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Socialist Organiser

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Over the last week our Treasurer has been breaking a national target of £1150 down into targets for local groups, and sending out letters to the Socialist Organiser groups asking them if they can raise those targets this month.

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LABOUR PARTY

STOP THE

WITCH-HUNT!

by Jeremy Corbyn
(Hornsey Labour
Party and London
Labour Party Region-
al Executive, in
personal capacity)

On a war footing

by Rachel Lever

'Membership of Bermondsey Labour Party has doubled since Peter Tatchell took on the job of secretary. We're a live party now. We've got everything from barristers to navvies like me', John Roxburgh reported to a packed London Labour Briefing meeting on the Tuesday night after the Organisation Sub-Committee refused to endorse Peter Tatchell. 'If we stand for this, we'll stand for anything.'

There was little doubt from anyone about the need to organise to go on the offensive, to mount a fightback. Reg Race told the meeting: 'There's an imperative need to organise a united left. If anyone doubts this, they're living in a different world from me.'

And the message from the meeting to Reg, and to Tony Benn who had 'come along to listen', was: we need leadership.

Some discussion centred on whether to treat the Tatchell affair purely as an issue of democracy — the rights of local parties — or

to come up front on the issue of 'extra-parliamentary action'.

Activists from Brent East, St. Pancras North and Islington, supported by a great deal of nodding and signs of agreement from the 80 or so members of many London CLPs, spoke strongly for the need to go beyond the purely democratic aspect — and not just talk about extra-parliamentary action but go out and lead it.

Care

'The Right have already given up on the next election. They know all this is destroying the Party but they don't care', Ron Heisler of Hackney told us.

And Tony Benn echoed the point: 'The right's strategy is to minoritise the left, throw us out, and then go into coalition with the SDP to re-create another Callaghan government.'

By the end of the meeting, the London left was put on a war footing. Plans were laid for:

continued back page

The decision of the Organisation Sub-committee to refuse to endorse Peter Tatchell shows how the Right are hitting back at every democratic aspect of the Labour Party.

That Michael Foot, who in the past has suffered more than most from press trials and Party machine witch hunts, should lead the attack is a cause of sadness to some members; but to others it is the inevitable consequence of his role in the last Labour government and his determination to 'defend' the Parliamentary party.

Watershed

The Brighton conference was a watershed for the party. Policy decisions of a major nature were taken by a huge majority — leaving the EEC, unilateral disarmament, nationalisation. But a skilful use of the media, the block vote, and St. Ermines Hotel dining room meant that Tony Benn was narrowly defeated and the NEC changed political complexion.

We are now witnessing the Right's fight back from the only place where they have any support — the Parliamentary Party and Tory or Social Democrat journalists in Fleet Street.

Since Brighton, there have been calls from those on the Left for a 'soft pedal' and slowdown in the interests of 'party unity'.

These arguments are as spurious as they are dangerous. It is more vital than ever that the Left in the Party should be organised together with a clear set of demands: for the

Party to campaign at all levels on conference policy; the election of left wingers to the NEC in the trade union and constituency sections; to defend the right of any constituency party to select its candidate for Parliament.

For those on the Left who advocate a holding back on policy arguments are ignoring the most glaring inconsistency of all — the Parliamentary party are quite deliberately not following conference policy.

For example, Denis Healey has already threatened not to serve in a government committed to unilateral nuclear disarmament, and Michael Foot attacked Tony Benn for speaking in support of Party policy in the North Sea Oil debate.

Interference

The logic of retreat on these questions of Party policy is the latest attack on

constituency parties.

Over the coming weeks, we will see an unprecedented media interference in the affairs of Labour Parties.

Hornsey Labour Party has received an application from Tariq Ali to join the Party, something that socialists should welcome. But veiled threats are being made via the media that by some mysterious power the NEC will stop him joining.

Bermondsey Party are now being put through the mill, and it is vital that Labour Party members throughout the country show every possible means of support for Peter Tatchell and his constituency party.

If we do not stand firm at this crucial time, the future of the Labour Party will be a return to the intolerance of the '50s and the failure of Labour governments in the '60s and '70s.



Michael Foot



Peter Tatchell

PETER Tatchell spoke to Socialist Organiser on Monday 7th, after the NEC Organisation Sub-committee had refused to endorse him.

First, we asked him how thought Labour could beat the SDP.

'We need radical and imaginative socialist policies which can bring about a real socialist transformation of society. That is the only way we can bring about Britain's industrial recovery and economic prosperity, together with social justice and equality for all citizens.'

Unless we have a fundamental redistribution of wealth and power in society, we will never be able to secure full employment and better housing, education and health care for working class people. We've got to argue that case openly and honestly, and mobilise and inspire the electorate on this basis to ensure a Labour victory in the next election.'

Had any local Labour voters rejected Peter because of his politics?

'There are a few. But a local Liberal rang me up on

Saturday and said he was tearing up his Liberal card and joining the Labour Party because he was convinced that, in place of the apathy of the past, the Labour Party in Bermondsey really was a force for social change.'

Look at what the Liberals are doing in Liverpool. It's an absolute disaster for the people there, in terms of mass redundancies and cutting back social services for the elderly and disabled.

Here in Southwark the Labour councillors who have now defected to the SDP

pushed through cuts at the whim of Michael Heseltine. They have sold off Bermondsey riverside to property speculators, implemented 37 per cent rent increases, refused a union agreement to their local authority employees, and sold off council land earmarked for new council housing.

These policies have been deeply unpopular, and we have found that the only way to reverse this unpopularity for Labour is by arguing clearly for a radical socialist alternative.

Locally we've fought on issues such as the reopening of St Olave's Hospital, houses with gardens for local people on Hays Wharf instead of offices, and a rent freeze for local tenants'.

What sort of membership has the Bermondsey Labour Party built up?

'Most are born and bred in Bermondsey, and most are working class. For example, the chairperson of the Party is Ted Bowman, a printworker, member of SOGAT, and member of the Labour Party for over 30 years.'

TATCHELL HITS BACK

Political trial in Leeds

REFERENCES to the IRA and the Workers' Revolutionary Party have been banded about in the first week of the trial in Leeds of the 'Chapelton 6', youth accused of offences during the summer riots.

Five of the youth on trial have been held in custody since their arrest in July. The six face a total of sixteen charges ranging from making or possessing petrol bombs through to burglary and theft. If found guilty they face lengthy jail sentences.

The trial began with the defendants rejecting a number of people from a panel of 30 all-white and largely middle-aged jurors. And there were police restrictions on those allowed in from the press and the public.

The Charges: Malcolm Alan Bouch, 24 of Grange Avenue, Chapelton has pleaded not guilty to 4 charges that he made 76 petrol bombs with intent to endanger life, cause serious injury to property or enabling someone else to do so and that he made petrol bombs for an unlawful purpose.

Michael David Cummins Fahy, 22, of Grange Avenue Chapelton, has pleaded not guilty to similar charges relating to the possession of petrol bombs. He has also pleaded not guilty to two charges of burglary and has admitted handling stolen goods.

Alan Johnson, 20, of Hamilton Terrace, Chapelton, has denied two charges, relating to the possession of petrol bombs.

Frederick Joseph Harbinson, 29, of Hillcrest Avenue, Chapelton, has pleaded not guilty to two charges relating to the possession of petrol bombs.

David Johnson, 18, of Hamilton Terrace, Chapelton, has denied attempting to inflict grievous bodily harm on police officers and damaging a Hillman Avenger.

Mohammed Hussain, 17, of Grange Avenue, Chapelton, has denied a charge of attempting to make explosive substances for an unlawful purpose.

Michael Fahy, on a march in support of the hunger strikers. But he had not asked him questions trying to brand him as an IRA supporter, he insisted.

Instead he asked him whether he had been involved in political marches. He asked him, "Were you involved in making petrol bombs for political reasons?" Then he asked "Was it your intention to help cause a riot because you believed it would help the cause of the IRA?"

To each of these questions, and in each of his interviews with police, Fahy insisted that he had not touched any petrol bombs or been involved in the riots.

Outside the court the Leeds 8 Defence Campaign (who also support two other youth due to be tried separately) gave out leaflets calling for the charges to be dropped.

The Defence Committee can be contacted c/o Box L8, 59 Cookridge Street, Leeds 2.

The case is proceeding.



Fall in for fall-out

NATO is facing a new and terrible threat. Ministers and military strategists from its 14 member states meeting together in Brussels have decided to prioritise combatting this menace. No effort will be spared to get agreement on a common front against the peril.

You guessed... it's the anti-bomb movement.

Inexplicably, millions of normally sane and sensible Europeans have taken an irrational dislike to the idea of nuclear weapons being sited in their backyards.

Worse, they're even objecting to being chosen as targets in a 'tactical' nuclear war.

All of which means that

BENEFITS CUTS

By next summer, more than a third of those unemployed, over a million, will have been out of work for over a year. While the total unemployment figures have risen by just under half, the number of long-term unemployed has doubled over the last year to 750,000.

And inflation is eating at the real value of unemployment and supplementary benefits.

Last year the government removed the guarantee that increases would compensate for inflation. And in Howe's mini-budget another cut slipped through.

•The government underestimated by 2% the rate of inflation for this year's increase, but promised that this would be made up for long-term benefits in the next rise in November 1982. But while this is true for long-term supplementary pensions [for those over retiring age - if they happen to live that long] it does not apply to long-term supplementary benefit for long-term claimants under retiring age who don't sign on, mainly single parents.

So by the back door, the Tories have managed to undercut the precarious means of existence of the absolutely poorest section of society.

Social Dinner Party

If the SDP didn't exist, it would be necessary for Posh Simmonds to invent them. While opinion polls reveal the average SDP voter doesn't have a clue what s/he is voting for, apart from a vague dissatisfaction, your average member knows exactly what it's about.

The SDP, it transpires, really is one long dinner party for the concerned

Students join fight against Tory cuts

by Everton Williams

OVER 20,000 marched in anger to Westminster on December 1 to protest at the latest Tory plans to destroy London education.

The march and lobby of Parliament were called by the teaching unions, NATFHE and the NUT,

many of whose members will lose their jobs if the Heseltine bill on local government is passed.

The protest was strengthened by half-day strike action which closed many schools and colleges across London. The march received the support of the National Union of Students, whose London members have been in the forefront of the struggle against cuts.

The Tory offensive would mean the end of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), which provides much of London's education. Already this year the Tories have cut the £125 million grant to ILEA, providing nothing.

Simply for attempting to provide education standards and facilities such as nurseries in the interests of the working class, the Labour-controlled ILEA has been singled out for special attack.

A major strength of the march, besides its size and spirit of determination, was that it brought together students and teachers in active struggle against the cuts.

The chants of 'no ifs, no buts, fight the cuts', and 'Tories out now', show that the campaign recognises its enemy.

However, at the rally at Central Hall, no adequate lead was given to the obvious militancy and willingness to fight, except to 'build the campaign'.

'leaders' try to keep the NUT a professional and unpolitical union and witch-hunt those who actively mobilise against the cuts, as in Lambeth. They also oppose the affiliation of the NUT to the Labour Party.

The rally would have been greatly strengthened had it invited or allowed any of those involved in real action against the cuts to speak.

The rally had no student speaker, although the London Student Organisation (LSO) has been at the forefront of the struggle.

On November 18th the LSO mobilised thousands

alongside the AUT in a march against the cuts from Chelsea. No mention was made from the platform of the occupation of the Polytechnic of Central London against the cuts.

The 24-hour occupation of the South Bank Poly by students, in support of PCL and against police eviction, the day before received no mention either. Neither was the day of action for December 4th called by LSO mentioned.

Overwhelming

These examples of determination to stop the cuts illustrate the need for direct action in the form of occupations and supporting strikes to stop the cuts. Despite the inactivity and often opposition of our so-called leaders, this type of direct action points the way forward.

The overwhelming vote by NUS Conference for a week-long strike against the Tory cut in the value of the grant is further evidence of the willingness of rank and file students to fight.

The strike action by teachers shows they are prepared to take direct action.

We need to build upon that movement if we are to defeat the Heseltine Bill.

Build a fighting socialist youth organisation! Join the National Left Wing Youth Movement of the LPYS, Box BM 5277, London WC1N 3XX.

PRESS GANG

Daily Mail

DAILY EXPRESS

FINANCIAL TIMES

The Daily Telegraph

THE Sun

by Patrick Spilling

IN A former existence, Labour leader Michael Foot carved himself a reputation for radical journalism. This did not stop him developing a friendship with Lord Beaverbrook.

He reminisces from time to time about his other amicable relationships with noted enemies of the working class. They were, we are invited to believe, lovable old rascals who just happened to be Tories.

Class war dissolved over the mahogany dinner table. Maybe Foot is now paying off some of his debts.

At any rate, it is almost difficult to blame the press for the latest Fleet Street public assassination.

When Peter Tatchell complained he had been tried and executed without the benefit of stating my case, he was, after all, not talking about the press but about Foot himself.

Certainly, despite their best efforts, neither Healey nor Hattersley have managed to hand such a weapon to the press as did Foot in his wounded bellow of oh-so-parliamentary rage.

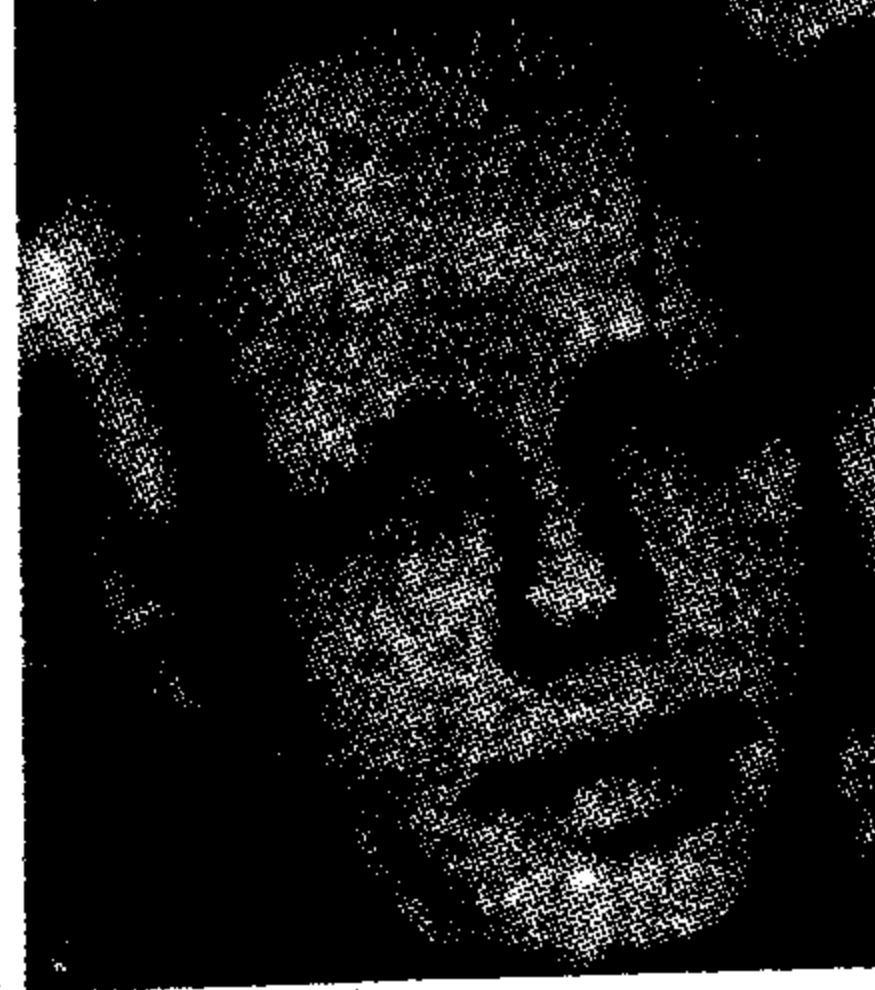
Still, the enthusiasm with which the pubs of Fleet Street disgorged their seekers after truth is admirable. The Daily Mail was in no doubt this was one of the most bitter confrontations yet in Labour's internal war.

Both the Mail and the Times agreed that Bermond-

Hands off Sakharov!

DR. ANDREI Sakharov and his wife Yelena Bonner have reportedly been transferred to a hospital in Gorki, the city (250 miles west of Moscow) of their internalexile.

On the 13th day of their hunger strike the elderly couple experienced a quick deterioration of their condition.



It is reported that the Soviet authorities are now force-feeding them.

Sakharov - one of the Soviet Union's most brilliant physicists and one of the best known critics of the regime - has for the last two years been exiled in Gorki. Two weeks ago, he and his wife began a hunger strike to bring attention to the Soviet regime's refusal to allow their daughter-in-law, Liza Alexeyeva, to emigrate to the United States to join her husband. She married Alexei Semyonov (Yelena Bonner's son by a previous marriage) by proxy.

The authorities have refused to recognise the marriage - no provision for this exists in Soviet law.

Liza Alexeyeva was detained and harassed by the KGB last Saturday as she was attempting to board a train for Gorki to see the Sakharovs.

However much Socialist Organiser disagrees with Andrei Sakharov's political views and his idealisation of the West, we must defend unconditionally his, and the right of thousands of other political prisoners in the Soviet Union, to freely express and propagate their views.

It is the savage repression, endured by millions in the Soviet Union - the denial of basic democratic rights of free speech, the right to travel and to emigrate - which has produced fighters like Sakharov.

LABOUR PARTY

Background

to Bermondsey bust-up

by Martin Thomas

PETER Tatchell was selected as Labour candidate for Bermondsey on November 8th.

There were a few murmurs of discontent on the right wing. Bob Mellish, the present Labour MP for Bermondsey and a hard-bitten right-winger, is due to retire soon and a by-election is likely in the new year.

Labour right-wingers maintained that a left-winger like Tatchell would lose votes. Also, perhaps, they felt that some sharp action against the Bermondsey Party activists would be necessary if they were to persuade Mellish to postpone his retirement.

Bermondsey, and the Southwark borough of which it is part, have been the scene of battles between the old-style right wing — people like Mellish — and the Southwark borough councillors who have just gone over to the SDP — and newer activists.

Irregularity

Frank Chapple has tried to flood Bermondsey Labour Party for the right wing with delegates (often directly appointed by head office, and often people quite unconnected with the electrical or plumbing trades) from some 15 EETPU branches. When Central London EETPU refused to endorse Chapple's nominee — a man who had not attended the branch for 14 years — Chapple suspended the branch!

But no-one suggested any irregularity in Tatchell's selection.

Then, on Thursday December 3, James Well-beloved, a Labour defector to the SDP, complained in Parliament about an article of Tatchell's advocating extra-parliamentary protest. Normally the matter would have passed as routine SDP point-scoring. But Michael Foot jumped to his feet to declare that Tatchell had not been endorsed nationally as a Labour candidate, 'and as far as he was concerned, never would be'.

Legitimacy

The Daily Mirror reported: 'Although Labour moderates were pleased, some were puzzled'. What grounds could Michael Foot have under Labour Party rules for vetoing Tatchell?

The 'offending' section of Tatchell's article read as follows:

'No matter how Left our MPs and councillors may be, the battle for socialism needs a large and active Labour membership committed to mass campaigns of real resistance to Tory rule. Reliance on the present token and ineffectual Parliamentary opposition will advance us nowhere.'

Thankfully, there have been some welcome signs of change in the last couple of years. The NEC has taken the initiative in reviving a more campaigning style of mass politics. [But] surely more imag-

inative and defiant forms of protest are justified in response to the callous policies of this government? Indeed, perhaps they are even necessary to motivate and inspire a large-scale popular opposition which can seriously challenge the authority and legitimacy of Tory policy.

Such challenges, especially when combined with the industrial might of the trade union movement, are probably the only means by which this government will listen to the voice of the people and be deterred from its monetarist course.

Debated and parliamentary divisions are fruitless cosmetic exercises given the Tories' present Commons majority.

And if we recognise this, we are either forced to accept Tory edicts as a fait accompli, or we must look to new more militant forms of extra-parliamentary opposition which involve mass popular participation and challenge the government's right to rule.

Perhaps we should be thinking more in terms of a 'Siege of Parliament' to demand jobs — a march on the House of Commons led by 250 Labour MPs and a thousand Labour mayors and councillors and involving an afternoon's sit-down occupation of the Westminster area.

Or possibly the Labour-controlled GLC could sponsor a 'Tent City' of the unemployed and homeless in the grounds of County Hall and within sight of the House of Commons.

[London Labour Briefing, November 1981].

And why not?

Recall

Foot himself only a year ago was calling for 'a storm of protest' against the Tories.

Tatchell has stressed that he is for parliamentary democracy. And so are Marxists for parliamentary democracy, against all undemocratic attempts to restrict and crush it.

Indeed, Marxists are more for parliamentary democracy than the Labour right-wingers who defend the monarchy, the House of Lords, the Official Secrets Act, and Lord Denning.

Marxists believe that the ruling class will attempt to crush parliamentary democracy by violence if Labour uses it for real anti-capitalist change, and that, in the fight against that ruling class, workers can develop their own democracy, based on delegates and the right of recall, better than present-day parliamentary democracy.

The left wing — the real left wing, not the Stalinists — has always been more for real democracy than the right wing.

Red Flag

Peter Tatchell points out that such action against the Tories is in the best traditions of the Bermondsey labour movement.

Bermondsey Labour Party was founded in 1910. A year later, in August



1911, Party members were prominent in a general strike which spread from the docks through the cocoa, tin box and jam factories in the area.

At the outbreak of the 1914-18 war, the Bermondsey Labour Party wrote an anti-war leaflet which was reprinted in 1½ million copies and distributed worldwide. By 1916, 19 Party members had been imprisoned and tortured as conscientious objectors.

In 1922 Labour won control of the council, and flew the Red Flag from the Town Hall.

In the 1926 General Strike the Labour council suspended itself and gave support to a working-class Council of Action which started to take control of the area, setting up road-blocks.

During the Spanish Civil War, the Bermondsey Labour Party defied Labour HQ to organise aid for the Republic. And in 1937 a combined Bermondsey

Labour Party and trade union counter-demonstration routed Mosley's British Union of Fascists as it attempted to cross Tower Bridge into Bermondsey.

In Bermondsey as elsewhere, extra-parliamentary action is the real tradition of all the important struggles and victories of the working class.

Despite this, Foot had put himself on the line. To pull back, he would need the courage to face a vicious backlash from Labour's hard right wing. And Michael Foot, even in his most radical days, has never had that sort of courage.

So the pro-Foot Centre and soft Left on the NEC were rallied alongside the Right. And on Monday 7th the NEC Organisation Sub-committee voted to recommend the NEC, meeting on Wednesday 16th, to reject Tatchell.

The officers of Bermondsey Labour Party immedi-

ately responded:

'We deplore the decision of the NEC Organisation Sub-committee to reject Peter Tatchell as Labour Candidate for Bermondsey. We again reiterate our total and unqualified support for Peter Tatchell as best candidate to fight future elections in Bermondsey and represent the interests of local people in Parliament.'

There have been no complaints from the Regional Organiser of the Labour Party, who was present at the selection conference, about Peter Tatchell's selection, and all five defeated candidates for the prospective Parliamentary Candidate have stated publicly that the selection procedure was conducted fairly.

We urge the full NEC, when it meets on Wednesday 16th December, to reverse the recommendation of this sub-committee and endorse Peter Tatchell as prospective Parliament-

Talk of 5,000 expulsions

by Reg Race MP

THE CRISIS in the Labour Party following the decision of the Organisation Sub-committee of the NEC not to endorse Peter Tatchell is a crisis not just about the selection of candidates.

It is a crisis about the very character of the Labour Party itself.

The decision of the organisation committee, encouraged by Michael Foot, is a decision which calls into question the right of a constituency party to select a candidate of its choice. What Denis Healey and the right wing are now saying is that any candidate elected by a CLP who does not meet with the approval of any individual member of the National Executive, can be de-selected on the whim of the NEC.

This opens the way to severe problems for many constituency parties who have already, or who are likely to, select left-wing candidates.

Needless to say, the proposal will not be used to attack candidates of the

Right.

But there are other issues involved. There is now talk, encouraged by right-wing NEC members, of expulsions of 5,000 key left wing activists in the Labour Party. Such proposals, if implemented, would wreck the Labour Party completely and would open the door to a further period of Tory government or SDP coalition.

The whole weight of the Labour Party in the constituencies and the trade unions must be mobilised in a vigorous campaign, first to defend the right of Bermondsey Labour Party to select Peter Tatchell; second, to defend the right of the constituency parties to select whom they will; and to deflect the call for mass expulsions and proscriptions in the Labour Party.

We desperately need to get organised. Who can doubt that the right wing are now getting organised and will fight to the death?

any Candidate for Bermondsey.

Bermondsey Labour Party will continue to fight for the interests of local people and for the right of individual constituency Labour Parties to select their own candidates without outside interference.

This decision is unprecedented. It goes against the traditions of the Labour Party. We are confident of full support from constituency parties throughout the country in our stand.

And vice-chairperson Bette Crickmar told us:

'Our reaction is absolute surprise and shock. Many Party members have sent messages to Mr Foot supporting Peter's nomination.'

'I know one Party member, 75 years old, has sent a letter to Michael Foot reminding him of his younger days, when he spoke out and she backed him all the way.'

Peter is not using Bermondsey. He is part of Bermondsey. It's not the local people objecting. The local people have taken him as one of their own.'

Bermondsey's sitting MP, Bob Mellish, has dismissed the present Party membership with contempt — 'students, NUPE members, people like that'.

Bette Crickmar said: 'I'm Bermondsey born and bred, and I take it as a personal insult. I left school at 14, I come from a dockers' family, and my husband is an ex-docker.'

In the last two years since Peter was elected Party secretary, he has done a marvellous job. Much more open now.

The officers of the GLC used to give me the impression they didn't care what I thought, but now we forward motions we discuss issues, meetings are more enjoyable. No-one is coerced, strong-armed, or asked if they are left wing or right wing.

We've gone back to issuing Labour Party newsletters to each household, by the contents contributed by anyone in the Party who wants to — mostly on local issues.

Union affiliations have increased as well as individual membership. Peter are becoming more political — seeing that through Labour Party they stand up for themselves.

Know

Up until this fuss, I thought we had more than a chance in the coming election. But if the media and press put 'left-wing' and 'Marxist' in front of a person's name, and played up as if it's something terrible, then a lot of Labour voters won't know what it means.

It's the first time I've dealt with the Press this. When I saw what I wrote, my reaction was I might as well tell to start with, because that all that gets printed in any case!

Southern Africa Special

World News

BUILD LINKS WITH SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS!

IN SOUTH Africa the movement of independent, non-racial trade unions, organising black workers, has become one of the major sources of opposition to apartheid. With over 160,000 members, a strong base in the industrial sector, and firmly established structures among the rank and file, these trade unions have become a power in the land.

In this country a campaign to build solidarity with independent, non-racial unions has long been waged: through the Anti-Apartheid Movement and SACTU (the trade union wing of the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party), as well as through some sections of the TUC, the Labour Party, etc.

The main planks of this campaign have been: boycott of South Africa, disinvestment of foreign capital from South Africa, the channelling of all support for independent

Bob Fine argues the case for direct union-to-union links

trade unions through SACTU.

While some success has been achieved along these lines, events have taken place which are beginning to lead a substantial minority in the solidarity movement to seek to modify the approach.

The most significant development has been that many of the independent non-racial unions in South Africa are now calling for direct links with unions internationally — including unions in this country — and are actively exploiting all channels available to them to forge such links.

For example, the largest of the independent trade

union federations in South Africa, FOSATU (the Federation of South African Trade Unions) has an explicit policy of calling for links at all levels with sister unions in other countries; and they call for trade union missions to go over to South Africa at their invitation to learn what is actually happening in the struggle, to offer specific assistance, and to provide a firmer base for solidarity action.

During the Glacier Bearing strike, MAWU (the Metal and Allied Workers' Union) extended an invitation to shop stewards from Glacier in Glasgow and Kil-marnock to visit them, and one shop steward did go. At an earlier date a shop steward from BL at Rover, Solihull went over at FOSATU's request.

Similarly, when the Western Province General Workers' Union was engaged in a long and bitterly fought meat workers' strike, they invited representatives to come over from this country — though the invitation came too late to be put into practice.

Recently, SAAWU (the South African Allied Workers' Union) have asked through the IUF (the International Union of Foodworkers) that a trade union delegation go out to South Africa as a fact-finding mission designed to build support for them in their bitter dispute with Wilson Rowntree.

Floodgates

As far as I know, this request is still being considered by the T&G.

The difficulty facing the solidarity movement here is that these calls for direct links violate or appear to violate its major traditional principles: namely that South Africa should be 'boycotted' and that all support should be channelled exclusively through SACTU.

That is why at their recent AGM, the Anti-Apartheid Movement, contrary to the views of a minority, reaffirmed its opposition to all links of this nature.

They argued that black workers themselves do not want them; that they are not necessary since the oppressiveness of apartheid is well known; that they would prove to be a source of real danger to the union movement in South Africa (which they say is underground or semi-clandestine); that they would open the floodgates for all kinds of reactionary elements to enter South Africa with the nod and wink of the apartheid regime; that they would constitute a breach of the boycott policy which is crucial

in order to isolate South Africa internationally; and that it is sufficient for trade unions here to work through SACTU, since SACTU represents the independent, non-racial trade union movement as a whole.

Whatever the force of these arguments in the past, the facts no longer support them. As far as what black workers themselves want, it is clear now that their representative organs are calling for direct links with British unions at all levels.

Clout

It is also clear that these unions do not find such links unnecessary or impossible dangerous (though there are very real dangers which should not be underestimated).

The fundamental problem with the intended visit of Sirs and Duffy was not just that two right wingers were going to South Africa (after all, the unions there wish to make contacts at all levels), but that their visit was not countenanced by any independent, non-racial union in South Africa. Rather, they had been invited by the executive of the IMF (the International Metal Workers' Federation), without even informing, let alone consulting, their non-racial affiliates.

When Sirs and Duffy implied that they had been directly invited by black unions, they were mistaken or not telling the truth.

In contrast to the Sirs-Duffy plan, useful links internationally have in fact been made by the independent, non-racial unions in South Africa.

Members of Anti-Apartheid argue that the apartheid state would only allow visits to take place which they approve of.

What they forget, however, is that the apartheid state is not all-powerful, and that both the unions in South Africa and unions outside have a certain amount of clout to prise open the doors of state security.

Boycott

Imagine an official T&G delegation going over at the invitation of SAAWU: if the state lets them in, all well and good — it will be our job to make sure that the delegates keep faith with those who invited them. If the state does not let them in, imagine the propaganda that could be made around this refusal.

The apartheid state would like to stop all progressive links, but whether it can remains up for grabs.

The great advantage of a boycott strategy is that it is

clear and simple: have nothing to do with South Africa. Any substitute for such a position must be equally clear and simple.

The alternative being proposed is as follows: support all links between South African trade unions and unions here which are organised by or favoured by genuine, independent, non-racial unions in South Africa.

The only difficulty with such a principle concerns how to decide what constitutes a bona fide independent, non-racial union. For there are many unions in South Africa which are overtly racist (like the white unions), and many which are more subtly racist but are tied hand and foot to the apartheid state (like those in TUCSA).

For the time being there is a convenient way of making the necessary distinctions. We can safely treat all those unions which participated in a recent solidarity agreement in Cape Town in August of this year as independent and non-racial (they include FOSATU, Western Province, Food and Canning, SAAWU, etc. and exclude TUCSA).

There are going to be some difficulties in deciding which unions are bona fide: but these can be overcome in consultation with known militant unions in South Africa and with the exile movement here. In

any case such distinctions cannot be avoided without unwittingly isolating black workers alongside the legitimate struggle to isolate apartheid.

Those who advocate boycott do not, of course, wish to isolate the struggles of black workers. In reality they have never supported a policy of total boycott. Rather they have sought to channel all solidarity action through SACTU.

It has been the traditional policy of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, and a policy with considerable influence in the TUC, to recognise SACTU as the sole legitimate representative of the South African trade union movement and to seek to mediate all solidarity through them.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s SACTU was, indeed the non-racial, independent union umbrella in South Africa. In the 1960s it was heavily suppressed by the state and went underground. The late '60s were the dark ages for black unionism: its leaders were murdered, arrested, exiled or banned, and its membership declined to around 16,000.

Since the mass strikes of 1973 in Natal the trade union movement has risen again from the ashes; and it has done so in a number of diverse organisational and political forms. It is no secret that many of the unions which have emerged

in the last ten years have done so quite independently of SACTU and not infrequently have major political disagreements with SACTU over the most appropriate way of building non-racial trade unionism.

The net result of this history is that many of the open and legal unions in South Africa (whose independence and opposition to racialism cannot be doubted) will not work through SACTU, partly because they have major differences with SACTU and partly because they find it dangerous to work with an organisation which is underground and illegal. Whatever our views on these divisions, the reality is that they exist.

They mean that support channelled exclusively through SACTU cannot be a substitute for direct contact with other independent unions on the ground.

With unions in South Africa calling for direct links, and with union groupings here beginning to respond (e.g. Oxford Trades Council and the T&G 5/293 branch at Cowley have come out in favour of building direct links with BL workers in South Africa), Anti-Apartheid, SACTU, and their sympathisers in the TUC will find themselves in an invidious position if they provide an obstacle rather than a stimulus to such links.

Dumping grounds of Apartheid

by Jo Thwaites

ANOTHER 'homeland' has been given its 'independence' from South Africa.

Ciskei, practically a desert, has become the fourth 'homeland' dumping ground for black South Africans.

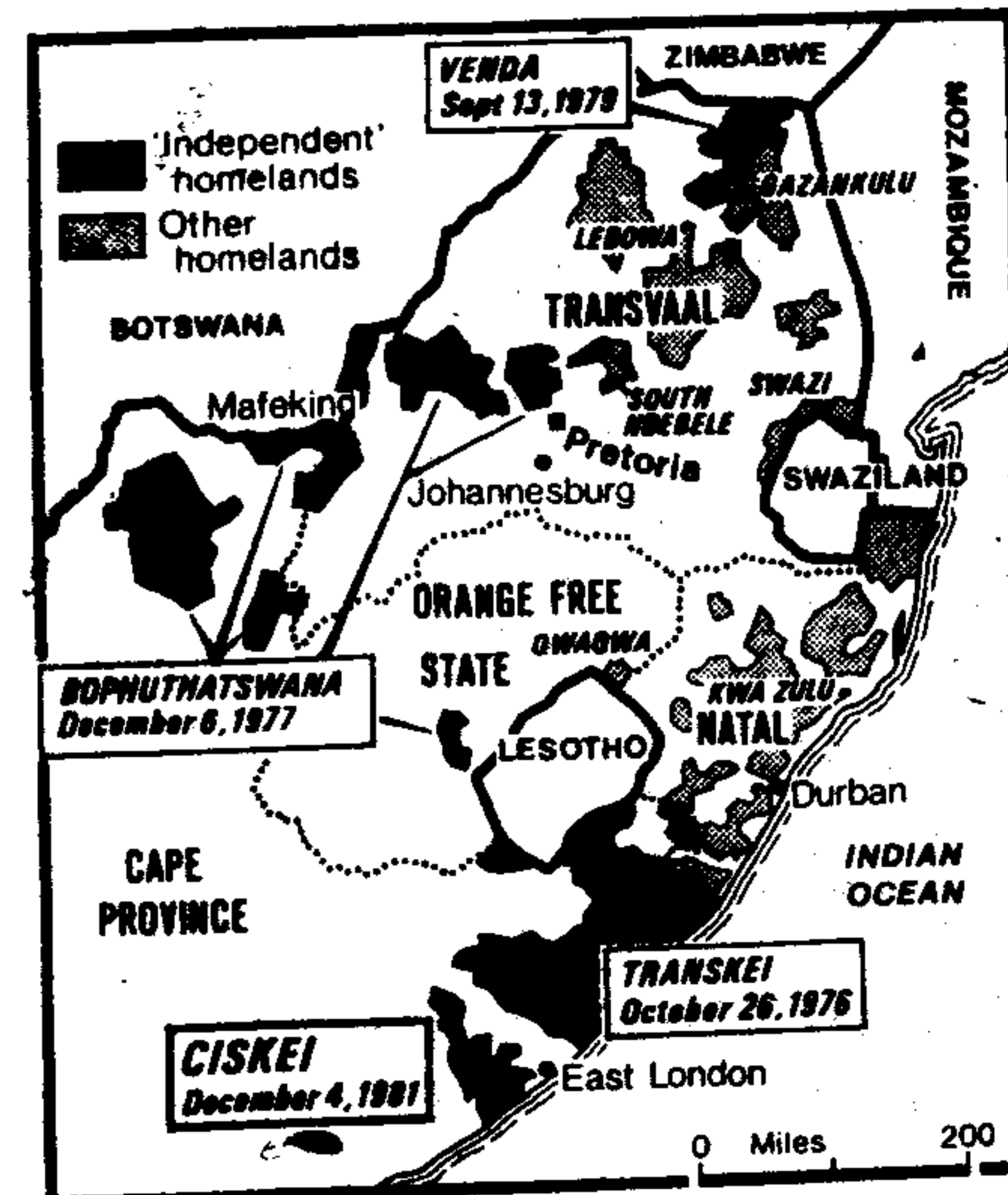
There is no way that the 2,100,000 'citizens' of Ciskei could live there [only 660,000 do, though the South African government has made efforts to move old, unemployed, etc. blacks into the area].

The South African government aims eventually to make all black South Africans citizens of one or another 'independent' homeland. Most of them, of course, will actually live and work in South Africa — but as immigrant workers, who can be deported to their 'own' country at will.

And the talk of independence from South Africa is a nonsense. Disease is rife in Ciskei, there are hardly any medical facilities, and the prospect of employment is practically non-existent.

As the 'independent' flag was raised at the ceremony last week, the flagpole collapsed and broke in two. South African soldiers

fixed the flagpole and took away the flagman. They're staying around to deal with any more problems Ciskei may have as a 'independent' state.



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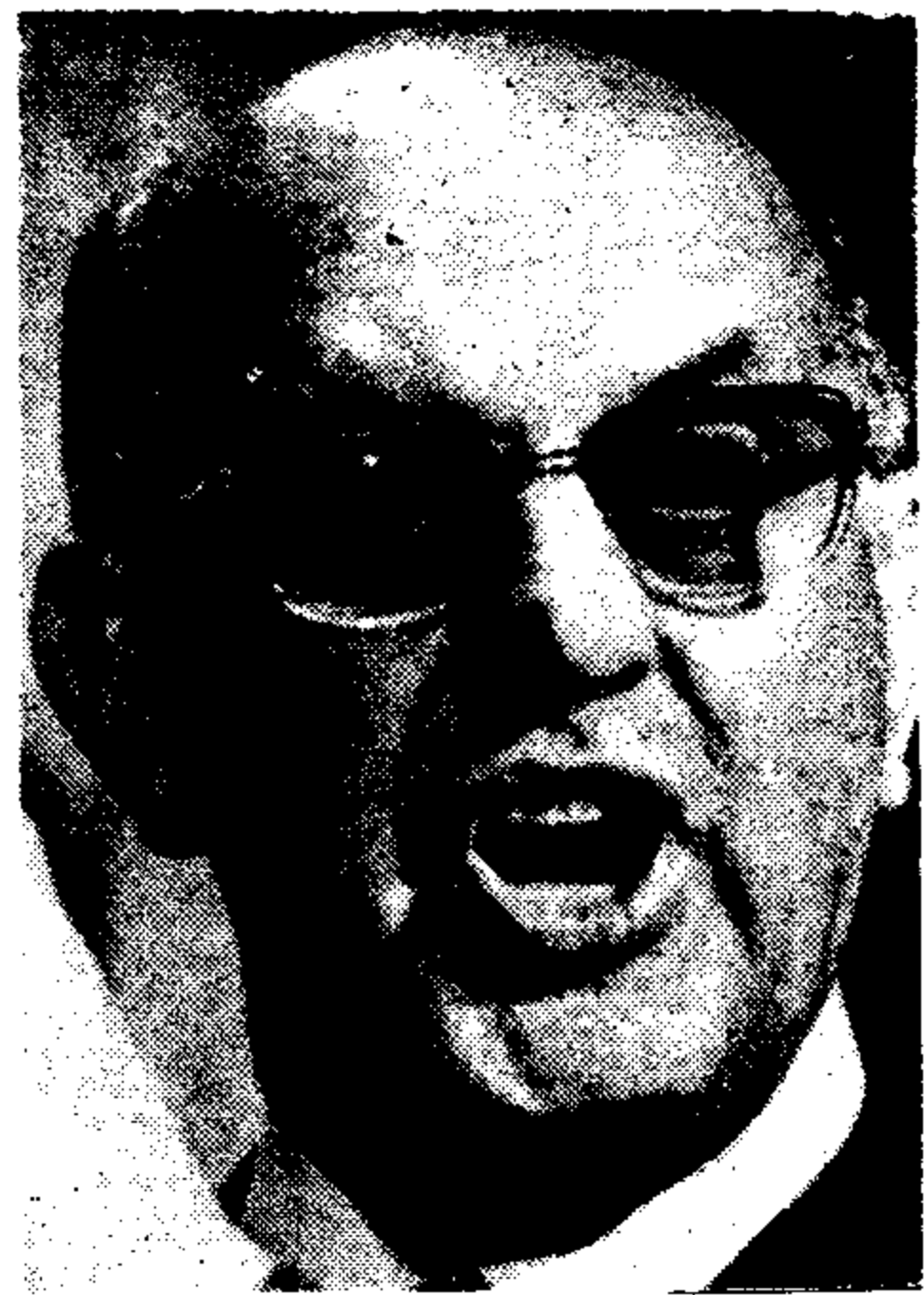


Southern Africa Special

World News

BOSSSES FIGHT TO KEEP CONTROL OF NAMIBIA

by Jim Farnham



Botha

IN THE aftermath of the recent South African invasion of southern Angola, Western diplomats have been to Nigeria, Kenya, and all the states of Southern Africa, trying to put together a new version of the United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia.

After weeks of secret negotiations and deals, it was announced late last month that the governments of Nigeria, Kenya, and the frontline states (Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, Botswana) together with the exile leadership of the Namibian national movement SWAPO, had effectively accepted the Western proposals.

Pressure?

The South African regime and its puppets in Namibia, who have denounced the original UN plan as unacceptable, have not openly committed themselves to the new deal — but neither have they opposed it publicly.

On the surface, it might seem that a way is being opened for freedom and independence. The imperialists and their diplomats present things this way, saying that they are putting pressure on the South African government. They warn that what stands in the way of independence is the so-called threat of Soviet expansionism.

But no worker should be blinded by the public words of these people. They are the same bosses and their Tory government who are planning how to break our unions, who every day feed us lies in their media, who use their army to attack anti-imperialist workers and youth in Ireland.

Who could rely on such people to help the oppressed of Namibia?

Behind the diplomacy and propaganda of the imperialists, lies the reality of struggle. The imperialists face a rising tide of mass struggle in Southern Africa, which is challenging their control and profits in the region. Every move they make is forced on them by this threat.

Demobilised

They are forced to rely more and more centrally on the bosses' apartheid state as the main weapon against the mass struggle, and the main guardian of profits. They condemn apartheid in public — while in secret they continue to plan with Botha and the South African bosses against the struggles of working people and they continue to supply them with advanced weapons and technology.

Some of the imperialists fear that certain actions by Botha, such as the invasion of Angola, go a little too



SWAPO freedom fighters

far, and threaten to provoke an even greater resistance and determination among the oppressed. So they are forced by the fighting strength and militancy of the oppressed to look for additional weapons, with which to politically weaken the mass movement in Namibia.

The UN plan has never been a basis for genuine independence. It has always been an option for constructing a neocolonial government in Namibia that would politically chain the mass movement and guard bosses' interests.

The imperialists have constantly acted to strengthen the plan as a possible weapon against the mass struggle, always taking into account the interests of their ally, the South African ruling class. And these moves have continually got the direct or indirect support of neocolonial bosses' governments in Africa.

Despite the fact that these governments are forced to pose before workers in their own countries as champions of the liberation struggle, their main concern is that the struggle in Namibia should be demobilised — because the more it advances, the more it threatens to strengthen the challenge which they already face from the workers' movement in their own countries.

The huge South African military offensive against SWAPO freedom fighters and the Angolan people has now been followed up by an imperialist political offensive around the UN plan for independence. South African military terror increases the pressure on the Angolan govern-

ment, which has always tended to compromise with imperialism.

Initiative

At the same time, the Soviet government sees the growing pressure and demands from the developing struggle in Southern Africa as jeopardising the 'peaceful coexistence' balance which they have constructed with imperialism in the region.

They claim to fully support the liberation struggle — but they have never fought to mobilise the international working class to take action in support. The economic and military aid which they give to SWAPO and Angola is limited. It is not part of a genuine programme of solidarity, but is in practice designed to maintain their credibility with the oppressed while keeping a bargaining counter for deals with imperialism.

In the end, after all the anti-apartheid speeches and anti-Reagan speeches have been made in the UN, the Commonwealth conference, and the solidarity rallies, the African and Soviet governments have fallen in line with the latest imperialist initiative, put forward by the Reagan government. Meanwhile, even as the negotiations and secret deals take place, the South African army continues to launch raids into Angola, to maintain a near-occupation of parts of southern Angola, and to carry out its terrorist repression inside Namibia, especially in the northern region.

All of this is passed over

in near-total silence by the imperialist governments, since it is in reality the other half of their strategy against the liberation struggle.

The Reagan proposals for tightening up the UN independence package involve three phases, the last of which is the election of a constituent assembly which would draw up a new constitution. This last phase is usually described as taking place at the end of 1982 — provided there are no delays with the other phases.

Phase 1, which has recently been agreed in principle by the African governments and SWAPO leadership, involves the constitution of the independent state. Phase 2 deals with the ceasefire leading up to elections. The details of the plan show quite clearly that it is designed to safeguard bosses' control.

The 'constitutional guarantees' of phase 1 are in fact little more than rules for the protection of the private property of capitalists with Namibian investments. The ceasefire plan of phase 2 has not been finalised, but as it stands, it gives a free hand to the existing apparatus of the bosses' state.

'Protection'

The police, courts and civil service will remain intact to keep 'law and order'. The Namibian working people can tell us what the law and order of the bosses' state machine means. And the working people of the Congo and Zaire can tell us what sort of 'protection' the UN troops would give to the oppressed against this

law and order.

The UN is fundamentally an institution used by the imperialist powers to organise and maintain their world domination. But the South African and imperialist governments are going further and planning for a UN force to be dominated by troops from the imperialist countries, to lessen any risk of fraternisation and to ensure more direct control.

The South African army and SWAPO guerrillas are treated entirely differently under the existing plan. South African troops would be confined to bases inside Namibia — which means that they remain ready to be used like the Rhodesian army was used during the Lancaster House ceasefire.

SWAPO guerrillas, on the other hand, would be effectively imprisoned in bases in Angola and Zambia, guarded by soldiers from these governments, and monitored by US AWACS surveillance planes.

And as if all this was not enough, the bosses would have one further armed force — the ultra-right terrorist gangs which every day grow more organised, and which are becoming more and more closely linked with their counterparts in South Africa. In the last month, at least two large rallies in Namibia have been addressed by fascist demagogues from South Africa — calling for armed resistance to any attempts to remove the 'white man's power'.

Ultra-right terrorists have already been schooled in their role as the unofficial force of the bosses' state, backing up the official

army and the police, by carrying out assassinations, bombing of SWAPO offices, and other terrorist acts.

In face of all these attacks, the militancy and determination of the mass movement remains unbroken. Workers and all oppressed are looking for a way forward to win genuine freedom — not only from South African colonialism, but from all oppression and poverty.

The independence plan of the imperialists would have no weight if it was not for one fact — the politics of the SWAPO leadership, which rely on the UN, on certain imperialist governments, and on the frontline African governments.

For years the leadership has upheld the UN independence plan as a way forward, and are now sliding towards accepting the latest deal. SWAPO president Sam Nujoma is following Mugabe's road of collaboration.

In fact SWAPO leaders have said that a SWAPO government would draw on the experience of the Mugabe government. The workers of Namibia might want to ask them whether this includes Mugabe's by now extensive strike-breaking experience.

SWAPO leaders have promised the imperialists that there would be no expropriation of the mining monopolies, whose great wealth comes from the sweat and blood of workers. In the words of SWAPO secretary general Moses Garoeb, 'In the first few years, our people may not necessarily get the fruits of independence'.

But leaders like Garoeb are determined that they, like Mugabe and his leadership, will get the fruits of independence.

Massive pressure is being exerted on the SWAPO leadership by the imperialists, the African governments, and the Soviet bureaucracy. The leadership succumbs to this pressure because it comes from the forces with which it has long been building alliances: the SWAPO leaders have no programme of action and demands that starts from the needs of working people, and shows a way forward from today's struggles to the meeting of those needs.

Workers and militants look to and build SWAPO as a weapon for taking forward their struggle. The leadership is wasting the militancy and sacrifices of the mass organisation through its politics of class collaboration.

A fight has to be taken up inside SWAPO to end the secret diplomacy of the leadership, and for an end to the strategy based on class collaboration.

This can only be taken up as part of a fight inside the working class for a programme based on the needs of working people, showing a road to develop the class force that can defend against capitalist attack and move forward to the smashing of the profit system and state of the bosses, and the building of a workers' and peasants' government and a socialist economy.

Workers need their own leadership to fight for this programme: they cannot wait for or rely on the existing SWAPO leadership. From the militancy in struggle of the Namibian workers today, the basis is already created for the building of their own workplace and community committees to take up all the issues facing them in struggle.



December

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WHAT'S ON

Ads for Socialist Organiser events and many campaigns are carried free. Paid ads: 5p per word, £4 per column inch. Send to: Socialist Organiser (What's On), 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

IRELAND

Oxfordshire Trades Councils conference on Ireland. Saturday December 12, 10 to 5 at West Oxford Community Centre, Binsey Lane, Oxford.

Delegates credentials £3, observers £1.50 (unwaged £1) from Marie Campbell, 167 Walton St, Oxford.

Labour Committee on Ireland: Labour Movement Conference. Saturday February 27, 11am to 6pm, at The Theatre, 309 Regent St. Open to delegates and observers. Details: 1 North End Rd, London W14.

SOLIDARITY

The Campaign for Democratic Rights in Turkey is organising a conference for Saturday December 12, from 10.30am to 5pm at NUFTO Hall, Jockeys Fields, London WC1.

Labour movement organisations are invited to write to the CDDRT, 29 Parkfield St, London N1 for credentials. Delegate's fee is £3.

International evening against repression. Speakers from Iran, Palestine, Chile, Turkey etc. Friday December 11, from 6.30 at Friends House, near Euston Station. Admission £1.

LABOUR LEFT

Campaign for Labour Party Democracy. Annual General Meeting: Saturday December 12, in London. Open to all CLPD supporters: to join send £3 (£3.50 couples) to V. Schonfield, Treasurer, 21 Wallingford Ave, London W10.

Leeds Labour Left meeting. Sunday January 10, 7.30, at Leeds Trades Council club.

London Labour Briefing social: Saturday December 12, Caxton House, St Johns Way, London N19. Hot food, curries, disco, bar. Adm. £1.

DEFEND THE BRADFORD 12! Demonstration, Saturday December 12, 1.30 from Manningham Park Gate, Bradford.

London Labour Briefing fringe meeting for London Labour Party conference: 12.30, Saturday December 12, at Camden Town Hall. Speakers: Tony Benn, Ted Knight, Jo Richardson. Adm. 50p. Co-sponsored by Labour Herald and Socialist Organiser.

Socialist Organiser meetings and forums

LAMBETH: Sundays at 7pm, for venue phone 609 3071.

Dec.20: The Russian revolution
Jan.31: Stalinism
Feb.28: The origins of the Labour Party

LEICESTER. Sundays at 7.30, at the Leicester Socialist Centre, High St (above Blackthorn Books).

OXFORD: Wednesdays at 8pm, at 44b Princes St.
Dec.16: The nuclear threat.

OXFORD Socialist Organiser Christmas bazaar, with cakes, tombola, bottle stall, darts, and Father Xmas. Saturday December 19, from 1.30pm, at Northgate Hall, St Michael's St. Entrance 10p.

ISLINGTON: Socialist Organiser meetings every other Tuesday at the 'Florence', Florence St, near the Town Hall.

Islington Socialist Organiser fund-raising social: Sunday December 20, from 7pm. For venue phone 354 1050.

Leeds Socialist Organiser class: 'The socialist programme'. Sunday January 3, midday at Leeds Trades Council club.

LEIGH. Every other Sunday 7.30 at the 'White Lion' (opposite the market).
Dec.13: Ireland and the British labour movement.
Jan.10: Organising the Left: how and why?
Jan.24: Iran - what has happened and what's happening now?
Feb.7: Women's liberation.
Feb.21: Afghanistan and the Soviet invasion.

WOMEN

Leeds Women's Fightback inaugural meeting. Thursday December 17, 7.30, Leeds Civic Hall, room 3.

MARXISM

London Workers' Socialist League classes on basic Marxism: a fortnightly series, alternate Fridays from January 8. For details of registration and venue, write to PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

YOUTH

National Left Wing Youth Movement Steering Committee meeting. Sunday December 13, 12 to 4, in Birmingham. (For details phone 01-354 1050).

Walesa clashes with Solidarnosc militants

OVERFLOWING with people climbing onto window sills, the meeting room in the Hotel Solec was the scene of an angry encounter between Lech Walesa and 2,000 Solidarnosc workers.

Walesa was appealing for moderation - a retreat in the face of the massive police assault on the occupied firefighters' training college.

The reply came swift and desperate: 'We can't retreat. We have nowhere to retreat to'.

The brutal eviction, the arrest of the trainee firefighters and some of Warsaw's highest-ranking Solidarnosc leaders, the tearing down of Solidarnosc's red and white emblem and the hoisting of the Polish national flag - this miniature battle scene was confirmation, if any were needed, of the bureaucracy's contempt for the independent workers' movement.

The thousands of relatives, workers and supporters surrounding the occupation had spat back their venom at the State. The chant of 'fascist' was repeatedly hurled at the riot police.

Trams were moved by their drivers to barricade the road, as police helicopters hovered above and 6,000 armed mercenaries of the Stalinists charged the building.

For the first time since August 1980, the Stalinists had dared launch an open military assault against strikers.

Only days before, the Plenum of the Central Committee of the PUWP (Polish CP) declared that the time had finally arrived to settle the accounts of the last 18 months by 'granting full powers to the government to effectively oppose those that menace the Socialist State'.

General Jaruzelski, head of the military, the government, and the Party, wants the power to suspend the right to strike, and to ban all meetings (apart from those of a religious nature), and to use military courts.

Only the 'softs' around Barcikowski are still convinced that the policy of co-opting Solidarnosc between the twin vices of Party and Church in a 'national front of salvation' can work.

The special powers are only one of the laws the Party is trying to ram through the Parliament.

The Trade Union Bill outlaws all political strikes and requires votes before strikes, all the union officials concerned to have agreed, and seven days' notice of action.

The intention is clearly to stop the wave of wildcat strikes.

The Trade Union Bill also grants the government the power to ban all strikes for up to two months in the case of national emergency. The government declares that only when these provisions are breached will the Special Powers come into effect.

The government is also pushing through a whole series of 'economic reforms' - necessary to enable it to

by Alexis Carras

satisfy the IMF and World Bank creditors, who are rescheduling the interest for the first nine months of this year on Poland's debt.

The moderate Presidium of Solidarnosc has called for a one day general strike on December 17, and said:

'The events of the last weeks prove that the State has chosen the road of force and has rejected the possibility of a dialogue with society. The PUWP's economic policy, arrived at without the slightest consultation, signifies that the government wants to perpetuate the existing system of mismanagement and is proceeding simultaneously to a drastic lowering of the standard of living of the population, while the special powers constitute an attempt to liquidate civil rights - the rights the workers acquired in 1980'.

The question is - where will Solidarnosc's leadership go now? Walesa, more than anyone, has been compromised by the bureaucracy's overtures for a national coalition. That option is now closed.

Having dared to defy the Stalinist bureaucracy, stripped it of many of its powers, aroused its anger, launched its revolutionary appeal to the working classes of Eastern Europe, the Polish working class has no place to go now except forward to complete its historic task of cleaning out the stinking Augean stables of Stalinism - to tear to shreds the attempts by the bureaucracy to shackle it, and establish its own power.

If not - the bureaucracy's revenge will descend - mercilessly.

Make-up-your-mind time on Ireland

PADDY Logue is vice-chair of the National H-Block/Armagh Committee. He is also an executive member of Derry Trades Council.

Speaking at Greenwich Labour Party's conference on Ireland on November 28, he explained how the hunger strikes had been 'make-up-your-minds time for the Left in Ireland'.

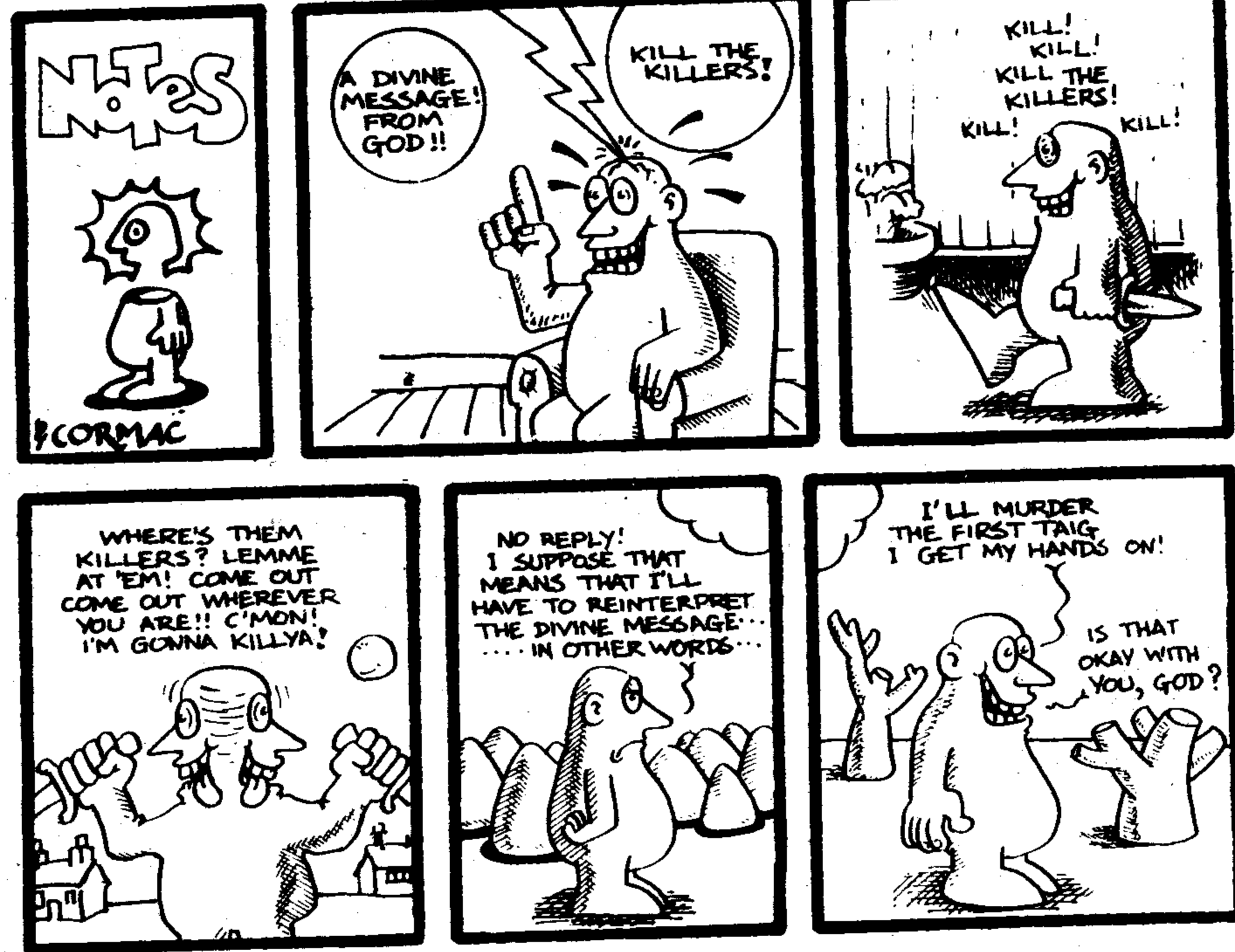
This became obvious in the course of the conference; but it was equally clear that it is make-up-your-minds time for the labour movement in Britain.

Paddy Logue's approach was in sharp contrast to two other speakers from Ireland. Professor Murphy of Cork, a university representative in the Senate of the Republic of Ireland, gave a version of the theory that Ireland contains two nations - Catholic and Protestant - and so should have two states.

It depended heavily on stories of southern hostility to 'that crowd up there', and his most revealing comment was his declaration that the Provisional IRA 'threatens my state' as well as 'the welfare of Britain'.

Ultra-left

Des O'Hagan, of Sinn Fein the Workers' Party, showed how far to the right some of the Irish 'left' who made up their minds not to support the hunger strikers have moved. His contribution combined calls for the development of democratic institutions based on proportional representation in the North and attracting investment with Stalinist attacks on 'ultra-lefts' and



their 'queer little newspapers'.

Even the Troops Out demand is ultra-left, according to O'Hagan. And he stunned the meeting with his statement that the 'ordinary, decent' Catholic workers of Belfast want to see the RUC patrolling the streets properly.

The leading Labour Party speakers at the conference were Clive Soley MP, who has a 'left' image on Ireland, but has just been appointed a front-bench spokesperson on Ireland alongside Concannon, and Euro-MP Richard Balfe.

Soley declared that partition never had worked and would never work, but saw the approach to unity through reformist measures like gradual harmonisa-

tion of social and economic policies north and south of the border. He opposed political status for H-Block prisoners and stressed 'union with consent' - leaving the Loyalists with a veto.

Peace-keeping

While Balfe's approach was also gradualist, he agreed that there are 'aspects' of the armed resistance to Britain which are just. He agreed to raise the Prevention of Terrorism Act at the next meeting of the European Parliament's group on Ireland.

In the afternoon Carl Gardner, TV editor of City Limits, described how television misrepresents the war in Ireland as an in-

coherent list of atrocities and statistics, with the army and RUC deferred to as peace-keeping authorities. Mike Biggs, a former British army officer, now active in 'Veterans Against the War in Northern Ireland', exposed the sham of 'peace-keeping'.

The troops' real role in Northern Ireland, he said, is as an army of occupation, constantly harassing the Catholic community - and gathering information: 'We even knew when the wall-paper was changed'.

Gardner and Biggs both pointed to the need for political campaigns. Carl Gardner said the Left should not regard the media as something it cannot do anything about. We should subject the media to politi-

cal pressure on Ireland, following the example of the women's movement.

Mike Biggs looked at the way unemployment and poverty helped army recruitment. Teachers and social workers could do a lot more to organise against this. Ex-soldiers should be invited to anti-recruitment meetings, the Veterans Against the War video could be shown. Counter-demonstrations should be mounted at military tattoos.

An obvious weakness of the conference was the small number of trade union delegates, especially from manual workers' unions. Nevertheless it was an important initiative in opening up discussion on Ireland in the labour movement. It is to be hoped that many more constituency Labour Parties follow Greenwich's example.

There was an encouraging response to a proposal from the floor to start a South-East London branch of the Labour Committee on Ireland. Many delegates took membership forms, and a branch is now being set up.



Organise women to transform the trade unions !

Women
in
struggle



Typists' fight

drags
on

by Sue Erswell

DURING the Second World War, 18 million women in the USA were recruited into heavy industry. For most, it didn't need much persuasion: for the first time, they were able to learn skills that had been reserved for men. They were able to earn decent wages. They were able to break the stultifying mould of petty servitude imposed on women. In shipyards and aircraft factories, foundries and engineering, they proved that there was nothing at all natural about the sexual division of labour that decrees what a 'women's place' is.

After the war, they were driven out again. And in a few short years, the old ideology was restored with a vengeance.

Marginally

But the boom years, less dramatically, brought women out of the home again. There was no similar breakthrough into skilled, well-paid jobs. But all the same, most women could earn an independent wage.

Now once again, we face wholesale deportation from the labour market. The jobs and services are being eliminated. Very soon, the small ideological gains painfully won by the women's movement, rooted in the reality of women's partial escape from the kitchen sink, will be under mortal threat.



It's a very different problem from that faced by working class men under the Tories. They may lose their jobs — but they're still the masters in their own home. They may — indeed do — have the problem of a trade union leadership that won't fight the bosses and the government and that will sell them out if they try to fight. But when jobs are threatened and wages are squeezed, the men are marginally privileged and slightly

better defended than the women.

As the squeeze gets tighter, the male union leaders and officials still have one element of manoeuvre on behalf of those they regard as their 'real' members: they can sell the women's jobs and the lower paid to keep the pressure off the men. Women are the reserve army of the last that's dumped first.

While books are written, resolutions passed and conferences held on 'Women in the Eighties' or positive action for women, nothing has changed in the trade unions' practices: women are still at the bottom of the union heap, abused, ridiculed, patronised and, when their interests are at stake, ignored.

The past year has seen a series of demonstrations against unemployment. Some have emphasised regions, some have highlighted the problems of young people. But there should be a demonstration for a woman's right to work — to highlight the very special problems women are facing, and which tend not to feature on the general demonstrations, has been met with endless prevarications. Countless resolutions, petitions, letters and meetings have gone into trying to persuade the labour movement to go out on the streets for our rights. We're still fighting for it. But there at the end of the line is the unanswerable blockage: after the anti-Corrie demo, Len Murray said, "Never again a woman's demonstration". And that's that!

It comes down in the end to the problems women have in even getting a hearing, against crude, prejudiced, hostile and sexist obstacles — the 'brothers' who are supposed to be so much more knowledge-

able and experienced about the ways of 'their' movement. So knowledgeable that they've learned to live with the routine, the bureaucracy, the sellout, the dead, jargonised language designed to stifle real communication, the excuses for inaction, the hierarchy that cuts out the rank and file, and the countless other encrustations of old rubbish that weigh down the workers' movement.

Tackle

There are, of course, the few strong, brave women who have carved out a place for themselves — but at the cost of adapting to the male environment. They are not the pioneers or front-runners of a movement, but token women, held hostage and used to prove that nothing is wrong.

We need to build a movement of women in the unions that can act together, work out demands, learn from experience, find new ways of organising ourselves, and forge a cohesive, self-conscious force to change the trade union movement, not merely to 'advance' women into a movement that stays the same.

The strands of this movement exist and are being formed in many corners of the trade union movement, spontaneously. What we do not have as yet is the sense of this movement as a movement with conscious goals and methods, organised networks or resources, or even visibility.

Women's Fightback is calling together a conference of trade union women on March 27th, which could be a milestone in the building of such a movement. For a start, it will be the first ever rank and file women's trade union conference, bringing together women from different unions on a national

The task in organising the conference is to find a balance between the tasks we face and the problems we have to tackle which all knit together into a system of oppression. For example, unemployment, the Tory government's attacks on our services and our trade union rights, fighting the 4% limit, learning how to conduct a particular struggle effectively: these 'big' questions must be meshed in with detailed discussion on how to tackle put-downs in union branch meetings, how to start a women's committee, how to tackle the ideology of the family wage, learning the argument for positive discrimination and the ways to achieve it.

We can't afford to be one-sided: we can't lose the 'big' questions in an interesting but timeless examination of the daily problems of women trade unionists — nor should we gather together women to talk about the evil Tories and the appalling union leaderships and forget that we are women, with different problems and different answers, and with a movement of our own to build as trade unionists.

Bolder

The conference is based on an understanding that no part of the way we are treated is trivial, unimportant or non-political, and that no part of our fight should be dismissed as a 'diversion' from something more important — because in every fight that we take on and win, we become stronger for another fight; whereas if one part of our oppression is dismissed as irrelevant, we will go on fighting with one hand tied behind us, and we will simply go on as we have done up to now.

The thing about women

that is different is the great range of militancy: women are often the least well-organised, the least committed or interested in their union; but when they do 'find themselves' and discover how to take action, they are bolder and stronger and more radical than men.

Radicalism

What can be gained from getting the confidence as women to act is not just getting women 'equally' involved just like the average trade unionist — but to release the dormant energy and radicalism so that women might take the lead, as the Lee Jeans women did last summer.

Invitation

The conference is set up for March 27th, though we haven't got a venue yet. To make it a success, we need dozens of women working for it in every area and union: raising it in their branches, at work and at trades councils, talking to women in their Labour Parties and campaigns about it, mailing out leaflets and letters of invitation to local union branches, writing articles about it for local left-wing papers, broad left union journals and women's newsletters, putting up posters and notices about it in bookshops and noticeboards at left-wing centres — in short, making sure that it's impossible for anyone not to know it's going on.

If you can help in any way, write in now for leaflets and details to Women's Fightback, 41 Ellington Street, London N7. (Phone: 01-607 9051)

by Rachel Lever

THE LIVERPOOL typists' dispute still drags on, with no hope of a favourable settlement in sight.

The offer of arbitration a few weeks ago looked certain to end it, with little or nothing gained for the typists themselves. However, Trevor Jones and the other Liberal councillors are either too arrogant or too stupid to take a gift horse without looking in its mouth.

Having seen the typists go from a position of strength to one of weakness by accepting arbitration, they have taken the opportunity to go on the offensive once again.

Expulsion

The council are now demanding a guarantee from the union that none of those NALGO members who have scabbed throughout the strike will be victimised. NALGO have quite rightly said that they will give no such assurance, and deadlock reigns for the time being.

The reason the council want this assurance is quite clear. Any so-called victimisation would mean at most expulsion from the union, and although this means little at present, a closed shop agreement is soon to come into force, and scabs could lose their jobs.

Selective

One of the methods used by the Liberals to get people to scab on the strike was the promise to protect them against the union come what may.

At a mass meeting it was agreed to step up action once again, and restart selective strikes in support of the typists.

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CLP TU

TORIES PLAN TO EXPLO



YOP, Super YOP and Son

THE YOUTH Opportunities Programme, initiated in 1977-8, was the Labour Party's initiative on the increasing growth of youth unemployment, which was even then proportionately higher than adult unemployment.

It was seen by the Labour Party as a 'temporary' measure to ease the situation until the arrival of revenue from the North Sea.

The Programme covered

a variety of schemes, of which the best known is WEEP — Work Experience on Employers' Premises.

The original idea was that young people would receive training for six months from an employer. YOP trainees cost the employer nothing, but the government paid them an allowance of £19 a week, which has now increased to £23.50.

Training schemes had to

be approved by both the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) and the Careers Service, and in this way the schemes did offer some protection to trainees, and in most cases some real training.

Initially 70 per cent of trainees got a job after being on YOP schemes: the schemes were particularly useful for proving to employers that anyone with a disability could cope in that particular job.

In 1981, YOP presents a very different face. Whereas one in eight school-leavers went on YOP schemes in 1978, now the figure is one in two.

There are a staggering 2,000 new schemes set up each week, partly to cope with the rapidly rising numbers of young unemployed and partly so that the MSC can meet Thatcher's undertaking that there will be a place on a scheme for all school-leaver by the Christmas in the year they leave school.

Unchallenged

The riots of this summer forced Thatcher to take youth unemployment more seriously.

She has therefore attempted to reduce the length of time each school

leaver has to wait to do one of these much-vaunted 'training schemes'.

However, the result of increasing YOP provision has been a decrease in training and supervision, with exploitation going unchallenged.

We saw this in the recent case of a YOP worker in Northampton who was left to clean a machine unsupervised and subsequently needed both feet amputated.

Reinforced

'Super-YOP' is a development of previous ideas of the Youth Opportunities Programme, and is the government's answer to training as it exists in France and Germany.

In May, the Government issued a new 'training initiative document' which proposed that all school leavers should do a short period of 'unified vocational preparation', followed by a few months in college to learn some skills, followed by (you guessed it!) up to six months WEEP.

It does not mean the 'end of YOPs', as stated in the Guardian's headlines on December 2.

It is actually a reinforcement of it — and, worse

still, the Cabinet are thinking of making it compulsory.

There are proposals to withdraw supplementary benefit from any unemployed young person who refuses to do a 'government training scheme': careers offices have already been requesting and keeping notes on YOP refusals.

Although 1983 is the proposed date for the implementation of Super-YOP, there are pilot schemes being set up already.

The MSC bulletin 'Special Programme News' quotes the example of British Leyland in Coventry, where the scheme is being run at the Jaguar Training School.

As described in the MSC paper, the scheme is designed to use the 'surplus training capacity' of the school created by cut-backs in apprenticeship training.

Elitism

Forty young people will do six months in the training school, and three months WEEP at the Jaguar plant itself — at the end of which they should be suitable recruits for British Leyland.

'Super-YOP' also contains an elitism not seen on YOP before. It will 'cater

for the needs of the better qualified entrant — that with O levels or good CSEs' who would 'normally have got an apprenticeship'.

The average qualification of school leavers is CSE grade 4 — are they eligible for Super-YOP or just YOP?

"Fair price"

The YOP allowance of £23.50 is regarded as inadequate: but there is still the possibility of employment. Isn't there?

Well no, not really. We can get an insight into the chances from the figures: in August of this year, there were 4,900 vacancies in careers offices (in 1979 there were 31,000), as against 268,000 young people who were known to be unemployed. (Most youth don't register until September, when they make their first claim for supplementary benefit).

'Son of YOP' now comes into the picture under the title of the 'Young Workers' Scheme'. It is designed to 'create more employment opportunities for young people' by introducing a youth employment subsidy.

Again this was originally a Labour Government initiative but as usual the Tor-

ies have turned this to their own purposes.

The £15 subsidy is now only available to employers who pay less than £40 a week: its intention is to 'help' youth employment by fixing a 'fair price' on their toil.

Only those employers tied by union negotiated wage rates will not take advantage of these schemes.

As I quoted in my previous review of the scheme in *Socialist Organizer*, a first year hairdressing operative receiving £26 a week will now in real terms only cost the employer £11 a week.

Insensitive

The subsidy last for only a year: the Department of Employment admits there are no safeguards against dismissal at the end of that year, but they claim there are more honest than dishonest employers around.

The exploitation of young people is now complete. They are faced with a choice between jobs with no pay, or with little pay, or no jobs at all.

Just how far the Tory government is willing to exploit young people is also seen in the timing of the advertisements for the



ADDITIONAL JOBLESS YOUTH



What the unions should do

TORIES DRIVE DOWN WAGES FOR YOUTH

by Mick Liggins

MANY trade unionists are disgusted at the YOP cheap labour schemes, which now involve 550,000 youth. They know only too well that they are cheap labour schemes, which can only be used against the interests of both the youth and themselves.

The Manpower Services Commission, the direct employers of YOPs, say that in any industrial dispute YOP workers are to be "impartial".

Begging

That implies that if there was a strike the YOP workers would have to work.

This sums up what the YOP schemes are: both a reservoir of cheap labour for the Tories and also a potential scab force, to be used to break strikes. They are also a handy replacement for workers who have been made redundant.

So what can trade unionists do?

It is not widely advertised — especially when Len Murray is on the

'Jobs for Youth' platform begging Thatcher to "Give us a future" — but the whole existence of the YOP schemes relies on the support of the trade unions.

If they withdrew support, they could cripple YOPs. Rather than do that, 'leaders' like Duffy, Murray and Gormley would sooner appear in all the daily papers with the CBI actually promoting YOPs.

Disciplinary

The unions have made no real moves to challenge YOPs, or to unionise YOP workers. They seem to be increasingly scared of the militancy of the YOP workers and only the T&G and NUPE are recruiting.

They recruit on very minimal programmes that demand more holiday, a 'wage rise' and of course a disciplinary procedure.

NUPE only offers part-time status at the moment — adding insult to injury for YOP workers already sick of working 40 hours and being paid as part-timers.

If the unions nationally will not take a lead, it is the job of trade union and Labour Party activists to take up the fight.

That means finding out where they work (many of them work on their own in factories etc) and visiting YOP schemes; and persuading them to join a union. If there are any YOP workers in your workplace, pass a resolution refusing to work alongside non-union labour while attempting to get them in the unions.

Concessions

The YOP schemes can be exposed for what they are through independent trade union inquiries; and these in turn can lead to a withdrawal of any co-operation with the MSC by Trades councils, union branches and Labour councils.

Trade union branches must be made to play a leading role in establishing unions in YOP workplaces by showing the YOP workers their strength and not their weakness and ignorance. After all, how many adult workers would work for a wage of £23.50 a week with no rights and a two-year wage freeze?

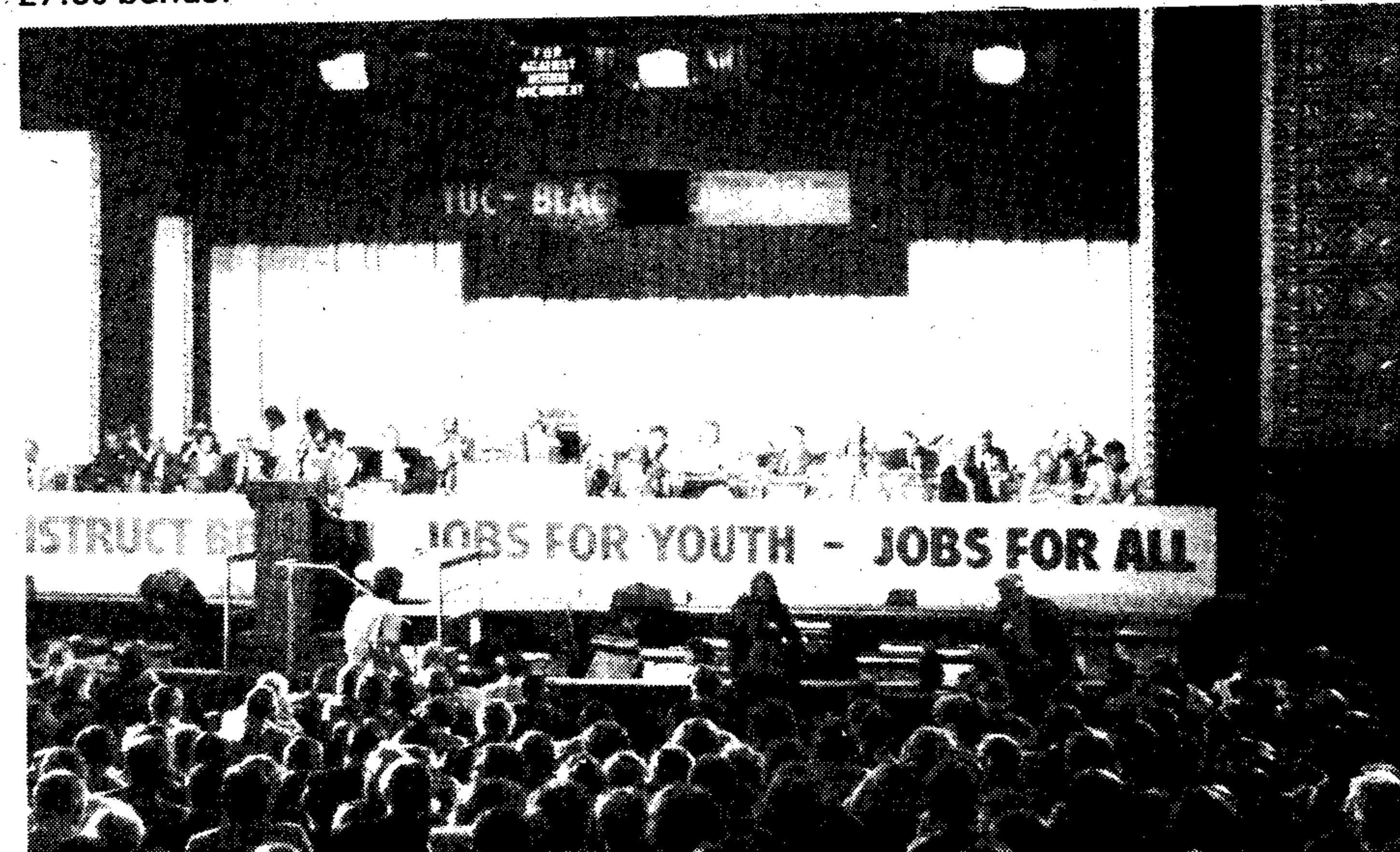
Under a new scheme called, believe it or not, the 'young workers' scheme', the Tories have launched a massive attack on the wages of young workers. Every employer who pays young workers under £40 a week will get a £15 a head allowance from the Tories; every employer who pays under £45 will get a £7.50 bonus.

As the average wage of a young worker is over £45 a week this move means that many employers will now wait for the Tories to put up the allowance before they put up the wages of young workers.

This puts the Tories in the position of controlling the wages of young workers indirectly and also enables them to undermine the unions

even more by making across-the-board rises impossible.

The new scheme will erase thousands of 16-18 year olds from the unemployed register: but in real terms it will increase unemployment, since no employer in their right mind would pay a proper wage to a 16-18 year old worker when they can get one virtually free of charge.



DON'T JUST SIT BACK AND BE RIPPED OFF

Youth don't have to sit back and be ripped off on a YOP scheme. There are many things that we can do to fight back.

Not going on a scheme is not much of a choice: it costs you £90 in lost benefits or more.

But events around the country have proved that we can fight back and we can force concessions from the MSC and the management.

The factory that I worked at was a so-called 'Training Workshop' in Leicester called M.W. Hamptons. It employed 80 'trainees' and about ten 'supervisors'. They had the right to suspend or sack youth without consulting the management and they often used to fine us on stupid pretexts.

Victimisations

The work we did was hardly socially useful, we were making horse boxes, trailers and case bolts for the docks by the thousand. The idea that you get 'training' on YOP is a myth. We spent three weeks learning how to drill a

hole or run a weld; and after that we were put into the production section where we would spend the rest of the year.

While I was still in the beginners' section a machine part got lost. We were all kept in for an hour after work and fined £2 each.

We decided to do something about it and we set up a works committee. It was very effective in curbing fines and suspensions. It was even recognised by the management — until we refused to let a supervisor in the meetings.

Management then began to attack us, now allowing us to hold meetings in work time, and victimising. We decided to join a union and that put us in a much stronger position since we had the threat of blacking action and support for strike action.

The union was a bit scared of us and tried to put us off. While I was convenor at the factory the manager used to continually offer me posh training schemes well out of the way.

They finally made me take the job — and after that sacked the main militants for going in the pub at dinner time. Many more left because their year was up.

Only the union could take the lead in keeping the factory unionised — but they were glad to get rid of us and the official never once went down to the factory.

Now the factory is not organised and the management are back at their old tricks. The experience proved that if YOP workers stand up and fight they can get things done. It also proved that full support from the unions is vital.

In the North East, YOP workers have been able to make a lot of gains and organise a regional demo of hundreds of YOP workers, with the backing of NUPE.

It's no good looking at your rights to fight YOP. The rule book is on the management's side — as we proved. Only militant action will make any difference.

of YOP

by Jean Calder

young workers' scheme and in the press releases on the new 'training' schemes. Both come neatly after the 'Jobs Express' and the demonstration on Sunday. The adverts appeared in London papers on Monday

30th, and on the 2nd December the Guardian's headlines ran "Training for all in £900 million jobs plan".

The Tory government is not insensitive to the touchy nature of youth

unemployment: Thatcher is quite prepared to make both political and financial capital out of it.

That is precisely what these new "training" plans are about.



DEBATE

THE LABOUR PARTY

THE LABOUR PARTY

THE LABOUR PARTY

THE LABOUR PARTY

Which way for the Left?



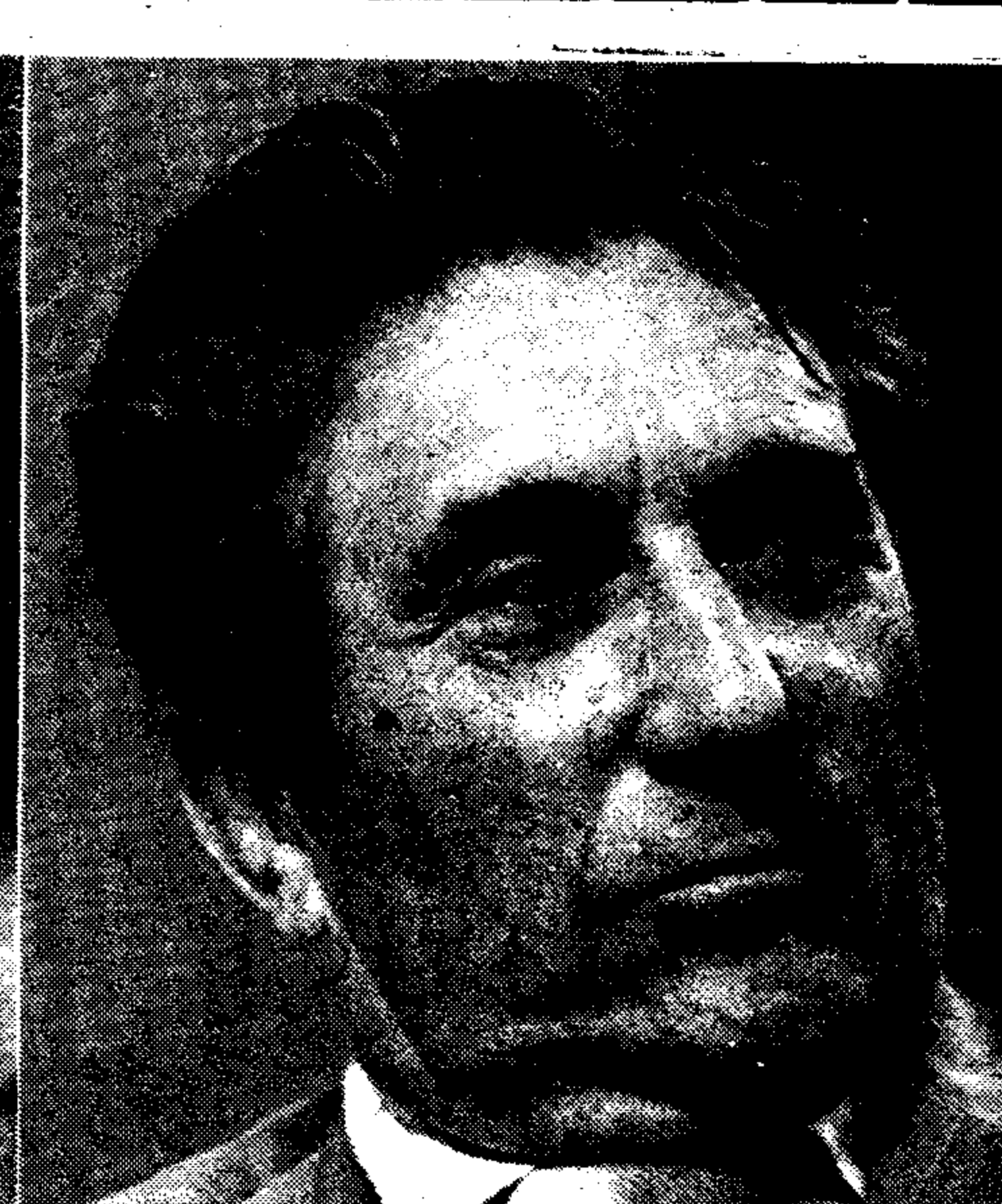
Duffy



Shore



Weighell



Chapple

ANSWER RIGHT-WING OFFENSIVE

by Tom Hart and John McIlroy

AS rank and file (and recent) members of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, we would like to take up some of the basic points which inform the perspective of retrenchment for the left in the Labour Party outlined by Vladimir Derer.

We believe that Vladimir is correct to insist that we must look reality in the face and to warn against any overestimation of the situation presently confronting us. The results of the reselection process over the last months, for example, show a strong current for retention of MPs who backed Healey against Benn and who have otherwise resisted the democratisation of the party. The fact that the Stanley Clinton Davies, George Cunningham and Joel Barnett are able to hang on shows that we have forged a weapon that we are not yet strong enough to use to its full effect.

The collapse of the Labour vote in Warrington and Crosby too cannot be shrugged off. The powerful tide turning towards the Social Democrats has to be

taken seriously and makes the possibility of a majority Labour government at the next election increasingly unlikely. On the industrial front most of the trade union leaders are facing falling membership and financial problems with caution and conservatism. The fightback against Thatcherism on the shop-floor is limited and uneven whilst the demoralisation these factors can breed can lead to moves to the right reflected in, for example, the AUEW elections. The left's only answers, moreover, are often far too rudimentary. It is all very well for us to call for the nationalisation of 25 large companies but if we are to take this demand into the movement we need a lot more concrete detail and explanation of both philosophy and mechanics.

Agreed then that we have massive problems, how do we react to them? One way is to follow the path already trodden by Michael Foot and Neil Kinnock by closing ranks, dropping our policy demands and aspirations to transform Labour into a socialist party, and uniting on terms which are essentially laid down by those who must bear the main responsibility for the predicament the Labour Party faces today, those who in 1970 and 1979 led the Labour Party to humiliating defeat after betraying in office the people and policies that put them there.

'Mad Dog'

To follow this course would be to replace 'Never again' with 'Just once more'. It would mean following the suicidal trajectory of every past Labour left. Having closed ranks to get the Tories out, we would, if we were successful, be prisoners of the even more compelling necessity not to let the Tories in again.

We are not for one minute suggesting that Vladimir is advocating the path of Bevan and Foot but that is the logic of his approach. The pathos of his position lies in the belief that there is some honourable compromise attainable between those who stand for socialist policies and those determined to maintain the capitalist mixed economy and the privileges of MPs essential for that maintenance.

That the right have no intention of compromising is evident from the Shadow Cabinet elections and the recent attack on Benn for upholding conference policy. John Golding's description of Benn as a 'mad dog' speaks volumes.

Limited

Moreover, it is not merely the Healeys, Hattersleys and Shores who are calling for bans and proscriptions. Frank Field has decided not to stand for the Shadow

Cabinet, the better to prosecute the witchhunt, whilst even CLPD supporter Neil Kinnock is urging new tests of admission based on his own limited conceptions of 'parliamentary democracy'.

Unpopularity

The prospects for an honourable armistice seem to be extremely limited. The alternatives for the Bennite left would seem to be either unconditional surrender or the creation of a fighting capable of developing strategy and resisting the growing right wing offensive, providing a forum for discussion and action, sponsoring a newspaper and regular meetings all over the country.

Against this Vladimir urges the necessity to utilise existing channels. We agree but don't we need to organise to do this?

The right wing already have their organisations. The Shadow Cabinet for a start. The Manifesto Group recently got up on their hindlegs to petition the NEC for an inquiry into Militant. Healeyites facing reselection have the support not only of this organisation and Labour Solidarity but of course the organised media.

'If vile people unite and constitute a force then decent people are required to do likewise'. The fragmentation led by the LCC must be braked and reversed. We need a united organisation of the left bridging Parliament, the CLPs and the unions.

The aim of the Bennite left must be the leadership of the party as the guarantee and precondition of socialist policies which will mean a mass base and a mass vote. This objective means a long haul. We cannot short-circuit the situation. It also means crucially the left maintaining its independence. We must weather the unpopularity and lay it firmly at the door of its creators — those who have

opposed the democracy struggle and who still presently control the party.

It is essential, however, in the meantime, to turn outwards towards the youth, women, blacks, and of course, the unions. Vladimir, however, apparently objects not only to a new broad left organisation but to campaigning beyond the narrow terrain of the party.

To adopt this perspective is to fight with one hand tied behind our back, ceding the basic working class organisations to the right. The struggle to democratise the party is inextricably intertwined with the struggle for democracy within the unions. There was in the Deputy Leadership election a strong correlation between those unions moving in an undemocratic direction, EETPU, AUEW, GMWU, NUR and strong support for Healey.

For good or bad — and we feel it is for good — the last two years have broken open the clogged valves between party and union. If, as Vladimir claims, progress was made on the limited terrain of the party, it will be endangered today unless the fight is taken into the unions. It is on this terrain that the future prospects for socialism and the Labour Party will ultimately be determined.

Dogged

This brings us to our final point. Vladimir argues that the CLPD has achieved its success by sticking to the question of democracy and by not identifying with policy issues: this has enabled it to build wide support in the party. For us the fight for party democracy is basically a political issue — and a clear left/right issue at that. We believe in the end in the potential of the rank and file constituency activist and trade union member for socialist politics. We fight to democratise the party and the unions to provide the opportunity to imple-

ment a socialist society.

Foot, Healey, Shore, Kinnock have not, to put it mildly, been on the side of democracy in the fight on the manifesto, reselection and the electoral college. Neither do we believe that they seriously share our objective, the termination of capitalism. We have to face the fact that, just as in the case of the full-time union official, even more so the MP is the focus of a host of conservatising pressures which make most of them bitter and dogged opponents of control from below and ultimately the aims of the CLPD.

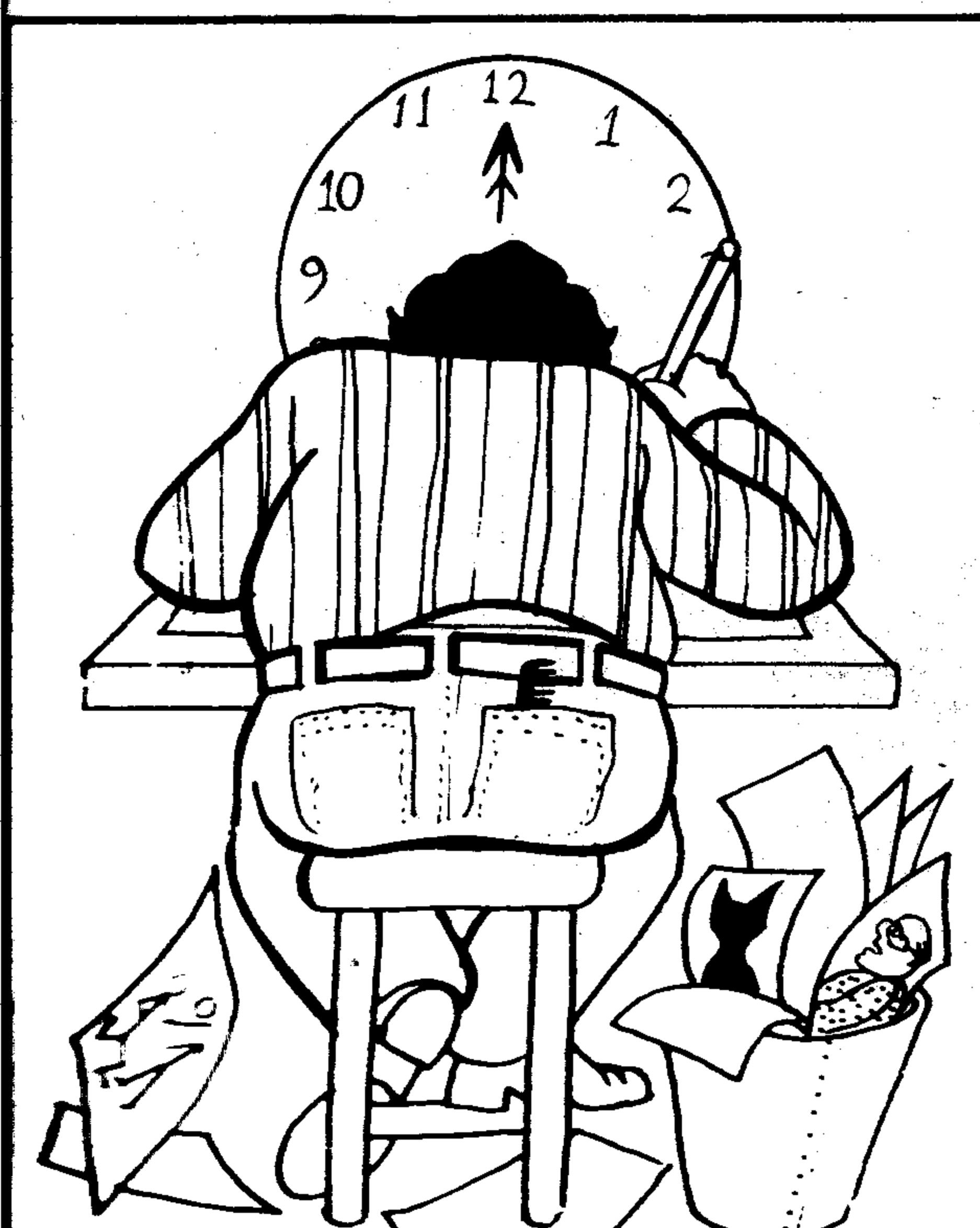
The Campaign must real-

ise that as issues have polarised, its support has not come from centre MPs, not from the 'inside left', but largely from Benn supporters.

It is clearly as part of that grouping that the CLPD should see itself. The situation facing supporters of democracy today is far different from that of two years ago. With polarisation it is time to make choices. We look forward in the not-too-distant future to seeing the CLPD as part of a broad left Socialist Forum or Socialist Fellowship campaigning for the democratisation of the Labour Party and the trade unions.



Kinnock



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Which way for the Left?

Existing organisations must get together

Victor Schonfield (treasurer of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, writing in a personal capacity) argues instead for an alliance of existing organisations

THERE is a general desire for a single organisation to lead the fight for the democratic reforms, for Party policies and candidates who support them.

This could take one of four forms:

[a] an existing organisation: Both the LCC and SCLV originally aimed to take over from other organisations, but in practice they are simply two more among many other Left tendencies — and with no concrete achievements to their credit, either.

CLPD is the best organised and most effective, and the only one which is open to members of all the other groups. But although many of them join CLPD, they show no inclinations to give up their own organisations. This option is therefore a non-starter.

[b] a collection of individuals: This was the format of the Benn campaign and worked out quite adequately for its six months' life, despite a high proportion of talkers to workers.

[c] an alliance of organisations: this is obviously better than the previous option, as it gives a chance of proper co-ordination and firm commitment. This too has been tried out and worked well in the RFMC for the eight months up to the Wembley Conference.

It is this type of organisation which the CLPD Executive would like to set up to mobilise for the 1982 Conference.

[d] a new organisation: At first sight the call to launch an organisation of the Left with individual and affiliated membership at a Central Hall rally looks better still. In fact it is nothing but a recipe for disaster.

I suspect those putting forward are largely attract-



GMWU: backing for some of Benn's policies

ed by the sheer glamour — the speeches, the propaganda, the publicity! — but I will do my best to deal with it on its merits.

The main argument put forward is that it will unite the Left. Apart from being improbable, to make that the yardstick is the height of irresponsibility. The only criterion which means anything is that of results.

By this standard the Left has wasted its time on the policy of the empty gesture, and its record has been one of almost complete ineffectiveness. The last Labour government was little more than a Tory government by another name, and so was the one before that.

All our fine policies are not worth the paper they are written on if they are not carried out. It is what Labour does that counts.

Thanks to the democratic reforms, at least there is now some chance that the next Labour government will carry out Labour policies, whereas otherwise

there would be none at all. And where was the Left over the democratic reforms? They opposed and delayed mandatory reselection, campaigning either for optional reselection or retention of the Prentice system, and, by pressing for three-way parity, they not only delayed the electoral college, but managed to cut down the trade union and constituency share by 5% in the process.

And they were quite prepared to deprive the membership of another 20% (in the name of depriving it of only another 3 1/2%), and came within a handful of votes of doing so.

It would be pointless for CLPD to unite with the Left except on the basis of a common platform, and the only way to get that is by serious negotiation between organised national groups, not at a jamboree where people effectively represent nothing but themselves.

The reason for this irres-

ponsibility is that it is based on a delusion, the delusion that even a united Left could actually win anything. The fact is that to win in this party you must have a majority of the votes, and the Left has simply not got the votes.

Take the main planks of the Benn campaign — the alternative economic strategy, Common Market withdrawal, nuclear disarmament: these are backed by the GMWU. Take the electoral college: that is backed by USDAW and the NUR.

Those are the votes you need to get a proper majority at Conference, and what those trade unions want is a united party. The Left's only asset is that it is fighting for their policies. Without that it is nothing.

This proposal would make the Left into splitters, and simply drive those we must win into the arms of our opponents. The Benn campaign, which was eff-

ectively run as a Left campaign despite the advice given by some who took part in it, shows just what would happen. It failed to win 30-odd Tribune MPs, and it failed to win NATSOPA, the FBU and, above all, NUPE.

To paraphrase Oscar Wilde, to lose one was a misfortune, to lose all of them was downright careless.

And the Benn campaign was careless — not grossly, but enough — in laying itself open to being portrayed as divisive, and allowing itself to get isolated from the middle ground. Not only did this cost the Left the Deputy Leadership and the NEC, but more crucially, the last chance to gain party control of its own manifesto.

The lesson is that you can only win a majority from the Left and the Centre. It is absurd to pretend that the GMWU is likely to support the left as such, and equally absurd to deny that the GMWU already supports many things that the Left is fighting for, and could well be won to others.

Fantasies

But the only way is to campaign for specific proposals on their merits — not on the grounds that they or their supporters are Left.

The Left must stop indulging in fantasies and throwing away its real chances. At present it is only possible to do effective work as part of the Party's majority, by organising the majority to back up its own policies.

Therefore an alliance between existing organisations is generally acceptable. Setting up a new one is political suicide.

Socialist Bookshelf

Books and pamphlets that you should read

JO THWAITES introduces James Connolly's 'Socialism Made Easy'

WITH THE prospect of a witch hunt in the Labour Party looming, the short pamphlet, *Socialism Made Easy*, by the great Irish socialist James Connolly, is a powerful illustration of what labour movement organisations should be like.

Though he was writing 80 years ago, the message is as relevant today as it ever was. The questions asked by workers in the first section are similar to those that come up in your union or Labour Party branch time and time again.

"Well, I'm not interested in internationalism. This country is good enough for me"; or: "Would you confiscate the property of the capitalist class and rob men of that which they have, perhaps, worked a whole life time to accumulate?"; or: "You won't get the Irish to help socialism. Our Irish leaders tell us that all we Irish in this country ought to stand together and use our votes to free Ireland".

Fruits

Connolly simply and convincingly answers by showing how the capitalists organise internationally — you just have to look at the headlines of their papers to see that — and pointing out that a worker can be exploited by a capitalist who is living thousands of miles away.

"He is, therefore, interested in the revolt of Labour all over the world..."

On confiscation of the bosses' property, he shows how the fruits of our labour go into making profit that could pay for the cost of the whole industry we're working in again and again. So he explains: "The capital of the master class is not their property; it is the unpaid labour of the working class".

On Irish nationalism he says: "Sure, let us free Ireland" — but points out that an Ireland with the Green Flag floating o'er it won't make a lot of difference if you are still unemployed, paying high rents, and living in poverty

Arguing

The pamphlet goes on to explain the need for workers' solidarity. Everyone knows what scabs do, but

Connolly argues that it's not necessarily the scabs who turn the tide against the strikers.

He talks of a public transport strike in New York (where he was living at the time), where all the workers struck, except the engineers in the powerhouses which supplied the electric power to run the cable-cars. Thus the scabs could run the system and break the strike.

He's arguing for industrial unions (he was an activist in the IWW) and for united action.

Happiness

He refers to the Irish Land League and how the word 'boycott' came to be part of our language. Captain Boycott was an Irish landowner who suffered at the hands of the tenants when he and his kind were trying to evict them.

Organised in the Irish Land League, labourers, servants and all those whom those landlords depended on for their existence refused to work. They even organised doctors, shopkeepers, and grave-diggers to 'boycott' the landowners.

Connolly also explains how he saw socialism — a society organised to serve the interests of the mass of the people and run by those who know what they're talking about, the working class. A society where national boundaries will have no more than administrative significance, and where the health and happiness of ordinary workers come first.

In other words, 'Socialism must proceed from the bottom upwards, whereas capitalist political society is organised from above downwards'.

Witch-hunt

The final section explains why it is that the working class is the only class that can change capitalist society, and that any organisation that claims to be fighting for socialism has to be rooted in that class.

While it seems to me that in this pamphlet Connolly relies almost exclusively on organising for socialism through the trade unions, and doesn't talk of building an independent workers' party, this short pamphlet gives a clear explanation of what socialism is about.

Trade union and Labour Party members, in view of the witch hunt and the SDP defections, would do well to read it.

Pesticides that leave SCIENCE profiteers alive

by Les Hearn

WHEN the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) proposed regulations to require employers to provide information on dangerous substances and to test them before exposing workers to them, the government response was to postpone them, under pressure from business, and then to reject them in favour of much weaker EEC regulations.

The EEC scheme excludes foodstuffs, pharmaceuticals, pesticides, intermediates (chemicals made during a process) and chemicals sold in quantities of less than one tonne a year in total.

Tests for poisonous effects and for causing cancer and birth defects are only compulsory if more than 1000 tonnes of the chemical is sold per year.

The HSC scheme would have included all these

exceptions. Predictably the Chemical Industries Association (CIA), i.e. the bosses, didn't like it, and told their friends in the government so. Surprise, surprise, the Tories chose to implement the EEC scheme (and that several months late).

To show the difference between the two schemes, let us consider the organochlorine pesticides (DDT), which would have been covered by the HSC regulations but not by the EEC ones.

Mucks up

After these were introduced it was discovered that they are not broken down in the environment, but persist in the soil for ages.

Unfortunately, because they are similar to some chemical compounds found in living things, they are

easily absorbed by living things. First, by plants, then by the animals that live on the plants, then by the animals that eat the plant-eaters, etc. etc. Once absorbed, the unnatural part of these chemicals, the chlorine, mucks up the chemical machinery inside the cells of the body.

Sacred

One effects it to cause sterility in birds of prey, upsetting natural controls on animal populations (with effects on agriculture). But the CIA aren't worried about this, as long as their sacred profits are untouched.

In any case, there aren't enough scientists to run even the EEC scheme. Well, there are, but they're too busy working on 'defence', etc.



AFTER the fiasco over what exactly is the US policy over nuclear war, more evidence that the US Department of Defence is staffed with humourless morons.

New Scientist carried a little item a few weeks ago about an American, Herb Susmann, president of a Californian cycling club, who had invented a type of paint whose colour was just outside of the visible range of the spectrum. In other words, invisible paint! He had painted parts of his bike with it, and had been

riding round on an invisible bicycle seat.

A few days after the article came out, there was a knock at Herb's door. A man from the DoD, telling Herb to 'clam up' about his invention and demanding to see the formula and any of the paint still left.

Herb wanted to oblige, being a patriotic American, but, alas, he found that he had clumsily spilled the last of the paint over his notes, so that the formula had become invisible!

All very amusing, but these people have some power over our future!



Letters Funds needed for Chilean struggle

LOTARIO Best, a man of eighty years of age and 61 years of work in the trade union movement, is almost a living history of the Chilean trade union movement's struggles.

Throughout his life of struggle against injustice he has been a religious person. But this fact did not stop him, under pressure of the demands of the struggle, from having a revolutionary practice. He was one of the founders of CUT, the national union joining together the different syndicates in Chile.

The CUT was smashed by the dictatorship, but Clotario Best, as one of the recognised leaders of the working class, reunited their forces and founded CODES (the Defence Committee for Trade Union Rights). At the same time it was also necessary to create a sister organisation, CODEH (The Defence Committee for Human Rights).

Clotario Best is the President of these two organisations, which are together now called CODESH.

Invaluable

CODESH has played an invaluable role, not least in circulating to militants in exile and those fighting for solidarity work with the Chilean workers' movement regular information on developments in the struggle in Chile.

The 'Bolshevik Workers' League of Chile' (LOB), which is affiliated to the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee, started the CODESH solidarity campaign in exile. They did this despite the reactionary boycott of CODESH at its birth by the traditional and bourgeois workers' parties such as the Communist and Socialist parties and the MIR.

In late November the LOB was informed from Chile that all publications

of leaflets, pamphlets, and bulletins which are distributed throughout Chile have stopped because the printing press and photo-copying machines upon which they have been produced have finally broken down and are now useless.

Comrades, on behalf of all those struggling to reorganise the Chilean workers' movement, we ask you to make contributions to help to buy another printing machine to replace the unrepairable previous one. At this very moment such a printing machine is a vital revolutionary arm in the fight against the dictatorship.

Solidarity with international workers' struggles is not charity but a revolutionary duty. For the construction of socialism and proletarian internationalism!

LOB comrades in Britain.
*Cheques to CODESH Appeal: send to 11 Nook St, Leicester



Writeback to
Socialist Organiser
28, Middle Lane
London N8

No to witch-hunts in the Labour Party

THE BUREAUCRATS and the parliamentarians are marking the ground on which to erect the witch-hunters' gibbets.

Their real target is the fighting reformist Left in the Labour Party and in the unions which, with help from some of the Marxists, has won the changes that have been pushed through recent Labour Party conferences. Their strategy is to intimidate the Labour Left by chopping out the Marxists — so they focus on Militant, on George Galloway, and on Tariq Ali.

In this situation, John Lister's piece in Graffiti (last Socialist Organiser) — more like gratuitous and self-indulgent abuse than his usual standard — is about the last thing we need in Socialist Organiser.

Entire

Surely we are for the affiliation of the CP to the Labour Party? We are for the affiliation of the CP, the SWP, the WSL, and the IMG. We deny the trade union officials and the Left and Right parliamentarians exclusive ownership and control of the Labour Party, the mass political party of the British labour movement.

George Galloway is right to advocate CP affiliation, and it is an extremely serious matter that he is under investigation. Clearly it is one strand of the repression which is now being prepared for the Left.

Deny

He is entitled to the support and solidarity of the entire Left, and especially of SO, which has championed the unity of the Left and, in the RFMC, been instrumental in achieving unity for a while.

As well as the history of the CP, in the light of which John Lister's comments are mild, there is the present British CP. It is far from homogeneous.

As well as old-line Stalinists and Eurocommunists who yearn to make careers in the Labour Party, there are probably quite a few would-be revolutionaries and socialists who can become revolutionaries. We should welcome such people into the Labour Party, to work with them and, of course, to discuss and argue with them.

To denounce them as an undifferentiated mass of right wing finger-men and 'rats' is not likely to be true or just. Certainly it is not useful. When some of them do act as finger-men, our job is to help others of them to learn from that experience.

Prejudice

'We appeal to their reason against the prejudice', was Trotsky's formula for dealing with people in the labour movement with whom he had differences. It's more likely to be a fruitful method than hurling abuse at them: that is the sure way to reinforce their prejudices against



Tariq Ali

our reason.

Comments like John Lister's are not appropriate to the immediate task of defending Tariq Ali's right to join the Labour Party without disavowing his politics. Neither do they speak to people for whom Tariq Ali is being made, by the press and Michael Foot, to represent revolutionary politics.

They are likely to switch off a lot of people, not from Tariq Ali's Marxism but from SO's Marxist politics is a process of self-selection, re-selection, grouping and regrouping of the militants in response to the living issues of the class struggle and the struggle in the labour movement.

The experience and concerns of the past are very important, but serious people focus on the struggle now, and measure others according to what role they are playing. If Tariq Ali wants to join the Labour Party, that is good, and it should help others to slough off sectarianism.

Why waste time and space with such nonsense as questioning Tariq Ali's Marxism in general? Let's discuss his current politics at the right time and in the appropriate circumstances. Let's give him time, and offer him space, to spell them out in his new situation: then we will be entitled to express an opinion as to whether he is a 'Marxist' or not.

The Right and soft Left are now trying to isolate the Marxists in the Labour Party. We should not do it for them. We must build the broadest unity to resist the Right/soft Left offensive.

That doesn't rule out principled criticism of our allies and potential allies. It should, I think, rule out such 'Graffiti'.

JOHN O'MAHONY,
Islington.

JOHN LISTER replies: Without wanting to prolong debate on this topic, I would point out that (a) my article was never intended to, and does not, brand every member of the CP as a witch-hunter; (b) I took it for granted that SO stood opposed to the investigation of Galloway and the proscription of Tariq Ali; (c) my article — some 200 words long — was necessarily less detailed than O'Mahony's 720 word reply; (d) Graffiti is a column in which informal — often personal — comment takes place: the editorial line of SO can be found under the heading 'Editorial'; (e) my remark that Tariq Ali's 'Marxism' is open to debate was quite charitable to Ali — and took a great deal less space than O'Mahony's wordy reply!

CAROL HOBBS, Bolton

Women's Voice

IN SOCIALIST Organiser no. 63 you write that 'with the end of Women's Voice, there is now only one national women's newspaper with a socialist perspective'. This, as many readers and supporters of both Socialist Worker and Women's Voice know, is absolute rubbish!

The truth is that the SWP has disbanded the organisation that had grown alongside the Women's Voice paper. The magazine itself is to continue as the women's publication of the SWP. In this way all members of the party will reprioritise our women's work.

The criticisms that Socialist Organiser make of the SWP, though, are more deeply rooted in your lack

of understanding that it is the proletariat that creates socialism and not any outside force, whether it be the Stalinists in Eastern Europe, the labour fakers here in Britain, or any other non-revolutionary social force such as feminism or black nationalism.

The major differences between the various 'trotskyist' groups are merely in your selections from the list of various substitutes for the revolutionary role of the proletariat and its class party. In this way socialists such as yourselves find a way to 'enter' an utterly irreformable bourgeois workers' party such as the British Labour Party.

When it comes down to fighting for independent feminist policies in the

working class, it would seem that for Socialist Organiser it is only a matter of choice between Joan Lestor and Jo Richardson within the Labour Party. Therefore I can only take your independent feminist position to mean 'independent of the revolutionary party'.

In this way it is Socialist Organiser which abstains in the struggle against reformism which it is our task to wage within the labour movement as a whole.

Socialists must realise that it is an urgent task for revolutionaries to build an alternative to the Labour Party now and not in the future. Only in this way will we ensure the victory of both feminism and revolutionary communism.

M.C. PEARNS, Cardiff SWP

Where we stand

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

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

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

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

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

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

* Freeze rents and rates.
* Scrap all immigration controls. Race is not a problem: racism is. The labour movement must mobilise to drive the fascists off the streets. Purge racists from positions in the

labour movement. Organise full support for black self-defence. Build workers' defence squads.

* The capitalist police are an enemy for the working class. Support all demands to weaken them as a bosses' striking force: dissolution of special squads (SPG, Special Branch, M15, etc.), public accountability, etc.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Longbridge sell-out: what makes the CP do it?

by John Lister

MANY working class militants will be baffled by the reactionary role played by the leadership at BL's Longbridge plant during the 'relaxation allowance' strike.

The appalling terms 'negotiated' by the stewards under the leadership of convenor Jack Adams — a Communist Party member — and forced through a resistant mass meeting handed Edwardes a victory at the very point where the strikers had gained the upper hand.

This is by no means the first betrayal by the CP at Longbridge. Their squalid record stretches back beyond Adams and the involvement of his predecessor Derek Robinson in 'workers' participation' to the days of Dick Etheridge, who eagerly advocated negotiating acceptance of Measured Day Work — a move which has done more than almost anything else to hold down the wages of BL workers.

But it is not only in BL that leading Communist Party members have played a sabotaging role: the same has been true in the Lee Jeans occupation — where CP members on the NUTGW executive were the first to propose withdrawing support — and in the fight for solidarity at Laurence Scott.

Why do CP members wind up acting this way? The answer lies not in the individual personalities involved, but in the politics of the Communist Party.

The British CP was founded in the aftermath of World War 1, in the midst of a tide of mass struggle in Britain and Europe — struggles which had included the victorious October 1917 Revolution in Russia.

After the war, capitalism was in chaos. Not only in

Russia, but in Germany, Italy and Hungary, workers seized the factories. Meanwhile the right wing, often helped by social democrats, attempted bloody repression. Left wingers in every country formed CPs to lead the struggles internationally to the same socialist conclusions as in Russia.

Careerists

But there were immediate setbacks. The revolutions in Germany and Hungary were defeated. Fascism triumphed in Italy. Elsewhere mass struggles were headed off by partial reforms. The Russian revolution became isolated.

Within the Soviet Union, wracked by economic crisis and war devastation, nationalist elements emerged within the revolutionary leadership. Headed by Joseph Stalin, these forces drew support from careerists, technocrats and administrators in the new Soviet society, together with richer and more conservative layers of peasants in the countryside.

After the death of Lenin in 1924, Stalin began openly to argue that the task was not to extend workers' power internationally but to build 'socialism in one country'.

Bludgeoned

And Stalin turned from political and material support not to the strength of the working class, either in the USSR or internationally, but to the burgeoning state bureaucracy and their co-thinkers — the bureaucratic leaders of the labour movement and nationalist leaders — abroad.

These included for example the 'left' British TUC

leaders who participated in the Anglo-Russian Committee and China's Chiang Kai Shek.

Under Stalin's domination, the CPs were transformed from a revolutionary leadership into simply a tool for manoeuvres with such forces.

And the policies were immediately disastrous — leaving the British CP impotent in the face of the betrayal of the 1926 General Strike, and paving the way for the slaughter of the Chinese Communists by Chiang Kai Shek in 1926-7. Opponents of Stalin's politics were bludgeoned into silence by bureaucratic threats or — like Leon Trotsky and the Left Opposition — driven out of the CPs.

'Progressive'

After 1928-9 Stalin, his alliances failing, switched to an equally bureaucratic ultra-left line, branding social democrats as 'social fascists'. But by 1933 the CPs had been so purged that not a single voice was raised to attack the suicidal ultra-left line of the German Communist Party which had prevented a united front with the Socialist Party, and enabled Hitler to ride to power.

In 1935 the changing foreign policy of the Kremlin brought a shift of policy by the CPs, and the unveiling of the strategy of the 'Popular Front' — alliances between workers' organisations and so-called 'progressive' parties and elements of the capitalist class.

With the exception of a brief flurry of ultra-leftism in response to the imperialist Cold War offensive after 1947, it has been the collaborationist politics of the Popular Front which have



Jack Adams (foreground) on platform at Longbridge mass meeting

dominated the Communist Parties ever since.

In 1945 the British CP was to the right of Labour right-wingers like Herbert Morrison, still arguing for a coalition with 'progressive' Tories.

In the 1940s the CPs formally abandoned socialism as the immediate goal — 'a new democracy' or 'an anti-monopoly alliance' took its place. For Britain, this shift was summed up in

a new programme, 'The British Road to Socialism'.

When the CPs talk about socialism now, it is a bureaucratic concept they put across, instead of the goal of a government of workers' councils.

And they have mostly dropped the idea that the working class must be mobilised, force against force, to defeat the violent and undemocratic resistance of the ruling class to socialist

change. Instead they look towards gradual change of the existing power structure.

Some sort of socialism is still the aim, in words and in the minds of the rank and file — but in the deeds of the leadership, a better place in the existing system is the real goal.

In countries where they are strong, like Italy, they go for coalitions with bosses' parties like the

Christian Democrats. In Britain, where they lose all their parliamentary deposits, they look more towards the trade union bureaucracy.

They bank on getting their own members into to official positions — when like Ken Gill and George Guy, they often ignore policy — or friendly relations (without criticism) with established bureaucrats like George Smith and then Les Wood of UCATT.

And the Communist Party has also worked consistently towards the formation of a latter-day Popular Front. Hence the notorious blocs in the National Union of Students with right wing Labourites, Liberals, and even Tories their support for worker participation schemes; and during 1981 their efforts to draw bishops, 'progressive' bosses and even Tories onto platform and committees of the People's March.

In BL, prominent members like Robinson and Adams have accepted without question the argument that it is necessary to restore 'viability' at the expense of jobs and living standards — and climb down as readily as Mr Evans or Terry Duffy in the face of threats to close the plants. They have an independent line to the working class.

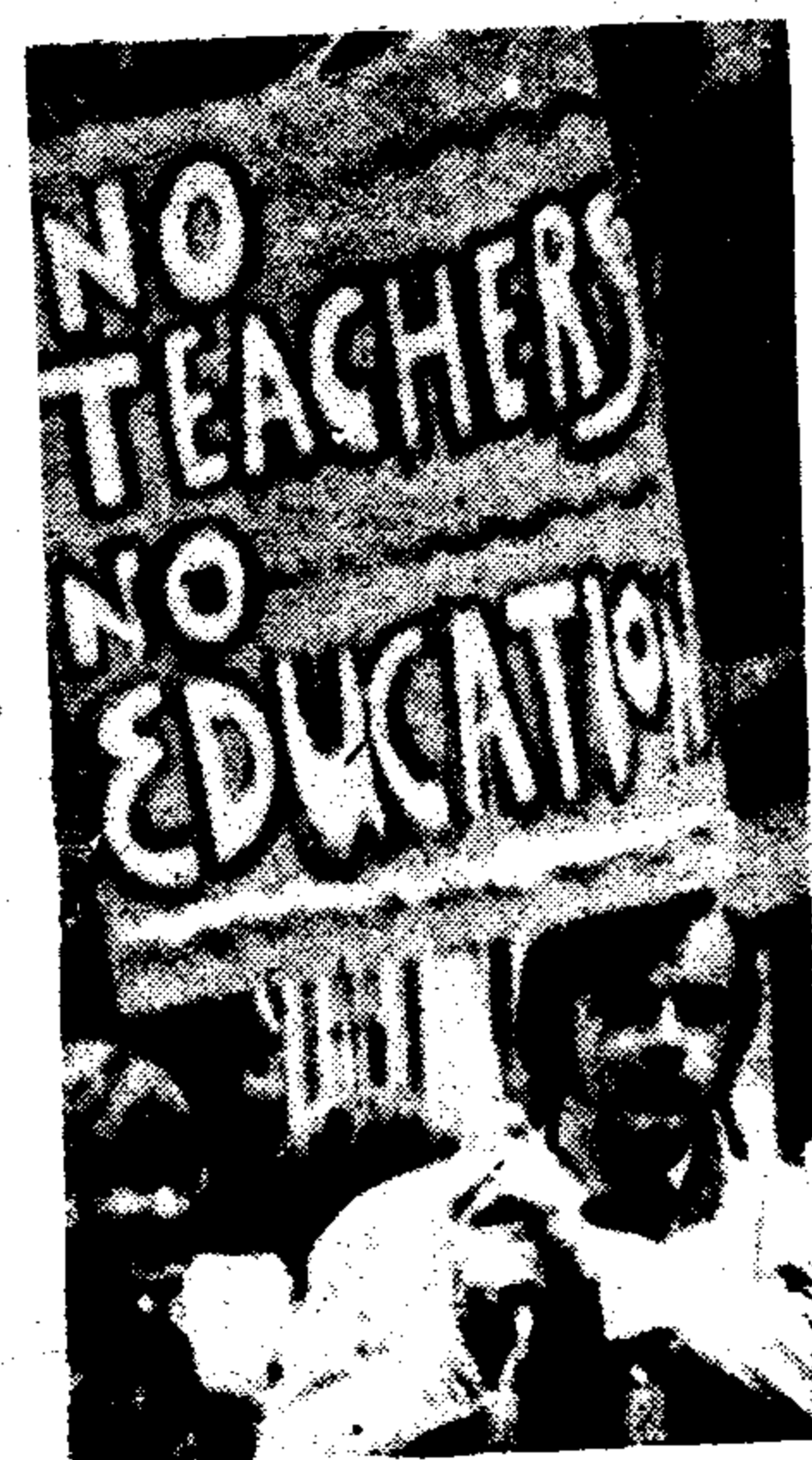
The dwindling membership of the CP and its growing isolation from genuine militants on the shop floor of industry speak volumes for the bankruptcy of this perspective.

CP militants shaken angry at the latest Longbridge sell-out should take the appropriate lesson and join with Socialist anarchists in the fight for persistent class struggle politics.

Teachers fight to democratisise their union

MIKE FOLEY reports from the conference, last Saturday 5th, on democracy in the National Union of Teachers

Tories screw students



IN January this year the National Union of Teachers suspended its Lambeth branch officers for backing a cuts day of action alongside the Lambeth labour movement. In June, the NUT suspended 59 members at Alpertown school, in Brent, for fighting for jobs.

September saw the suspension of Southwark officers, who were fighting for jobs and against compulsory transfers.

Meanwhile, members of the Inner London Teachers' Association await disciplinary action for demanding the right to attend their own AGM!

NUT headquarters has

intensified its scrutiny of local branch agendas, and increased its use of veto.

On Saturday December 5, some 172 teachers attended a conference on union democracy in the Poly of Central London to discuss fighting back against this bureaucracy.

The conference was initiated by the Haringey Association of the NUT and sponsored by 14 other NUT associations (branches).

Problem

The problem goes back further than this year. Militant teachers' trade unionism, especially in London, developed in the late '60s. But

by 1973 the Young Teachers Conference set up in 1960 was closed down by the EC, basically because it reflected a militant stance.

Notorious

In the same year, the notorious Rule 8, which prohibits any industrial action without the approval of NUT HQ, was passed.

In the morning session, platform speakers put events into historical perspective, and located the NUT in the wider labour movement, particularly in relation to the Tebbit Bill. There was a speaker from Polish Solidarnosc.

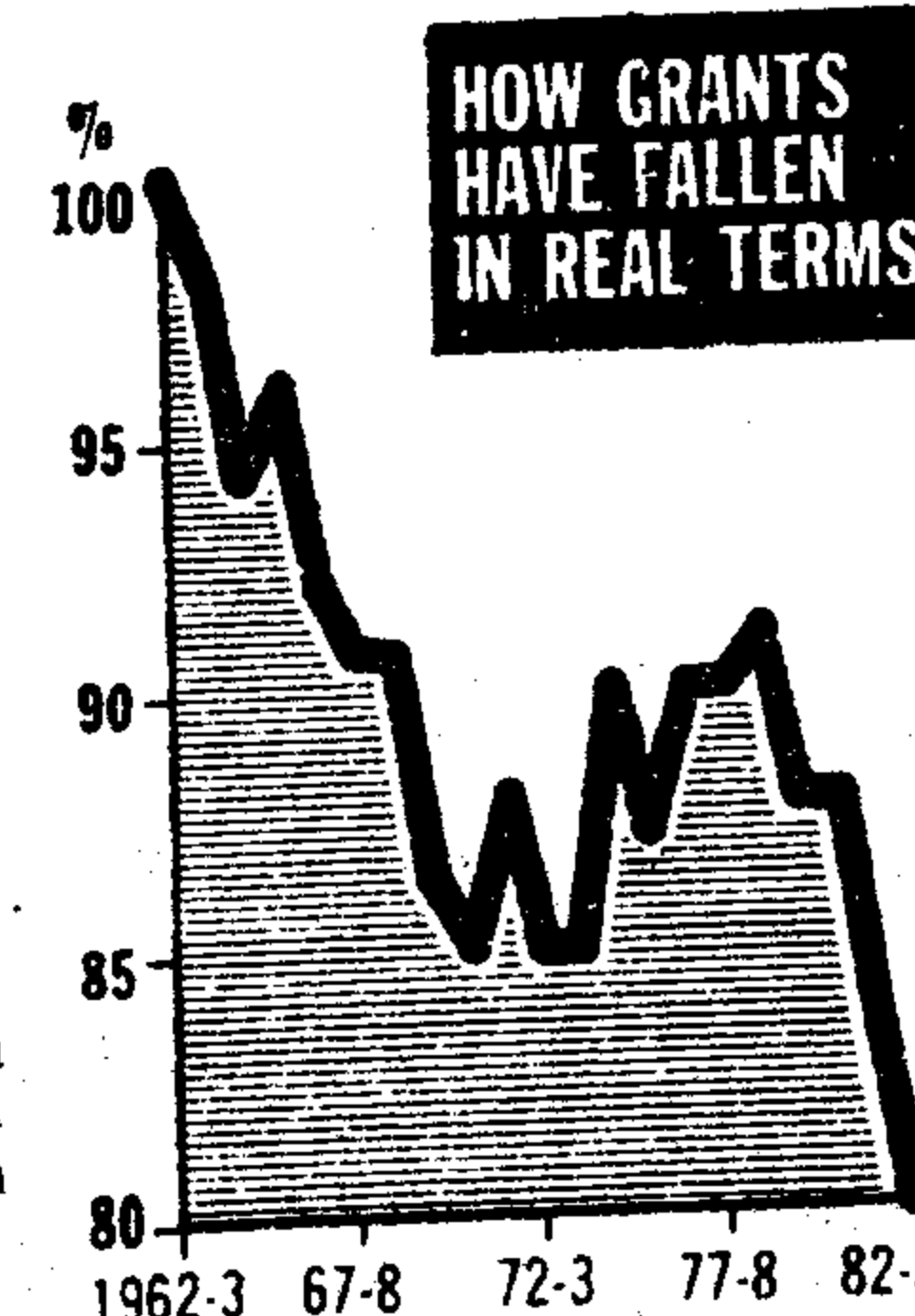
The bulk of the confer-

ence took the form of workshop sessions. Sharp differences were expressed in the debate about tactics against Rule 8 — how far is it foolhardy and self-destructive simply to defy it in the present situation.

Sponsor

But £100 was collected for the NUPE strikers hardship fund in Coventry. And we agreed to sponsor a fringe meeting at the next NUT conference, to consolidate and build militancy against a highly conservative and undemocratic union bureaucracy.

SUCCESSIVE CUTS mean that students' grants are one fifth lower now, in real



terms, than they were years ago. And George Howe has just announced another big cut in the value of grants.

For next year the will be £1596.

Yet in some student residences, rent and now cost over £1000 20% over the last year!

The National Union of Students conference in Blackpool is discussing student strike, and the dominant Broad notorious for their keep-in-with-the-Liberals lack of militancy proposing a student strike.

Last week's demonstration against showed that the fight is there.



Industrial News

CHAMBERLAIN PHIPPS APE

by Jane Ashworth

IN A period of declining profit margins it might come as a surprise to the uninitiated that Chamberlain Phipps Holdings Ltd. announced a 92% profit increase in the first six months of this year.

However to those who know the management tactics at Chamberlain Phipps it comes as no surprise at all. Mattie Smith of the Strike Committee attributes the figures to 456 redundancies in the last six months, a £10 a week wage cut at the Bishop Auckland plant and skimping on workers' safety in their plants.

The Strike Committee think management have been reading Michael Edwardes book of dirty tricks; and judging by the dispute at Bishop Auckland, they are right.

Imposed

Workers refused to accept the wage deal of a 7.5% rise, turned into an actual 10% cut by the conditional cut in the bonus scheme (this was the offer NUFLAT had kindly negotiated) and imposed an overtime ban.

In response, management declared that everyone going into work on September 23rd was deemed to have accepted the offer. In response the workers called a one-day strike for that day.

All of the strikers were subsequently locked out, but not before the firm had visited strikers' families asking them to make sure their bread-winner went into work as usual, otherwise they would be out of a job.

Successful

Management had miscalculated: even the bribe of £5 'loyalty' payment could not break the resolve of the workers. And far from being intimidated, the strikers are campaigning with them.

Understandably, as

EDWARDES

NUFLAT refused to support the dispute, some of the locked-out men crawled back to work and the plant started work again with the taking on of 17 new workers recruited from the dole queue — 20 less workers than previously.

Since then the 43 strikers have been solid in maintaining a picket line, visiting supplying firms and further processing firms. Successful lobbying has meant management having to employ independent lorry drivers to transport their product.

Despite this NUFLAT still refuses to recognise the dispute. At least one case has been discussed when NUFLAT, attempting to preempt the strike committee delegation, argued on the shopfloor of a supplying factory that they have done everything possible to help in Bishop Auckland and so there was no point in answering the call for solidarity action — the dispute being already over.

Reinstate

But in Bishop Auckland the dispute is far from over. Next week there is a women's picket and on Friday 11th a mass picket has been called for 2pm. A leaflet is being written for the dole queue asking for the unemployed to support the strikers and explaining the dispute's significance in the fight for a living wage and the right to strike.

And it will show how unemployment has helped management find a workforce prepared to scab.

The strike committee needs your support. The dispute needs to be spread to supplying firms and to the CPH Ltd. NUFLAT's December executive meeting must

make the dispute official.

Please send donations and messages of support to: Mattie Smith, 26 Havard Close, Woodhouse Close Estate, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham. And write to NUFLAT demanding that they support the sacked strikers.

Reinstate the 43!

Time to stop TUC talks with Thatcher

ON December 16 the Transport and General Workers' Union will be putting a proposal to the TUC's employment policy and organisation committee calling for an end to trade union participation in the National Economic Development Council ('Neddy').

Not before time, you may remark.

Moss Evans reckons it would be 'hypocritical' of the trade unions to sit down with the CBI when they are supporting Tebbit's anti-union proposals. Has there ever been any doubt that the CBI has more in common

with the vicious anti working class Tory government than it could have with the interests of the working class? Interests that the TUC is supposed to represent.

However, better late than never.

But what about all the other committees and boards that the TUC General Council members sit on with the Tories? Between them, 34 of the 41 members of the TUC General Council share over 100 Government appointments.

Many members sit on the boards of various state-owned and nationalised industries — such as British Shipbuilders, BP, British Airways and Remploy Ltd. These are run on strictly capitalist lines — to make profits. How do the TUC General Council members represent the interests of the working class on those?

There are also General Council members on ACAS, the government's conciliation service, which is used time and time again to sell out workers' struggles for better pay and conditions.

The TUC's withdrawal from the NEDC, which is basically about planning capitalist industry better

Talks on at McGaws

The workers at McGaws textiles in Kirkby have forced the boss, who had locked them out after a dispute on job timings, back into talks.

They won this victory by picketing the offices and occupying McGaws' mail order department just down the road from the main factory.

Last Monday, only 20 minutes after the occupation took place, the boss wanted talks.

The workers have now been reinstated, and the disputed piece rate adjusted to their satisfaction.

At a victory meeting last Wednesday, the McGaws workers said they had been few in number and, at the start of the dispute, very inexperienced. Outside support and the experience of others had helped them a lot.

And now the McGaws workers see the need for them to help others in their disputes, and pass on the experience they have now gained themselves.

SUFRSWELL

Coventry strike goes to ACAS

by Dave Spencer



COVENTRY's NUPE local council strikers decided last Saturday to go back to work immediately pending the result of an ACAS inquiry.

Previous conditions will apply until ACAS reports — that is, the council have withdrawn their letter which broke local agreements and attempted to cut back the wages of the workers by ten per cent.

The strike had lasted for four weeks, and involved 4,000 workers — caretakers, school cleaners, and canteen workers. Over 60,000 children were off school.

Only half of the strikers attended the mass meeting last Saturday — ironically, because of a lightning strike by West Midlands bus drivers over their 23 per cent pay claim — but the vote was two to one to go back.

Two of the most active pickets felt that the result was a sell-out, since the implication was that the ACAS result is binding.

However, strike leaders emphasised that both sides were to respect the result, not abide by it. At the same time, it was felt that the strike had shown Coventry NUPE's militancy in face of the cuts, and the Labour council had backed down quite considerably

over the four weeks.

They felt that ACAS would have to find that agreements had been breached by the Labour Council, and find in favour

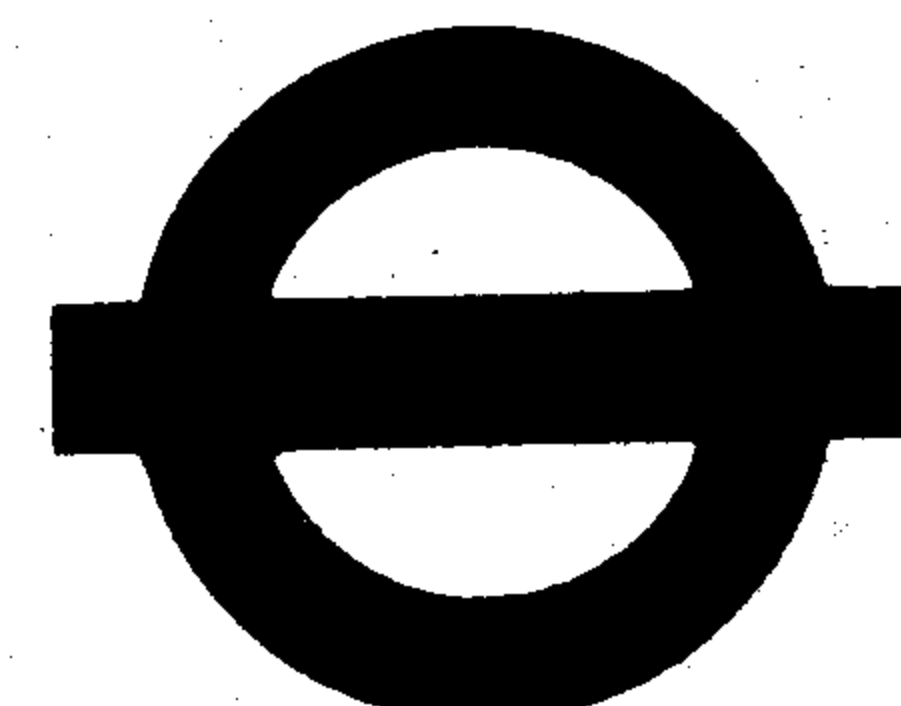
of NUPE.

As well as this, a return to work would give the members two weeks' money before Christmas, and keep the membership united.

As reported last week, support for the strike at official level was appalling. At a mass meeting last Thursday called by NUPE and attended by about 1000 militants from all the unions, Harry Mellon, the NUT secretary, got a very rough reception because of his union's poor show.

A committee of local unions at official level is to be set up to coordinate and plan against the next round of cuts. At the same time, the support committee of rank and file trade unionists needs to be kept in existence to pressurise and to remove, where necessary, the local officials.

The NUPE strike has been the first battle against the cuts in Coventry, and has shown the way forward.



Unions must back fares stand

THE LAW Lords still have not announced their decision on the Greater London Council fares case, though the hearing are finished.

Denning ruled that the London electors did not actually vote for what they thought the Labour Party stood for in the election, and that it didn't matter anyway because the council is exceeding its powers and does not have the right to carry out its manifesto.

If the Lords uphold this ruling, it will be one of the most explosive political issues in decades — a direct and openly political intervention by the permanent un-elected elements in the state machine to overwhelm and outlaw a decision approved by the relevant electorate. A small scale model, in fact, of one thing the ruling class would do if the labour movement posed a real challenge to their interests nationally.

Not only defiance by the London Labour Parties and the GLC, but also industrial action by London Transport workers to black any Lords-ordered fares increases, will be called for to beat this back.

Pickets shut off Evans oxygen

by Steve Akers

THE 13 week dispute at Evans Lifts, Leicester, widened significantly this week with a 120-strong mass picket called by Leicester Trades Council in support of the sacked staff.

Important support on the picket came from four senior stewards from Dunlop Polymer Engineering, where 650 TGWU members have recently gone back after a week-long strike in defence of a sacked worker who is now suspended on full pay.

Four AUEW-TASS members who were made redundant from Cannon and Stokes after a long strike earlier this year were also on the picket.

The isolation which afflicted the struggle at Cannons must not be repeated in the Evans dispute, which is almost a carbon copy of Cannons.

Then as now, the AUEW Engineering Section continued to work and crossed the TASS pickets.

The TASS no.14 Divisional Council have called on the NEC to organise a national campaign in defence of the Evans workers. 'We are circulating our corresponding members in this division to call for support', said Mike Philbean, 'as well as TASS regional offices and local authorities to ask them to have nothing to do with Otis Elevators, who have recently taken over at Evans'.

A major step in this direction has come from the London metropolitan district council of NALGO, who have asked their members not to cooperate with Otis. They have sent a resolution to their NEC urging instructions be issued to all NALGO branches not to cooperate with Evans Lifts, Otis Elevators, or associated companies and products.

Liquid oxygen suppliers have already been

stopped by 24 hour picketing. Effective picketing must be maintained, stopping all vehicles to get information as well as to prevent deliveries. The BOC stewards in all depots supplying Otis companies should be asked to black Otis deliveries.

Blacking action should also be taken by trade unionists against Smiths Haulage of Leicester, Macreadys Instant Steel of Rugby, and Delsons of Avechurch, Birmingham.

The mass pickets will be from 7am onwards every Monday.

Messages/Money: B. Dixon, 42 Elmfield Ave, Birstall, Leicester. Cheques payable to Evans Lifts AUEW-TASS staff fund.

Bulletins and collection sheets from Evans Lifts dispute, c/o 74 Highcross St, Leicester.

Speakers from S. Goddard, 74 Highcross St.

Leyland ACTION

The Leyland Action Committee brought together militants from different BL factories to get the £20 claim adopted and then to help develop the strike. Now it will be working to draw out the lessons of the betrayal and organise to prevent repetitions.

Contact: Leyland Action Committee, 194 Dawlish Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham 29.

ST MARYS SIT-IN EVICTED

by Geoffrey Green



Management at St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road, London W9, have pressed ahead with plans to close two wards - but found the workers' fightback alive and kicking.

On Thursday 3rd they planned to close Ward 3 - but were thwarted by workers and supporters who occupied the empty Ward 7, where the administration had planned to move the Ward 3 patients.

The next day a militant demonstration, including contingents from Oxford, Leicester and Brighton as well as London, marched from the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital in Euston Road to W9, getting a big response on the way from workers at St Mary's Hospital Praed St. A mass meeting after the march decided to join the people maintaining the occupation of Ward 7.

Management had immediately gone to the courts to get an eviction order for Ward 7, and they finally evicted the occupiers on Tuesday 8th. But a 24 hour occupation had been maintained for four days, often with large numbers in the ward.

Stealthily

Ward 4 was closed swiftly and stealthily on Friday morning, 4th. But now both management and workers know that no further closure is going to be easy.

If management get their way, St Mary's will very soon be a cottage hospital with a walk-in casualty - as preparation for total closure.

But London* ambulance workers are deliberately bringing as many patients as possible to W9. Similar solid support from other workers and labour movement organisations for the fight to stop closure, to get new admissions, and to win reinstatement for shop steward Mick Woods, sacked for fighting the closure, can defeat the cutters.

* Messages/money: c/o TGWU office, St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road, London W9.

* Mass pickets: every Monday morning, 7am to 10am.

Conference fights health charges

by George McLean
(Manchester Health Service Branch ASTMS)

A DAY conference in Manchester on the Tories' plans to charge for NHS treatment was attended by nearly 80 people from across England on Saturday November 28. The school was convened by the newly-formed Race and Health Group, which has delegates from health service unions and local black groups.

The conference heard of the latest developments in the proposals from George McLean (Manchester NHS ASTMS) and Steve Cohen (Manchester Law Centre). As reported in SO 47 everyone wanting NHS treatment will have to prove their entitlement, which could ultimately depend upon presentation of a passport or a work permit.

Jigsaw

These so-called 'charges for overseas visitors' regulations will clearly mean that certain groups will be singled out for questioning - that is, people with strange accents, unusual names, and black skins.

The plans are yet another piece in the jigsaw of racist legislation with which the Tories are seeking to divide and ride over the working class.

Twist

In October the DHSS held a little-publicised trial run in about ten hospitals around Britain in which patients were questioned about their nationality and residency. The conference heard that the results of this scheme showed predictably that any plans to introduce another layer of bureaucracy to net a few overseas visitors would cost far more than could be recouped.

In March, the then DHSS Secretary, Patrick Jenkin, had claimed that £5 million was being lost by the NHS due to people receiving free treatment to which they were not entitled: this out of an NHS budget of £11½ billion! Despite the latest DHSS report Jenkin's replacement Norman Fowler is determined to make the charges law next year.

Jane Salvage of the London-based Politics of

Health Group told the conference that the Jenkin/Fowler Plan would give another push to the privatisation of health care. Health Minister Vaughan has already said he would like to see 25% of the NHS hived off to private schemes. Obviously, to avoid the degradation of having to convince a hospital clerk of their entitlement to free NHS treatment, many people will take out private health insurance.

Amrit Wilson of the Black Workers and Patients Group, London told delegates that the main impact of the proposals would be to entrench further the divide between black and white, and rich and poor, and to give another twist to the racist knife held in the hands of many health service staff.

The workshop sessions proved valuable in identifying the problems which will have to be faced in fighting the Jenkin/Fowler plan. At least two main issues were isolated.

First, there is the need to organise on a hospital trades union level. NALGO, NUPE and COHSE have pledged support for oppo-

by Hugh McClung

STIRLING Unemployed Workers' Association have been leafletting and demonstrating outside the Job Centre, the Claims office and the DHSS office in protest at ten social security snoopers being drafted into the Stirling area as from Monday November 30.

The investigators thought that they would just walk over us without protest, but we have made this quite clear - that we are not prepared to accept the bully-boy tactics of Thatcher's henchmen. They will be exploiting the

unemployed and the sick for the sake of a ruling class whose system is so clapped out that they can only resort to the law courts, police and army to carry out their sick policies.

For those who experience this policy of snooping, we say, 'Inform your members of the Tory threats by telling them:

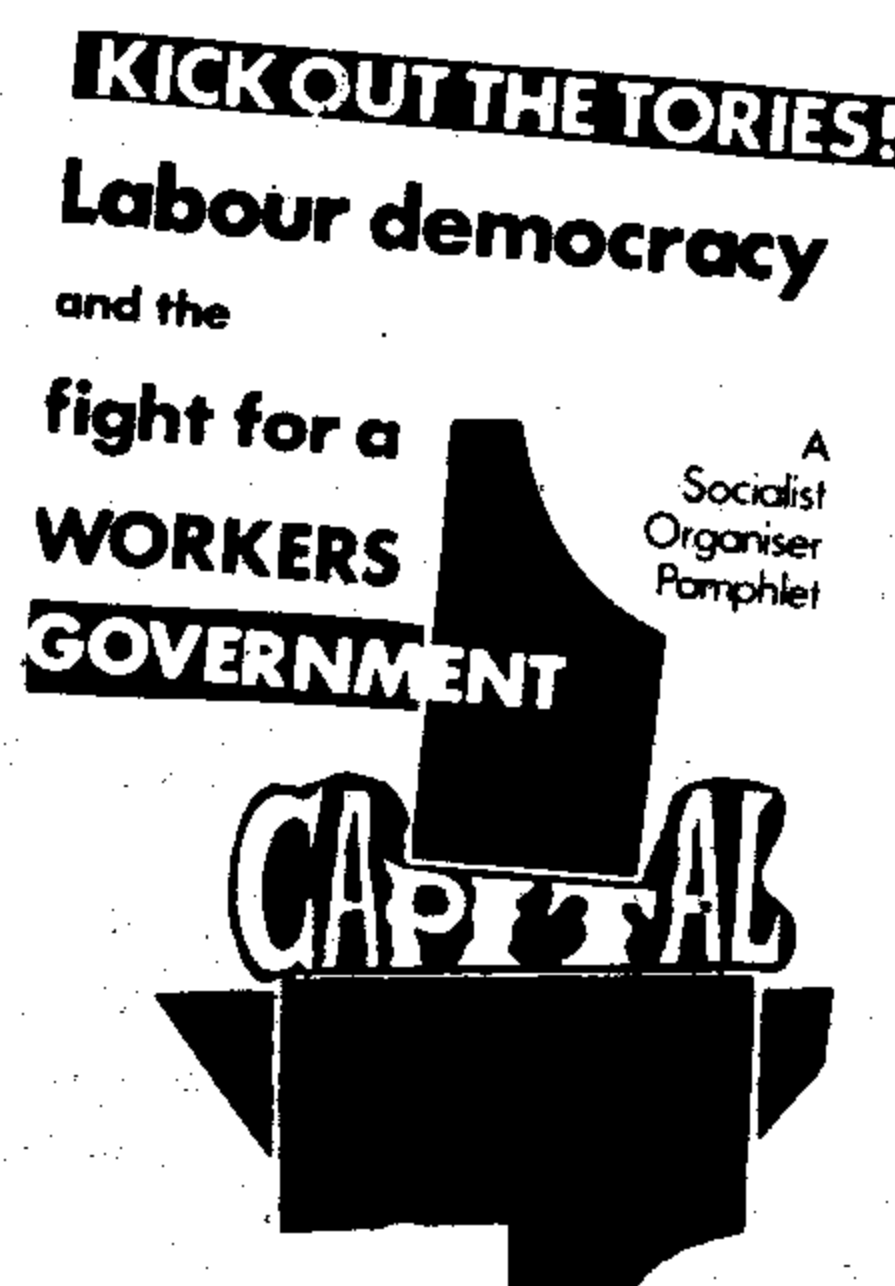
'If you are asked to attend a Social Security interview and are confronted by two SS officers, then ask if you can have an independent witness available.

'If you are refused, then refuse the interview, and get in touch immediately with your social worker or MP'

unions and between hospitals. To this end, the Race and Health Group was given unanimous support and many of the delegates will attend future meetings to report on individual progress.

It seems likely that Fowler will force the regulations through Parliament within the next couple of months. This makes it all the more urgent that activities in other hospitals in Britain are publicised and supported.

Please send information to George McLean, Pathology, St. Mary's Hospital, Manchester.



40p plus postage from Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8

Industrial News

HALEWOOD VOTES FOR STRIKE

THE THREE Ford plants at Halewood have voted overwhelmingly to strike in answer to the call by the union negotiators for all-out strike from January 5.

Ford offered a wage-cutting 7.4 per cent wage 'increase' (just over half the current rate of inflation). Even that miserable offer they insisted on tying to a five point 'efficiency improvement' plan which would involve the scrapping of local agreements where they conflict with the company's 5 point programme for 'mobility and flexibility' between jobs and grades - that is, for

an increase in exploitation. The offer sets January 1983 as the date for a one hour reduction in the working week, to 39 hours, dependent on improvements in 'efficiency'.

Ford's offer is thus a wage cut, plus worsening standards, plus loss of what little control over their working lives Ford workers have now.

The company is intransigent. When the determinedly non-militant union negotiators offered their own plan to 'improve efficiency' as a basis for negotiating, the company countered with the

five points, which were not negotiable, and on acceptance of which the miserable 7.4 per cent pay offer depended.

A firm decision for a national strike will depend on votes by 45,000 other Ford workers, on Wednesday as we go to press.

With the miners' decision to reject the Coal Board offer and to call a conference to plan strike action, it may yet prove a warm winter for Mrs Thatcher and her government.

JOHN O'MAHONY

Stirling jobless campaign

by Hugh McClung

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'If you are refused, then refuse the interview, and get in touch immediately with your social worker or MP'

No help from TGWU

by Hugh McClung

AT THE advice of the local Trades Council, the Stirling Unemployed Workers' Association has asked for volunteers from a committee of the local TGWU District organisation to help run the unemployed centre. This request was turned down.

We also asked for information from the STUC and to be kept on the mailing list and this was turned down too.

Clearly, the trade union hierarchy do not care to be bothered about unemployment. They are only capable of giving token verbal support at rallies etc.

The UWA in Stirling feel that the time is now ripe for unemployed people to demand recognition and support from Trade Unions, the TUC and the Labour Party.

The problems of the unemployed have no meaning for many Labour Party leaders. All they can do is help Thatcher, by starting witchhunts against Tony Benn and the left who threaten their so-called 'democratic' existence.

We say to the unemployed: Unite and fight - fight for the right to work, demand trade union recognition from the tuc by (a) securing places on the General Council for unemployed associations;

(b) having delegates to trade union and Labour Party regional committees; (c) demanding that the Labour Party fight for the unemployed by attacking Thatcher and her policies, instead of the Labour left.

Demand jobs and free transport in your area to help look for jobs. Affiliate your organisation to the National Unemployed Workers' Movement.

LONGBRIDGE: THE WORST SELL-OUT YET!

Socialist Organiser

Tories jack up tax again

by John Lister



Howe

is no doubt that in electoral terms it is Howe's measures which stick most firmly in the minds of alienated Tory voters.

It is this — and the dire consequences for the profits of sections of British employers in a prolonged period of recession — rather than any concern for the plight of the working class or unemployed, which has started vocal opposition within the Tory Party.

The already dripping 'wets' have been joined by an increasingly soggy group of Mps who fear that Thatcher is leading the Party to electoral annihilation.

They point to the success of the SDP in attracting former Tory voters by the thousand in recent by-elections and the level of public opposition to Howe's policy of mass unemployment.

Nor is there any scope to offset such electoral liabilities against more popular measures. Anyone dumb enough to have voted for Thatcher on the basis of her promise to cut taxes, for instance, has paid a heavy price for their mistake.

The latest figures show that workers on average earnings have faced an overall 5% increase in tax deductions as a percentage of gross pay since the Tories came to office, while even the stinking rich on four times average pay have suffered an overall percentage increase in taxation.

But it is those on or below the poverty line that have borne the brunt of Howe's attacks.

Treasury figures released last week in answer to Labour economics spokesman Jack Straw showed a dramatic leap in the share of wages taken in taxation from low-paid workers.

A married couple with two children on half average earnings — £74 a week — are now paying nearly twice as much of their gross income in tax as they were in 1978-9 — the share has risen from 6.6% to 11.8%.

The increase is no accident: it is the result of the Thatcher/Howe strategy of benefiting the wealthy at the expense of the working class.

While right-wing union leaders join Foot in moves to purge the left from the Labour Party, the fight that is needed is for all-out working class action to bring down Thatcher and the building of a genuine alternative leadership in the labour movement.

initially. But as the final recommendation seems to have been unanimous we can only assume that Convenor Jack Adams and the Works Committee majority beat down the opposition.

Challenge

What is clear from all this is that there is something fundamentally wrong with both the politics of the Longbridge Works Committee and their secretive, undemocratic method of operating. Oppositionists on the Works Committee must in future be willing to break with the "collective responsibility" policy operated by Adams, and militants in the factory must now come forward to challenge the existing leadership in the forthcoming Works Committee elections.

It's war!

continued from p.1

■ A rally on Tuesday 15th. (Phone 607-9052 or 853-0056 for venue.)

■ A mass-signature campaign in Bermondsey itself. Meet on: Saturday 12th at 11am at the Advice Centre in the Blue, Southwark Park Road, SE16; Sunday 13th at 2pm at the Jolly Gardeners Pub, Rotherhithe New Road, SE16; and Monday 14th at 6.30 at 45 Arrol House, Rockingham Street, SE1.

■ A statement endorsing what Peter Tatchell wrote about extra-parliamentary action etc, to be signed by prominent Labour members, MPs, councillors and leading trade unionists.

■ A barrage of emergency resolutions and telegrams from CLPs, union branches, and individuals, to the NEC as a whole; to the one-time middle ground on the NEC (Kitson, Hoyle, Lestor, Hart, McCluskie and even Kinnock); and to union executives, especially the TGWU (re: Kitson, and Tatchell's own union), ASTMS re: Hoyle, and the Seamen's Union re: Sam McCluskie.

Socialist Organiser readers and supporters must give this top priority, and make sure that ALL these initiatives are taken up urgently in their own parties and union branches.

by Jim Denham

"It's a dirty sell-out, the dirtiest one we've ever experienced — and we've experienced plenty". That was how one T&G steward summed up the feelings of track workers at Longbridge, after last Friday's vote to end the 4-week strike.

The workers had shown extraordinary courage and determination. The strike had started just one week after the betrayal of the pay review and held solid, despite all the company's pleas, manoeuvres and implied threats. The bosses' attempt to break the strike on Monday (30th November) by "throwing open" the gates ended in total failure and only succeeded in spreading and strengthening the dispute.

The bosses had another card left to play — the weakness of the union leadership at every level, and in this case at plant level, in particular.

'Sacrosanct'

On Tuesday 1st December (the day after the Company's strike-breaking ploy failed) Moss Evans of the T&G met with Michael Edwardes and emerged with a proposal that would have given the management everything they wanted, except that the 25% reduction in relaxation allowance would be delayed for a 4-week "cooling-off" period. This suggestion met with universal derision, including from local T&G officials and the Longbridge Works Committee.

However on Wednesday 2nd, the Longbridge Works Committee itself entered into negotiations with the



JOHN HARRIS

management. The talks went on into Thursday morning when press and TV announced that a "peace formula" had been "hammered out" and would be recommended for acceptance by the Works Committee.

That day, Works Committee loyalists amongst the Shop Stewards were enthusiastically arguing that the strike had already been won. Certainly all the active strikers expected that whatever else the deal contained, it would leave the "sacrosanct" 12% relaxation allowance intact.

However many people were worried that the deal was being kept such a deadly secret and that there were no plans to call a joint shop stewards meeting before a mass meeting scheduled for Friday.

The reasons for this became apparent at Fri-

day's meeting. The deal not only sold out the 12% relaxation allowance (reducing it to 10½%) but it also added an extra hour to the week's night work — overturning an agreement for 38 hours on nights reached in 1957!

Waverers

As the facts of the deal emerged the meeting became increasingly heated. The track workers from CAB1, who had been the first to go on strike previously, were particularly angry that other workers who had joined the strike later and, in many cases, didn't work nights at all, were allowed to vote on the deal.

The first vote was so close that the Works Committee called for a parliamentary-style division. As the meeting divided

amidst shouting and confusion, Works Committee Chairman Brian Chambers encouraged waverers to cross from the 'reject' to the 'accept' side of the division. The final result was very close — with the deal only being accepted by 46 votes.

The strikers from CAB1 were furious. Clearly the vote on whether or not to return should have been restricted to those affected by the night work increase.

Beat down

How such a rotten sell-out came to be recommended by the Works Committee in the first place is still not entirely clear. It seems that a minority of three on the Works Committee (an SWP member, a dissident CPer and an independent) did oppose the deal at least

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