

Break
links
with
Tories

Socialist ORGANISER

Join the
Labour
Party

Paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance No. 155 November 17 1983 25p

Brutality against Grenada captives

By Harry Sloan

AS Grenada begins to slip from the world headlines, Reagan's marines are making it quite clear that the brand of 'democracy' they have brought to the island is the same as that of El Salvador, South Korea and countless other US-sponsored dictatorships.

After the slaughter of as many as 1500 — one per cent of the population — during their brutal invasion last month, the occupation forces have followed up with the repression of all potential opponents of US domination, including former members of the New Jewel regime whose overthrow Reagan pretended to deplore.

News emerged this week of the torture of detainees, who have been incarcerated in wooden crates exposed to the open sun and to the rain. Among those imprisoned under such conditions was Kendrick Radix, the closest supporter of deposed Prime Minister Maurice Bishop.

It is no secret that the US forces exercise complete control over the island, and are treating their political opponents with the same respect for 'human rights' as they showed their Asian captives during the Vietnam war.

Yet the stooge 'interim council' appointed by Governor-General Sir Paul Scoon insists on the absurd notion that it is actually in charge of events.

One at least, Anthony Rushford is plainly also suffering from delusions of grandeur. He told a press conference: "The very presence of American troops depends entirely on our authority. They could not be here without us".

CRUISE: the fight goes on!

By Sue Arnall

FAR FROM giving up in despair, anti-nuclear campaigners are gaining in strength and determination with the arrival of the first Cruise missiles in Britain.

Tory leaders who thought they could brush aside and ignore the majority of people opposed to the new weapons have found themselves under attack on all sides, with even the arch-Tory Daily Mail highlighting the mass hostility to Cruise in the aftermath of Reagan's Grenada invasion.

Thousands have shown themselves prepared to risk police harassment and arrest in protests across the country as the US Galaxy aircraft have flown in the lethal components to assemble the missiles.

And in the forefront once again are the women peace campaigners whose two-year camp at Greenham Common has become a focus of the nuclear disarmament struggle.

The National Greenham Conference held last Saturday, 12th, in Manchester, was attended by women from all parts of the UK who have been active in the mass actions, the blockades and the peace camps.

The December 11 action is being planned as another mass women's action to sing down the walls of Jericho, and it is planned that thousands should be at Greenham to show our anger and determination.

There were few illusions expressed last weekend about the seriousness of the State in its intention to protect the Cruise missiles, as spelled out by Heseltine and Thatcher.

Practical training and direct action is increasingly needed if we are to confront the army as well as the police.

Local actions to coincide with December 11 by mixed groups picketing Regimental HQs were suggested as a way to draw more forces in to demonstrate the continued mass opposition to the missiles.

The peace camps set up on November 9 at 102 US bases are another graphic way of drawing attention to the military machine hidden amongst us.

At Burtonwood, 300 of us picketed the gates and some cut the wire in protest at the biggest arms store in Europe.

It was all very low key, with a policeman wishing us to have a nice protest. But nice is not how we feel, and protest is going to have to take place in the labour movement, in the fight for trade union action to cut supplies to the missile bases, as well as outside the bases, to demand that the government abandon Cruise.



POEU sell-out on Tebbit - see back page

EDITORIAL

Enemy at home

OPPOSITION to Cruise is now the focus of the nuclear disarmament movement, and rightly so.

The invasion of Grenada, and the US flotilla now cruising menacingly around the Middle East, have made 'whose finger is on the trigger?' the question of the day.

Quite properly, millions of people are concerned that the power to draw Britain into nuclear war, even against the will of its elected government, lies in the hands of Washington.

But opposition to Cruise and opposition to imperialism are one thing. Anti-Americanism is another.

The US government is a brutal oppressor in Central America, the Caribbean, and the Middle East. But there is another America. The US government is not the same as the US people.

Our opposition is to US imperialism. Chants like that outside the US Embassy after the invasion of Grenada, when the crowd shouted 'Yankee scum' and 'Kill the Yankees' at everyone going in or out, have no place in a healthy anti-imperialist movement.

In opposition to the Indochina war, the people of the US did during the '60s and '70s what few peoples in history have ever done — they revolted against their own government's unjust war so powerfully that it became a major factor in making it impossible for the US ruling class to continue that war. The American people, and in the first place the American working class, are our allies — immediate or potential, but in any case irreplaceable in the work of stopping the warmongers and disarming them.

There is another and equally basic reason to oppose the confusion of anti-Americanism with anti-imperialism. It lets our own government off the hook.

It panders to moods which imagine that there is a broad British national anti-war interest. It obscures the fact that the only basic answer to the war threat is an international working class answer. And it covers over the fact that Cruise missiles are here because the British ruling class and its Thatcherite government want them. Cruise is not here against their will, but according to their express desire. And they have nuclear arms and imperialist exploits of their own, too.

The main enemy is at home — governing from Westminster, Whitehall, Downing Street, and the City.

How to do it

IN THE YS? Bored with hearing about the need to nationalise the top 200 monopolies and never told how its going to be done? Then come to Class Fighter conference on November 26 and 27 in Camden Tenants Hall, Camden Estate, just off Peckham High Street, London SE15.

We'll be deciding on the priorities and policies for Class Fighter in the next year as well as holding workshops on Ireland, women, lesbian and gay YS, YTS and more.

IN YCND? Fed up with all this talk about a nuclear freeze and Bruce Kent's witch-hunt against the left? Then make sure you

are at Class Fighter conference where members of the disbanded national committee will lead the YCND workshop and discuss how to rebuild the national campaign and win back our autonomy from CND.

There will be videos on most of the weekend — the TV Eye expose on YOPs, The Red and the Blue, Carry Greenham Home, plus a few commercial films. Groovalux and the Bronsky Beat will be playing Saturday night.

Make sure you are there. It costs £1 to get in and the social costs 50p (P.S. Bring a sleeping bag).

Residential social workers Ranks organise

By Anne Crowder

NOTTINGHAM provided the venue on Friday, November 11, for a highly successful conference of residential workers from ten of the twelve districts throughout the country.

With the action into its ninth week, and no movement by the employers to meet our claim for premium payments at weekends and Bank Holidays, and a shorter working week, we organised the conference with the aim of developing a more cohesive rank and file approach of the action nationwide.

Reports from around the country clearly show that in every district represented, action over and above the basic action of a ban on admissions and a ban on overtime is taking place.

There are now over 1,000 residential workers on indefinite strike, many of them from rural areas, but the majority in city areas.

Many others have escalated their action by introducing a

ban on working unsocial hours, which effectively means that there are no sleeping-in duties or weekend working in these areas.

Others are banning administration work.

The action is building up as more and more residential workers are infuriated by the actions of some authorities in the handling of the dispute.

There were strong feelings among the delegates that action must now spread to other areas and include other local government workers.

A number of the motions passed at the conference will be taken to the national delegate meeting this Thursday, including a more unified approach to the action not only from NALGO but also NUPE members with a call for parity in strike pay.

One motion seeks to safeguard residential workers from

any settlement which is unacceptable by taking the decision for settlement to a national delegate conference; another calling for a one-day strike of residential workers and other local government staff on December 7 (the date of the next executive meeting of the NJC) to enable a further massive lobby of this meeting was unanimously passed.

The unity shown at this conference is a further measure of the determination of residential social workers to reach an early settlement to our just claim.

A further conference will be convened in Essex on December 6 for residential worker shop stewards to discuss where we see the action going.

The conference in Nottingham was a major step forward in ensuring that we will win this claim and that the rank and file make the demands on the NECs of NALGO and NUPE and they are organised as a rank and file.

Students fight back

THURSDAY'S day of action by the National Union of Students against the National Advisory Board's 'rationalisation' of public sector higher education involved over 100 colleges.

Some colleges, including the Polytechnic of Central London, North London Poly, Manchester Poly and Ravensbourne College of Art went into occupation. Ravensbourne are still in occupation, demanding that their college is kept open.

NUS left it to colleges and areas to decide what action to take and what precise demands to raise.

At the Polytechnic of Central London the occupation demanded amongst other things, that ILEA pulls out of the NAB.

The NAB is a quango which is directing and supervising the government attacks on the polys and colleges.

NAB is demanding cuts and a shift away from arts and social science teaching towards courses which suit the needs of industry.

But NAB also wants an increase in student numbers, and therefore a reduction in standards and resources available per student.

There is a long-running argument in NUS about NAB — whether to urge LEAs to pull out or 'stay in and fight'.

NAB is a tool of the Tories which has shown minimal — if any — independence. Under this government any central body which organises public sector higher education is bound to be geared up to making cuts.

It cannot be reformed or its members convinced to change their minds.

Pulling LEAs out of NAB won't be achieved by student pressure: not even by a centrally organised student campaign.

It demands a campaign inside trade unions and Labour Parties and winning the argument against talking to the Tories.

Unfortunately, pulling out of NAB won't stop either the central cuts or the reduction in 'top-up' money from councils. But it will certainly be a step on the way to organising a united student and trade union fight-back.

Tarzan heckled

STORMY scenes greeted Defence Minister Michael Heseltine when he visited Manchester University to make his first public speech after the arrival of the Cruise missiles.

Immediately before his arrival protesters staged a die-in and blocked the main road. As Heseltine tried to get into the building, he was met with heckling, chanting, and red paint from the angry crowd.

He could only get in with the aid of a heavy police escort. Once inside, he could not get into the meeting, as both doors were blocked by the protesters.

Only after reinforcements were brought in could the police break a way through to the hall. One hour late and visibly shaken, Heseltine attempted to speak.

His shortened speech was continually interrupted by heckling. Eventually he was bundled out of the building by police and driven off at high speed.

MPs slam IBA gag on Loach

WE WISH to express our grave concern at the continuing refusal of the Independent Broadcasting Authority to permit the showing of Ken Loach's films, Questions of Leadership. We believe the demands for cuts, insertions, and revised formats are an insidious and highly dangerous form of censorship.

Ken Loach is a distinguished British film-maker with a long record of fine productions: Cathy Come Home, The Big Flame, Days of Hope, Kes, The Price of Coal, Looks and Smiles, and The Red and the Blue among others.

Interference of the kind to which he is being subjected is

always intolerable, but it is doubly so in this case because in Questions of Leadership Ken Loach's rare talents enable ordinary rank-and-file trade unionists to speak for themselves about the real questions of democracy, accountability, and power in our society.

We fear that it is precisely because the films do this with great success that such strenuous efforts are being made to prevent them from being broadcast.

Bob Clay MP, Margaret Beckett MP, Max Madden MP Ernie Roberts MP, Joan Maynard MP, Jeremy Corbyn MP, Mark Fisher MP

Handing over to Kinnock?

LEFT ★ PRESS

THE Kinnock bandwagon has gained some unexpected new recruits — Socialist Action.

In the November 11 issue John Ross replies on behalf of the editorial board to the Labour Coordinating Committee, and puts forward Socialist Action's own proposed basis for left unity. It includes:

"Right now no-one running against the leadership provided no qualitative steps are taken such as turning Labour to a coalition with the alliance, dumping unilateralism, or starting a witch hunt."

This is difficult to distinguish from the LCC's own formula:

"Unless circumstances alter in a dramatic and unexpected way, no challenges to the new Leader and Deputy Leader..."

Flank

And, remember, the LCC is now the organised left flank of the Kinnock camp, with LCC leaders like Peter Hain and Nigel Stanley in Kinnock's inner circle.

Ross does try to differentiate from the LCC. "Significant

aspects of the witch-hunt are still going on and have not been stopped", he notes. Neil Kinnock has praised Eric Hobsbawm, the allegedly-Marxist theorist of a Labour/Alliance pact.

But this makes Ross's formula about 'no contest' even more alarming.

Neil Kinnock fought (unsuccessfully) to get the clear unilateralist resolution taken off the agenda at the Brighton Labour Party conference, in favour of evasive formulas. He has firmly supported the continuing witch-hunt.

He has also successfully dumped Labour's policy of British withdrawal from the EEC.

Socialist Organiser does not shed tears over the demise of this backward-looking, nationalist policy. But John Ross does.

He has recently been explaining, at length and somewhat excitedly, that British withdrawal from the EEC should be a cardinal policy of the Left.

And certainly opportunism, not internationalism, was the reason for Kinnock dumping it.

All this... and Ross is still waiting for 'qualitative steps' in the future before any challenge to Kinnock (or even Hattersley) will be justified! Just what will count as a 'qualitative step'?

Presumably Socialist Action think they are carrying out a clever tactical move. Even if it is desirable, a left challenge to Kinnock is not immediately possible. So (they may reason) why not declare it undesirable?

You lose nothing in practice, and you gain in terms of Socialist Action's acceptability to the broadest left.

In the November 4 issue SA explained their difference from SO on this in terms of "the need of not isolating [the hard left] from those who voted for Kinnock..."

Playing down the ideological tasks of Marxists in favour of schemes about pushing forward 'processes', 'waves' and 'evolutions', has long been a characteristic trait of Socialist Action's.

And here their approach is opportunism in the classic sense: sacrificing long-term perspectives to (presumed) short-term gains.

Woeful

The present state of the Labour Party is woeful if measured against the needs of the working class. The task of Marxists is to change it for the better — and as a start to arm as many as we can of the Left with the urgent desire to change it.

It is not to go along with the view of the 'war-weary' Left that Labour will be all right if only we can prevent any big changes for the worse.

Scabs help axe Brent geriatric hospital

By Mick Woods

ON Saturday 12 November Brent District Health Authority used a private coach firm to clear up last year's cuts before this year's started.

Leamington Park Hospital was a 96-bed geriatric unit on the corner of Wales Farm Road and Western Avenue.

For eight years it had been under threat and for that period had been denied adequate maintenance.

The decision to close it last December in order to sell its quite spacious ground — a prime site worth well over a million pounds — was tied to the loss of acute beds at Wembley Hospital and the reopening of closed wards at Neasden.

The initial response of staff at LPH was to resist the closure, despite the fact that there were no compulsory redundancies involved. Over the months, however, individuals left or transferred to be replaced by agency staff or temporary staff and morale dropped.

The staff at LPH had not been involved in last year's pay dispute to any great extent and although the hospital was organised solidly in NUPE, shop steward structures were next to non-existent and there was a lot of work to be done to get a fight at the hospital.

During the spring, a relatives campaign was active but the DHA offered the relatives £6,000 for improved transport to the new hospitals. In the absence of an active campaign in the hospital this was accepted as the best deal available. Likewise early protest from medical staff fizzled out.

In fact LPH might have died without a whimper had not the DHA resisted cuts in September. Things started perking up, but it was too little and too late.

LPH was due to close on the 6th. A picket line organised by NUPE and sparsely manned by hospital workers and local trade unionists turned away LAS ambulances sent to empty the hospital.

The picket was always understaffed and despite rising confidence in the hospital, was only

a holding action and could not provide 24 hour cover.

It was decided towards the end of the week to hold a meeting on Monday 14th to push for an occupation — to put the hospital into the hands of the workers and replace the hospital gates — removed and chained to a tree by management.

On Friday a scab furniture van broke through the picket line and removed furniture. It was obvious that the confrontation was near.

At the short notice given and in the absence of a credible prior campaign, it was impossible to muster many pickets for the next day.

On the Saturday pickets arrived at 8 am to find two specially adapted coaches in the grounds.

The firm, Chalfont Line Holidays, have a regular contract with the DHA. We were treated to the sight of administrators, agency staff and a few bewildered hospital staff loading frail old people into coaches.

As at St Benedicts it is likely that their chances of surviving the winter have been seriously lessened by the move.

Although, as has been said earlier, too little was done too late, certain clear lessons come through:

- 1) Be on guard against the running down of conditions in the hospital — no matter how minor the faults may appear. The condition of parts of the LPH were cynically focused on and exaggerated by TV cameras in an attempt to show that pickets were keeping patients in an unfit hospital. This is reminiscent of the famous lift in the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital.

Don't give them the chance to run down and use it against the hospital staying open.

Constant monitoring of faults and fighting for repairs is the precondition of having a strong fight.

- 2) Keep out agency staff and under no circumstances allow management to introduce short term contracts.

- 3) Build and maintain strong shop stewards organisation at hospital, local, regional and national level. Every section should have stewards to form the basis of an occupation committee or the leadership of sympathetic strike action.

- 4) Occupy to stop closures — a picket line at the gate won't stop the cowboys. Only the workers controlling the hospital — controlling the administrators and physically controlling access can stop raids and snatches. An occupation provides a tangible focus for solidarity. Occupy in good time — not at the last moment.

- 5) Force the officials to fight: since workers pay large salaries to union officials, work them to death. Ensure that they come to the hospital, encourage and support the staff and deliver the goods.

- 6) Build links with the community, especially relatives and other work places. Raise collections and get physical support on the picket lines. Work towards sympathetic strike action inside and outside the health service.



Newham 8 trial charges switch

The trial has been delayed for a few days: but in the run up the police have dropped the conspiracy charge. Now the Newham 8 are to be charged with causing an affray — which can be just as serious. It carries the same maximum sentence as a conspiracy charge — life.

The Old Bailey is being picketed every morning from 9am - 10am. Days have been allocated to sections of the support campaign. November 22 is the day for socialist groups to staff the picket. Contact the Defence Campaign on 555 3331 for more details.

Lobby backs Thornton View

By Walter Leser and Keith Denny

A well-lobbied meeting of Bradford District Health Authority took place on Tuesday 8 November where a decision was expected on the fate of Thornton View hospital.

A NUPE branch secretary was at first banned from the meeting but due to the ensuing uproar the decision was rescinded.

When challenged, DHA Chair Royston Moore said he could

give no guarantee that health workers would not lose their jobs following closure — in fact he later specified that 546 jobs must go by March.

Responsibility for the closure has been transferred to the Minister of Health, Norman Fowler, and informed sources suggest a police raid is imminent in the next few weeks, once Fowler gives the go-ahead.

Whimpered Moore, "We need a decision fairly soon on Thornton View and Shipley for

us to make management decisions". Evidently, Thornton View workers have no time for this style of management decision.

Leading

The Thornton View occupation is leading the way forward for other hospitals facing closure — workers showing they will not accept Tory attempts to smash the NHS. However, they

require the support of all health workers and those in associated unions, with guarantees of strike action.

In Bradford, key sectors in the health service will come out following an eviction, but nationwide solidarity against the cuts must be developed. A national conference would provide a focus for health workers to draw the necessary lessons from these struggles and coordinate an effective plan of action against cuts in the NHS.

Brent DHA fight crumbles

By Mick Woods

IT APPEARS that the anti-cuts stand made by Brent District Health Authority is crumbling.

This is largely due to the approaches made by Mike Jackson, the full-time NUPE official, to the vice-chair, Reverend Haslam of the DHA, to find a mechanism not to have the 'generalist' members dismissed by the Regional Health Authority.

The likely compromise is to accept a budget cut of a quarter of a million pounds but hold firm against staffing cuts and privatisation. This represents a retreat from a position of total opposition to cuts taken at the September and October meetings.

The rebel generalist members who can be "hired and fired" at the whim of the DHSS via the RHA, were an odd assortment of SDP, Liberals, ex-Labour councillors, TUC appointees and a friend of Rhodes Boyson!

It was obviously only a matter of time until they copped out.

The likely cop-out will therefore only change the terrain of the struggle from the DHA "front line" to the unions.

Coming cuts (as opposed to last year's cuts) involve the threat to the casualty department at Wembley Hospital and cutbacks all around.

The District has absorbed the staff turnover with the use of short-term contracts and agency staff, and last year were found to be employing 216 below their maximum staff quota.

Nevertheless, 110 jobs — many in the nursing and medical sector — are under threat and if the DHA retreats on the budget question, jobs and more swingeing cuts next year will follow on.

The next DHA meeting will be on Monday 21st at 5.30 in Central Middlesex Hospital. It will be lobbied by those in the community and the unions who don't see gentlemanly agreements and dirty deals as a way to fight the cuts.

5,000 join in

By Judith Bonner

AN ESTIMATED 5,000 people took part in the action on November 8 and 9 last week organised by Greenham women against cruise. The 102 peace camp action was initiated to coincide with the court case being filed on November 9 in the Federal Court, New York, against President Reagan.

Greenham Women Against Cruise are attempting to take Reagan to court on the grounds that cruise violates international law and are hence illegal, in an attempt to stop them.

It is difficult to know what the campaign expects out of such a case. Apart from costing a lot of much-needed money, at least £20,000, it can do very little except give Greenham more international publicity.

As a focal point for action, the camps were successful and reflected popular support for Greenham. Most of the bases were in fact covered with CND groups, YCND groups, Labour Parties organising mixed action to coincide with the women's peace camps.

In the north of Ireland over 100 women made a protest out-

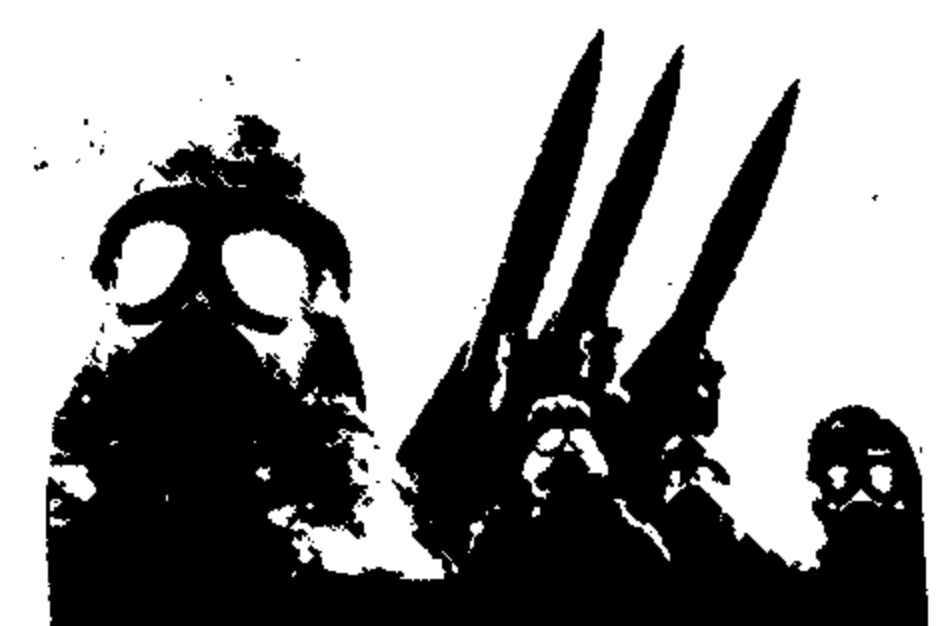
side the US consulate. Letters were then handed in to the Vice-Consulate, who later met with four women.

Action is being continued with a half-day blockade at RAF Bishopcroft, Co. Down.

In Wales, people turned out at Barry, Caewent and Brawdy.

In Cardiff on 22 November, to coincide with the next stage of the case in New York, a mock trial of Reagan will be held, along with further action.

All in all the events were a colourful success. Banners, bands and singing accompanied the many protests. The day of action shows that despite the government's attempts, people are willing to take action against cruise and in support of the women at Greenham.



Hands off BT!

'Stop Privatisation of
British Telecom'

Public meeting called by
the Islington Labour
Parties

Monday December 5, 7.30
at Central Library, Field-
way Crescent, N5.

Speakers include Jeremy
Corbyn MP, Jock Campbell,
and a member of
the POEU Executive.

'Star' editor out in CP purge

By Harry Sloan

HEADS have begun to roll as the chronic factional divisions within the Communist Party have begun to take tangible form with the ousting of hardline pro-Moscow Stalinists from the Executive Committee.

The purge of the Morning Star's editor Tony Chater, deputy editor David Whitfield and industrial correspondent Mick Costello is the most visible evidence of the determination of the Party's "Eurocommunist" majority to impose its authority.

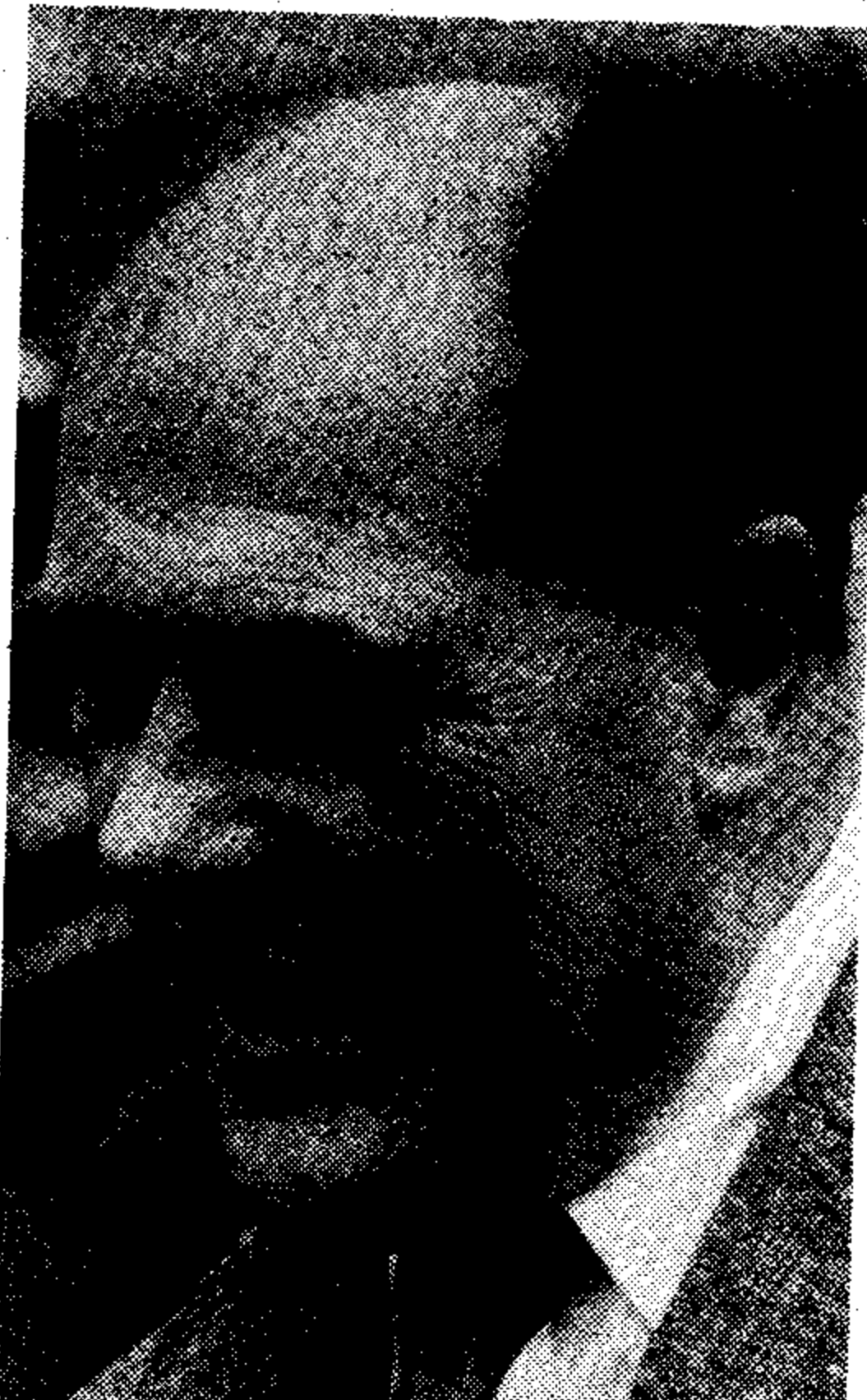
And General Secretary Gordon McLennan made a clear threat that his old-guard Stalinist opponents could face expulsion if they continue to defy the Party's line.

Despite the enormous heat generated within the CP over the factional divisions, there has been little political light. The conflicts between the "Eurocommunist" and the "Moscow liners" defy any attempt to brand either side as to the "left" of the other.

While the "Euros" speak openly about their hopes of a cross-class "anti-Thatcher alliance", and exercise themselves in thoughts of how to draw into such an alliance forces from the SDP, the churches, and "anti-Thatcher" Tories, the "hardliners", too, lent eager support to the vicious suppression of politics and the cross-class platforms which summed up this year's People's March.

Though the "hardliners" are described in the Tory press as "more revolutionary" or even "Marxist-Leninist", their orientation is just as counter-revolutionary and reformist as the "Eurocommunist". In each case the political orientation is derived from the reformist, parliamentary, "British Road to Socialism", which first received Stalin's seal of approval in 1952.

On international issues, too, the differences are not what they appear. The "revolutionary" hardliners give uncritical support to the Jaruzelski regime in its ruthless suppression of the mass struggles of the Polish working class and its ten million-strong union Solidarnosc: this view is linked to their eager political endorsement of the Kremlin bureaucracy, its junior partners in Eastern Europe, and its cynical, reac-



Out — Derek Robinson

tionary policies and choice of "friends" on a world scale.

The "Euros" on the other hand took a stand — albeit feeble — in support of Solidarnosc: but this distancing from the more embarrassing recent politics of the Kremlin is plainly related to placating middle class liberal supporters in Britain rather than any line of principle. This same petty bourgeois orientation is obvious in the trajectory followed by the Party's magazine, marxism Today under "Euro" editor Martin Jacques.

The differences also have a practical dimension. The hardliners have recognised the growing danger to the Party's dwindling base in the trade union bureaucracy and have vocally opposed any more critical

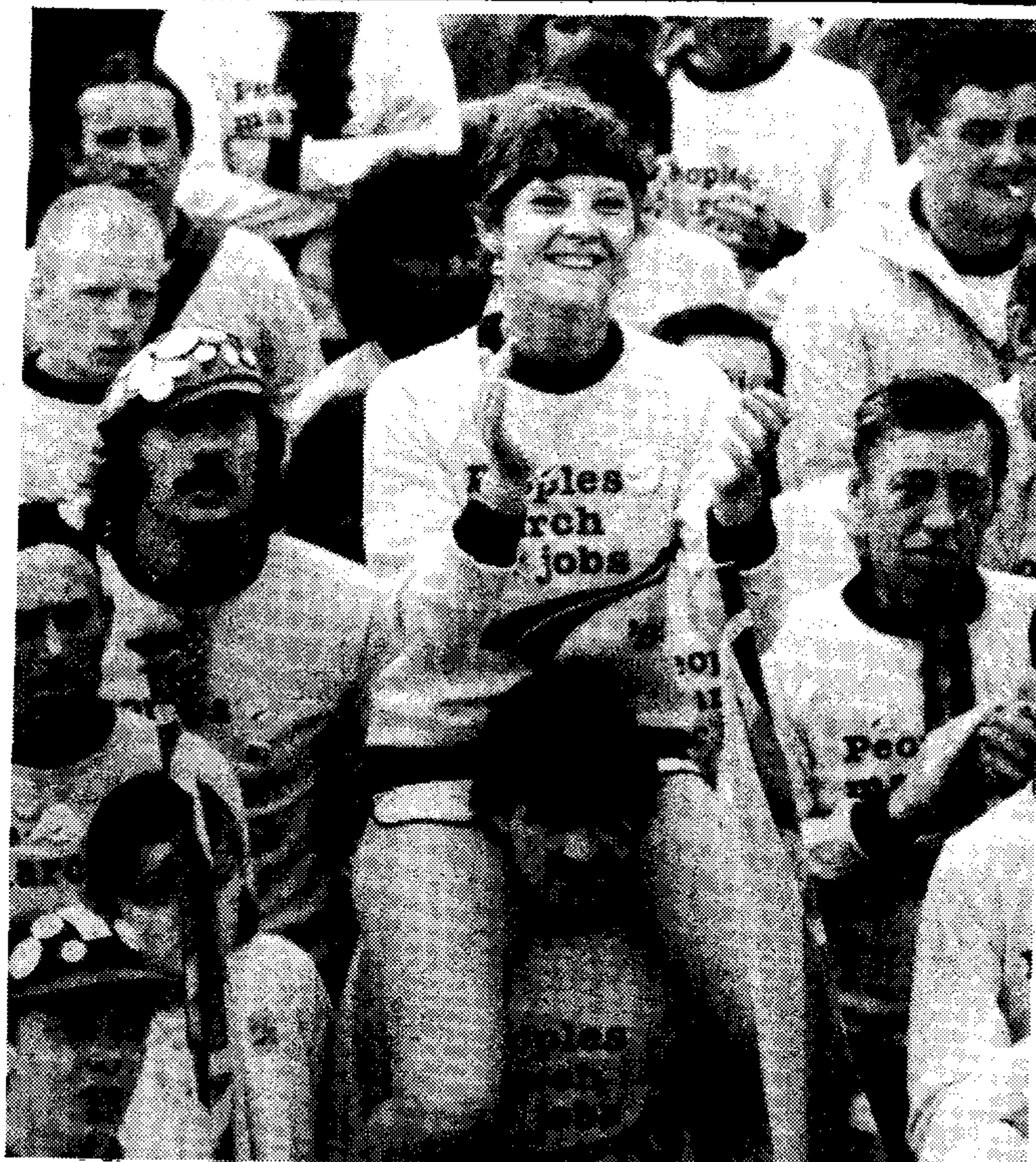
examination of the politics of the TUC 'left' or the shop stewards' movement.

The publication in Marxism Today of an article pointing to the (real) signs of bureaucratisation amongst top layers of the stewards' movement provoked a torrent of heated correspondence from leading Party trade unionists and fellow travellers defending the status quo in the unions.

The hardliners — though they have their own project to 'broaden' the base of the Star — also fear that the "Euros" increasingly close relationship with the Labour "soft left" could further erode the Party's dwindling membership base or even lead to its disappearance as an independent entity.

The differences reached a peak earlier this year with the attempt by the "hardliners" to consolidate their position in control of the Morning Star as a last bastion.

Mick Costello resigned from his Party-controlled post as Industrial Organiser and moved to the Star's industrial desk. A bitter and successful struggle was mounted by the "hard-



People's March: its opposition to politics united both factions of the CP

liners" to defeat a CP majority slate in elections for the body that controls the Star.

Now the 38th Congress has seen the tables decisively turned: for the first time since the paper was launched as a Stalinist daily in 1930 the editor will not be on the executive of the CP. Two of Chater's staff, however, were brought on to the new, Euro-controlled executive, in changes that also saw the ousting of victimised BL convenor Derek Robinson and GMWU bureaucrat Tess Gill.

The struggle for the Star could yet be one for the custody of a corpse: despite frenzied appeals to boost sales, circulation is 285 down on the January figure, and there is no sign that the latest purge will assist a revival.

It remains to be seen whether Yuri Andropov's vocal fan-club within the CP will accept their latest setbacks sitting down, or embark on a new round of struggle which could further weaken the CP as an obstacle to revolutionary politics in the British workers' movement.

Bruce Kent: stop the witch-hunts!

By Tom Rigby

WITH THE first cruise missiles arriving at Greenham the Tories have opted for a classic "reds under the beds" witch-hunt directed against Bruce Kent and the Communist Party, designed to defuse the massive opposition that exists to cruise deployment.

In a press statement, carefully prepared by Conservative Central Office, Tory Party chairman John Selwyn Gummer has called for the resignation of Bruce Kent from his position as General Secretary of CND.

"He's either congenitally confused or purposefully blind. Unilateralists and multilateralists can unite on one thing — Bruce Kent must go."

Bruce Kent's great sin is that he spoke to the Communist Party's Congress last weekend and "praised" them for their work in the disarmament movement.

Socialist Organiser has many disagreements with the "work" of the Communist Party and that of Bruce Kent in CND.

But we unconditionally defend their right to organise and argue for their politics within the disarmament movement.

The Tory Party have absolutely no right to advise CND on who can or cannot take part in its work.

As for their efforts to whip up a Catholic revolt against Kent, the hypocrisy of this stance is transparent enough.

There is a certain irony in what has happened to Kent and the CP. Both Bruce Kent and Ian Davidson, a leading member of the CP, have been very prominent in the organisational clampdown and anti-socialist witch-hunts at present going on in CND.

Davidson has gone as far as quoting "secret documents from the International Marxist Group" purporting to show "an organised intervention by the secretive, manipulative left".

Perhaps by now they have learned their lesson.

The CND Executive cannot afford to play with fire. It is not possible to engage in witch-hunts against activists within CND — helping to stoke-up a McCarthyite atmosphere in the campaign and within the labour movement — while still remaining immune from witch-hunting by the Tories and their press.

New threat of deportation

FOLLOWING the recent campaign around the threatened deportation of Muhammed Idrish, another black worker faces the racist and intimidatory policies of the Home Office.

Vinod Chauhan, an Indian man, who has been living in Ashton-under-Lyne (Lancashire) for five years, with a job, friends and some family there, is faced with deportation following the

breakdown of his marriage.

Despite an appeal where the Adjudicator cleared Vinod of any suggestion that his marriage was "a marriage of convenience" to provide a basis to come to Britain, he is still to be deported.

A recent letter from the Home Office Minister responsible, David Waddington MP, ended by saying "... the police will be asked to arrange for his removal to India as soon as possible."

The controlling group of the local Council in Tameside support Vinod's fight, together with local MP Robert Sheldon, Euro-MP, Barbara Castle, and local trade union branches and the community.

This is just another example of the present government's "firm" and "fair" immigration policies in the "interests of good community relations". Increasingly, individuals, mainly black, are selected, and face deportation from this country, often to repressive regimes, losing their jobs, friends and family, with an uncertain future ahead of them. It is our job to raise this issue throughout the labour movement, and to make sure that these individuals do not remain isolated and thus more vulnerable to the Tory attacks.

Vinod needs all the help he can get, and the Vinod Chauhan Defence Campaign can be contacted c/o 18 Firs Avenue, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancs. (Tel: 061-330-5784, 061-226-1751, 061-336-3359).

LABOUR PARTY AGAINST THE WITCH-HUNT!

NATIONAL COUNCIL AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

12.00 Saturday, November 26

at Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, London NW1

Deadline for resolutions and nominations for a new National Council: Friday, November 18

DEFEND THE WITCH-HUNT

LABOUR PARTY is the only campaign against the witch hunt that is based on and controlled by CLPs

Affiliation fees:

CLPs and trade union branches	£10
LP branches	£5
Other LP organisations and individuals	£3

Contact: The Secretary, 11 Wilderton Road, London N16

Facts & Figures



Figures

UNEMPLOYMENT in Britain has at last gone down — very slightly. Unfilled vacancies are rising fairly steadily.

This is part of a general trend in the advanced capitalist countries. There is an economic upturn — but it is very limited, and the prospects of it becoming less limited are dim.

Only in the US and Canada has unemployment been reduced more than very marginally. The US unemployment rate currently stands at 8.8%, as against 10.5% a year ago.

US industrial production, boosted by a whopping government budget deficit, has gone up 12% over the last 12 months. The UK increase is only 2.4%, and nowhere else in western Europe is doing particularly well.

An index of the shallowness of the recovery is that UK manufacturing investment was still falling in the first half of 1983. Production in the investment goods sector is stagnant.

Profits have gone up. Figures in the Financial Times and the Economist suggest that industrial profits this year are about 20 to 25% up on last year. Behind this is a growth in productivity in manufacturing industry of about 7.5% a year — in other words, an increase in the rate of exploitation.

Other advanced capitalist countries also show a rise in profits — the Economist suggests a 20% rise in the US between 1982 and 1983, 10% in West Germany, and 200% (starting from a very low level) in France.

But it is still not clear that capitalists can get a better return on their money from investment in UK production than from lending at interest. A real boom, centred round a rapid rise in investment, is still only a speculation for the future.

Gas prices will go up 5%, probably in January next year. Electricity prices will go up about 3% next year.

These price rises will cost consumers about £600 million. And they come on top of big previous increases.

Gas prices last went up by 10% in October 1982. Before that they had gone up 100% in three years. Electricity prices last went up 9% in April 1982.

Over the years 1973-82, energy costs to industry went up to 385% in real terms.

There is a bureaucratic logic to the latest rises: they will help the Treasury square its books. There is a political logic: they will boost the already fat profits of British Gas, and make it a better prospect for privatisation.

And there is an economic logic: high energy prices are good for the oil monopolies, and also good for the rich capitalist countries' continuing effort to cut down oil consumption, open new sources, and reduce their dependence on OPEC.

But if thousands more old people die of hypothermia this winter because they can't pay fuel bills...? That doesn't count in the Tory logic.

Fuel bills are a larger part of the budget of working class people, and especially pensioners, than for the better-off.

We need a working class cost-of-living index, calculated by the labour movement, and a fight to win clauses protecting wages, benefits and pensions against inflation as measured by this index.

After repeated Pill scares

The search for safe contraception

THE problem with discussing the ideal contraception is we all start from our own problems and understanding of our needs and bodies, so it is difficult to make overall recommendations.

For the 'middle class woman, aware of her body and capable of and willing to fight for back-up abortion facilities', most people advising on contraception (and I don't mean conventional medical advisors) would recommend the diaphragm plus spermicide.

But as the majority of unwanted pregnancies are due to ignorance rather than contraception failure, we have to look for easily available, easy to use, effective and safe contraception for those presently not using any.

In addition, we need something as simple as the pill without the horrendous side effects for those on the pill now.

Let's look at what we've got (the problems) and hopefully find some answers or suggestions.

The problems of the Pill are well known, now, but the seriousness of these problems is not widely believed.

The requests for aid/alternative contraception/or information from present Pill users following the latest disclosures has been underwhelming.

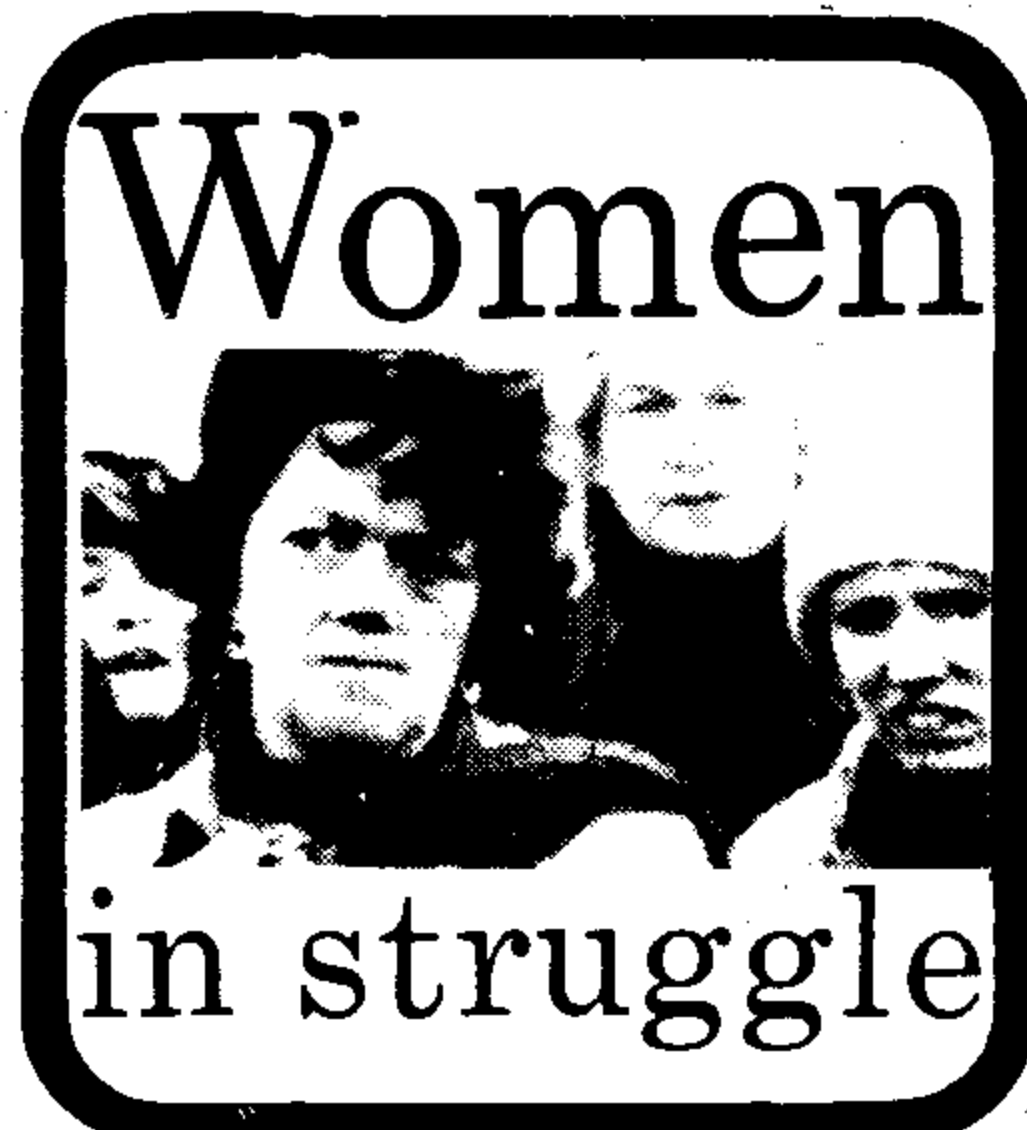
The latest 'scare' appears to have sorted out women willing to look for alternative contraception and not take the risks of the Pill: those now taking it either ignore, don't believe, or fully understand the risks. Or perhaps they can't face the alternatives.

It is obvious that what is needed is a barrier contraception (no chemical side effects) that can be left in place (no need to carry it around or put in place at the last minute).

The Intra Uterine Contraceptive Device (IUCD) commonly known as the 'coil' sounds ideal — no chemicals and permanently in place.

Unfortunately this method has a lot of unpleasant side effects — not chemical... but things like heavy periods and cramps at the minor end to penetration through the wall of the uterus (womb) amongst the worst.

I have already mentioned the diaphragm ('Dutch cap')



Even more hazards of the Pill have recently been revealed. Sue Lister looks at the alternatives available to women, and Les Hearn discusses male contraception.

as a possible hope.

But look realistically at this method... Some women find it easy to fit and have no hang-ups about rushing off and inserting it at a key moment in the proceedings; but you have to consider where these 'proceedings' are taking place.

It may be fine if you've a stable relationship, usually have sex in the same place — or have a convenient way of taking it everywhere you go — and have sex somewhere where it's convenient (e.g. enough room) to insert.

Young

But for a young woman just embarking on sexual rela-

tionships who is not very confident, sex is not always in comfortable surroundings — imagine putting a diaphragm in in the back of a car! Many wouldn't bother...

The question of why the diaphragm has to be inserted immediately before intercourse has to be looked at — the use of spermicide with a diaphragm is said to be essential and I am not going to disagree with this — I don't know.

Experiment

But research into use of barrier contraception without spermicide is very rare — because the only way firms can make a profit out of barrier contraception is with the spermicide.

There are small groups of women experimenting with diaphragms without spermicide but there is no conclusive evidence yet.

There is research into spermicide-impregnated sponges which can be left in the vagina and don't interfere with sex.

I do not know the failure rate of this method of contraception, but it is not as yet widely available.

Comeback

The Cervical Cap (a very small cap which fits over the cervix [neck of the womb]) was popular many years ago and appears to be making a comeback: again I don't know any figures but both this method and the sponge could hold some hope in terms of convenience,

Below: Depo-Provera — dangerous but often prescribed, especially to black women



with lack of side effects — let's hope they are effective.

There are no easy or simple answers.

It is worth noting that most

FAMILY PLANNING MATERNITY CARE and UNDER ATTACK



Above: While the drug companies still make fat profits, family planning advice is cut 'to save money'

stopped taking it. This shows that the most important point is that the full information should be given to women before any decisions are taken.

This does not mean handing out all the scientific research papers to every woman (though they should be available); but before any woman uses any form of contraception she should not only be told its effectiveness and how to use it but the risks too.

Control

That way she can make the decision facing her taking into account her life style and what risks she is willing to take — if any.

The Pill has made an amazing profit for drug companies — the nationalisation of these companies and their control by workers and users is not just a necessary step in a socialist economy — for some of us it is the necessary step to save our lives. They've made a killing in more ways than one.

Why leave it all to women?

SPERM production is ultimately controlled by the brain. At puberty, the hypothalamus send hormones to the pituitary gland, on the underside of the brain. This gland then sends its own hormones to the testes which have been dormant until now.

One hormone, FSH, stimulates the maturing of sperm, while the other, LH, instructs cells in the testes to make testosterone. This is another hormone which directs the development of male sex characteristics — enlargement of penis and scrotum, growth of pubic and facial hair, etc.

After puberty, testosterone has little role to play. Sexual activity is so much under psychological influence that it can continue even in the complete absence of testosterone.

FSH and LH at a constant rate, involving only the testes. Production of sperm is therefore a much simpler system than egg production in women which involves cyclical changes in ovaries, womb and breasts as the body prepares for pregnancy each month.

Chemical approaches to stopping the sperm can be aimed at various levels in the system, but all seem to have side-effects except for gossypol.

Gossypol was discovered in cotton-seed oil in China and seems to act directly on the sperm, stopping them from storing energy during the maturing process. In a vain attempt to store energy, they burn up lots of food, generating useless heat and dying of starvation.

Gossypol

It is possible for gossypol to affect only sperm because their source of energy is different from other body cells. This fact makes side-effects less likely. Since gossypol is cheaply available, side effects on drug companies might be more serious.

Three physical approaches to male contraception are possible: The lowly condom has the advantage of being obvious in use and effective, though possibly aesthetically displeasing.

Castration, or removal of testes, is too drastic to catch on, but contrary to popular belief, does not necessarily affect sexual activity or masculine appearance. It is also the only cure for baldness!

Vasectomy seems the best once-and-for-all method — one which I have adopted myself. It involved cutting the vas deferens, a long tube leading

from the testes to the seminal vesicles where sperm are stored before passing out of the penis during ejaculation.

Sperm are therefore trapped in the testes and build up in quantity for a while. This causes a certain soreness and swelling, but the sperm are soon reabsorbed and no more are made.

All hormonal secretions continue as before.

Vasectomy is a minor operation, involving a local anaesthetic, a tiny incision, cutting and tying a tube and a single stitch.

It is usually painless, though I experienced a feeling like a rather mild slow-motion knee in the nuts. Afterwards, I didn't feel like riding my bike for a week or so, but everything was soon back to normal with not even a scar. It was about as bad as having a tooth out.

Return

Sometimes vasectomies can be reversed but often the body starts producing antibodies to escaped sperm since it has not met them before. This will hamper the return of fertility.

Vasectomy is suitable for men who don't want kids or whose families are complete.

Changing one's mind after-

wards need not be a problem even if reversal fails. After all for men, the act that results in conception marks the total biological contribution to the new life. In practical terms, the social contribution of a man to child-rearing should far outweigh it.


Male contraception does have problems in that malicious men can cause women to run risks of unwanted pregnancy.


Chemical contraception would therefore need to be supervised, with regular checks

of fertility.

Vasectomies are not certified effective until two successive semen tests over three months have shown no sperm present. No man should be upset at having to show his letter confirming this fact.

In any case, male contraception should not be seen as a replacement for methods under women's control, though it may remove a great deal of the risk of some of these methods.

Scrap the bosses! 


Stop the Bomb! 

A Class Fighter pamphlet 10p

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

Diary of a People's Marcher 50p
and "How politics were kept out of the People's March"

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



by Satvinder Singh and Tony Purtil
Introduction by Jeremy Corbyn, MP

International news

Resistance on Israeli 'North Bank' General strike defies repression

From our correspondent in Haifa

WHILE the fighting continues in the Beirut area between the imperialist occupation forces and their Falangist puppets on one side, and the militias of the Lebanese masses on the other, Israel is doing its best to control the southern third of Lebanon.

It is meeting growing resistance from the 700,000 inhabitants of the area, which on Tuesday 25 October held a one-day general strike.

South Lebanon has long been out of the control of Beirut's bourgeois government.

Under the "democratic" system granted to Lebanon by retreating French imperialism, and now guarded at the expense of much blood, the voice of a citizen who happened to be of Shia-Moslem origin (most of the population of the South) counts less than a third of a vote of his countryman (or woman) of Maronite-Christian origin.

For the Beirut government the South carried little weight, and its villages received hardly any development programmes for roads, water, electricity, schools and hospitals.

For years before the civil war the area was under the influence of the Communist Party and the Organisation of Communist Action (more to the left than the CP).

The alliance between the poor villagers and the Palestinian refugees enabled the establishment of the foundations of the "PLO state" which the Israeli invasion set out to destroy.

A year and a half after the invasion, the Palestinians in the south still live in conditions of devastation.

Terror and killings by Israeli agents and Falangist gangs continue against the defenceless population gathered in the ruins of the camps.

Resistance

The poor Lebanese villagers of the South are now at the forefront of the resistance to the occupation. Many of them, who fled continuing Israeli bombardments over the past 15 years, now inhabit Beirut's southern slums, where they are under fire from the Falangists, the Falange's "official Lebanese" army and the US marines.

Those who stayed under the Israeli occupation now come to confront Israeli soldiers, with the masses throwing stones at the firing soldiers, and daily guerrilla activity.

In the South's main eastern township of Nabatiya, a Shi'ite religious gathering was attacked by an Israeli patrol. The army



The ruins of Tyre

said the soldiers were "shot at" from an "unknown source".

No soldier was hit, but one civilian was shot dead and dozens wounded. But the masses didn't retreat; they made some army vehicles flee and burned two that the soldiers deserted.

In the village of Sarafend on the Sidon-Tyre road the villagers came with stones and sticks to resist an army patrol arresting people.

Three were shot dead and 20 others wounded. That sparked the general strike of 25 October, which even the Israelis admitted was successful in mobilising the vast majority of the population.

In the south of South Lebanon there is the Galil mountain which — even after being occupied since 1948 and the expulsion of many villagers — has a majority Arab population.

The border was drawn after the First World War to separate British-occupied Palestine from French-occupied Lebanon. Some new links are now being

reestablished in the struggle against the common occupier.

On October 19, six men were brought before the Haifa regional court, accused by the police of membership of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (General Command).

One of them is a Lebanese from the Aley area, Farid Abdel-Khaleq, who was held in an Israeli prison near Haifa. The fact of his arrest was concealed from the Red Cross. The other five are Palestinians from the Galil: three Druzes and two Moslems.

Closed doors

Their trial, like others, is to be held behind closed doors. Even the lawyers of the accused are not allowed to enter the court!

Al-Ansar concentration camp near Nabatiya was built by the invading Israelis to hold all PLO men, including medical staff of the Red Crescent and teachers at UNRWA schools.

Polish hunger strike

FIVE leaders of Solidarity, sentenced to several years in prison for "creating clandestine committees," began a hunger strike on September 12 in the Barzew prison near the city of Olsztyn.

Who are they?

*Andrzej Slowik, a leader of Solidarity in the Lodz region, sentenced to six years in prison.

*Jerzy Kropielnicki, a leader of Solidarity in the Lodz region, sentenced to six years in prison and four years' deprivation of civil rights.

*Edmund Baluka, on his second hunger strike, a historical leader of the Baltic strikes in 1970-71, a Solidarity activist, sentenced to five years in prison in August 1983. His appeal was rejected by the authorities.

*Wacław Frasniuk, a Solidarity leader in the Wrocław region and a member of the Regional Strike Committee (RKS). He led the strikes after

the declaration of war against the Polish people on December 13, 1981. A member of the Provisional Coordinating Committee (TKK) of Solidarity, he was sentenced to six years in prison and four years' deprivation of his civil rights.

*Piotr Bedmarz, Solidarity activist in the Wrocław region.

In addition, trials of the leaders of KOR (Committee for Social Self-Defence) are proceeding. Some have already been sentenced to prison terms.

Now imprisoned are a number of Solidarity leaders, including Andrzej Gwiazda, Karol Modzelewski, Jan Rulewski, Seweryn Jawoiski, Grzegorz Palka, and Marian Jurczyk.

Considering the urgency of the situation, we ask you to immediately send letters or telegrams of protest demanding:

*Satisfaction of the demands of the five hunger strikers who are Solidarity leaders, and their

immediate release.

*An end to the trials of the KOR activists, and their release.

*Release of the Solidarity leaders and all those detained for union activities or political opinions.

This information comes from the Committee in Solidarity with the Polish Workers (Montreal) which has received information from the Committee to Support Solidarity in Lund, Sweden. This information was transmitted through Agence-France-Presse under date of September 26, 1983.

WHILE tens of thousands of Polish workers in Warsaw and other cities demonstrated their continued allegiance to Solidarnosc last week, it was announced that Reagan's administration — presumably satisfied that the repression of the union has now reverted to the more "normal" tactics of East European bureaucracies — has begun lifting economic sanctions.

Iran protesters face death sentences

ON MONDAY 7 November, ten supporters of the Organisation of Iranian Fedai Guerrillas (OIPFG) were arrested during a protest occupation of the Iran Airlines office in London. At the time of writing, the ten are still being held in custody, having been denied bail.

The London occupation was part of an international protest action staged by OIPFG supporters in order to draw attention to the level of repression in Iran and the failure of the media to cover this repression.

Apart from the London occupation, Iran Airline offices were occupied in Paris, Vienna, Frankfurt, and New Delhi, whilst in Brussels OIPFG supporters were able to occupy the Iranian Embassy itself and seize large amounts of Embassy documents.

The demands raised by the occupations included: Amnesty International to be granted access to Iranian political prisoners; the passing of a motion of condemnation by the United Nations on the Iranian regime; Red Cross to be allowed to visit Kurdistan, where Iranian forces are fighting to deny Kurdish self-determination; and the cessation of arms export to Iran.

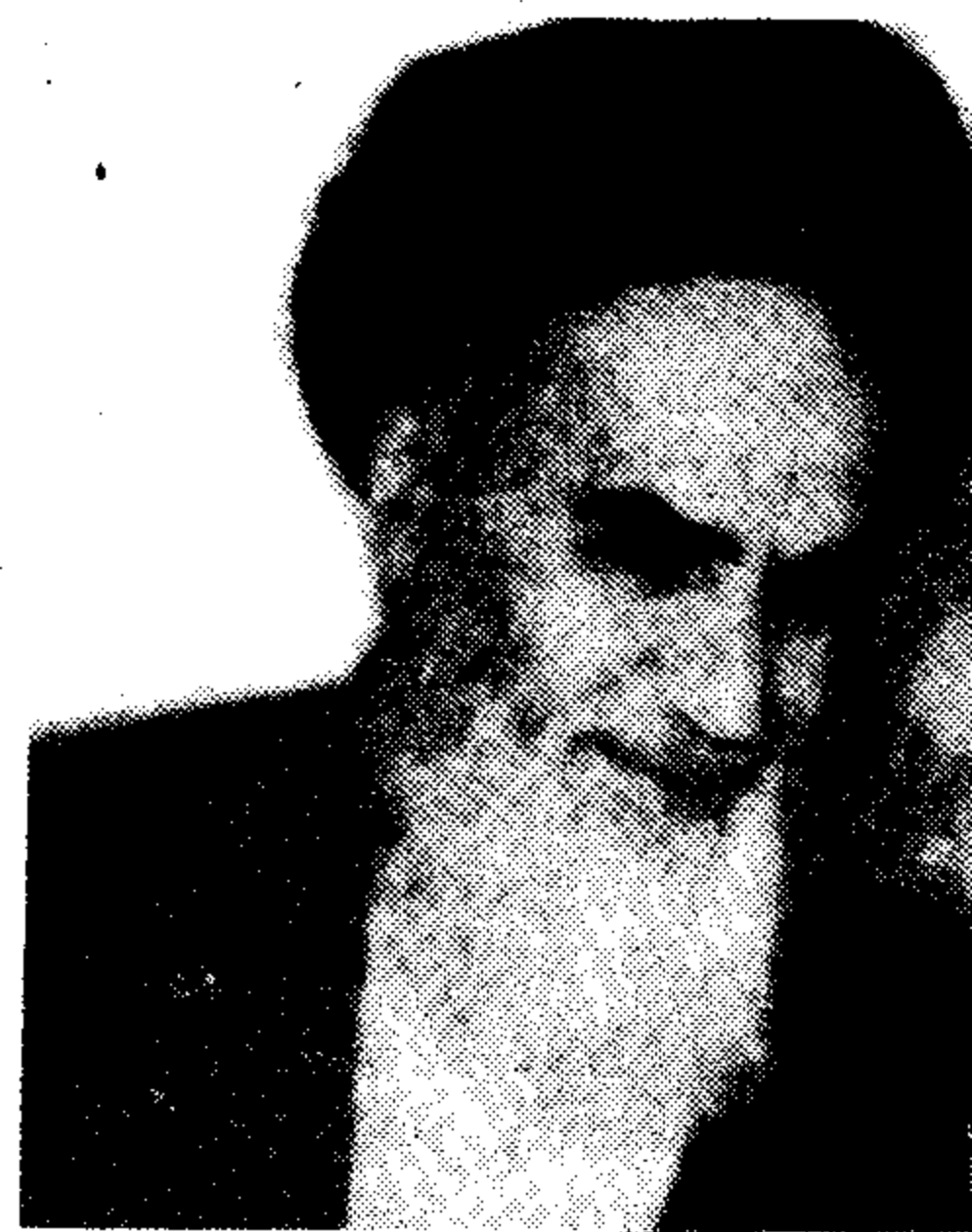
The latter demand is particularly pertinent in Britain. American weapons and munitions are now being shipped into Cardiff airport and re-exported to Iran from a jetty-site bought by the Iranian government in Newport. There are also unconfirmed rumours of a possible deal to sell Jaguar fighter aircraft to Iran.

France

In all countries, those staging the occupation were arrested. The only exception was France, which supports the bourgeois-liberal National Council of Resistance against Khomeini, and also backs Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war because of French investments there.

Apart from in London and New Delhi, all those arrested were released relatively quickly. In London the ten arrested appeared in court two days later charged with: criminal damage to property, illegal entry and assault (i.e. allegedly preventing the staff from leaving the building).

The police opposed bail on the grounds that the Iranians might repeat their "crime" if released. The judge readily complied with their request. The one female prisoner was held in Tottenham Court Road police station, while the nine male prisoners were transferred to the remand centre in Peterborough.



Khomeini

All ten have been served with deportation notices. If these notices are followed through by the Home Office it would mean certain execution for the ten on their return to Iran.

One of the ten arrested, who lives in the Gorbals in Glasgow, has had his home raided by police acting without a warrant, and documents, political pamphlets, etc., were confiscated. Iranians visiting his home have also been followed by the police and questioned.

It is not known yet whether similar raids have been carried out on the homes of the other nine, who live in London, Manchester and Edinburgh.

The labour movement in this country, and particularly Labour Party members, must be campaigning for the release of the ten, the dropping of all charges against them, and withdrawal of the threat of deportation.

The composite resolution on Iran passed at this year's Party conference pledged "support for workers' resistance against the regime's brutal suppression", called on the International Labour Organisation to "do all in its power to help end the plight of the Iranian workers and trade unionists" and urged the National Executive Committee to "do all in their power to assist Iranian refugees, especially to prevent their deportation back to Iran."

The first task is to achieve the release of the imprisoned Iranians, if they are still being held by the time this issue of the paper appears. Labour MPs and councillors in particular must mount the necessary pressure on the police to ensure that they cease opposing bail.

The longer term campaign which needs to be built is one which aims at the dropping of the charges and preventing any deportations should any of the ten be found guilty.

For further information about the defence campaign, contact ISF, c/o BM Box KAR, London WC1N 3XX.

**LABOUR MOVEMENT
CAMPAIGN FOR PALESTINE
NEWSLETTER**

New issue now out:
Better and Kinrock on
the Middle East
The fight in Fatah
10p plus postage from
LMCP, 25 Carlton
Mansions, Holmleigh
Rd., London N16.

**SOLIDARNOSC
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.

War chief goes East

By Harry Sloan

PRESIDENT Reagan's wild war-mongering statements in Korea are a useful reminder of the role that country has played both in the original Cold War and in the latest imperialist propaganda and military offensive.

As he made new pledges to step up military aid to the vicious South Korean regime of President Chun Doo, Reagan larded his speeches with scare-mongering claims that North Korea is about to invade, and hypocritical references to the supposed 'freedom' defended by Chun's dictatorship.

Speaking to some of the 40,000 American troops stationed in Korea to bolster the regime, he declared:

"You stand between the free world and the armed forces of a system hostile to everything we believe in. You are truly on the front line."

"The Communist system to the north is based on hatred and oppression. It brutally attacks every form of liberty and declares those who worship God to be enemies of the people."

But of course there are

chief pass by.

Reagan has good reason to view South Korea with some affection. It was the outbreak of the Korean war in 1950 which gave the Democratic President Harry Truman exactly the pretext he needed to begin a massive rearmament of the USA demanded by hawkish security advisors.

Truman used the cover of the war to fund the establishment of an integrated NATO force in Europe, extend military aid to the French imperialists fighting Communist forces in Vietnam, and boost the reactionary regime in the Philippines against Communist-led guerrillas.

So useful was the war that Truman and General MacArthur repeatedly sabotaged hopes of a swift negotiated settlement, to prolong the crisis and thus increase military funding from the US Congress.

It was this key period which was decisive in launching the post-war USA into the frantic arms race with the USSR — an arms race which Reagan has accelerated.

And, ironically, one tool which Reagan himself has used to achieve funding for the new MX missile was the recent shooting down of a South Korean airliner.

Significantly the American hula-balloo about the incident has died away once the holes in the State Department's flimsy propaganda story began to show through, and the hysteria had helped procure Congress backing for Reagan's immense armaments budget.

This cold and hot war background to the Korean visit helps explain the stark contrast between the flak-jacketed, trigger-happy, bunker-visiting Reagan on the 38th parallel, and the softly-spoken, "peace-loving" Reagan who spoke so movingly of his fears of nuclear war to the Japanese ruling class only hours earlier.

From Japan, Reagan wants trade concessions, and a big increase in their own arms spending to assist in militarising the Pacific Ocean: in Korea he was merely seeking the pretext for a further lurch in the arms race.



Farrell Dobbs

By a US correspondent

FARRELL DOBBS died in Pinole, California, on October 31 at the age of 76.

He was a member of the team that made Minneapolis a union town during the labour struggles of the 1930s in the United States.

The leaders of that team were Carl Skoglund and Ray Dunne, trade union revolutionaries and followers of Leon Trotsky. The two men were members of the Communist League of America, the forerunner of the Socialist Workers Party.

Skoglund is considered the architect of the 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strike, one of the most important strikes in the history of the United States.

Together with Ray Dunne, Skoglund mapped a massive organising campaign in which tens of thousands of workers became involved. The strike was won and the union — Local 574 — won recognition. It paved the way for large-scale expansion of the Teamsters, which up to that time, had been a small, relatively ineffective union.

Dobbs became active during the strike, and afterwards, was elected the union local's secretary treasurer.

During the strike he joined the Trotskyist party. In 1972, Dobbs authored a book called *Teamster Rebellion*, which is about the strike.

Dobbs quotes Harry DeBoer, one of the strike leaders, as saying, "We couldn't have done it without a disciplined revolutionary party."

Dobbs wrote that DeBoer's

statement is "a broad political generalisation about Local 574's victory that is hard to improve upon."

Following the strike, Dobbs was a member of the team that organised the truck drivers in eleven midwestern states including Minnesota.

Workers joined the Teamsters in large numbers. They recognised that the union's militant leadership group was prepared to fight for the workers, and win decent conditions. And the reputation of the union spread.

Dobbs was a Teamster organiser until he became labour secretary of the Socialist Workers Party in 1939.

Dobbs was one of 18 people connected with the Teamsters, convicted under the Smith Act in 1941 for sedition. The act was later declared unconstitutional. It was invoked against the Teamsters in Minneapolis by President Franklin Roosevelt who was determined to wipe out the anti-war sentiment reflected in the team that had organised the union.

Dobbs served 13 months in prison. When he got out, he returned to New York, serving in several capacities for the Socialist Workers Party and running for President on the Socialist Workers Party ticket four times. He became national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, succeeding James P. Cannon, the party's founder.

Dobbs retired from the SWP in 1972. He wrote four books about the history of the Teamsters in Minneapolis, collaborating with DeBoer and Ray Rainbolt, another revolutionary trade unionist. Dobbs' best-known book is *Teamster Rebellion*.



Farrell Dobbs with James P Cannon in 1941

Dictatorial powers in S. Africa

Constitution

THE new, notionally "liberalised" South African constitution hands virtually dictatorial power to an Executive President, who will in many respects single-handedly control Parliament and the Bills passing through it.

The much publicised and controversial racially-based three-chamber Parliament — from which South Africa's majority blacks are, of course, excluded — is transformed into little more than a rubber stamp.

Among the President's powers will be the right to:

- *Determine sessions of Parliament.
- *Dissolve Parliament.
- *Appoint Ministers.
- *Proclaim or terminate martial law.
- *Declare war and make peace.
- *Appoint and remove civil servants.
- *Chair the Cabinet.

It will be the President's sole prerogative to decide whether a matter is of concern to only one or to all of the three chambers of Parliament: once he has decided there will be no right to appeal or question his decision.

He will also be able to recommend amendments of his own to any Bill, even if already approved by Parliament — and refer the amended Bill back for endorsement.

He will, by combining the office of State President with that of Prime Minister, also be Commander in Chief of the Defence Force, and will preside over the cabinet. To remove him from office would require the joint action of a majority of each of the three Houses of Parliament.

Terry Smith analyses the new political arrangements of apartheid

In addition, the Constitution offers a rigged system of Committees which ensure that the facade of involving Indian and Coloured representatives does not involve ceding any control. There would be a white majority on joint standing committees of the three Parliaments; a white majority to elect the President, and a white majority on the Council to advise the President.

But even before this Constitution was pushed through a referendum, it had become plain that real power in South Africa has been transferred out of the arena of Parliament and the Cabinet into the hands of the powerful State Security Council, headed by Prime Minister Botha.

Cabinet Ministers are not allowed to attend SSC meetings without invitation. The SSC includes Defence Minister Pik Botha and a few other hand-picked government ministers.

But also on the Council are the head of the National Intelligence Service, the Chief of the Defence Force (army), the Commissioner of Police, and the Directors General of Foreign Affairs and of Justice.

Since the beginning of 1982 the SSC has been under the administration of the National Intelligence Service, and commands a wide national and international network of influence



Black trade unionists: the power that can beat apartheid

extending far beyond military and "security" affairs into political and cultural fields.

And while these decisions are taken behind closed doors by powerful, unaccountable cliques, the extent to which South African businesses have been concentrated in the hands of a few vast conglomerates has also been revealed.

It is estimated that 80% of the shares on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange are owned by only seven companies, of which the largest, the Anglo-American Corporation, owns no less than 56% of the total. The next largest is the Sanlam life insurance company (9.4%) followed

by Barlow Rand with 7.4%.

Yet even after these figures were compiled there have been further takeovers and mergers by the "Big Seven" which will have further tightened their grip on South African business.

The only serious way in which this vast concentration of power in the hands of South Africa's ruling white capitalists can be fought is through the organisation and mobilisation of the black working class.

Through the building of independent black trade unions and the preparation of mass class action, the South African system can be taken by the throat and the racist rulers defeated.



TROOPS OUT NOW!

Join the Labour Committee on Ireland.
BM Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX



Republican contingent marching at the height of the 'H' Block Blanket protest.

Sinn Fein Ard Fheis: a w

LAST WEEKEND Sinn Fein held its Ard Fheis (conference) in Dublin. It was a watershed Ard Fheis which brought the changes of the last three years to a logical conclusion by electing an entirely new national leadership.

Those who founded the Provisional Republican movement and have led it for the last 13 years, men like Rory O'Brady and David O'Connell, have been replaced by younger, left-wing, populist radicals from the North whose policies have carried the day at the last two Ard Fheisneae.

Now Gerry Adams, Westminster MP for West Belfast, replaces O'Brady as President.

Some of the bitterness of the dispute between the old Southern-based leadership and the Northerners over issues such as federalism came out at the conference, though both sides deny that a split has taken place or is likely to.

In the discussion on abstentionism — the principle which forbids elected Republicans to take their seats in the 'Partition Parliaments' in Dublin or Belfast, or at Westminster — O'Brady recalled previous disputes in the Republican movement on this issue.

By John O'Mahony

He had, he said, shared platforms with former comrades who were now in their graves because they abandoned the 'good old principle' of abstentionism. The Provisionals formed a separate organisation in 1969-70 because the old Republican movement (IRA and Sinn Fein alike) had voted to abandon abstentionism.

While the Ard Fheis voted to lift the ban on discussing abstention, it did not change the policy.

But then, towards the end of the conference, the Ard Fheis decided that while the ban remains on elected Republicans taking their seats at Westminster, Belfast, or even Dublin, if any Sinn Feiners are elected to the EEC Parliament next June then they will take their seats in the supra-national assembly.

This is close to the Labour Party's level of confusion and self-contradiction!

Danny Morrison, Mid-Ulster Assemblyman, proposed fighting the Euro-elections on both sides of the border and taking

seats. Martin McGuinness said that not to fight the election on the basis of taking seats would be 'madness', because this was 'the best opportunity ever' to beat the SDLP.

It is widely believed that the Adams group wants to abandon abstention generally. Such a move, however, would imply a split.

Other decisions of the conference were:

- A reference to 'Christian principles' in Sinn Fein's statement of aims was replaced by: 'Irish Republican Socialist principles in accordance with the Easter proclamation of 1916 and the Democratic Programme of the first Dail in 1919'.

- Removal of the word 'total' from the expression of Sinn Fein's opposition to abortion. Now it is merely 'opposed'.

- Reaffirmation of last year's decision to reject federalism.

- A motion reaffirming the constitutional ban on discussion of abstention was defeated with both Adams and O'Brady voting for it.

One of the new Sinn Fein vice-presidents, trade union official Phil Flynn, was once a Trotskyist.

One of the most interesting points was made by Adams when he implicitly criticised the outgoing leadership and the movement in the South:

"Outside of its nationalist policy Sinn Fein has, to a great extent, been isolated in the 26 counties and, because of our almost exclusive concentration on the national question, we have failed to develop the social and economic momentum which our party began during the '60s. Others [the Official Republicans, now the Workers Party] who abandoned the central question of partition have been able to make political capital on those issues".

Thus Adams explicitly proposes to go back and pick up the threads of social policy, North and South, which the Provos who split the Republican movement in 1969-70 reacted against, in favour of old-fashioned physical-force militarist Republicanism.

The ideas of 1969-70 were represented most clearly at the conference by O'Brady when he said:

"I don't want us to start discussing converting a revolutionary movement into a constitutional party..."

"These things weigh very heavily with me as I sat on a



1978 Sinn Fein Ard Fheis

Sinn Fein Ard Fheis platform as chairman with people who you know very well, who were later killed because of feuding between different fragmentations of this movement.

"I think people should try to educate themselves into the basic nature of this movement — we are a revolutionary movement. We can't have one foot in enemy parliaments..."

"We have those principles. Stick by them and we'll stay together".

Adams and his colleagues, in contrast, hope to combine the turn to social and community politics with a maintenance of the military struggle in the North, and thus avoid the imbalance that fractured the Republican movement in 1969-70 and led to the emergence of the Provos, the Officials (now Workers Party) and then the INLA/IRSP.

The national question, however, is to be central, and the axis of everything else.

To understand the importance of this Ard Fheis, and to attempt an account of what it means for socialist politics in Ireland, it is

in England and Ireland, it launched a military campaign mainly against customs posts and RUC stations in the North. The activities were very small-scale by the standards of the '70s, but they mobilised a lot of support. Abstentionist deputies were elected not only in the North, but also in the South — something Sinn Fein could not repeat today even during the hunger strike. Rory O'Brady was one of two Sinn Fein TDs.

The Fianna Fail government introduced internment in the South in 1957 to deal with the Republicans. By the end of the '50s the 'Border Campaign' had run out of steam. A formal ceasefire was declared in 1962.

Many activists — like David O'Connell — dropped out. The remainder analysed their defeat and reached conclusions rather like earlier Republicans of the '20s and '30s and like Adams and his colleagues today.

The concentration on the Border and on the pure military struggle alone would never call forth and organise the forces to gain a united Ireland. They began to discuss social policies and socialism, and to move both to the left and away from narrow militarism. Timidly they edged towards a break with the principle of abstention.

The Republicans did this partly under the influence of former (or perhaps undercover) members of the British Communist Party and its Irish 'front', the Connolly Association — Roy Johnstone and Tony Coughlin. The strong Stalinist coloration in the Workers Party today dates from this period.

They turned to housing action committees and agitation over Catholic civil rights in Protestant-ruled Northern Ireland.

At the same time they expelled and purged traditionalists throughout the country, evolving a thoroughly Stalinist regime. Opposition to the Republican leadership often took the form of a reflex defence of militarism. (For example, the first dissident 'An Phoblacht' was a duplicated sheet published after 1967 from Cork by people who seem eventually to have made their way to the IRSP).

Then the North blew up. In

CONFERENCE

IRELAND: PEACE THROUGH DEMOCRACY

Speakers include: Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone and Clive Soley.

Time: Saturday November 26 at 9.30 am.

Place: Edrich Hall, South Bank Polytechnic, Borough Rd., London SE1.

The conference aims to build up support for an end to any British presence in Ireland, an end to the Unionist veto on reunification, and the right of Ireland to maintain its traditional neutrality (i.e. not to be pushed into joining NATO).

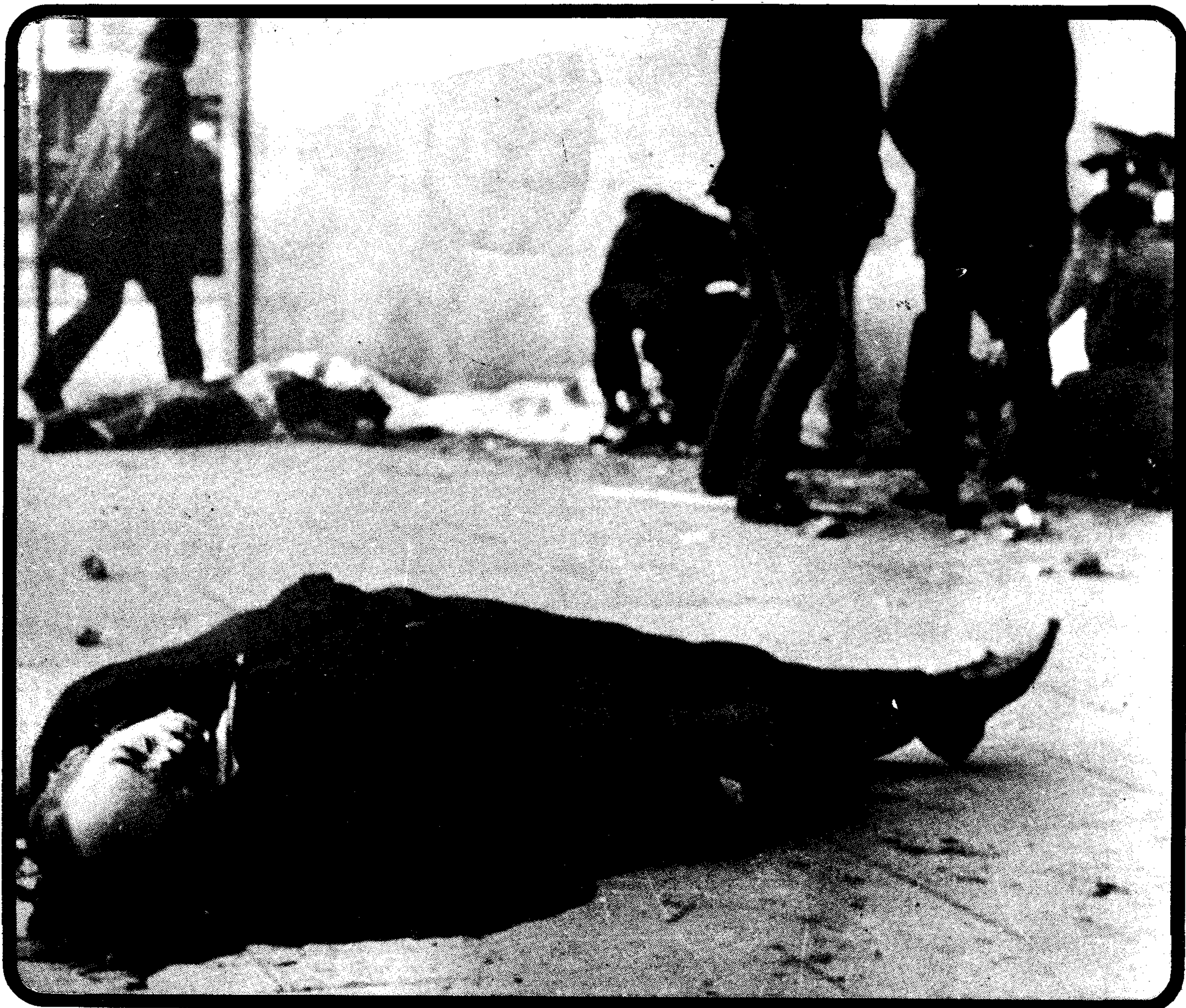
The conference will focus on the situation in the trade unions and the problems of raising the issue of Ireland, particularly where British unions have members in the North.

The conference is open to delegates (£3) and observers (£2). Further information from Box 189, 32 Ivor Place, London NW1.

TROOPS O



Loyalist leaders, including shipyard workers' leader Billy Hull (right), formerly in Northern Ireland Labour Party.



Bloody Sunday — January 30 1972

atershed

October 1968 a Catholic civil rights demonstration in Derry was savagely batoned. World TV audiences saw the present Lord Fitt, then MP for West Belfast, clubbed to the ground with his head streaming blood.

A tremendous Catholic reaction followed, and there were further civil rights marches and demonstrations.

Inevitably this triggered a Protestant backlash, which led, in August 1969, to serious pogroms in Derry and Belfast.

The artificial Six County state was disintegrating into Catholic-Protestant civil war. The British Army went in in force to take a tight grip on the situation.

At first the Catholic areas in Belfast and Derry welcomed the soldiers, but still walled themselves off behind barricades in Free Derry and Free Belfast. These remained in existence until October 1969, when the barricades were peacefully taken down.

The IRA had been caught unprepared, largely without weapons and quite unable to defend the Catholic ghettos. The existing Republican leadership (the future Officials) and their policies were discredited in much of the North. The reaction against the new 'social' and 'extreme socialist' policies was inevitable, and quick.

Things came to a head at the IRA convention in December 1969 and the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis in January 1970. A sizeable majority decided to abandon abstention. About a third, almost entirely old-timers, walked out and set up the Provisional IRA and Sinn Fein.

They denounced the others as 'extreme socialists', seeking to establish a totalitarian dictatorship, and as Marxists.

It is pretty firmly established that the Provisionals, certainly those in the North, had encouragement, including money, from elements in the ruling Fianna Fail party in the South — Blaney, Boland, Haughey, and so on.

Until it made a sharp change of policy in April 1970, the 26 Counties government channelled money and other support to the Northern Catholics, and

Prime Minister Jack Lynch said that the 26 Counties army "would not stand idly by" and let the Catholics in the North be massacred.

The Cabinet was said to have discussed invading the North.

But whatever its midwifery, and whatever Blaney and Haughey intended it to be, the Provisional movement inevitably took on a logic of its own.

It grew very quickly, essentially as a defensive militia in the Catholic ghettos and initially with a purely defensive concept of their own role. In Belfast they numbered a few dozen at the beginning of 1970, and over a thousand by early 1971.

Where did the new recruits come from?

After October 1969, when the barricades came down in Free Derry and Free Belfast, things were quiet and stagnant. Civil rights reforms were quickly introduced, the sectarian B-specials disbanded, the RUC disarmed. The British Labour government left the Orange state in being as a facade, but put British civil servants in to share day-to-day running of Northern Ireland.

Masses of unemployed Catholic youth had been stirred up, and some radicalised. They were bitterly disappointed. They wanted action. They began to clash with the heavy-handed British Army.

Then, in June 1970, British politics changed the course of developments in Northern Ireland. Labour lost the election. Under Labour the British government had independently been putting pressure on the Orange state to reform since the mid-'60s (and thereby it helped to destabilise Northern Ireland and give birth to the Catholic civil rights movement). Some of its key people were sympathetic to the plight of the Northern Ireland Catholics — even Prime Minister Harold Wilson.

It had built up a considerable experience of handling Northern Ireland. It handled the initial secession of Catholic Derry and Belfast with great skill after August 1969.

But the Heath government was allied to the ruling Northern Ireland Orange Tories, and

indifferent to Ireland. Meanwhile the British Army's heavy-handed policing of Northern Ireland had brought it more and more into conflict with the Catholics who had initially welcomed it.

The Army's role was essentially to keep the balance within the artificial Six County state, which had a built-in bias in favour of the Protestants. The Catholics were the troublemakers. The Army responded with CS gas against rioting youths.

In July 1970 the Army imposed a curfew on the Catholic Falls, engaged in a sweep for arms, and fought a gun battle with the Official IRA.

The Provisionals had seemed like a rump of yesterday's hard men at the beginning of 1970. But as the Army came into conflict with the Catholics, they grew into a powerful force in the Northern ghettos.

Somewhere along the line a decision was taken to go on the offensive. As one participant was to put it: The Provisionals cut through all the problems (especially the problem of Protestant working-class hostility) which inhibited and oppressed the Left and the Official Republicans, with a simple message. They pointed to the patrolling British soldiers and said: 'That's British imperialism. Shoot it'.

The first soldiers were killed early in 1971, and there was a spate of bombings.

Then in August 1971, internment without charge or trial, and exclusively for Catholics, was introduced. It completed the alienation of the Catholic community.

And it led to a mass growth of Provisional influence. There was a full-scale offensive against Stormont and the British Army. From early in 1972 car bombs devastated the centres of Northern Ireland's cities and towns.

The British government was forced to seek a political solution. In March 1972 it abolished Stormont and set out to find a political arrangement within Northern Ireland which would command the support of Catholics as well as Protestants.

1972 was the high point for the Provisionals. They achieved the important victory of destroying the sectarian parliament. They forced the British government to negotiate with them directly. (Gerry Adams was released from prison to be flown to London to take part in talks

with secretary of state William Whitelaw).

But no agreement was possible. A brief mid-1972 ceasefire broke down (though the Official IRA's ceasefire of the same time was definitive).

The Provisionals demanded that the British should withdraw and that the 32 counties of all Ireland should be the unit for decision-making — i.e., an end to the Protestant majority's veto over any changes in the six counties and in Ireland as a whole. They proposed a federal Ireland, organised in four provincial units, including a nine-county Ulster.

Britain continued to consider the Six Counties as sacrosanct, though it advocated links with the South.

Eventually Britain shaped a new compromise approach. There was to be an executive in Belfast, based on a six county assembly in which the Catholic constitutional nationalist party, the SDLP, would share power with 'moderate' Unionists. At the same time there was to be a Council of Ireland, loosely linking the six and 26 counties.

The power-sharing executive which took over at the beginning of 1974 had many things going for it. It had the support and patronage of Britain, the support of about two-thirds of an assembly elected the previous June. The die-hard Orangemen were ghettoised.

SDLP

The SDLP, supported by a big majority of Catholic voters, had a tremendous weight within the executive. Nationalist aspirations were accommodated in the Council of Ireland.

In early 1974 the IRA seemed to face the prospect of being marginalised. Had the new power-sharing executive taken root, probably they would have been.

Now, for the second time, British politics changed the course of events in Northern Ireland. The battle between the government and the miners led Edward Heath to call a snap general election in February 1974.

The Unionist Party in Northern Ireland had split over power-sharing, and the election found the pro-power-sharers led by Brian Faulkner strong in the Assembly but effectively without

a party outside it. There was mass Protestant discontent with power-sharing and especially with the Council of Ireland. The Faulknerites were considered to be traitors who had broken their election pledges.

The February election allowed this discontent full expression. 11 of the 12 Northern Ireland Westminster MPs elected were hostile to power-sharing. The executive's authority was undermined.

In May 1974 a majority vote in the Assembly to endorse the new arrangements triggered a Protestant General Strike, which grew to massive proportions and led to the resignation of the executive and the destruction of Britain's entire strategy.

Since then Britain has had no strategy but to hold on.

The Protestant backlash had begun against the civil rights movement and grown continuously. Held in check when the British and Stormont were beating down the Catholics from

mid-1970 to March 1972, it burst out with the abolition of Stormont.

Tens of thousands of workers struck in protest at the abolition of Stormont. The Ulster Defence Association, formed in 1971, began open marching and drilling in 1972, and soon numbered over 50,000. Protestant Vanguard, led by William Craig, organised a demonstration of 60,000 Protestants. (In British population terms that would be 2½ million, or, if you reckon it against the Protestant two-thirds of Northern Ireland's population, 3,600,000).

There was an orgy of sectarian killings of Catholics picked at random, as Catholics. The culmination was the reactionary general strike which smashed Britain's strategy.

That was a decisive turning-point. In a continuation of this article, next week, I will discuss the shape of Irish politics after 1974, and how it determined the evolution of the Provisionals.



UT NOW!

Will Liverpool be a new Clay Cross?

SHOOTING the foreman is a sackable offence. It's the kind of thing you dream of, but just don't do. Someone brings an air gun into work, you fire it accidentally through a plate glass door, and it hits the gaffer in the leg. How were you to know the fellow was behind the door?

Yet in Liverpool these days, workers aren't penalised for common human errors. They get reinstated on the understanding that air-gun practice is no longer permitted on council premises and may go on to become an advisor on trade union affairs to the Labour Council.

Liverpool today stands out, bloodied but unbowed, against the Tory government and the capitalist system which has been attempting to destroy the fighting spirit of this working class city for two decades or more.

Not wishing to follow the national trend, scousers registered a marked swing to Labour during the general election. Before June, the city had two Tory MPs. Today it has none. The Tory victory was just incomprehensible to working class Merseyside. It was as though the rest of the country lived on a different planet.

Another success chalked up by Labour this year was the victory at the city council elections in May.

Liberals

For the first time in ten years, the Labour Party won a majority (51 seats) on the 99 seat council. The Liberals, whose pavement politics gimmickry had served them well for most of the previous period, were shown to be impotent when faced with the major problems of education, housing and unemployment.

The present council is dominated by the Militant Tendency, the most significant force on the Labour Party left. As such, it is universally hated by the local media and a prime target for attack by the Tory government.

The Council does things which go against the grain of the "how do you like your steak, councillor" style of local government. One of its first acts was to abolish the office of Lord Mayor. But what would happen to the Mayor's poor old horses, asked the local press. "They would make good glue" replied the chair of the council.

The new regime was committed too, to much more significant acts aimed at turning the machinery of local government to the benefit of the working class.

*Rents have been reduced.
*Council house provision would be increased.

*1000 extra jobs would be provided by the Council in the form of direct employment.

*School reorganisation would take place on the basis of

Liverpool Labour marches against cuts this Saturday, 19th. Bas Hardy reports.

comprehensive education principles being firmly maintained.

*There would be closer involvement of trade unions and particularly shop stewards in the decision making processes of the council.

Such policies of course require money. Where does it come from? Not the rates. The council has firmly committed itself against rate rises to pay for its programme. It is even estimated that a 100% rate rise would be necessary if the council were to rely on this as a source of finance.

So the local authority wants more money from central government to deal with the multiplicity of problems Liverpool has. It is not going to get it.

The City will go bankrupt sometime next year unless the Militant councillors and their supporters abandon their stand and start to make cuts in council services.

It is doubtful that Liverpool will become another Lothian or Lambeth. The scenario is closer to Clay Cross.

Despite their numerous and grievous faults and shortcomings, the Militant councillors who provide the leadership of the Labour Group are much clearer and solid on their intentions than the amalgam of disparate leftists who hold sway in most Left Labour local authorities.

Nevertheless, there are a number of shortcomings in the whole approach of Militant which are potentially damaging to the future course of struggle against the Tories.

Major flaws

The Militant comrades, like most of the politically committed left, are inexperienced in terms of wielding governmental power. This has been compounded by the employment of their own organisational norms to local government.

In essence this means secrecy, boss politics, workerism and sectarianism. These four major flaws in the Militant's whole mode of operation are placing a Labour victory in next May's elections in extreme jeopardy.

In the field of housing, the Council's total commitment to council house policies are alienating Labour voters who are involved in the Housing Co-op movement. Purchases of housing stock from the private sector

have been done without the knowledge of Labour councillors in the areas concerned and the housing stock involved has been sub-standard.

Militant comrades extol the virtues of council housing but a large number of them live in Wavertree Garden Suburb and other suburban owner-occupied areas of Liverpool.

In the field of local government employment, individuals have been advanced for posts on the basis of friendship ties with Militant councillors. The Labour Party has been made to look ridiculous in the local press when the actual qualifications of these candidates have been examined. It is as if we now have left-wing variants of Bob and Bessie Braddock, the old Labour bosses in the city.

When dealing with the trade

unions Militant has a noted hostility to the white collar sections, implying that they are "not proper workers".

The Militant have also attempted to transform trade union bodies such as the joint shop stewards committee into adjuncts of the Labour Party by arguing that only Labour-affiliated unions should be represented.

Independent

Finally, we have seen that Militant have been abusing their position on the Executive Committee of the District Labour Party to reject prospective candidates for council if they are left wing but independent of Militant's political sphere. Existing right wingers on the panel remain untouched!

This commentator, however,



Liverpool, 1982: Labour marches against unemployment. This Saturday Labour will march against cuts.

does not wish to be a sideline scribbler. Whatever the faults of the Militant comrades at present directing the Council, the left must squarely back them against King and the Tory attack. We must once again

praise the comrades in their resolve to fight, and put every effort into their important mobilisation on November 19. This city is in the front line against the Tory offensive.

A relentless onward march of the robots

Martin Thomas summarises the latest 'Labour Research' which reports on new technology

FACTORIES and offices with nothing but gleaming machines and the odd maintenance worker are still a long way in the future. But selective automation is growing very fast indeed.

A word processor can replace about 1½ workers; so the 60,000 word processors installed in the UK at the end of 1982 replaced about 90,000 workers.

Each industrial robot is reckoned to replace about 2½ workers: that means the 1,152 robots in the UK in 1982 had captured nearly 3,000 jobs from humans. World-wide, some 60% of spot-welding in the car industry is now done by robots.

More numerous are small business computers: there were 240,000 in use by the end of 1982 replacing perhaps 500,000 workers.

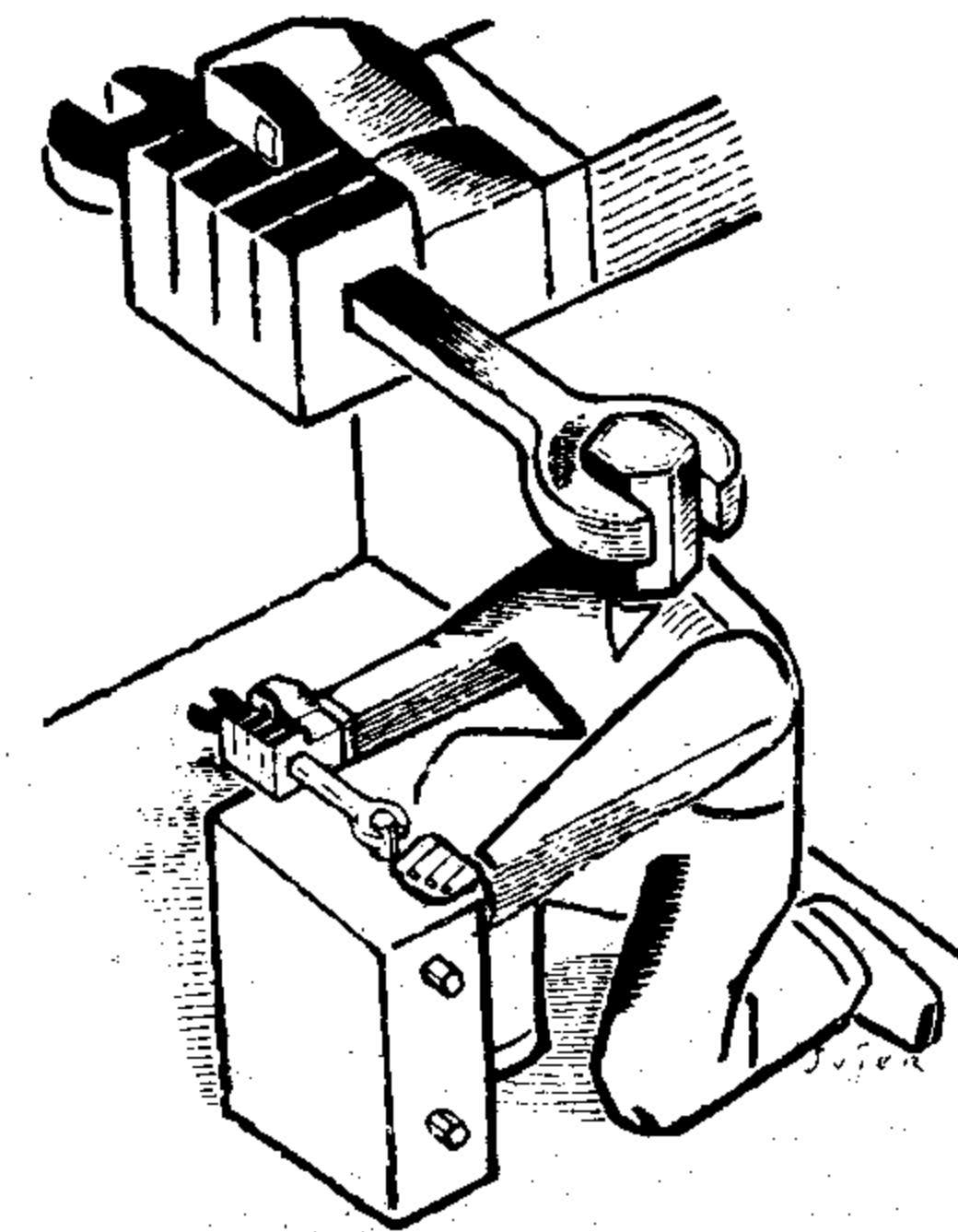
All these new technologies date from the late 1970s. In 1979 the CIS Report on New Technology gave a figure of 9,000 word processors in the UK. Today it is 60,000.

The largest user of robots in the UK is Ford. They decided to introduce them in June 1980. By December 1982 they had 220. Labour Research reckons that Ford now has nearly 400 robots.

The number of small business computers in the UK quadrupled between 1980 and 1982. The number of electronic typewriters — a more modest form of new technology, halfway between an ordinary electric typewriter and a word processor — went up from 18,000 to 120,000.

The engineering industry, according to a recent Financial Times report, plans to spend more on computers for design and manufacturing in the next two years than it has done in the past 30.

The basis for all this is the 'microchip'. Complicated circuits can be constructed on a tiny piece of silicon. The CIS Report pointed out:



"A 'microprocessor' (micro-computer) costing £20 today, can now replace a computer that cost £200,000 in 1960. Where it used to occupy a whole room, require special climate controls and still be unreliable, it is now no larger than a thumbnail, is unaffected by temperature or vibration, and is many times more reliable".

This has made it possible to put computer 'brains' and 'memories' inside typewriters, cash registers, and assembly-line machines.

Of big UK companies (those with a turnover of more than £1 million), 86% are now using electronic typewriters, 79% word processors, and 78% microcomputers. These are the major uses of new technology: in the office, on typing, accounts, record-keeping, stock control, etc.

90% of factories employing 1,000 or more people now use computers in design or manufacturing.

Other uses include:

*Bar-coding systems in retail. A scanner linked to the cash register automatically deals with pricing and stock control. The number of supermarkets in the UK with such systems doubled between December 1982 and September 1983.

*Automatic tills in banks. By December 1983 the number of these will have increased by 58% since June 1982.

*New technology in print.

Parallel to, and even outstripping, the rise in use of new technology, has been the rise of producers in this field.

"Five years ago", the Financial Times reported recently, "there were around a dozen robot manufacturers in the West. Today there are more than 220..."

Both the Financial Times report and a recent article in the Economist conclude that "the robot industry is heading for a shake-out". Big firms, like General Electric, IBM, Siemens, Hitachi, but also General Motors, Volkswagen, Renault and Fiat, are moving in and taking over or pushing out the small businesses.

The Economist also reports on problems with the more modest office new technology. Although it is less sensitive to heat, humidity and dust than older computers, it does call for air-conditioning — and often for expensive building work to accommodate all the cables.

But the general trend is certainly upwards. Even after the tremendous expansion of the last three or four years, UK industry is still way behind other advanced capitalist countries in new technology.

Sweden

Sweden, for example, has 15.7 robots per 100,000 population, and Japan has 11.1. The UK has only 2.1 (December 1982 figures).

One worrying fact about the new technology business is that many of the producers are non-union or anti-union firms.

IBM is well-known as an anti-union firm: and other major information technology firms in the UK which do not recognise unions include DEC, Hewlett Packard, Systime, Mitel, Newbury, Sinclair, Acorn, Dragon, Texas Instruments, Motorola, General Instrument, Hughes, NEC, Scicon, Logica, CAP and CMG.

Union organisation exists in less than half the firms — and mostly those which are part, or

offshoots, of older companies with unionisation in their other operations.

This industry is also notable for its effective internationalisation of production. Large chunks of the assembly operations in the microelectronics industry have been sited in the 'free enterprise zones' of Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, the Philippines, etc., where they profit from starvation wages, absence of labour protection laws, and police-state anti-union regimes.

The trade union movement has so far done little to tackle the new technology producers. Many unions have, however, worked out policies in the new technology user firms.

No job loss, rest time for work on Visual Display Units, and other health and safety conditions, have been the main trade union demands. But Labour Research finds that "the hopes and aspirations of the late '70s have not been fulfilled".

Often new technology is introduced unilaterally by employers, and Labour Research cites only one example (NALGO in the gas industry) where a union has won shorter working time as part of a new technology agreement.

Weak though the fight has been so far, it does have radical implications. Labour Research points out that "many clerical workers have had a major role in determining their working environment for the first time".

Some unions have negotiated trade union control over information flows, in the form of data protection agreements.

New technology, at present, is a means of increasing profits, cutting jobs, speeding up work, strengthening employers' control, and centralising information.

But it can be a means of improving living standards, reducing work hours, eliminating routine drudgery, giving workers more control over their environment, an distributing information more widely.

It all depends on who controls.

Demonstration LIVERPOOL No Tory cuts!

Saturday November 19
Assemble 11am
at Shaw St, Liverpool,
and march to Pier Head.

Reilly, ace anti-Bolshevik

"REILLY, Ace of Spies" has introduced this murky, nasty, interesting villain from history to millions of people who had never heard of him or his activities.

These activities, it seems, included some responsibility for the notorious forged 'Zinoviev letter'. Supposedly from the President of the Communist International to the British Communist Party, it was used by the Daily Mail and the Tories to bring down the 1924 Labour government.

Of course 'Reilly, Ace of Spies' is fictionalised and romanticised in the James Bond vein. So, it seems, was Reilly.

Captain Sidney Reilly was not always such an obscure figure as he had become by the time the TV series 're-launched' him. In the '40s and '50s he was widely known to sections of the international labour movement.

Conspiracy

He was a central character in one of the great political best-sellers of all time, 'The Great Conspiracy against Russia' by Sayers and Kahn.

This purported to be a history, but it had a great deal more fiction in it than the TV 'Reilly'. It was an exposition of the Moscow trials, told in popular thriller style.

With considerable skill, the fantastic testimony forced from the chief victims of Stalin's show trials of 1936-38 was woven together with real historic events and accounts of real people in the Russian Revolution and civil war.

In the trials the surviving Bolshevik leaders of the revolution and civil war — with the exception of Trotsky and Stalin — had confessed that they themselves, and most of those who led the revolution, had all the time been sneakily working as spies and agents of the imperialist powers whose armies they drove out of Russia!

This tissue of nonsense lent itself well to Sayers' and Kahn's enterprise of popularising lying Stalinist 'history' by presenting it in the style of a fantastic thriller. So did the life and activities against the Russian Revolution of Sidney Reilly.

White Guards

British agent and emissary to the White Guards, paymaster of the counter-revolutionaries, associate of Social-Revolutionary terrorists, friend of leading anti-Bolshevik Boris Savinkov (about whom Winston Churchill wrote a memorial lament), aspirant Napoleon of the Russian counter-revolution — Reilly was a god-send to Sayers and Kahn.

The real history of the counter-revolution was used as a source of facts, testimony and quotations ripped misleadingly

Frank Higgins reviews the ITV series, 'Reilly, Ace of Spies'

out of context, on which to weave and try to make plausible the fantastic fictions of the Moscow trials.

Fat hands

The style did a great deal of the work. Bukharin, ideologist of the Bolshevik ultra-left during the revolution, and afterwards Stalin's ally and leader of the Right Bolsheviks, was described as "a blond Machiavelli in a leather jacket".

Trotsky was depicted as a vainglorious failed Hitler, rehearsing gestures of his 'fat, white manicured hands' in front of a mirror, and surrounded by smart leather-clad bodyguards.

These were the prototype stormtroopers of incipient Russian fascism. Their goal was to make the arch-traitor and imperialist saboteur, Bronstein-Trotsky, personal dictator of Russia!

For, 'with the death of Sidney Reilly in 1925', wrote Sayers and Kahn, and the elimination of Boris Savinkov, 'only one man could play Napoleon for the White Guards, and that man was Leon Trotsky.'

Packaged with a friendly, anti-Cold War foreword by 'progressive' US Senator Claud E. Pepper (still a Congressman from Florida today, though an octogenarian), the book had an enormous circulation — until Stalin's mountain of lies was shattered in the 1950s.

Ludicrous

Now television has discovered Reilly and woven a more benign type of semi-fiction around him. This is much less serious anti-Bolshevik propaganda than that of Reilly's poisonous former 'handlers', Sayers and Kahn!

Me, I enjoyed much of it and found some of it gripping. Some of it, of course, was ludicrous.

Example: It is 1918, and Russia has had to make a costly separate peace with Germany. Von Mirbach, the German ambassador, tells an assembly of Bolsheviks (the Central Committee? The Council of Commissars?): "We put you in power, and we can drive you out again!"

The problem with 'Reilly, Ace of Spies' is that it takes a very interesting story and fillets it into episodes to hang a cluster of conventional 'entertainment values' on.

By any standards the story of



Reilly — anti-Bolshevik turned GPU agent?



Stalin — the real saboteur of the revolution

the people he is involved with in the Russian episodes is high tragedy — Savinkov, the former anti-Tsarist revolutionary; the Left Social-Revolutionaries and their patriotic revolt in 1918 against their erstwhile Bolshevik coalition partners; the anti-Bolshevik socialistic and populist intelligentsia who were to be mowed down in the Bolsheviks' defensive 'Red Terror' and so on.

I found it, therefore, inevitably, unsatisfactory and disappointing.

One of the best things about it was Tom Bell's convincing Felix Dzerzhinsky, the semi-mystical Polish Bolshevik who founded the Cheka, the political police of the revolution. He plays him like a priest.

By chance I came across the book the TV series is based on, 'Reilly, Ace of Spies' by Robin Bruce Lockhart, son of Reilly's British associate in Russia in 1918.

It would be a cert to win the "worst book ever written" contest. Dzerzhinsky killed his own mother, his staring fanatic's eyes were never known to blink, and so on.

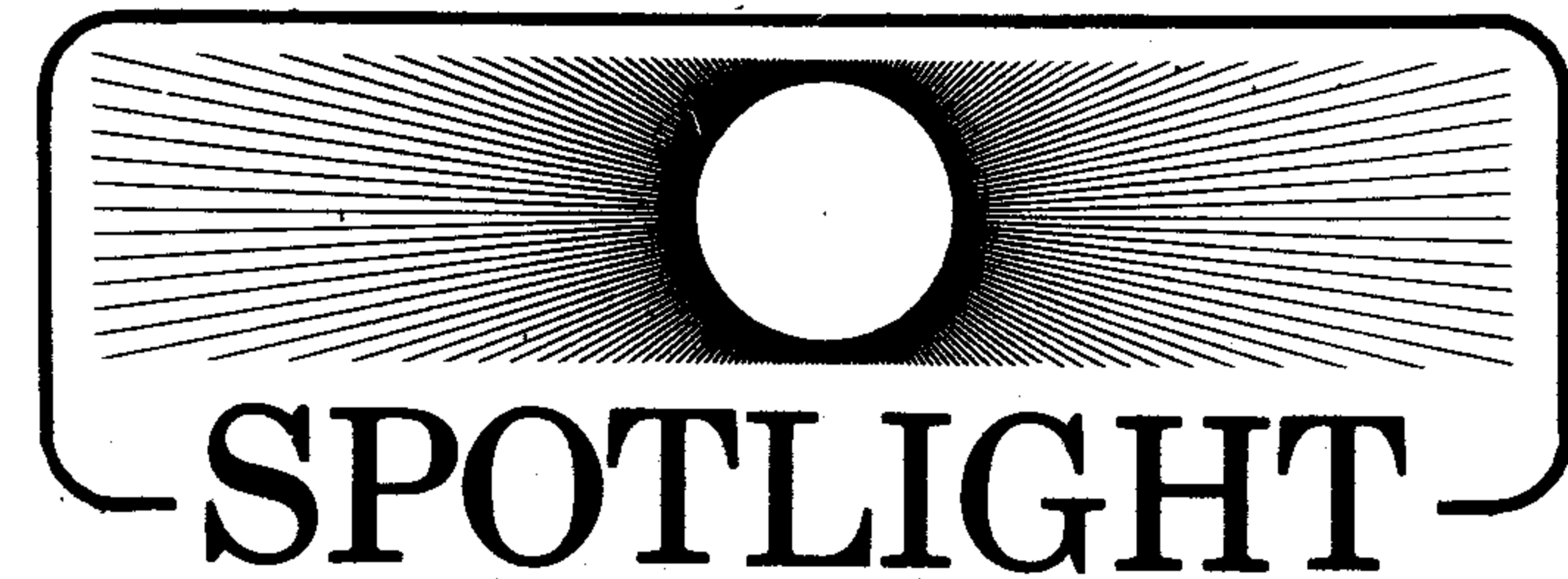
I looked up Reilly in a serious book about spies at the local library. Reilly disappeared into Russia in 1925 and was never seen again. An announcement that he was executed in November 1925 is refuted by much circumstantial evidence that he was alive for some time after. There were reports that he was still alive in the 1940s.

There is a serious possibility that he voluntarily went back to collaborate with the Cheka/GPU. He was something of a Russian nationalist and politically he was probably a Social Revolutionary like Savinkov, who did voluntarily return to Russia and to a ten year jail sentence.

Reilly was brought up as a normal upper class anti-semitic to whom such toasts as 'Long live the Tsar and damn the Jews' were normal. Then at the age of 19 he discovered that his mother's husband was not his father and that his father was a Jewish doctor. He remained an anti-semitic for some years more at least. He had a serious identity problem all his life which might well have led to a dramatic switch in allegiance and identity. And in 1925 he was facing bankruptcy.

But whether he went to the Russians voluntarily or otherwise he is reckoned to have collaborated with them, delivering up a vast knowledge of the Western intelligence services.

Russian penetration of the British and other secret services — Burgess, Maclean, Philby, Blunt and so on — is reckoned to date from Reilly's capture or defection and to be in part a result of the information he passed over. I wonder what the last episode of Reilly, Ace of Spies will make of that?



Film review

Death Wish screwed up

SOME twenty-five years ago Henry Fonda starred in a film called '12 Angry Men'. The entire film, except maybe for a minute at the end, was shot in the jury room.

The film's thematic focus was equally unswerving. In a rivetting, minutely observed, yet eventless plot, the film warned of the threat to human decency posed by a casual attitude to evidence and a prejudiced attitude to race, to class and to youth.

The law, the film was saying, needs to be applied scrupulously if we are to be able to call ourselves civilised.

Now comes "Star Chamber" (directed by Peter Hyams, starring Michael Douglas). A newly installed judge (Douglas) is forced to dismiss the cast-iron case against The Southside Killer — who has killed five elderly women for their welfare cheques — on a legal technicality. Soon after the judge is forced to rule as inadmissible a piece of evidence that crucially links two crooks to the slaughter of a young boy after he had been tortured and sexually abused as part of a child pornography racket.

The message is clear: the law has got so concerned with protecting the rights of the defendant that it can no longer protect the community.

In despair the judge turns to his friend and former Law School tutor who tells him about the Star Chamber. The Chamber consists of nine Superior Court judges who are fed up to the teeth with the inadequacy of the law. They hear cases — the ones that got away — pronounce sentence on the evil-doers and hire a killer to carry it out.

By this time the movie has already turned the probability corner and made tracks for the Starsky and Hutch film factory situated at the far end of Fantasy Avenue.

Predicament

If any pertinent social comment or human predicament had managed to surface in the early part of the film, it disappears in a welter of deserted warehouses, fight scenes, exploding drug factories, car chases, cool cops with Kojak scripts, nick of time rescues, cross and double-cross.

After the twist in the plot has been followed by another twist we are left with a corkscrew narrative that fails to pull a single thematic cork.

The cork that should have popped concerns the relationship between the law as a set of rules operated by a select group with its own distinct ethos — the judges — and the community that the law is supposed to serve, a community increasingly

Andrew Hornung reviews the film 'Star Chamber' (on general release)

disenchanted with what it sees as 'the law'.

Instead — even if we overlook the gratuitous thrills-and-spills aspect of the film — what we have here is a group of judges (the community makes its appearance only very indirectly) who are disenchanted and a judge who becomes disenchanted with their way of dealing with their disenchantment.

It is interesting to compare the film with "Death Wish", a film which some years ago really captured that mood of outrage at the ineffectiveness of law enforcement in the face of street crime.

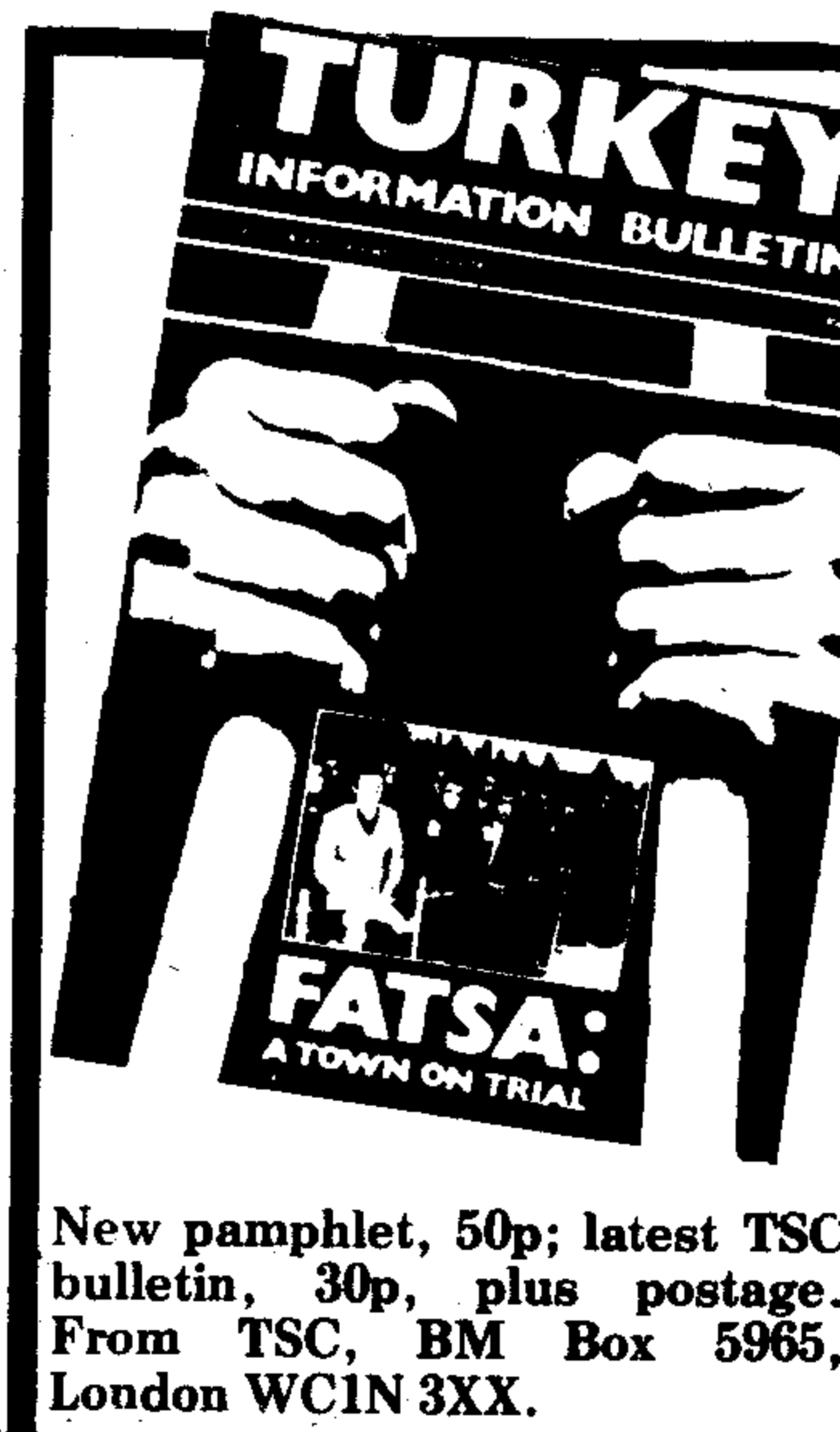
In that film the hero was the solid citizen (Charles Bronson) whose wife and daughter had been raped. Mr Solid Middle Class Citizen — he is an architect — junks his habitual liberalism and reasserts the old Puritan and frontier values that have "made America great". He becomes a lone vigilante admired by the ordinary decent folk of the community.

Now "Death Wish" was a vile, reactionary hate-whipping movie. But it made sense. "Star Chamber" tries screwing together the issue behind "Death Wish" with the cop-and-court worship of Ironside — and consequently screws up.

But if the rationality of the film is too confused to convince, the feeling is not. The feeling is not dissimilar to "Death Wish": here too the criminals "are creatures, they're not human beings", here too "manhood" is counterposed to reasoned behaviour, here too the irrevocable bullet is the only agent of justice and civic protection.

Trotsky on Stalinism

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



New pamphlet, 50p; latest TSC bulletin, 30p, plus postage. From TSC, BM Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX.

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 blacking action to halt the closures. For nationalisation without compensation under workers' management.

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

*Freeze rent and rates.

*Scrap all immigration controls. Racism 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.



Official badge of the 'Save the Mole' campaign. 25p or £2 for ten, from N. Barstow 165 Liverpool Rd, London N1.

Socialist Action-USA

By Terry Smith

IN A long-expected move with potentially far-reaching international implications, a new public faction of the American Socialist Workers' Party was launched at a Chicago conference at the end of October.

The faction — taking the name 'Socialist Action' — comprises in excess of 100 members, most of them either suspended members or recently expelled by the leadership of the SWP, headed by Jack Barnes, which has been conducting a ruthless purge of its political opponents.

Among the more prominent people involved are suspended National Committee members Nat Weinstein, Lyn Henderson and Frank Lovell. Socialist Action intends to launch its own newspaper in opposition to the Militant, the SWP's weekly paper since the 1930s.

Though the US Socialist Action appears to be politically divided on many questions, and has been launched on only the most sketchy programmatic

basis, the roots of its differences with the Barnes leadership go deep to some fundamental points.

In particular, members of the new faction have strongly criticised the sectarian, propagandist method imposed by the SWP leaders during the course of the Party's much-vaunted 'turn to industry.' Far from rooting SWP militants in the struggles and organisations of the American working class, the 'turn' has made them isolated, abstract propagandists for the virtues of the Cuban, Nicaraguan and Grenadian leadership, with no concrete programme, guidance or perspective for the day-to-day struggle in the unions at shop floor level.

The leaders of the Socialist Action faction have also — to varying degrees — challenged the SWP leadership's craven support for the politics of the Castro and Sandinista regimes,

and criticised the SWP's abstention from the actual campaigns in opposition to the war drive in Central America, the nuclear 'freeze' movement and struggles for women's rights. They have also opposed the increasingly tight bureaucratic regime imposed by the Barnes leadership — a regime which reached its peak this summer when, in the midst of a wave of expulsions of oppositionists, and with prominent NC members suspended, the leadership called off the Party's biennial policy-making convention at which the expulsions and suspensions could have been appealed.

It appears that the leadership of the new Socialist Action faction have been assured of support from international co-thinkers in the United Secretariat of the Fourth International for their project of declaring a public faction. The SWP is currently, however, recognised as the American sympathising section of the

USFI (barred from affiliation by reactionary US legislation).

The SWP — despite its constitution — is notorious for its ban on factions within its ranks. In August 1982, three leading members — two of them veteran Teamster militants from the Minneapolis strikes of the 1930s — were summarily expelled for forming the 'Cannon-Trotsky Faction' in opposition to the Barnes leadership.

Lessons

For the USFI now to support the formation of a public faction in the USA must make a formal political split with the SWP a near certainty.

And since the SWP has cultivated co-thinking factions within a number of USFI sections — including the Socialist League in Britain — this will have a world-wide effect.

To give more of a flavour of the issues and struggles current in the SWP, next week's Socialist Organiser



SWP leader Jack Barnes

will reprint extracts from the documents of the expelled Cannon-Trotsky Faction.

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

WEST London branch, Labour Committee on Ireland: Ceilidhe at the Venture Centre, Wornington Road, Wil, from 8pm on Sunday November 20. Admission £1: music, bar, light refreshments.

'THE Thorn in the Rose — the politics of Clause Four, a revolutionary Marxist critique.' By Brian McKenna. Produced by 'Socialist Student' (Glasgow). 30p per copy: by post 50p, or 80p for 2 copies, £1.25 for 3, £2 for 5, £3.95 for 10. From 'Socialist Student' (Glasgow) c/o 29 Bowmont Place, Halfway, Cambuslang, Glasgow.

LABOUR Committee on Ireland London region: Irish folk night, Saturday November 26 from 8pm at the Hackney Labour and Trades Hall, 96 Dalston Lane, E8. Admission £2 (50p unwaged).

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.

CLASS FIGHTER conference, 26 7 November in South London. Two days of workshops, videos and dis-

ussion on perspectives for Class Fighter. For details write to 214 Sickert Court, London N1 or phone Jane on 263 9484.

LONDON Labour Campaign for Gay Rights meets every four weeks at Marchmont Community Centre, Marchmont St, WC1, at 6pm. Next meeting Sunday December 4 - contact Mike 659 2938, Rob 341 0666.

Gay YS meets at the same place, again every four weeks. Next meeting November 20. Contact: Martin 263 9484.

Gay NUR just forming. Launch meeting soon, open to all lesbian and gay railworkers. Contact c/o 119, Southwyck, Colindale Avenue, London SW9.

Lesbians in the Labour Party: next national meeting Saturday November 26, 2pm in County Hall, London SE1. Creche available. Contact: Sarah Roelofs, c/o Gays The Word bookshop, Marchmont St, London WC1

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

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 Crumpton 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.

Stoke. Meets first and third Tuesdays of every month. Contact: Paul Barnett, 328198.

Hyndburn. Contact Accrington 395753.

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. Weekend school on the politics of SO, December 3/4. Contact Andy, 64088. SO is sold at the Community Co-Op, New Elvet. 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. Contact: Godfrey Webster, 169 Barclay Road, Burswood, Smethwick. SO is sold at the Other Bookshop.

Leicester. Supporters' meetings alternate Fridays at the Socialist Centre. Next meeting November 18. Contact Phil, 857908. SO is sold at Blackthorne Books, High St.

Coventry. Contact Keith, 75623.

Nottingham. Meets 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 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 Radcliff, 585640.

Northampton. Meets alternate Tuesdays. Next meeting November 29. Contact Ross, 713606.

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.

LONDON Hounslow. Sunday November 20, 8pm: business meeting. Contact Chris, 898 6961. Other London group contacts: Brent, Mick 624 1931; Camden, Mike 267 4806; Islington, Nik 278 1341; Hackney, Andrew 249 4618; East London, Susan 377 1328; South-East London and Orpington, Siu Ming 691 1141; Putney, Tom 789 7587.

Southwark/Lambeth. Next meeting, Tuesday 22 November. James Dunkerley on 'Central America after Grenada', 7.30pm at Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5. (The meeting on union leadership with Alan Thornett has been postponed to December).

Socialist Organiser London educationals.

1. Fridays, 6pm, at the London School of Economics, East Building, first floor, room E196.

November 18: Cuba and Central America. To follow: State and Revolution; The Russian Revolution; The USSR and Stalinism; Ireland; Why is the Left divided?

2. Sundays, 8pm, in Southwark (phone 609 7459 for details).

November 13: Black nationalism. To follow: Rise and fall of the Benn movement; Castroism.

3. Half-day school in Hounslow, Sunday December 4, 12noon to 5pm, at Hanworth Labour Hall.

Politics of SO, 'The parliamentary road', The Alternative Economic Strategy; The working class and revolutionary politics. Details: 898 6961.

4. Discussion series on imperialism, Thursdays 7pm at 214 Sickert Court, N1.

November 24: The New International Division of Labour. To follow: Lenin on imperialism; The economics and politics of 3rd World development; Is the USSR imperialist? For details of preparatory reading etc. contact 609 7459, 278 1341, or 354 1050.

Sold out to Thatcher?

YOU have done it again! I was appalled to read in Socialist Organiser (27 October) of your latest contemptible capitulation to British imperialism and fawning accommodation to its social-democratic henchman, the Labour Party.

Kautskyst renegades that you are, you failed to support the objectively progressive invasion of Grenada by America, who has laid claim to the island ever since the enunciation of the Monroe Doctrine, early in the last century.

The re-acquisition of Grenada is an integral part of the national democratic revolution in America, which, as Trotsky explained to your historical mentors 70 years ago, must inevitably flow over, in the epoch of rotting capitalism, into fully-fledged socialist revolution under the leadership of the peasantry and proletariat.

But the fundamental tenets of Marxism are eschewed by Socialist Organiser in its grovelling subservience to its capitalist paymasters.

America's invasion has brought it into an objectively progressive conflict with British imperialism, which seized the island in 1763 and colonised it with the ancestors of the present population as a strategic outpost for the domination of the American sub-continent.

The American government may not be a fully socialist one by your ultra-sectarian standards. (In fact, being Republican, it is probably too left-wing for your monarchist tastes). But an American defeat of British imperialism will weaken the world imperialist system in which American imperialism is dependent and serve as a massive encouragement to the

oppressed millions throughout the world.

Instead of pursuing this consistently socialist and anti-imperialist line, Socialist Organiser, capitulating to the jingoistic war hysteria, condemns the American national liberation struggle and seeks to hide its grotesque opportunism behind the spurious notion of "self-determination for Grenada".

Comrades, (I use the word with hesitation), Grenada is no bigger than the Isle of Wight, which in turn is not much bigger than a few streets in Islington. What will SO be calling for next? Defence of the GLC against the objectively progressive attempts of the Thatcher government to create a unified nation state, which, as Trotsky explained to your historical mentors 70 years ago, must inevitably flow over, in the epoch of rotting capitalism, into fully-fledged socialist revolution under the leadership of the peasantry and proletariat?

British imperialism is opposed to the invasion and occupation. It calls for withdrawal of liberating forces. SO is opposed to the invasion and occupation, and also calls for withdrawal of the American freedom fighters. What is the difference, save that you seek to cloak your pro-imperialist sentiments in the language of Marxism?

If SO had members in the Grenadian Parliament, I do not hesitate to say that they would vote for war credits.

Do not get me wrong. I am not a hard man. The tools of British imperialism who inhabit Grenada live in abominable conditions of poverty. But, let us face facts, it is not their country. If they want to remain British, then let them return to Britain, save that they cannot do so

because of the Tories' immigration laws.

Away with your servile slogans of capitulation to British imperialism! Let us inscribe in blood on the glorious banner of the international proletariat: Grenada-Yankee-Si! Britain, go home! Long live the American National Democratic Revolution, which as Trotsky explained to your Historical mentors 70 years ago, must inevitably flow over,

in the epoch of Rotting Capitalism, into fully fledged socialist revolution under the leadership of the Peasantry and Proletariat!

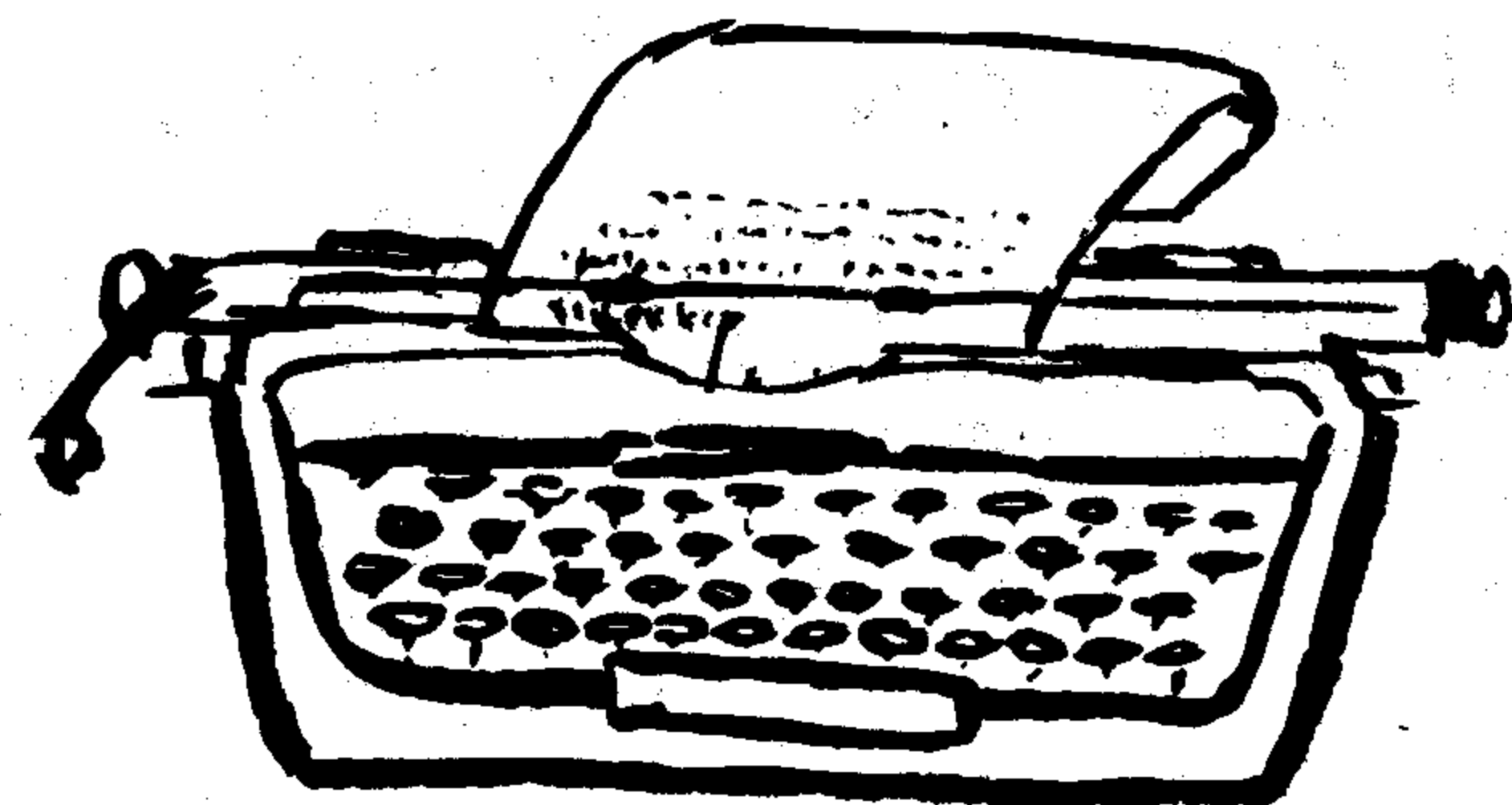
Please cancel my subscription to SO forthwith. I can find better uses for my money than financing the hand-maidens of British imperialism.

Yours in solidarity,
Stanley C. Raptis
Glasgow



The US in Grenada: continuing the War of Independence?

Writeback



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

We're no minority!

SOCIALIST ORGANISER claims to stand for "equal rights for women". How does this correlate with your comment in the Editorial (November 3) that women were an "oppressed minority". Oppressed we may be, but a minority we are not. We make up 52% of the population and you would do well to remember it.

It is typical of the male-dominated left to make this sort of fundamental mistake. You pay lip service to feminism "abortion on demand" etc. . . . but how often is something concrete done to bring equality between the sexes, not just policy, but a reality.

It is bad enough when the women's movement has to listen to the Tories advocating Victorian values, pushing women out of jobs into supporting an informal welfare state at home

(looking after the old, sick and young).

Socialist Organiser should realise that women are not impressed by a facade of concern for women's issues. One of the most important steps at the moment is Jo Richardson's Bill to fill the gaps in the Sex Discrimination Act. I hope you will support this with action rather than with condescending inaccuracies of the kind mentioned above.

FIONA SOROTOS
London EC1

* The offending sentence — formulated in haste and unfortunately not corrected before we went to press — called for 'support for the fight of oppressed minorities — including women, blacks and gay people' as a fundamental plank for left unity. We apologise for the slip: future coverage will look at the Richardson Bill.

The ebb and flow of the wardrive

THE article by Mick O'Sullivan in SO 154 completely misunderstands Alan Thornett's background piece in SO 153 to such an extent one wonders whether the comrade had read the paper.

At least Mick accepts that there is now a new post-Vietnam world-wide imperialist offensive thus reducing his difference with Alan Thornett to one of an assessment of how the 'Falklands Factor' affected this surge.

In this sense he at least distances himself from the moralistic approach of the lead article of SO 152.

Middle-class

This lead article, which does not mention imperialism, is full of good English middle class anger over the 'criminal' invasion of a Commonwealth country by Reagan.

The conclusion of this article was to limit the struggle against the invasion to protest inside the

Labour Party.

Denis Healey could possibly have written the whole of the lead article. The writer's theme was summed up by "That should see off what's left of the Falklands Factor in British politics."

Objectively

Unfortunately the Factor was not limited by the nationalist boundaries of Britain, and Reagan shot to the top of the US popularity polls.

The lead article predicted the exact opposite, but Reagan knew what the outcome of the invasion would be. He had seen the impact of the Malvinas war upon the fortunes of Britain's most unpopular Prime Minister.

He lived in the real world of deeds and not in the demi-monde of Guardian readers' dreams.

Thornett explained: "After

the Nicaraguan revolution, Carter under pressure from Pentagon generals stepped up the US war drive, and drew the line. The US was not prepared to see El Salvador go next. Carter began to escalate military intervention in El Salvador. The same policy was echoed and amplified by Reagan. It was against this background that Thatcher's war in the South Atlantic had a major international significance."

In other words, Comrade O'Sullivan's catalogue of the steady build up of American arms prior to the Malvinas invasion was known about by everyone, including Alan Thornett (and Fred Halliday), but not

by our leader writer.

The imperialist war drive is not some carefully controlled operation under the command of some imperialist in the sky.

Ebb and flow

There is an ebb and flow. And sometimes an unexpected break and the whole world has changed. Of course one can go back and say that there was this preparation made or this portent, but the most important thing is to grasp that change has taken place.

This lies at the difference between how a revolutionary wrestles with reality in order to change the world and a reform-

ist describes the world in order to accept. For a reformist it is already written.

The US did not react the same way in Grenada as they previously reacted towards the struggles in Afghanistan, Angola, El Salvador, Surinam or Jamaica.

Difference

That is the difference that Thornett is focusing on.

After Malvinas all has changed. No longer is there old fashioned destabilisation or aiding a few reactionary guerrillas. Today the US imperialist goes in with bombers and nuclear submarines. Real bombs

are dropped and real workers killed.

One percent of the population of Grenada has been slaughtered in the invasion. The build-up has changed to war.

Nicaragua and Cuba are directly threatened by this new development. In the Middle East any opposition to the US policies is now threatened by the most heavily armed war fleet in the history of the world. We now know the US is not shadow boxing, they mean business.

Rambling

Comrade O'Sullivan's article shows in his descriptions of the build up of US military might how much he has broken from the long and rambling denials of such changes made by John O'Mahony during the Malvinas war.

He must make that extra effort to break from a method which denies sharp changes in the world. The beginning of understanding for workers is to face this new situation and to mobilise the working class in a struggle for power.

Not to make this break is to be part of the problem of working class leadership and not to be part of the solution in the struggle to reconstruct a new socialist vanguard.

These are world-wide tasks and must for members of the Socialist Organiser Alliance involve increased discussion and cooperation with socialist groups throughout the world in order to gather the forces which can turn the imperialists' offensive into their graveyard.

We too have to make a leap in understanding if we are to survive upon the planet.

GARTH FRANKLAND,
Leeds.

The balance of forces

IN SO 152 Alan Thornett argued that the outcome of the South Atlantic war was a decisive shift in the 'world balance of forces' to the advantage of imperialism, but surely the collapse of the military regime in Argentina shows that this judgement is too simplistic.

To see the world simply in terms of 'imperialism' on one side and 'the masses' on the other means that we fade out powerful and important forces — like the Argentine bourgeoisie — which complicate the picture.

The Argentine ruling class was weakened by the outcome of the war. Alan Thornett discounts this fact with the comment that a military comeback is still a threat: but this is no more sensible than trying to deny the boost that the war gave to the Tories by saying that a working

class comeback is still a threat to them.

Since the war, military regimes have hit severe crises not only in Argentina but also in Brazil, Chile and Uruguay. This weakening of the position of imperialist interests and the local ruling classes was not necessarily caused by the war — other chains of cause-and-effect are in operation, too — but there is certainly no factual basis for saying that the powers-that-be are stronger in South America as a result of the war.

"But" — to quote the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci — "the most important observation to be made about every concrete analysis of relations of forces is this: that such analyses cannot and must not be ends in themselves . . . they only acquire significance if they serve to justify practical activity, an

initiative of will . . .

"The decisive element in every situation is the force, permanently organised and pre-ordered over a long period, which can be advanced when one judges that the situation is favourable . . . therefore the essential task is that of paying systematic and patient attention to forming and developing this force . . ."

Develop

The 'balance of forces' in Argentina depends entirely on the development of the socialist working class movement — and on its ability to focus ruthlessly on its own class interests and programme, rather than subordinating those to the 'balance of forces' between camps in world power politics.

COLIN FOSTER
Islington



To join or affiliate, write to Chris Richardson, 21 Devonshire Promenade, Lenton, Nottingham NG7 2DS. £5 for individuals, or for affiliated organisations, per 1,000 members. £2 for low-waged individuals. £1 for unwaged. Add 50p if you want the special issue of Gay Socialist.



Shell must go all out!

FROM Monday November 14 of this week, Shell tanker drivers and terminal workers began a national overtime ban and work to rule in support of their pay claim.

After mass meetings in the depots on Friday, 11th, the 1750 workers voted by more than 3-1 to reject management's slightly improved pay offer of 4.5% and to begin industrial action.

Transport union delegates are due to meet again in a week's time (November 21) to consider any plans for further action that may need to be put to their members.

Already all out strikes by craft and manual workers at Shell UK's two biggest refiner-

ies, Stanlow (Cheshire) and Shellhaven (Essex), involving about 2,900 workers, themselves involved in a fight over management's first and "final" pay offer of 4.5%, have caused three quarters of refinery output worth £4 million a day to be lost.

However, union hopes for a concerted campaign of industrial action in all of Shell's five UK oil and chemical sites were dealt a blow when a mass meeting of about 380 workers (out of the 570 TGWU workers), on Sunday November 13, at the Carrington chemical complex site (Manchester) voted against strike action, and to reject union instructions to close down the important naphtha pipeline link

from Stanlow, operated by six men.

This development came about after management had sent letters to all of its manual workers saying that the future of the site (a plant that has already faced one round of redundancies) was in jeopardy.

Despite this threat which affected the mood of the meeting, the overtime ban and work to rule is to continue there.

What is needed by all the Shell manual workers and drivers is a concerted campaign that links up both sets of pay claims: the refinery and chemical plant workers with that of the tanker drivers; instead of one pursued at present by the union

leadership, that sees the negotiations by the two sections of workers (many in the same union) as separate.

Negotiations

Such action should also aim to develop into making the important links with the other sections of workers; the tanker drivers employed by other UK based oil companies whose pay claims are now taking place.

Shell tanker drivers were first in the wage claim, though now BP and Texaco drivers have already rejected 4% offers and it seems likely a similar response will be taken by Esso drivers in their pay talks.

BT gets tough

BRITISH TELECOM management in Stoke have withdrawn their permission to Bill Cawley, Secretary of the POEU Potteries Branch, for him to conduct union business in work time. Their action followed a complaint from a POEU member whom Cawley had attacked over the phone for having not paid his levy for the anti-privatisation battle.

Management have obviously used this as an excuse to attack Cawley and the POEU in the Potteries to pre-empt industrial action which is likely in the near future. Stoke lies midway between Manchester and Birmingham. If either or both of these areas are called out then management would attempt to bus in workers from Stoke, thus bringing POEU members directly into the struggle.

THE CBI at the end of their conference in Glasgow last week took a firm stance in opposing trade union proposals of moving towards a common working week of 35 hours. Delegates said that shorter hours would put paid to plans for economic recovery. Plans by unions were described as "an act of the utmost folly"; and resistance to the campaign for introduction was viewed as "our responsibility to put a swift stop to a lemming-like leap in this direction".

THE NGA is to continue with a series of national mobilisations, in defiance of anti-picketing laws, at the Stockport Messenger group of newspapers. The dispute at the Stockport Messenger, a free weekly paper, with print works at Bury and Warrington, is over trade union rights and recognition, with the management attempting to set up non-union typesetting and printing facilities.

Last Wednesday [November 9], despite three injunctions under the Employment Act against the NGA over picketing and the blacking of work, mass pickets took place at Warrington [with over 700 NGA and NUJ members and other trade unionists from the North-West and Yorkshire attending], and at Stockport.

This Tuesday [November 15] the union's London region are sending a delegation of 100 members to demonstrate their solidarity on the picket lines.

THE NEW pay review body for nurses, a crucial factor in allowing the non-union RCN leadership to accept a two-year pay deal for nurses and so sabotage last year's eight-month NHS dispute, seems unlikely to be able to make a full report in time for the settlement due next April. So far only a chairperson has been appointed — a former chairperson of Shell UK and former president of the CBI: Sir John Greenborough. Even assuming that the complete body can be established, what is the chance of nurses getting a decent deal with such "impartial" arbiters?

New!

Solidarity betrayed

MEMBERS OF THE BASSINGSTONE POST OFFICE WORKERS STRIKE

This new pamphlet tells the story of the victimisation of Socialist Organiser supporter Alan Fraser and how the fight to defend him was sold out by the union officials. 25p plus postage from 75 Freemantle Close, Basingstoke.

Strong CPSA vote for Labour affiliation

By Steve Battlemuch and Mike Grayson

DESPITE the best efforts of the right-wing dominated NEC and of General Secretary Alistair Graham, a third of the votes cast in the recent ballot of CPSA members on the question of re-affiliation to the Labour Party favoured such a course of action. The last conference of the Civil and Public Services Association — the largest of the Civil Service unions — voted in favour of a campaign to set up a political fund and affiliate to the Labour Party.

The "campaign" consisted largely of the distribution of a single pamphlet with the inspiring title: "Reaffiliation to the Labour Party? The choice is yours."

Meanwhile the Tory/SDP faction "Daylight" (supported by many of the current NEC members) poured out large

numbers of leaflets arguing against re-affiliation. The chief argument was that the loveable old Labour Party was now nothing more than a nest of (shudder!) "Trotskyites".

Not content with his peerless display of careerism at TUC conference, Alistair Graham used his regular column in the union journal Red Tape to further ingratiate himself with the right wing, saying that unless the Labour Party gained a new moderate leadership it faced "the quick slide to extinction".

Instead of using his column to argue whole-heartedly for conference policy, he has preferred to take pot-shots at the Militant Tendency (the dominant faction in CPSA's Broad Left), and at the editorial independence of Red Tape itself.

As for the Broad Left, hampered both by lack of money and its own internal wranglings, it managed only to put out one

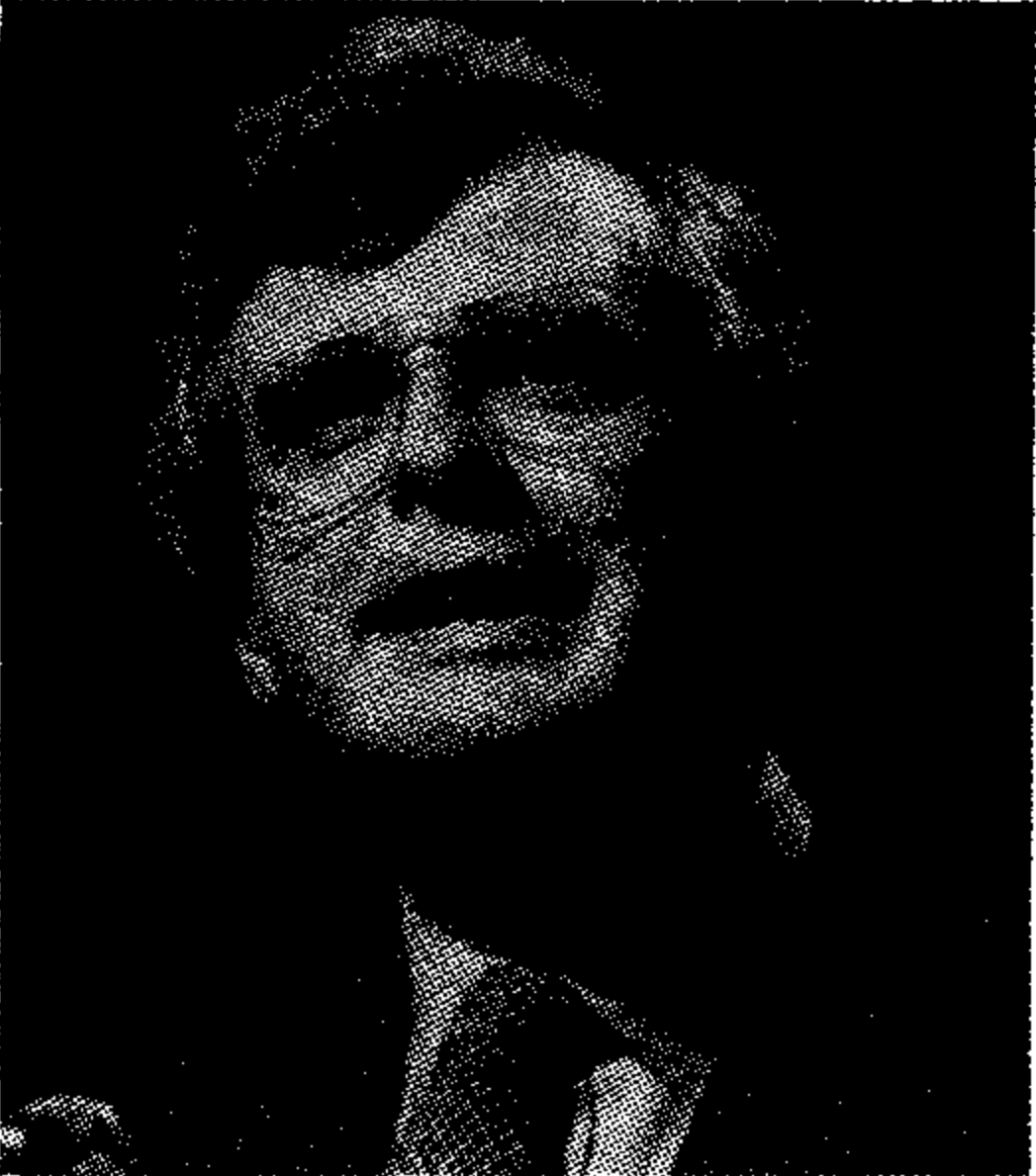
issue of Broadside in very inadequate numbers, arguing the case for affiliation. The campaign was, by default, left mainly in the hands of local activists.

Despite the difficulties and setbacks almost 31,500 members voted in favour of affiliation.

In a union where there has always been an influential right wing voice arguing against bringing politics into CPSA, this result is by no means a major defeat.

More worrying is the fact that only a little over half the total union membership returned their ballot forms at all. Although it would be foolish to deny that this implies an alarming apathy among sections of the membership, it is also a refutation of the right wing's argument that postal ballots (as this one was) automatically and dramatically increase membership participation.

Activists must now build on



Against affiliation: general secretary Alistair Graham

the reserves of strength shown by the 32% of votes in favour of affiliation. One method will be the establishment of Labour Party workplace branches, which can also serve the dual purpose of building links with activists in other Civil Service unions — such as CSU, IPCS and SCPS — who often share workplaces with CPSA members.

Prepared

But the Broad Left too must learn the lessons of this ballot result — the heartening aspects as well as the simple fact of defeat in votes — and turn outward from its current life of electioneering and resolution-mongering.

The possibilities of organising a real rank and file movement have been demonstrated: will the Broad Left be capable of rising to the challenge?

Civil servants walk out

AT 2.00pm on Wednesday 9 November at Nottingham Land Registry, over 300 civil servants in both the CPSA and SCPS (a union for executive grade and above) walked out to protest against suspension notices given to 98 of them by senior management.

A similar walk-out took place at 3.00 p.m. on Thursday to coincide with the 98 being pulled out on strike. Other walk-outs and strikes have occurred throughout the country: Birkenhead, Durham, Gloucester, Harrow, Lytham, Plymouth, Swansea, Tunbridge Wells and Weymouth.

Out of grade working proposals by management has been the cause of the dispute. As a result of a whole office inspection by HQ Staff last May in league with the Treasury, management attempted to introduce corner cutting work systems involving downgrading of jobs. This was an attempt to cut 200 jobs to appease Thatcher's axe-wielding minions in the Civil Service.

Backwater

In what has been, up to now, a rather quiet backwater of the Civil Service with only a handful of Broad Left activists, rank and file members were angry enough to totally reject the

By Chris Watkinson, CPSA Nottingham Land Registry Branch Secretary

management schemes at mass workplace meetings. Their refusal to comply with the retrograde treasury plans has resulted in the 98 suspension notices at Nottingham and similar numbers of suspensions at other registries.

In all these places the threatened members of both unions are now on official strike.

Senior union officials now have had a clear mandate for further action from their outraged members. The strike should escalate as management's attempt to bring workers into the key areas denuded by the strike and members refuse to move or handle blacked work.

Further suspensions are thus in the pipeline. It remains to be seen how much leadership will come from the 'Moderate' NEC of CPSA. Broad Left workers must take the lead.

While rank and file stand united in this fight there must be no sell-out at section or national level; and no let-up in financial backing from the National Disputes Committees or donations from other branches in CPSA or SCPS. Then we can win.

BPGC occupied

AN occupation started on Sunday night, November 13, by about a dozen members of the print union SOGAT 82 was joined by more than a hundred other workers, after scab engineers tried to dismantle two presses.

This followed an announcement at the weekend of the immediate closure of Robert Maxwell's British Printing and Communications Corporation printing plant at Park Royal, West London. The 400 workers there are now effectively sacked.

At the time of writing it appears that Maxwell has sent in a gang of thugs — "removal engineers" — with 14 lb hammers, to smash up the printing presses in the plant.

Management plans to "rationalise" production by shifting work to East Kilbride and Leeds may well come unstuck though, if SOGAT members there adhere to SOGAT instructions and stick to their previous refusal to print extra copies of publications arising from the London shortfall. This means that amongst other publications the Christmas edition of the Radio Times may be missing this year!

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.

NUPE official connives at victimisation

A local NUPE full-timer has played a scurrilous role in the victimisation of a hospital union militant.

Last Tuesday, 10th, management sacked NUPE branch secretary Martin Barclay from Cardiff Royal Infirmary. The reason for the sacking was given as "gross misconduct" — he was physically assaulted by another member of staff and was forced to defend himself.

In normal circumstances as a first offence and under this kind of provocation it would have led to a final written warning, but clearly there was a political decision to get rid of a leading militant in the NHS in South Glamorgan.

Local management are obliged to consult with their superiors at area level in these circumstances and it is likely that the decision was taken at the top.

With privatisation looming next year on top of a 3% cut in NHS spending, management obviously grasped the opportunity with both hands.

NUPE members reacted by walking off the job at 8am Friday morning to attend a meeting. There they decided to come out on strike on Monday 14 November and demand that Martin Barclay be reinstated.

But then, with the connivance of management, the NUPE area officer, Stewart Barber, called a further meeting on the Friday completely against the rules, and, in the absence of the branch secretary, got the strike decision overturned.

The case is now due to go to appeal — which is likely to be just as fixed as the interview. But the only serious hope of restoring Martin Barclay's job is through industrial action at his place of work.

Land Rover sackings

BL's Land Rover subsidiary is to axe 1,560 jobs and close nine plants over the next two years. The decision was not part of BL's 1983 corporate plan and was first announced to union representatives at a meeting on Saturday.

Doug Gray of the TGWU National Committee, who is a steward at Land Rovers, said:

"The meeting should have been dealing with annual pay and conditions — but the redundancies were virtually sprung on us."

The closures would reduce Land Rovers' workforce to 9,700 — a 16% cut. Since it was declared a separate business within BL four years ago, Land Rover's workforce has already been reduced from 14,200 to 9,700 at the same production level. In 1982 alone productivity rose by 14%!

1,000 of the jobs to go will be from the hourly paid (manual) workforce, the rest from the white-collar staff. Land Rover managing director Tony Gilroy (whose track record includes cutting the Sherpa workforce in half at Common Lane) claims the closure will save £14 million a year in overheads.



Opposed to defiance: Bryan Stanley and Len Murray

POEU betrayal

from back page

still being implemented by the POEU.

Having seen the Executive crack on this first-ever injunction, management and their Tory mentors will be confident that they will crack every time the courts intervene.

Indeed a new, humiliating blow will be struck in the New Year, when Mercury press their demands for damages.

It was the POEU Executive that was decisive. There was never a chance that the conference would overturn the EC recommendation of surrender.

The whole campaign of industrial action against Mercury and the Privatisation Bill was based on extremely limited action, sustained by paying full average take-home pay to the members in dispute.

That was never a way to build a fighting, angry mass membership — certainly not angry enough to overturn a retreating Executive and defy the courts. At the peak of the action only 2% of the POEU membership was actually taking action at any one time.

The result was predictable and plain to see: most delegates to the conference had come from areas where members have had little or no involvement in the action.

And they had been told by POEU Head Office that the initial High Court ruling in the union's favour had been secured by the Executive's earlier retreat in lifting the "secondary" backing of Mercury's financial backers.

From this confusion they were confronted by the manoeuvres of the right wing and the inadequacy of the Left. An enormous Broad Left meeting — over 300 strong — showed itself ready to lobby the crucial NEC meeting, but was derailed into a futile lobby of the right wing "Mainstream" faction's open meeting instead.

Meanwhile in the Executive meeting, Bryan Stanley and his cronies plugged away relentlessly from 8 pm until 1 am before pushing for a vote, confident at last that they had won a majority.

Stanley had already issued to conference a letter from Len Murray endorsing a line of capitulation to the injunction. The phrasing makes it clear that Stanley had written to the TUC seeking precisely such a reply. Murray wrote:

"Congress has not yet decided that any union obeying an injunction would be contravening Congress policy . . . and that conference had pointed out on behalf of the General Council that there was no question of the TUC setting out to break or encourage members to break the law . . . The recent Congress rejected a motion to show a policy of non-compliance with the legislation."

The unmistakable — and deliberate — message from this letter is to call on the POEU to capitulate to the injunction. This was compounded by well-publicised advice from the union's legal advisors to "observe" the

THE POEU right wing are not the only section of the union bureaucracy retreating from a fight with disastrous consequences. Two weeks ago we saw a BL-style eleventh-hour sell-out of the pay struggle in the shipbuilding industry as workers stood poised for occupations and national strike action.

In the NUM, the leadership's retreat from the necessary fight for all-out strike action over the pay review has led to the adoption of the divisive policy of an overtime ban, which is how a sitting duck for sabotage by right wing leaders and attack from Ian MacGregor and the NCB.

In the case, too, TGWU leaders are stubbornly avoiding all-out concerted action to improve on a 4.5% across the board pay offer.

Only in the print industry, where both NUJ and NGA have defied court injunctions against "secondary" blacking and mass picketing, is there official-led resistance to the Tory legislation.

court ruling.

Stanley added a few touches of his own, claiming that it was specified in the POEU's rules that the union's officers, staff and members must "act lawfully". Had this been the case and union militants obeyed anti-union legislation in the early British trade unions of the last century there would, of course, be no POEU or TUC today.

Stanley piled on the threats, warning that the union would be "smashed" and bankrupted if it defied the injunction. A good response to this had come when the night before a delegate had pointed out "I would rather be a member of a union bankrupt of money than one bankrupt of ideas."

Despite strong opposition from the floor, the Executive's motion of surrender was carried by a large 94,000-38,000 majority.

The following day came the news of the lock outs and suspensions, a reaffirmation of the fight against privatisation, and collecting in donations and a £500,000 UCW loan towards the dispute fund. Many delegates were moved to tears as the conference erupted into "We shall not be moved". Anyone might have thought that the injunction

and the Privatisation Bill had been smashed.

But it is the union's campaign that is in tatters. When asked how the Executive would now respond to a further injunction, Stanley's only reply was "the campaign will be flexible, we will sometimes call the members out and other times ask them to go back."

The fight against privatisation cannot be won by such Duke of York tactics. 50 members of the union face the immediate threat of dismissal for refusing to cross picket lines. In London pickets report threats of attack from the SPG. BT, Mercury and the Tories are orchestrating their attacks, as the POEU and TUC right wing block involvement of the rank and file.

The almost euphoric solidarity of the last day of the POEU conference must be turned into widespread industrial action.

Unless the left in the leading branches (mostly centred in London) can take a lead and mobilise their membership irrespective of the probable injunctions, the fight could soon revert to the pathetic letter-writing and parliamentary pressure campaign which the union correctly rejected last June.

Shipyard sell-out threat to Clyde

THERE WAS no reason for workers in the Scott Lithgow shipyards on the Lower Clyde to rejoice at the deal on pay and productivity which union leaders and the management of British hipbuilders (BS) agreed to on 2 November.

Not only is the deal bad enough in itself, since it makes payment of a mere £7 per week increase conditional upon productivity increases of up to 50%. But for workers at Scott Lithgow, the deal spells the green light for even more attacks on jobs and working conditions in the yard.

For three months, ever since the announcement of last year's losses, workers at the yard have been subject to a tirade of abuse in the local media and management attempts to foist a so-called "survival plan" on them.

The main features of the plan involve: increased job flexibility, leading to inevitable job losses; an ongoing programme of voluntary redundancies; and the introduction of three-shift working, meaning effective abolition of overtime with no pay rise in compensation.

Rundown

In the longer term, management's plans seem to be aimed at a complete rundown of the yard's workforce, leaving only a skeleton core workforce, and bringing in sub-contract labour to do the work on each contract. In that way the yard's profitability could be restored and therefore be ripe for privatisation.

Right now though, the goal is slashing the workforce and boosting productivity. The yard's main customer at the moment, Britoil, has given management a helping hand in trying to pressurise the workforce into acceptance of the "survival plan".

Two days before the meeting of 2 November between BS and union leaders, Britoil announced its intention of taking BS to court for cancellation of the contract for Britoil on which it is currently working, now some two years behind schedule. Withdrawal of the contract

would mean complete closure of Scott Lithgow.

The following day, the eve of the union-management meeting, Tory ministers George Younger and Norman Lamont announced in the Commons that the contract might just be saved — if productivity was increased and the BS offer on pay and productivity was accepted by the unions the following day.

Whether the threat of Britoil withdrawing the contract made union leaders accept the management offer is questionable. Given their lousy record, they would have accepted whatever management had on offer anyway.

But Britoil's threats have had a very real impact on the situation at Scott Lithgow itself. They have provided additional ammunition for the propaganda campaign about the "work-shy" and "lazy" workforce, and also another stick with which management can bludgeon the Scott Lithgow workers into acceptance of the much-vaunted "survival plan".

What makes matters worse is the lack of any backing for the workers from their own union leader and officials, both nationally and locally.

Jim Murray, chairperson of the national Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee, put up even less of a fight against job losses than many of the businessmen at last week's CBI conference. And within the yard itself, the shop stewards committee, in particular convenor Duncan McNeill, has failed to plan out a campaign of effective resistance to the "survival plan".

Tool

Moreover the Boilermakers Broad Left, whatever its situation and level of activity nationally, is very much a tool of the Communist Party on Clydeside and made use of only at election times in the union. Campaigning on issues such as job losses

and working conditions does not feature amongst its — in any case — limited range of activities.

Scott Lithgow workers are threatened with job losses for refusal to accept the "survival plan". But acceptance of the plan will definitely lead to job losses, given its contents. Defence of jobs at the yard does not therefore hinge on acceptance of the plan, but on mounting a campaigning fight back within the yard, tied up to similar resistance throughout the rest of BS.

If the Boilermakers Broad Left cannot transform itself into a body capable of defending jobs at Scott Lithgow and the rest of BS, then many militants will be left wondering what is the point of it existing anyway.

Secretaries strike

OVER 200 Sandwell school secretaries voted by a 2-1 majority to go on all-out strike last week over a regrading dispute which has gone on for over four years.

Some of the women have to exist on a take-home pay of £44 a week, well below the recommended minimum wage.

Their action has the full support of the local NALGO branch who are supporting the secretaries by organising public meetings and arranging a strike levy.

The Council has, in effect, locked out the women and they have been refusing to answer telephones and handle school monies. Despite the fact that Sandwell has a majority Labour Council, the actions taken against these workers fits in with what we have seen happen in the Tory-controlled boroughs.

School secretaries do not have a tradition of militancy and it shows the desperation to which they were driven to take action on this question.

The secretaries have received official support from the local NUT and NAS branches.

By STAN CROOKE



'Yes, we would back invasion'

By Harry Sloan

IN THE bluntest official statement yet of the USA's belligerent attitude, Reagan's top national security advisor Robert McFarlane has declared a willingness to support "any decision" by reactionary Central American regimes to invade Nicaragua.

McFarlane was being questioned following a top level secret meeting of the formerly defunct Central American Defence Council (Condeca), which includes El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama and Honduras.

Condeca was formed by the USA in 1963 and its reemergence is part of Reagan's offensive against Nicaragua which formerly — under Somoza — was part of the alliance.

At the meeting it appears that military commanders discussed what "legal" pretexts might be available to them were they to mount an invasion against Nicaragua's Sandinista regime.

They concluded by seeking a guarantee of full scale logistical support from the USA — backed up by outright military intervention.

Asked whether the State Department would support such an adventure, McFarlane categorically replied:

"Yes. We support what it takes to support the independence of Nicaragua's neighbours in the future. To the extent that Nicaragua exports revolution and tries to subvert this process we oppose that."

Of course there is not the slightest evidence of the Sandinista regime trying to "export" revolution — though revolutionary struggles are to a greater or lesser extent in existence in El Salvador, inside Guatemala and in other Central American

countries.

ut there is confirmed evidence that Honduras — where over 4,000 US troops are currently staging "exercises" and which harbours an estimated 6-7,000-strong CIA-funded army of "contra" mercenaries — and Costa Rica — where another concentration of CIA-run "contras" are based — have been relentlessly seeking to "export" counter-revolution to Nicaragua.

Now, according to Defence Under Secretary Fred Ikle, the USA is to send another 1,000 military personnel to Costa Rica to engage in "civil action", "such as road building". At present around a dozen army engineers are building barracks and support facilities for 2,000 contras on the Coast Rican border with Nicaragua.

So great has grown the US involvement in Costa Rica that the country's Foreign Minister, Fernando Volio Jimenez has resigned, apparently in protest at the extent of the anti-Sandinista operations from his country. Costa Rica itself has no army — but its President has been more than willing to accommodate the CIA's hired gunmen and facilitate their murderous cross-border raids.

But despite the deployment in the region of US military aid, "advisors" and bands of mercenaries, the State Department has not succeeded even in taming the left wing guerrilla struggle in El Salvador, which has continued to make new gains against the vicious ruling junta.

Ikle, fresh back from El Salvador, was forced to admit that "It would be exaggerating to say things are going badly, but the momentum has become sluggish."

To put right the problems faced by the junta's troops, however, would cost tens of millions more in military aid to El Salvador. Sooner than confront a hostile US Congress with such a proposal, Reagan continues to mount the offensive through Honduras and other pliable military regimes in the area, focusing on the alleged "threat" posed by Nicaragua.

The fight to undermine this imperialist offensive is not by any means the sole responsibility of the Central American revolutionaries and the American working class. In Britain, too, and throughout Europe the fight for labour movement support to the struggle for the liberation of Central America from imperialist rule must be urgently stepped up, before Reagan feels able — directly or through a proxy invasion — to threaten the overthrow of the Sandinista regime.

Socialist ORGANISER

Behind POEU betrayal

TUC GIVES IN TO TEBBIT

By Ricky Houston

LAST week's retreat by the Executive of the Post Office Engineering Union in the face of Tory anti-union legislation is a sell-out of the POEU and of the whole working class.

It was a sell-out that had been worked for both by the POEU right wing, headed by Bryan Stanley and by the TUC bureaucracy: but the Broad Left majority on the NEC split at the most crucial point of the struggle and handed the right wing an easy victory at the conference.

Stanley and his cronies knew — as did Len Murray — that to maintain the union's "blacking" of the private Project Mercury in defiance of the Appeal Court injunction would have abruptly switched the fight from its restricted, selective level to an all-out battle for the existence of the union.

Faced with the prospect of fines and claims for damages,

when the Broad Left cracked, and four executive members (one a Communist Party member) capitulated.

The Executive's decision to bow to the injunction and call off the "blacking" effectively kills off any serious fight against the privatisation of British Telecom. Tebbit's anti-union Bill will now help Tebbit in his new existence as Minister for Privatisation to force through the sale of the giant corporation.

The reason is clear: though a POEU appeal against the injunction goes before the House of Lords in three weeks' time, nobody seriously believes it will be upheld.

This means that BT management can choose their time to seek a further injunction against the remaining selective action

Continued page 15



DUTCH STRIKE WAVE

By a correspondent in Amsterdam

ceded ½% on wages of public sector workers but has said that there will be no further concessions.

It is a hardline attitude and the feeling by workers is that the government is not doing any-

thing to reduce unemployment (Holland has the highest unemployment rate in the Common Market) and the belief that the government is trying to destroy the welfare state has brought the situation to a head.

Talks this week, ordered by the Dutch courts, between the government and the main

unions involved in the action could prove decisive in determining the future of the dispute.

It is quite likely that the union leaders could accept a deal based on a smaller cut in wages than the 3% presently offered and a guarantee of more jobs and thus derail the strike movement.

Monthly Fund

A QUARTER of the way through the fund drive, but only an eighth of the target raised. So we must indeed double our efforts!

Nottingham has joined the other nine groups in the table this week, but 27 groups have yet to start.

Nottingham supporters are planning an Xmas party, and a stall; and the infamous Islington jumble sale is taking place this week. Other groups must make plans too; especially those who haven't started yet.

Meanwhile the fund column has received the following letter from Brent supporters:

"We resent the slur on our good name in the labour movement implied by the epithet 'animal lovers' in your column last week. In fact our efforts are mainly due to the great demand for 'Shergar coats' in Neasden market. We demand that you immediately retract this dastardly statement as we shall undertake proceedings through the Press Council, the Labour Campaign for Press & Media Freedom and Colonel Gaddafi [not necessarily in that order] if you do not."

Being at the top of the table [74%, who can stop them now?], success is obviously going to these people's heads. The most harmless comments in the fund column are being seized upon and questioned. We say to Brent supporters: we shall not retract! Why did you not mention resorting to a labour movement inquiry? And what about the weekend trips made by one of your number to the Essex marshes? These questions must be answered.

Meanwhile, send donations to: The Treasurer, 214 Sickert Court, Essex Road, London N1 2SY.

GROUP	% achieved
Brent	74%
Sheffield	16%
Cardiff	13%
Hull	12%
Leeds	12%
Southwark	9%
SE London	8%
Tower Hamlets	7%
Halifax	6%
Nottingham	5%

Groups yet to score: Basingstoke, Birmingham, Bristol, Chelmsford, Durham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Harrogate, Huddersfield, Leicester, Leigh, Liverpool, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Northampton, Oxford, Rochdale, Stockport, Stoke, Wallasey, York, Camden, Hackney, Haringey, Hounslow, Islington, Putney.



Official badge of the 'Save the Mole' campaign. 25p or £2 for ten, from N.Barstow 165 Liverpool Rd, London N1.