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## Post Office Engineers defy asset strippers

# HANDS OFF BRITISH TELECOM!

By Ricky Houston

2,300 members of the Post Office Engineering Union are on strike or locked out by British Telecom in a full-scale confrontation over Tory moves to privatise the giant corporation.

Last night the POEU's Broad Left-dominated National Executive voted to step up their selective industrial action in defiance of management threats and moves by backers of the private network, Mercury, to seek a High Court injunction against the union.

The struggle has escalated from the POEU's long-standing boycott on interconnections between Mercury and the BT network to a "blacking" of work on BT installations in the main firms in the Mercury syndicate - Cable and Wireless, Barclays Bank and BP.

It is this "secondary" action by the POEU which Mercury is attempting to prevent, using the courts and the Prior and Tebbit anti-union laws.

But last week's escalation of the action - to include a work to rule on international telephone services - has also been met by an increasingly aggressive stance from BT management, who last week began suspensions, sackings and lock-out action against POEU members who refused to sign undertakings to work normally.

Despite public claims that the engineers' action has had little impact on services - partly through massive scabbing by management on jobs normally done by the POEU - the Financial Times admitted on Tuesday that "BT acted swiftly, partly because of the surprising effectiveness of the industrial action..."

But it went on to stress the other reason:

Indeed this fight is the acid test of the resolve of the POEU leadership to fight the Tory asset-stripping of British Telecom.

And if the Executive are under pressure from BT to cave in,

"to pressure the left-led executive to cool down the campaign - which is now going to cost the union about £250,000 a week in strike pay."

they are also under fire from an increasingly aware and militant rank and file to fight on, defy the injunction, and rally the strength of the union in defence of jobs and conditions against privatisation.

Ironically it is right wing General Secretary Bryan Stanley (who tried last month to get all industrial action called off because an injunction was expected) who is named in the Mercury injunction.

So far, Stanley - whose proposal for a retreat was defeated by 21 votes to 2 - has felt unable to do other than argue publicly for the escalation of the dispute: but the right wing in this traditionally conservative craft union retains a strong foothold both amongst full time officials and at local branch levels in many localities.

Both the action against Mercury and the work-to-rule have focussed almost exclusively on the well-organised, well-informed and left-wing led London branches, as well as Aberdeen members involved in the blacking of BP installations.

Although a special conference of the whole union recently endorsed the fight, there is a potentially dangerous gap between those members embroiled in the dispute and those who have no direct involvement except through payment of the levy which generated the £1.2 million strike fund.

This gap could yet be exploited by Stanley, the union's political officer John Golding, and other right wingers, in order to split and weaken the action against the asset-strippers.

Nevertheless, the current level of the dispute is indeed a far cry from the pathetic handwringing, petition-signing, letter-writing "campaign" against privatisation waged by the old right wing leadership of the POEU prior to the election of the Broad Left majority to the executive in June of this year.



ANDREW WIARD (REPORT)

POEU members' mass protest outside BT headquarters last week

## Pack up your troubles?

By Harry Sloan

THE order went out from Tory Central Office: pack up your troubles, rejoice at the June 9 victory and for God's sake smile at the TV cameras.

But many Tory delegates will be grinning a hollow grin through gritted teeth as they come to terms with a far from perfect performance from the government since the landslide election win.

Thatcher's gang, which strode so confidently and comfortably over the prostrate bodies of the Labour leaders to a scarcely believable Parliamentary majority has since skidded over an embarrassing succession of banana skins - many of them of their own creation.

There was the shame and humiliation of the impregnable Tory House of Commons throwing out the restoration of hanging by a massive margin.

There has been a succession of disputes in which workers have brazenly cocked a snook at



Happier days...

Norman Tebbit's supposedly iron-clad anti-union laws.

The economic crisis continues with unbridled ferocity, driving unemployment relentlessly upwards, and forcing highly unpop-

Continued back page

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# EDITORIAL

## Time to wake up!

THE 'dream' ticket is becoming a nightmare. It's time to wake up. A witch-hunting leadership cannot unite the Party.

A leadership which conspires against every policy capable of inspiring resistance to Thatcher, cannot defeat her. The leadership cannot be trusted: and that is why the Left must organise.

Activists must not accept the retreat imposed on the Party by the trade union bosses and the right of the Parliamentary Labour Party. We must agree to launch a fightback against the fast-moving attempt to move the Party rightwards.

We need to fight against the Tories now, but there will be no serious struggle against the Tories if we abandon our policies to suit Fleet Street. The policies and democratic changes which have been won in the past few years must be built on — not compromised away.

**The left must organise. The left must unite.**

We must defend the rights of CLPs to run their own affairs; recruit members who they believe will build the party; and to continue the fight for democratic reforms and accountability at every level.

We must stop the witch-hunt and reinstate all those expelled from our Party for being socialists.

We must urge the PLP to begin a campaign of obstruction in Parliament to help the struggle of the working class. We must support the endeavours of those in the unions who are fighting for democracy and accountability. This is the best answer to the misuse of the block vote.

We must build workplace branches. This is the most effective way of rooting the Party in trade unions and workplaces. We must turn the Party outwards, ensuring that women and black members play a central role.

We must turn the Party towards defending jobs and opposing sackings, to support strikes and occupations; to oppose NHS cuts and closures; and to support Labour local authorities which are fighting Tory-imposed cuts. Only in this way can the Party lay the basis for challenging the Tories and their backers.

We need a Labour Party and trade unions which confront the government now!

In all this we will work with the left on the NEC and the Campaign Group of MPs. We will work for unity of the Left against the attempts by the Kinnock/Hattersley team to reverse the gains of the past few years.

We will build and support all efforts to organise the CLPs and union lefts in the fightback, such as the national conference called by the Islington CLPs, the national conference called by Wythenshawe CLP, and the Labour Against the Witch-hunt annual general meeting.

We cannot wait for the 1988 General Election which will be called by the Tories on their terms and to suit them. The fightback against the government must start now — from this conference. Only a Labour Party rank and file united for action will stop the dangers of the rightward drift and face up to the task of defeating the Tory government.

\*This was the appeal to Labour Party Conference Delegates put out on the last day of Conference by the joint Labour Briefing and Socialist Organiser Conference Briefing.

# "Streamlining" the social service cuts

ON FRIDAY last, 7 October, the Tory government announced a further step in its effort to slash local services and attack local democracy.

The White Paper carrying the title — perhaps intended to be ironic — 'Streamlining the Cities' — has been put forward as a means of removing a tier of local government, "tidying up" administrative arrangements and "reducing waste".

A reading of the White Paper makes it clear that the purpose of the Tory plans are nothing less than a reduction of the services provided to local communities and an effort to keep them much more closely under the control of Tory diktat.

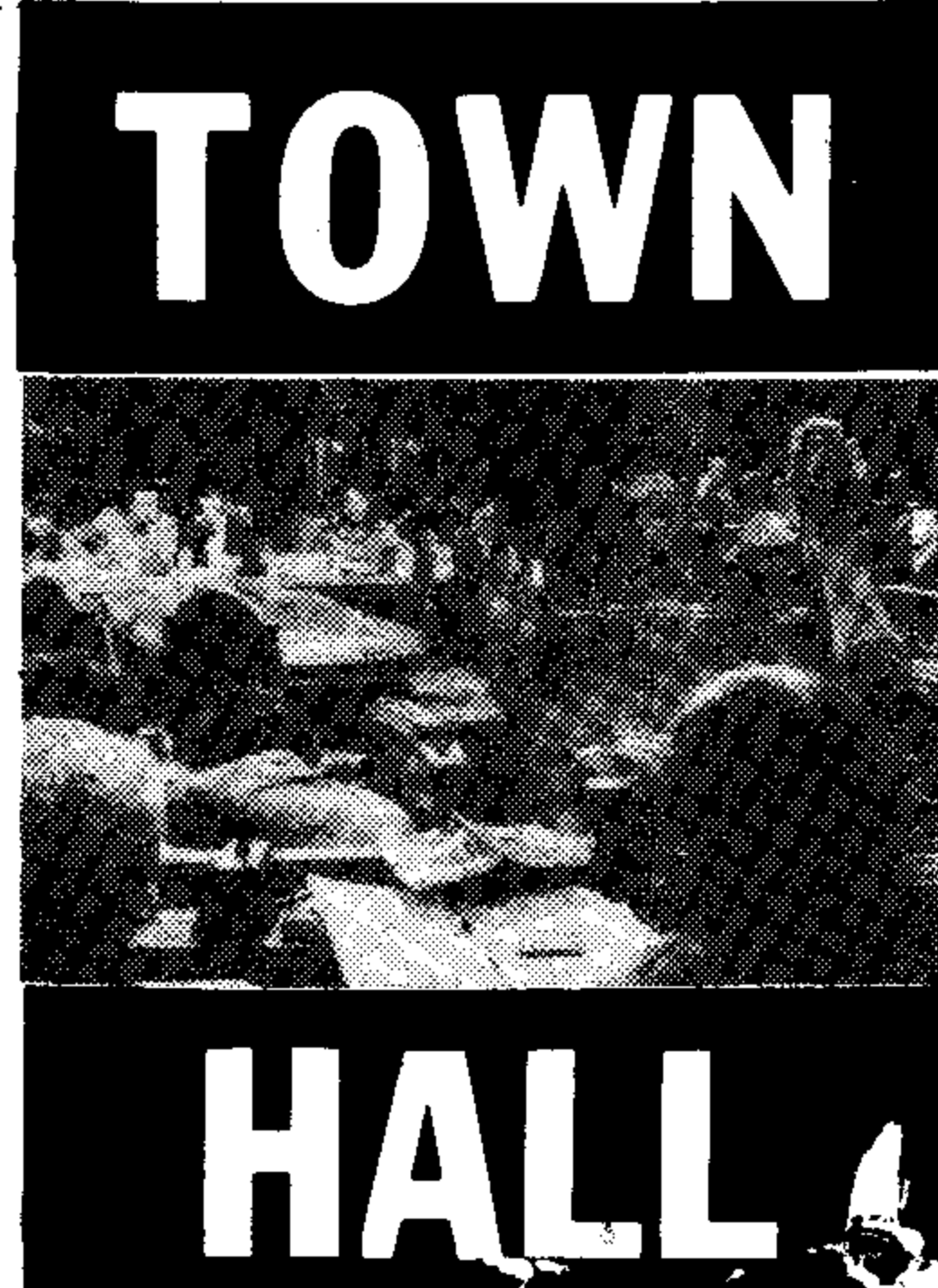
The first argument presented for the proposals refers to the so-called 'overspending' of the Labour-controlled Metropolitan Authorities it is proposed to replace.

Interviewed on presenting the proposals, Environment Minister Patrick Jenkin was asked whether the political control of the Metropolitan Authorities was a factor in deciding this course of action.

He had to admit that it was, and press coverage makes it clear that the left wing policies of the GLC in particular and the campaigns built up against them by the Tory press, have provided an important pretext for this policy.

The proposals will of course reduce levels of democratic control and accountability. They will set up a great new range of unelected and unaccountable bodies to run local services.

Even where 'joint boards' are proposed consisting of groups of



TOWN

HALL

By Alan Clinton

local councillors, experience in local authorities shows very clearly that such bodies are subject to a good deal less democratic control and accountability than the sorts of organisations that exist in the Metropolitan Authorities and the Inner London Education Authority.

It is important for socialists to realise that within all the laissez faire and antediluvian rhetoric of the present right wing Tory leadership, there is a real trend to a rigidly centralised command structure.

It is the task of socialists under such conditions to defend elected institutions and democratic rights, however ancient their lineage, and however unacceptable some of the

decisions they reach.

Tory moves against local government do not command universal support within their own ranks.

Local Tory politicians have been prepared to associate themselves with the defence of institutions which they had hoped that they might themselves one day control.

Even more interesting perhaps was an editorial in The Times of 8 October entitled 'No Minister' which condemned the enterprise as 'political opportunism' and said that the aim of the White Paper was to make 'the entire system of urban administration in London and the Metropolitan Counties more opaque, less reachable.'

It was, said The Times, a policy 'conceived in haste' because of the failure of the Tories to come up with a better method of organising local government finance.

There are many things wrong with the Tory proposals beyond the attack on local democracy.

One particularly interesting feature of the proposals is that it will allow government ministers to dictate levels of employment during the changeover.

One of the problems the Tories have at the moment in their efforts to butcher the National Health Service is that they do not have the legal powers to compel regional health authorities to sack as many hundreds of workers as they would wish. The White Paper on 'streamlining' shows that they clearly do not intend to be so frustrated in the future in their efforts to escalate unemployment, especially in the

public sector.

But what really lies behind the entire enterprise is their efforts to cut local services, salvage odd bits for privatisation and reduce the rest to a minimum which will prevent widespread rioting and social discontent at the least possible cost.

This becomes very clear if these latest proposals are considered in combination with those announced in August under the title of 'rate capping'.

They intend to reduce the resources available to local authorities below the level of the Metropolitan bodies at the same time as increasing the functions they will have to perform.

Thus the rate capping proposals will mean that London boroughs and other local authorities will be legally compelled to spend less on their services while they are being compelled to take on more functions like traffic management and waste disposal.

The only reaction from local authorities must be to refuse to cooperate with the Tory schemes.

There is no way that we in the lower tier authorities should accept functions which we were not elected to perform without any resources to carry them out.

The 1985-6 period will be crucial in this, when the Tories will be trying to pass on the functions to their 'quangos and joint boards'.

Local councillors will then be able to work with unions and community groups who care about decent services.

As the Tories begin to falter, we can now prepare the ground to fight back and defeat them.

## Answer Tory laws

WRITS are beginning to fly as the employers start to test out the Prior and Tebbit anti-union legislation.

Three weeks ago the National Union of Journalists faced a contempt of court action and possible sequestration of its assets for its policy of solidarity with the print union, the NGA.

Now, as the same industrial action at the Stockport Messenger newspaper grinds on, the NGA is being hauled into the courts on Friday 15th. The employer is now seeking an injunction to prevent the union informing advertisers of the recognition dispute — presumably as a prelude to seeking damages.

More significant, however, is the court action threatened by the Project Mercury consortium against the 'secondary' industrial action being carried out by the Post Office Engineering Union in its fight against privatisation. Mercury are seeking an injunction to end the union boycott: but they could also pursue claims for damages, or demand action over contempt of court if such an injunction is refused.

But the key factor in implementing such legislation is the union leadership: in the NUJ, the National Executive Committee stood firm, and prepared to defy the courts. If the POEU leadership does the same, and mobilises full support, then the law can be broken — just as the Tory limitations on picketing have been brushed aside by 1000-strong picket lines at Nigg Bay in Scotland and the Esso strike in Southampton.

These lessons also show, however, that where full-time officials refuse to lead, the rank and file must take a stand in defence of basic union rights.

If there is any climbdown by the POEU in the face of these legal threats, the employers and the Tory government will return strengthened to demand more and still more concessions, surrenders and betrayals.

This same message must be taken up by militants in every union, demanding that the TUC leaders stop their craven crawling to Norman Tebbit and mobilise the real strength of the trade union movement to break down and smash his anti-union laws.

## Champion of Victorian values

MRS THATCHER took the Tory Party by storm this week when she declared that the programme to restore Victorian values to Britain was bang on target.

In a public endorsement of the behaviour of Cecil Parkinson she singled him out as the politician who had done most to capture the real flavour of Victorian morality.

"In public", she declared to the Party conference, "Cecil is the most virtuous of all my ministers. Unctuous, condescending, self-righteous, sneering."

"In private he has shown himself to be hedonistic and ruthless. When this combination spreads throughout my team we will be unstoppable."

Mrs Thatcher pointed to the row which the incident has caused in the Party as proof of her words.

In every Tory Party Club in the country the same debate is raging. Which one of these two women was most to blame? Was it the loose secretary who betrayed her trust? Or was it the wife who failed to realise that a high flying husband needs more care and attention?

"Should Cecil have stood by his wife however badly she had failed him? Or should he have given his son-to-be a real father? I feel confident that any baby born in the aftermath of the Falklands campaign is bound to be a boy. These are the questions the Tories are asking — and we are not a party which is content to answer."

It was clear from the BBC and other media that Mrs Thatcher was not only aware of her own position but also of the position of the Tory Party — a party which is clearly losing its way.

She attacked some of the press who had misguidedlly



By Patrick Spilling

called for Parkinson to resign as falling prey to the permissive society. The Mail on Sunday for example had claimed that: "Ambitious and well off young women of 31 do not have babies by accident. In the age of the pill and easily available abortion they choose to have them."

Mrs Thatcher said abortion on demand was anathema to her party and the fallen woman who had lured her Minister into immorality should now face the public shame of her actions.

She applauded the press for dogging the footsteps of Mr Parkinson's former secretary. "When this child goes to school, when it takes its first steps, when it travels on a bus, I hope there will be a photographer on hand to remind the public the sins of the flesh will be visited at least on the mother, if not the father."

But last night Mr Parkinson's future was considered to be still in doubt after it was learned that he had made arrangements for a regular sum of money to be given to Sara Keays the widow of the deceased.

Mrs Thatcher was known to have arranged for being paid out without a penny in tax as a single parent in the new Conservative Britain is a public writing to other women of loose morals.

It emerged last night that Mrs Thatcher was also considering a new deal for the health service.

She is considering applying to America to extradite the Harley Street doctor who has been accused of plotting to murder his partner.

She believes that this man could do for the health service what MacGregor has been asked to do for steel and coal.

"With someone like him at the helm the health service's future really would be beyond doubt."

The Conservative Party: A Statement.

It has been suggested in some quarters that this column has been failing in its duty by not paying more attention to alleged infiltration of the Tory Party by right wing groups.

We have considered this matter carefully and decided that it would not be in the interests of the highest ethics of newspaper journalism if we were to give too much space to vague and uncorroborated speculation.

We take the view that a politician who declares himself or herself to be a Conservative should not be hounded simply because of a drawing room full

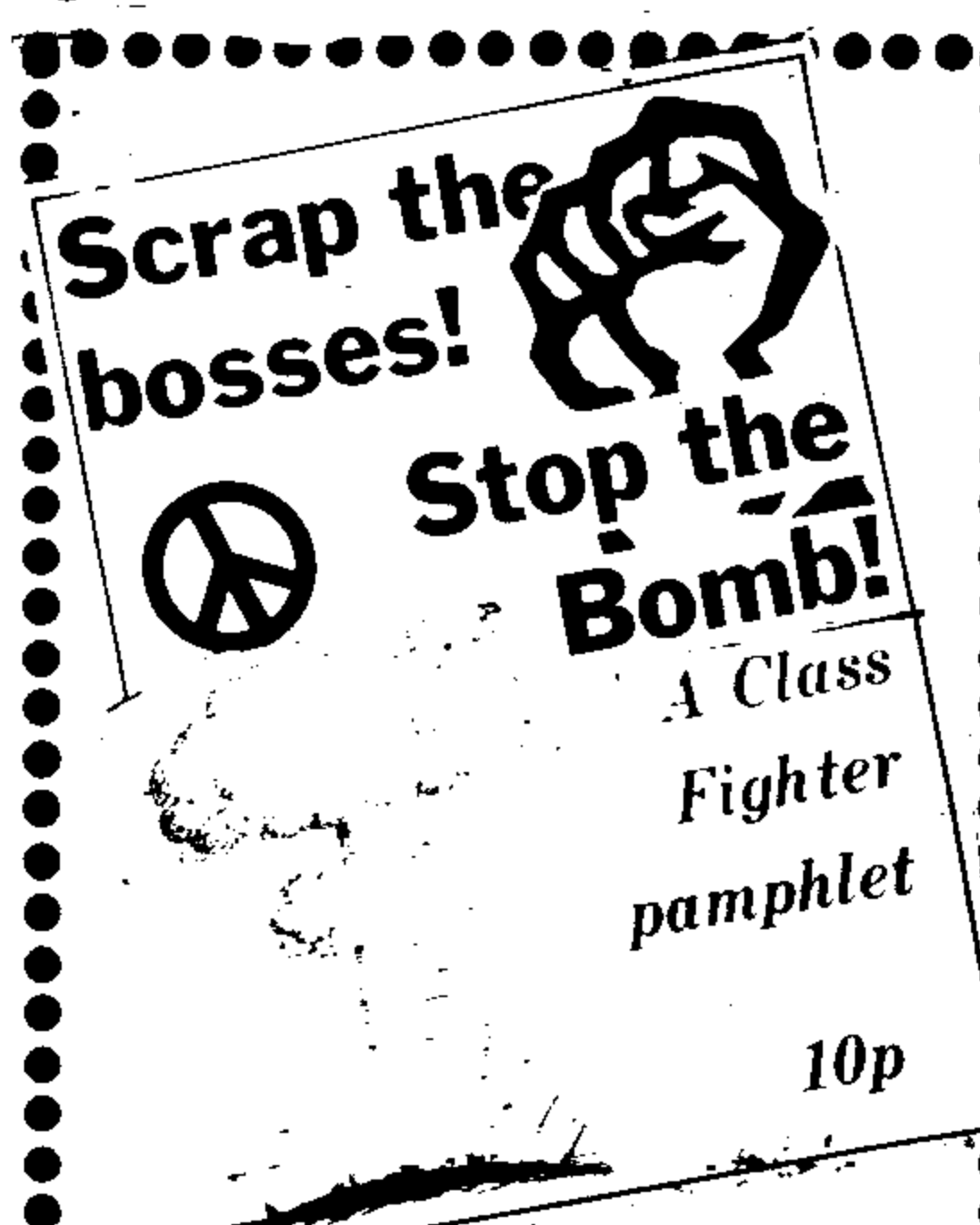
of Hitler relics or some junior position in the Holocaust Support Group.

To ensure firm evidence of membership of such groups would in any event require extraordinary measures.

Reporters and photographers would have to be posted outside the homes of suspects, day and night, photographing anyone who goes in or out.

Dustbins would very likely have to be poked through and some hotheads would be bound to trespass on private property to peer through windows to see if copies of Mein Kampf were visible on the bookshelves.

Of course the public has a right to know. But we feel certain that the public does not expect a family newspaper to stoop to such levels and our journalistic ethics to be compromised.



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AGAINST THE WITCH-HUNT!

LABOUR AGAINST THE WITCH-HUNT

# Tightening whose belt?

LOOKING at a recent report on pay and pay increases by the Labour Research Department (Labour Research October 1983) I was reminded of the old adage, "One rule for the rich, another for the poor."

Last year we had a 6% pay norm, this year the Tories are trying to enforce one of 3% — but on whom? Figures from 1982 show that five men picked up over £1 million each and one just under that.

David Sainsbury, treasurer of the SDP, got £4,763,873; Timothy Sainsbury, Conservative MP for Hove, got £1½ million. Ten men gave themselves total rises of more than £100,000 each. Then we have seven UK company directors receiving £250,000 or more, and another 28 directors being paid more than £125,000. (Perhaps it is needless to say that all the above are men).

In the first three years of Tory rule the inflation rate rose by 49%, "average workers' earnings" increased by 43%, thus resulting in a drop in their standard of living — whilst the pay of Britain's highest paid rose by 93%. Not only have these directors benefited from greatly increased pay, but the effects of Tory budgets since 1979, in cutting top tax rates from 83% to 60%, have massively boosted their incomes.

What about the rest of us, then, up against a government legislating to increase the income divide? On 21 November changes in the method of calculating old age pensions will deprive OAP couples of £1.20 a week.

The practice of uprating benefits in line with the forecast annual rise in prices is now abandoned. The link now is with the annual inflation rate shown in the Retail Price Index on the date when new scales are announced. All this means that many benefits to be paid out in November will rise by only 3.7% — the annual inflation rate recorded for May — instead of 6%, the forecast inflation rate for November.

This latest Act is, of course, only the latest in a series of measures introduced by the Tories to attack the working class, and in particular its weakest members. Already Britain's pensioners are among the worst off in Europe, and the situation looks like getting worse.

Relate all this to the continuing attacks on his social and welfare services and you get a horrific picture of what Tory Britain in the late 1980s will look like unless the labour movement rouses itself into a fierce fight-back against this hard-faced government of the rich for the super rich.



THE largest demonstration in recent years over an individual deportation case took place in Birmingham last Saturday, 8 October.

1,000 people marched through the city to demand that the Home Office drops its case against Mohammad Idrish. The march was called by his union, NALGO,

as part of a campaign agreed at its annual conference. Despite patchy organisation and little central direction by the union, members came from as far away as Glasgow.

Attempts to restrict the politics of the march to "NALGO says Mohammad stays" failed as most people took up the slogan

"Stop the deportations" and "Smash the racist laws". But although a relative success, the attendance shows how far there is to go in educating trade unionists in the importance of fighting deportations.

Defence Campaign members felt it marked an important step forward for the campaign. The

fight continues around the other planks of NALGO's policy, to get work on the deportation blacked and for a national day of industrial action if a deportation order is served.

Further details from Barry Lovejoy, 30 Antrobus Road, Birmingham 21, 021-523 8923.

## Civil service black YTS

THE TORIES' mis-named £25-a-week 'Youth Training Scheme' has run into new trouble.

One place it won't be introduced is where the Government itself is the employer. Civil service unions have decided to boycott the scheme.

The biggest civil service union, CPSA, voted for a boycott a while back. But it looked as if there would be a majority on the Council of Civil Service Unions for co-operating — and with that excuse the CPSA's right-wing general secretary, Alastair Graham, went ahead to negotiate introduction of YTS.

The position was changed when the executive of the second largest union, the Society of Civil and Public Servants, voted on October 5 to boycott YTS. That ensured that there would be a majority against cooperation on the Council of Civil Service Unions.

## Quango's hand-out to gourmets

NOW for all of you who thought public spending was being cut back by this government...

The English Tourist Board has been given £8.3 million to hand out this year — 60% up on last year.

Excellent you say: More foot-paths, better maps, better information about that holiday in the Lake District.

Not a bit of it. The money is to go to developers to help pump prime country mansions, mini-Disney Land centres and 'budget priced hotels'.

A good example of how well this money is to be used comes from the announcement last week of a £95,000 grant to M. Raymond Blanc, the owner of the Quatre Saisons restaurant in Oxford.

Meals — up to £50 a head — have become so renowned that

half of Raymond's customers now come from London. And they get so drunk that they weave all over the road on the way home.

So Raymond is converting a mansion in the Oxfordshire countryside to cater for their every need — bedrooms, a swimming pool and squash courts included. The £800,000 needed is a bit hard on M Blanc and his backers so the Tourist Board has kindly topped up the fund.

It is not a loan you understand. None of that nonsense about interest rates and debt. The £95,000 is a gift.

Once the GLC has been abolished we can expect more such useful spending of public money by the Quangos that will succeed it.

## Brighton Graffiti

THERE was something very British about the Conference Arrangements Committee's choice of emergency resolutions to take for debate. Lebanon wasn't an emergency — "the French threat to our daily pinta" was!

The full leadership election results revealed two new 'dream tickets'.

A secret group of seven MPs defied every instruction from the LCC, Fleet Street and John Golding, and voted for the Bygone Era dream ticket of Shore for Leader and Dunwoody for deputy.

And the Welsh Wizard Denzil Davies had the Walter Mitty ticket when he voted No-one for leader and Himself for deputy.

I've been told by comrades that I did get an appearance on TV, selling SO outside the conference. I'm a bit puzzled as to how after my experience on the Monday morning.

As I distributed SO bulletins, MP Phillip Whitehead was standing beside me trying to shift the Fabians' expensively-printed Conference News. He didn't get a very good response, except from the couple of dozen well-dressed young gentlemen and ladies whom the right wing always seem to be able to mobilise for their Party Conference activity.

But no matter. John Tusa was there with the BBC cameras. They took pictures of the Fabian bulletin from every angle, and then, for the finishing touch, a Fabian helper was instructed to walk past as if entering the con-

ference, to take the bulletin, and to study it as if interested in the contents.

Arthur Scargill outside the conference on Sunday: "It's like the SDP in there".

TV commentator on Militant: "There is a hard core of people from Liverpool, and other such places, who want to nationalise everything in the land and stop anyone owning a house."

Jo Richardson: "... my male-colleagues — that's what we call each other... I never know why we don't call each other comrade... Well, perhaps I do..."

Ken Loach, outside the closed session on Militant on Monday: "It did seem very much like standing outside a prison waiting for the execution notices to go up."

John Spellar of the EETPU, who was there to take notes at Ken Loach's meeting on Monday, when asked if he would support the right of all working class views to have equal access to the media: "I think because of the legal problems it would be inappropriate to comment."

Strange visitors: four of the senior officials of the CPSA were at Labour Party conference, but

only fleetingly.

The first visitor, on Sunday was general secretary Alastair 'I hate Scargill' Graham. He stayed long enough to get himself on TV commenting on the leadership election, then left on Monday.

Late Monday night, the General Treasurer arrives. He bemoans the fact that he cannot get a visitor's ticket, and leaves on Tuesday.

Midday Tuesday: the President and Senior Vice Presidents arrive, sit in the Grand Hotel bar, hear a few minutes of Foot's speech, and then leave.

The CPSA is currently conducting a membership ballot on reaffiliation to the Labour Party. The NEC is recommending a yes vote, but the top officials are campaigning vigorously to sabotage this.

Half a dozen of them came carrying their flag in a small parade up the pavement to the Labour Party conference.

They were dark-skinned and opulent, the two women dressed in expensive-looking western clothes and wearing heavy make-up. When they came to the door of the Conference Centre they stopped, unfurled their flag, and grouped themselves to be photographed around a man carrying a large portrait. Then two of them went into the conference hall.

Who were they? Iranian Royalists! The portrait was of their new Shah.

No doubt encouraged by the previous day's condemnation of the Khomeini regime, they may also remember the solid support Labour in office gave the Shah and his regime.



## Help us win!

Islington Labour

ISLINGTON has three council by-elections on October 27. At first sight these would not seem very important. Labour currently has a 51-1 majority on the council, even if we lose all three by-elections, we'll still have 48 seats.

Because Islington has become known as the most left wing Labour council in Britain, October 27 will, however, be an important test in national politics. The Sunday Times on October 9 pointed out: "the first test of Labour's electoral appeal after Brighton will come more quickly than party officials would like — on October 27..."

"SDP officials regard these (by-elections) as nationally significant... The SDP agent... commented, 'It's an argument over the nature of our two parties. Islington has become the flagship of the Left'."

Help is needed. Contact: Barnsbury ward, Elaine Friedman 278 3854 or Alan White 609 1040; Holloway ward, Jim Warren 609 0252 or Keith Veness 254 5582; St Peter ward, John Worker 837 3873 or Ian Draper 837 1738.

# Brighton '83: what they thought

**ERIC HEFFER**

## My result was not so bad

I think there is a great mood amongst the delegates that they want a unified fight now against the Tories. But they also do not want any backsliding on basic policy. I think they feel that they have now got to give the new leadership every support, providing, of course, that they are carrying out those policies.

There is a general feeling that having been really battered at the polls, that there has got to be a fightback.

I would have thought too that there is a certain mood of uneasiness in the Party and that may develop but summing up I'd say this has been a week where the Labour Party has tried to regroup itself.

We on the left of the Party have to admit that things haven't gone entirely the way we wanted them to go otherwise I would now be leader, and other things would have happened, but we now must ourselves take stock.

We should avoid rushing into making quick statements but really take stock, think about what is the way for us on left to proceed in the future.

We have to start from a recognition that the left has been pushed back at this conference, and many of the things that the left wanted to do have certainly been overwhelmingly defeated.

If however we proceed on the project we have in mind for a mass campaigning party, we would have to take up the themes which were there in Neil Kinnock's speech, other speeches, in my own speech, in which I said we need to be carrying out both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary action in fighting for our policies on defence, the NHS, against the cuts, supporting workers' struggles, against the witch-hunt in industry and so on.

We need to look very carefully at the best way we can do that without appearing to be in conflict with the Party, but being the sharp edge of the campaign.

The Executive has moved slightly to the left and I would think that the mood amongst the new Executive is that it is time we stopped this witch-hunting business. I don't think there's going to be any great demand for a further extension of the witch-hunt.

If there is, then without any shadow of a doubt we have to oppose it, and we have to find ways and means over the next period of trying to get back into the Party those who have been expelled, and those who have not been allowed in.

The NEC knows that if they were to attempt further expulsions we would be back into the old arguments instead of fighting the Tories and they would be responsible for it.

My result in the leadership contest was not as bad as Michael Meacher's because it was quite clear from the word go that I wasn't going to win and so some people who had all the sympathy in the world for the policies that I and my colleagues were putting forward, were tempted by the arguments over the age gap and the need to step over a generation. The result was not as bad as some people are saying. In the constituencies there was more support reflected in the actual votes.

### Meacher result

The Meacher result was a bit more serious because he was actually defeated in the constituencies by Hattersley. I think that is something we have to take on board. We must have more serious educational programmes of a socialist kind, so that when candidates supporting socialist policies are standing they almost automatically get the support of the constituencies.

It was clear in the course of the campaign that Michael Meacher was not coming out for me and was tending to distance himself and give the impression that he was really the running mate of Neil Kinnock. That probably did have some effect on the campaign.

Some people also felt that he wasn't being totally forthright. If you say where you stand and are defeated, people will still respect you.

We have to be careful not to give the impression that because the left has been pushed back at this conference we are suffering sour grapes and that we are now going to turn our venom onto the new leadership.

Whether we like it or not they are the leadership and we now have to play our full part in the defining of policy and make sure that the policy is moving in the direction that we want it to go, and that there is no backsliding.

We have to play a very positive and constructive role at the present time, while clearly stating where we stand and the principles on which we stand.

Sooner or later there have got to be discussions within the trade unions about the actual views of the members being reflected more accurately at conference than they actually are. That is why we



'Casting 1 1/4 million votes just one direction doesn't really reflect the views of the union membership'

JOHN HARRIS

have got to have majority and minority votes cast on real basic issues. Casting 1 1/4 million votes just in one direction doesn't really reflect the views of the membership.

I think the mood in the unions will be rather similar to that in the constituencies for a period,

but what we have to do is make certain the issues are there all the time.

Sometimes you have to go with the mood and at other times it is possible to move things in our direction. At the moment I think we've got to accept the fact that we have to go with that mood, at

the same time being there putting our own point of view.

As the political situation does change almost overnight in certain circumstances and we have to make sure that we are there and we know what we are doing.

## ERNIE ROBERTS MP

### Back to shop floor

THE election of the new leadership shows that there is a great desire on the part of Party members to have a change of direction. They believe that Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley are going to lead the Party in a more working class and more socialist direction.

Whether this is in fact so will depend on whether the resolutions passed at this same conference as has elected them will be put into effect, campaigned and fought for by the new leaders and the new NEC, on which there has been a slight swing to the left.

#### Shadow

We are now going to go, as a Parliamentary Labour Party to the election of the shadow cabinet and here again there will be an indication of the kind of fight that is going to be put up in the House of Commons and in the country, as to the kinds of persons chosen to occupy those important positions on the opposition front bench.

It seems that the leader is gathering around him a number of young ex-students and others with a professional background. I would rather there had been more working class shop floor types in the Shadow Cabinet to take part in that fight.

The direction the party takes and the speed at which it takes it will depend in the end on what happens at the grass roots. I pin my faith on the establishment of workplace branches which will be vital to the stability, the direction and a strong base for a socialist fight within the Labour Party, because it is in the workplace that workers can come together in a Labour Party branch to make certain that the Party reflects the opinions, the desires and struggles of workers in their place of work and such branches can have a considerable effect on the leadership and direction of the trade unions.

If that is accomplished then there will be a serious struggle for



Ernie Roberts

socialism, both within the Party and within government.

The left has had some successes at conference. The worst defeat has been on what is called the witch-hunt, the expulsion not just of five editorial members of Militant, not just the proscription of Militant itself, but rather the warning or threats given by certain people on the right in the Party that they intend to carry on that witch-hunt within the Party in order to root out opposition to themselves and their personal ambitions, in order to root out those who dare to put up a consistent daily fight on the decisions which have been carried by the annual conference.

So there has got to be a fight-back within the Party on the issue of the right of members and of groups that are connected with the Party to fight for their views and their policies and to get these views and policies resolved at an annual party conference.

#### Leaders fear

Some of the right wing union leaders also fear, and are troubled in their jobs, by those people who are called militant, not neces-

sarily supporters of the Militant newspaper, but militant trade unionists.

These leaders no doubt see in the attack on Militant the same attack that they would wish to conduct, and are conducting against militants inside their own trade unions.

We have to take the argument back to the shop floor and make sure those trade unionists in the right wing unions play an active part in their unions and make sure that the leaders that are elected are in accord with their demands.

#### Handful

We need to get it understood both in the Labour Party and the trade unions that this isn't an attack on just a handful of Militant supporters. This is really an attack on all those who would dare to fight fearlessly for socialist policies and for working class interests.

Workers will only have themselves to blame if they stand aside and allow right wing domination of their unions and CLPs.

The PLP is still very much to the right, it is the most right wing grouping within the Labour Party and they have considerable power so it is necessary for constituencies to examine very carefully whom it is that they choose as their candidates and to see that the Members of Parliament that they have elected are accountable to them continuously and correspond to their views and their needs.

The left need not go away demoralised from this conference. I think many of us were disappointed that there was no real contest for the leadership of the Party. I think the contest would have been much more realistic and meaningful if Tony Benn had been a candidate.

The leadership issue has not been settled for all time. The movement still has it within its power to change leaders if they do not correspond to the decisions of the Party and the needs of the membership.

Audrey Wise

## Ranks don't want retreat

DEBATES like that on nuclear disarmament show that the rank and file wants to stick with policies that will really benefit people. I just hope that the new leadership actually will carry out what conference and the party members want.

It remains to be seen. If they do, they will get full support. If they don't, then I hope that the rank and file will put the politics before the personalities.

I don't think we should be demoralised. The whole rank and file could have come off so much worse. There could have been a headlong retreat. There is an element of panic and that worries me, but it's not gone too deep. If it had, then I think we would have had the TGWU motion on disarmament remitted, the one person, one vote pseudo-democracy might have been carried. There hasn't really been that. There's been a desire to have a good presentation, but a good presentation of what people actually wanted before June 9, on June 9 and still want.

So I don't think we should be demoralised, just determined.

The shift to the right in the unions in the 1950s was on the basis that the system could provide. That was the right triumphant, the right feeling it could say that our demand for a changed economy or a changed society was no longer relevant or necessary.

It is not at all the same background now. The basis for the lurch to the right that they will try to engineer in the unions is the collapse of the system, not that it can provide and therefore we are not necessary, but that we can't accomplish it, because as far as the unions are concerned, loss of membership, the atmosphere of fear being created by the Tories.

I think it's an extremely dangerous situation and undoubtedly some of the trade union leaders and some of their members, want to distance themselves from the Labour Party. That is because of the fact that though we've got the most political trade unions in the world, it is in name more than in political education or agitation.


We've all had experience of trying to raise political issues in the unions and being told that this is a trade union, keep politics out of it. By conniving at that many of our leaders have paved the way for the formal as well as the informal depoliticisation of our trade unions.

It really is dangerous because there is real cause for fear, but we have got to point out that this just makes what we want even more necessary. You get nothing by lying down except walked over. A lot of young people never had to learn that really thoroughly, but the movement has to learn how to fight and how to conquer fear and my belief is that action conquers fear.

I don't think the rank and file of the Party want retreat. They want the policies put across better and we should be on the offensive against anyone who interprets that as retreat. It would be a mistake to portray this conference as a right wing conference.

There have been some very good resolutions at conference which give us a lot to build on. We've got an NEC which is better, the constituencies didn't show any retreat in the elections to the Constituency Section of the NEC.

There has been a mood of realism, though. The people who say it's no good having the right policies if you haven't got power are right, but it's no good having power if you turn then on the people. You need both. I want power, but the rank and file know that power is no use unless you use it properly.



**Labour Campaign for Gay Rights**

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# Shouting for policies: met by deaf ears

Comrade chairperson, sisters and brothers,

We have heard much rhetoric about the need for the Party to win back the support of the working class.

We have applauded speeches that have called for socialist policies. And the louder you shout, the louder the applause you can get.

Well, comrades, there are in this party people who are shouting louder than most others but are being ignored and prevented from pushing forward the policies that they have decided are vital for them.

They are women.

This is:

- despite the fact that we are 52% of the population,
- despite the fact that we have been the ones to bear the brunt of capitalism,

- and despite the fact that women have turned to the Labour Party to support them. This has been shown by the increase in women's Labour Party membership, in women's voting figures, and, most important, in women's activity in the trade unions and the Labour Party.

The activity of women has enriched the labour movement and encouraged women to become even more active. But when we get near to winning the demands which will make a difference for women — when men will have to clear out of the way to let forward women representing and accountable to the rank and file women — then out come the old arguments, out come the old hostilities, playing on the backwardness which socialists should have thrown off and rejected centuries ago.

Socialists must recognise that women have special needs and concerns — and not just about creches.

Women have recognised this. Look at the resolutions that have been sent to Labour women's annual conference. Perhaps these resolutions reflected the concerns of women too much for those in the leadership of the movement who despise policies that challenge capitalism.

There has been some recognition in the trade unions, pushed by active women. Look at the TUC women's charter, look at the recent policy on sexual harassment. The TUC has started to recognise women's special concerns.



ANDREW WARD, REPORT

**ANN CROWDER (above)** — the delegate from East Nottingham Constituency Labour Party — was one of the speakers moving composites to give women more of a say in the Labour Party. This is what she said.

I don't think this resolution will be carried. The present NEC is hostile to women's demands in action, and the block votes will be against us. But I ask the trade union leaders who are against change in favour of women: how far did you consult with your women membership?

And what do you mean by consultation? Telling women how they should continue to be ignored? Telling them to continue to be at the bottom of the pile when it comes to policy-making? Telling them that when we get socialism, then their

demands will be taken up, but only on condition that they don't challenge men's position at the top?

Have you consulted your cleaning woman, Neil?

Comrades, women won't wait. We have been at the forefront of struggles — industrial struggles, Greenham, international struggles — and at the forefront of the demands for change. The Labour Party is way behind.

The women pushing these demands have consulted with women. In the East Midlands we held a dayschool. We debated these issues with women. After we had discussed together as women, at the end of the dayschool not one woman disagreed with our demands. They rejected the arguments that men in the labour movement have forced on them.

This composite will not achieve everything that women demand, but it goes some way to ensuring that issues of concern to women, and issues of concern to us all where women see differently to men, will not be ignored, but given a hearing as of right.

The trade unions and CLPs will still be able to submit resolutions on women's issues, but women's conference is the forum where women can decide our opinions on policy.

What are you frightened of that you cannot allow this sort of change to get through? Are you afraid that men will have very little say and little control over what goes on in our conferences and our resolutions?

Don't pretend to be socialists, don't pretend you've got something good to say on this platform, unless you are prepared to stop standing in our way and let women decide what is important to women, let women decide what changes we seek, and let women carry them out whilst remaining accountable to the women at the grassroots.

Many women feel that this conference has been deeply sexist. The chair and others have patronised women. Women: don't despair, let's organise. Men: stop holding us back.



A 'military zone' has been declared in the airspace above Greenham Common — indicating that the Cruise missiles will be arriving very soon now.

## Firm on unilateralism

ONCE again the Labour Party conference at Brighton reaffirmed its commitment to the full programme of unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Composite 40, moved by Ron Todd for the TGWU, received overwhelming support at the conference. It contained a clear rejection of any fresh nuclear weapons and bases and an unconditional commitment to removing all existing nuclear weapons and bases, including Polaris, from British soil and from British waters.

It also stated that the Labour Party would be committed to a non-nuclear defence strategy within the lifetime of the next Labour government.

These are key demands and they should mean that we can now campaign on consistent demands without the fear of the sort of confusion that was built into the campaign document.

### Multilateral

The resolution on multilateral disarmament, moved by the AUEW, and supported by the EETPU, was overwhelmingly

### The Labour Party conference stood firm on unilateral nuclear disarmament, reports Joy Hurcombe (secretary, Labour CND, writing in a personal capacity)

defeated.

There should now be no problem for the Labour Party. This is the fourth successive year that conference has voted for unilateral nuclear disarmament.

But there is a problem. Conference also passed the NEC's statement 'Campaigning for a Fairer Britain'. In the section on peace and disarmament all the old fudges and compromises reappear. This statement was put to conference by, guess who? Dennis Healey himself.

In the interests of the media and loyalty to the Party no-one spoke against it.

Hopefully, since it is supposed to serve as demands to be placed on the Tory government while Labour is in opposition, it will have no status. It will then dis-

appear like many other Labour Party policy statements. On the other hand, it is there ready to be used to oppose a clear commitment on the scrapping of nuclear weapons and bases.

The NEC statement talks of Polaris being included in current arms negotiations. It talks of the first use of nuclear weapons and it states that we must fight for nuclear freeze. All these are multilateral disarmament statements. They are the sort of words that possessors of nuclear weapons use to justify their intentions.

It was a mistake that conference allowed this statement to be passed. The contradiction has to be exposed. We are still party of free discussion and there is no way that we can allow the outgoing NEC to steamroller over the party in this way.

Composite 39 on a northern Europe nuclear-free zone was some way in opposing membership of NATO but in general was a patchy resolution. It was supported but the Militant resolution was thrown out by conference on the grounds that the NEC opposed the idea of nationalising the arms industry, and linking the fight for peace with the fight for socialism.

## Fares fighter freed

Jan Wallcraft, a Can't Pay, Won't Pay campaigner refused to pay the excess fare required of her by the House of Lords ruling last year. She alone of those "defying the law" refused to pay the fine, even if it led — as it did — to a jail sentence.

Jan was welcomed by a small but vociferous group of friends and supporters from Highgate Ward of Hornsey and Wood Green Labour Party, other GMC members of the local party, representatives of the Can't Pay, Won't Pay campaign, including Dave Wetzel, chair of the Transport Committee of the GLC.

Jan emerged from the prison to cheers and embraces from her comrades and friends who have stood by her during her ordeal. The weather was appalling but the placards were there denouncing the House of Lords decision over a year ago to outlaw the GLC's cheap fares. Thames TV interviewed both Jan Wallcraft and Dave Wetzel.

Socialist Organiser spoke to Jan.

### How do you feel?

Marvellous, marvellous to be out with my friends and comrades. It's all very wonderful. There were eight of us crowded into the prison cell.

### Have you any regrets?

No. It is a question of principle. I was not prepared to lie down in front of the law. As I have said elsewhere, I am a working class wife, married to a

park-keeper, living in a tied cottage owned by the City of London. I joined the Labour Party because I was drawn to it by the progressive policies of the GLC, especially on fares.

Do you stand by everything you have said?

Yes, I haven't time to give a political analysis and a strategic

justification for the campaign. My instincts were the dominant factor. I believed someone had to challenge the law instead of just talking about it. The campaign goes on!

Jan was escorted by her friends to the nearest cafe for a well-deserved cup of tea, and back home to the continuing struggle.

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International news

# A programme for Poland?

WORKERS in the West live in a world dominated by the owners of capital operating through a more or less free market. Production is for profit, and economic regulation and 'control' is by market forces which work through ebbs and flows of profit.

It is a capitalist world. Its classic ideology is free-market liberalism, to which Thatcher is a twisted throwback.

Workers in Eastern Europe, the USSR, China, etc., live, on the contrary, in a world ruled by bureaucrats who control an anti-democratic state which 'plans' the economy and controls more or less everything in society.

Against the early free-market capitalism and its present-day stiff-jointed descendant, monopoly capitalism, the working class long ago elaborated a socialist programme: socialisation of the means of production, production not for profit but regulated for need in a consciously planned economy, political and economic democracy.

But how does the world appear to workers in the Stalinist states? What programme does someone like Lech Walesa opt for against the oppressive Stalinist system? He was a small child when the present system was imposed on Poland by the USSR's army in the 1940s, and never knew anything else. He inhabits part of the world where the old socialist traditions either have disappeared or have been gutted and appropriated in a corrupted form by the ruling bureaucrats.

The economy is already socialised — and in the hands of the state bureaucracy which mercilessly drives the workers, imposing speed-up and additional working hours.

For the working class the Stalinist world is a world of oppression. But its features are often the mirror image of the world of capitalist oppression. Economic oppression is at the hands of a tyrannical state, controlling a collectivised economy dominated by a privileged bureaucracy.

Even when it is recognised and understood that the Stalinist bureaucratic system is not — as it claims to be — the realisation of socialism or communism, it is not always self-evident that the anti-capitalist socialist programme is the answer. Even when socialist goals are accepted, there are still vast areas of political problems to be explored, most of them concerning the lessons that socialists must draw from the experience of 'socialist' collectivism under the bureaucracy in a totalitarian or semi-totalitarian state.

The following document by Andrzej Gwiazda, Solidarnosc leader and political prisoner (see last week's Socialist Organiser) presents us with a vivid picture of the range of uncertainties that are felt and being discussed in the Polish underground today, as the heroic Polish labour movement fights for survival against the Stalinist state and for the political clarity necessary to overthrow it.

Text of a programme by Andrzej Gwiazda, one of the 7 Solidarnosc leaders imprisoned in Rakowiecka Prison, Warsaw. Gwiazda has been held without trial since 13 December 1981, when martial law was imposed.

A NEW stage in the history of the Polish struggle against the imposed system of government began on 13 December 1981. The only offer made to society by the government of occupation has been the proposal for unconditional cessation of resistance and conspiratorial activities.

The statement that "a return to the situation before December is impossible, but so is a return to the pre-August 1980 situation" indicates that the Polish United Workers Party (Communist Party) will not tolerate the existence of either independent institutions legal before December, or of independent activity of the pre-August 1980 type.

A decisive victory for society, achieving both a return of the freedoms won in August and the possibility for their development — something that is essential for the appeasement of society — is currently unlikely.

Any sort of rotten compromise on the other hand would appease very few people, and the rest would continue their underground struggle. There are no conflicts therefore between the struggle for the return of legal Solidarnosc activities and the building of an underground society, or as opted for by others, an underground state.

It is a mistake to concentrate all directions and political activities within a trade union framework, because this discards the trade union structure and deforms union activity. The purely verbal exercise of calling Solidarnosc a social movement did not solve the problem — its purpose was merely to superficially reassure the communists.

There is no longer any need for this. Everything has been said by now and nothing is changing. The only path forward will be through the

## From 'Voice of Solidarnosc'

thing, and will only lead us into confusion. A free underground society must have its trade unions and political parties, which will create their own visions of the future Poland. The initial phase of the beginning of any society's political life is often characterised by the rise of several hundred groupings and parties, all conducting debates about frequently unimportant issues.

Uniting and merging occurs as a result of the crystallisation of opinions. Under conspiratorial conditions, this procedure could take too long and, because of the impossibility of exchanging ideas and the impediments to public discussion, trivial divisions would be consolidated.

To avert this danger, a plane of agreement should be created, defining very general aims and methods of activity. This agreement — called the democratic front or movement — would embrace all organisations and initiatives whose aims and methods did not conflict with fundamentals, and which had at least one joint aim. The front's participants would undertake to cooperate and help one another in the realisation of superior aims, irrespective of their differences on specific issues.

With participation in the front rigorous discussions on these issues would be permitted, through objective argument and with a respect for differences in outlook, but mutual slander and affronts would not.

The goal of the Democratic Front is the struggle for the full realisation of employees, citizens and national rights. At all stages of our struggle the willingness to come to an agreement with the existing government should be preserved, provided such an agreement does not conflict with our superior aims. The realisation of rights is understood as the constitutional guarantee of appropriate articles and the repeal of all laws and decrees repugnant to the

the letter and spirit of these articles in the Constitution.

(...) Any organisation and grouping evincing the characteristics of racism and national or religious intolerance, working towards a totalitarian system (...) are excluded from participating in the Democratic Front. The Democratic Front cannot determine participating organisations, and it does not have a leadership, although in the future, the creation of a coordinating or negotiating body is possible, along with an acceptance of the principles of its appointment and activity. Participants of the Democratic Front may be political parties, clubs, self-education and cultural organisations, trade unions and independent press editorships.

The Democratic Front does not have a membership. A grouping becomes a participant of the Front through the public acceptance of its principles.

It might be useful to outline some areas in which differences of opinion are likely to appear.

1. Extent of union power in restricting the freedom of management or of an owner of a workplace.

2. Structure of the state, electoral law, method of appointing the government, number of ministries, scope of local authorities.

3. Right of possession. State or social possession — method of administration, power of self-management. The admissibility of limiting private property and its maximum level — for instance, the size of agricultural holdings, workshops, small private factories and factories.

4. Size and scope of state welfare. Compulsory or voluntary social services and their scope. Tax amounts — whether to pay high taxes and gain from better services, or to let everybody choose for themselves what the money they earn should be spent on.

5. Size and equipping of the army; Obligatory, voluntary or professional military service. Expenditure on the police, its control and range of powers.

6. Method of appointing judges and judicial structure. Appropriate punishments for different crimes and prison conditions.

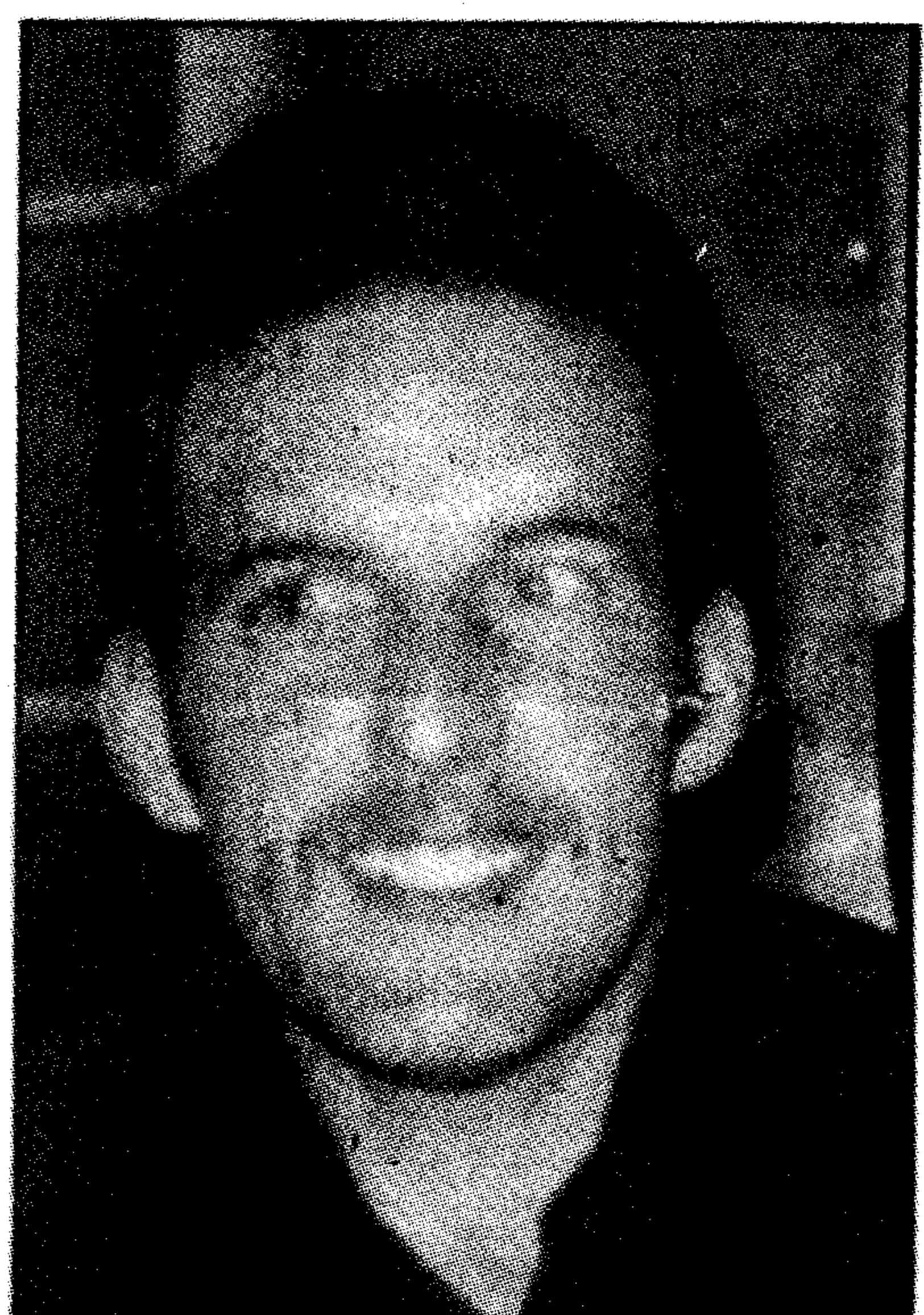
7. Method of financing culture and, in connection with subsidising, where state interference is unavoidable.

8. Should army personnel, judges and the police be allowed to join political parties? Does this result in partiality?

9. Scope of restrictions — censorship, military secrets, criticism of the government.

This cursory enumeration indicates just how many differences there may be. The quicker we begin our discussions, therefore, the more rapidly underground society will pass from the negative stage of unification against, to the positive stage of struggling for specified aims. Until that time, all exhortations for people to overcome their hatred will be futile. Hatred will remain while things are bad, but there is currently a lack of definition on how to bring about a good situation. The need to move from the stage of struggling "with" to the stage of struggling "for" is urgent.

When this happens, communism will no longer be the aim to be fought against, and will constitute only an obstacle in the achievement of our aim. And it will only be one obstacle, for it is likely that we will encounter many other difficulties along our path.



Among the escapees: Harry Murray (left) and Bobby Storey

# Reprisals follow H-block escapes

From the Republican paper An Phoblacht, September 29.

Following the mass break-out from H7-Block, RUC men and warders came into the block at around 6.30pm. The remaining POWs, about 89 in number, were forced to spread-eagle against walls at gunpoint and were then searched. About two hours later, the RUC and screws returned and started to move the men to the adjacent H8-Block in a violent manner, characteristic of wing shifts during the period of the 'no-wash' protest.

The prisoners were told to take off their shoes and socks and were then forced to run a gauntlet of warders the full length of the wing, being badly beaten as they ran. At the top of the wing they were stripped naked, some having their clothes torn from them, and were beaten again. After some of their clothes were returned, the men were then made to run under a hail of blows to the administrative area of the block.

Throughout this time an assistant governor was present and was aware of what was happening.

The barefoot POWs were then handcuffed and made to run a gauntlet of both warders and dogs in H8.

17 men suffered dog bites and 40 were badly beaten, but all were denied medical attention. Days later, Gary Roberts, from West Belfast's Andersonstown, required four stitches to his eye as a result of the beating he received.

In a destructive follow-up operation, prisoners' clothes and other personal possessions were strewn over the yard outside H7.

Eyewitness accounts of the visible results of these beatings are emerging slowly from relatives and priests, despite the vain attempts of the Northern Ireland Office and prison authorities to prevent details of the escape and the subsequent brutality of warders from becoming public.

Since visits to Long Kesh were resumed last Friday, all those now held in H8, as well as the captured escapees now held in solitary confinement in punishment blocks, have been allowed only closed visits, separated from their relatives by a glass

screen, and within the hearing of up to ten warders who terminate visits when the escape is discussed. Although few details have so far emerged, it appears that all but one of the captured escapees were severely beaten on their return to Long Kesh.

Bobby Storey, also from Andersonstown, was among the 15 POWs captured shortly after the break-out who, on being brought back to the prison, were systematically beaten by enraged warders.

Bobby Storey suffered bruises to his body and numerous graze 'burns', having apparently been trailed across gravel by his captors. His parents saw one bruise on his face, still visible after over a week.

His father, Robert, describes their two minutes together: "There were six warders behind him and four warders behind us, even though we're both 54 years of age."

After exchanging greetings, Bobby had time only to tell his parents that about 60 warders had jumped on him. His horrified parents then watched as the visit abruptly ended and Storey was forcibly flung against the wall by warders while they were made to leave.

## Fracture

Harry Murray, from Lenadoon, West Belfast, and who was shot as he ran from Long Kesh suffered a triple fracture to his thigh bone, was taken to Musgrave Park Hospital where, having undergone several operations, he is expected to remain for at least three months.

The four prisoners who managed to reach the Castlewellan area before capture were taken to the Castlereagh Interrogation Centre following their re-arrest. On their return to Long Kesh, several days later, all were apparently badly beaten by warders.

After the beatings, the escapees 'on the boards' had their clothes removed and they were forced to go 'on the blanket', some of them for a week, rather than wear prison-issue clothing.

The warders' vindictiveness has been exercised against all republican prisoners in the H-blocks.

Last Monday week, the day after the escape, the POWs moved to H8 were not allowed to wash, cells were again searched and their clothes were not returned to them for several days. Despite their injuries,

throughout the week the men were refused access to the prison doctor and the governor.

Last Thursday, September 29, after warders had put wire wool and powder into the prisoners' food, the men refused meals for 24 hours. Reports have emerged, from several blocks, of prisoners being injured as a result of provocation by warders. Several have been put on the boards as a result. Handicrafts and other personal possessions have been deliberately smashed during perfunctory cell 'searches'.

Although prisoners are now being allowed evening association, it appears that the POA which on Tuesday October 4 began 23 hour lock-ups in Magilligan Jail, is intent on forcing the introduction of a harsher regime in the North's prisons.

In a statement this week, Gerry Adams, MP for West Belfast, dismissed the Northern Ireland Office's claims that no beatings had occurred in Long Kesh as a "deliberate lie". As Adams pointed out:

"Everyone knows that following any incident in any of the British prisons, POWs are ill-treated and harassed. Any ex-internee or former political prisoner will confirm this fact. The NIO's attempt to deny such beatings occurred after last Sunday's great escape is a patent falsehood and a deliberate lie."

# Provoked?

A NEW definition of pacifism was offered up last week in the US Congress by racist Senator Jesse Helms.

Attempting a long filibuster speech to block the proposed legislation of a public holiday in memory of murdered civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Helms claimed that King had associated with 'Communists' and that "his calculated use of non-violence was a provocative act".

"Dr King's action-oriented Marxism about which he was cautioned by the leaders of this country including the president at that time is not compatible with the concepts of this country".

Helms eventually called off his filibuster in exchange for a pledge of legislative support on the tobacco industry which is central to the economy of his home state of North Carolina — where 25% of the population is black.

# International news

## The 'upturn' has already arrived!

RECENT figures from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD: an association of the main advanced capitalist countries] give a picture of the current limited economic upturn.

The OECD estimates that industrial production in the seven biggest capitalist economies rose at a rate of 2 1/4% per year in the first half of 1983. Between 1981 and 1982 it had fallen 4.6%.

Total national income in all OECD countries rose at 1 1/4% per annum in the first half of 1983 (in real terms), after falling 0.2% between 1981 and 1982.

Just as the recession started in the United States (in early 1979), so too the upturn has originated there. Some sectors of the US economy have risen sharply. Car sales have gone up over 30%, and all three big car firms are making profits again. Overall, the OECD expects about 5% growth in the US national income between 1982 quarter 4 and 1983 quarter 4.

However, the upturn is very limited — more limited even than the upturn of 1976, after the 1974-5 slump.

The OECD expects lower growth than in the US everywhere except Japan. And in France, Italy, Benelux, Greece, Iceland, Southern Ireland, Norway, Switzerland, Australia and New Zealand, it expects further decline or very little growth between 1982 and 1983.

The OECD is not optimistic about the revival of business investment that is needed to give a capitalist upswing life and vigour. "Such a pick-up in investment is by no means assured".

The main reason for this is the decline in the rate of profit. "For example, taking six of the largest OECD countries as a group, realised rates of return (on capital) in manufacturing fell from 20 to 13 per cent between 1973 and 1981 . . .

While a small decline in the labour share of value added is expected this year, realised rates of return are unlikely to recover to the rates prevailing before the second oil shock" (in 1979).

By Martin Thomas

In the US, the upturn has marginally reduced unemployment. But the OECD does not expect 1983 average unemployment rates to be lower than 1982's in any of the major capitalist countries.

The total numbers out of work in the OECD are expected to rise from 29.9 million in 1982 to 33 1/4 million in 1983.

As the British economy plunged into slump after mid-1979, the Tories kept on promising that it was about to 'turn the corner'. The upturn, such as it is, is here. It's very far from the glowing prosperity the Tories promised.

The UK index of industrial production [seasonally adjusted] stood at a high of 116.6 in 1979 quarter 2. It declined to a low of 100.8 in 1981 quarter 2, and then recovered, very slowly to 102.3 in 1982 quarter 4. Since then, in line with the general world capitalist upturn, the index has increased further to 103.7 in 1982 quarter 2.

That's still 11% below the 1979 level.

The figures for national income show the same pattern, though less sharply.

The high was 112.7 in 1979 quarter 2. The low was 104.6, in 1981 quarter 2. The figures for 1982 quarter 4 and 1983 quarter one were 106.7 and 107.2.

This upturn is nowhere near strong enough to reduce unemployment. It also leaves the decline in UK manufacturing industry continuing apace.

Fixed capital expenditure in manufacturing industry was £1006 million in 1979 quarter 4. By 1983 quarter one it had sunk to £629 million, and was still declining. (Figures adjusted to 1975 prices).

According to the Economist, September 24, the industrial rate of profit is still so low that an average capitalist can gain more by lending money to a bank than by investing it in British manufacturing.

The index of engineering order books stood at 81 in May 1983 [1975 is 100 — and, remember, 1975 was a slump year]. This index has oscillated between 79 and 90 for years, and shows no signs of an upturn.



PICKET lines have been formed outside a number of US airports as trade unionists take strike action against union-busting tactics by Continental Airlines.

Continental used provisions of the US bankruptcy laws to tear up union contracts, lay off 65% of its 12,000 employees, and halve the salaries of the rest.

Even before this move — designed to return the still operational firm to profitability at the expense of the workforce — maintenance staff, organised by the Machinists' union, had been on strike for several weeks.

Now even the conservative pilots' union ALPA has called out

its members on Continental in protest at the 50% cut in the \$77,000 a year salaries.

Though a small band of scabs have continued to fly, uniformed flight captains have been prominent on picket lines, discovering a trade union awareness which they conspicuously lacked during the Reagan administration's smashing of the Air Traffic Controllers' union PATCO three years ago.

ALPA is levying all its members \$134 a week to sustain the Continental strikers on full pay. Other Continental unions are less generous with strike benefits.

Meanwhile the rival Eastern Airlines is seeking to get in on the act, demanding 15% wage cuts.

## Reagan pulls out of visit

By Harry Sloan

WEIGHING up conflicting advice from contending sections of his White House staff, Ronald Reagan last week called off his controversial visit to the bloody Philippines dictatorship of President Ferdinand Marcos.

Vivid and embarrassing memories of Jimmy Carter publicly toasting the Shah immediately before the Iranian revolution were one factor inspiring those who argued against Reagan's visit.

Other factors were the sheer scale of the threats to Reagan's safety as mass demonstrations have grown against Marcos and his US sponsors (whose military and economic aid fuel the military repression on the islands), as well as scepticism towards Marcos amongst increasingly vocal sectors of US public opinion.

But some advisers also estimated that a cancellation of the visit, though damaging in the short term to Marcos, could also have a useful dampening effect on mass demonstrations, by denying the opposition forces a new and unifying target.

Other, hawkish, elements looked with alarm at the prospect of the State Department taking its distance from yet another bulwark of US interests, bemoaning the consequences of Carter's abandonment of Nicaraguan dictator Somoza in 1979.

Meanwhile a new dimension to the struggle in the Philippines is the growing economic crisis.

The Filipino peso has been devalued — and is widely predicted to fall again in value by

another 30 to 50%, while foreign investors get cold feet and the country's \$15 billion of foreign debt begins to look increasingly insecure.

Marcos has been forced to crack down hard on the working class, and hardest upon the lowest paid, in a series of measures designed to minimise inflationary pressures after the devaluation. A price freeze on a number of commodities is linked with a delay in the overdue increase in the minimum wage.

Unions are already demanding pay increases of up to 40%.

There is no disputing the potential scale and scope of the opposition to Marcos: but as a cross-class movement ranging from business leaders to students and trade unionists it lacks any coherent programme or policies.

### CIA links

The best-known opposition politician, Benigno Aquino, whose murder provoked the latest wave of protests, was a bourgeois politician with links to the CIA.

It is certainly a measure of the level of repression required by the Marcos regime that it felt obliged to stage the clumsy murder of Aquino, and has used such heavy-handed tactics to repress its critics from the Makati financial district.

But under the current conditions of radicalisation it is essential that a working class leadership be developed for the struggle against dictatorship: only such a leadership can carry through the struggle for policies that will meet the needs of the country's workers, students and peasants.

## IN BRIEF

by Terry Smith

### Mexico

WHERE would the Mexican government stand if the CIA-backed 'contras' in Nicaragua were to carry out their threat to sink Mexican oil tankers delivering crude at Puerto Sandino?

The Honduran-backed 'contras', encouraged and financed from Washington, announced on October 7 that they have placed mines in the waters around Nicaragua's oil port.

Mexico is the country's only oil supplier — and if the claim is not a bluff, then it may not be long before a tanker is sunk.

Yet Mexico is also a supplier of oil to the USA — courted by US Presidents Carter and Reagan; and as the most powerful capitalist class in the region it is also committed to seeking a 'political settlement' to the war in El Salvador in alliance with other bourgeois governments through the Contadora group.

For the CIA to be implicated in the scuttling of a Mexican tanker would further complicate US relations with Central and Latin America: would Ronald Reagan make speeches denouncing the 'cold-blooded murder' involved?

### Argentina

A 24-hour general strike called by Argentina's Peronist-dominated trade union federation brought industry and transport to a grinding halt last week.

The strike centred on demands for wage increases to keep pace with inflation — currently running at 335% a year.

According to union leaders, nine million teachers, drivers, bank workers, civil servants and airline staff supported the strike.

It was a bleak day in the Treasury, too, where it was announced that the country's foreign reserves have dropped to less than \$200 million — falling by \$441 million in September alone.

Foreign debts stand at \$39 billion, and a \$300 million repayment due on September 15 has not been paid.

Central Bank president Julio Gonzalez, however, was jailed by a federal judge for 'treason' after he allegedly agreed to renegotiate terms which were "damaging to Argentine sovereignty".

Clasped in the grip of the IMF and Western banks, the Argentine bourgeoisie can find no escape from the growing militancy of its own working class.

But to chart their own way forward, Argentine workers must break from the bourgeois nationalist delusions of the Peronist leaders of the trade union movement. The only alternative road in Argentina is the road of socialist revolution and a workers' government.

## VOICE OF SOLIDARNOŚĆ

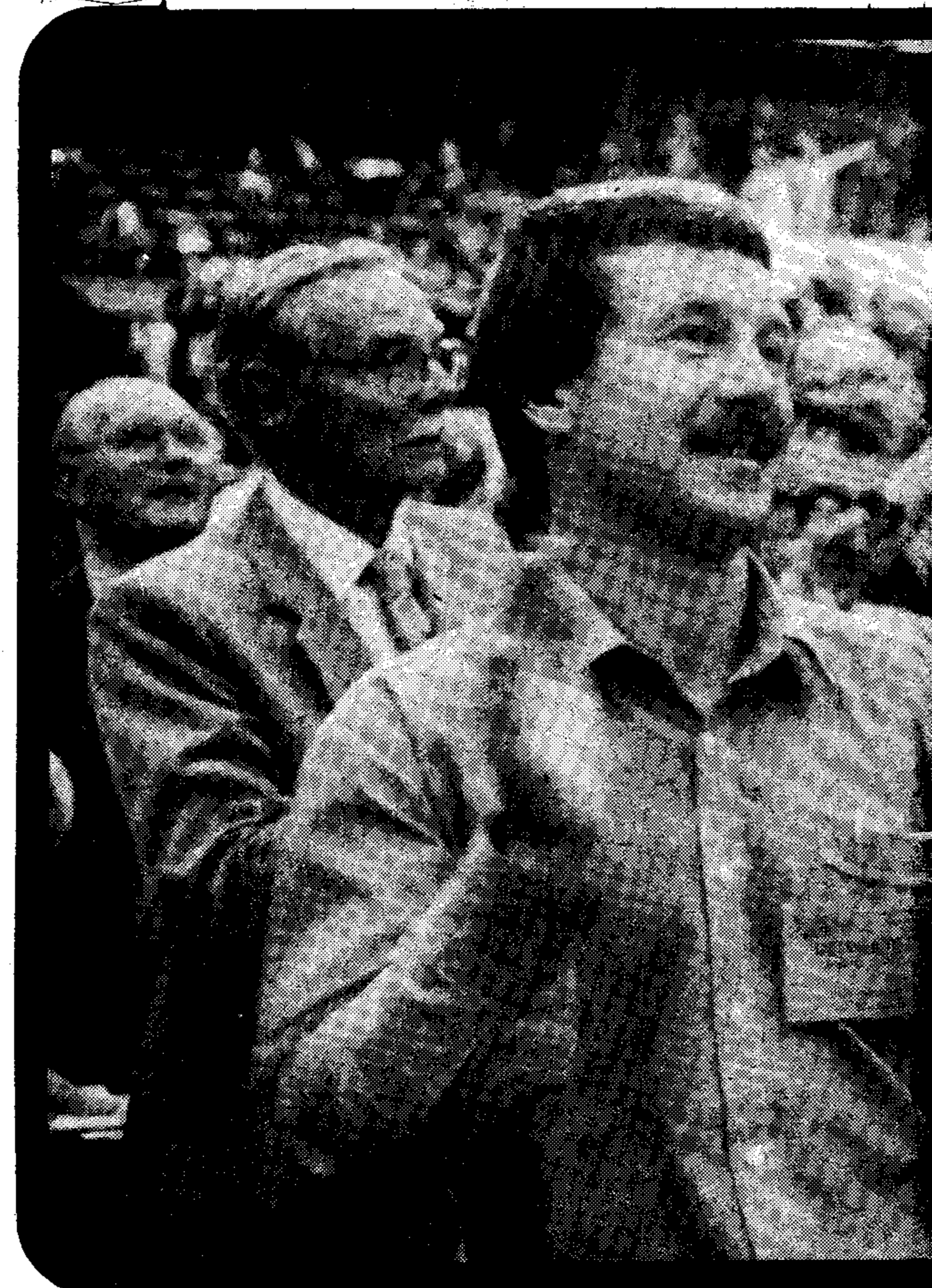
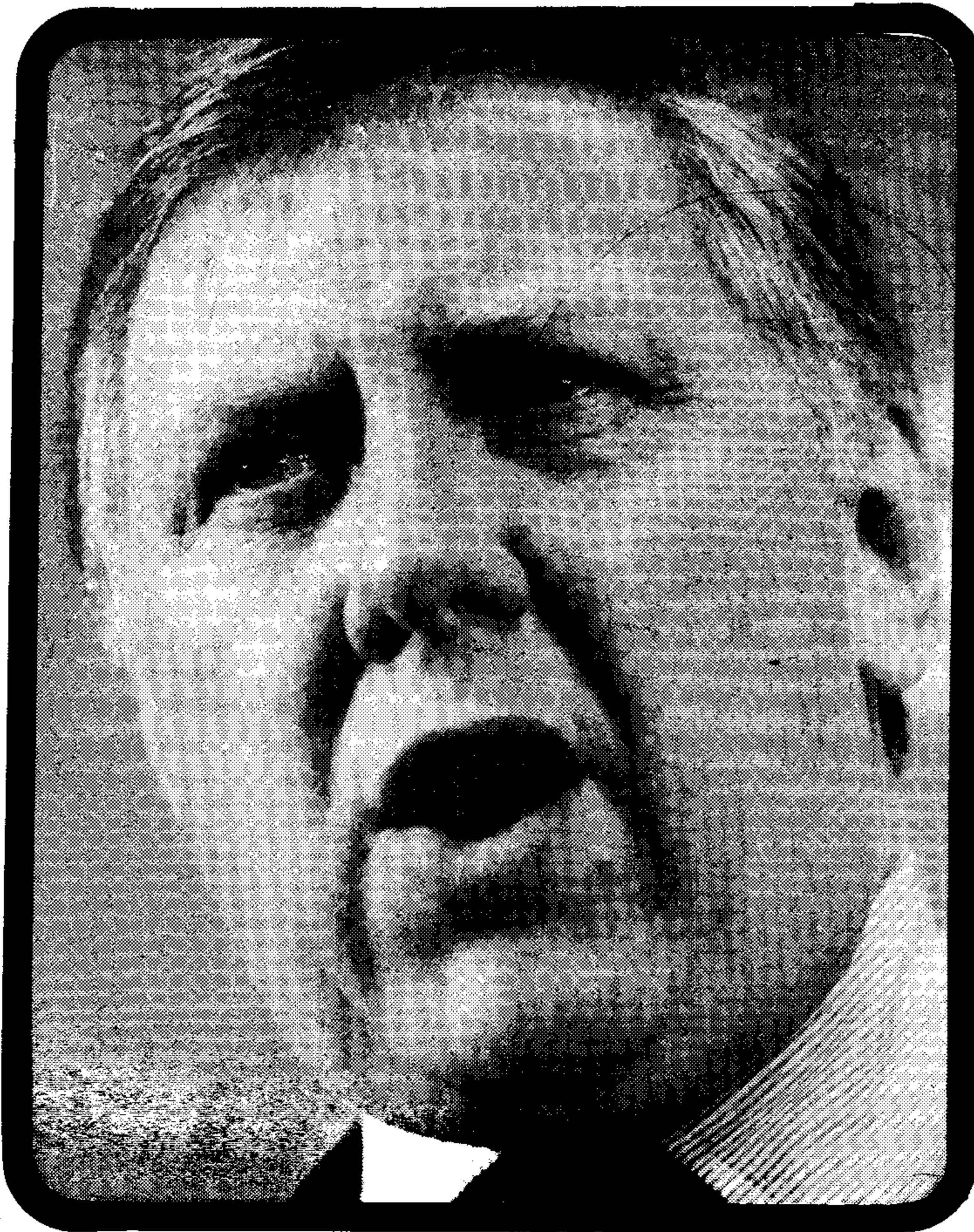
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SOCIALIST STUDENT

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Kinnock: will he act as a popular packaging for Hattersley's "policy development"?

The process of sifting and educating the Left is still going on

## After Labour's Brighton conference

# Are we back t

Suddenly, last week, it seemed as if all the tortured debate about why Labour's vote has declined had found a simple answer. Elect a new, photogenic leader; drown thorny political issues in a soup of compromise; and Labour's opinion poll standing will rise to just 3 per cent behind the Tories!

But even the opinion polls showed how shallow this success is. A big majority in the opinion polls finds Margaret Thatcher personally unsympathetic, a big majority also considers her the best prime minister on offer. People are convinced, and rightly so, of the need for drastic remedies: if Labour continues to offer sops and fudged phrases, then the Tories will stay on top.

And if, through some Tory fiasco, sops and fudged phrases should win Labour an election, even then a Labour government based on such phrases could not possibly do anything like what the labour movement needs to do. In the meantime, the next general election is some four years away, and the Tories need to be fought now. The soup of compromise will not nourish any fight back.

For serious socialists, then, the Brighton Labour Party conference was not a new dawn, but a setback. How serious a setback? John O'Mahony examines the balance sheet.

### A CENTRE-right coalition now has control of the Labour Party.

After the Blackpool Labour Party conference of 1980, we wrote in Socialist Organiser that there had been 'half a revolution' in the Labour Party.

Was it the counter-revolution that took place at Brighton? Is it now complete?

Not entirely. Let us itemise what has happened. First, the negative side of the balance sheet.

• Neil Kinnock has been elected leader by 71% of the elector-

al college vote — and 91.5% of the Constituency Labour Party vote. Roy Hattersley has been elected deputy leader with 67% overall and 51% in the CLPs section.

Because of the early rallying to him by the trade union leaders, the decision was in Kinnock's bag long before the election. And then there was a snowball effect, gathering CLP support around the core of trade union votes.

This support went to a Kinnock who had been publicly, and unilaterally, changing items of Party policy long thought to be sacred, on the EEC for example. Who supported the expulsion of the Militant editorial board.

Who was justly cursed on the Left in 1981 for opposing Tony Benn's campaign for deputy leader. And who does not disguise a desire to change Party policy on unilateral nuclear disarmament and missile bases (in effect, if not in words).

• The Right and Centre have control of the National Executive Committee, whenever they combine against the Left. At Brighton there was some shift to the Left, or Left-Centre, on the NEC: but there is certainly a solid Kinnock/Hattersley majority on the committee.

• The expulsion of the five Militant editorial board members has been endorsed by Conference, by over 5 million votes to about 1.6 million, though with some 80% of the CLPs voting against expulsion.

The Labour Party's general secretary, 'Morning Star leftist' Jim Mortimer, says he makes no undertaking that there will not be further expulsions.

• There was a distinct mood at conference of support for the new leadership, and a 'passion for unity' — a mood to forget the past and concentrate on fighting the Tories.

This mood was evident at the 1981 and 1982 conferences, too. This year it was very powerful.

The message that Reg Race pounded out on last week's front page of Socialist Organiser — 'Not Our Dream' — was distinctly not the view of most conference delegates.

• The Left candidate for Labour Party leader, Eric Heffer, did badly, with 6 per cent of the vote. Michael Meacher for deputy did far better (28%) — but he fudged and hedged and finally cast his leadership vote for Kinnock against Heffer.

Heffer was of course weighed down from the start by the Party's awareness that he had no chance of winning.

• The new leadership is the first full leadership to come out of the electoral college, and thus has tremendous authority.

• Election victory is being erected as the goal to which everything must be sacrificed, including the goals that make victory meaningful.

There is a conscious, and so far partly successful, move in the Labour Party to replace politics and concern for politics by personalities. The personality of Kinnock (and his wife) is being touted as the answer. The perspective is one of political beauty contests — in response to the most ideological and hard-

edged Tory government in half a century!

Like the role played in the deputy leadership election by non-active members of the Labour Party who voted Hattersley in constituency postal ballots, this is a marked (though as yet limited) shift towards the Americanisation of British politics and the depoliticisation of the Labour Party.

• The Left was divided, in disarray, without an organisation or a widely recognised figurehead in the field.

Prominent leftists, including Michael Meacher himself, defected en masse to join Kinnock's victory march. We failed to organise the sort of campaign for Heffer that could have swung the CLPs behind him. Tony Benn did not come out for Heffer until the last minute, when it counted for little and could change nothing.

• The failures of Labour's 'local government Left' have dampened and partly discredited the whole Left. This was predictable — and we predicted it, and fell out with those who started London Labour Briefing and Labour Herald over it. But it is now a fact to be reckoned with.

• The union block vote was more solidly and efficiently delivered for Labour's new centre-right alliance than ever before. Not a single union voted for Heffer. Only 11.8% of the union votes went to Michael Meacher.

To be consolidated and given real bite, the democratic changes in the Labour Party needed to be followed up by reform within the unions. That has not happened. Conservative union officialdom is still very much in the saddle.

• The revolutionary Left is not united, and its major forces are still outside the struggle in the political wing of the labour movement.

Socialist Worker responded to Brighton by repeating once again its usual message: turn away from general political concerns, and as 'an alternative', look to "wherever workers struggle for better wages and conditions".

### Abandon politics

In other words: abandon politics, and because the centre-right have control, leave them in control. Such abstention also assists the growth of neo-Stalinism in the ideological vacuum on the Labour Left.

Militant was always, and is

now, a self-concerned sect, internal to the Labour Party but incapable of interacting with the broader Left — of learning from it (and it would have much to learn) or teaching it.

The revolutionary Marxist Left, whether defined in its narrowest sense as Socialist Organiser and its periphery or in a broader sense, has never been anywhere near having hegemony on politics or perspectives in the Left. Indeed, in our opposition to the narrow British nationalism of the common anti-EEC wisdom of the Left, to protectionism and to the Alternative Economic Strategy which rests on protectionism, we have been a small lone voice.

### Positive side

But there is also a positive side to the balance sheet.

• Unity against the Tories is a double-edged weapon. If Kinnock doesn't deliver, then he will be called to account.

Joan Maynard's warning that Kinnock can be replaced next year sounds at present like wishful thinking. But it reflects something important in the mood of the Labour Party.

There is support for Kinnock — but not unconditional support. After the leadership election results were announced, and after Kinnock's speech to the Tribune fringe meeting, attempts to get a standing ovation for him brought only a handful of people to their feet.

The election of Kinnock is not quite as decisive as it may seem. He is a 'left' by tradition and knows how to fake. He had big union backing and was the favourite from the beginning.

Within what appeared to be the 'realistic' options, the Party voted for the 'left'.

What if Tony Benn had stood? He would probably have beaten Kinnock, though Hattersley would probably have won on the final ballot.

It is, of course, a measure of the weakness and immaturity of the Left (and unfair and unjust to Eric Heffer) that personalities matter so much.

In the deputy leadership, it was a factor that Meacher is not Benn. People probably also felt war-weary, and pressured by the threat from the Right of another split.

• Jim Mortimer gave no 'undertakings', but so far the purge is a token one. The Right/Centre coalition have to choose between 'unity' and continuing

the witch-hunt and purge. If they try to step up the purge there will be widespread resistance, and they know it.

• They are still relying on double-talk and fudge to water down the Party's commitment to unilateralism. Kinnock failed to persuade the TGWU to remit its motion reaffirming the policy. There will have to be a full-scale fight between the new leadership and the Party before they can ditch unilateralism — and they do not feel strong enough for that.

They rely, of course, on diluting the policy — but we can resist that.

• The Centre/Right have also been forced to leave mandatory reselection alone. It is unlikely that they can scrap it before the new round of reselections starts in December 1984. The Left in the CLPs should make reselection work, by dismissing the right wing and the dead wood.

• Dennis Healey has opined that Kinnock and Hattersley can dominate the executive if they want to. Perhaps. But there are limits. This is not the executive for a major purge or a political clean sweep. This is a fudge executive — the embodiment of the 'faking culture' in which Labour talks left and acts 'realistic'.

### Authority

• The new leadership has tremendous authority — and much is expected of it. The opinion polls — now showing Labour at 39%, only just behind the Tories at 42% and way ahead of the Alliance at 18% — are a boost.

But will this leadership fight the Tories? Thatcher's secret manifesto is being unveiled piecemeal. Working class resistance will develop, at whatever tempo.

To the extent that the new Labour leadership leads a fight-back, that will bring a new militant spirit into the labour movement and undermine the position of Kinnock and Hattersley for the future. To the extent that they obstruct the fight back, illusions in them as effective anti-Tory leaders will be dispelled.

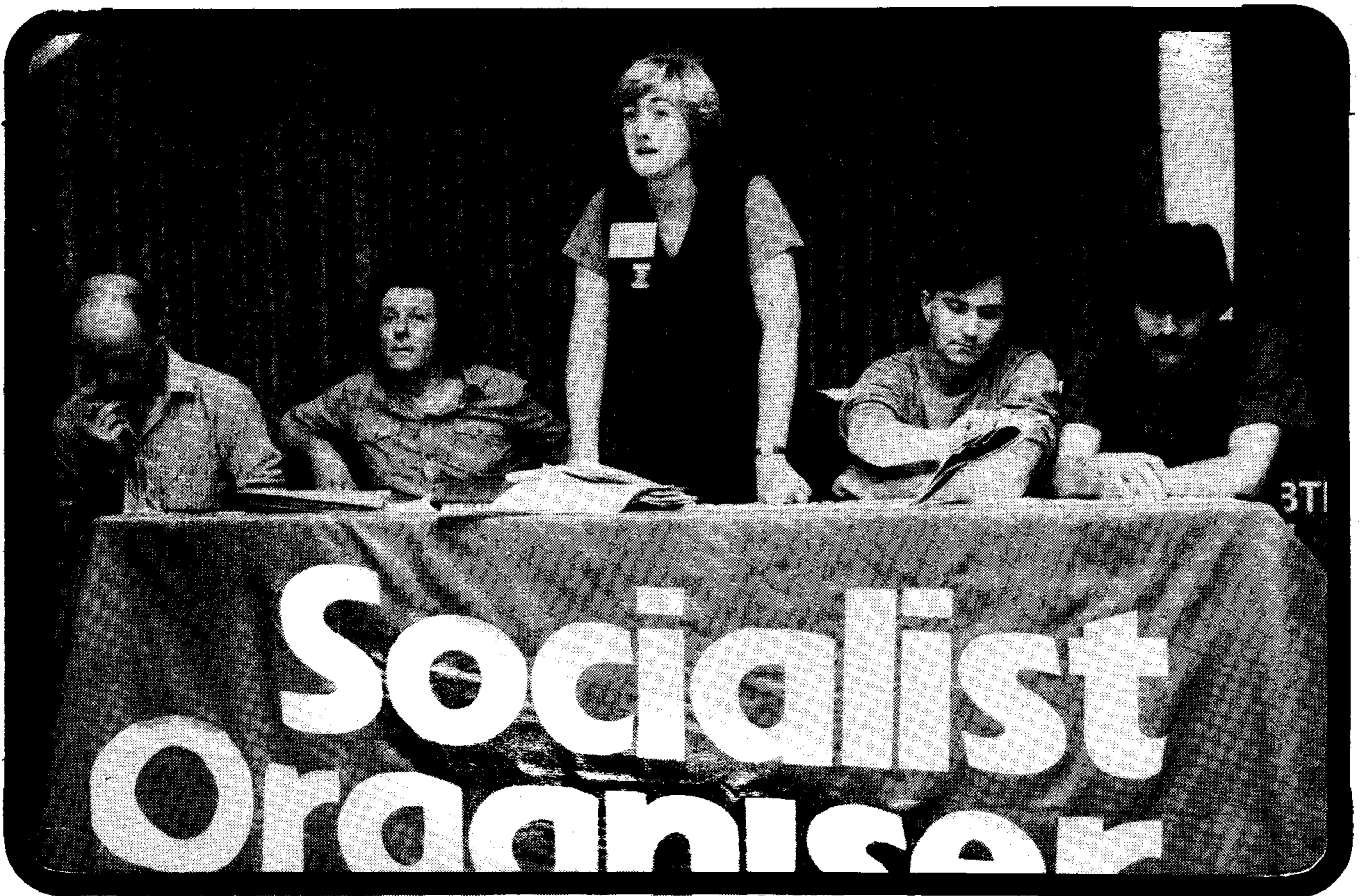
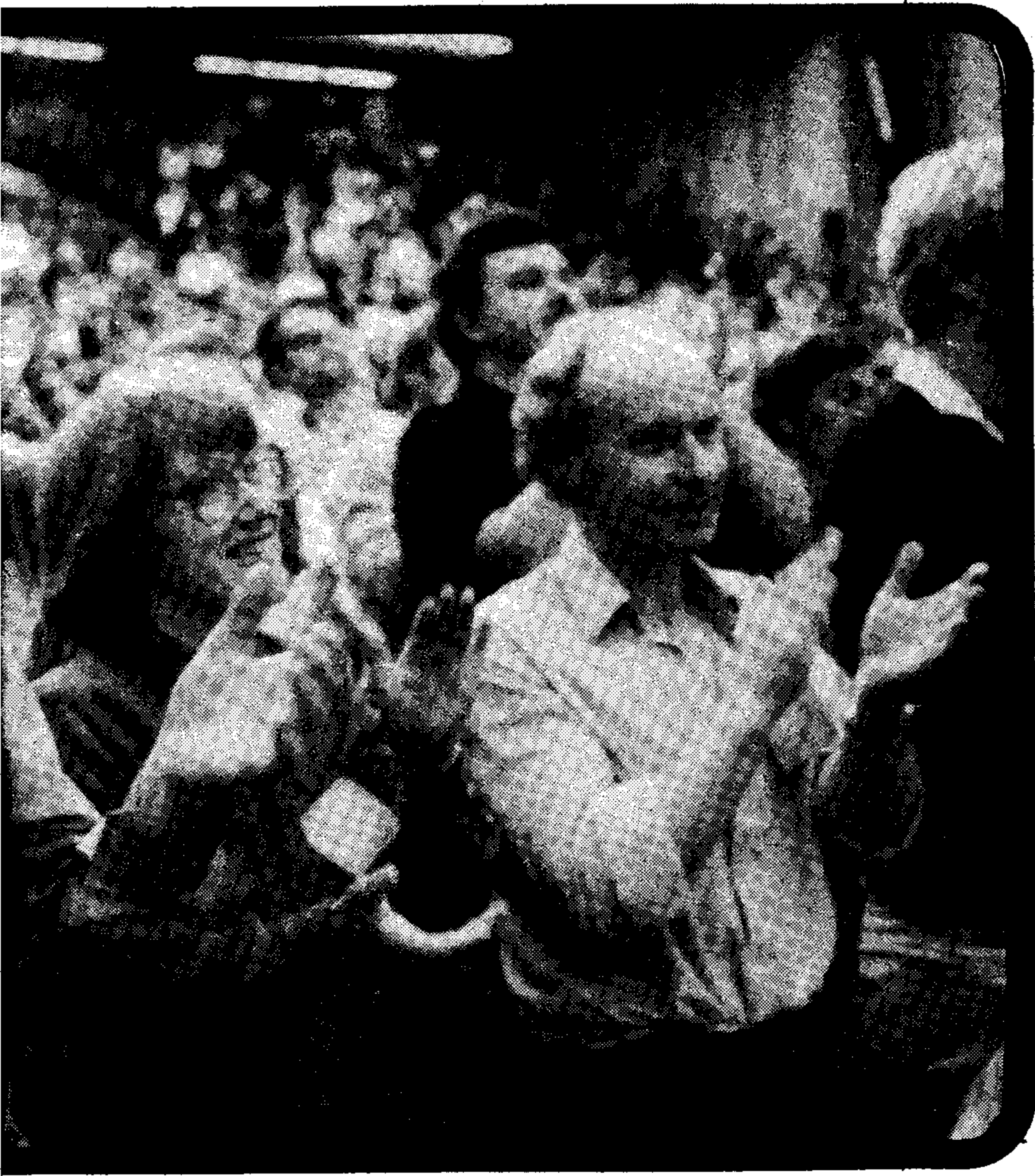
People have talked about "1963 all over again" — referring to the year when Harold Wilson, a 1950s Bevanite leftist, succeeded Hugh Gaitskell and finally, by faking and bluffing, put an end to a long period of left-right disputes.

The comparison sheds some light. But this is 1983. The



Kinnock and Hattersley at Brighton conference





Turn to workplace branches — a main theme of Socialist Organiser's campaign work at Brighton.

# Do square one?

...sh capitalist system is in... The Tory offensive is... and speeding up. The... of the crisis will... and brutally strip away... ability for any reformist... that Kinnock and his... dream up (according to one... the division of labour is... that Hattersley will be... for 'policy develop...', and Kinnock for packag... and selling the policies!)... Kinnock/Hattersley's instinct... when it tells them to go... personalities and avoid dis... on policy. But that will... take them so far — and not... far at that.

## Honeymoon

...that is not the situation... there will be a honeymoon... and, perhaps of some length... major resistance to Kin... its inevitable drive to the... is a certainty... in, the new close alliance... between the Parliamentary lead... and the trade union bosses... been identified as a recrea... of the ancien regime of the... '40s, and '50s. This is not... ly true, either... the big unions are not mono... ally right wing. Moss Ev... not Deakin, and Arthur... is not Will Lawther... is still something of a left... movement in certain... the POEU, for example... indications are that the... leadership will balance... and fake. It will probably... tactics, slicing at the... piece at a time, doing... has done in Manchester... areas. But if it tries to... more forthrightly against... it will undermine its... again, the future hinges... the Left, and the various... within the Left, will do... think urgently before the... movement after 1979 was... of itself of those respons... of the past, to restructur... and to rethink its polici... mainly. The major prob... is the strength of the

...opposition we faced, nor even... the tremendous reserve social... strength (that of the influence... of the bourgeoisie in the labour... movement) that they have to... fall back on.

It was not only that the Labour... Party is inseparable from the... unions, and that the organised... Left was weak in the unions.

Primary and central was the... state of the Left. The pay-off... now is the crystallisation of a... neo-Left Eurocommunist current... behind Kinnock.

Professor Eric Hobsbawm, a... long time Communist Party... member, lectured to a fringe... meeting at Brighton, chaired by... Neil Kinnock, on the need to... face the choice between coalition... with the Alliance or permanent... opposition. Kinnock sat nodding... throughout, and making notes... like a diligent pupil.

The stench of Popular Front... is in the air. With the aid of... people like Charles Clarke —... a few years ago the architect of... a Labour/Communist Party/Lib... eral alliance in the National... Union of Students, and now an... adviser to Kinnock — the... centre/right coalition is group... ing around itself a political... formation capable of weaving fears... nostalgia, hatred of Thatcher... ism, and even bits of Marxism... misappropriated from Antonio... Gramsci, into what may become... a coherent and self-respecting... rationale for Popular Front... politics — a 'historic compromise... ' with the SDP.

However, it is not one-way... traffic on the Left. Many will... be horrified by the implications... of what Kinnock seems to be say... ing and Hobsbawm definitely is... saying. The process of sifting... out and educating the Left is... still going on.

## Marxism Today

Tony Benn, in fact, got to the... heart of what it is that separates... the serious Left from Kinnock... Hobsbawm, and 'Marxism Today... ' in an interview with Andrew... Murray of the Morning Star.

"Owen, Steel and Mrs That... cher all have their main interest... as the destruction of Socialism... trade unionism and the Labour... Party".

Benn says that large sections... of the labour movement are on... the run before Thatcherism... "But for Tory-influenced Com... munist, Tory-influenced mem... bers of the Labour Party, and a... Tory-influenced SDP to set up as... an anti-Tory alliance is just... absurd".

"To take socialism off the... agenda". Exactly. People like... Hobsbawm have abandoned the... idea of socialism as something... distinct from capitalism, as a... radical transformation of... society.

They long ago gave up such... notions as 'millennarian' and... utopian. In large part they... did so in response to the exper... ience of Stalinism in the USSR... For sentimental reasons they... still call themselves Commun... ists, but they are to the right of... the average Labour Party left... ist. They are demoralised... reformists.

The Left has much to learn... from Eric Hobsbawm's academ... ic work as a historian, especially... perhaps from his writings about... 'primitive rebels' and early la... bour movement sects. But as pol... itical guides for the present day... he and his co-thinkers are poison... to the labour movement.

## Neo-Stalinism

Next month the two publicl... y-warring factions of the Com... munist Party meet in congress... and may split. If they do, the... Kinnockites will be reinforced.

But quite aside from the... Communist Party itself, a num... ber of strands of Stalinism and... neo-Stalinism already exist, and... are growing powerful, on the... Labour Left. The ideologies of... British nationalism, protection... ism, and bureaucratic statist... reform, create good conditions... for them to grow. For these are... their policies.

Counter-revolution? Yes, in... that the centre/right alliance... has control of the Party. But that... is still a matter of formalities... What they can do is limited... Much is still undecided.

The Financial Times political... correspondent, Margaret van... Hattem, wrote a perceptive ar... ticle on the eve of the Labour... Party conference.

"...In terms of organisation... the Left has collapsed. The pro... gress made in previous years on... limited, narrowly-defined goals... such as mandatory reselection... of MPs and the establishment... of the electoral college, has not... carried forward into a more... comprehensive strategy..."

But the leadership "outcome... cannot be seen as the Party's... verdict on a choice of different... courses

"The Party is not being offer... ed a real choice. Mr Kinnock is... usually held to be of the centre... left. Mr Hattersley of the

Right; but the distinction is... becoming increasingly blurred... They may identify with differ... ent traditions in the Party's history... but on most political areas they... have a lot in common...

"The Party is only beginning... to come to terms with its electio... n defeat. In doing so it will have... over the coming months, to... question its organisation, its... policies, its class allegiances, its... relationship with the union... movement, the scope and nature... of its membership — everything... that makes it what it is.

"That there will be bitter... struggles is certain..."

This is the counter-revolution... that dares not define itself yet.

So what must the Left do? We must study the history of... the last four years. We must... refuse to run scared before... Thatcher, or to let the pressure... of the Tory offensive redraw... the parameters within which... social policy is discussed in the... labour movement. We must continue... the fight to remake the labour... movement, so that we have an... alternative to the Tories, and... also to everything that the... Tories stand for.

We must refuse to accept that... there is a choice between turn... ing outwards to fight the Tories... and continuing to discuss and... clarify the Party.

The Tories need to be fought... now — by class struggle, not... by pronouncements of what... Kinnock will do on election day... four years from now.

We must reject the 'historic... compromise' which Kinnock... may be contemplating with social... Toryism, represented by the... SDP and the Liberals. We must... not 'take socialism off the... agenda' — whether for a deal... with the SDP/Liberal Alliance or... in the vain hope of bringing... back Labour's successful reformist... yesterdays.

Socialism is the answer and... the guideline for a fight back... against the Tories now, and must... be the goal of the labour move... ment.

On that basis we can turn the... Labour Party outwards, build... the membership, draw it into... the class struggle at every level... and develop workplace... branches.

We must fight the witch... hunt. Kinnock and Hattersley... do not yet feel that they have... the strength to confront the Left... head-on. They can be beaten... back.

We need to stress once again... the centrality of the fight with... in the unions. The top union

officials, wielding their block... votes, were the decisive force... behind Kinnock's triumph. But... they are not the sum total of the... unions.

The newly triumphant centre... right can be challenged by a... flanking attack, through the... rank and file of the trade unions... Demands for democratic reform... must be taken into the unions... Labour Party workplace branch... es can help to assemble the left... wing forces for this fight.

To the extent that the direct... industrial class struggle revives... and the working class succeeds... in shaking off the stunning first... impact of the slump since 1979... new forces will be brought into... this struggle in the unions.

The Left must face the fact... that for now Kinnock has a great... deal of support. We must find... ways to talk to and convince... the activists who support Kinnock... When Kinnock talks about mobil... ising against the health service... cuts, for example, we must... demand that he puts his words... into practice.

At the same time we must... take up the ideological fight... within the Left. The Left prob... ably faces a period of regroup... ment and realignment. Why... have organisations like the Lab... our Coordinating Committee... gone over to the centre-right?... The lessons must be discussed... and analysed.

We must take up the argu... ments against nationalism, edu... cate the movement about Stalin... ism (in all its varieties and... phases), and build a Marxist... class-struggle, internationalist... left wing of the Labour Party... around the Socialist Organiser... Alliance.

Finally, the serious Left must... steady itself for a long haul.

The struggle to remake the... labour movement, to prepare it... to overthrow capitalism, will... take longer than in the heady... days of 1980 there was reason to... hope it would.

This should neither surprise... nor dishearten us. Many layers... of reformist hopes and delu... sions, of political prejudices... confusions, and ingrained nat... ionalist wrong-headedness... have to be worked through by a... vast movement of women and... men who have no political unifi... ying centre and who move all... the time under the hostile fire of... our class enemies and their agents... supporters and allies within the... labour movement.

Is it any wonder that we... experience setbacks and back... slidings?

There is no serious alternative... to continuing the fight for social... ism within the existing labour... movement, both industrial and... political wings. All proportions... guarded (and with a shorter... time-scale), what Karl Marx... said to impatient comrades after... the defeat of the 1848 Revolution... in Europe is relevant to our... situation now:

"...The materialist standpoint... of the [Communist] Manifesto... has given way to idealism. The... revolution is seen not as the pro... duct of realities of the situation... but as the result of an effort of... will.

Whereas we say to the work... ers: you have 15, 20, 50 years of... civil war to go through in order... to alter the situation and to... train yourselves for the exer... cise of power, it is said: we must... take power at once, or else we... may as well take to our beds..."

(From the minutes of the... 'Meeting of the Central Author... ity' of the Communist League... September 15 1850).



Marxism Today reflects CP delight at Kinnock's win

*Repressed by Stalinist rulers:*

# No friends of western warmongers

In the final part of a two part article STAN CROOKE examines the origins and activities of the autonomous peace movement in East Germany [GDR] and describes the relentless persecution of the state.

IN January 1962, only six months after the building of the Berlin Wall and the sealing off of the border with West Germany, the GDR introduced conscription and a minimum of 18 months military service for young males.

Although, two years later, a limited conscientious objection clause was introduced, those accepted under its criteria still had to serve in army units, were subject to military discipline, and had to promise active support for the NVA.

Those who opted for this clause inevitably and automatically found themselves confronted by obstacles in access to further education and in their careers in general.

The 1962 decree has always been a source of opposition in the GDR. In many ways, those who opted for the conscientious objection clause after 1964, and suffered correspondingly in their careers, formed the nuclei of today's unofficial peace movement.

And with last year's extension of the measures of the 1963 law, opposition to compulsory military service has assumed an increasingly important place in the activities of the unofficial peace movement, reflected in the "Women's Letter" of October 1982, signed by several hundred women in opposition to newly introduced measures for the conscription of women.

The main alternative proposed by the peace movement to military service is that of a genuine "Community Peace Service", whereby those who opt for it could do 24 months work in hospitals, old people's homes, drug addiction centres, etc. instead of some form of military service.

But the GDR authorities have not responded to such a proposal, at all on the grounds that

"these people (i.e. the advocates of the proposal) forget that our whole Republic is a Community Peace Service."

The other main concern of the unofficial peace movement, opposition to the militarisation of everyday life in the GDR, is the inevitable reaction against the importance attached to military values, skills and discipline throughout East German society, particularly in education.

"Patriotic toys" (i.e. war toys) are readily available in the GDR and used in the state-run nurseries and kindergartens.

Kindergarten groups, in which the children are at most five years old, make organised visits to their local barracks.

In their first school year the children, aged six, are visited in their schools by members of the NVA and receive "education" in how the NVA protects peace and their native country. Further visits to local barracks are also organised. From six to fourteen, children belong to the "Pioneers", another Stalinist transmission-belt organisation. It organises military-style camps, games and competitions. Each Pioneer group is twinned with an NVA company.

Since 1978, a "Decree on Defence Studies" has also been in operation, whereby fourteen to sixteen year-olds receive theoretical and practical military courses as a subject in its own right.

Military and para-military training for youth from fifteen to twenty-five is in the hands of the "Free German Youth" organisation and the "Society for Sport and Technology", which provides two-year part-time paramilitary training courses.

Then comes 15 months long military service followed by regular courses in the Reserves as well as civil defence work, plus also possible involvement

## Half million in Moscow march against missiles

By Our FOREIGN STAFF

THERE is no difference for us between a US, a French or a British nuclear missile if they are targeted on the Soviet Union, half-a-million Muscovites said at the weekend.

Columns of marchers wound their way through the Soviet capital on Saturday to seven separate rallies.

The news agency TASS

Europe. "We are for a simple and clear principle—equal security for all. There is no difference between a US, British or French missile if they are targeted against and can hit the USSR and its allies," the resolution added. "It is our inalienable right to have defence against them."

*This is what the Morning Star calls 'the peace movement' in the USSR. But are the 'columns of marchers' there through their own will, or through conscription by the bureaucracy?*

in the "working class combat groups" attached to the different workplaces.

There has long been an undercurrent of opposition to such a level of militarisation in the GDR. But it was the 1978 "Decree on Defence Studies" which made militarisation a major issue of concern, and did as much to stimulate the emergence of an autonomous peace movement as the work of the nuclei of conscientious objectors.

Petitions against the decree were drawn up by parents, sections of the Church also took a strong stand against the decree, and the increasing involvement of youth in the real peace movement is also, in part, a reaction against this specific measure. Those opposed to the decree called for the introduction of a course in Peace Studies rather than Defence Studies.

But on this point, too, they came up against the catch-22 argument: the GDR is a "peace-state"; defence of the "peace-state" strengthens the cause of peace; therefore militarisation in the GDR is in the service of peace; therefore opposition to militarisation is a threat to peace.

Given the fragmented nature of the unofficial peace movement due to the level of repression in the GDR, organised national campaigning is impossible. Thus, the activities of the peace movement are as yet largely local activities and initiatives, only rarely linked up to enable broader initiatives to be taken.

One aspect of the movement's activities is the publication of documents or open letters which manage to achieve at least a limited circulation. Such documents include the 'Berlin Appeal', the 'Women's Letter' and the proposals for a 'Community Peace Service' already referred to, as well as open letters by GDR dissidents such as Robert Havemann and Rainer Eppmann or, more rarely, leaflets publicising an unofficial peace demonstration.

Another aspect of the peace movement is the Church "Peace Weeks" ten day long forums given over to discussing the question of peace, held yearly since November 1980. Such forums provide an opportunity for open discussion which, in other circumstances, would not be possible, through intervention by state forces. Practically, the importance

of the "Peace Weeks" is now decreasing, owing to the growing numbers taking part. 13,000 turned up to a "Peace Week" forum in Halle last year, compared with 700 the previous year. But, as support for the peace movement grows, the East German Church, anxious to maintain its *modus vivendi* with the bureaucracy, is becoming increasingly hostile to the peace movement and to the exploitation of its "Peace Weeks" by the autonomous peace movement.

But the activity of the peace movement which causes the state authorities most concern is the organisation of unofficial rallies and demonstrations.

The best-known of such rallies was the Dresden Peace Forum, attended by more than 5,000 youth in February 1982. But similar rallies and demonstrations have also been held in other cities in the GDR, particularly Leipzig, Jena and Magdeburg, and at Whitsuntide last year the peace movement even managed to organise a contingent for an unofficial peace demonstration being held in Prague.

The response of the Stalinist bureaucracy to the emergence of an autonomous peace movement has been the predictable and inevitable one of varying forms of repression.

In the Stalinist press, the peace movement has been subject to a vicious tirade of abuse. It has been accused of being "blind, deaf, hypocritical and incapable of thinking clearly", of being "hostile to peace, socialism and the constitution" and its members have been described as "asocial elements, rowdies and hooligans".

Hand in hand with the propaganda offensive against the peace movement has gone physical repression by the state.

House-searches, searches in the street, interrogation, arrest and phone-tapping have all been used to try to break the back of the independent peace movement. Rallies organised by the peace movement have been broken up by the police, and contingents of supporters of the autonomous peace movement attempting to take part in official "peace" demonstrations have been attacked and arrested.

And, as the threat posed by the autonomous peace movement grows, so too does the level of repression.

On December 24 last year, virtual martial law was imposed



*Dissident peace campaigners in Dresden*

on Jena to try to prevent the observance of an unofficial one minute's silence for peace. In the days leading up to the event, youths were picked up off the streets for interrogation.

Checkpoints were set up on the roads leading into Jena. Searches were made of all trains arriving. "Suspicious-looking" youths were banned from entering Jena or arrested if they refused to do so. Hundreds of security police sealed off the town centre, and the "working class combat groups" were placed on alert for a "major action against the class enemy".

Despite this, 200 managed to take part in the minute's silence. All were photographed, and most subsequently visited by the security police. Fourteen were imprisoned for their involvement in the peace-minute.

Similarly elaborate precautions were taken in February of this year to prevent a repeat of last year's Dresden Peace Forum. Students and school students were warned by their teachers on the orders of the SUPG, not to take part in any unofficial peace event, and the scene of last year's peace forum was used as the site for an official "peace" rally, opened by a fanfare of the NVA orchestra, illuminated by the torches of an NVA guard of honour, and addressed by the President of the Peace Council of the GDR.

### Swords

But the object of the greatest repression by the state authorities has been a sew-on badge bearing the words "Swords into Ploughshares" around a logo of a sculpture depicting a man carrying out such an action.

Immediately after its appearance in autumn 1980, the crackdown began on those wearing the emblem. Police tore it off clothes and bags. Teachers warned their pupils not to wear it, nor use the symbol as a bookmark. In September 1981 20 East Berlin youth were imprisoned for wearing the emblem, and the Mayor of East Berlin

warned: "those who wear this emblem will tomorrow be waving the West German flag, and the next day the swastika."

In March of last year the SUPG (Communist Party) banned the wearing of the emblem. Failure to comply meant possible loss of apprenticeship, place at university, school or job. More recently, failure to comply has also led to withdrawal of identity papers and replacement by a "PM12" card, holders of which are classified as "unreliable elements".

The independent peace movement in the GDR, as in other Eastern European countries, is subject to the extremes of repression and isolation. Denied, by definition, any support from the ruling bureaucracy and its various mass organisations, the peace movement now faces the hostility of the Church also, which, after an initially sympathetic attitude, quickly linked up with the bureaucracy when confronted with the growing radicalisation and determination of the autonomous peace movement.

In the West, the response of the Right to the genuine peace movements has been a parallel to its response to the emergence of Solidarnosc. Just as the right wing claims hypocritically to support Solidarnosc while attacking trade union rights in the West, so too it hypocritically mouths support for independent peace movements whilst at the same time supporting imperialist's war drive.

Socialists in the West must demonstrate in practice to the independent peace movements that their real allies are not warmongering right wingers but the Left and the working class as a whole.

Instead of lining up with the Stalinist bureaucracy and its fellow travellers in the West by attacking the genuine peace movements and organisations such as END which support them, socialists should be to the fore in mobilising support for these peace movements and helping defend them from the daily repression they face from the Stalinist ruling bureaucracies.

### Diary of a People's Marcher

and "How politics were kept out of the People's March"



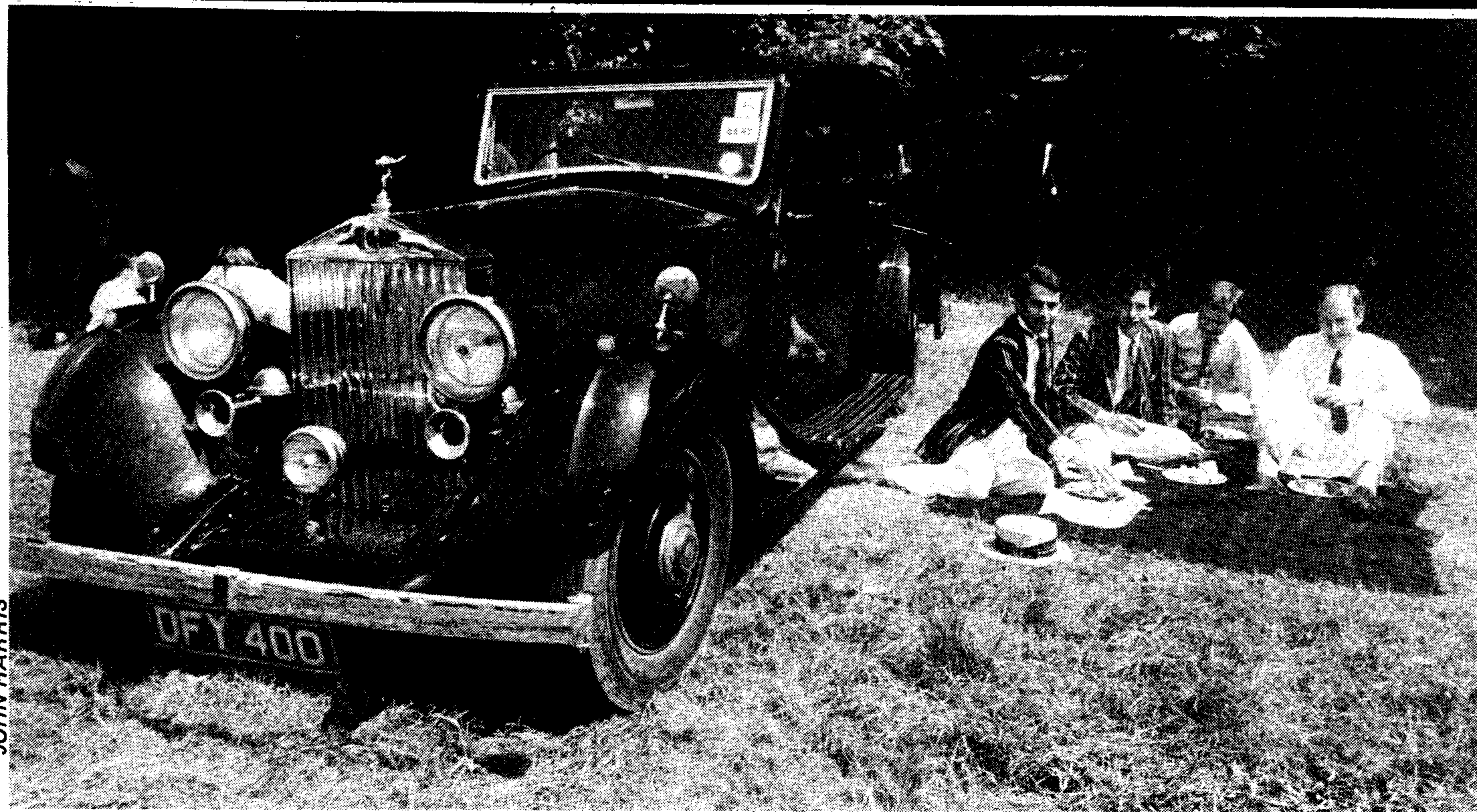
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## Trotsky on Stalinism

The classic Marxist analysis of Stalinism in Lenin Trotsky's Revolutionary Betrayal: What is the Soviet Union and Where is it Going? Available for Socialist Organiser, 21 Middle Lane, London N5 £2.50 plus 50p postage.





# SPOTLIGHT

## Fighting spirit

### WHICH CLASS DO YOU BELONG TO?

Which class do you belong to?  
The ruling class have the money.  
Which class do you belong to?  
The ruling class get the honey.  
Which class do you belong to?

Which class do you belong to?  
The ruling class have the lot.  
Which class do you belong to?  
The sun shines on the rich.  
Which class do you belong to?

Bryan Edmonds reviews  
*'Fighting Spirit'*, by  
Milton Smalling

IN THIS small collection of short poems (29 in all) we are given a hard and passionate description of everyday life, viewed through the eyes of a black man who sees himself as being at the bottom of society's pile.

The first half of the book takes as its central theme frustration — frustration with unemployment, police oppression, racism and lies, politicians and the rich. An experience of frustration that is ever present in the chain of feelings pounded into the brain by a brutal world — frustration leading to anger, frustration to despair, frustration to bitterness. Frustration to fightback?

There is an optimism in such lines as:

"we going to burst" (p.4);  
"we can't give up" (p.6);  
"The black colony's ready to fight" (p.8);  
"The unemployed fuse is burning" (p.11);  
"It's not too late to shout at the devil" (p.13);  
"Black people must point a finger at the ruling class" (p.14).

He poses a class solution to society that gives rise to such feelings.

In the second half we are

treated to more of a mixture of themes, but still concerned with an underlying frustration with the way of the world, tinged a little now with a longing for an idealised past.

He comes back to the real world with descriptions of colonialism, of a sordid, money-hungry world, of the Falklands war and threats of nuclear annihilation.

Nowhere is safe or pleasant any longer, not even the Caribbean, and he seems to be saying that a "Black Star Liner" is no way out.

There is also in Milton Smalling a sense of the abuse and exploitation of women, seemingly to reflect a romantic image of "pure" women living in a mythical, natural, pleasant world of the past.

"Like the dinosaurs, we cannot live in this world any more" (p.28) ends one poem. This most fitful plea to the reader brings a final note of reality. A reality of today and of our future that we ourselves must consciously make if we want change and an end to our destructive system.

Finally, in recommending this work, I'd like to mention one poem (p.21) that reflects bitterness and regret against Asians for being allegedly concerned solely with money-making rather than rights. Well, that may be true of the aspiring Asian petty bourgeoisie (and not just them alone) — but what about the Asian working class youth?

# A look at our rulers

JOHN SCOTT argues that the ruling class in Britain is very small, and moreover that its core — 'a group within the class which is able to act on behalf of the class' — is smaller still.

The 100 largest companies, he points out, accounted for 45% of all output in manufacturing by 1970 — as against 10% in the 1880s. The class dominating the largest companies, he says, is the dominant class.

Taking even the 1,000 largest companies, "the directors, top executives and principal shareholders would, together with their immediate families, number between 25,000 and 50,000 people . . . less than 0.1% of the population."

Within this 'business class', John Scott argues that the pivotal role is played by the 'finance capitalists', defined as those who have major interests in two or more separate companies. He estimates this group at no more than 200 to 300 families.

Surrounding the 'business class', he says, is a 'service class' — managers other than the top managers and top professionals. This class is maybe 10% of the population.

Scott also identifies a core 'status group' within the business class — 'the establishment'. He is not explicit on how he sees the relation between this core group and the core group of finance capitalists. Nor does he demonstrate that the 'establishment' is in fact entirely contained within his narrowly defined business class, rather than overlapping with the service class.

But he cites some striking figures which show how the public school/Oxbridge connection continues to dominate the

No more than 200 families dominate the central sections of the British economy and hold sway over the whole society, according to a recently-published book. Martin Thomas reviews 'The Upper Classes in Britain', by John Scott (Macmillan, £5.95)

top levels of British society. [All figures for 1970 or around then unless otherwise indicated].

Of the directors of the largest industrial companies, one half went to public schools. In the financial sector, the percentage is higher. Three-quarters of the directors of clearing banks went to public school, one-third to Eton alone.

Four judges in five went to public schools. In 1963, just four schools accounted for two judges in every five.

These proportions are not decreasing markedly. The public school percentage in the upper ranks of the armed forces has, on the contrary, increased. 90% of army officers of the rank of Lieutenant-General and above have been to public schools.

Among civil servants of the rank of under-secretary and above, two-thirds went to public schools; among ambassadors to major countries, four-fifths.

Tory MPs show a similar pattern of backgrounds. Scott gives figures for the 1974-9 Parliament — 73% public school, 55% Oxbridge. There has been some shift since then. In the current Parliament, only 50% of the 100 new Tory MPs

are from public school, 34% from Oxbridge. Of the 297 others, 68% are public school, 51% Oxbridge.

58% of the 297 are company directors. [Figures from Labour Research, August 1983].

### Land

A large part of John Scott's book covers the historical development of the British upper classes from the 12th century to today. Most of this is too summary and sketchy to be much use. He does, however, give some interesting facts on the 19th century.

In the early years of the 19th century, a landowning oligarchy — presiding over capitalist agriculture — ruled Britain. The industrial capitalists were a new and rising class. By about 1880 the industrialists were economically dominant.

The result was a synthesis. From the 1870s the structure of the ruling class changed in several ways, simultaneously. Landowners were appointed more and more frequently to the boards of joint-stock companies. The civil service became professionalised and the public school/Oxbridge connection became important. Nationally-organised political parties

developed, landowners lost their domination of Parliament.

Thus, John Scott argues, the modern 'business class' was formed, with ideological bonds and props adapted from the old oligarchy.

As a work of social theory, this book is unsatisfactory. It takes it more or less for granted that economic dominance implies political dominance, without examining how this happens. It describes the internal organisation of the upper classes in almost complete abstraction from their struggles against the 'lower' classes. It says nothing about the considerable international ramifications of the propertied classes of Britain.

Its distinction, for example, between the 'business' and the 'service' class, therefore remains pure description, with no theoretical weight.

The value of the book is that it summarises, more or less conveniently, available data on the development of the ruling class. Unfortunately it is less readable, and actually contains less serious research than journalistic books like Anthony Sampson's 'Anatomy of Britain'.

# In Wilson's footsteps?

By Bas Hardy

20 years ago Harold Wilson defeated George Brown and Jim Callaghan in the contest for the leadership.

Nye Bevan once said of Wilson "I feel very proud that the Labour Party is still able to produce men like Harold."

Wilson very carefully cultivated a left wing image over the previous years. He resigned from the Attlee government over the reintroduction of prescription charges, and claimed after Bevan's death, to have assumed the mantle of Nye.

However, Wilson also cultivated the centre and right of the Party — proving behind the scenes that whatever his left-wing credentials, he was a safe candidate for leadership.

"Not only do I support the principle of a monarch in this country, but I believe it essential to democracy as we know it."

The Wilsonian affirmation of the British way of life has a familiar ring when we consider Neil Kinnock's recent statements on the monarchy.

Wilson was concerned with image. Thatcher's presidential

style in the General Election was nothing new. Wilson first introduced it in 1964. He believed in changing Labour's image in order to win elections and modelled his media style very closely on President Kennedy.

The cloth cap Labour image was out. The upwardly mobile section of the working class had to be courted by a Labour leader committed to dynamism and change.

Personalities became more important than politics.

Wilson's record in office was strictly pro-capitalist. In the aftermath of the General Election in 1964, he ordered the expulsion of the majority of the radical youth in the Young Socialists and closed down 'extremist' CLPs. He launched a vicious witch-hunt of militant trade unionists in the National Union of Seamen and effectively broke their strike in 1966.

He supported the American war in Vietnam. He postponed vital social programmes for the benefit of the British economy.

He sponsored anti-union legislation. In short, he behaved in office as the messenger boy of the British capitalist class and prepared the way for the defeat of Labour at the polls in 1970.

Will Kinnock be any different? In words he seems much more

radical, but in office? A few things have changed since Wilson's day. The economic climate makes it much more difficult for a politician like Kinnock to drift to the right.

Secondly, the degree of con-

trol of the rank and file over the Labour Party is significantly more considerable than 20 years ago.

It is the task of that rank and file to see that socialist policies are not ditched for short term electoral gains.

## Get ORGANISED!

Become a supporter of the Socialist Organiser Alliance — groups are established in most large towns. We ask £1.50 a month minimum (20p unwaged) contribution from supporters.

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

Name .....

Address .....

Send to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.



## Dayschool and AGM

Annual General Meeting, Sunday October 30 at County Hall, London SE1. Day school on organising for the politics of Socialist Organiser, Saturday October 29, Crouch Hill Recreation Centre, Hillrise Road, London N19. Details from SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8



# Socialist ORGANISER

## Where we stand

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

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

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

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

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

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

\*Freeze rent and rates.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Unity saga - Part 2

THE "SAD but instructive" story of the bulletins at Labour Party conference (last week's Socialist Organiser, p.12) had a happy ending.

On Friday, the last day of conference, the Labour Briefing and Socialist Organiser bulletins combined to produce a joint briefing, in the way that SO had proposed from the start. There was a joint editorial, calling on the Left to organise against the moves by the Kinnock/Hattersley team to slide the Labour Party rightwards.

This joint briefing was agreed on Wednesday. Between then and its appearance on Friday morning there were, however, a few more twists and turns.

At an open meeting to discuss the joint bulletin, Thursday midday, Socialist Action turned up in force and argued against it. They were eventually subdued only by Labour Briefing editor Jane Stockton insisting that she was accountable to the Labour Briefing national committee for the bulletin and could not be overruled by an ad hoc meeting.

The objection of the SA supporters was not on any issue of political content, but the front cover. It should not carry the Socialist Organiser logo as well as the Briefing logo, they said.

Instead SO should appear among a list of sponsors at

the bottom of the cover. I.e. it should not be a joint edition, but SO missing a day and helping on the Briefing bulletin instead.

Obviously enough, the SA comrades objected to prominence being given to SO. Irritatingly, they did not argue this straightforwardly.

They protested that SA factional considerations never crossed their minds. Their only concern was for the well-being of Briefing as a broad left coalition. This would be ruined by association with a sharply-defined tendency like SO.

Labour Against the Witch Hunt, the Labour Committee on Ireland, and Labour CND would also face disaster (so SA supporters or sympathisers wearing other hats assured us); they would be seen to be linked with SO at one remove, since they had sponsored the Briefing bulletin.

All this was argued with the characteristic exuberance of SA on the trail of a 'new vanguard'. Briefing organised the whole hard left, everyone read it, it had swayed the NEC elections, it had 100 delegates around it, etc. etc. (Mind you, we were also told that SA had "at least 12" delegates supporting it in addition to those at the meeting!)

Some minor changes in the design of the bulletin

cover satisfied the few non-SA objectors, and finally the absurdity of the argument was exposed when it came down to SA arguing about the size of the SO logo on the cover.

The longstanding Labour Briefing comrades at the meeting were clearly annoyed by the unctuous and disingenuous concern for their welfare shown by SA. Indeed, the meeting mostly came down to an argument between SA professing concern about dire consequences for Briefing, and long-standing Briefing comrades replying that they could look after themselves, thank you.

This experience may be important for the months to come. Clearly SA have identified Briefing as the wave of the future in the labour movement. It's like the SLV a few months back, Socialist Unity before that, the 'new mass vanguard' of the late '60s, or the hoped-for 'replacement leadership' of an earlier period — or (at various times) Castroism internationally.

As with the other examples, SA respond not so much by straightforward political involvement as by themselves pretending to be the heart and soul of the 'new vanguard'.

More straightforward politics are a better basis for unity.

# Socialist Organiser in Brighton

By Nik Barstow

ROY Hattersley and I agree on at least one thing — we prefer Labour Conferences in Blackpool.

Brighton is a sad place, cold and damp instead of bracing and lively, faded glory instead of repainted brass; hotel bars instead of Yates Wine Lodges.

The feeling about Brighton is even stronger if you're staying in an overcrowded cellar with a duplicator and two typewriters, without enough 50ps for the meter.

Socialist Organiser Conference Briefing's little team got off to a flying start. On the Sunday, instead of doing our regular, 'Welcome to conference, and by the way we're backing the losers for the leadership' two-page tract, we were forced into a frenzy of activity, doing a 5-page bulletin and running off leaflets for the Women's Action Committee of CLPD.

From then on, it was all hard slog. Days and nights spent working out explanations of the resolutions. Fending off the worst jokes provided by Bow & Poplar delegate Stephen Corbishley and cutting his 'in the bars' column.

Stopping SO Briefing from being the Ann Crowder appreciation sheet, after she

managed to be one of the few CLP delegates to make two speeches, and even got to talk about action going on in the world outside — the residential workers' industrial action that she is involved in. Pushing workplace branches against a wall of apathy from the party hierarchy.

All the effort — advice on resolutions, comment on conference and fringe meetings, gossip, rumours, and some of the world's worst jokes — was worth it.

It not only gave SO an unbeatable reputation for poor spelling and bizarre graphics — it showed that we were there, prepared to stand against the unity tide and point to the future.

The poor delegate and husband staying upstairs from us paid us an odd compliment when they revealed that, "we call your cellar the bomb factory, you know".

Last week proved that the Party really does need a bomb under it to shake it out of wishful thinking and mindless 'unity', and to get it out fighting instead.

Copies of the week's SO briefings available for £2 plus 31p p&p to 'SO Briefing', c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

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



# Agenda

SOCIALIST ORGANISER AGM and day school: Saturday October 29/Sunday October 30, in London. Day school Saturday at Crouch Hill Recreation Centre, Hillrise Rd, off Hornsey Rise, London N19. AGM Sunday at County Hall, London SE1.

LABOUR Committee on Ireland: inaugural meeting of West London branch. Monday October 17, 7.30 at the Malvern Arms, Bevington Rd, London W10.

LABOUR Committee on Ireland: South West London branch meeting. Friday October 21, 8pm at Starr House, 57 Church Rd, Richmond. Speakers: Reg Race, Nick De Marco (secretary Richmond LPYS).

LABOUR movement conference on Ireland: Peace through Democracy. Saturday November 26: speakers include Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone, Clive Soley.

LABOUR group for human rights in Sri Lanka: public launch meeting coming soon. Speakers invited: Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone, Tariq Ali, Jeremy Corbyn. Date to be fixed. Contact: 42 Sickert Court, London N1.

LONDON Campaign for Gay Rights now meets regularly every four weeks at Marchmont Community Centre, Marchmont St, WC1, at 6pm. Next meeting November 6. Gay Young Socialists meet at Gay's The Word at 6pm. Next meeting Sunday October 16.

Contact: London LCGR, Mike Haran 659 2938 or Chris Beer 785 9515; GYS, Martin Goodsell 263 9484.

LONDON Cuts conference organised by the Southwark Campaign Working Party: Sunday November 6, at County Hall, London SE1. Contact: Southwark Campaign Working Party, Town Hall, London SE5.

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

# Where to find Socialist Organiser

## SCOTLAND

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

Edinburgh. Contact Dave, 229 4591. SO is sold at Muirhouse (Saturday 10.30-12) and at the First of May bookshop, Candlemaker Row.

## NORTH-WEST

Rochdale. Next meeting Monday October 25, 8pm at the Castle Inn, Manchester Rd.

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

Stockport. Meetings every Sunday, 7.30pm: contact 40 Fox St, Edgley, Stockport. SO is sold at Stockport market, every Saturday, 11 to 12.30.

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

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

Exeter. Contact Acering-

Stoke. Contact Paul Barnett 151 Broadway, Meir, Stoke on Trent (328198).

## YORKSHIRE AND NORTH-EAST

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

Harrogate. Meets every other Sunday evening. Contact Mark Osborn, 522542. SO is sold outside the market, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday lunchtime.

York. Contact 414118 (98 Hull St). SO is sold at Coney St on Saturday morning, at the Community Bookshop, outside the dole office most mornings, and at the University on Friday mornings.

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

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

Sunderland. Contact c/o Durham.

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

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

Hull. Meets every Wednesday, 8pm. Details from SO sellers. Childcare available.

## WALES AND WEST

Cardiff. Contact 492988.

Bristol. Contact c/o 28 Middle Lane.

## MIDLANDS

Birmingham. New series of discussion meetings starting on 'Imperialism'. Alternate Wednesdays, 7.30 at 169 Barclay Rd, Bearswood, Smethwick. Next meeting Wednesday October 19: 'Decolonisation and the economics and politics of "development"'. SO is sold at the Other Bookshop.

Northampton. Contact Ross, 713606.

Coventry. Day school on the Politics of Socialist Organiser — Sunday October 16, 10.30 to 4.30. For venue phone Keith, 75623. Creche, tea and coffee provided. Agenda includes report-backs from Labour Party and TUC conferences.

Leicester. SO is sold at Blackthorne Books, High St. Contact Phil, 857908.

Nottingham. Meets every Thursday evening, 7.30 at the International Community Centre. SO is sold outside the Victoria Centre (Saturday 11 to 1) and at the Mushroom Bookshop, Heathcote St. Contact Pete Radcliffe, 585640.

## SOUTH

Oxford. SO is sold at the Cornmarket (Saturday 11 to 1) and outside Tesco, Cowley Rd, Friday 5 to 7. Also at EOA Books, Cowley Rd.

Basingstoke. Next meeting Thursday October 13, 7.30 at Chute House. 'Trade union and Labour leaders — the first line of defence of the bosses'.

## LONDON

Haringey. Contact 348 5941 or 802 0771.

Islington. Next meeting Sunday October 23, 7pm at Caxton House. Details to be arranged: contact Linda, 278 1341.

North-West London. Contact Mick, 624 1931.

South-East London. Contact Siu Ming, 691 1141.

Hackney. Contact Andrew Hornung, 76 Carysfort Rd, London N16.

Richmond. SO is sold at Richmond Quadrant every Saturday, 11.30-1.30. Further details, contact Nick De Marco, 876 6715.

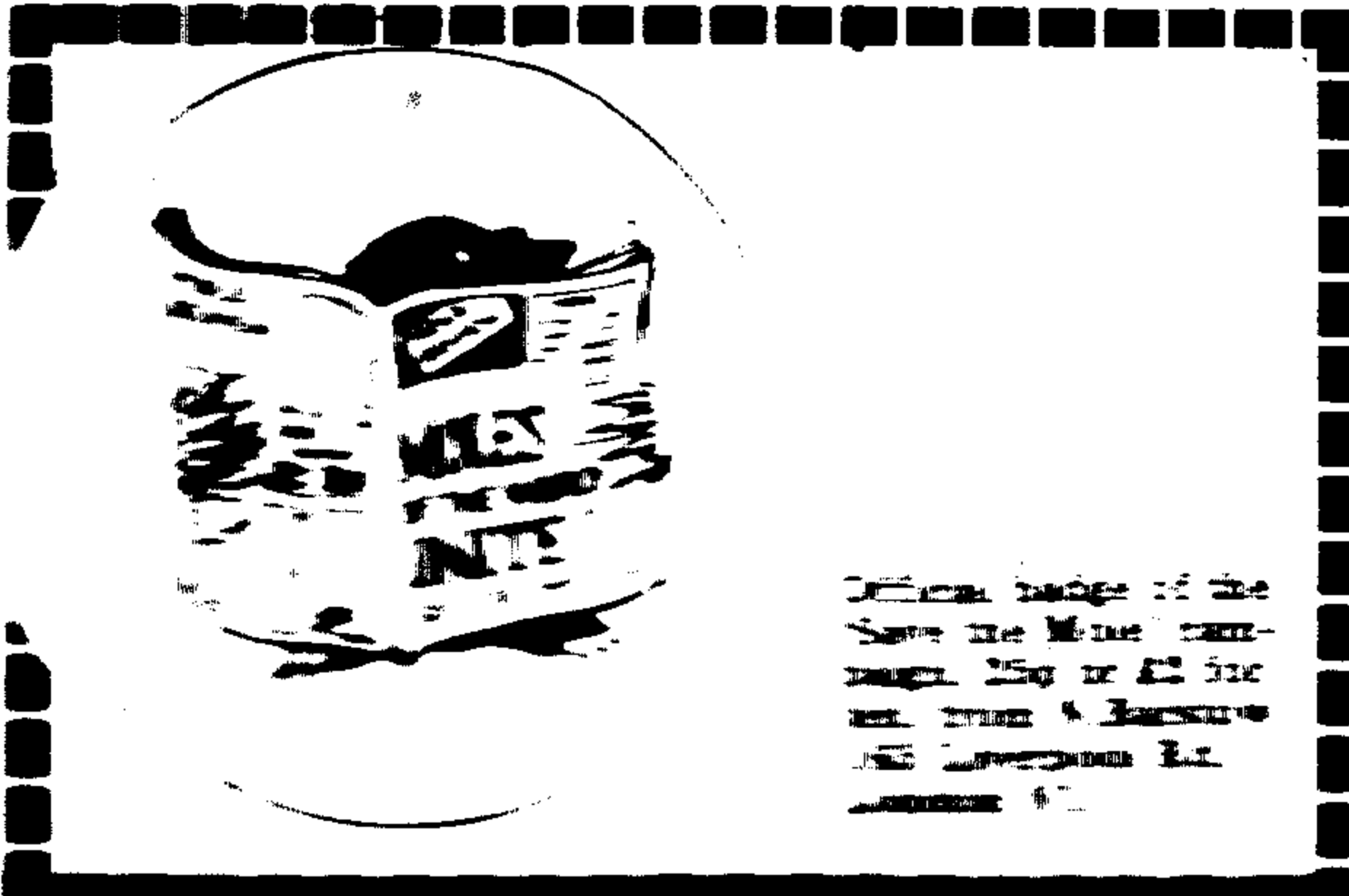
Southwark/Lambeth. Meets every other Wednesday at Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5. Business 7.30, discussion 8.30. Next meeting Oct. 12.

Orpington. Contact c/o South East London.

Tower Hamlets. Next meeting Monday October 19, 7.30, on the Labour Party conference. For details, phone Susan, 377 1328.

Hounslow. SO is sold outside All Saints Church, Hounslow High St, Saturdays 10.30 to 12. Contact Chris, 898 6961.

Harlow. Contact c/o 28 Middle Lane.



# Delete this nonsense about EEC parliament

MARTIN Thomas' 'Socialist Manifesto for Europe' (SO 148) is a useful contribution towards clarification of the central features of an internationalist alternative to left reformist 'Little Englandism'. Unfortunately it contains some rather bizarre formulations which in my opinion have no place whatsoever in the programme of revolutionaries.

I refer, of course, to the suggestion that we should put the fight against existing EEC institutions on a proper footing by arguing for 'full sovereign powers for the EEC Parliament over the bureaucratic machinery of the EEC (and) annual elections.'

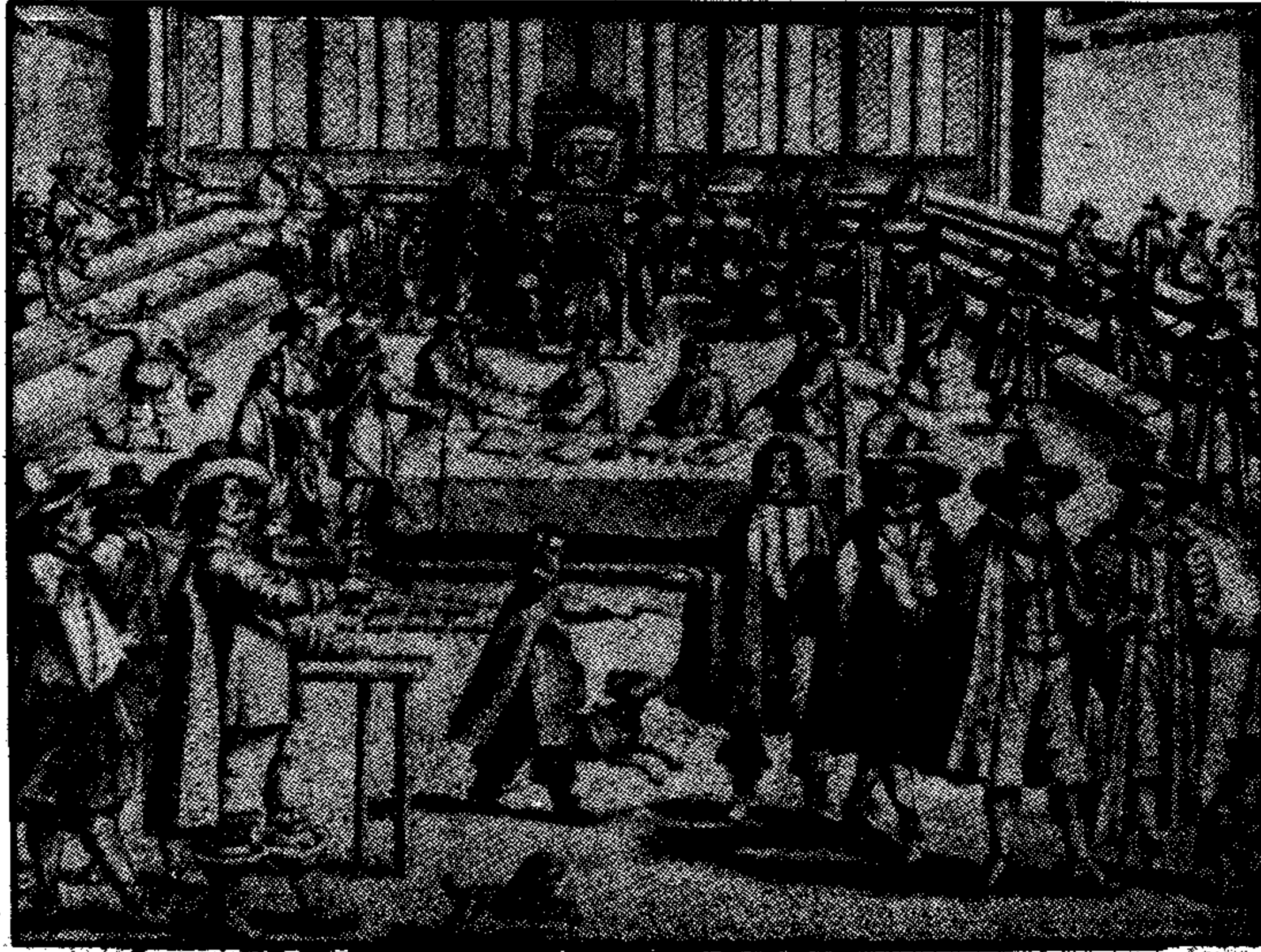
The justification for this attitude was contained in a previous effort by comrade Thomas which accompanied his recent interview with Tony Benn. As I understand it the argument runs something like this. 'Left reformists counterpose the British Parliament to the EEC. We believe that this is fundamentally to misunderstand the nature of British parliamentary democracy. Institutions such as Parliament are part and parcel of a capitalist state machine. It is no more realistic to expect the British Parliament to deliver the goods than it is to expect the European Assembly to do so.'

So far, so good. However, it does not seem to me that this generally correct premise necessarily leads on to the programmatic conclusion advocated by Martin.

## Difference

There is a difference between the British Parliament and the European Assembly. The former is deeply rooted in the political culture of society and the working class movement is firmly committed to it. Revolutionary Marxists direct demands towards the capitalist state and in particular the institution of Parliament because the present consciousness of the working class is wedded to Parliament.

But what do British workers, or any other workers for that matter, think of the European Assembly? They recognise it for what it is — a joke. It is not our job to direct our attention



Cromwell and the Long Parliament: 'deeply rooted in the political culture of society...'

towards capitalist institutions in which the working class has no illusions.

On the contrary — we foresee a socialist democracy which will be of a completely different character. No more 'once every five years ballot box involvement'. We will build institutions of direct democracy which will emerge out of the self-organisation of the class at every level and out of every facet of our lives — at work, in the community and so on.

I have no doubt that the British workers' state will have to take into account the traditions of our class and incorporate in some way Parliamentary institutions into the structures of the higher socialist democracy. This will of course be for the working class itself to determine.

It is in no way pre-ordained that the present EEC institutions will figure at all in the development of cross-Europe workers' unity. Surely the way in which that unity develops will very much be rooted in the presently existing links and material common interests of workers throughout Europe.

Is it the case that these material interests derive from common EEC membership or is it more the case that the fact of working for the same multinational company, or in a similar industry or even being a common

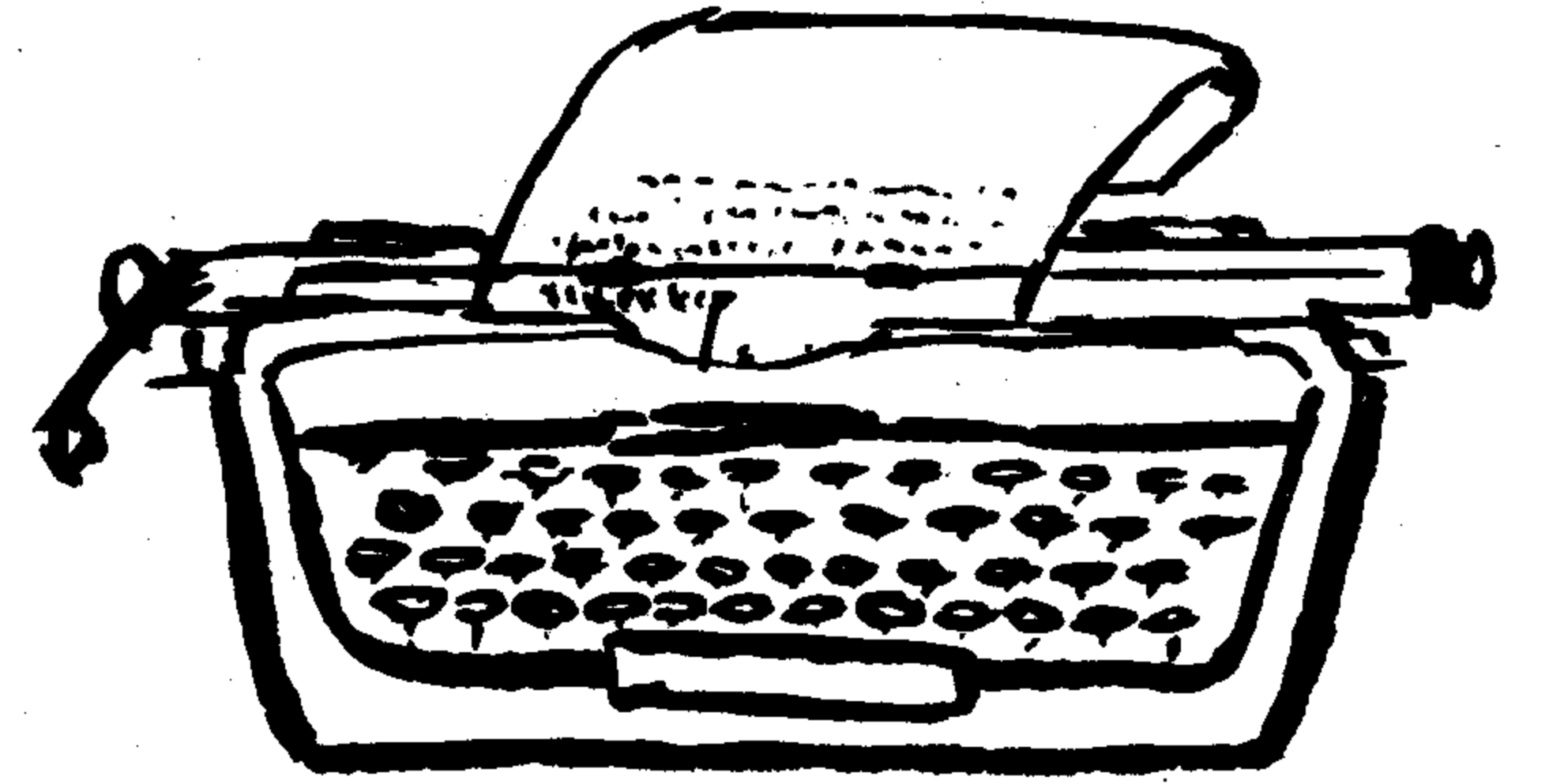
manifesto the lunatic slogan of 'EEC level public ownership'? It seems clear that Martin wishes to direct European workers down the road of developing EEC institutions as a focus for European-wide workers' unity.

Now I am no expert on the EEC but I have read nothing in Socialist Organiser which tells me anything I didn't already know. Perhaps the Editorial Board could commission a series of factual articles outlining the profiles of the economies of EEC countries, the spread of multinationals and their influence, the structure of the Market, the Common Agricultural Policy, etc., the way in which integration of the economies has taken place, and the political face of each EEC country. Such a series would also have to tackle the question of the non-EEC European countries, their labour movements and how they would figure in cross Europe workers' unity.

Such a series would inform the discussion which has opened in the wider movement and within Socialist Organiser itself. Together with a more developed 'Socialist Manifesto for Europe' (which means first of all the deletion of Martin's nonsense about the EEC parliament), this series — suitably edited — could then be published in pamphlet form for use in the Euro-elections.

Fraternally,  
KEITH WHITE  
Coventry SO Group

## Writeback



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

## Fight supergrasses

AS YOU are aware, the informer situation has, with the recent convictions, reached a critical stage. It is essential that our campaign against the informers takes a more vigorous direction. With more trials going on at the moment we are trying to bring international pressure on the RUC and the six county judiciary. To this end we have invited various barristers, judges, and other legal people from Europe, Britain and the USA to attend these trials and see for themselves the gross injustice being done and the corrupt system in operation here in the so-called courts.

We also intend to send relatives to Britain to expose and highlight the use of informers by the RUC.

All this requires money. We are not party political and as relatives of those imprisoned under informers, have little funds to rely on. In fact the pressure on us because of our loved ones being locked up puts even greater pressure on us with the extra financial burden of visits and having to travel to the

prisons. Therefore we would be more than grateful if you would consider with favour our appeal for financial assistance. All donations will be acknowledged.

MOIRA BERKEY  
Chairperson,  
Relatives for Justice,  
c/o 7 Aspen Park, Twinbrook,  
Belfast BT17 6JY

## 'Unity' No. 3

UNITY is a bi-monthly journal published to stimulate debate and influence policy within the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs (ASTMS) on the question of British withdrawal from Northern Ireland. Issue no. 3 is just out. This is a new development in British trade unionism and may interest you. Copies of Unity are available from Associated Staffs for a United Ireland, c/o 5c Park Avenue, Hockley, Birmingham 18.

D.J. BROOKS  
Editor

target for US and USSR nuclear missiles are more meaningful bases for international working class unity.

Indeed is it not the case that these material interests — particularly in the case of nuclear disarmament — create a campaigning base far outside the borders of the ten EEC countries. What is our line for workers outside the '10' — join the EEC, democratise its institutions and elect a European workers' government?

This does not seem so bizarre as it sounds when you read earlier on in Martin's proposed

# BLOWING IN THE WIND?

## SCIENCE

By Les Hearn

LITTLE by little, the truth about the Windscale fire of 1957 is emerging.

Readers may remember my summary of the theories of John Urquhart last April. He noticed a reference to Polonium-210 among a list of radioactive elements which escaped into the air during the fire, but no details were given, and in the published account of the fire no Po-210 was mentioned 'in the national interest'.

This is because the Po-210 was being made at Windscale for military purposes. It is highly radioactive and was being used to start off the chain reaction in atom bombs.

The National Radiological Protection Board report early this year also left out mention of Po-210 in its calculations of the overall toll of the fire, arriving at an estimate of 20 for cancer deaths.

Taking Po-210 into account, John Urquhart estimated deaths at between one thousand and eight thousand, using the NRPB's own model for the behaviour of polonium in the environment.

### Polonium

Following the revelation of the polonium factor, the NRPB has brought out a revised report. But they have discarded their own model for polonium's behaviour. Their latest model estimates that a lower amount of Po-210 would get into the milk and meat of cows (on its way to us). The NRPB admits that there is little data to support this theory. Indeed, such evidence as exists is of an alarming level of polonium in milk collected at the

time.

Nevertheless, the NRPB now estimates a death toll of 33 from the Windscale fire, while non-fatal cancers must number several hundreds.

Windscale 1957 therefore now ranks high amongst industrial disasters of recent years.

### The survivors

FRESH from its Windscale success, the NRPB's next job is a survey into the health of British atom test veterans.

This follows the discovery of apparently high rates of cancer among British and US servicemen who took part in A-tests during the '50s and '60s, together with accounts of exposure to fall-out during and after the tests.

The choice of the NRPB has been criticised by the National Test Veterans Association, who 'don't think it is independent enough of the government (understandably). Epidemiologists are also unhappy, including Dr. Alice Stewart, whose research helped to force the enquiry. They feel the NRPB doesn't have enough expertise to carry out the survey.

The NRPB will be hampered by the Ministry of Defence's failure to keep proper records. Out of an estimated 20,000 servicemen involved, the MOD

only knows the names of 12,000, and only 3,000 of these were equipped with radiation dose-meters.

Having traced the servicemen, the NRPB will use NHS records to compare death rates from cancer with rates from similar people who did not take part in the tests.

This may not be enough, though. Types of cancer need to be analysed, as some are more often caused by radiation. Also, some victims may die of other

causes while weakened by cancer, so simple cancer death figures may be misleading.

Footnote: A friend of mine living in North Australia almost went on an excursion to the Monte Bello islands a few years ago. By chance she couldn't go, but her friends went and returned talking about the curious differences in the wildlife of the islands from normal.

Shortly after, government scientists on a routine investigation found that the islands were still highly contaminated with radiation from A-tests, a fact which greatly worried people who had visited the islands and had caught fish there.

The Australian government had not seen fit to put up warning signs, or to warn local inhabitants.

Join the Labour Party

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Fight the witch-hunt

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Scargill gets it right

**BREAK LINKS WITH TORIES!**

By Harry Stean

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Solidarity

UNDERGROUND

'Solidarity Underground: Free trade unionism in Poland today' is a new pamphlet by Magda Zalewska, Henryk Gawinski, and John Taylor, published by the Polish Solidarity Campaign. 50p plus postage from PSC, 186 Avenue Road, London W3.

## BRIGHTON '83

# Build workplace Labour branches!

FIRST OF all I'd like to congratulate Socialist Organiser on being (unfortunately) the only group to organise a meeting on workplace branches during this conference.

It really is shameful that they are the only people to have given workplace branches that priority. In many ways the future of the Party will depend as much on how we develop workplace branches as anything else.

I'm speaking not really from any experience as a Member of Parliament, because I haven't been an MP for very long, but mainly from my experience as a lay official in the GMBATU - a union which has considerable room for improvement in terms of its own democracy.

I'm very wary of the argument that the reason for workplace branches is because that's the only way that we will be able to win ballots in the unions if Tebbit imposes them over the political levy. If that is the only purpose of workplace branches, then I'm not sure that we'll entuse thousands of trade union members about them.

On the other hand, if the Tebbit legislation does go through, then there may be unions where we can't carry a ballot for the political levy. It will have very serious financial implications for the Party, and the whole financial future of the Party will depend on our ability to collect subscriptions to the Party in the workplace.

That's important, but not terribly inspiring. What's much more important is that workplace branches can contain the solution to a dilemma that a lot of people have been talking about in Brighton this week.

When things go badly for the Left, then some people on the Left say, "The block vote is to blame".

Now I think it is dangerous to attack the block vote. It is dangerous to attack the close relation-

**BOB CLAY MP speaking at the Socialist Organiser fringe meeting at Labour Party conference.**

ship that the unions have with the Party. But we do have to get to a situation where the criticism made of the way that trade unions determine their affairs within the Party is resolved.

Obviously it's not the job of the Party to tell the unions how to do that. But look at the contradictions. People like Bassett go around reading lectures about one person one vote; but apart from the EETPU I can't think of a union where the members have less say in how the union's affairs are determined than the GMBATU.

I remember in the deputy leadership campaign in 1981 we had a consultation based on the chair and the secretary of each branch in the region being invited along to give their views. I can remember one branch where there were four shop stewards who were all active attenders at their Labour Party General Management Committee. They couldn't go to the meeting. The branch chair, who was a card-carrying Tory, went to the meeting to support Healey.

Workplace branches are eventually going to be the way that we can defeat that sort of thing. They are one way of combatting the kind of passive, media-influ-

ced, postal voting that the right wing of the Party are so enthusiastic about.

I think we can look forward to the time when the way that unions vote at Labour Party conference will be discussed and decided by meetings in the workplace.

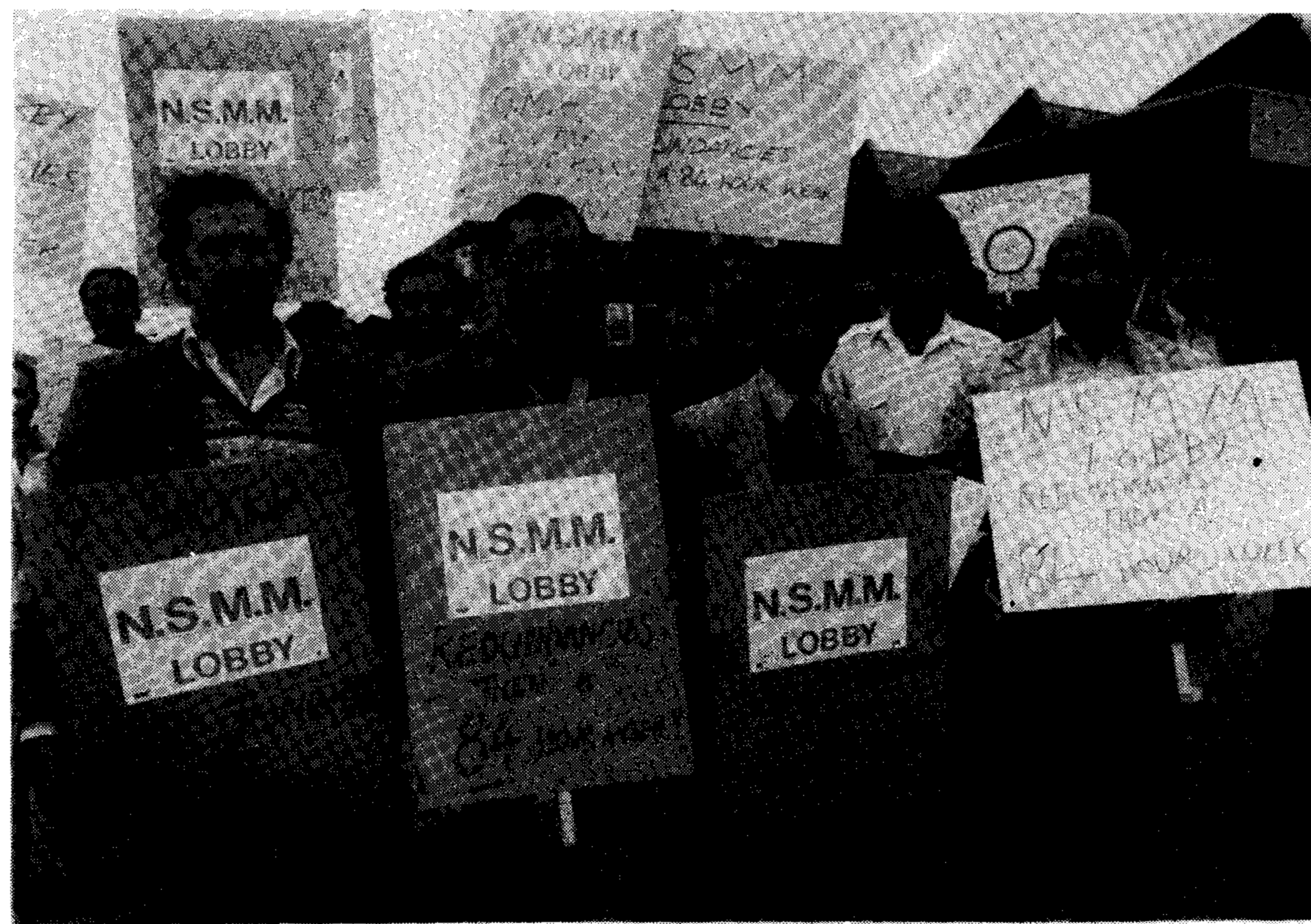
The other thing is that the campaign for our own labour movement daily newspaper isn't going too well. And we become more and more aware, year by year, of the devastating effect the media have on us.

If we have workplace branches we will be in a position to put on videos and distribute literature in the lunch breaks.

Now if all that all happened it would not automatically mean that we would be electing Dennis Skinner as leader of the Party by a huge majority. But it would enable us to open up an informed discussion at a rank and file level.

I think that if there had been proper consultation in the GMBATU in 1981, it would have gone for Healey. But if we had been able to have a proper debate, I think by this time the vote in the union might be somewhat different.

As people experience having some say in the way the Party is run, they will discover why those matters which at the moment they see as remote and abstract are so important - matters like accountability and democracy both within the Party and in society more generally.



JOHN HARRIS

## Picketing GM Plastics

A MASS picket took place this week, (Monday October 10) in support of nine victimised Asian trade unionists who were sacked almost nine months ago by G.M. Plastics of Redditch for joining a trade union, the National Society of Metal Mechanics.

A clear majority of the workforce (20 out of 22) at this small plastic mouldings factory joined the NSMM at this time to get a better deal on wages, hours and conditions.

For example, the basic working week is 44 hours divided into four 12 hour shifts, for which day-shift workers get £1.75 an hour and night-shift workers £1.95 an hour. All overtime,

including Saturdays and Sundays, is paid at time and a third, and there is no fixed working week, workers being brought in and sent home as management wishes. None of these conditions have been subject to any negotiation by workers, but imposed by management.

The company, on being informed of their workers' action, immediately went onto the offensive, sacking eight of the night-shift (where moves to join the union had started) and one day-shift worker, the shop steward, justifying this move by saying work was running short.

However, on the Monday following their dismissal they

were replaced by other Asian workers, with the workforce then being put on an 84 hour week for the next seven months.

### Tribunal

The union, instead of calling strike action, decided to go to an industrial tribunal - which found in favour of the company!

Although many months have now passed the victimised workers feel determined to fight for their rights and jobs, and have now formed a campaign to gain publicity and support through the labour movement.

Contact: M. Younis, 49 Colville Rd., Sparkbrook, Birmingham 12.

## Lobbies pay dividends

THE week, hailed by the Tory press, started not just with the expulsion of five comrades from Militant but also with the indiscriminate smashing of other anti-witch-hunt resolutions. A similar fate was later administered to calls for democracy within the Parliamentary Labour Party.

The prospect of recorded voting obviously filled the establishment with particular horror.

There were, however, various grounds for encouragement. First demands to replace trade union involvement at constituency level with some kind of one member one vote balloting were temporarily repulsed although the remission of one such resolution

**FRANCIS PRIDEAUX, CLPD Executive member gives his reaction to the Conference.**

to the NEC suggests that this particular threat may yet return.

Second, the modest demands for the women's section to be allowed a rule book came within half a million votes of success and must stand an excellent chance of success next year if the necessary work is done in the relevant trade unions.

Such a success would strengthen still further the basic demand that the women's conference should at last be allowed to elect for itself the so-called women's section of the NEC.

Third, sustained lobbying throughout the week finally won a much needed debate on positive discrimination and an NEC commitment to set up a working party.

Maximum pressure will now be required to ensure both that this working party contains a proper proportion of women and black comrades and also that it produces policy recommendations for policy reform in plenty of time for debate and decision at next year's conference.

Finally vocal and persistent pressure from Wythenshawe and Hornsey made it impossible for the NEC to sweep under the carpet the disgraceful way in which the two CLPs have been treated.

Although the necessary victories have still not finally been won, the NEC should now be in no doubt that there are limits to what the rank and file will tolerate.

A clear lesson of the week is that despite the party's "new look" sustained lobbying still paid dividends. Before Brighton many trade union delegates had never even heard of Wythenshawe or a rule book for Labour Women, or black sections.

Our task is now to ensure that these and other questions are taken up not just in the week of the Party's Annual Conference, but routinely at regional and union conferences throughout the year.

SOUTHWARK Council, which prides itself on being a left-wing Labour Council, is planning to use scab labour against the residential social workers' dispute.

They have decided to use agency staff, 'volunteer' scab labour, and management staff to look after children in care.

Southwark has been particularly affected by the dispute because the Council has left a 25% vacancy rate amongst residential social services staff.

To justify their use of scab labour the chair of Social Services - Paula Moore - has come out with the kind of bleeding-heart "our first duty is to the children" propaganda that would be expected from a Tory council.

It echoes the line taken by the Tory government in the health workers' strike, which local councillors were active in supporting.

### Offered nothing

Paula Moore has said that the council offered to negotiate locally provided that NALGO calls off their action in Southwark.

But she should know that the local branch cannot itself call off action.

Furthermore the council has so far offered NALGO nothing, except threats; and have said that any local agreement must be "funded from internal resources" (i.e. cost nothing).

It is the impression of officers of Southwark NALGO that leading councillors want to take on NALGO in order to smash the union, so that the way would be open to impose cuts when the effects of the Tories' rate-capping legislation become felt.

This impression is reinforced by the fact that the Council has rushed through a local regrading

deal with manual residential home workers in order to divide manual from non-manual staff.

The NALGO branch has not yet decided its response to the council's threats, but it is

possible that they may decide to increase the action locally, perhaps including local strike action.

The issue must also be taken up in the Labour Parties as a matter of urgency.

## Clampdown on student unions

JUST AS student unions will be booking coaches for the big CND demonstration on October 22, the Attorney General has announced a new clampdown on student union expenditure.

Student unions have charity status, meaning that their money can only be spent within prescribed limits. But since there is no list of 'illegal' expenditure, payments have been in effect legal unless proven otherwise.

Under the law, donations cannot be made to campaigns or disputes unless there is a return. Thus £100 could not be given to, say, the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign, but an affiliation could be made since the affiliates receive mailings in return.

The test is whether the money spent furthers the cultural, economic or educational interests of students (and, according to some student union rules, their own students). But what lies within these bounds is obviously a political decision.

Now the Attorney General has written to college authorities reminding them that 'their' student unions must not make improper payments, and recommending that colleges should cut the union's money if there is evidence that money has been illegally spent.

There is even the suggestion that union officers responsible

may be personally liable to repay amounts wrongly disbursed.

But while all this is clearly reactionary, a dilemma remains on the question of CND coaches. Is organising and paying for coaches simply providing a service for a student union's own students - or does it amount to a donation to CND? And can students' cultural interests be promoted irrespective of the danger of nuclear annihilation?



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# Messenger dispute back in the news

By Joe Dobson

A couple of weeks ago the dispute involving the National Graphical Association at the Stockport Messenger was threatening to blow up into the first major confrontation over the Tabbie laws.

When the local NUJ members decided that they were not prepared to be the first in the firing line for their so-called secondary action, the dispute disappeared from prominence and became again a local battle.

But the printers have fought on and this week they have regained the support of the journalists. The Messenger journalists refused to cross the NGA picket line on Thursday last and rejoined the dispute.

On Friday, 7th, management told NUJ members to hand in their car keys and collect their wages. The journalists are not sure whether this means they are suspended or sacked. It seems that the management are leaving their options open.

On the morning of Monday, 10th, a picket of the offices of the Group's paper in Sale, South Manchester, had some success also.

Of the two NUJ members working there, one was ill and off work, but the other walked out in support of the Stockport workers.

Despite these developments this is very much an uphill struggle. This is the fifteenth week of the strike which is over the recognition of the union and the closed shop agreement.

The NGA Branch President and Secretary who are active on the picket line, organised the shop and negotiated the union agreement when the paper was set up. They are now furious that these agreements have been casually discarded by the Messenger Group.

Despite the obvious importance of the dispute, the strikers

have received little support from the local labour movement on the picket line. Scabs have been brought in from other non-unionised Messenger Group workplaces, by Salford Van Hire.

The NGA members fear that scab labour may also be recruited by job agencies. Artwork for the paper is also being sent in from local art studios, many of which are unorganised. Those which are unionised are being circulated and asked to black any work for the Messenger.

All of these developments make it even more essential that the picket line is swelled. The number involved in the dispute is small so appeals have been made to Stockport District Labour Party, Stockport Trades Council and the Trade Union Centre for support.

## Disappointment

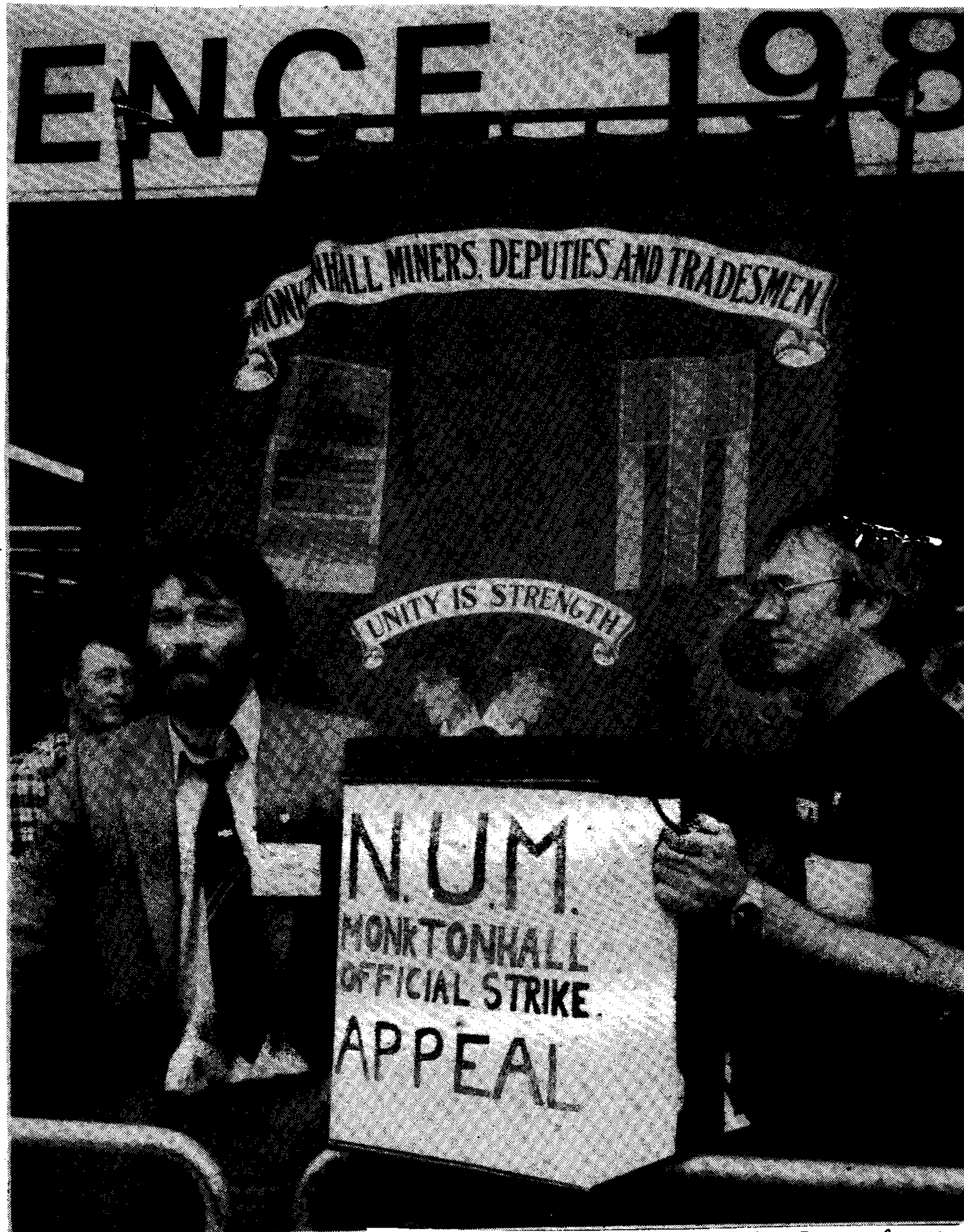
However the pickets expressed extreme disappointment at the level of support from local Labour activists and trade unionists. Few Labour Party members, no Labour councillors and no local MPs have been down to support them.

So far the main presence on the picket line have been NGA members from Leeds, Manchester and elsewhere.

The escalation of the dispute makes it essential to organise the local labour movement behind the strikers who are crying out for help.

NGA members nationwide can also help to mobilise support for the Stockport dispute. NGA and NUJ members have no illusions about the task facing them and the strength of the management but they may lose confidence in the power of the movement.

Please send donations and messages of support c/o Arthur Scott, Stockport Graphical Society, 27a Greek Street, Stockport SK3 8AX.



Monktonhall miners lobby Labour Party conference

# NUM: from back page

Scottish miners would be lobbying the national conference.

Yorkshire has an area conference on Monday, and under the influence of the Scottish one-day strike may well also reject the

pay offer.

But Monktonhall is still on its own as far as action is concerned. Although their strike has been made official, the Monktonhall miners are even having problems with strike pay.

The Scottish area conference decided to ask for a £2 a week levy for the dispute from all miners in Scotland, and Kent and Yorkshire areas have also promised money. Monktonhall delegate Davie Hamilton nonetheless told the Morning Star, "We are pleased with the support we got today, but we need more. We need £12,000 a week to give our members and their families £10 a week, and most of them are getting nothing else."

And according to the Morning Star - which is likely to reflect the views of the Scottish area NUM leadership well - "the centre piece" of the campaign against pit closures is to be "the Scottish TUC's special conference... next month, which will draw round the miners, local authorities, churches, political parties, business and trading interests, in a broad alliance to defend the industry."

## No substitute

Such hankering after a Popular Front spanning unions and employers is no substitute for developing and extending industrial action.

The Monktonhall strikers must not be left to fight alone: this was what broke the back of resistance at Cardowan and in South Wales. The NUM leadership must focus its every energy on spreading the fight across Scotland and onto a national level.

destroy the health service.

The occupation HQ can be contacted at the Thornton View Hospital, Bradford. Telephone: 0274 817574. Messages of support and donations to Betty Elie, c/o Resource Centre, 93 Little Horton Lane, Bradford 5.

\*As the number of health authorities resisting a fresh round of cuts and redundancies imposed by Health Minister Norman Fowler rose to six this week, over 1,500 health service workers in North West London, including doctors and nurses, stopped work for an hour on Tuesday, 11th, in support of the Brent Health Authority, the first of the six to say no to Fowler.

## Halewood deal

THE six week strike by 200 car delivery drivers at the Silcock and Colling delivery plant, which brought the lay-off of 4,000 production workers at Fords Halewood, ended in a short term victory this week.

A mass meeting accepted a 15-point peace formula, arranged in talks at the weekend between union officials and management,

who had breached negotiating procedures by refusing to take complaints through agreed channels.

This was seen by the union as a preliminary move in the company's plan to make redundant one third of the 200 workforce - a move which is now to be discussed with TGWU officials.

# Bradford NHS unions call for support action

THE occupation at Bradford's Thornton View Hospital continues despite renewed attempts by management to undermine the struggle and police intimidation of pickets.

Since the beginning of August nurses and auxiliary staff at this 82 bed hospital which cares mainly for geriatric patients have been staging a work-in, and an around-the-clock picket (with support now from the local labour movement and community) in defiance of the Yorkshire Regional Health Authority attempt at closure.

Under the present Tory attacks on the NHS, the Department of Health has stated that the Bradford District Health Authority has "overspent" by £1 million.

The response of the DHA to this statement was to announce plans to close two of its hospitals, Thornton View (the first to come under direct threat) and Shipley Hospital, a special unit with 23 pre-convalescence beds, X-ray and physiotherapy units.

Since then an occupation headquarters has been established inside the hospital for workers to co-ordinate the continuous and special care many of the elderly patients require, and to organise the essential picketing needed to

By Bryan Edmands

keep watch on the entrance in case any attempts are made by management to move out the patients.

According to a spokesperson at the occupation a van load of police turned up one evening two weeks ago and tried to get through the picket line on the pretence of an alarm bell ringing inside. And last week management made a public announcement that due to their concern for the deterioration of nursing care, especially at night, they would be bringing in agency senior nursing staff to take charge of night-time patient care.

This renewed pressure by management to weaken the confidence and solidarity of the occupation was foiled when pickets remained firm and refused the two attempts by agency scab workers to get in.

Local doctors are opposing the closure, and the hospital workers' action is being supported by the consultant geriatrician, with medical attention continuing to be provided by the hospital GP.

This week (Monday, October

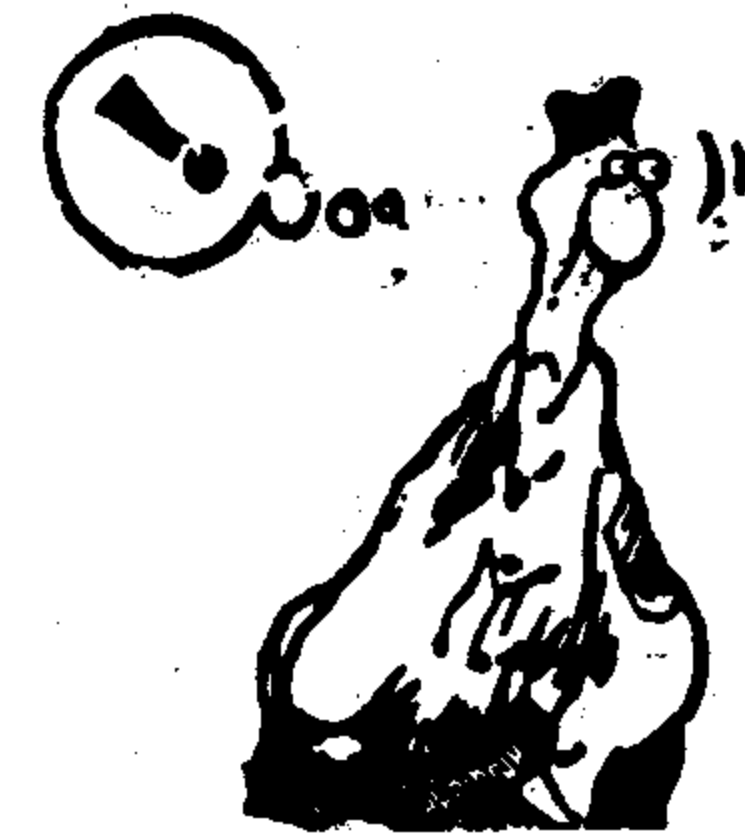
10), health service unions NUPE and COHSE in Bradford gave notice of widespread union action in support of the occupation and called upon the DHA to withdraw dismissal notices and drop its threat of legal action against the hospital workers.

Last month (September 10), despite pouring rain, there was a successful demonstration in support of the Thornton View occupation, with the aim of gaining widespread labour movement and community support for their action.

Now, with the Shipley Hospital coming under attack the need to broaden the struggle is essential. So another demonstration has been called, this time at Shipley Hospital, on Saturday 15 October at 1.00 p.m., to make links between the two threatened hospitals.

It is vital that the occupation at the Thornton View Hospital, and the forthcoming fight at Shipley Hospital, receives the total support of the labour movement. This is just one of the attempts being made by the Tories to dismantle the NHS. We should make sure that we put all our efforts into making sure that they do not succeed in their bid to privatise health care and

# Facts &



# Figures

Over the last two weeks we have looked at figures indicating that on average white collar workers strike much less often than manual workers - but there is a big overlap, some groups of white collar workers striking much more of ten than some manual groups.

The figures - a Department of Employment analysis of strikes between 1966 and 1973 - also show that white-collar workers' strikes are much more likely to be made official than manual workers' strikes. 16% of white-collar workers' strikes were official, but only 4% of manual workers' strikes.

.....

A NEW study of 'Workplace Industrial Relations in Great Britain' published recently, pinpoints a fact missed by the 1966-73 study.

White collar workers do strike less than manual workers, it confirms; but they also "practise greater use of non-strike industrial action, particularly work-to-rules and blacking of work."

.....

TO TRY to get some rough picture of whether overall patterns have changed since 1966-73, I went through the lists of major stoppages which the Department of Employment publishes each year.

Between 1978 and 1982, inclusive, there were 773 such stoppages. For each one, the Department of Employment gives brief details. By my reckoning, 612 of those disputes were manual workers only, 74 white-collar workers only, and 87 mixed.

That makes 79% of the disputes manual workers only. In 1966-73, according to the Department of Employment, "some 85% of stoppages concerned manual workers alone".

Major stoppages are only a small percentage of all strikes. But the indications are that manual workers' strikes continue to be by far more numerous: and this, despite the fact that in 1981 and 1982, the share of manufacturing in the total striker-days was way down on what it had been in previous years.

BRADFORD

March  
Oct 15

Save  
Shipley  
Hospital!

Assemble Shipley  
Hospital, 1.00 p.m.

# Socialist ORGANISER

## Tories' stiff upper lip

From front page

ular cutbacks in the NHS. Election pledges to scrap metropolitan councils which the Tories cannot control and cap rates have brought divisions and arguments among Tory councillors.

And perhaps at the forefront of the thinking of many conference delegates - there have been the recent scandals: the revelation of the extent of fascist infiltration of the Tories already heavily racist ranks, and the public flaunting of the Mary Whitehouse "morality" espoused by so many Tory landlords and landladies by none other than boy-wonder Cecil Parkinson.

What else was there to do, therefore, other than resort to the old stiff upper lip, and come out with a grim mixture of paper-thin good humour and traditional Tory red-baiting, bloodthirsty tub-thumping from the Blackpool rostrum?

Home Secretary Leon Brittan, wiping the egg from his face after the fiasco of the hanging debate, came through with some of the goods: a pledge of heavier-handed prison sentences - but the conference was disappointed not to get more promises of violent reprisals.

Environment Secretary Patrick Jenkin hit more of the right note when he bemoaned the fact that in Thatcher's wasteland Britain, so many voters are low paid or on social security that they receive rate rebates: yet their views still influence decisions.

### Reactionaries

"In some areas it is only a small minority of the voters who pay full rates - too few to influence elections.

"Conversely many households have votes, but pay no rates because they are on rebates or get social security."

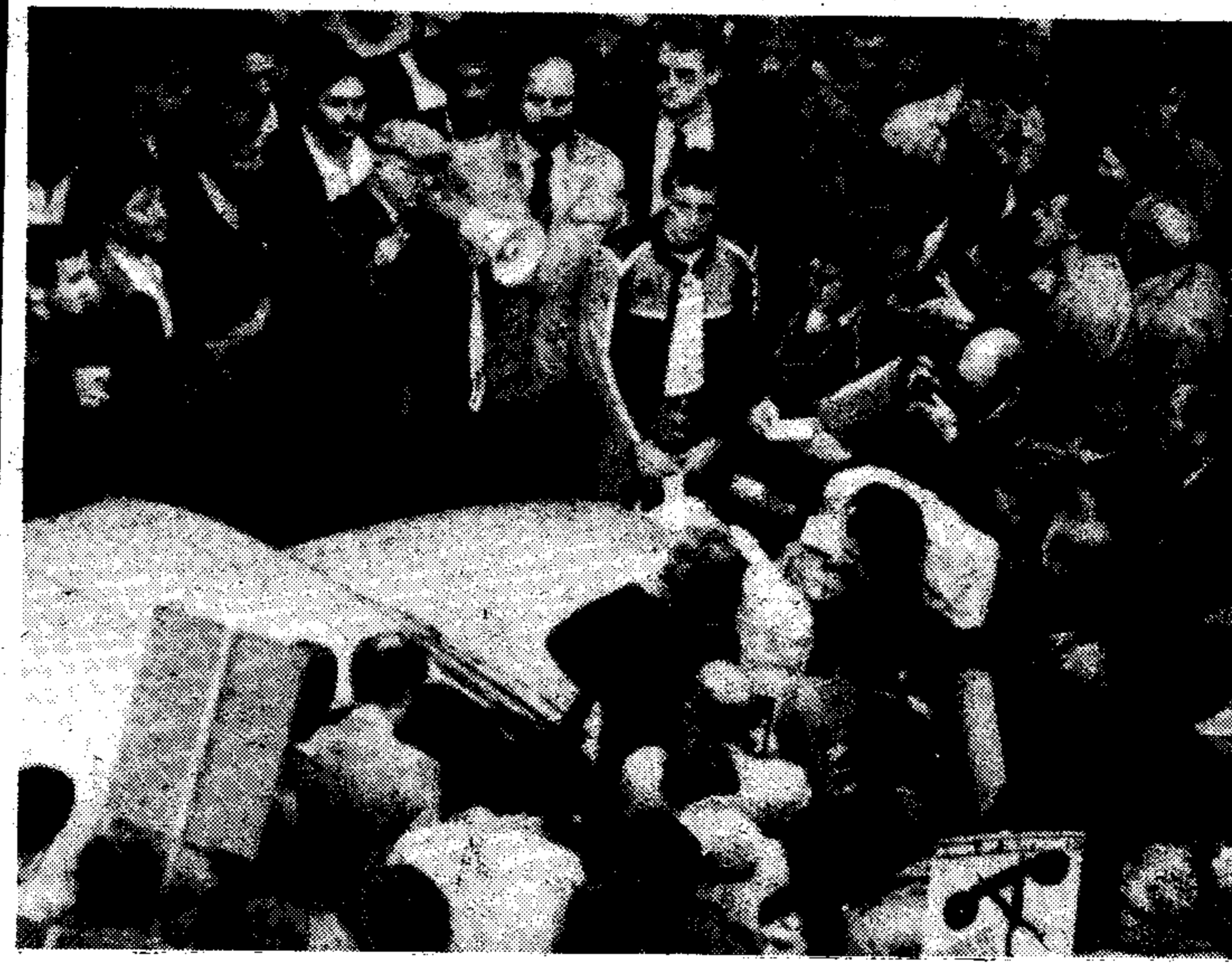
And, to the usual audience of well-heeled and assorted reaction-

aries, Jenkin waxed eloquent about "councils hi-jacked by Marxists", who can be defeated not through the ballot box but only by centralised government decrees.

There is little doubt that the conference can only be retrieved from the brink of disaster by a consistent resort to such rabble-rousing by the Tory leadership.

An indication of the mood of delegates is that the topic of immigration controls has been forced onto the agenda against the wishes of Central Office - and is likely to provide a prominent platform for the National Front-style policies of Billericay's ultra-right MP Harvey Proctor.

Though Thatcher is likely to escape any serious disturbance in the conference itself, the lengthy standing ovation she can look forward to on Friday will do nothing to resolve the external problems which have helped push the Tory leadership into its present disarray.



## POEU: from front page

The solid rank and file response which there has been to the clear calls to action from the new leadership is an indication of what can be achieved. Yet the special conference censure of

the new executive for its refusal to renominate Golding to Labour's NEC is a stark warning of the need to continually inform and educate the rank and file right across the union if the right wing are not to chop away at the control of the Broad Left.

The left must continue to turn outwards to the rank and file at every engineering centre and exchange, and build active links with militants in other trade unions and the labour movement as a whole, to prepare a base of support for the sharper struggles to come when the law is invoked, and the struggle spreads beyond London.

And the executive must take the initiative in spreading the struggle. The hard fact is that Project Mercury and privatisation will not be defeated without national all-out strike action.

It may be difficult to build up to that national action: the level of militancy in the union is uneven. But that must be the perspective.

### Boldness

British Telecom and the Mercury bosses have taken the initiative to escalate the dispute. The POEU leadership must match that boldness - calling out big city areas on a large scale.

And if the executive falters, the Broad Left - meeting for its AGM this Saturday - must not go the same way. It must map out a militant course, organise the rank and file, and keep up the pressure on the executive from the left.

The POEU must defy the injunction - with or without official support for this from the TUC (some of whose member unions actually support the privatisation of BT!) Dependence upon pledges of support before taking action have proved fatal to other public sector struggles.

Instead the POEU, by stepping up the fight, can give a lead to the forthcoming miners' union conference discussing action against pit closures.

With that conference in the offing, it seems unlikely that the Tory courts will jail leaders of the POEU - though moves may be made to sue the union for damages or freeze POEU funds.

In any event the only way forward is to fight. Privatisation means the splitting and destruction of union strength and a full scale war on jobs and hard-won conditions.

Keith Hardacre, a delegate to the Special Conference on Privatisation in September said: "We must fight or lay down and die." He was greeted with tumultuous applause. That applause must now be turned into strike action.

Fuller analysis next week



O.K., Norman, but if you stitch us up like this, how can we get our hands on our members to control them?

## Miners step up fight

A SCOTTISH miners' area conference this Tuesday, 11th, voted to call for a Scotland-wide one-day strike next Monday, 17th.

The strike will be in solidarity with the miners at Monktonhall colliery, who are in their fourth week on strike against the rundown of their pit and who lobbied the area conference, 300-

strong.

The area conference also rejected the Coal Board's pay offer, and decided to press at the National Union of Mineworkers' special national conference on Friday 21st for an overtime ban on the issue. Scottish area president Mick McGahey said that

Continued on page 15



## INSIDE

Stockport dispute, p.15

Editorial - page 2

## Chile: new round of struggle

THREE days of protest, the sixth in a series of mass actions against Chile's military regime of General Pinochet began quietly on Thursday 11th. Nearly 50 people have died in the previous marches or demonstrations. This time the military authorities banned a 'march for democracy' planned by the semi-licensed 'Democratic Alliance', who then called the march off and show signs of withdrawing from the movement.

The Democratic Alliance is a block of five opposition parties including the Socialist Party but excluding the Communist Party.

The three days of protest has been organised by the CP-led Popular Democratic Movement (PDM). The



Workers National Council, made up of labour organisations led by the copper miners, who started the monthly protests last May, is backing the October protest. The anti-Pinochet movement is increasingly a movement of the Chilean working class.

## Monthly Fund Get cracking!

£66 by October 12 won't get us very far! Donations this month have come from Cardiff, Glasgow and Manchester supporters' groups; which leaves all the rest yet to make a donation for October.

The coming week must see every group sending in donations in the run-up to the Socialist Organiser AGM at the end of the month.

Remember, groups' fund-raising totals will be published there, for August, September and October. So now's your last chance!

And don't forget to plan now for November and December. Cardiff supporters are planning a barbecue for November 5; Islington supporters are holding a November 5 jumble sale, followed by a party. Southwark supporters are planning a social in November.

With the run-up to Xmas, it's one of the best times for fund-raising. It's a good excuse for holding a social; and Xmas jumble sales or bazaars go down well. Each group can at least manage an Xmas raffle. Stockport's Xmas raffle raised £10 last year; if every group in the fund-target did that we'd have £320 towards our Xmas target at least.

Let us know your plans, and rush October donations to: 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

Group	August, Sept and October
Glasgow	20.50
Edinburgh	26.00
Liverpool	40.00
Manchester	141.00
Rochdale	33.00
Stockport	15.00
Wirral	20.75
Durham	11.85
Halifax	13.20
Harrogate	14.50
Huddersfield	
Hull	38.00
Leeds	32.50
Leicester	15.75
Sheffield	45.70
York	10.00
Birmingham	65.00
Coventry	166.10
Northampton	10.00
Nottingham	53.90
Stoke	23.40
Basingstoke	1.50
Oxford	108.24
Cardiff	205.47
NW London	53.30
Hackney	
Haringey	58.00
Hounslow	28.25
Islington	88.50
SE London	48.60
E London	44.50
Southwark	79.50
Others	390.94

THANKS this week to: a Cardiff reader £40; Glasgow supporters, £10; Alan Johnson, Manchester, £5; Steve Hall, £5.