

Join the Labour Party

Write to 150
Walworth Rd.
London SE17.

Socialist Organiser

No. 54 SEPTEMBER 24, 1981 (CLAIMANTS AND STRIKERS 10p) 20p

SOCIALIST ORGANISER
Labour Party Conference fringe meeting

"Forum on Labour's strategy", with

Reg Race MP
Hilary Wainwright (co-author, 'Workers' Report on Vickers', 'Workers' Inquiry into State Intervention in Industry', and 'Popular Planning for Social Need')
Dennis Barry (convenor, Laurence Scotts)
Rachel Lever (secretary, Women's Fightback)
John O'Mahony (Socialist Organiser Editorial Board).

Thursday October 1, 7.30, at 'The Hungry Years', 8 Marine Parade (opposite Palace Pier)
Followed by social with Irish singer until midnight.

100 relatives back H-Block struggle

by Ian Swindale

"WE APPEAL to the political leaders, community leaders, Church leaders, and in particular to the British labour movement...

"Northern Ireland is Britain's last colony. The nationalist people don't accept that the British government has any right to divide their country and maintain that division with thousands of troops, armed police, and UDR."

Fermanagh and South Tyrone's Anti-H-Block/Armagh MP Owen Carron was speaking at a press conference to launch a visit to Britain by nearly one hundred prisoners' relatives.

The aim of the visit was to step up pressure on political leaders and appeal to the ordinary working people of Britain to reject the media lies and cringing subservience of Labour and Trade union leaders on the question of Ireland and come out in support of the hunger strikers and the prisoners' five demands.

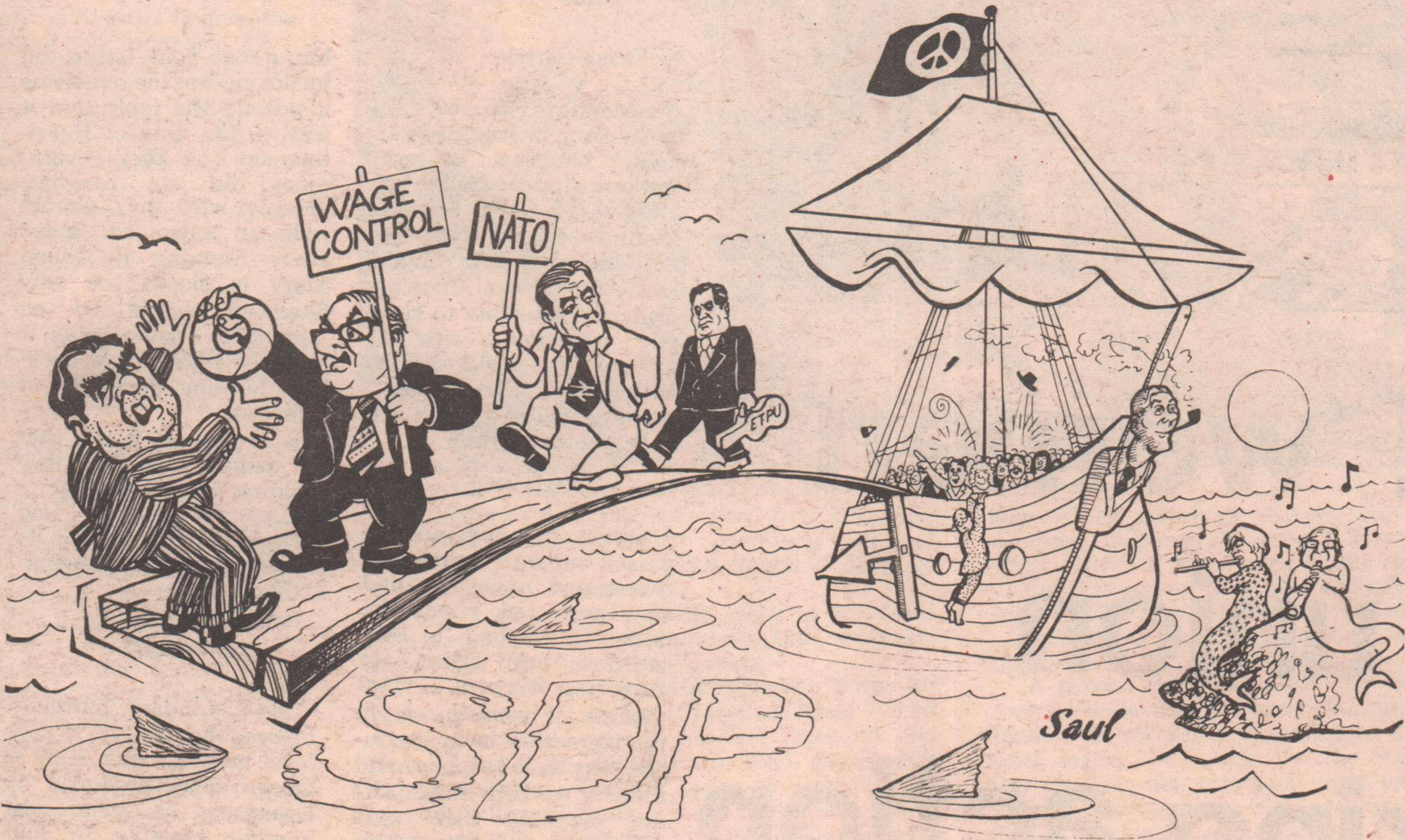
And it was a very moving story they had to tell.

Several parents told of sons — serving long sentences in Long Kesh — being beaten up by warders, several of them receiving broken bones and perforated eardrums. And Mrs. Livingstone told us of her two sons in the H-Blocks and her 14 year old daughter, Julie, murdered by a plastic bullet fired by the "security forces."

Their simple, powerful stories won over many even hostile workers, confronted with the brutal reality of British repression in Northern Ireland, at street meetings round London.

And Owen Carron will be back next week to address a Labour Committee on Ireland fringe meeting at the Labour Party conference in Brighton.

It is now up to militants within the Labour Party and the trade unions to take up the struggle of these relatives for the just demands of the H-Block prisoners. We must expose those Labour and union leaders who on the day the relatives flew back to Belfast were to be seen on the annual Chile demonstration, but, who, on Ireland, slavishly support the Tory government or, worse still, actually implement those same policies when in office.



Back TGWU Executive decision

VOTE BENN!

by Alan Thornett (TGWU shop steward, BL Cowley Assembly Plant)

THE EXECUTIVE of the TGWU should be fully supported in its decision to urge support for Tony Benn in Sunday's vote for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party.

This decision, which puts Benn within sighting distance of victory, was a major defeat for acting TGWU general secretary Alex Kitson, who was opposed to Benn's nomination originally and has fought against it ever since.

'Consensus'

He advised against the executive's 21-to-12 vote for Benn, urging them to take into account the 'results' of a 'consensus' of branches, regional committees, and district committees, which, he claimed, had gone in favour of Healey.

The subsequent screams of the mass media that the executive had acted in defiance of a democratic expression of the views of the TGWU membership, is simply hot air. It is not diffi-

cult to see that the 'consensus' had nothing to do with democracy.

Bound

Some executive members, quite rightly, questioned the validity of the 'consensus' result at Monday's executive meeting, arguing that they could not be bound by a decision taken under such conditions.

Kitson has already refused to provide any details at all of the completely unscrutinised exercise, except to claim that eight of the ten regions involved supported Healey.

Every Region carried out a different exercise, although it is clear that in most regions the appointed full-time district and regional officers, who are controlled directly by Kitson, were heavily influential in the results.

Irony

To exert influence in this way is not difficult in the TGWU, where a great proportion of the union's 8,000 or so branches never meet. Many of them are run direct-



Kitson

ly from the district offices, or by the officials or their secretaries.

There are so many unanswered questions. How many branches actually replied? Of those that did, how many had a branch meeting to take a vote? What are the branch membership figures?

Many branches have complained that they have not even had the chance to place their vote at all.

Alex Kitson says eight regions out of ten voted Healey. But the two regions he accepts voted Benn — London and Scotland — contain over one third of the union's membership. The North-West region, possibly the most militant, was recorded as voting for Healey. In that region there was no real attempt to consult with the branches, the decision being left to the regional committee.

Since the regional committee was held when a number of the left-wing members were on holiday, it produced a freak result.

Although the executive was quite right to disregard such a farce, they have, however, little to be proud of.

Chaos

Their decision, last June, to recommend that the T&G's biennial delegate conference should take no decision on the deputy leadership issue, is at the root of today's chaos.

That decision gave Kitson the authority he needed to ensure that no vote was taken. This determination led T&G national chairman

Stan Pemberton into disgraceful scenes of manoeuvring which, although eventually leading to a challenge to the chair, was effective in stopping a vote.

Yet the BDC consists of 1400 elected delegates. It is the highest body of the union, and decides policy on all other questions.

Who would doubt that had the conference been allowed to vote, it would have voted for Benn? Moreover, the decision would have been perfectly democratic and beyond challenge.

The media are completely right when they point to the irony that the union which provided the vital vote to enact democratic reforms inside the Labour Party appears incapable of producing a simple democratic decision within its own ranks.

But that does not mean we should support the fraudulent 'consensus'. It means we should fight for democracy in the unions as well as the Labour Party, and the media will give no help in that.

Efforts are now being made to overturn the democratic decision of the execu-

tive. It is already being emphasised that the executive decision is not finally binding on the union's delegation, although it would be unprecedented for them to ignore it.

Factor

Alex Kitson, although defending the executive decision in public, has not changed his convictions on the matter. Already Moss Evans, back at work for two days a week, has said it is simply 'another factor' for the delegation to take into account on Sunday'. Brian Mathers, Midlands regional secretary, has said that he does not regard the executive's decision as binding.

The delegation should, however, fully support the executive decision, and cast the union's 1½ million votes for Tony Benn. They must completely disregard the 'consensus'. There is not the slightest evidence that the T&G rank and file has suddenly swung to the right and produced a majority for Healey.

The policies passed at the T&G conference were basically the policies supported by Tony Benn. The conference called for the return of a Labour government pledged to socialist policies and it is quite certain that Dennis Healey is not going to carry that one out.



BRIGHTON '81

pages 6-10

Women in struggle



The picket line is solid — but a new initiative is needed

Glencroft: women fight for union blacking action

by Stan Crooke

THE 15 women sacked from the Glencroft Knitwear firm in Glasgow at the beginning of August are continuing to keep up the pressure on the firm in support of their demands for reinstatement and union recognition.

But Leon Newman, the firm's owner, still shows no sign of giving in. Despite the pickets, the non-unionised employees are working as usual, and a considerable number of TGWU drivers are continuing to make deliveries to the firm.

The worst offenders for breaking the picket lines are the drivers for the Knoll company in Saddleworth near Oldham, who have made deliveries of yarn both this week and the previous week.

Donations

Financially, things are looking up a bit for the pickets, although donations are still desperately needed. Apart from strike pay from the unions, donations are now starting to come in from factory collections, and union and Lab-

our Party branches. Both well CLP alone managed to raise over £40 for the women.

And, surprisingly enough, there have been no problems with the police lately.

Pressure

Support for the women continues to grow. A mass picket was organised for the women by the 'Right to Work' campaign last Tuesday lunchtime (15th), and another one is being held this coming Tuesday, 22nd. A meeting to build support for the women in Edinburgh has been organised jointly for the following day by Women's Fightback and the Edinburgh Unemployed Workers' Association.

However, there is as yet nowhere near enough pressure being put on Newman to defeat him. But the

local National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers reject criticisms in last week's Socialist Organiser that they have been lackadaisical about stepping up the pressure.

According to the local officials, the main problem in getting Glencroft products blacked at the washing plant is that, while union members there are ready to carry out the blacking, management has intimidated them by threats of sackings and closure.

But then shouldn't the union be doing something to counter the threats?

The local officials also defend the full-timers who came up from the NUHKW head office in Leicester, pointing out that they came up specially to see the women and prepare their case for the next hearing of the ACAS tribunal.

But the tribunal, even if it finds in the women's

favour, cannot force Newman to reinstate them and recognise the union. No reliance can be placed on ACAS. Indeed, Newman has already made it clear that he is not prepared to have anything to do with ACAS.

So, after almost two months of picketing, the situation shows no sign of chance: despite the picketing and the growing support for the women, Newman seems able to maintain normal levels of production.

With the October round of Union and Labour Party meetings coming up, it is therefore essential that members raise the question of this dispute in their branches and build as much support as possible for the pickets.

Information/collection sheets from: Glencroft Knitwear Dispute, c/o NUHKW, 44 Kelvingrove St, Glasgow G3 7RZ.

Typists fight for equal pay

AFTER a one-day strike in solidarity with striking typists, Liverpool City NALGO have decided on a policy of non-cooperation.

They have also been given permission by the NALGO Executive to call out 100 members. These will probably be wages staff — and as soon as the wages are stopped, other council workers are likely to strike in support of the typists.

The 500 typists have been on strike for 12 weeks, in a grading dispute. Thanks to other NALGO members blacking their work, their action has para-

lysed many City Council functions. But Liberal City Council leader Trevor Jones has been determined to sit it out.

Under a legal provision dating back to World War 2, he has been running the City through a six-person emergency powers committee. He has also tried, unsuccessfully, to send the typists' work to outside agencies.

The strikers are also demanding that NALGO recall the national typists' delegate meeting.

Messages/money to: Liverpool typists, c/o Duchy Chambers, 24 Sir Thomas St, Liverpool 1.

Nursery workers join lobby against closure

by Susan Carlyle

On Monday 14th, 60 rain-soaked and bedraggled parents, children, nursery workers and supporters lobbied the Social Services Committee — wet, but determined in their opposition to Tower Hamlets Council's attempts to close two nurseries (with 85 places) and replace them with a new 'purpose-built room' which at a pinch will only take 25 children.

Scuttling

Other nurseries had organised support for the two threatened nurseries, and also protested about the delay in settling a long overdue pay claim for nursery workers. Two months of work-to-rule in the nurseries have produced very little response and nursery workers in NALGO are planning their next move to step up their demands.

A room in the Town Hall was laid on for the demonstrators to meet Cllr. Reg Beer, who was flanked by officers scuttling to give him facts and figures as parents put him on the spot.

The children had been given and large bag of toys and played in the foyer outside.

Why, even though parents had bothered to send

him a nine point letter, did he not answer the questions it posed? His reply that it was all the fault of Heseltine and the Tory government did not convince parents why they should walk an extra 1½ miles every morning if Queen Mary is closed, or why Shadwell should be an 'option for closure' when it is on the edge of new dockland housing development schemes.

Beer also let it slip that he hadn't seen the new building for Queen Mary's at Langdon Park — and seemed unperturbed by its smallness and unsuitability.

Protect

On Monday morning, before the lobby, a top-level meeting with staff at Queen Mary produced no assurance on jobs, just another meeting to follow — but Thorne (the newly appointed head of Social Services) did reprimand the management staff responsible for closing the waiting list and for pressuring and harassing individual parents to change their nursery.

The campaign also has to protect other nurseries. Last July's council meeting implemented a 15% cut in all services.

How do you run a nurs-

ery with a 15% cut in staff and food without reducing the number of places?

Initiative

The campaign is now looking into the idea of a Saturday afternoon meeting of parents, nursery workers and supporters to discuss future activity and to build support in the labour movement. Contact with childminders and health visitors is seen as important, and with the aid of baby-sitting, parents have been able to take the initiative in speaking at Labour Party meetings and petitioning in the street markets, writing letters, and producing the campaign bulletin.

With the council elections procedure now started, Beer was challenged at a Labour Party selection meeting the following Thursday. Social Services may well now advise caution over nursery closures.

Win

But nobody should feel confident about nursery provision in Tower Hamlets. Even if the timescale is lengthened, in the end industrial action by other council workers, in support of actions taken by parents to defend their nurseries, is the way to win.

Advertisement for 'WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK' magazine, No 8 October 1980, 10p. It features the text 'MONTHLY PAPER OF THE WOMEN'S CAMPAIGN FOR LABOUR MOVEMENT FIGHTBACK FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS' and 'AGAINST THE TORIES'.

Advertisement for 'WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK' magazine, No 8 October 1980, 10p. It features a photo of a woman and the text 'The new issue of Women's Fightback is out soon. 15p plus postage from 41 Ellington Street, London N7.' There are also smaller photos and text snippets related to women's rights.

Advertisement for 'WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE' rally. It features a large graphic with the text 'WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE' and 'Rally' in a stylized font. Below the graphic, it says 'Public launching of the Workers' Socialist League from the fusion of the WSL and the I-CL. Saturday October 10, from 10am to 4.30pm, at Digbeth Civic Hall, Digbeth, Birmingham. Admission £1 (50p unwaged). Transport available from most areas: details from WSL, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD. The programme starts with workshops from 10am to noon and from 1pm to 2.30: themes include fighting the four per cent limit, the Labour Left, organising in the unions, women in the labour movement, and a discussion on Ken Loach's film 'A Question of Leadership'. At midday there'll be films and perhaps a theatre group — as well as food. Displays and exhibitions (and tea and coffee) will run through the day. Speakers at the concluding rally session, at 2.30, will include a Solidarnosc representative, a Trotskyist just returned from Poland, Dennis Barry, and possibly Owen Carron MP, as well as WSL speakers.'

**Socialist
Organiser
EDITORIAL**

Organise for a general strike!

THE TORIES and the bosses have bunched their fists for a new assault. Thatcher demonstratively followed up her hard-line Cabinet reshuffle with the announcement of a 4% pay limit for public service workers.

The CBI's comment was that the 4% figure might make some private sector workers expect too much!

Whatever their differences on interest rates or on the balance of public spending, the Tories and the bosses are united in a drive to bring down real wages (and sometimes even money wages) in order to restore profits.

According to latest Bank of England figures, the real rate of return on capital is now running at 2% — as against 3% last year, 4% in 1979, and around 10% in the 1960s.

This low rate of profit — lower even than the dwindling profit rates in other major capitalist countries — is not due to suddenly high labour costs. It is due to lack of demand (because of high unemployment), lack of modern investment, and the constant decline of living labour (by which alone profits are created) in relation to total capital.

But the capitalists' answer is to beat down wages. With inflation currently at 11.5% per year, the 4% figure means a cut in real wages of at least 7½% in one year. And if they achieve that, there'll be more to come.

Miners' leaders have said that they will smash the 4% norm.

NUM vice-president Mick McGahey said: "I am all for the miners acting on behalf of other unions. We will smash through this policy."

The miners have the power to do this. They showed it in February, when the mere beginnings of strike action in the coalfields forced the government to back down on pit closures.

But the Tories and the bosses have pressed ahead with cuts and closures double-speed in other sectors. And they could do the same on pay — bend the rules for the miners and then throw their full weight against other sections of workers.

The labour movement needs to bunch its fists, too, and not let the Tories and the bosses take us on section by section.

There is a real chance now of uniting important sections of workers in a single counter-offensive against the Tories.

Vauxhall workers have already voted to strike on their pay claim, due for settlement this month, against a "4%-with-strings" offer.



Saltley 1972: solidarity beat the Tories then, and it can beat them now

BL workers have just submitted their £20 wage claim, dated from November 1, and have been told fairly clearly by the bosses that they'll be lucky to be offered four per cent.

Ford workers have a similar claim to BL, dated from November 23. Their employers, too, have made it clear that the offer will be peanuts.

The miners' claim for £100 minimum is due for settlement from November 1. The Coal Board will be responding within cash limits laid down by the Tories. And over one million local government manual workers — the first big group to be directly covered by the 4% norm — come up for their yearly wage review in November. So do 30,000 firemen. The waterworkers follow in December: they'll be submitting their claim on Wednesday 23 September.

For all these groups of workers, the policy must be — bring forward the struggle, and strike alongside the first group to come out. Once on strike, send out

deputations and flying pickets, and organise joint meetings, to spread the struggle. For every worker's wage settlement will depend on the victory or defeat of the first section to go into struggle — against the 4%, we will stand united or fall divided.

In this way, the struggle against the 4% limit can be developed into a general strike.

A general strike can break the 4% limit and go forward to demand automatic monthly inflation protection for all wages, according to a working class price index. It can clear out the Employment Act and stop any new anti-trade union laws. And it can do more. It can make it impossible for the vanguard Tories to govern, and drive this Tory government from office. And the level of mobilisation needed by the working class to defeat this entrenched government would open up tremendous possibilities beyond the limited objectives of defeating Tory policies or even of bringing down the Tory government.

A general strike poses implicitly — and, as develops, more and more explicitly — the question of which class is master in the country.

If the Tories retain power after a general strike they will quickly counter-attack. So indeed would Labour government led by the present Foot Healey-Shore team. But that is the round after the one. The task now is to mobilise the full force of the labour movement to win this round — to defeat the 4% limit and the Tory government.

Socialists must start organising for a general strike.

1. We must spread the idea and explain the power of workers' unity.

2. Where possible, and as soon as possible, joint meetings of workers coming up for confrontation with the 4% limit should be organised. Local trade councils and Labour Parties can give a lead in this activity, and organise local action committees to coordinate the struggle.

3. We must press the demand for the leadership of the labour movement — TUC, Labour MPs, Labour councils — to break collaboration with the Tories and prepare a fightback. The TUC should organise a general strike.

4. A general strike will be won through a network of workers' committees and organisations developed in struggle — shop stewards' committees, combine committees, trades councils, Labour Parties. We must fight to gear these bodies to the urgency of preparing for a head-on clash with the Tories, to strengthen the links between them, and equip them with a fighting political perspective against the Tories — the perspective of a workers' government, a government based on and accountable to the workers' movement, taking decisive measures against capitalist power and privilege.

5. A general strike can only develop if those in the front-line give a lead. It can never develop if each group of workers, faced with an immediate struggle, ducks the fight and waits for a general strike. Every time we duck a fight, the Tories get stronger. That's why waiting for the next general election is no answer — and also why waiting for a general strike is no answer. In the wages fight, and in the fight for jobs, socialists must argue for maximum mobilisation by the workers in the front-line — and then for a drive to draw other workers into the struggle.



Home from home

Whether it's due to over-exposure to Royal Wedding fever, or too much Coronation Street, I know not, but Shirley Williams seems to have gone into the business of matrimonial counselling.

She has come up with this gem — "a marriage followed by a tiff is usually followed by a great many babies" — especially if you share Shir's opposition to abortion, even for offspring, as in this case, that are likely to be severely brain-damaged.

The tiff in question is the decision of the Liberal Assembly to call for the banning of Cruise and Trident and for Britain to take a lead in making Europe a nuclear-free zone. Her comrade-in-arms Bill Rodgers does not entirely share her optimism, he says he'd find it difficult to be Defence spokesman for the Alliance if it was saddled with this policy.



Poor Bill, he's having a hard time of it. Fancy leaving the Labour Party because it looks like thwarting your dreams of blowing up the world, only to find you're marrying into a clan of raving peaceniks.

Fear not though Bill, for yonder stands the blushing bridegroom David Steel with that tried and tested remedy for ailing marriages, the "I won't take a blind bit of notice of Conference policy" formula. Phew! It's not really like the Labour Party after all!

Do as I say...

A stride forward for multinational trade unionism was how the T&G Record welcomed a meeting of General Motors union representatives from 20 countries. The General Motors World Auto Council met in Michigan and drew up a ten point list of world bargaining objectives. The need for solidarity was stressed and strong arguments were put against workers in one country accepting low wages because of the bosses' pleas about competition

Off the South end...

You may have seen the full page ad the other day singing the praises of Southend Council for the courageous step of putting out their street cleaning services to private profiteers, and inviting other councils to follow in Southend's pioneering footsteps.

It may not have impressed you, but one council looking at taking up the idea is Wandsworth. No doubt they were drawn by the lure of saving thousands of pounds of ratepayers' money. Or maybe they were affected by the short sharp treatment meted out to the greedy trade unionists previously employed to do the job — they were all sacked and some of them were taken back on by the private contractor under new

wages and conditions (where else do you expect them to make savings?).

Blacked

So Wandsworth has been advertising in the trade journal inviting tenders for their one million pound cleaning contract. Unfortunately for them, Wandsworth NALGO have also taken space in the same journal pointing out that any firm that does submit a tender will be blacked nationally. The unions have already succeeded in at least temporarily blocking plans by the council to sell off the mechanical workshops which maintain their fleet of vehicles, ambulances, meals on wheels, dustcarts etc.

And the blacking threat has already dissuaded one potential contractor from tendering.

Deteriorate

Now Wandsworth council is taking NALGO to court to get an injunction to force them to lift the blacking threat. As the NALGO branch point out, if they win the court case being brought against them the ratepayer foots the bill. And if the council wins, some private firm will pocket £1 million of ratepayers' money and, if Southend is anything to go by, the service will deteriorate.

Wandsworth NALGO have called a day's strike for the day of the court hearing.

GERRY BYRNE

PRESS GANG



"UNTIL now disgruntled Tories have had nowhere plausible to go. They have been able only to relieve their disquiet by casting a protest vote for the Liberals. But at the next election they may be able to vote for a genuine alternative, a coalition that could hold real political power".

That was the Sunday Times at the end of a week which had seen the press taking the Liberal Party conference seriously for the first time in living memory. It was forced to — if only because it could find little consolation in the Thatcher reshuffle.

After a flurry of enthusiastic puns of the 'Wets Dried Out' variety, and some satisfaction that at last trade union members would be slapped in proper handcuffs by the new unemployment minister, Tebbit, inflation figures showed an unmistakable upward trend.

Even the truest blue Tory rag began to have festering doubts as to whether Thatcher would still be cracking the whip after the next election.

Derek Brown in the Guardian invoked the nost-

algia of "the brave old days before the mould was broken" at Liberal conference.

"Now the last man to have spelled David Steel with a final E has gone to the great telephone box in the sky. And the sight of an entire smear of reporters fast asleep on the assembly press bench is no more than a folk memory".

Did we not know it! Pictures of Shirley and David, David and Shirley. Jokes about living together and modern marriages. Jokes about Mrs Steel not using the Downing Street paper (a little close to the knuckle; the gang of four do not see Steel as the man in number 10 even after the second coming).

The Liberal leaders wore their heavyweight cloaks like children dressing up in parents' clothes. After years of being treated as sandal-clad irrelevancies, they are suddenly statesmen (a notable absence of stateswomen in this future cabinet).

It is of course a commonplace that the SDP is being groomed as a reliable alternative to the Tories. But it is one thing to recognise that abstractly and quite

another to watch it be put into action.

Indeed, even while Liberals were being boxed by the press, it was clear that they are forever destined to play second fiddle to the SDP.

The lion's share of publicity went to the SDP leaders, just for turning up, vultures landing on throats of their victims.

Steel clearly thought was the new Messias but in fact he was cast Fleet Street as John Baptist, whose main virtue was being on good terms with those who were come.

The real contempt which the Tory press holds the Liberals most clearly shown was the conference voted to oppose Cruise and Trident missiles.

The only relevance resolution had to the current political situation whether it would cause embarrassment to Steel his dealings with Rodgers, Williams, and the rest.

Still, it was by overcoming little difficulties inconvenient conference votes that the SDP trou became the superstars are today.



World news

CRISIS WRACKS BOLIVIAN

Bolivia, September 8.

ON FRIDAY September 4, La Paz suffered a snow-storm the like of which the city hadn't seen for 40 years. At the same time Bolivia acquired its fifth president in a month: the gruff and palpably unintelligent General Celso Torrelío.

In the event, the urban masses paid a good deal more attention to the climatic conditions, reflecting the virtually universal recognition that the 'election' of one general by himself and two others (the previous junta) heralded nothing new: the dictatorship continues.

The designation of Torrelío rather than one of the others rests almost exclusively upon the fact that he is not publicly known to be a 'narcotraficante' (cocaine smuggler) as is General Bernal, head of the airforce (US\$10,000 a month for not interfering with illegal flights), or a smuggler of rotten rice to Pakistan, as is Admiral Pammo.

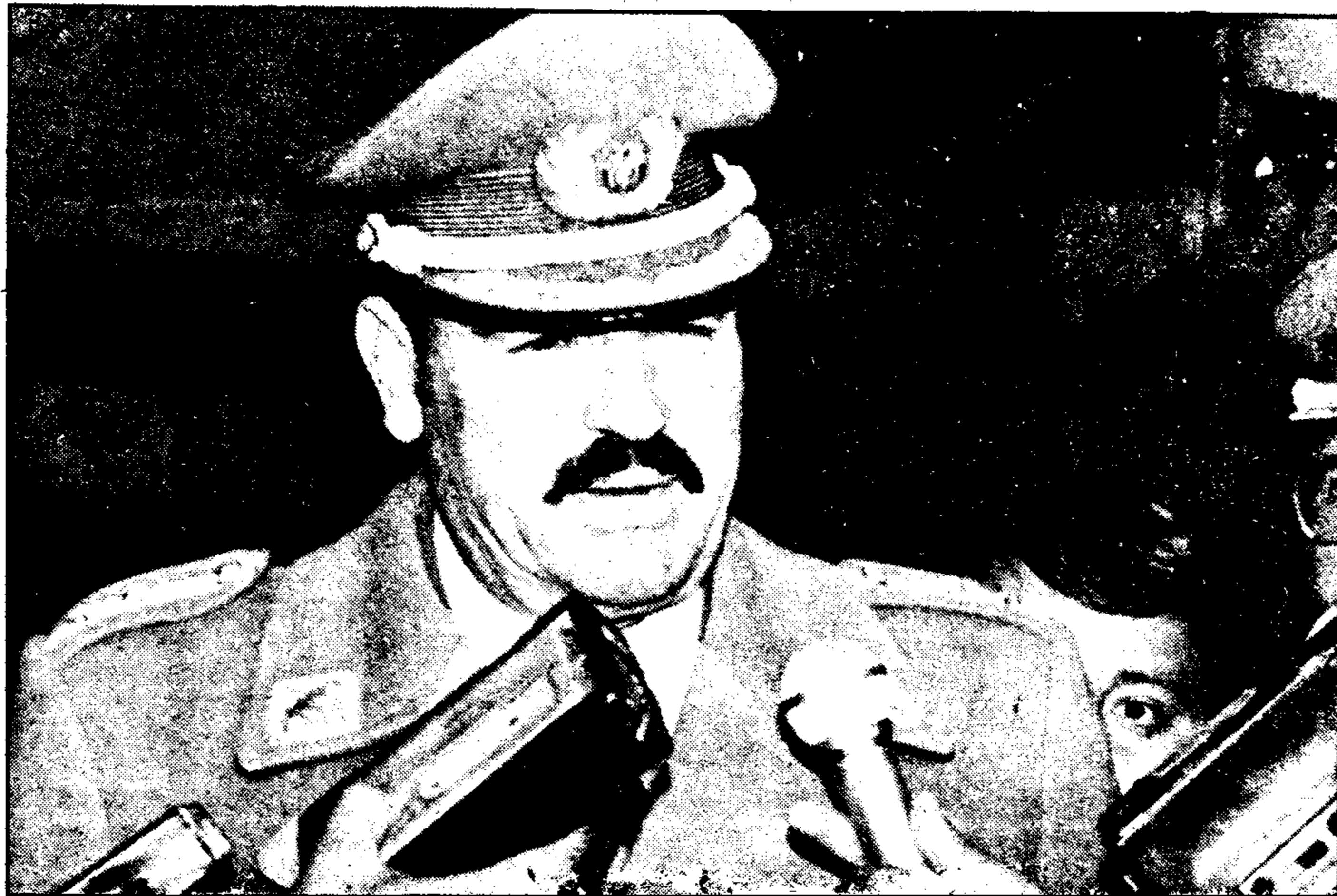
Apart from his permanent inability to drop his voice below a shout, Torrelío's only distinguishing feature for the masses — (who are by no means always progressive in such matters) — is his reputation as a 'K'aspa Chola' (one disposed to adorn himself in female garb).

Yet the nomination of the new president did not proceed without another major crisis inside the military, since Torrelío, promoted from Lieutenant Colonel to Divisional General in a year, was the most obvious candidate of 'continuismo', of the continuation of the Garcia Meza dictatorship.

This led to the opposition of that fraction of the army which rebelled against

JUNTA

SANTIAGO FORTIN reports on the growing disarray of the Bolivian military.



New dictator Torrelío

García early in August, headed by Generals Anez and Natusch, backed by ex-dictator Banzer and directed by the Pentagon, whose strategists are increasingly anxious to put an end to the games of the Bolivian armed forces.

In the event this bunch of 'rebels' — responsible for the massacres of November 1979 and yet shamelessly supported by the Communist Party and the petty bourgeois MIR — decided not to stand and fight.

One reason was the threat of yet another coup by Col. Luis Arce Gomez, the prime mover of the July 1980 uprising. Arce was

García's Minister of the Interior, responsible for hundreds of deaths, and is a leading 'narcotraficante'.

Arce's bloody schemes are now of little use either to the weakling native bourgeoisie or to the imperialists, for whom it is hard to square drug-dealing with 'freedom' (even of an imperialist variety).

Significantly, it is Arce's cocaine connection rather than his massacre of workers that gives rise to this 'moral' objection.

Even though they are played upon the bodies of workers assassinated each week, these manoeuvres may appear as mere games. These they

are not.

They are the reflection of the deep-seated decomposition of the Bolivian military, which after a year in power has taken on all the structural deficiencies of the nationalist capitalist class, and is riddled with corruption.

Rigged election

For the last month the armed forces have been searching desperately for the means to pull themselves together.

The only difference between Anez and Torrelío is that the former sees salvation in a 'democratic opening' and preparing the



Old dictator Banzer

way for a rigged election to place Banzer in office, while the latter lacks the imagination and political sense to grasp the straw offered by Reagan, the CP, the banks, and social democracy.

Within a matter of weeks Torrelío will be forced to devalue the peso by around 80% if his government is to receive the 'support' of the IMF. If he survives this measure, it will only be by yet another direct offensive against the workers and peasants.

The last devaluation — in December 1979 — was met with a general strike and blockade of roads by the campesinos, who are

now mobilising after the measured retreat of July 1980.

The clearest sign of this is in the repudiation by the miners of Siglo XX-Catavi of their 'relacionadores' (yellow, officially-appointed, union leaders) who belong to the CP and MIR.

The 9,000 members of this same complex have shown their class independence by striking for five days to protest the killing of a 'relacionador' by the army, while at the same time repudiating the role of the 'relacionadores'.

This movement is now being spread to other mines and the factories of La Paz and Cochabamba,

and represents the growing strength of the Trotskyists in the clandestine trade unions.

The Friday of Torrelío's inauguration also saw the (clandestine) publication of 'The Heroic Resistance of the Bolivian Miners' by the Human Rights Assembly.

This short book is completely bereft of any political perspective bar the bankrupt belief that elections will provide the Bolivian masses with a way out of their crippling economic and social plight.

Yet, nevertheless, it is a tragic and impressive testimony to the heroism of the vanguard of the proletariat in its resistance of García's coup.

The book details the daily battles, for over three weeks, against the military's offensive on the mining zones, and contains a vivid series of colour photographs of the final capture of Siglo XX, when a group of militants are captured by the Rangers, beaten up, robbed, taken to a distant hillside, stripped to avoid future identification, and executed.

Such is the nature of the Bolivian working class that despite such massacres the Bolivian generals have been unable to impose their ambition of a Pinochet-style crackdown: after a year they are running scared and in total collapse.

The growing mobilisation, which has at its core a deep repudiation of the electoral adventures of the reformists and the lacklustre arguments of the Stalinists for class alliances, is the surest guarantee that these comrades, who are our comrades, have not fallen in vain.

Mitterrand's African repression

By Jim Farnham

AT THE beginning of the year the capitalist press blamed the Libyan regime of Colonel Gaddafi for the rapid development of mass struggle in West Africa.

Skillfully using the media created anti-Libyan hysteria, the imperialist nations and their agents have been intervening forcefully against those growing layers of workers and peasants who have continued in their life and death struggle against capitalist oppression.

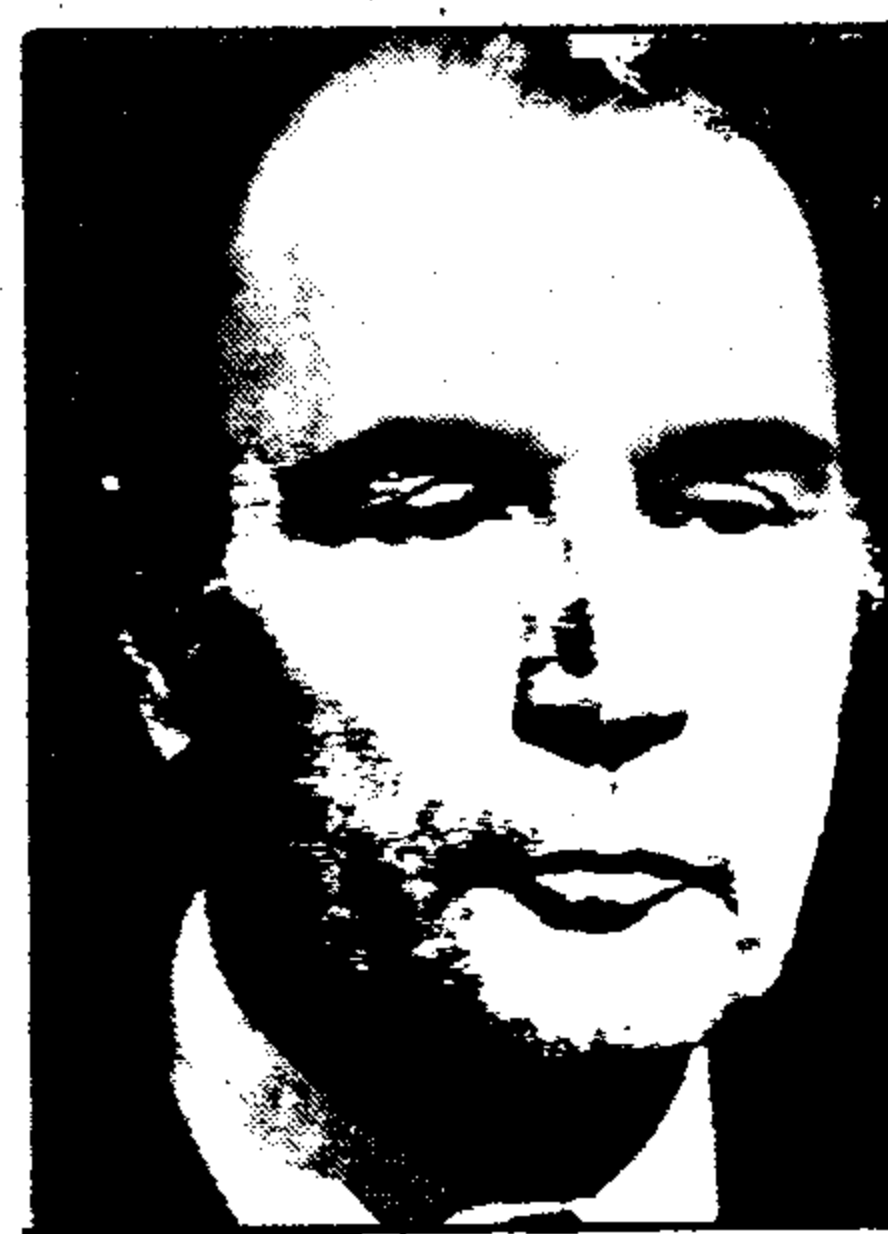
The "socialist" Mitterrand government has played a crucial role in this aggressive approach in West Africa.

Last month, Mitterrand's Minister for Co-operation, M. Jean-Pierre Cot said in Nigeria:

"As long as we have Cuban troops in Angola and Libyan troops in Chad and while the Americans and Russians are selling high technology weapons to African countries, we can hardly refuse to answer the demands of our friends who are afraid for their security."

But who are these "friends" of the Stalinists and reformists in the Mitterrand government?

Nor the Gambian workers and peasants now living under the jackboot of a French-trained and French-supplied Senegalese army of



Mitterrand

occupation!

Not the mass oppressed of the Central African Republic who now live under the martial law of the French-paid, trained and supplied soldiers of General Kolinga (ex-henchman of Emperor Bokassa)!

Nor the 250,000 members of the Sierra Leone Labour Congress who staged a general strike against the appalling living conditions and 200% inflation of the Stevens regime; a regime that survives with the backing of the imperialists and of its neighbouring and fellow neo-colonial regimes.

The 14,000 French troops stationed in Africa are there today, as they were

in Giscard's yesterday, to prop up the agents of imperialism who rule Africa's neo-colonial states.

They are there to protect a system of profits that tramples on the needs of the workers and peasants, throwing millions into starvation and disease when there is enough wealth in the world to prevent these.

Capitalism in West Africa is unable to give even the most elementary democratic rights or provide enough for people to eat.

The result is that even partial struggles for the improvement of the living standard of the workers and peasants, immediately challenge capitalist profitability and the entire system of imperialist control in the region.

The threat to the livelihood of West Africa's mass oppressed is posed by the continued existence of the capitalist system — and no French soldier can ever help them against that threat until such time that there exists a Red Army of a revolutionary workers' government in France!

For all Mitterrand's hollow "socialist" rhetoric at home and his strong words against the South African invasion of Angola, he was still able to agree with

Thatcher on the need for pumping in money as well as guns, as part of a new 'Aid' package with which to prop up the client governments of neo-colonial Africa.

When Mitterrand argues that increased 'aid' will create "new outlets, new partners and new worlds to work with", he is not talking about helping the mass oppressed to build workers and peasants governments — he is talking to Thatcher and Reagan about how to create new markets, new profits for imperialism.

Organisations of the French working class must mobilise against Mitterrand's imperialist policies in West Africa.

With the organisations of the international working class they must help to build the class mobilisation of their brothers and sisters in West Africa.



IN BRIEF

SUDAN ARRESTS

ONE OF Reagan's favourite puppets in Africa, President Numeiry of Sudan, last week sent his police force to arrest thousands of homeless unemployed people in the capital Khartoum.

They were then expelled to the totally impoverished rural areas. Numeiry's vicious regime described these people as "vagrants, tramps and criminals" — the favourite words of dictators who are waging a campaign of repression against the oppressed.

In June this year, when Sudan's more than 40,000 railway workers went on a three week strike for higher wages, Numeiry arrested union leaders and militants, and threatened to execute them for their "criminal" actions.

For the working people of Sudan, struggling against terrible poverty and repression, the real criminals are Numeiry and the imperialists behind him.

For the sake of the profits of imperialist bankers and their Sudanese lackeys, the working people face even worse living standards and an even sharper battle to get the basic needs of daily life.

As the militant railworkers have shown, the working masses are fighting back, determined to win the basic right of all working people — a decent standard of living and political control over their daily lives.

Numeiry's regime faces a growing crisis over how to break this fighting militancy and defend the rule and the profits of capitalism. Reagan has been quick to give large amounts of military and other aid to help Numeiry in his bloody task.



Numeiry

FSLN in crisis

ON September 9th, Nicaragua's Sandinista government declared a state of emergency.

Strikes will be banned, and public spending is cut by five per cent. This state of emergency will continue for one year.

The background to the Sandinistas' decision is the devastation caused by the civil war against the dictator they overthrew, Anastasio Somoza, the flight of capital since then, and Reagan's decision to block \$75 million US aid.

The Sandinistas have earned the hostility of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie and of the US, while at the same time failing to move decisively against the continued private ownership of over half the economy or to aim for a link-up with revolutionary movements in other countries.

Balance

So for two years they have been trying to keep a delicate balance. But the growing crisis, and the Sandinistas' latest move against the working class, must increase the danger of counter-revolution.

World news



Russian tanks mount a threat on the borders, while inside Poland the bureaucrats menace the workers

THREAT HANGS OVER POLAND

The stunned silence greeting the salvoes from Solidarnosc's Congress was shattered within days as Albin Siwak — a member of the PUWP (Polish Communist Party) ruling Politbureau announced that "Solidarnosc must be delegatised. For this we have enough men in the security forces and the army". Siwak, an old trade union boss, is known and ridiculed throughout Poland and its free trade union press as the man set up to make (whenever necessary) the appropriately chaotic and violent outbursts against the union.

But this buffoonery could only be allowed officially as there was a substantial amount of agreement within the Politbureau itself for a course of open confrontation.

Other blows followed in quick succession. In Wroclaw, Kornel Morawiecki, a delegate to Solidarnosc's national congress and leading light on the union's local monthly journal (The Lower Silesian Bulletin) was arrested and charged with activity detrimental to "the allies of the Polish Republic".

Menacing

He was accused of distributing two appeals to Russian soldiers in Poland written and signed by Russian exiled trade unionists, calling on the troops to understand the real nature of events in the country and support Solidarnosc.

The following day, the PUWP declared that the Gdansk agreement — the concordat signed between the workers and the bureaucracy last summer — had been unilaterally ripped up by Solidarnosc's 'provocative' Congress.

The union, according to the PUWP Politbureau, "has opted for a programme of political opposition..... an orientation towards a menacing and perhaps bloody confront-

continued from back page

ation." Throughout the Eastern bloc these obligatory meetings "expressing Workers' horror at what the Poles are doing, are held with monotonous regularity. Photos of unhappy Russian workers (as distinct from the laughing, carefree kind waving red roses about) in front of protest placards

having as "its main objective to vilify and calumniate the first socialist state in the world and the very idea of socialism itself, and to encourage hostility and hate amongst the Poles with respect to the Soviet Union and the Soviet people. To cut the ties of friendship and to liquidate socialism in Poland."

And the PUWP, what is it doing about all this? demands the note in a hurtful tone. Nothing.

"On the contrary, they allow them (i.e. Solidarnosc) to use local offices



European-style are laid to waste, as Walesa himself admits:

"I would like Solidarity to be a trade union movement. But life introduces corrections. If suddenly the problem of political prisoners appears, or food queues get longer and longer and people are dissatisfied, I can't stay in an enterprise, limit myself to the enterprise and forget about these problems..... As a union I can wait, as a Pole I would die".

Spectre

The union, in reply to the Politbureau's vicious attack, stated that it "would not enter into the scenario of provocation" prepared by the bureaucracy, the rising war of words and tempers.

As far as Solidarnosc was concerned "the real reason for the clash over the last few weeks has been our union's activities in the face of the ruin of the economy.

"It's a matter of pushing back the spectre of hunger and creating the conditions which would guarantee that the sacrifices and extra work agreed to by society as a whole are not wasted and squandered again" — not squandered and wasted by bureaucratic misrule and mismanagement.

But this can only be done by the workers throwing out the bureaucrats, effectively seizing power, and running the economy themselves.

SOLIDARNOSĆ

are splashed throughout the world.

On Thursday 17th the Russians, following up their denunciation five days earlier of Solidarnosc's congress as an "anti-socialist and anti-Soviet bacchanalia", delivered their most ominous note yet to the Polish government.

The message, conveyed personally by Aristov, the Soviet ambassador in Warsaw, denounced the workers' movement as



Polish workers demand more food

to organise their meetings, they are given access to the mass media and have technical equipment put at their disposal. We don't hide the fact that all this arouses the deep indignation of the Soviet people".

Is this message a final warning — crack down or we invade — or has the Kremlin already lost confidence in the Polish stalinists? They put on a war-like, militant face to please the Russians and a compromising one to contain the workers, in the end satisfying no-one.

As Solidarnosc moves towards the second session of its national Congress, due to start on September 25th, it is caught in a very real dilemma.

Caste

It seeks not to tread on the bureaucracy's toes and not to offer a directly political challenge to the privileged caste. Nevertheless reality impinges on this schema — all the best laid plans for "historic compromise" Eastern

INTERNATIONAL ACTION

Dogan Tarkan KEEP UP THE PRESSURE!

DOGAN TARKAN is a Turkish socialist and former trade union official whom the Home Office are threatening to deport. If they send him back to Turkey, he will certainly be jailed and tortured by the military regime there.

This week Dogan

spoke to Socialist Organiser about the campaign against his deportation.

AS A result of the successful campaigning of the Turkey Solidarity Campaign in my defence, and the growing support for me inside the British labour movement, the Home Office invited me for an inter-

view on September 15.

They asked questions about my involvement in political struggles since 1965 — which suggests an ongoing investigation about me by the Home Office — and about my organisation (Kurtulus). There was nothing new in these questions, since they asked me similar questions when I entered Britain.

However, in my view, for the Home Office to ask me to this new interview was a development in a positive direction.

So far we have around 2,500 signatures on my petition, including a number of trade union leaders such as Arthur Scargill (NUM), Lawrence Daly (NUM), Terry Marsland (Tobacco Workers), Tom Jackson (UCW), and Bill Deal (Fire Brigades Union); 16 Labour MPs; five Danish MPs; and several Labour Party constituencies, Trades Councils, and Labour Party and trade union branches.

Home Office

Some organisations have taken up my case directly with the Home Office, such as the TUC, the Indian Workers' Association, and the Society of Socialist Lawyers.

In brief, I am delighted to see the international solidarity of the British labour movement which has been expressed in defence of me as a Turkish socialist and my right to remain in Britain until such time as I can return to my country freely.

But we should keep up the pressure on the Home Office. We must pass further resolutions in trade union branches and Labour Parties, collect more signatures, send protest letters to the Home Office, and hold further meetings.

Thousands

It is not only me who is a victim of military dictatorship in Turkey. There are thousands of working class militants, revolutionaries, and socialists killed, put in jail, or under torture and all working class organisations (trade unions, political parties) have been banned.

So it's crucial that the British labour movement exerts its solidarity in defence of the labour movement in Turkey, and actively supports and participates in the Turkey Solidarity Campaign.

Contact: Friends of Dogan Tarkan, c/o Box BM 5965 London WC1N 3XX; Turkey Solidarity Campaign, same address.

Thousands join US march



OVER 250,000 workers took part last Saturday in the biggest US protest march since the Vietnam war.

The demonstration had been called in Washington by leaders of the AFL-CIO trade union confederation, under pressure to show some opposition to the vicious domestic policies of the Reagan administration.

The protest was termed 'Solidarity Day' after the Polish trade union, and was the first national action called by the AFL-CIO since the Ford government.

But it does not reflect any turn by the AFL-CIO bureaucracy towards a break from the twin capitalist political parties in the US.

Alienated by Reagan, the union chiefs have turned not to the building of a Labour

Party, but towards strengthening links with the Democratic Party, whose present leaders are equally committed as Reagan to attacking the working class at home and abroad.

Socialist Organiser will carry a full one-page on-the-spot report on the march next week.

Iran in chaos

AS THE war between Iran and Iraq moves into its second year, the internal chaos in Iran grows ever more savage.

The sound of gunfire erupts through the streets of Tehran, as groups of leftists, mainly members of the Mojahedeen, battle with Khomeini's Revolutionary Guards.

Every day small street battles claim the lives of dozens of leftists. After such battles the revolutionary guards round up dozens of people whom

they claim supported the leftists: most of these never appear again.

At the same time gunfire echoes through the prisons of Iran, particularly Tehran's notorious Evin prison, as firing squads execute hundreds every week.

In two days last week, over 180 leftists were shot there.

In Kurdistan fighting continues, with the government troops unable to suppress the struggle there.

ANDREW HORNUNG

BRIGHTON '81

What basis for unity of Labour's Left?



Healey's howler

NIGEL WILLIAMSON — a member of the Benn Campaign Committee [writing in a personal capacity] — opens a discussion on organising the Left.

CAN LEFT unity ever genuinely be more than romantic notions, good intentions, and constant bickering and division?

The precedents may not be encouraging, but there are several signs which can legitimately give rise to optimism.

Firstly, 'broad left' and similar groupings, stretching across a far wider political spectrum than the Labour Left, have operated very successfully in a large number of unions.

Secondly, the Rank and File Mobilising Committee has united up to ten different groups on the left of the Party in a common aim over the last eighteen months.

Blocks

Both of these examples must be qualified, however. In many unions, such Broad Left groups often operate solely to get resolutions onto agendas and build up electoral blocks in support of those resolutions and left candidates. This is a legitimate exercise in itself, but it is also a source of equally legitimate criticism levelled at the Labour left by the ultra-left — that it is merely interested in building up electoral blocks, controlling the bureaucratic superstructure, while ignoring grass-roots activity.

In addition, the Rank and File Mobilising Committee may have created a certain unity on the left (although that was not without its traumas), but it must be conceded that such unity was on a very limited basis — namely the need for democratic reform of the Party constitution.

Activity

Nevertheless, it should certainly be possible in the light of these experiences to avoid in future some of the shortcomings of these two approaches.

A broad left grouping in the Labour Party would certainly have a role in building electoral blocks in support of resolutions. But it should not be an organisation which swings into operation only at the time of conferences and Party elections. It would need to involve itself in rank and file campaigning, building a mass Party at the grass-roots through a regular journal and other campaigning activity.

It should also be possible to build upon a wider basis of unity than solely constitutional reform. Whatever differences the Left may have over import controls



and other specific elements of the alternative strategy, there is more that fundamentally unites us than divides us.

Rhetoric

For instance, our commitment to Clause IV Part 4 of the Labour Party constitution, and to that "fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of wealth and power in favour of working people and their families" unites us. Our belief that our society is still divided by class and privilege, and that the Labour Party must seek to overthrow capitalism rather than merely seek to manage it better than the Tories, unites us and fundamentally differentiates left and right when all the rhetoric has been stripped away.

There is a fundamental basis for unity.

Roy Hattersley has recently criticised the Left of the Party for indulging in 'street politics'. The Left would, of course, consider this to be one of the most encouraging developments, epitomised at a national level by the People's March and the huge unemployment demonstrations officially organised by the Party, but mirrored a thousand times in local activity that is less organised but at least as effective.

Hattersley's comments are clearly typical of the "leave it all to the Parliamentarians" approach. This is shared by not a few

of the Tribune Group, who believe that socialism can be legislated into existence by three hundred Labour MPs.

We would obviously reject that, and one of the essential tasks of any tentative new basis of left unity would be to coordinate the left forces in Parliament (those on the left of the Tribune Group) and the whole spectrum of left activity outside Parliament.

Rights

The Labour Party's role has always been to represent the interests of working people. The origins of the Party itself lie in the campaign for Labour Representation in the Commons. To secure this, the Labour Representation Committee was founded in 1900, and launched with these words, "It is the workers' reply to the aggressive action of Federated Masters and Trusts".

Today workers are still suffering from the "aggressive action" of the same market and from a reactionary Tory government which is seeking to turn the clock back eighty years on basic trade union rights.

The difference now is that the working class has both the strength and the policies democratically arrived at by the TUC and the Labour Party Annual Conference to combat successfully the joint attack upon workers' living standards and their basic rights.

What remains the same is the need for Labour Representation in the Commons; that is to say, elected representatives of the Party who will represent the cause of Labour in Parliament.

The recent letter signed by Labour's five-strong front bench defence team repudiating Party policy on disarmament illustrates just how far away we remain from this simple and fundamental requirement.

One of the fundamental aims of any new basis for left unity must be, then, to coordinate the activities of left Labour MPs and activists, and to secure the representation of the cause of the labour movement in Parliament, in a way that it clearly is not represented at present.

The following could form the basis for discussion towards establishing principles on which to ground the Labour Representation Committee. Methods of effecting such basic principles would, of course, be far more controversial, but point 10 would go some way towards covering this.

1. To consolidate the gains already made for democracy in the Party and to extend the principle of accountability to other areas of the Party's operation.

2. To ensure that Labour's manifesto at the next election contains clear commitments to carry out those policies which will have been decided by conference.

3. To secure the election to offices in the Party of people committed to the carrying out of conference policies.

4. To defend the federal structure of the Labour Party and the central role of the trade unions within it, while not necessarily accepting existing levels of democracy within trade unions.

5. To strengthen the fight against the Tories and the Social Democrats by ensuring that Labour's representatives cannot deliver us into their hands by pursuing policies against the interests of working people.

6. To promote the full implementation of Clause IV Part 4 of the Party's constitution.

7. To ensure that the next Labour government is committed to a full frontal attack upon capitalism, rather than merely seeking to manage it better than the Tories.

8. To develop a strategy which will not only dismantle the economic power of the City and the multinationals, but which can overcome the problem of the massive coercive apparatus of the State obstructing a Labour government intent on implementing its manifesto policies.

9. To encourage greater awareness in the Labour party of the specific problems faced by women in capitalist society and the problems faced by gays,

blacks and other minorities.

10. To promote discussion of the most effective methods of bringing about an irreversible shift in balance of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families, in a frank but tolerant fashion.

11. To coordinate the activities of left-wing Labour MPs and left activists in the unions, constituencies, and other Labour Party groups.

Impetus

It should be stressed again that such a list is far from comprehensive (it was the product of half an hour one rainy afternoon); it is merely meant to serve as a basis for discussion and an example of the sort of platform around which the left ought to be able to unite.

Tony Benn's candidature has electrified British politics and generated unprecedented interest in left alternative policies; the momentum and impetus it has given the whole of the Left cannot afford to be wasted.

The potential is most certainly there. What is necessary now is the most wide-ranging discussion on the precise basis upon which left unity should proceed.



CLPD: vote Willsman!

THIS YEAR'S Labour Party annual conference will provide the first opportunity for rank and file representation of the influential Conference Arrangements Committee, which decides which resolutions and amendments shall be included for debate and which will be ruled out of order.

The rank and file have previously been denied any say in the arrangement of the procedure, and that is why many decisions taken by the party as a whole have been mysteriously reversed at the start of conference.

Unaware

This year, however, delegates will automatically

LAST Saturday, Denis Healey got loudly heckled and booed by exasperated workers on the Labour Party jobs demonstration.

Seizing the chance to present himself as a martyr, he set about denouncing the crowd and rousing further uproar. And he followed that up by naming Jon Lansman, secretary of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy as 'leading' and 'orchestrating' the booing.

Healey spared no detail. Lansman had been just to the right of the platform, raising his arms as a signal. And he had done the same thing at the Labour Party's earlier Cardiff rally — from immediately below the platform.

At last, after all the dozens of anonymous, uncheckable accusations from the Healey camp about 'bully-boys' and 'intimidation' by the left, the right wing was naming names!

And it rebounded in Healey's face. Straight away Jon Lansman was able to prove that he was not even present in Birmingham or Cardiff, let alone 'orchestrating' anything. Healey had to apologise, though he still blustered that this "does not alter the important facts. There was an organised attempt at

both rallies to prevent me from being heard. It was carried out by supporters of Mr. Benn."

But this is back to the usual style — no names, no details, no possibility of checking. What evidence does Healey have of the booing being 'organised' or aimed to silence him?

More likely, the booing was 'organised', or rather provoked, by just one person — Denis Healey himself, first by his continued insults, over the years to the labour movement and second by his calculated attempt to taunt the crowd.

Jon Lansman told Socialist Organiser:

"Healey has not even properly retracted his accusation against me. More important, he is trying to submerge the limited traction he has made beneath renewed general accusations of organised disruption. In short, he is still using smear tactics."

"It is utterly hypocritical for him to pose as an injured claimant for free speech when he has the entire Fleet Street press pushing his case and denouncing Tony Benn."

"He is trying to divert attention from the real issues — which are party policy and the implementation of that policy."

Heather Gaebler contributes our regular column from the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy this week.

There will then be a second ballot, and this election concerns only the delegates nominated by the constituencies.

Delegates may make choice only, but in our view it is desirable that voting on the second ballot (unless they are mandated) should cast their vote irrespective of who among the CLP nominees came top in the first ballot.

Pete Willsman is the delegate who in our view has considerable knowledge of Labour Party procedure and has been nominated by a number of constituencies. We therefore urge delegates to vote for Pete Willsman on second ballot, regardless of the result of the first ballot.

BRIGHTON '81

Ireland: reject this document!



FOR THE first time this year there has been really widespread opposition in the Labour Party to the bipartisan policy on Ireland.

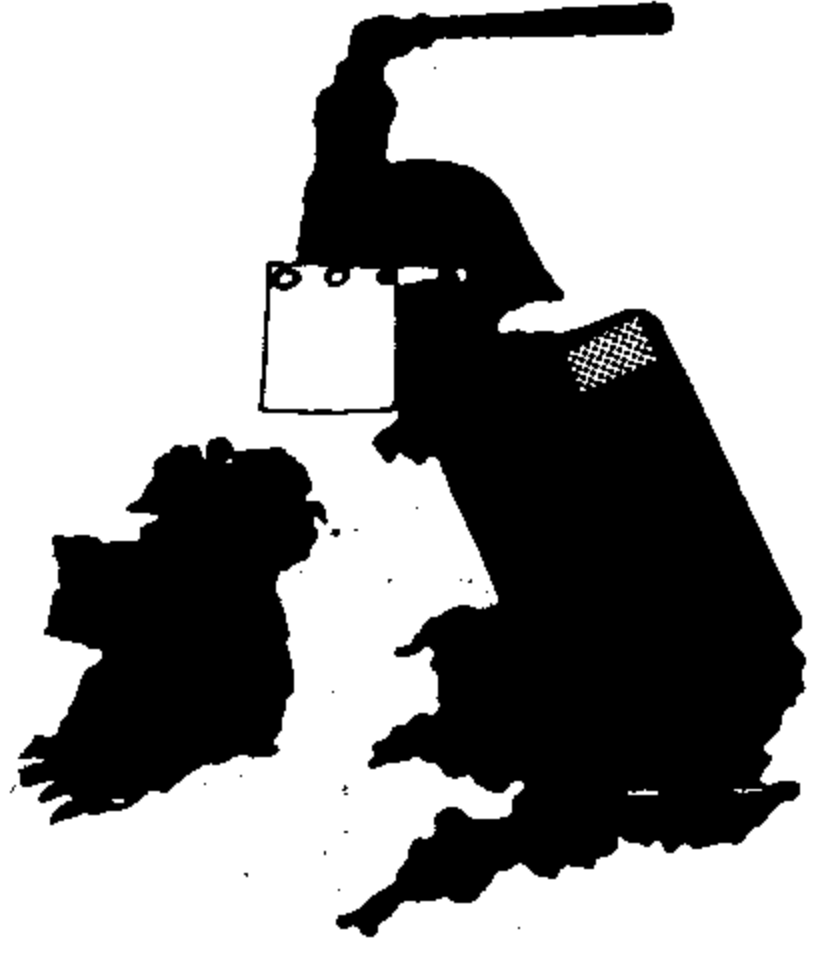
The grotesque spectacle of official Labour spokesperson Don Concannon crowing over Bobby Sands' deathbed brought home the reality of it very vividly.

It has been clear for some months that the bipartisan policy could not survive in its old form.

But the response from the Labour Party NEC Working Party — set up early last year to present a new policy for Labour — has been to wrap up the policy of support for the British presence, for repression and for the status quo in talk about support for a united Ireland and an end to partition . . . not now . . . not under the next Labour government . . . but some time in the future.

Taken on its own and unconditionally, the commitment to a united Ireland would be a major step forward for the Labour Party but it is so hedged about with qualifications as to become meaningless — no more than sugar on the same old pill.

The working party looked seriously at three alternatives — a united Ireland, a devolved power-



sharing government in the six counties and a continuation of direct rule. It comes down in favour of all three!

The report states that "These should not be seen as separate alternatives. Instead they should be seen as an integral part of a practical political programme".

So for now we stay where we are!

Veto

To get to a united Ireland, according to the report, consent is needed within the existing Northern Ireland state — thus the report explicitly gives the Unionists the right to deter-

mine the rate of progress towards Labour's ultimate goal.

It states that, "... the people of Northern Ireland will not be expelled from the UK against their wishes. It does not mean a veto on political progress in the hands of the Unionist leaders" — though given that the Northern Ireland majority support the Unionists it is difficult to see what else it does mean — "... Before any constitutional change is made . . . we would therefore seek to obtain the consent of the people of Northern Ireland.

To get there the report calls for discussions between the British and Southern Irish governments and for the setting up of a power-sharing government. Yet the Protestant majority has made it clear — not least through the 1974 WUC strike — that they will not tolerate this.

The report concludes that as power-sharing —

"the medium-term goal" — is not immediately practical, "it is inevitable that direct rule from Westminster will have to continue for the time being."

The whole of the rest of the document — all the immediate and practical proposals — is cast in the framework of this acceptance of direct rule as the status quo. By this long route the report ends up back with the bipartisan policy with a pink tinge.

Reformed

The existing state should be reformed, abuses of the law — such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act or occasional lapses by members of the army "who have a difficult job in very trying circumstances" — removed. But "under direct rule both Labour and Conservative governments have generally acted to defend the rights of all sections of the community in Northern Ireland."

Labour's economic policy is trotted out as a solution to Northern Ireland's economic problems — as if no change in the relationship between British governments and the six counties was desirable or likely.

Every policy that represents a rejection of the existing state is rejected for one reason or another.

Support for the early withdrawal of troops "was reflected in the evidence received from constituency parties and branches" but, on the basis of evidence from the Northern Ireland unions, this is rejected in favour of the gradual replacement of troops by the RUC — the policy of 'ulsterisation' that, until the hunger-strike blew it sky-high, was one of the mainstays of the policy of both Mason and Atkins.

It adds "we would urge all sections of the community to assist the work of the

A new Labour Party NEC discussion document proposes lip service to a united Ireland — and many other ideas — but ends up in practice proposing no real change in the bipartisan policy. Bruce Robinson reports.

police in Northern Ireland in their struggle to establish law and order", failing to notice that the RUC is notorious for its sectarian harassment of Catholic "sections of the community".

Rejected

Similarly, the demands of the H Block prisoners are rejected for much the same reasons one can read in any British newspaper. Political status is rejected out of hand, the prisoners are accused of asking for privileges over other prisoners and the only concessions suggested are a general improvement in prison conditions in Northern Ireland and Great Britain as a whole,

falling well short of the five demands of the prisoners.

At the same time as rejecting any policies opposed to Britain remaining in Ireland for the foreseeable future, the report makes a gesture in the direction of "class politics".

This consists of a nod in the direction of Militant's panacea of calling a trade union and labour movement conference in Northern Ireland to set up a Labour Party. The report ignores the reality of working class politics in the six counties — that organisations of Catholic and Protestant workers have remained united by agreeing to disagree on partition and thus opting out of the main political struggles of the day. Evasion on the question of partition has withered all the brief flowerings of the now-moribund Northern Ireland Labour Party.

The report does not begin to spell out a distinctive socialist policy, let alone one that makes it clear that the Labour Party supports the oppressed minority in their fight against 'our own' state.

We should reject this document at Conference and insist that the Labour Party adopts policies for withdrawal of troops, an end to the Unionist veto on a united Ireland and support for the prisoners.

Hunger strike families seek labour movement support



Goretti McDonnell — wife of dead hunger strike Joe McDonnell — and **Nora McElwee** and **Theresa McCreesh** whose brothers **Tom** and **Raymond** have also died for political status, spoke to **Gerry Byrne** and **Anne-Marie Sweeney**.

"WE'VE come over here," said **Nora McElwee**, "to make

a big appeal to English people to realise that people in Northern Ireland are not extraordinary. They're just normal people and the men in Long Kesh are not criminals.

My brother **Thomas** would never have seen the inside of a jail except for British repression in Northern Ireland. And we just want to make it clear to English people that we are going to keep coming back to remind people here that the struggle is still going on in Northern Ireland."

Goretti McDonnell: "There's a war going on. The Thatcher government says the prisoners are of no importance yet they had special interrogation centres for our men and women, and they had special Diplock Courts.

They have very special sentences.

In one instance, **Bobby Sands** and my husband and

four others were in a car where a handgun was found in it. Six men got 14 years each for one handgun.

If they had been criminals they would have conformed and put on a criminal uniform, done 5 years out of the seven and been out in two years. **Bobby Sands** and my husband gave the ultimate."

Teresa McCreesh: "My brother didn't die in vain because those men are going to gain their five demands eventually, no matter how long it takes.

But it's typical of the British media to play down everything because they want to put over in Britain that there's nothing happening in Northern Ireland.

The only mention the hunger strikers get is when they go on hunger strike or when they die, but the people in Northern Ireland don't only hear that.

They know what's happening. We know every day what's happening.

It's brought the people together. It's absolutely fantastic, the support of the nationalist people in the North."

Goretti McDonnell: "The press have been getting at us a lot about the other men coming off the hunger strikes and how much their

THE women's message to Labour Party conference delegates came from Nora McElwee:

"I would like them to come out in support. They have opposed **Maggie Thatcher** in everything else that's going on, but when the Northern Ireland question is brought up they go silent; they've no interest in it.

"I would like the Party to come out and do what they can for the hunger strikers because it will just go on and on if nothing can be done."

families backed them.

Well, we backed our men 100% right to the end. There's no way in this world you can order a man to die. It was their decision to go on hunger strike and it will be their decision if they ever want to come off. They would have the support of everyone.

People think that we are better than the other relatives who took their sons and husbands off the hunger strike.

Well, we ourselves know for a fact we are not better. We are very much behind them. Only we know how hard it is to watch someone you love give every minute of their life for their

country.

For 63 days I watched my husband die. I could never have made any other decision than the one I took. For a fact I know that if I had intervened with medication he would have gone on hunger strike again and I would just have been prolonging his agony.

So when people think that our men are ordered on the hunger strike, I would just say that they should think again and put yourself in our places.

We are just ordinary people like you, trying to bring up a family but because of repression we can't do it."

Teresa McCreesh: Until the men went on hunger strike, we'd always been fighting for the H Block situation to be ended but we'd never actually met.

Since the hunger strikes the families have had constant meetings so we're one big family. If anybody tries to break us they'll never succeed, because we just can't be broken."

Teresa McCreesh explained that the women also feel close to many struggles throughout the world.

"We were at a meeting last night and representatives from the Basque country, Malaysia, Namibia and Spain



were there. They told us that the struggle they had gone through was very similar to ours. If they were out on the streets they'd get shot down for no reason whatsoever.

There was an Iranian girl there as well. It just came across to me that the same thing was happening there as was happening to us — people being shot down, harassed and put in prison.

People over here realise the repression going on in those countries. Because those countries are so far away, Labour leaders can call these people freedom fighters. But they don't recognise that in Northern Ireland the same thing is going on. They just don't accept it.

If they'd only open their eyes and realise what's happening, they could do something."



BRIGHTON '81

NATO's hirelings attack unilateralist policy

John Lister examines the right wing's arguments for NATO and the Bomb



AS support grows within the trade union rank and file for the policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament, a handful of top union bureaucrats have ganged up with James Callaghan and Labour right wingers in a bid to stem the tide.

Their initiative is funded by NATO. It takes the form of a 4,000-word pamphlet published by the so-called "Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding" - which admits to being totally funded by NATO.

The Committee's trade union supporters include its treasurer Frank Chapple, Terry Duffy and NUR leader Sid Weighell. The new statement is also supported by Roy Grantham of APEX and steel union leaders Bill Sirs and Hector Smith.

Support

But the Committee has been forced to scrape the barrel in search of sponsors from the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Callaghan had to be wheeled out of semi-retirement, along with faded has-beens Lord Stewart, Sir Harold Wilson and Lord Peart.

Significantly neither Foot nor Denis Healey - NATO's candidate for Deputy Leader - could be enticed into an initiative which offers no prospect of securing popular support.

Callaghan was obviously

joking when he told a press conference on Monday that he hoped the statement would be "on sale" at the Party conference: with Labour's leading Cold Warriors having already defected in numbers to the SDP, sales are scarcely likely to be brisk.

Holocaust

Against unilateralism, the NATO statement argues that it would increase anxiety in Europe; that it would add to US disillusionment with European defence; and that it would encourage individual countries to make separate deals with Moscow.

But amongst working class people, most anxiety in Europe revolves around the fact that NATO's strategy against the Soviet Union involves transforming the European continent into a "theatre" of nuclear holocaust.

Any steps through disarmament towards minimising that risk can only ease the worries of the working class.

But of course such steps would also weaken the military threat which the US administration wishes to level at the deformed and degenerated workers' states of Eastern Europe and the USSR.

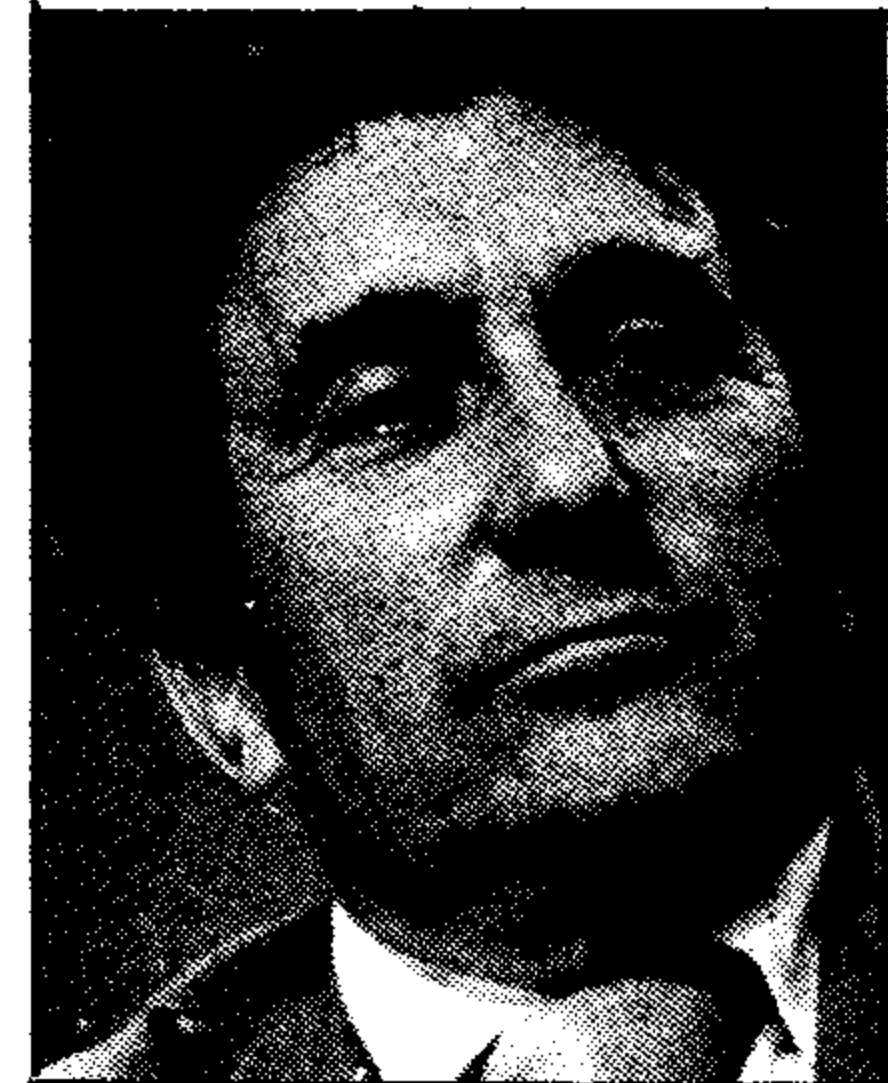
Pentagon

In this sense it would certainly "add to the dis-



"One can say that NATO could never have been established without the support of the organised labour movements . . . Without this early labour support, which existed in spite of tremendous efforts of the Communists to block it, there might never have been a successful Marshall Plan, EEC or a NATO alliance . . ."

Irving Brown, writing in 'NATO - The Next Thirty Years'

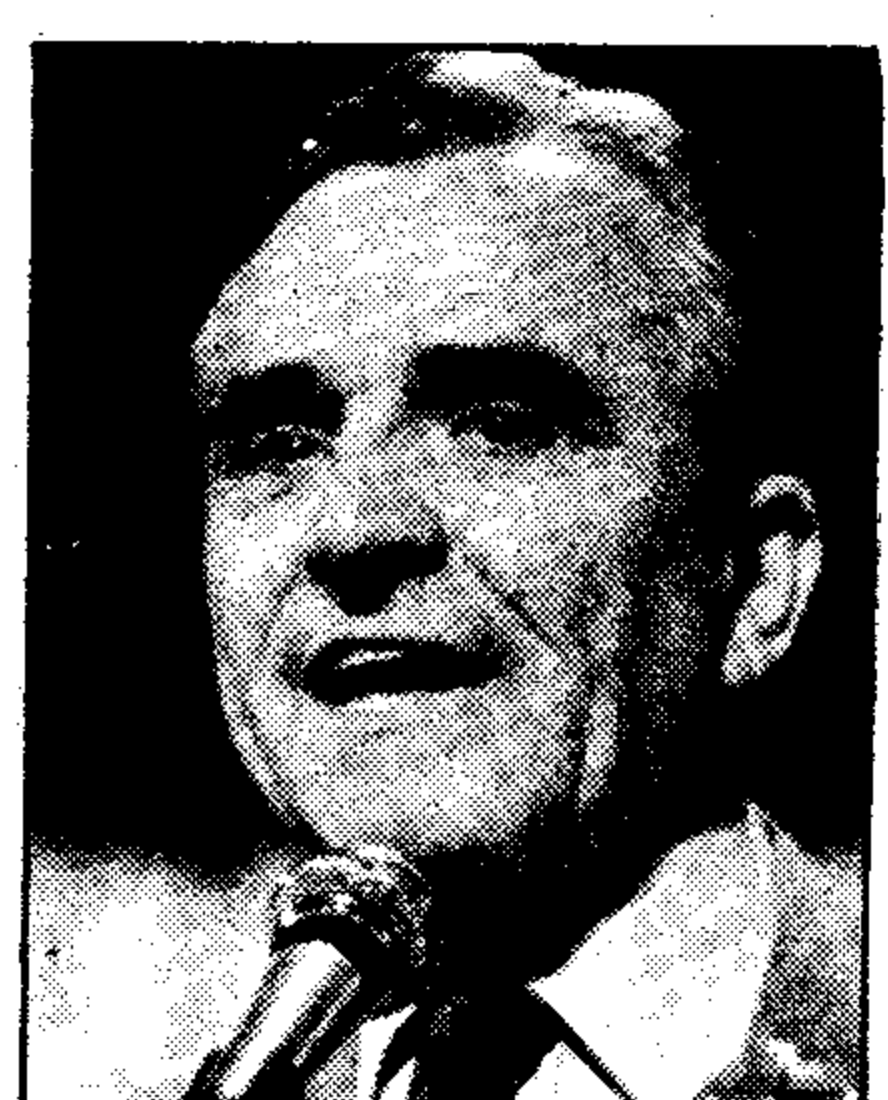
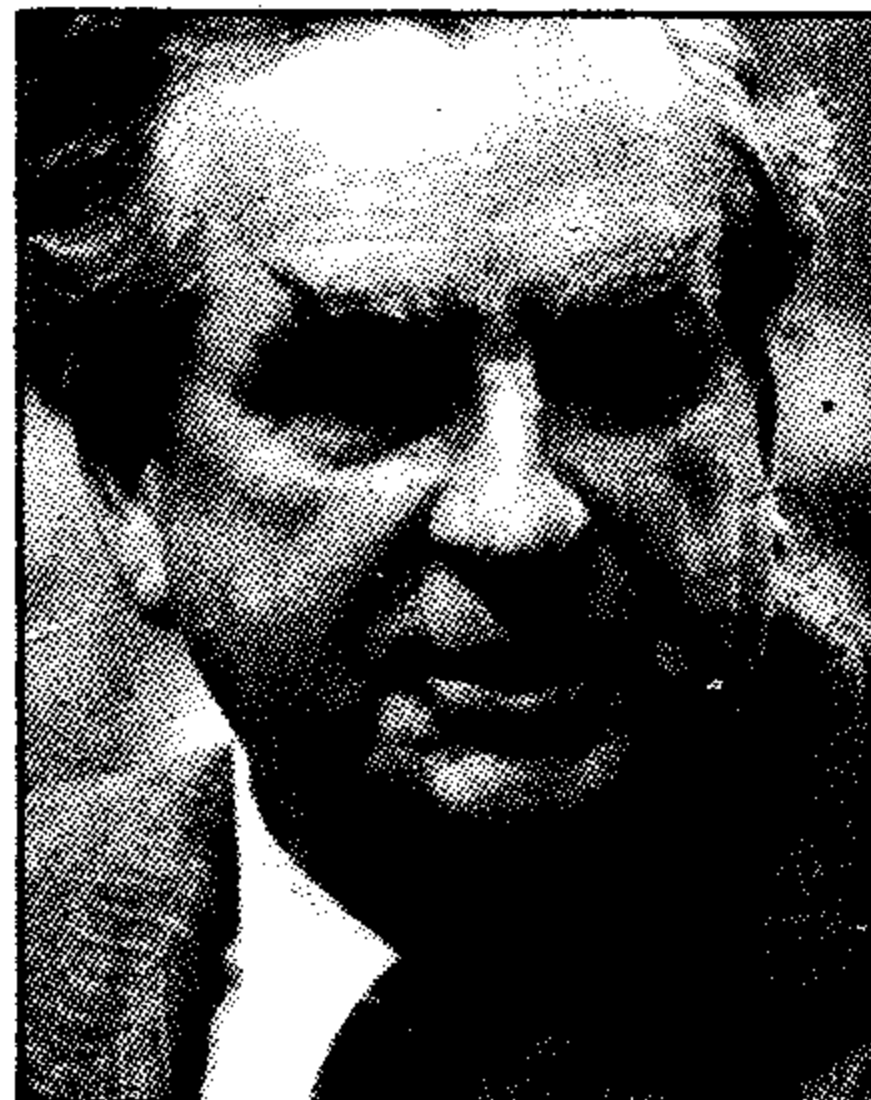


NATO is paraded by its supporters as a pact for mutual "defence". Yet at the same time these supporters tell workers in Britain and Europe that a precondition for such "defence" is a prior agreement to participate, in the case of war, in an orgy of thermo-nuclear slaughter, bringing inevitable self-destruction!

There is another question to be raised in this context, of course. Just what is supposedly being "defended" at such enormous cost and risk?

The fact is that NATO is an alliance to defend capitalist governments against the working class of Europe and against the historic gains embodied in the overturn of capitalist property relations in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe after World War 2.

Renouncing British nuclear weapons is not enough: to defend itself against the barbaric plans of the imperialists, the British workers' movement must demand immediate withdrawal from NATO; and must fight jointly with the working class of Europe for the overthrow of capitalist governments whose very existence demands the maintenance of armies and armaments, and whose crisis continually raises the threat of violence and war.



illusionment" of the Reagan warmongers.

But that can only be a positive advance for mankind, under conditions where even without encouragement, the Pentagon chiefs are foisting cruise missiles and neutron bombs onto their European "allies".

In fact the real concerns

of the statement's American sponsors emerge in the final argument: that a neutralised Britain would encourage individual countries to make separate deals with Moscow.

Neither Reagan nor Thatcher wants the countries of Western Europe to move towards separate deals. They want to retain NATO as a

solid, anti-communist, aggressive military bloc, firmly tied to Reagan's arms race and his sabre-rattling foreign policies.

As if it were the final nail in the coffin of the unilateralist policy, Callaghan and his cronies argue that the rejection of nuclear weapons by Britain would make it

impossible to remain in the NATO alliance.

The argument is of course inconsistent: the NATO alliance comprises 12 European countries, of which Britain is the only one to have its own stockpiles of nuclear weapons.

But the whole concept is also absurd and barbaric.

NATO: CREATURE OF GOLD

"It is no good shadow boxing with disarmament, and it is no good dealing with the symptoms of a disease without dealing with its cause . . . It was NATO that decided last year that Britain would have Cruise missiles . . . It is consistently NATO, through operations such as Operation Crusade and Square Leg, which adopts a Cold War posture and threatens world peace. It is NATO we must get rid of comrades; NATO is truly the cancer of Europe."

James McAllister, Basingstoke CLP Blackpool 1980

THE NATO alliance in April 1949 was an attempt by British and American imperialist leaders to regroup the capitalist countries in Europe in an anti-Soviet bloc.

World War 2 had crushed Churchill's early hopes of a British-Nazi alliance against the Soviet Union, and left imperialism weakened, with two major powers - Germany and Japan - militarily defeated.

On the other hand, the Red Army - carrying the brunt of the war against Hitler in Europe - had

moved into Eastern Europe supported by popular struggles against vicious pro-fascist regimes - struggles which they were quick to repress.

Stalin and the Kremlin bureaucracy had learned bitter lessons from their near-defeat at the hands of the Nazis.

Militancy

They resolved to defend the borders of the USSR not by revolutionary, but by old fashioned bureaucratic-military means - by maintaining a ring of "buffer" states against attack from Western Europe.

Though Moscow at first attempted to establish only capitalist coalition governments in Eastern Europe, using the Red Army to protect such regimes from the militancy of the working class, the imperialist leaders were not satisfied.

Conscious of the acute economic weakness and disarray of European capitalism and the post war militancy of the European working class, they feared further setbacks to their power.

Aid

With this in view the American imperialist leaders recognised the need for the USA - which had emerged economically unscathed and in a dominant position among the capitalist countries - to embark upon

a two-pronged programme to reconstruct capitalist Europe.

On the one hand there were moves to secure military alliances against the Soviet Union. The keynote for such alliances was struck by US President Truman, pronouncing the "Truman Doctrine" in March 1947.

"It must be the policy of the United States of America to support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure."

This doctrine was the prelude to the sending of a massive \$400 million in military aid to combat Stalinist-led partisan struggle in Greece and bolster the Turkish government.

Marshall

The second prong of the US strategy was the economic reconstruction of capitalism.

General George C. Marshall's Programme for European Recovery was announced in June 1947. With this combination of carrot and stick together with increasingly hysterical Cold War propaganda the European working class was to be ushered into a strengthened capitalist strait-jacket.

But it was not only capitalist politicians who led the way. Labour's Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin was a prime mover in steps towards NATO.



"This Conference believes that the next Labour Government should withdraw from the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. It considers that alliances of this type are not for the defence of democracy and are a threat to world peace, and it is inconsistent for a Labour Government, carrying out socialist policies and campaigning for disarmament, to maintain the Cold War and spend ever-increasing amounts on nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction . . ."

Royal Tunbridge Wells CLP

In January 1948 he proposed a "Western Union" anti-communist alliance. In March 1948 Bevin put his signature to the Brussels Treaty, comprising capitalist governments of Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Britain.

And Bevin was the first to applaud the suggestion three months later that the Treaty be expanded to

include Canada and the USA. By April 1949 after necessary legislation in the USA NATO was established - pledged to defend the "way of life" of the capitalist class in Europe and America.

In response to these moves to consolidate a bloc against the Soviet Union, Stalin moved to assert firm control over the "buffer



The reality of nuclear war

A ten-megaton bomb could produce a crater 240 feet deep (deeper than London's underground railway) and perhaps half to one mile across, with a huge rim of piled-up wreckage for up to twice that distance. The blast wave would travel along the tunnels of any underground system and so kill people sheltering in them ten or twenty miles away. People out in the open up to twenty-two miles away would be burned fatally; fires would be started up to twenty eight miles away.

Everything within three and a half miles would be totally smashed and there would be major damage to houses and streets up to fifteen miles away. People sheltering in basements or ground-floor rooms at this distance would be in danger from their homes collapsing. So the initial effects of blast and fire alone would be capable of killing over half the population of a city thus attacked.

Following this there would be further fire damage. The enormous number of fires that would be started over hundreds of square miles would not remain isolated. A "firestorm" would be produced on a scale bigger than the big fire raids of the Second World War at Hamburg, Tokyo, Dresden and other cities.

The fire storm might well destroy everything within twenty miles. People who survived the heat and blast would still have to face the third destroyer: radiation.

John Cox, 'Overkill'.

John Cox's book (published this month by Penguin at £1.75) describes in sober detail just how 'a fraction of the nuclear stockpiles in existence' can 'annihilate the entire population'



Checklist of resolutions

LABOUR Party conference really start on Saturday 26th, with the composing meetings.

After those meetings, the Conference Arrangements Committee publishes a final agenda on the Sunday morning.

Each year, several issues get pushed out. Poland and gay rights are among those likely to suffer this year.

But this year again there are many resolutions on LABOUR DEMOCRACY. Constitutional amendments seek to outlaw 'shortlists of one' in selection of MPs (Paddington CLP, agenda, p.21) and to establish NEC control of the manifesto (Tottenham, Wallasey, and Honiton CLPS; p.18).

Normal procedure is for constitutional amendments to be delayed one year, so there are special motions calling for these to be debated this year. A constitutional amendment on Labour local government democracy (Hammersmith N. CLP, p.22) is bound to be delayed, as there is no such special motion for it.

Last year's conference instructed the NEC to prepare an amendment bringing back the 'three year rule' (no re-raising of any issue for three years after a conference debate) for constitutional questions. But the NEC is also suggesting a proviso for waiving this rule when enough CLPs

JOHN BLOXAM gives a checklist on the issues at Brighton.

and unions submit resolutions. This should be supported.

21 CLPs have submitted resolutions or amendments on changing the Parliamentary Labour Party procedures so as to make the PLP more accountable. There are also eight (rather stronger) constitutional amendments left over from last year - but the NEC has decided to oppose them (NEC report pp.20-1). It will be important to get a debate on these.

However, the NEC, in a move that deserves support, is proposing to change the rules so that Ys and women's sections can be set up without the approval of the constituency GC (NEC report, p.15).

Defiance

Disarmament and Ireland, perhaps also the police, will also be big issues. And there are also strong resolutions on the cuts.

Norwood CLP, amending resolution no.435, proposes

a labour movement conference to plan a campaign of publicity, parliamentary disruption, defiance by councils, and industrial action. This should definitely be preferred to West Stirlingshire CLP's amendment (also to no.435), which suggests Labour Councils resigning.

Confrontation

Five CLPs also come out against rate rises.

The cuts debate, however, will bring us right back to the crucial issue of democracy. Last year's conference, too, passed a good resolution on the cuts: "Conference instructs the NEC to coordinate a united fight of Labour councils and trade unions on a firm no cuts position... In such a confrontation, the Labour Movement must be prepared to use its full strength, including industrial action..."

When the crunch came in Lothian, the NEC was nowhere to be seen. And in its report this year (p.62), the only activity the NEC can mention on this resolution is two circulars to Labour councils!

The NEC should be roughly called to account - for all the left-wing resolutions in the world are no use unless we get a leadership that will carry them out.



Labour Party 1980 Conference

Kinnock comes out

RACHEL LEVER, a member of the Benn Campaign Committee [writing in a personal capacity] analyses Neil Kinnock's appeal to the Left not to vote for Benn.

NEIL Kinnock takes a page and a half of last week's Tribune to explain his 'complicated' reasons for not voting for Benn - and to give courage to other MPs with a left reputation who are forming a block of abstainers that could give Healey the victory by turning around up to five per cent of the electoral college in his favour.

Among the complicated reasons he gives (after repeating all the rubbish about heckling at demonstrations) is Arthur Scargill's statement at the Scottish Miners' Gala that those who aren't with Benn are helping Healey. Nothing could better prove Scargill's case than Kinnock's present actions.

Other than saying he won't vote for Healey because 'he is on the Right, I am on the Left', he hasn't a word to say against the smear tactics, the lies, and the blatantly undemocratic practices of the Healey camp - the stitch-ups in the right-dominated unions and the refusal of the platform to allow a vote at several union conferences; incidents like that in one

constituency, where a pro-Healey verdict was announced after two officers had counted the results of a postal ballot and then burned all the ballot papers; and the massive backing that Healey has had from the bosses' press.

Indeed, Kinnock clearly doesn't think a Healey victory would be any great setback - "I do not believe that the accumulated policies of the party should be considered to be defeated or relegated if Denis wins the election".

The rest of the 'complicated reasons' come down to Neil Kinnock's antipathy to the kind of accountability that Benn has come to stand for.

In the main, he says, the PLP can be trusted to carry out Party policies.

Waffle

MPs, says Kinnock, have perhaps over-reacted to response to the 'implied assumptions of untrustworthiness'. The history of the Labour Party hasn't, he is sure his readers will agree, been a history of betrayals. What we need is a consensus for our policies: "it has to be done with arguments, for it will not be done simply by constitutional machinery or regulated democracy or implied threats of individual doom".

Little wonder that on the NEC this year Kinnock voted to allow shortlists of one even where other candidates had been nominated. Remove the threat of 'individual doom' (re-selection) for your MP, argue with him/her until you're blue in the face, and live patiently with the threat of doom over your job and your world!

And how about the simple reasons for Kinnock's stab in the back for the left? Isn't he being tipped as a future "acceptable left" candidate, whose chances won't at all be helped by a Benn victory?

Forget the page and a half of elegant waffle. Kinnock is on the other side.



Kinnock

WAR CAPITALISM

states of Eastern Europe. Capitalist participation in the coalition governments was eliminated; remaining privately owned industries were taken over; Communist Parties were purged and expanded, more or less forcibly incorporating the Social Democratic parties; and the state machinery was placed firmly in their hands under the watchful eyes of the Red Army.

The Marshall Plan was met by the formation of the Cominform - designed to bind together Stalinist leaders in East and West Europe.

Build up

And later the expansion of NATO in 1955 to include West Germany was followed immediately by the formation of the Warsaw Pact.

Indeed at each stage it has been the initiative of the imperialists to build up the aggressive potential of NATO that has prompted a new escalation.

In 1950 in the midst of the Korean war, NATO leaders met and agreed a programme for a substantial military build-up. Its "forward strategy" laid down that:

"Any aggression must be resisted as far to the East as possible in order to ensure the defence of all the European member countries.

"Such a strategy however demanded forces far exceeding those available to NATO

"It is a treaty of alliance within the framework of the UN Charter for the defence of a way of life..."

NATO publication "Facts and Figures"

at the time... Military strength would have to be built up and defence plans revised...

(NATO: Facts and Figures) Under such US prompting and with US subsidies and loans, European governments were persuaded to agree to an integrated defence force, the establishment of a Supreme Headquarters in Europe and the appointment of Eisenhower as Supreme Allied Commander.

The build-up of troops was dramatic: from 14 divisions in Europe in 1950 to 50 divisions by the end of 1952.

"Cuba, it is true, is outside the NATO area, but the events which took place on the island confirmed the fact that through the commitments of its members, the Alliance is inevitably involved in the consequences of political events occurring outside its territory."

NATO publication "Facts and Figures"

at inducing public opinion in various member countries to oppose the modernisation [!] of Western defence forces...

"The Council agreed that one object of this Campaign was to ensure for Soviet forces a monopoly of nuclear weapons on the European continent..."

"No power, it stated, could claim the right to deny the Alliance the modern arms [!] needed for its defence."

In December 1957 it was agreed that:

"It was necessary to establish stocks of nuclear warheads readily available for the defence of the Alliance in case of need... it was also decided that intermediate range ballistic missiles should be put at the disposal of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe."

From this point onwards the US had its nuclear bases in Europe. And NATO was successfully mobilised behind American sabre-rattling in the Cuban missile crisis and other actions in the 1960s.

Portugal used NATO hardware for its wars against its African colonies.

And in the summer of 1975, as Portugal simmered with revolution, there were NATO manoeuvres in Portuguese territorial water, NATO and US troop movements on Portugal's frontiers and a US intelligence centre aboard a ship anchored off Setubal.

BRIGHTON '81

Searching for an alternative to the 'Alternative Economic Strategy'

"We want to open debate"

A new declaration from several trades councils and combine committees criticises the AES. Andrew Hornung reports.

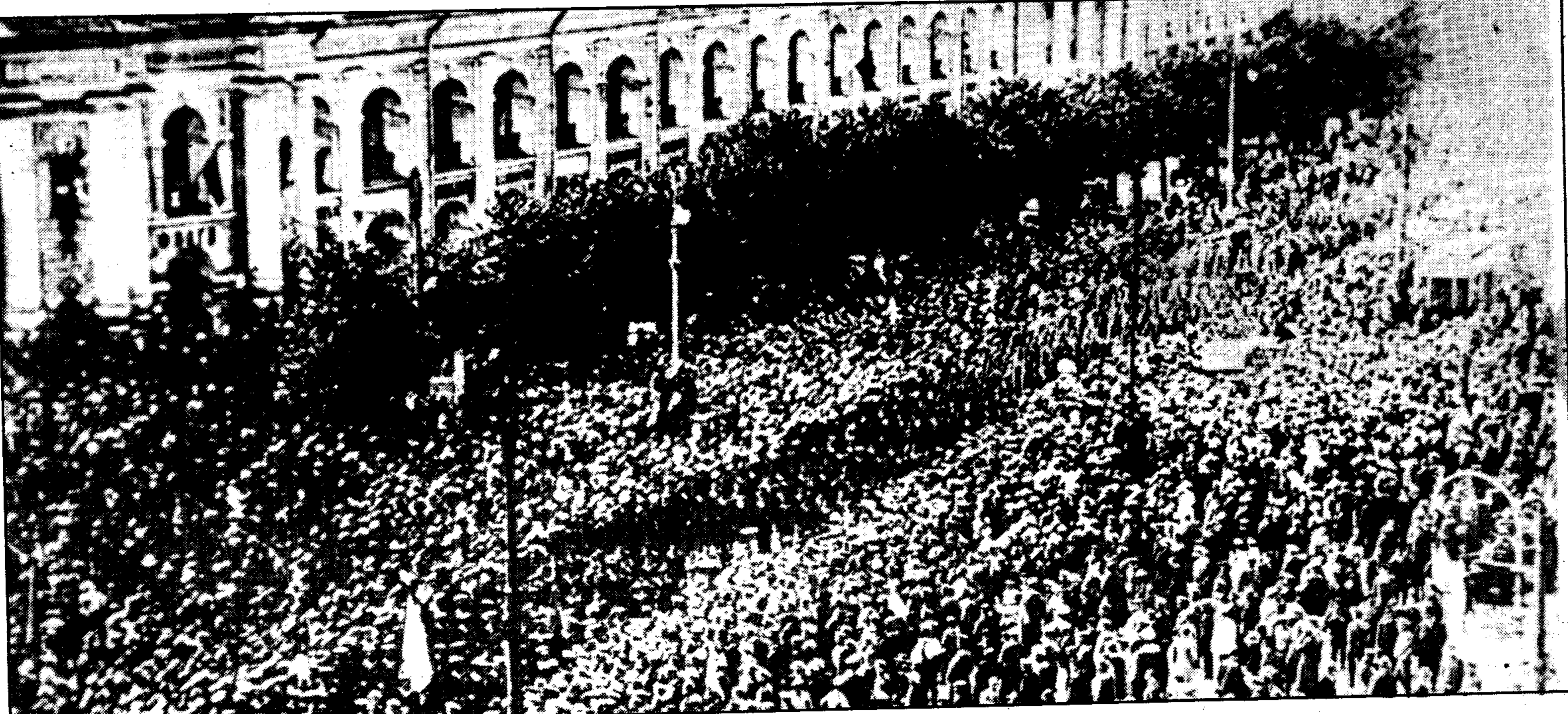
WHEN Michael Foot was speaking to a demonstration against unemployment in Cardiff a few months ago, he spoke of the need to fight for the alternative economic policy. He then went on to outline an economic programme that could mean nothing other than throwing ourselves on the murderous mercies of the International Monetary Fund.

The more rigidly Thatcher devotes the government to Milton Friedman's monetarism the easier it is to present any kind of warmed-up Keynesianism as 'the alternative'.

Lessons

Even if we disregard the interpretation of 'alternative' that would classify the last Labour government's economic policy as 'alternative', and focus on the more left-wing versions of the Alternative Economic Strategy (AES), that still leaves enough varieties to bewilder Henry Heinz.

A year ago, four trades councils (Liverpool, N. Tyneside, Newcastle, and Coventry) produced a detailed report on the last Labour government's "State Intervention in Industry". Now the same group of trades councils (plus Burnley) have collaborated with several shop stewards' combine committees to produce a follow-up as "a contribution to the TUC/Labour Party plans for an Alternative



Workers and sailors in Petrograd, 1917

Economic Strategy". This report lacks the close detail, the case studies, and the inside stories of the earlier report. It tries, however, to draw out some of the lessons implicit in it. In fact, it is both a polemic against the TUC/Labour Party plans for an AES and a challenge to them. It says that the AES plans are nationalistic, and

do not see things from a class standpoint. And a working-class policy must be more than a blueprint for some future Labour government, it must be 'for now'.

Both these criticisms, I think, are absolutely

correct. The TUC/Labour Party version of the AES stands on the very same ideological ground as our Tory enemies.

It assumes that there are 'national needs' and 'national interests' to be served rather than class needs and

class interests. It assumes that any alternative would simply be the plan of an alternative government that the workers could vote for, rather than a policy workers could fight for and enforce through our own workers' government.

Searching

The report argues for a conception of social need, saying that we must fight for this to become "part of the economic commonsense of our age".

The basic weakness of the report, I feel, is in the programme for fighting back here and now. It has little to say other than that trade unions should involve the rank and file in drawing up workers' plans of production and that the building of combine committees is essential. It does not map out a policy for replacing the present capitalist state machine with real workers' power — though that, surely, is vital if we are to enforce an 'economics of social need', against the power of the profit system.

The authors are trying to develop a policy for practical intervention in the struggle now that goes beyond reflex-action militancy and points to a different social order. But — it seems to me — they are still searching.

In a series of articles throughout the 1930s, Leon Trotsky tried to popularise the approach that the Third (Communist) International had been in the process of working out when Lenin died.

Confiscation

Trotsky argued for a 'sliding scale of wages', for instance, as a way of protecting the purchasing power of workers' wages. But he also argued for a

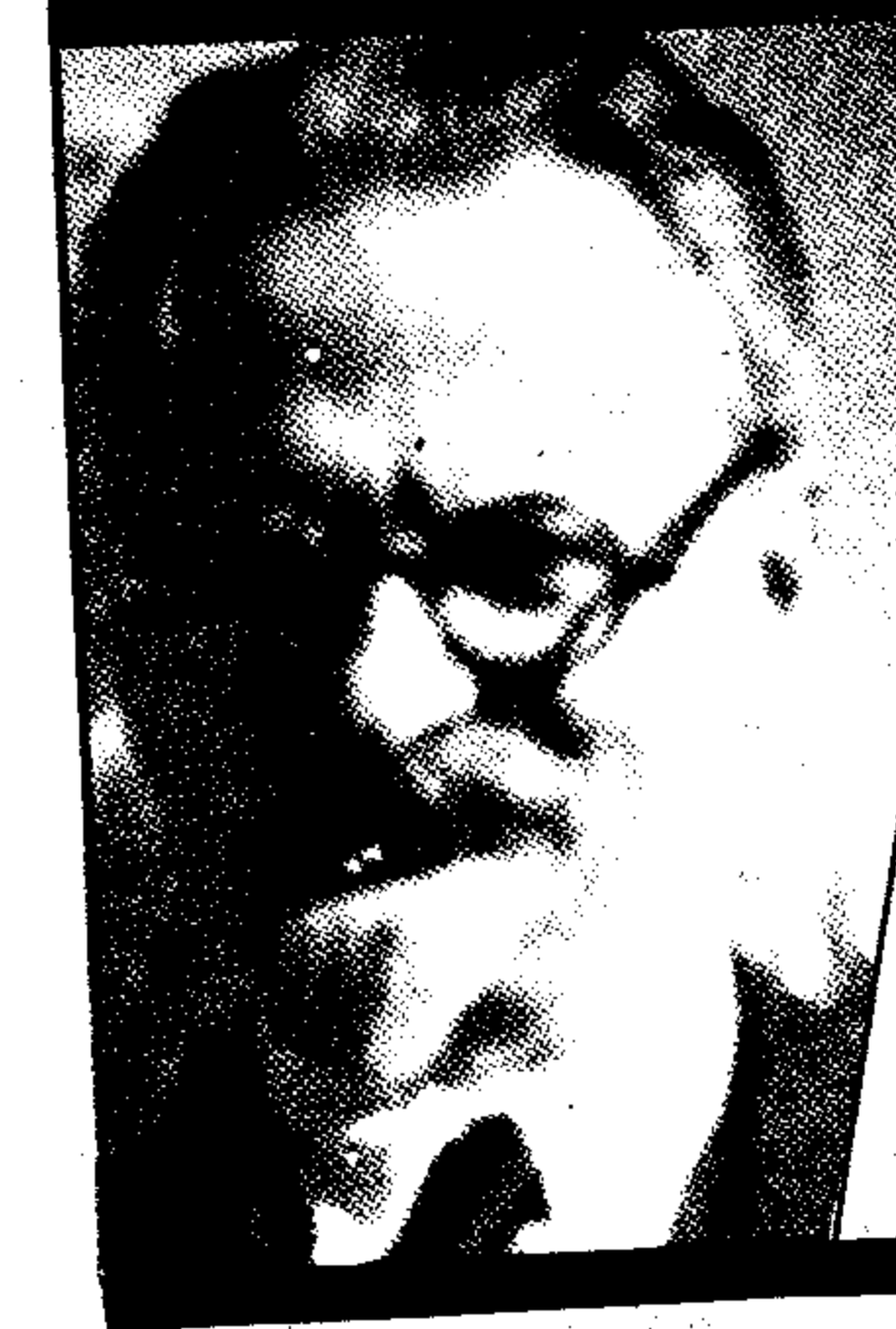
struggle to develop committees to monitor shifts in the working-class cost of living — committees that would unite rank-and-file workers with women stuck at home. The idea was that these committees' watchdog functions should develop to the point where they would be able to force the opening of the books of firms that were overpricing, and then demand new prices or confiscation.

This was no pipe-dream. Detailed legislation along these lines had been drawn up, for instance, in Germany in 1923.

The key to the whole process was class power — developing the fight for workers' control into the fight for workers' power.

Starting from that basic idea, the communists of the early 1920s, and, later, Trotsky and his comrades, summarised and codified the key demands of a 'Transitional Programme' for mobilising mass power against capitalist power. That programme, I think, shows the direction in which the ideas in this report could be developed into a real policy for struggle.

Copies of the declaration: 20p plus postage from Coventry Trades Council, Flat 2, 6 Norfolk St, Coventry.



RICHARD LEE, secretary of the Metal Box Combine Committee, explained to Barry Turner what the authors hope to see come from the 'Popular Planning' document.

'Popular planning for social need' came out of the work on state intervention in industry carried out by a number of Trades Councils, and attempts to produce alternative production plans by various combine committees.

It was clear that an alternative to monetarism was needed but there was dissatisfaction with the TUC's Alternative Economic Strategy.

We think that the rank and file should have some say in producing the alternative strategy, and our report is an attempt to open up a debate in the labour movement. We wish that debate to produce a strategy that the grassroots understand and have participated in producing.

The failure of the last Labour government proves the need for such a strategy. We have no control over the multinationals and the trade union officials have led no discussion on how to deal with them.

We do not wish to repeat the failings of the National Enterprise Board and the abuses of public money carried out by private firms.

The report was drawn up by a wide range of workers, many with differing approaches to the strategy needed, but all agreed on the need for a wide-ranging debate to create that strategy which would, I think, form the first steps in a plan for socialist production.

As I emphasise, our declaration is meant to open a debate, not answer all the questions. For my part in that debate, I would point to the need for nationalisation as a precondition for public money being channelled into firms.

We launched the declaration at the TUC conference, and will be intervening with at the Labour Party conference.

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

THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM FOR SOCIALIST REVOLUTION
LEON TROTSKY

Debate on council strategy

A MEETING organised by Socialist Organiser for prospective Labour councillors and other interested activists looked at local government 'strategy' last Sunday, 20th.

Socialist Organiser has always taken a tough line against cuts, against rent rise and against rate rises, and this stand was confirmed at the meeting.

But could SO supporters stand in a ward where the manifesto drawn up by the borough or city organisation does not contain this policy? and if so, what about accountability?

To answer 'no', under present circumstances, would virtually rule us out from standing as Labour councillors — and give a free run to the cutters and rate-raisers. After a thorough discussion, we agreed that SO supporters should wherever possible be prepared to stand, while fighting for our politics throughout the selection process, particularly on these issues of cuts and rate rises.

Principles

If possible, we should even issue separate liter-

ature making our policies clear to the electorate. If elected, on many occasions we may have to break the whip, but we must stick to the basic political line.

What about accountability? We must make absolutely clear at selection conferences that we will stick to our principles, even if it means breaking the whip, and that we will be ready to resign if the branch that selects us demands that.

Issues

The ability of a council to deliver the goods — any goods at all! — depends entirely on its ability to fight the government. That must be said in the manifesto. Manifestos can contain an outline of the needs in our areas, but they must point out that the only way to satisfy these needs is to organise a war against the Tories.

No-one at the meeting thought that all the problems facing us had been covered, but we all agreed that the discussion had raised and clarified many important issues. A further meeting will be held.

GET ORGANISED!

Socialist Organiser Alliance

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

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

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

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

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

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

Name

Address

Phone

CLP TU

Review

Adam falls short

CBS record promoters must be putting their heads together in despair and wondering how on earth they could have made such an enormous balls-up. With advanced record sales of over

by Andrew MacDonald

¼ million and a blaze of predictable media publicity Adam and the Ants new single 'Prince Charming' only managed to enter the BBC charts at a feeble number 2 position. I can hear them gritting their teeth and snarling 'What went wrong?, what went wrong?'

It looked like a sewn up guaranteed success and should have gone straight in at number 1, no less, without a hitch where it would have dutifully stayed for week after charming week, whilst gullible fools spend their hard-earned pound notes on a record which is going to be played every 10 minutes on Radio One anyway.

I wouldn't have bothered writing about Adam and the Ants at all, he's just another up and coming multi-millioned musical bore, except that he is a punk charlatan par excellence.

One time art student turned new wave rebel he participated in the strange 1977 punk film Jubilee and produced a few mildly interesting songs in his early days with a faintly novel tribal influence.

Now look at him; a tamed, limp, media-made puppet object.

He's the punk turned super-good, the weirdo rock star who your parents can really like, the sexual poser who's all heterosexual good, clean fun. The type of stuff lovy-dovy, teeny-bop magazines like Jackie are made of.

And indeed Jackie readers are told "Punk suddenly seems too harsh and all that black leather and safety pins is boring. The pirate look is romantic..."

But the romance doesn't come cheaply. It cost a staggering £45,000 to make a 3-minute video for Top of the Pops in which our super poser makes a series of super poses but no doubt a wise capital investment.



BARNEY RUSSELL reviews "CAN'T PAY? WON'T PAY!", a farce by Dario Fo, at the Criterion Theatre, London.

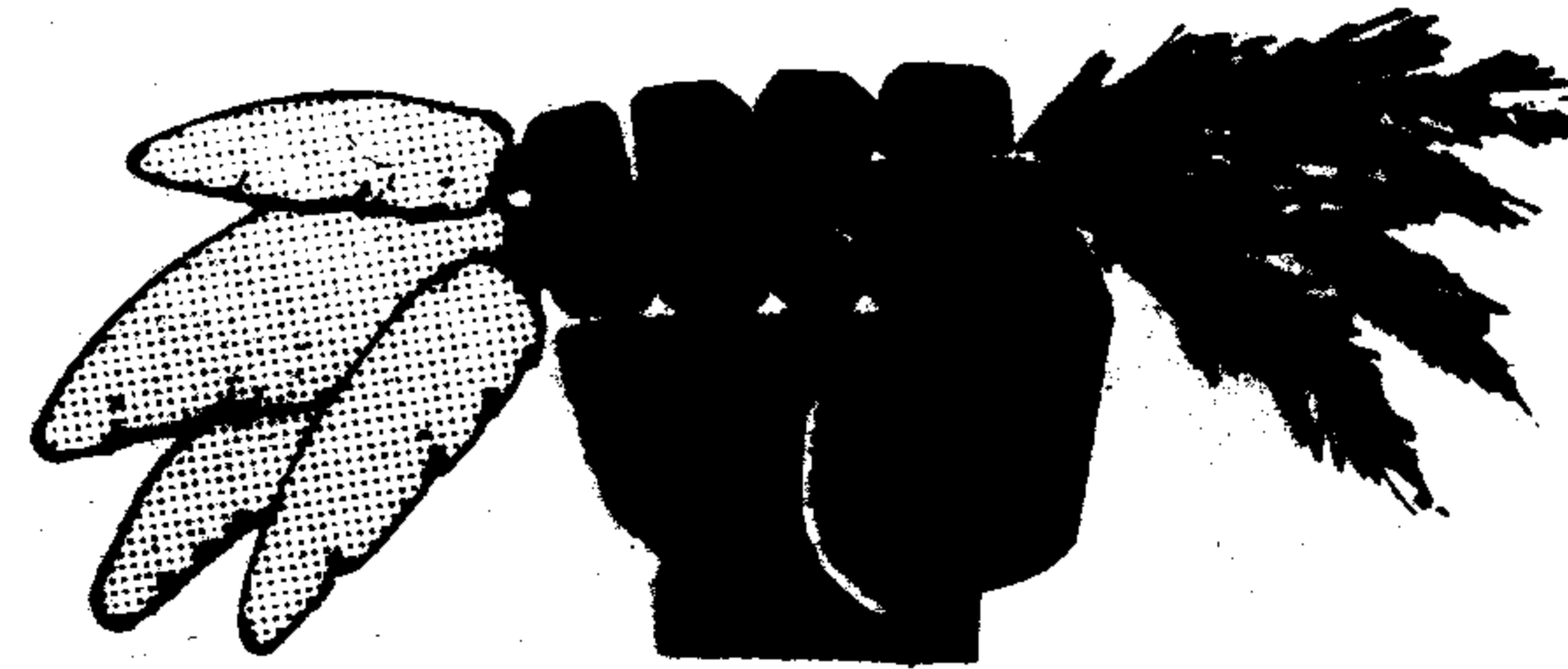
A GLENCHED fist holding a bunch of carrots is an unusual advertisement to choose for a play. It certainly made me wonder what to expect.

Can't Pay? Won't Pay! is the creation of satirist Dario Fo, one of the wittiest commentators on the contemporary Italian scene, who constantly attacks the absurdities of his country's government, Roman Catholic Church, and Communist Party.

The play, which is wildly funny and moves at splendid pace, is set in Italy in 1974. At that time the capitalist crisis had pushed up the price of basic foodstuffs by an incredible 50 per cent, and this culminated in women raiding a Milan supermarket to protest against inflation — which is where the title comes in.

Maggie Steed (Antonia) and Karen Drury (Margherita) play two determined working-class housewives fighting the system

FARCE OF FOOD PRICES



with marvellous elan. Together they provide the mainstay of the whole play.

Margherita is one of the supermarket raiders, but her action is bitterly opposed by her stubborn Stalinist husband (a Fiat car-worker) because she dared to act without the prior approval of the Party! In exploiting this ironical situation, Dario Fo uses every opportunity to attack both Church and Party.

Robert Walker, the director, gets magnificent results from his small cast of five players, who handle the dialogue with tremendous vigour and assurance. The total effect, I can honestly say, had me crying and laughing, sometimes simultaneously. Watch out for the trigger-happy police inspector, a refreshing comic creation, beautifully played by Sylvester McCoy.

With seats from a reasonable £2.90, this play is splendid value.

Easy on Cliff and Bruce!

A WARM welcome to Socialist Organiser's new column on rock music and youth culture. We need a breath of fresh air.

Personally I'm getting a little pissed off going to Militant Discos where that funny old DJ, what's his name? — Ted Grant keeps playing all these Guy Mitchell, Johnny Ray and Frankie Laine records, and handing out the razor blades with the Fortisan.

However, such columns have their dangers. It was only this January that Jean McKenzie, writing in Socialist Challenge criticised the Clash for only including one song about Nicaragua on their last (and excellent) LP! "What could have been a celebration and popularisation of the Nicaraguan revolution is a missed opportunity", moaned Jean.

Perhaps the Clash have got things a little more in perspective than Socialist Challenge over the Nicaraguan and indeed the Iranian "revolutions".

But Andrew had better watch his step, too.

The Cliff Richard LP is indeed a strange compilation, but among the dross lie a couple of jewels. "When Two Worlds Fall Apart" is one of the best love songs of the 1970s, and Miss You Nights is not half bad.

It is rumoured by the way that Cliff is Ted Grant's ideal LPYS recruit — over 40, looks 18, and is 'Wired for Sound'.

More serious is Andrew's writing off of Bruce Springsteen's The River — one of last year's best LPs. Cuts like Hungry Heart and Sherry Darling and Cadillac Ranch make a fantastic noise in the best traditions of American rock and roll.

Over twenty tracks the record presents a sustained evocation of New York young working class life now.

Springsteen is no Dylan, still less a socialist, and this is not a great LP. It doesn't point a way forward, it doesn't hint at more genuine ways of escape, and it certainly doesn't talk about Nicaragua or the 200 monopolies.

But it can tell us a lot about ourselves and our problems in the kind of society we live in. It does at least deserve some serious consideration.

CAROL HOBBS



No return to Brixton planning blight!

IN JULY this year residents and traders in the Rushcroft Road/Coldharbour Lane area of Brixton received details of Lambeth Council's latest development plan for the town centre.

The planners have come up with three 'options' for the area — options which do not significantly differ from each other.

All involve the destruction of the south side of Coldharbour Lane and the entirety of Rushcroft Road to make way for a massive supermarket development with several stories of car parking and some housing units above.

Lost will be a street of potentially good housing, cafes, a pub, late night shops, specialist Greek and West Indian grocers, and, in one option, the Ritzy Cinema and Atlantic pub.

Rundown

The plans involve the compulsory purchase of properties not already owned by the council (30% of the area affected) and road alterations — both of which, quite apart from the plan itself, will involve lengthy and costly public inquiries. Such formalities take many, many months, even years, to complete and, in the meantime, Brixton will become even more run down.

Planning blight is something that the people of Brixton have lived with for a long time. It is worth remembering that in 1969 the Council drew up tremendously ambitious development plans in which Brixton was to become a Croppington-type 'Strategic Shopping Centre' designed to attract the middle class to the area

and bring commercial prosperity to Brixton.

Ravenseft, the property company responsible for the development of the horrible Elephant and Castle complex, expressed interest in the scheme, but later withdrew in the changed economic climate of the mid-1970s.

'Barrier block'

Tarmac, the road-building firm, was given permission to build an office block on condition it helped to fund a new leisure centre (which is still unfinished today). Lambeth's chief planner (who himself lives in William Morris's historic 'Red House' in deepest Kent) designed the monstrous (and still unfinished) 'barrier block' sited alongside Coldharbour Lane, which was to have been a six-lane highway as part of the ring road system planned by the GLC for London and later dropped.

Streets of terrace housing made way for developments like the Stockwell Park Estate — which rapidly turned into a 'sink' estate, suffering from problems of dampness and vandalism.

Confronted with these remnants of the now-discredited planners' megalomania of the 1960s, the present Council, on its election in 1978, decided against any monolithic plans for Brixton and hoped instead that developments would take place in a piecemeal manner by existing major retailers.

So why has the Council come up with the latest set of proposals which differ only in scale from the discredited 1969 plan?

The Council say that the

plan is necessary because of the failure of the major retailers to develop their sites as the Council hoped. Finding their present sites too small to function economically, a number of major retail chains have closed down their Brixton branches.

The Council believes that the market traders rely for their prosperity on the proximity of large retail chains to attract custom to the area. This is certainly arguable if you compare similar street markets in other parts of London.

However, the real reason behind the latest plan is that the Council are in a state of panic. With elections in May the Council are desperate to have a plan on the books to show that they are doing something about the problems of the area.

In addition, the Council loses rate revenue when large retailers move out of the town centre and a supermarket development offers the prospect of increased revenue.

Misconceived

However: this is a purely speculative venture in which the Council must interest a developer: Ravenseft (again) and Wimpeys have expressed interest, and apparently several supermarket chains have said they might be interested when the site is developed.

Quite apart from the fact that we believe the plan to be misconceived, the uncertainties and delays associated with ventures of this kind, are bound to increase the problems of the area.

The Rushcroft Road Action Group (RAG) has been formed to fight the

Council's plans. We want the streets involved rehabilitated so as to preserve not only the character of the area and the potentially sound housing, but also to foster the growing community involvement which has attracted many young people to the area and spawned activities such as the Community Arts Centre (responsible for the recent Brixton Festival), and the Vining Street Community Gardens.

Above all we want the years of blight and neglect ended, not extended. We fear that the Council may attempt to pre-empt the outcome of any public inquiry by the piecemeal emptying and demolition of blocks in the street.

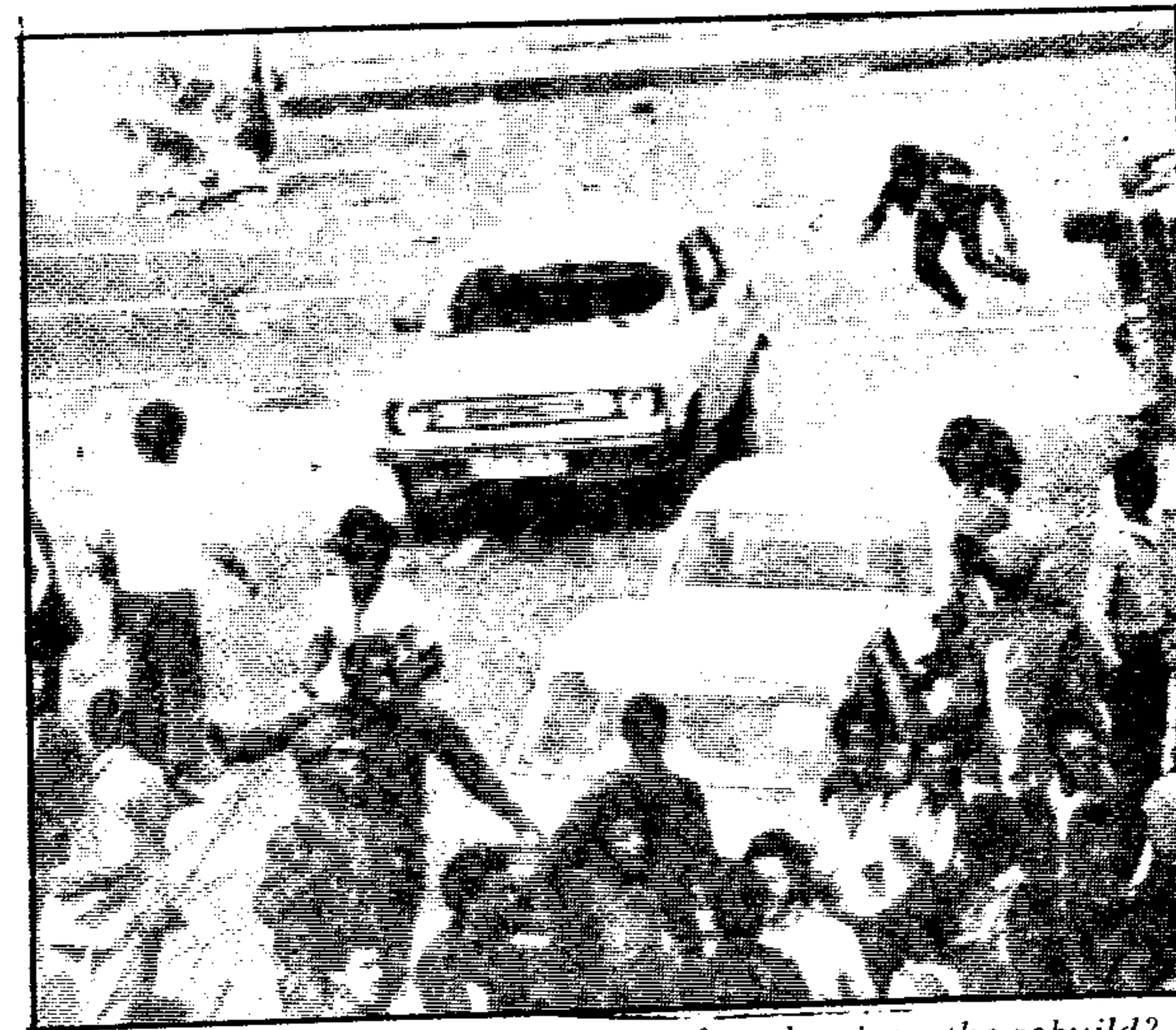
Therefore, while we intend to make representations detailing our objections and giving our proposals for the area to the Planning Committee when it meets on October 19, we will also be making a series of interim

demands. These are:

- a) that the Council should rehouse those who wish to move;
- b) that there should be no evictions, either of tenants or squatters;
- c) that there should be no gutting of empty flats;
- d) that empty flats should be made available either to squatters or to short-life groups;
- e) that basic maintenance and improvements to the properties should be continued.

We urge local readers to support both our long and short-term aims to preserve these streets by raising the matter at Labour Party ward meetings, trying to get your councillors to support us and by attending the Planning Committee meeting on 19 October.

*The Rushcroft Road Action Group can be contacted, care of 2 Hereford House, Rushcroft Road, London SW2.



After the riots, the rebuild?



WHAT'S ON

Public meetings to launch the weekly Socialist Organiser

LAMBETH
Friday September 25
Lambeth Town Hall
7.30 pm

OXFORD
Monday 28 September
8.00 pm

next to East Oxford
Community Centre
Princes St., Oxford

COVENTRY
Monday September 28,
7.30pm at the Wheatsheaf
pub, City Centre.

Basingstoke
After conference, which
way forward for the
Labour Left?

Thursday October 3,
7.30 at the Jackson
Room, Chute House.

**Campaign for Labour
Party Democracy**
Pre-conference rally and
fringe meeting
Sunday September 27,
1.30pm at the Metropole
Hotel, Kings Road.

Socialist Organiser
North-West day school
Sunday October 4, from
11am at UMIST student
union, Sackville Street,
Manchester.

Agenda includes: the
Tory offensive; Ireland;
women's liberation; the
AES; the cuts fight; and
organising the left in the
Labour Party.

Registration £1 (50p
unwaged).

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

**BIRMINGHAM SO
Classes**
Oct. 4 at 7.30
The American working
class.
Contact 021-429 4166
for venue

**Coventry North-East
LPYS**
Public meeting
The Bradford 12 frame-up
Thursday September 24
7.30 at Edgewick
Community Centre

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

**Anti-Apartheid
Movement**
Conference: Sunday
November 1, 10 to 5.3
at Westminster Cathedr
Conference Centre, Mo
peth Terrace, SW1.
Open to all AAM
members: details, AAM
89 Charlotte St, W1.

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

Letters



Writeback to
Socialist Organiser
28 Middle Lane
London N8

Open the books at Scotts'!

JOHN McILROY and Noel Hibbert [Socialist Organiser no.51] are correct to call for a labour movement inquiry into the affairs of Laurence Scott and its allied companies.

Such an inquiry could be a useful means of bringing clearly before the whole working class the precise detailed way in which the workings of the capitalist system take no account whatsoever of their interests and livelihood.

Among the questions such an inquiry might ask are:

- Why is a merchant bank like Hambros prepared to finance projects it knew almost certainly were illegal?
- Why and how do 'dawn raids' on rival companies' shares operate?
- Why does a nationalised utility like the NCB farm out important contracts to firms like Scotts with no control by the NUM?

How can suppliers to nationalised industries be brought under social control and ownership?

And why are capitalists able to apply for Temporary Employment subsidies when they simply intend to use it as a tactic to weaken workers resistance to final closure?

However, it is important that such an inquiry should be run by elected rank and file committees, backed up by their own advisers.

An inquiry under the aegis of Boyd and Duffy is unlikely to carry the struggle forward.

Secondly, such an inquiry should be seen as an addition and a stimulus to a firm fight for support action by other workers, not as a substitute for it.

The interview with the AUEW officials was also interesting.

It shows that there are splits among the full-timers in terms of politics, function, and level in the apparatus. Full time officials are open not merely to pressures, material and ideological, from the state and employers, but also from the workers that they are supposed to serve.

Some officials are far to the left of some shop stewards. Elected officials may be more amenable to pressures from below than those appointed by the Executive.

District officials are obviously closer to the workers than general secretaries.

We must take these differences into account in our analysis. They are often tactically important.

We must avoid the idea that the rank and file are homogeneous red-hot revolutionaries, straining at the leash to get at the capitalists, held back only by a totally reactionary, homogeneous apparatus.

The same kind of pressures that affect full-timers affect the ordinary steward to a lesser degree. The difference is that the steward workers with his/her members, has the 'same material interests as them, and is recallable by them.

Workers like those at LSE, slow off the mark as they might be, will in the end fight harder than their left-wing full time officials — who in the end will put the survival of their own function in the organisation first.

The categories 'rank and file' and 'bureaucracy' are still important, but Socialist Organiser needs to think more about their inter-relationship.

How about some articles on this?

CAROL HOBBS,
Bolton.

Iranian workers need independent organisation

FIRST OF all, apart from any ideological and political differences that probably there are between us and your organisation, we would like to express our full support to Socialist Organiser in its struggle against WRP (which in our opinion stands for 'Worthless Renegade Party').

It is a shame for WRP to use the bourgeois courts against a socialist organisation.

As probably you know, due to the happenings in Iran we are under tremendous financial pressure (e.g. a lot of communist literature from Iran which



Bani-Sadr has been translated into English lies on our desks because there is no money to publish it). But we would

like to send £2 as a symbolic financial support for Socialist Organiser in its fight against the WRP.

Secondly, we read and discussed your article about Iran in Socialist Organiser no.511 (3 Sep.).

You are right to say that, "So the working class... needs to organise independently to join the struggle against IRP tyranny but also to fight for its own solution for the crisis". This is what we can rarely find in the British Left literature.

Most of the analysis we have seen so far has taken a side with one of the bour-

geois and petty-bourgeois blocks, i.e. Khomeini, IRP, Tudeh Party and the majority group on the one hand, and Bani-Sadr, the Mojahedeen, and the army on the other, implicitly or explicitly calling upon the working class in Iran to rally behind its present or future oppressors.

While forces like the CP and WRP are flagrantly supported their Imam Khomeini and shedding tears for the assassinated top dogs of the IRP, organisations like IMG and RCG seek the liberators of the working class in the Bani-Sadr/Mojahedeen block.

What was absent in your article was the practical implication of your own stand — i.e. you have ignored the petty-bourgeois nature of the Mojahedeen and have not exposed their political alliance with Bani Sadr, whose natural and obvious alliance with the American-trained army of Iran has been rightly singled out in your article.

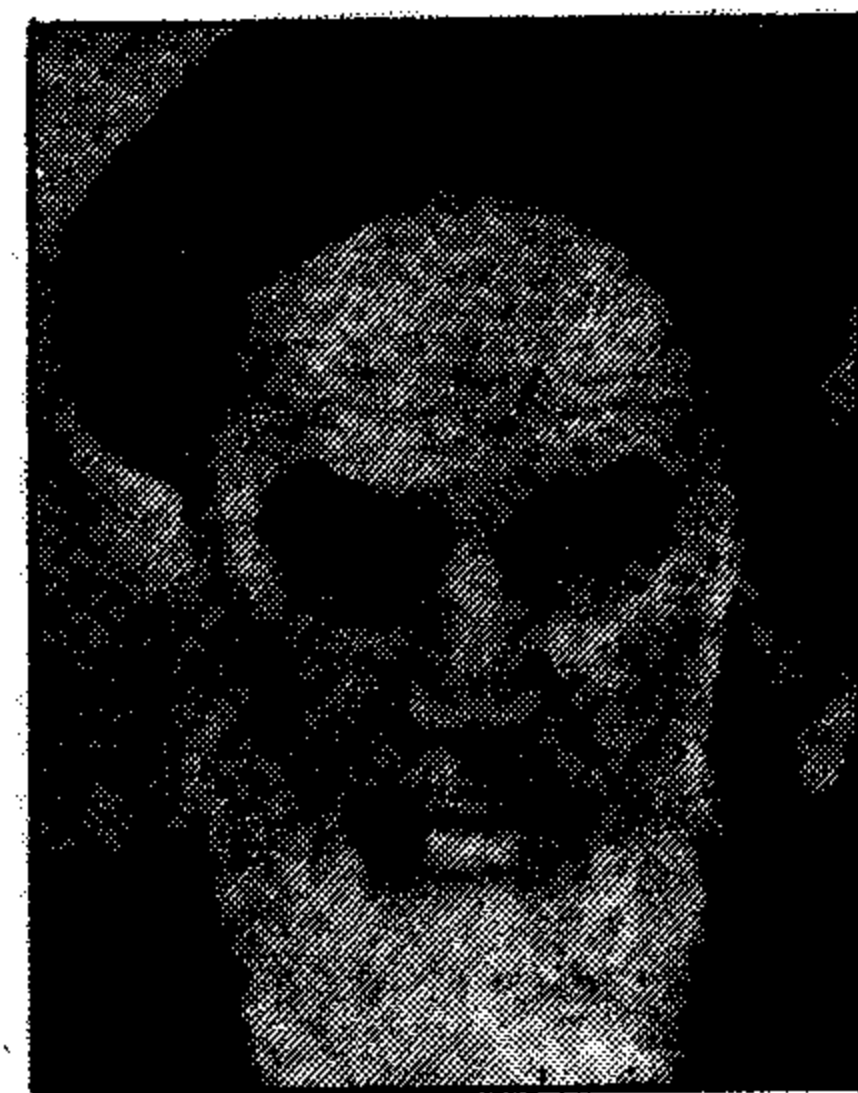
Furthermore, you have given the impression that by promoting terrorism, the Mojahedeen aim to facilitate a popular uprising. In this respect you are right to say that the way to fight the present regime is by mobilising a popular resistance rather than resorting to terrorism.

But the point is that the Mojahedeen do not want a mass uprising to topple this regime, and prefer to substitute Khomeini and IRP with a block of Bani-Sadr and themselves, using the opportunity of present conditions, which are characterised by the lack of a leading united working-class party.

Otherwise they would have sought alliance with the existing revolutionary Marxist forces like 'Komal', 'Peykar', and 'Unity of Communist Militants'.

Indeed, the vacillating social forces — i.e. petty bourgeoisie — must make a choice one day, between the revolution and the working class on one side and the bourgeoisie and liberalism on the other. It is clear that today the Mojahedeen have made their choice — Bani Sadr is their president!

Long live Revolution!
Long live Socialism!
Student supporters of the
Unity of Communist Militants in England.



Khomeini



EEC vote—move to left?

THE TUC's move to a harder line on withdrawal from the EEC has been reported in all the press as a shift to the Left. But why? The TUC was not counterposing a Socialist Europe to the EEC, but a capitalist Britain. And what's left-wing about that?



Liebknecht — the main enemy enemy is at home.

For some people on the Left, withdrawal from the EEC makes sense because it is linked to a plan for siege-economy import controls, which they see as the key-stone of a left-wing economic policy. Yet many on the Left reject the import control policy as nationalist — and still support withdrawal from the EEC! Why?

Ian McCalman (Socialist Organiser 51) has come up with one of the most contrived arguments yet: we should support withdrawal because the EEC Commission would prevent a Left Labour government subsidising the steel industry, or nationalising other industries.

Not hostile

The short answer to Ian is that the EEC is not hostile to industrial subsidies — it organises them on a huge scale. The EEC has presented no obstacle to the new French government's nationalisation programme, which is bigger than anything suggested by the leaders of our Labour Left. And in any case the EEC Commission has practically no power to impose its will on EEC member governments.

But that is all beside the main point. There is no reason at all to suppose that capitalist rationalisation of the steel industry in an isolated Britain would be less devastating than in the EEC framework.

Our answer to the EEC plans for the steel industry should be an international struggle for a workers' plan, not a nationalist programme of getting Britain out of the EEC and leaving steelworkers in other EEC countries to find their own answers (presumably by demanding subsidies and protectionist policies from their respective govern-

ments). And, in line with Marxist principle, "The main enemy is in our own country", we should focus our fire on the British Steel bosses and the Tories — not allow them to divert blame to the bogeymen in Brussels.

Real anti-capitalist measures by a workers' government in Britain would of course be opposed by the EEC Commission, and by all the ruling classes it represents — not because of Clause so-and-so of the Treaty of Rome, but because of class interest. But the serious enemies of such measures would be found in the House of Lords, the monarchy, the top ranks of the civil service, the army, the police, NATO, etc. The EEC Commission

and the Treaty of Rome would not figure in anyone's mind as important props of capitalism.

And the task of a workers' government would not be to cut Britain loose, but to link up with the workers' movements in Europe and extend the struggle for its anti-capitalist policies internationally.

In the elections for the EEC Parliament, French revolutionary socialists ran an exemplary campaign under the slogan, "Long live Workers' Europe — without fatherlands or frontiers". That should be our answer to the EEC — not "Britain out!"

COLIN FOSTER
London

We say no increases!

JOHN O'MAHONY sets out (Socialist Organiser no. 52) to assess the 'debate on the left' concerning rate and rent increases and the cuts. But the concluding part of this article is both confused and confusing.

During the course of the article he appears to suggest that the correct position is one of complete opposition to all rate and rent increases, and to all the cuts. Certainly, this is the only position which anyone who starts off from the interests of the working class could possibly hold.

But at the end of the article, comrade O'Mahony moves away from this position. He suggests unity with London Labour Briefing on, among other things, the policy that:

"Labour Local Government Committees must coordinate a mass refusal by Labour councils to

either increase rates and rents unreasonably or slash services".

Perhaps this actually means opposition to every single reduction of services, rather than just to their being 'slashed'.

But more importantly than what may just be clumsy formulation, the position which O'Mahony accepts as a basis for unity is entirely different to one of total opposition to any rate or rent increase.

No increase

With living standards being attacked and lowered each day, the only 'reasonable' rent or rate increase for the working class is no increase at all. That is the reality.

If O'Mahony disagrees with it, he should say so. If he agrees with it, then

again, why did he not say so?

JIM FARNHAM

EDITORS' NOTE: Socialist Organiser is against rent and rate rises. The formula quoted at the end of John O'Mahony's article is from Chris Mullin.

Mullin must be referring to the view sometimes held in the labour movement that Labour councils should be willing to raise rates, for example, by an amount proportion as wage rises. He certainly isn't referring to 'balancing the books', because his whole article is a polemic against that idea!

We didn't argue with Mullin's formula because both the political gist of it [the working class should refuse to pay for the bosses' crisis] and the practical conclusion [confrontation with the Tories] are the same as ours.

Violence no virtue

I OBJECT to the manner in which Wendy Frankland describes the image of Shelley as given by the educational system.

Whilst the description is probably an accurate portrayal of the kind of atti-



Shelley — a revolutionary revolutionary poet.

tudes we are encouraged to develop in schools it is blatantly sexist.

Wendy does nothing to counter the view that being "a beautiful but ineffectual angel" is an extremely derogatory way of describing personal qualities generally attributed to artists, women and gay men.

Without gentleness, sensitivity, warmth and encouragement we cannot build either a socialist revolution or a socialist society. Violent revolution and the use of violence in the build up to such a situation are necessary because of the balance of class forces not because aggression and destruction are useful in themselves.

If we are going to build a socialist revolution, the

revolutionary left has got to open its ranks to women. In doing so it might be useful to look at encouraging male revolutionaries to develop some of the personal attributes women are brought up with in the same way that women have to develop the attributes of aggression, dynamism etc., in order to become revolutionaries.

But at very least it is important to encourage women to feel worthy because of the contribution we can make and not go along with the destructive attitudes of capitalist society.

Yours fraternally,
CHRISTINA GOODWIN
Leicester

Pergamon NUJ chapel lives to fight another day!

MORE THAN six months ago journalists at Robert Maxwell's Pergamon Press headquarters in Oxford walked out on what they hoped would be a short strike over wages and conditions.

This Monday they returned to work for the first time since March 4. They were in new offices four miles down the road and almost none of their original demands had been met.

Yet the nine NUJ members who returned to the unfamiliar task of editing journals this week have won an outstanding victory. The full might of the Maxwell empire, bent on removing them from the company, has been pushed back.

Against almost overwhelming odds, a small group of workers has beaten off a determined attempt to wipe out the only active union at the hub of what has now become a giant multi-national web of publishing companies.

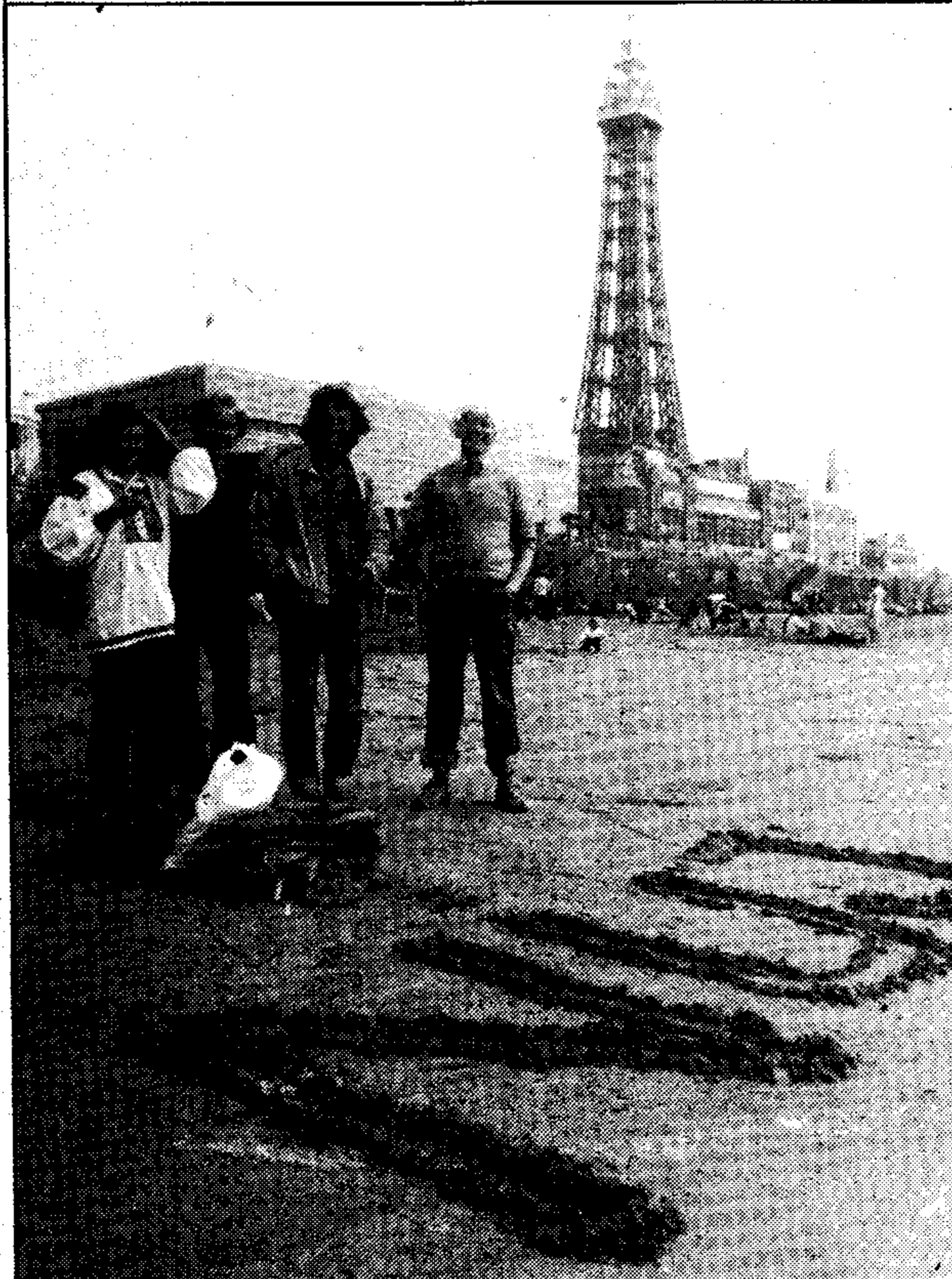
The strike which began on March 4 1981 came after 18 months of fruitless attempts to negotiate a new house agreement.

Wages at Pergamon were (and are) at the bottom of the list of publishing wages and other agreements were being changed for the worse day by day. For example there was (and is) no proper sick pay agreement.

No decisions

Although Maxwell was in the middle of negotiating to buy the British Printing Corporation, he insisted that no decisions could be taken by anyone but him.

This style of management is now being felt in BPC itself, where directors find that they have become errand boys for Maxwell's



At Blackpool to lobby the TUC

every whim. In the case of Pergamon it meant that most of the meetings which had been set up were cancelled at the last minute.

But there was more than that to Maxwell's obstruction. He was determined to confront and break the union. Within the past two years there have been two short strikes by the editorial staff at Pergamon, both over dismissals.

In both cases the sacked members were reinstated after strikes which had lasted three days and one day.

The Oxford NUJ branch had meanwhile written both to ASTMS and to the Labour Party, asking how it was possible for Maxwell to claim he was a member of the labour movement. (He was recruited to

ASTMS personally by Clive Jenkins and he is a member of the GC of Oxford City Labour Party GC).

Maxwell regarded those actions as 'interference'. He launched fierce attacks on the NUJ chapel, demanding that it dissociate itself from the Oxford branch, and blaming the chapel officers, Jim Boumelha and Simon Collings, for attacks which threatened his convenient divide between public and 'personal' life.

This distinction was later also to be made by the ASTMS National Executive, which said that Maxwell could not be disciplined, because he had not been acting in his capacity as a trade unionist when he sacked the NUJ members!

Several attempts had been sponsored by Max-

Patrick Spilling reports on the victory of a long and hard struggle

well's hired hands to overturn the chapel leadership. At one point Maxwell's son became a member of the NUJ chapel. All such efforts had failed. But by running down the staffing on the journals department and by threatening junior managers that they must choose between future promotion of the union, Maxwell managed to reduce numbers in the chapel.

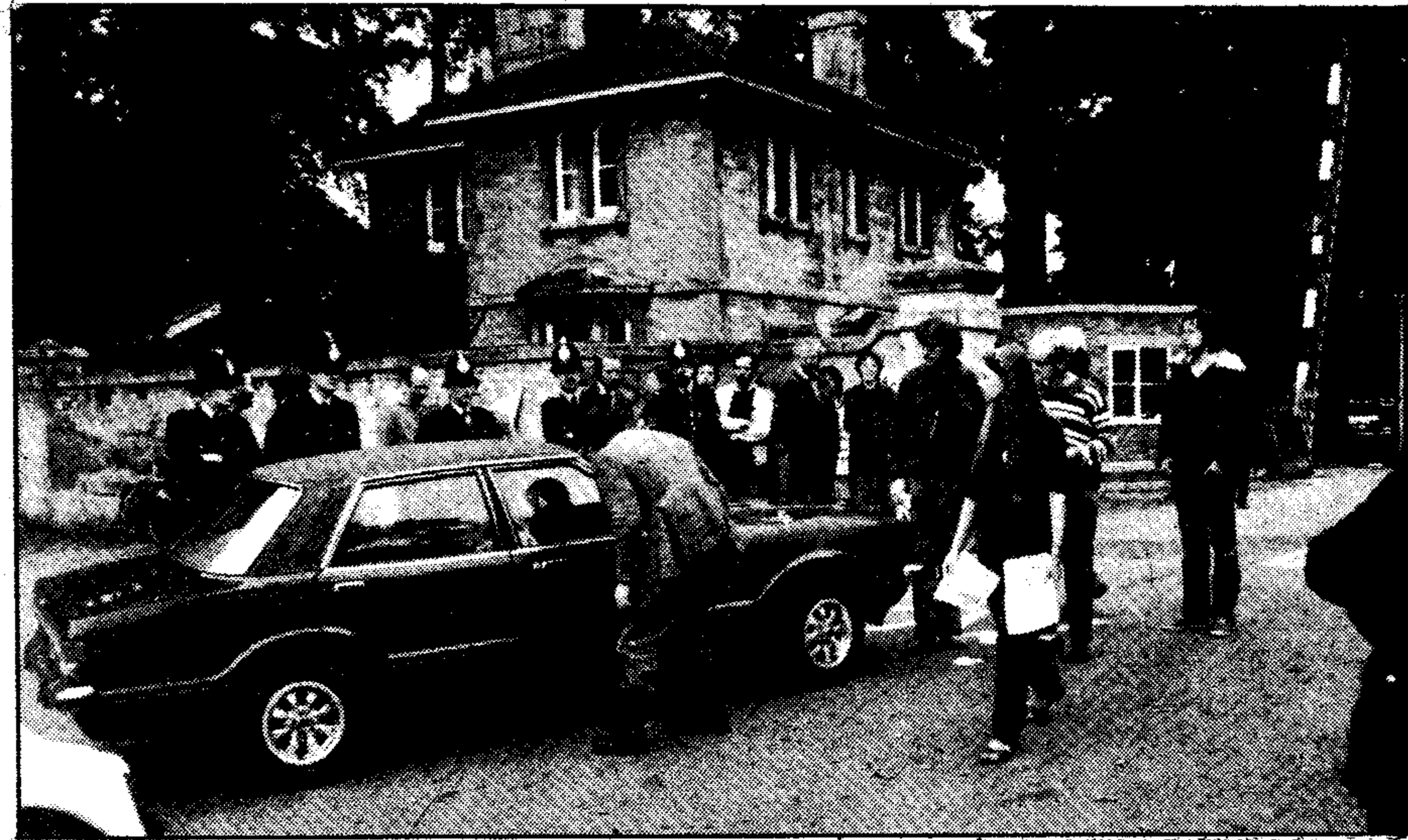
Sacked

Within two days of the strike starting Maxwell had sacked all nine NUJ members. Although the chapel continued to demand reinstatement and the meeting of the house agreement claim, from this point the number one issue at stake became whether the chapel would survive.

The NUJ is not the only union at Headington Hill Hall, in Oxford. APEX has a branch there, which has been used in the past by Maxwell to claim that the NUJ could not recruit in certain areas.

But out of a huge potential membership APEX has been reduced to a couple of dozen members, only half a dozen of whom are at all active. It proved virtually impossible throughout the strike even to get APEX to meet; only on one day did one of their officers refuse to cross the picket line.

The NGA also has a chapel at Pergamon — although not a closed shop. The NUJ chapel had held



Picket of Headington Hall offices by Pergamon strikers

several discussions with NGA before the strike started and were convinced that they would get swift support.

Many of the problems being faced by the NUJ were also being faced by NGA members, who were also crippled by having among their leadership Ken Hall, a long-time collaborator with Maxwell. During the strike Hall was elected as Oxford branch president.

But hopes of support were dashed, if slowly. For some time the NGA chapel maintained it was waiting for instructions from head office in Bedford.

Officials at national level claimed that the chapel didn't want to support — and there was one of those long drawn out shuttles between the members on the ground and the National Council of the NGA in which that union seems to specialise.

Support

The NUJ chapel, the Oxford NUJ branch, and the Oxford Trades Council, had set up a local support committee which built for a number of demonstrations on the gate and which helped to organise picketing and lobbies of key national meetings.

Both the NUJ chapel and the support committee were consistently in favour of placing demands on the

print union leadership to oppose Maxwell. There was a double importance of this. Maxwell's 'survival plan' for BPC involved thousands of redundancies in SOGAT and the NGA. One print plant after another was closed down with the workers complaining bitterly that a deal had been signed over their heads.

Although the struggle at Pergamon was not over redundancies, it was important that the print unions be forced to say where they stood when a fight did break out.

When a strike against Maxwell did take place — at Park Royal — the chapel quickly made contact and tried to show the common thread running through the disputes.

Gradually the chapel built contacts inside the new Maxwell empire and began to press for national action to win the dispute. The emergency committee of the NUJ was pressed to call for national blacking.

Chapel members went on tour around the country drumming up support. Everywhere they went they found a widespread hatred to Maxwell. A Scottish tour raised several thousand pounds. Mass demonstrations outside the gates won the support of trade union branches not seen in public for years.

Maxwell's own ASTMS branch condemned his action and asked for an

inquiry. But the emergency committee began hedging over action. National blacking would mean stopping major publications, like the colour magazines of the Observer and the Sunday Times.

'Deportation'

Out of the blue, talks were set up with Maxwell. He offered six members their jobs back — and 'deportation' for the other three, to jobs in France, Scotland, and Australia. These were for the two chapel officers plus Carol Russell, who had become MoC of the group chapel.

This deal was recommended by the union president, Harry Conroy, but rejected unanimously by the chapel.

During the TUC, the chapel sent a delegation to Blackpool to lobby the NUJ delegation. They in turn set up a meeting with the NGA and eventually the NGA agreed that if Maxwell did not agree to go to ACAS they would call out their members at Oxford.

The final set of negotiations — with a repentant Conroy now really fighting for the jobs — lasted until the early hours of the morning. Maxwell eventually conceded all the jobs back at Wheatley, where he is moving part of his journals production; and the chapel accepted. Talks are now taking place on the house agreement.

Standing on your own two feet!

LAST article on evolution this week — if your'e bored with it, hard luck! Following the revelation last week that, civilisation notwithstanding, we are the equal of any ape, I continue with my summary of the ideas of Jeremy Cherfas and John Gribbin in New Scientist on how we (and the other apes) got to where we are.

About 20 million years ago (MYA), the ancestor of all modern apes evolved. Scientists call it Dryopithecus of 'tree-ape', though it lived on the ground.

Over the next 10 million year, the climate of the earth was warm and there was a lush carpet of forest over much of Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Dryopithecus and its descendants must have found plenty of opport-

unity to make a living and evolved into several new species of ape which could exploit such favourable habitats.

One group developed the bodily adaptations which enabled them to live in the trees. These were the brachiators (from the Ancient Greek for 'arm') and they evolved in the forests of Asia. Gibbons split from this line some 10 mya and orangutans some 8 mya, but both groups still live in the forests of Asia.

The next split probably took place in Africa about 4½ mya, the results being chimps, gorillas and ourselves (or rather our direct ancestors). This means that our brachiating ancestors must have travelled from Asia to Africa between 8 and 4½ mya.



Darwin's first public defender, Thomas Huxley.

By this time the earth's climate was getting colder and the forests were dwindling, being replaced by grassland.

Culture

How did the arm-swinging tree-dwellers travel the 8,000 kilometres to Africa with no trees to swing

from? By walking, of course, probably using the semi-upright knuckle-walking that modern chimps and gorillas use.

Incidentally, the bodily adaptations necessary for brachiation also fit an animal well for walking more or less upright. Once in Africa, the walking brachiators would have found forests to swing about in, but these were still shrinking in the colder climate and there would have been a considerable advantage to a brachiator who could also walk upright on two legs. They would be able to wander about outside of the forests, looking for extra sources of food.

If they had also developed a food-sharing culture then we can imagine the beginnings of the line which we would call human. The earliest fossil example of this upright-walking line is a female of the species Australopith-



Science

by Les Hearn

ecus Africanus (African southern ape) named Lucy by her discoverer. Lucy is 3¼ million years old.

Now, round about 4 mya, the climate began to get better and the forests got larger and lusher and there was lots more fruit to eat. Cherfas and Gribbin now start to get a bit more wild in their speculations.

The popular misconception about evolution is that humans are descended from apes. Cherfas and Gribbin say it was the other way round.

Some early humans were attracted by the easy living in the forests and, so to speak, went back to the trees. Even now, chimps

and gorillas only need to spend a short party of the day looking for their food and spend the rest of the time playing.

Our direct ancestors, however, were not to be seduced by easy living and instead stuck to the difficult task of developing language, agriculture, industry, slavery, feudalism, capitalism, nuclear weapons and possibly even socialism.

Competition: A new logo for SO science. 1st prize 'Einstein for beginners', last prize 'Healey's Eye'. Hurry your entries in now! Judgement will be by an impartial panel of labour movement activists.

Determination

The significance for the labour movement is that even a small number of union members with determination and a consistent orientation towards forcing the union leadership to act can defend itself.

It is not a victory in terms of wages and conditions. But despite the odds, the chapel is still there. It can rebuild its forces. It can fight again on wages and conditions.



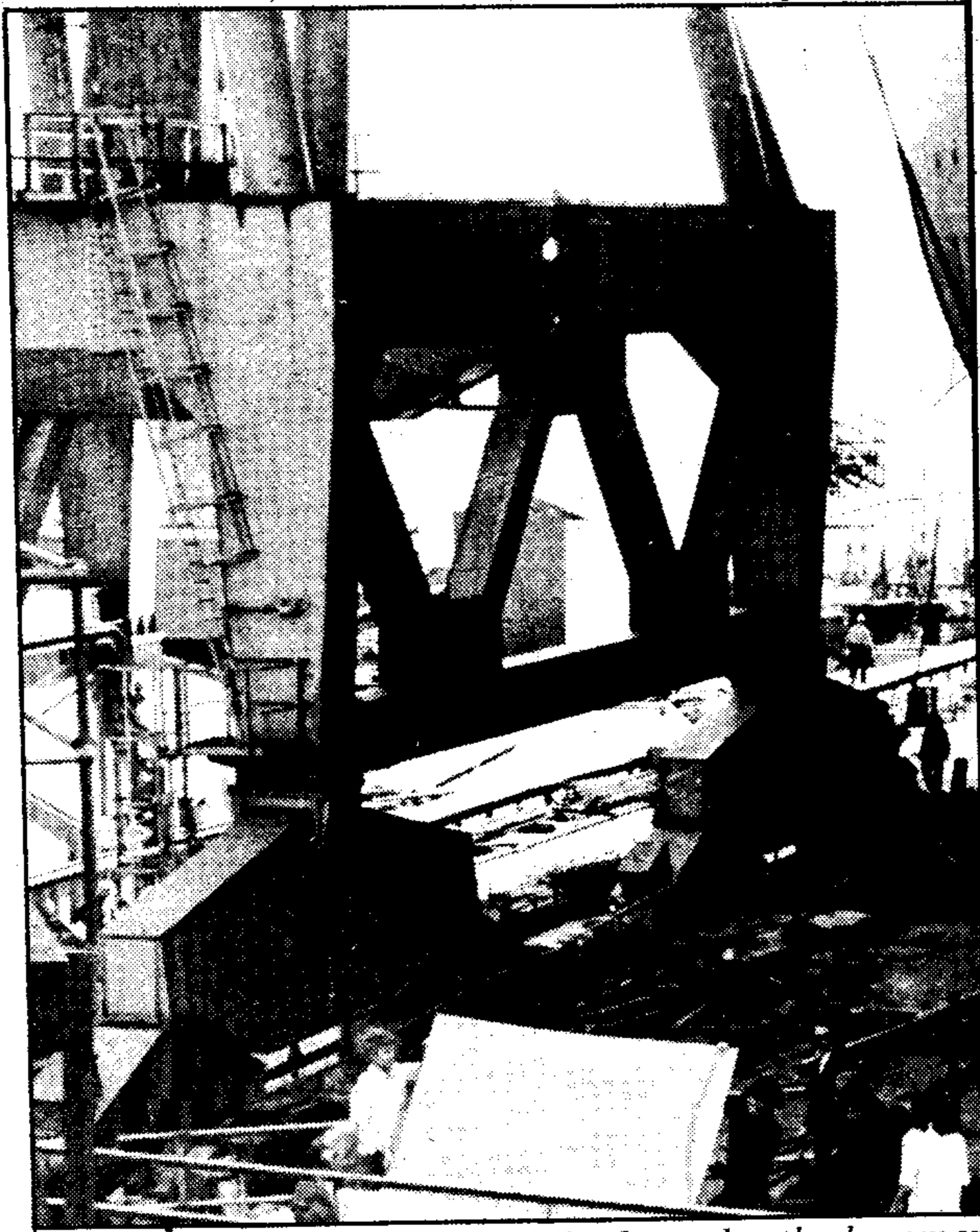
Maxwell

Industrial News

Fighting to defend Scottish shipyard jobs

All-out action needed

BOB BARTY, Robb Caledon yard convenor, **JACK McHARDY**, chairperson of the local Confed, and **CHARLES ROYLE**, Boilermakers' steward, told Matthew Jones and John MacDonald why Robb Caledon workers are occupying their yard.



More shipyard jobs under the hammer

□□ BB: 149 manual workers and ten foremen have joined the sit-in. The Executive of the Combine Committee asked for a commitment from the whole workforce not to accept voluntary redundancies.

Previously British Shipbuilders had run our yard down from a few thousand to the present numbers by voluntary redundancy and natural wastage. We've seen yards closed through voluntary redundancies alone, so we held a meeting and everyone agreed not to accept voluntary redundancy.

We attended a Confed meeting in Blackpool on the 9th, and it decided to fully support us.

The whole industry realises that unless something is done now the cancer of closures will spread. If we left this yard unattended it would be tantamount to compulsory redundancies.

□□ CR: a national overtime ban is being organised from 4.30 on the 18th, and a one-day national strike every Monday beginning on the 28th.

□□ BB: In the past they withdrew a threat of closure after an overtime ban. The overtime ban has a more far-reaching effect than most people realise. Robb Caledon sent a telegram congratulating the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee [of the Confed] on their decision on an overtime ban.

British Shipbuilders' put an advert in the papers today, and this is an admission that they're really frightened.

They're saying that there is no work. Since the Polish

order, they've not got us one single worthwhile job, though they sent a taskforce round the world looking for orders.

□□ JM: They're also saying that we've been offered permanent transfers to Leith. That's 60 miles away from our homes and families.

There's no travelling expenses in permanent transfers, and there's no housing there either.

□□ BB: And we can't get access to the press to say what is really happening. When they announced clos-

"This yard has a great reputation for specialist ships. They have a skilled workforce, and given the opportunity can even enter a higher field of technology".

KEN GRIFFIN, deputy chairman, British Shipbuilders, 27.10.79.

ure, they said that Dundee had lost £11 million.

We got the figures ourselves, with help from colleagues in the management union, and what did we find? — the losses that they said were for Dundee were for the Robb Caledon group as a whole. The losses for Dundee were a fraction of the total.

The chairman has admitted this to us, but they're still claiming publicly that we've made a loss of £11 million since nationalisation.

'Mistake'

They said we were bottom of the league for productivity. But now we've investigated, they say they made a mistake, and we're middle of the league.

They're saying we're not competitive, but we've not had the chance.

We were also told we'd be notified of any inquiries for jobs, and we were told that there had been none.

When we got hold of the list of job inquiries, dated September 3, 1980, we discovered that there had been inquiries for 119 vessels from January to August. Every one of them was refused.

The fire-fighting boat was 'too small'; a floating crane, a large cutter, and a wet fish trawler, were 'too large'.

"Men left this yard because we were being conned. British Shipbuilders are not people of integrity. They are confidence-tricksters".

B'B BARTY, convenor Robb Caledon.

The chemical waste disposal ship was refused because design staff were on other projects, although we'd been told that jobs for our yard were the absolute priority.

There's no way they wanted to find us jobs. Men left this yard because we were being conned, and we couldn't persuade them to stay on.

British Shipbuilders are not people of integrity, they are confidence tricksters.

I have a tape at home with a statement from Ken Griffin [deputy chairman of British Shipbuilders] that "This yard has a great reputation for specialist ships. They have a skilled workforce, and given the opportunity can even enter a higher field of technology".

Messages of support to: **Robb Caledon shipyard, Dundee.** [Phone Dundee 459066].

by Lol Duffy (Boilermakers' shop steward, Cammell Laird, Birkenhead)

AS FROM Friday September 18, the 31,000 workers employed by British Shipbuilders are on a national overtime ban. And as from September 28, we will start a series of one-day stoppages.

The reason for the action is BS's push to close down the Robb Caledon yard in Dundee. The call for national industrial action was unanimously supported by lay delegates from every yard in the country.

BS has responded with letters to every employee, adverts in the papers, and notices around the yards claiming that industrial action could mean a loss of jobs. But about 20,000 jobs have been lost since nationalisation in July 1977, and all that without industrial action!

Other yards are threatened with the loss of more jobs. Vickers in Barrow will have a surplus of 400 workers by December, according to BS. Assets have been sold off at Scotts Paulin in Scotland. Plans are being made to sell off a small engineering factory in London. Cutbacks are also planned at Vosper Thornycroft.

An engineering works in Hartlepool is due to close in December this year. Cammell Lairds, in Birkenhead, has only enough work for about a third of its present workforce, and that will

only last two years.

The SNC (Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee of the Confed) has had to call some action, despite its attempt to find a compromise. For years the SNC has allowed jobs to be lost without a fight, but now the crunch is coming. Those left in the yards are the ones who could not be pressurised into selling their jobs.

As the Socialist Organiser Lairs bulletin of September 17 says, "The SNC has attempted to divert the fight against enforced redundancies by becoming the go-between for Kestrel Marine, a private offshore platform production company, and BS, in an attempt to sell off Robb Caledon."

"This is totally against the interests of Robb Caledon workers, who also see it as a diversion from the fight to keep the yard open as part of a nationalised shipbuilding industry. It is also totally against union policy".

Now is the time for all BS workers to stand and be counted.

The tactic of one-day strikes is being criticised, with an amount of rank and file feeling for an all-out strike until the yard is reopened. The civil servants' lesson has not gone astray.

Shop stewards' meeting to organise support for the Robb Caledon occupation - Tuesday September 29 10.30am at Marryat Hall, Dundee.

North Sea Deaths

Money to burn!

IN THE past week three more men have lost their lives in the North Sea. Two were welders whose basket broke and flung them into the treacherous waters.

The safety record on the rigs in the North Sea is notoriously bad and union organisation is non-existent.

Prompted by the Bristow helicopter disasters, Moray Trades Council has adopted a resolution calling on the Scottish TUC to set up a trade union enquiry to investigate safety in the North Sea oil industry and related industries.

The Trades Council rejects the idea of a public inquiry, feeling this would be nothing more than a whitewash.

The sums of money involved in North Sea oil are so huge, the companies, BP, Mobil, Total, etc., so powerful, equipped with such slick public relations set-ups, that any public inquiry involving them would finally be a farce — even if the Labour movement could use it as a platform.

The resolution was passed on August 17. It remains to be seen if the STUC will act — as they have signally failed to since the oil 'boom' started over a decade ago.

THE crazy logic of Thatcherite economics is exemplified by the decision of the Cabinet not to invest public money in the projected North Sea gas pipeline.

Even Tory spokesmen and industrialists are horrified at the prospect of £50 billion worth of gas being flared off above the waters of the North Sea for want of a pipeline to bring it ashore. The expression "money to burn" has certainly been given a new meaning by the Tories in office.

The refusal of the government to back the £2.7 billion gas gathering project has sealed its fate. Tory hopes of its being totally financed by the oil companies has already collapsed in the face of a clear negative from that source.

No doubt this decision of the oil magnates was motivated by an attempt to blackmail the government into lowering the level of petroleum revenue tax and raising the price they would get for the gas. They may still hope to exact that concession in return for some agreement on investment in the pipeline but the immediate situation is one of total collapse of the scheme.

Even Tory spokesmen in Scotland are aghast at the implications of the Cabinet decision which wipes out the prospects of thousands of new jobs in steel and construction. A spokesperson for the CBI in Scotland



Thatcher bemoaned the loss of "not just the pipeline project itself but all the spin-offs for the construction and steel industries and the suppliers of the necessary equipment."

It has been estimated that an extra 11,000 jobs are involved. The cancellation of

the project can only mean more insistent demands by McGregor for a further 3,000 redundancies in the steel industry.

Since the decision of the Cabinet, obviously under strong pressure from Chancellor Howe and the Treasury, there have been tentative moves by some of the oil companies towards building other smaller pipelines to supplement those from the Frigg and Brent oilfields already in use.

It is possible that some such weaker option will be the conclusion of the affair but it cannot disguise the fact that the reckless squandering of vital resources is the hallmark of Tory economic strategy.

IAN McALMAN

ANOTHER occupation against closure has been started at Barnes Flexible Packaging in Cleeveham, Manchester. The 236 workers at the food packaging printers, voted unanimously to fight for their jobs, with the full support of three of the unions involved, the NGA, SOGAT and EETPU (the AUEW has yet



SOGAT leader Keys

to meet to discuss the occupation).

Although originally the workers were only demanding parity with redundancy payments with other workers who have been laid off by the owning Smurfit Group, once they had occupied the factory, they extended their demands to include the re-opening of the factory.

Dot Bradshaw, the SOGAT MoC for shop floor workers, told me that the management had offered a "revival package" in February, which was basically 40 redundancies, which were reluctantly accepted. Two months later a "survival package" was tabled, involving mainly demanning — again the unions reluctantly agreed. Four months after this, the company closed down the factory.

Already support has been forthcoming — the executive of the NGA has instructed its members in all 27 Smurfit factories in Britain and Ireland, to carry out an overtime ban, a work-to-rule and to black work from the Cleeveham factory. Pressure are being put on the SOGAT leadership to do the same.

The workers at Barnes Flexible Packaging have also found the strikers from Laurence Scott Electronics very helpful, giving them advice for fundraising and for avoiding the early pitfalls of an occupation. Bob Litherland, the MP for Central Manchester, has also shown support for the occupation.

Messages of support and donations to: Len Hughes, 163, Argyl St., Heywood, Lancs.

New Town closure

UNIGATE has declared its intention to close its factory, Scot Meats of Bletchley on 12 December.

If we allow this closure it will immediately mean the loss of over 1,500 jobs in the Milton Keynes area. The Joint Shop Stewards Committee have stated that it will oppose any attempt by the Company to enforce closure.

We realise that it is not only our members' jobs that are at stake but the future of the community. Milton Keynes is por-

trayed by the media as a boom area but the reality is different.

Support

Already we have 6,000 unemployed in our area. Any new factories opened are capital intensive with a low demand for labour. Many of the firms moving to Milton Keynes are closing factories in other parts of the country thereby increasing overall national unemployment.

To successfully win the

fight to retain our jobs will need not only the support of our own community but the strength of the labour movement. At the moment we need financial support to build our fighting fund and pledges of your support for our struggle.

Donations and messages of support to: Scot Meats Joint Shop Stewards Committee, c/o John Owen, 23 Lancaster Gate, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK36.

KICK OUT THE TORIES!

Labour democracy

and the fight for a WORKERS GOVERNMENT

40p

50p including postage from Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, N8

A Socialist Organiser Pamphlet

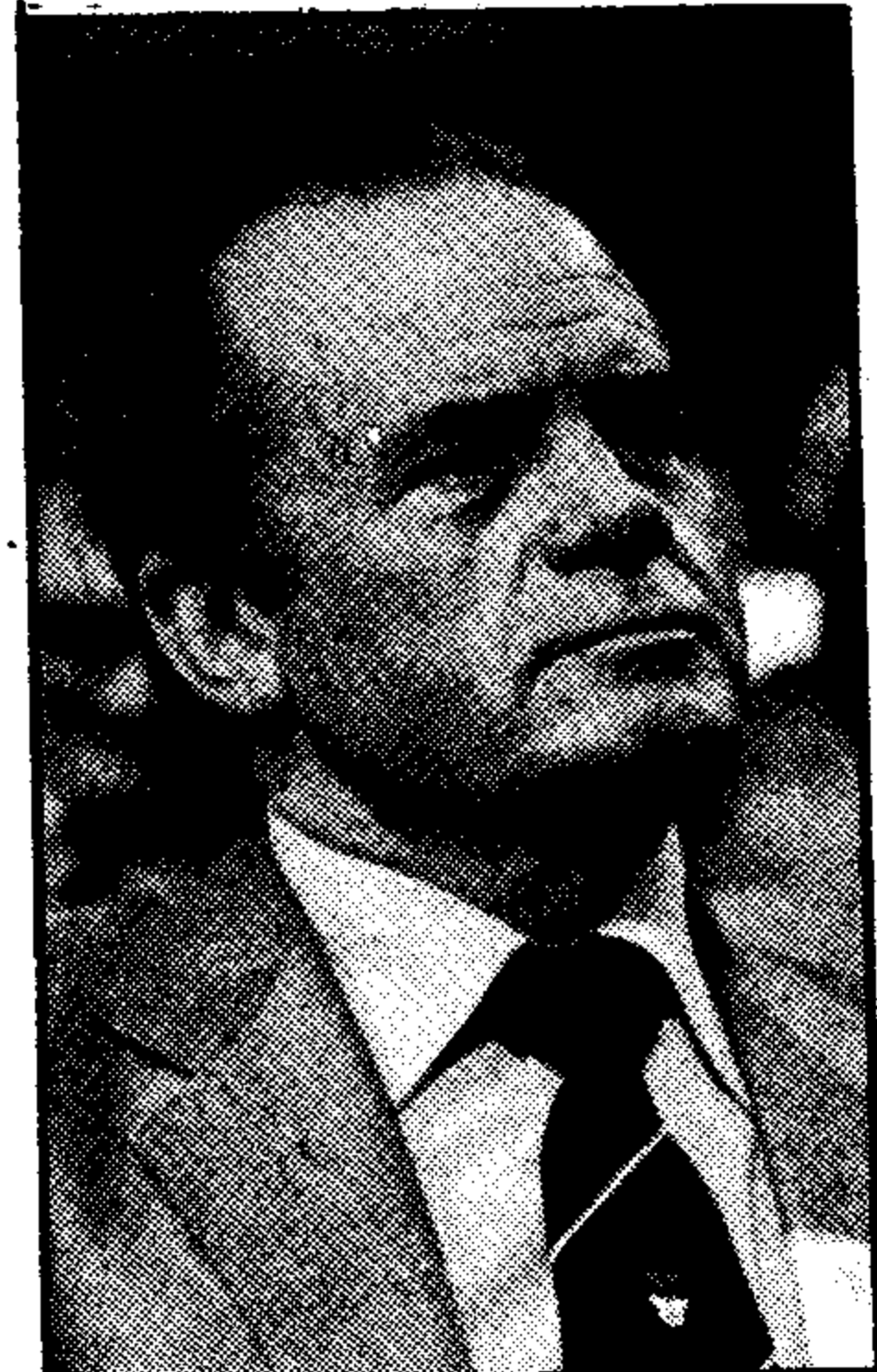
CAP & LAB

Industrial News

Ford: stick to £20!

FACED with Ford bosses' plans to slash over 16,000 jobs between now and 1984, to achieve 'Japanese' levels of exploitation, a well-attended national conference of Ford shop stewards met in Coventry on Sunday 20th.

It endorsed the claim prepared by the full-time officials, for £20 increase, a 35 hour week, improved pensions, and earlier retirement, and laid plans for a campaign among rank and file Ford workers.



Ron Todd

But the union negotiators are still indicating willingness to talk on the Ford bosses' new plans for manning levels. And when Ron Todd or other officials say that the 35 hour claim can be phased in over three years (presumably at the same time as Ford management want to phase out more than 16,000 jobs), that is a green light to Ford that hours is not an important part of the claim.

Every factory needs to organise mass meetings to win support for the whole claim. The stewards need to meet nationally again, both to monitor progress on the campaign, and to ensure that the full-time officials do not back down.

The claim is formally submitted on October 9, and is dated from November 23. But Ford workers should be looking towards a link-up with other workers in the pay front-line, with slightly different settlement dates.

The next national meeting of stewards should invite delegations from other groups of workers now coming up against the pay policy of the Tories and the bosses.

STEPHEN CORBISHLEY

'No' to Hoover wage cuts

by Ian McLeish

IN THE PAST seven years, unemployment in Cambuslang has risen 500 per cent.

In that time the workforce at the Hoover factory has dropped from 5,400 to just over 2,000. Those two thousand are now having to fight to keep their jobs.

Oppose

At a mass meeting on Thursday 17th, there was an unanimous decision to reject plans which include redundancies and a ten per cent wage cut. It was also unanimous that if the company closed the factory, the workers would take whatever action necessary to oppose that, including occupation.

Convenors from Hoover's three British factories will discuss the situation with AUEW officials at a meeting on September 29.

Workers at Cambuslang will be fighting for:

- * No compulsory redundancies.

- * A guarantee that the factory will remain open, before agreeing to any

changes.

- * No reduction in wages. All future increases must be in line with the increase in retail prices.

- * The company must increase its products range at Cambuslang.

- * Stop the rundown of UK production.

Convenor Eddie McAvoy told Socialist Organiser: "Everyone is determined to fight this time. Over the last five years the company has given us ten survival plans. We have accepted all of them, and they all failed."

"We recognise the problems of the company... But the company has to realise that the workers have financial difficulties. With short-time working our wages have been cut by 20 per cent. Overall our pay is 24% less than we think it should be, while the directors' wages have gone up by 115.9% in the last three years."

Foolish

"The philosophy behind wage cuts is the company taking advantage of the high

unemployment level, using people's fear. There were two recent examples of workers in this area accepting 10% cuts. They've all lost their jobs.

"If people are foolish enough to believe that the savings made by a 10% wage cut is enough to make the company viable, then they're kidding themselves. Any money the company saves by wage cuts will end up being paid out in redundancies."

"Anyone accepting wage cuts is financing their own redundancy."

Losses

There are also rumours that there will be massive redundancies at the end of October. The company, in its half-yearly report to shareholders, stated that it had made losses of £6.1 million, a lot of which was redundancy payments. It expects losses to be even higher at the end of the year, and intends taking 'necessary measures', that is, more redundancies.

Countdown to crunch at St Mary's

IT IS now only a matter of weeks before the proposed implementation of the government's latest attacks on St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road.

From the first week in October, some consultants are to be moved to St Mary's in Praed Street or St Charles, and the run down of the wards due for the chop is to begin.

The plan is to close Ward 2 by October 19, which is also the date given to stop the normal ambulance service to the hospital. From then it is meant to be an intermittent service with the emphasis on "walking wounded".

However the resistance to these plans is growing. Staff on Ward 2, backed up by the other workers, have pledged themselves to resist the rundown and closure, and the London ambulance service convenors have repeated their decision to continue bringing patients while the medical cover is there.

The fight back was strengthened by a motion passed by the stewards in the North-West London District of the Area Health Authority on September 14.

Strike action

The stewards decided to call urgent membership meetings and propose:

- *Support for the day of action on 3 October;

- *The blocking of any equipment moved from Harrow Road;

- *Refusal to work with any staff moved from St. Mary's Harrow Road;

- *The pledge to call immediate supporting strike action if management takes any steps to attack the occupation by forcefully moving equipment or patients, while full services are still being provided by the staff;

- *Refusal to work with new staff employed on short-term contracts - full contract staff to be employed instead;

*All branches to call on their national executive committees to give full official backing to this action.

Meanwhile, the attacks on the unions in W9, particularly centring on the ancillary staff, have been shown to be a general rule in this AHA (Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster).

Strike action has now spread throughout hospitals in the south district as a result of management victimisation of a porter.

When he lodged a complaint after being assaulted by the hospital administrator at St Stephen's Hospital, Fulham Road, he received a final written warning after 15 years' service!

St Stephen's workers came out and have been maintaining effective picket lines.

St Mary Abbots and now Westminster Hospital are also out on supporting strike action.

Stroke

The ancillary workers in W9 are itching to take action against their very determined management.

Rita Maxim, who has borne the brunt of the harassment because of her unswerving stand in defence of manning levels, is now off work with high blood pressure and appears to have some symptoms of a stroke.

This has been caused entirely by the actions of the domestics management.

The intimidation of other domestics is continuing in a cold, calculating manner. There is no doubt that further action will have to be taken to remove the authority from those who are doing this dirty work.

In this context the Day of Action on October 3 takes on huge importance. It is perfectly timed to bring together the opposition to these attacks.

After assembling at 11 am, outside the main entrance on Harrow Road, the demonstration will pass Paddington Green Children's Hospital, which recently won its fight against closure and St Mary's, W2, as well as the local Tory MP's surgery in Bishop's Bridge Road.

Lunch will be provided and there will be exhibitions on display of cuts struggles. Gerard Vaughan has been invited to justify his cuts at the debate in the afternoon and there will be a fund-raising disco in the evening.

Showdown

It is vital that there is a massive turnout with banners on that day.

Most important will be a large presence from local tenants' and community organisations and of trade union banners, particularly representing those unions involved - NUPE, TGWU, GMWU, COHSE and ASTMS.

None of these unions can afford to sit back and feel happy with the support they have given. This struggle is a direct showdown with the government over its policy of cuts.

Workers all over the country have got their eyes on this dispute to see how the unions will take up the challenge.

Messages of support and donations to Alyson Bunn, Ward 15, or Mick Woods, Porter's Lodge, St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road, London W9.

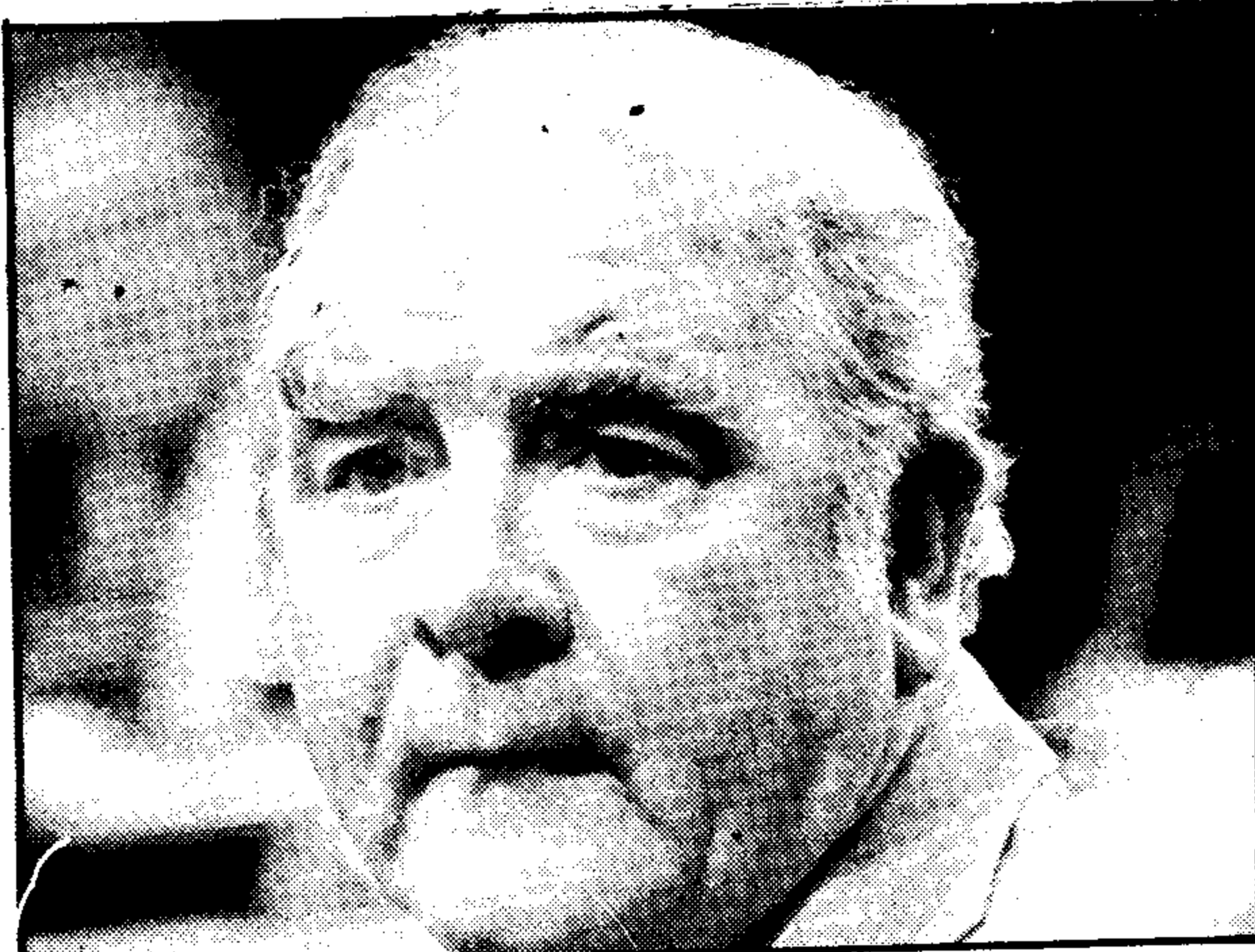
Probe Gormley's role in Scotts' carve-up!

by Clifford Peters and Keith Tuckman.

"TRADE UNIONS must develop the political dimension in their activities and work to support each other in job struggles."

So spoke Tony Benn to a rally of Scotts workers on Wednesday 16 September.

He went on to say: "What is happening here affects you and your families but the reason that Laurence Scott has become known throughout the labour movement is that the same thing is happening elsewhere in this country." This point was emphasised by a speaker from the sit-in at Barnes Flexible Packaging, who are following Scotts example by occupying against 200 job losses.



Gormley

negotiations and discussions."

"What they don't realise is our lads couldn't have afforded to buy the eggs - they were donated by local corner shops.

"It's easy for editors and SDP leaders to talk about the "proper way to conduct discussions". Most of them were born with a canteen of cutlery in their gobs, never mind a silver spoon.

"I've had to fight all my life for what I've got - and here I am at 57, still fighting."

Mass picket

The situation now is that 300 of the original 650 workforce are still on the roster - yet the number of activists involved on a day-to-day basis is about a tenth of this number.

The key tactic for bringing victory at Scotts must still be the imposition of a mass picket at the Mining Supplies factory at Doncaster - but the stewards feel they don't have enough strength both to picket the Scotts factory in Manchester and launch offensive operations at Doncaster.

An important initiative in linking up the isolated struggles in Manchester, however, would be the launching of an inter-site coordinating committee that could centralise tactics and experience in the jobs fight-back, and this is under review by Scotts stewards at the moment.

If, for example, only a couple of stewards from each major plant in Manchester came forward there would be sufficient comrades to launch a picket at Doncaster.

Also important is forging links with the workers at Scotts Norwich factory, already facing redundancies.

Unlike other papers on the left, Socialist Organiser does not believe in gilding the lily. If a new initiative is not launched soon then defeat for the Scotts workers is inevitable.

The demand for a labour movement inquiry into the affairs of Scotts and the enterprises it supplies is also growing.

In the past few days, information has emerged which casts a sinister light on the involvement of Joe Gormley of the NUM and

Derek Ezra of the Coal Board in a conspiracy to sabotage Scotts.

On Tuesday 31 June Joe Gormley, acting on a request from the CSEU, contacted Ezra for discussion on Scotts. The ostensible reason was to discuss whether the NCB would switch its tender for machinery from Mining Supplies to other sources.

The real dialogue however was rather different.

In fact, Gormley reminded Ezra that a year before, the NCB Pension Fund initiated a project that resulted in the financial destruction of Scotts and the eventual laying open of the company for takeover by Arthur Snipe.

Moreover, a court case is now beginning in which the NCB Pension Fund (Deputy Chairman, Joe Gormley) is likely to be named as part of the conspiracy to destroy Scotts.

The gist of the court case is this. Last year two directors of a Laurence Scott subsidiary, PPD Engineering, collaborated with Hambros Merchant Bank to take over Harland Simon Ltd., a competitor of PPD which they managed.

The wheeler dealings of Roy Ashman and Henry Lally, the two directors, left Scotts with a deficit of £900,000 in 1981 instead of an expected profit of £500,000.

The real irony of the situation of course is that Snipe based his case for closure on false figures and that Duffy and Boyd also accepted this falsity as the basis for withdrawing official status.

They argued that "if there's no redundancies at Scotts - then all five factories will have to close."

Messages/money: G. Fryer, 20 Round Croft, Romilly, Cheshire.

Subscribe

Special offer for the new weekly: £3.50 for three months, £16 for six months, £11 for a year.

Name.....

Address.....

Send to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Sorry. An overflow of industrial reports and Labour Party conference coverage means that we've again had to postpone the continuation of John O'Mahony's serialised article analysing Tony Benn's ideas on 'Britain as a colony'. As apologies also to other contributors who have found their articles squeezed out for lack of space.

Come on, Arthur, let's be having you!

POLAND



Socialist Organiser

BUREAUGRATS

Guns for Anderton

THREATEN 'BLOODY CLASH'

by Alexis Carras

STUNNED silence is perhaps the best way to describe the mood in Poland after the first session of Solidarnosc's National Congress.

The Congress was a landmark for the post-war Eastern European workers' movement and its fight against the bureaucracy. The roar of the tanks ominously patrolling Poland's three land borders was not loud enough to drown out the 'authentic voice of the Polish working

class'.

The Congress marked an important shift leftwards, with a dramatic open letter to all workers of the Eastern European bloc and calls for a referendum on workers' management of industrial enterprises, for free elections, and implicitly for the untrammelled formation of independent political parties and access to the mass media.

The shift was not due to a change of heart by the moderates influenced by

the Catholic church hierarchy. The division between them and the radicals still exists and if anything is becoming more bitter.

Shift

The reason for the shift is the impending catastrophe threatening at any moment to engulf the entire country. Production declines precipitously, the food queues grow ever longer. The formal authority of the party and state

clashes continually, in a thousand different ways, with the increasingly real authority of the working class. The prisons explode in open rebellion.

More so than ever in the last 13 months, Poland is on the brink of Russian invasion and/or internal disintegration.

Which way forward for the nation? Solidarnosc's or the bureaucracy's?

continued on page 5, inside



GREATER Manchester police chief James Anderton has purchased a number of the revolutionary Heckler and Koch HK33 carbines. This weapon has the accuracy of a rifle with the manoeuvrability of a hand gun, and was used by the SAS in the Iranian Embassy siege.

Both the chairperson of the Council's Police Committee, Peter Kelly, and the Home Office, expressed 'astonishment' when informed. Indeed, Anderton himself at first denied the guns' existence.

Friends of Socialist Organiser had noticed invoices, addressed to the Chief Constable, for the guns to be sent to the police HQ in Southmill St. But even when photostats of the invoices were shown to him, Anderton maintained they were fakes.

Only later did the head of the police firearms department, Det. Insp. Harry Davies, admit the existence of the guns.

Information has also been released to Socialist Organiser that the Manchester police provide free escort and protection services to the arms company 'Interarms' in moving arms and ammunition from its Salford factory to Southampton docks. 'Interarms' sells military goods to South Africa and other 'freedom-loving' regimes.

This news highlights the need for Labour councillors to use the Police Committee to demand that Anderton 'opens the books' — and for the labour movement to win control over the Labour councillors.

CAR WORKERS AT HEAD OF WINTER PAY QUEUE

FORDS DEMAND £20 - SEE PAGE 15



by Jim Denham

The BL unions have presented their claim for the 1981-2 annual review.

It is £20 across the board, a 35 hour week, and a pro rata increase in premium payments.

The company have not yet given their official reply, but BL industrial relations boss Geoffrey Armstrong has already described the claim as 'unrealistic'. Their reply will almost certainly be four per cent on the basic, and an offer to re-negotiate the bonus scheme.

Fourth

If the company has its way, this will be the fourth year running that BL workers have been held down to single-figure increases. Militancy in the plants is high

but once again BL workers look like being hindered in the fight by an unrepresentative and bureaucratic negotiating committee (LCJNC).

T&G automotive officer Grenville Hawley ignored the official T&G official policy (for a democratically-elected negotiating committee, based on proportional representation of unions) and persuaded T&G convenors to vote for reconstituting the same LCJNC structure that Longbridge, Cowley, and several other plants voted 'no confidence' in after last year's sell-out.

The company then graciously agreed to negotiate with the old LCJNC as long as the unions would agree to negotiate on BL's proposed new procedure agreement! — a document that would give the company sweeping new powers, including the right

of summary dismissal for 'gross industrial misconduct', a clause making unofficial strikes a sackable offence, and plans for a new LCJNC next year totally controlled by officials.

If yet another sell-out, not only on wages but also on the procedure document, is to be avoided, BL workers must immediately demand

* All negotiations to take place at BL plants (not at the plush Haseley Manor Hotel where the first meeting took place, comfortably distant from the membership);

* Every stage of the negotiations to be reported back to the plants;

* All major decisions to be put to mass meetings before the LCJNC proceeds;

* No retreat on the £20 and 35 hour week.

Vauxhalls

by Tony Cashman (T&GWU, Vauxhall Ellesmere Port)

IT IS now clear, following mass meetings at Ellesmere Port, Luton, and Dunstable, that the four per cent pay offer by Vauxhall Motors (GM) has been totally rejected, and the rejection backed up with a threat of strike action if there is no improvement.

The decision, by an overwhelming majority of the 16,000 workers, to reject the four per cent and fight the cuts in their living standards, is a big step forward for the unions in the crisis-hit motor industry.

The recession in the motor industry, redundancies, short-time working, and the Tory attack on trade

unions, have forced Vauxhall workers to suffer a ruthless management dictatorship over the past few years. Now we have the opportunity to fight back and win our full claim with no strings.

Luton and Dunstable workers did not set a date for strike action, but Ellesmere Port said that if the Joint Negotiating Committee does not receive an improved offer from GM at their meeting on the 25th, then an all-out strike should start on Monday 28th.

The Vauxhall workers' claim is for a substantial pay rise, work or full lay-off pay for 20 days instead of five days per quarter, a guarantee of full-time work in future, longer holidays, shorter working week (39 hours this year, 35 by 1984), better pensions, and staff status for sickness benefits.

Organise for a general strike—see page 3