labour Party activists revealed at this year's conference needs organising in a more permanent form.

The results of the elections for deputy leader and for the NEC show that the struggle for democracy and accountability must be organised and taken into the trade unions as well.

But we also believe that consistent socialist policies to meet the crisis of capitalism are also needed. So while we fully support the campaign for democracy and accountability in the labour movement, we fight through the pages of our paper and the activities of our supporters for a programme of revolutionary socialist policies and an end to the capitalist

system.

To carry out that job we need money. That's why we launched a £2,000 per month fund when **Socialist Organiser** became a 16 page weekly. We need every penny of that £2,000 to ensure that we bring you each week a paper adequate to the tasks ahead.

In the first two months the response has been quite encouraging. In August we received just over £1,500 and this month, £1632.86 with one day's post still to come.

But we must push this figure up to £2,000. So if you think our paper is doing a good job why don't you send us a donation today so we can make a good start to the October fund.

Donations should be sent to **Socialist Organiser**, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.