

Break
links
with
Tories

Socialist ORGANISER

Recall
the
TUC

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Israeli and imperialist interventions leave

LEBANON IN RUINS

By Clive Bradley

FOLLOWING fierce fighting in Beirut since the beginning of February, US marines in Lebanon are being moved out of the city to be relocated on ships off shore. British troops are also being withdrawn.

The transfer of US forces will not be immediate or simultaneous. According to Reagan, "US military will remain on the ground in Lebanon for retraining and equipping the Lebanese army and protecting our remaining personnel."

But the indications are that the US plans to pull its forces back to its offshore task force, and seek to guarantee the Lebanese state from the sea. Its fleet already has a record of military involvement in Lebanon - notably last September when it was responsible for the bombardment of Druze militias on the mainland.

French President Mitterrand has insisted that French troops will stay, although the Italian government is also withdrawing its contingent to the multinational force.

The crisis was precipitated by an uprising in Beirut, largely organised by the Druze militias of Walid Jumblatt and the Shi'a Muslim fundamentalist 'Amal (Hope) movement of Nabih Berri.

The government of Amin Gemayel, which was installed after the Israeli invasion of 1982, and has been backed by the US, has clearly collapsed. After the fighting broke out, members of the government defected, and then the whole Cabinet resigned.

The Lebanese army - restructured after 1982 so as to be dominated by Gemayel's Falange Party - fell apart during the conflict. According to some reports, 90% of the army surrendered their arms without protest.

The slaughter inflicted on Lebanon by the Israeli invasion, and imperialist intervention since then, were all justified as operations to secure 'peace' in civil war-torn Lebanon.

'Operation Peace in Galilee' as the Israeli invasion was called, led to tens of thousands of dead and wounded, and thousands of refugees. The Falangist government, which was designed to be a stable ally for Israel and imperialism, had to be backed by US military intervention and a war of attrition against the Druze and



French troops in Beirut

other Muslim forces in Beirut and the Shouf mountains.

As we go to press, the US fleet is once again bombarding Syrian positions in Lebanon.

Imperialist-Israeli 'peace' has only worsened the day-to-day tragedy that the Lebanese people have lived through. Whoever they back to replace Gemayel, it will be a government favourable to their interests, not a government wanted by the mass of Lebanese.

The Lebanese civil war of 1975-6 began as a just war against the Christian-dominated sectarian nature of the Lebanese state, and over the right of the Palestinian Resistance to exist in Lebanon. It degenerated into communal slaughter, partly due to the

involvement of Israeli and Arab capitalist states (like Saudi Arabia and Syria), backing sides in the war and changing sides in the war according to their own interests.

What was worse, the Lebanese National Movement - the oppressed Muslims and groups allied to the Palestinians - bowed to and worsened the increasing communal polarisation by dropping its anti-sectarian, secular programme in 1976.

An end to big power interference in Lebanon would help alleviate Lebanon's problems, but the anti-Falangist forces need to renew their commitment to a secular state, and seek to end the community-based sectarian nature of the conflict now if peace is to be secured.

Get Tories on the run!

POLITICAL banana-skins have dominated the Thatcher government's record in the months since it won the most stunning victory of any election since 1945.

And now the stench of financial scandal, of petty personal money-grubbing corruption, creeps up on Margaret Thatcher herself.

First her son was exposed as using Thatcher's prime-minis-

terial position to help his business activities.

Perhaps Mark Thatcher at 30 could be dismissed as 'a stupid boy', Margaret Thatcher's version of President Jimmy Carter's redneck brother Billy. But now Dennis Thatcher, Queen Margaret's consort, is caught at the same financial game.

Like corrosive poison gas, the cloud of scandal and corruption edges closer to the prime minister herself. Mrs Thatcher is slowly being undercut and discredited.

Good — but how ridiculous. Margaret Thatcher's government has made Britain a heaven for spivs and asset-strippers of all kinds, and a capitalist hell for millions of working class people.

The face of Thatcher's Britain is the brutal, ugly, nightmare of corrupt, socially irresponsible capitalism. What even an Edward Heath denounced as the 'unacceptable face of capitalism' is held up to the British people by Margaret Thatcher as her vision of the beautiful society.

She proclaims it and she fights for it. She glories in the memory of red-in-tooth-and-claw 19th century capitalism and offers it to the British people as a blueprint of the desirable future.

And this Mrs Thatcher is being undermined and mired because of the petty knavery of a doltish son and a husband on the make!

But then, come to think of it, when they finally got the big-time gangster Al Capone, it was for tax evasion.

And the Hitler-scale war criminal and mass murderer Richard Nixon was kicked out of the US presidency for inspiring a small burglary and telling a few lies.

In any case, the magical 'Falklands Factor' which fuelled Margaret Thatcher back to Downing St in June, despite her crimes against the British people, is well and truly dead in British politics. As dead as the Argentine junta and the sailors on the Admiral Belgrano and HMS Sheffield.

If the TUC were not led by well-heeled office boys unfit to run a small works canteen; if the Labour leaders were not Parliament-bound talk-mongers — then we could make it impossible for this government to continue to rule.

We could make it impossible for any government to rule Britain with the Thatcherite politics of social asset-stripping, attacks on democratic rights, and shameless indifference to the plight of the millions of capitalism's victims.

Inside



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Plus letters, reviews and labour history.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

Support Liverpool!

KEN Livingstone gave new heart to Labour activists with his speech over the weekend calling for defiance of Tory laws that will slash local services and local democracy.

But Livingstone and his co-thinkers have also — so it seems — been pressurising Labour councillors in Liverpool *not* to defy the Tories this year.

"We're not going to stab them in the back, but we'll have to tell them that if they can stick with us, then they should", said David Blunkett, twin star along with Livingstone of the local government Left, in Tribune last week.

In an interview with Militant last week Liverpool council Deputy Leader Derek Hatton also indicates, unmistakably, that Liverpool has been coming under pressure.

The argument, once again, is that we must buy time. Labour must keep its powder dry for a bigger struggle in 1985, when rate-capping and the abolition of the metropolitan authorities comes in.

What action will be undertaken for that bigger struggle remains vague. "to spell out options at this stage is merely to give a hostage to fortune", writes Blunkett in Tribune.

But whatever the action, another year of Labour-administered cuts, rents rises, rate rises, and squeezed real wages for council workers cannot be a good preparation for it.

Socialists must argue for Labour to fight now.

Fight is overdue

This is the text of a leaflet issued by Socialist Organiser at the Labour Party local government conference on February 3-5.

RATE-CAPPING and abolition of the metropolitan authorities will be defeated only by industrial and tenants' action.

Tory dissidents and public opinion may be factors in the situation. But they will certainly not sway the government. If the labour movement fails to deploy its own strength, then it cannot expect others to win our battle for us.

NALGO has resolved not to co-operate with the abolition of the GLC and the metropolitan authorities. To carry through this policy it will have to be prepared to move from non-cooperation to positive industrial action when the government responds by legal action or victimisations. But if NALGO does carry the policy through — and if other unions can be rallied to support it — then the government can be defeated. Labour has to build on NALGO's policy.

No amount of votes and speeches in council chambers can defeat the government. But council Labour Groups can play a crucial part in an overall labour movement fightback. They can give a lead for the formation of a fighting united front of council workers, other workers, tenants, and local communities.

To do so, Labour councillors must be arms of the local labour movement, and not, primarily, administrators of the local state. If Labour councils cut jobs and services, and increase rents this year, hoping thereby to avoid being selected for rate-capping next year, they will undermine the whole basis of a coherent labour movement fight against the Tories' plans for local government.

Councils must support workers

Workers, tenants, and working class communities will only support Labour councils if the Labour councils support them. The hostile attitude taken by many Labour councils to the recent residential social workers' dispute has done great damage to the possibilities of a united fight against the Tories.

Another round of big rate rises this year will be no better. Although a large chunk of rates comes from the well-off, big rate rises also hit heavily at many working class families and at small shopkeepers, people whose support Labour needs. Fine principles about local democracy will sound unconvincing to them if what they mean in practice is bigger bills for the same, or worse, services.

What Vidya Anand of the London Labour Party Executive has said about the GLC goes for many other authorities: "London Labour should stop cuddling up to the London Tories and the SDP, stop trying to form a 'popular front' against Mrs Thatcher. This is not the way. It will lose us credibility with our own supporters . . . The building of a rank and file movement in the unions . . . is far more important for the defence of the Labour GLC than the non-partisan, 'non-political' fronts . . ."

Liverpool City Council has given a lead. They intend this spring to take a stand on no cuts, no rent rises, and no rate rises, and to confront the government with a demand for more money. Other council Labour Groups should support them and take a similar stand. For years Labour councils have raised rates or squeezed services with the argument that the time for confrontation has not yet come . . . perhaps next year! This argument is now more delusory than ever.

Cynical wisdom not needed

In fact many other councils are better-placed to take a lead in confronting the government than Liverpool is. Labour has a majority of only 51 to 48 on the City Council: it will only take a couple of Labour councillors losing their nerve for the confrontation policy to be lost. Council deputy leader Derek Hatton says in this week's Militant: "For one or two reasons it is possible that [a Liberal/Tory budget could be pushed through the council] particularly if it became clear that the movement was not prepared to support the council."

But those who dismiss Liverpool's fight now, saying that it is a sham, or mad ultra-leftism, are only helping to make the odds against it worse. Labour can well do without such cynical wisdom. A fight is long overdue. Support Liverpool. Support council workers and tenants. No cuts, no rent rises, no rate rises!

Labour councillors' conference

By Alan Clinton, Chief Whip, Islington Council



THE Labour Party local government conference, held each year in the depth of winter, is normally a weak and ineffective affair, because it takes no decisions and has no direct influence on Party policy.

This year's conference in Nottingham on February 3-5 was somewhat different. This was both because of the great crisis facing local government services as a result of the Tory attacks, and because of sharp differences over tactics amongst those present.

Many leaders of local authorities were represented there and numerous councillors.

As one delegate pointed out, Labour local authorities cover 56% of the population of the country.

It should be emphasised that the great majority of those present were certainly not opposed in any very clear cut way to cuts, and had implemented a great many.

Outside Sheffield and London many 'old guard' groups have actively sought to stick to Tory 'guidelines' and to keep their heads down in the hope that the attacks on their services will simply go away.

One campaign going on at the conference reflected this most graphically. A group of women from Wakefield were gaining support for their opposition to the closure of their day nurseries by the administration of Sir Jack

Smart, who acts as Labour spokesperson for all the urban authorities in the Association of Metropolitan Authorities.

Not all local Labour councillors support Smart's politics, but similar if less brutal cuts are being carried through by Labour local authorities in Newcastle and many other places.

The speeches from the platform on the first night of the conference offered little alternative perspective. Party leader Neil Kinnock, who was supposed to be making a big contribution to defending those under attack in local govern-

ment, confined himself to one line jokes and statements about how compassionate Labour local authorities are compared to Tories.

He was also alleged to have said that Labour local authorities should do nothing which appeared to defy the Tories, though it was hard for me to determine this from the various rhetorical flights of fancy.

Jack Cunningham, front bench spokesperson on local government issues, seemed to know a little more on the actual problems facing local authorities and to have even less idea about

what they should do. He rebuked all those, like Ted Knight and Hazel Smith from Lambeth and Derek Hatton from Liverpool, who advocated a fight and defiance in any way.

He even complained about those who expected the Labour front bench to have any policies on local government. There was time enough, he said, for that, over the next four years.

The forthcoming confrontation in Liverpool even received tepid support from Jack Straw, the other Labour front bencher on the issue, who promised in one fringe meeting to visit the area. Many of us were delighted to see that one authority is in a position to confront the Tories this year, even if the crunch will come for the rest of us a year from now.

Despite their small majority which may well lead to their collapse, and their unclear tactics, which may have the same result, they clearly merit full support.

Whatever the short term outcome of the current Liverpool stand, the issue will soon merge into others, as defiance of Tory proposals to abolish the metropolitan authorities has to be translated into more concrete terms and as the Tories attempt to enforce their cuts on local authorities throughout the land.

Ken Livingstone and David Blunkett spoke of the need to fight in these circumstances. It is to be hoped that they will express clearer support for Liverpool in the meantime.

TUC plans action

THE TUC is calling a national march and rally in London on Thursday March 29.

It will be part of a 'nation-wide week of activities' from March 24 to March 30, to be undertaken by TUC local gov-

ernment unions and TUC Regional Councils in defence of local democracy and local services.

The TUC says that 'detailed arrangements are now being drawn up in consultation with local government unions and TUC Regional Councils.'

'All affiliated unions will be informed and encouraged to give maximum support.'

'The TUC is working closely with the Local Government Campaign Unit, which is composed of the local authorities threatened by the Government proposals for abolition of the metropolitan counties and the Greater London Council.'

The contact phone number is 01-387 9893.

WHAT'S BEHIND



Islington Socialist Organiser day school

Sunday February 12, from 10.30 am at Dorinda Lodge, 10 Lough Rd. 'Labour and the unions', with video 'Questions of Leadership'.



Mersey schedule

Liverpool's battle-plan.

*February 27: special conference of delegates from the Merseyside labour movement.

*March 22: Lobby of Parliament.

*March 26: Recall labour movement conference.

*March 29: Council fixes its budget. Possible one-day strike.

The March 26 conference will also discuss plans for further industrial action if the councillors are penalised as a result of a 'no cuts, no rent or rate rises' budget.

MPs slam witch-hunt

THE following statement has been agreed by the Campaign Group of Labour MPs:

The Campaign Group, having taken note of:

a) The recent conference decisions against witch-hunts, and

b) the legal advice given to the NEC that Constituency Parties have the right to admit individuals into Party membership,

reaffirms these Constitutional principles, and restates its total opposition to witch hunts at a local and national level. We are opposed to the banning of the Militant newspaper and any other socialist paper at Labour Party meetings and any punitive action which is taken against individuals for selling or supporting such papers. We totally oppose any further expulsions of individuals for their socialist beliefs and demand the reinstatement of the five expelled members of the Militant Editorial Board and Tariq Ali.

We oppose any attempts to disband CLPs and pledge full

support to all CLPs in their right to manage their own affairs by choosing whoever they wish to be members of the Party and by selecting candidates for local and Parliamentary elections, and calls upon all CLPs and Party members to offer their active support on this issue.

Signed by Tony Benn, Steve Morgan and the following MPs:

Norman Atkinson, Tony Banks, Margaret Beckett, Kevin Barron, Gerry Birmingham, Roland Boyes, Dennis Canavan, Jeremy Corbyn, Harry Cohen, Frank Cook, Derek Fatchett, Terry Fields, Mark Fisher, Martin Flannery, Stuart Holland, James Lamond, Bob Clay, Bob Litherland, Eddie Loyden, Max Madden, Willie McKelvey, Bob McTaggart, Michael Meacher, Dave Nellist, Terry Patchett, Bob Parry, Ray Powell, Jo Richardson, Ernie Roberts, Allan Roberts, Dennis Ross, Clare Short, Dennis Skinner, Chris Smith, Brian Sedgemore, Bob Wareing, Joan Maynard.

GCHQ Cheltenham Security for whom?

JUST what does GCHQ do that is supposed to be so important for everyone's security?

The main centre of GCHQ is two large buildings in Gloucestershire. Officially the work performed there involved 'the reception and analysis of foreign communications and other electronic transmissions for intelligence purposes'.

GCHQ deals with international communications — telephones, cables, telegrams and commercial satellites. It is a vital part of an integrated 'Sigint' (Signals Intelligence) network.

'Sigint' was set up in 1947 and involves Britain (GCHQ) and the USA (National Security Agency) as senior partners, but also draws in the rest of NATO and France, and provides information for states such as Brazil or South Africa.

GCHQ's main function is supposed to be to intercept and decode messages from the Soviet Union, especially those including information about troop movements and the whereabouts of submarines. Within the 'Sigint' set-up GCHQ has special responsibility for Europe, particularly Eastern Europe, and Africa. International sub-stations and outposts of GCHQ exist in Hong Kong, Malta, Mauritius, Cyprus and Eastern Turkey. Under the Shah, GCHQ worked close to the Iranian-USSR border in an operation carried out jointly by British security services and the hated secret police, SAVAK.

However, there is evidence to suggest that GCHQ does not limit itself to narrowly defined military intelligence.

Firstly, it is admitted by the security services themselves that they cannot break the communications codes used by the USSR and China. That would seem to make a lot of the expensive listening device

What's behind the screen of secrecy at GCHQ? Tom Rigby investigates

es at GCHQ worthless — unless other uses can be found for them.

Secondly, GCHQ has a warrant which allows it to intercept all international telegrams and cables coming into or out of the UK. In 1967 the 'D-notice' affair brought to light the fact that all overseas Post Office Telegrams were collected and read by security officials.

Ten years later the president of Western Union, a US communications company, told the US Senate that the British government had demanded copies of all overseas telegrams handled by the company since 1945.

If the complex surveillance equipment at GCHQ is used to monitor 'internal' dissent, that would fit in with what is already firmly established about the NSA, the US 'partner' to GCHQ.

An investigation in 1975 found that the NSA intercepted international telephone and telex messages from 'targeted' US citizens such as actress and anti Vietnam war campaigner Jane Fonda.

The activities of GCHQ and 'Sigint' are knitted together with those of other security forces in Britain. The main 'customers' of GCHQ are MI5, MI6, and the Special Branch.

The political attitude according to which GCHQ is run is indicated by the fact that until recently its very existence was supposed to be a secret. When journalists Duncan Campbell and Crispin Aubrey did some investigations into 'Sigint', they (and John Berry, who had helped them get information) were hauled into court for their pains.



CPSA members and unemployed activists protest at the activities of Department of Employment fraud squads — the Regional Benefits Investigation Teams known as "Rabbits".

CPSA and Society of Civil Servants policy is to refuse co-operation with the Rabbits, and this policy had been put into effect at the Birmingham Washwood Heath office, where the Rabbits have been based during January.

A joint leaflet put out by the unions and Birmingham Unemployed Workers Association, makes the point that "The government, whilst deliberately fostering the myth that all unemployed claimants are scroungers, ignore the vast amounts of tax frauds. Investigating officers in the Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise have been cut by 300. An increase in these areas of as little as 1,000 staff, would bring in £100 million a year in VAT alone. Harassing claimants is very small fry

By Jim Denham

indeed compared with the tax defrauders."

The picket of Washwood Heath UBO was the culmination of several weeks of leafletting by the Unemployed Workers Association and a consistent non-cooperation campaign by the staff. The Rabbits were clearly rattled by the action, and the head of the team skulked past the picket line and drove off in his inconspicuous red Porsche 924!

When the Rabbits move to Chelmsley Wood office next week, the unemployed and the unions will continue the campaign against harassment and build on the unity established during the Washwood Heath exercise.

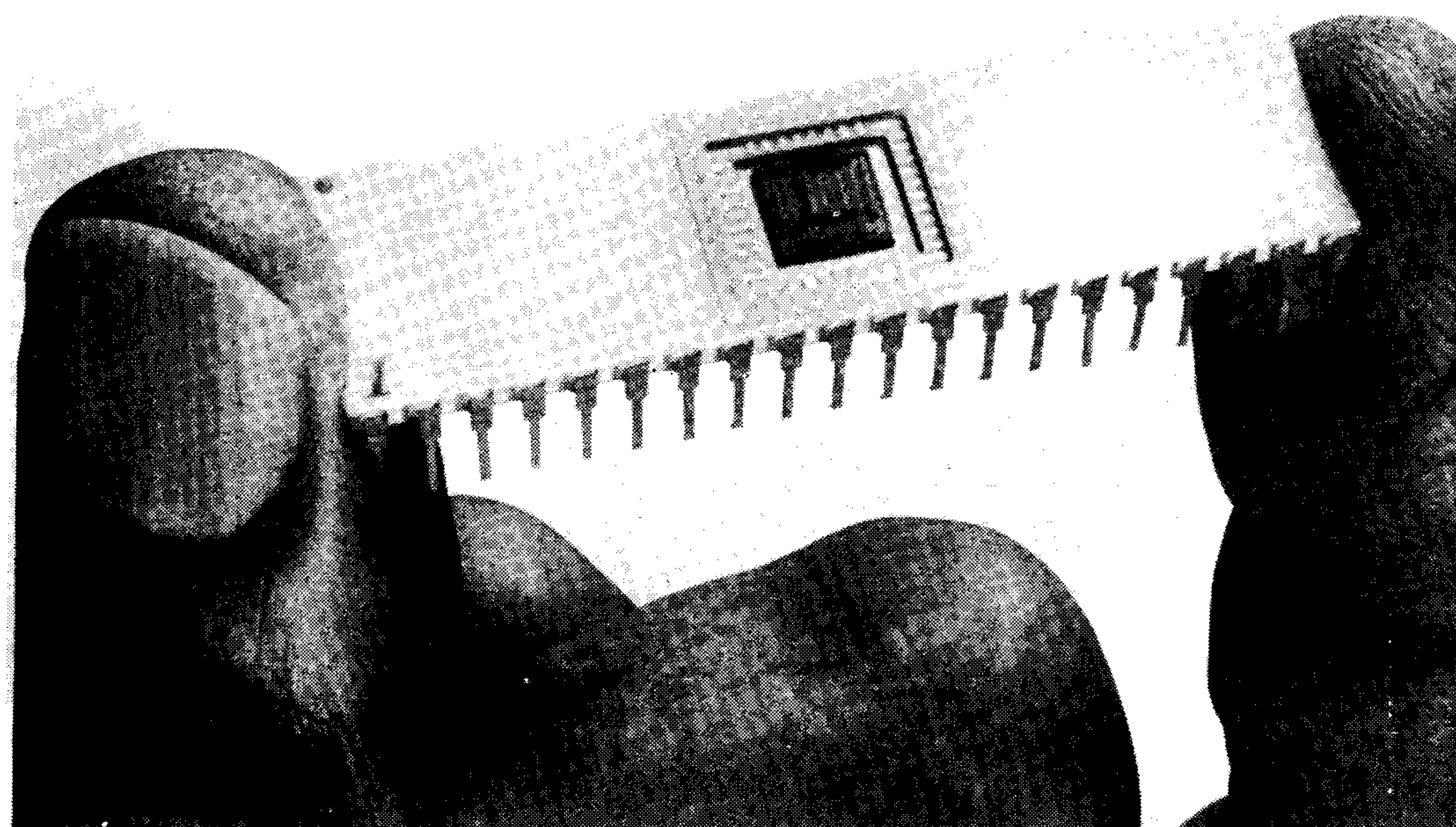
The Unemployed Workers Association intend to reciprocate the CPSA's solidarity, by supporting local action against the government's union ban.

GCHQ operates without even formal political control being exercised over it by elected politicians. According to Chapman Pincher, when James Callaghan was prime minister he used to receive a set of intercepted messages every morning in oblong yellow boxes from GCHQ. But he only got them on the basis of 'need to know'. The great bulk of the centre's operations were never known to him.

The 'national security' served by GCHQ is the 'security' of the British capitalist class, and capitalist state, against its international competitors and enemies, and against real or supposed threats to its rule in Britain itself.

The more GCHQ is disrupted, the more secure most people in Britain will be.

(Information from articles by Duncan Campbell in the 'New Statesman')



Does the State have your details on a microchip?



THE final total of strike-days for 1983 was 3.6 million — lower than any recent year except 1976 and 1967.

This Department of Employment figure, however, excludes about 135,000 strike-days in British Telecom, because that action is deemed 'political'.

Thatcher Inc.

THATCHER'S government is a bosses' government and Thatcher's family are small bourgeois trying to get big. Thatcher uses her power to get special privileges for her family.

Look at the case of Mark Thatcher, described by Penny Junior in her biography of the Prime Minister as "an odious little boy".

He failed his accountancy exams but as a young man needing help he got it.

This was not difficult as his mum was first a rising politician and then Prime Minister and his dad was a wealthy, well-connected businessman. So he got



"introductions" to the right people.

The boy-wonder has only one thing going for him — his name. He has milked thousands of pounds from it by way of token TV appearances and advertising and thanks to the direct intervention of the Prime Minister got himself a six-figure sum (probably around £350,000) just

for pushing a construction contract in the Sheikdom of Oman in the direction of the British company Cementation Ltd.

Maybe one day Mark Thatcher will do us all a favour and get lost in a desert for good.

Brixton dustbin

TEN people have died over the last 12 months in Brixton Jail. Nine of those who have died were on remand and at least seven were found hanging in their cells.

According to Dr. Stephen Shaw of the Prison Reform Trust, the medical wing of the prison, where those on remand are held waiting for psychiatric and medical reports, was "a most disgraceful place."

The prison, built in the 1850s, is, in Shaw's words, "decrepit, dilapidated and overcrowded." Brixton Prison is not untypical of a large number of jails in Britain, better described as 'penal dustbins'.

It is time the labour movement started to fight for the rights of prisoners who are at the sharp end of the Tories' attempts to impose a brutal and primitive 'law and order'.

Let them sleep rough! ...

Over two million people are homeless in the USA, the richest country on earth. They sleep rough and live as they can, in the 'land of the free and home of the brave'.

Is this a matter of concern to President Reagan — or even of shame?

Not at all, it seems. It may even be a matter of pride to the liberty-loving old duffer.

It's a free country, isn't it? On television recently, Reagan dismissed the idea that people sleep out because they can't afford to do anything else. He thinks they do it of their own free will.

It is, so to speak, an eccentric variant of the 'American way'. Reagan is for every variant of the 'American way'. As the Financial Times headlined the story: 'Reagan defends people's right to sleep rough'. Long live liberty!

'Liberty — what crimes are committed in thy name?', said the moderate revolutionary Madame Rolland on her way to an undeserved death under the Jacobin guillotine in 1794.

It could of course be truthfully

said today that the greatest crimes in history — against tens of millions of people — have been committed in the 20th century not in the name of liberty but by those who took a dismissive attitude to 'liberty'.

But the most powerful of the poisonous roots of the Stalinist and authoritarian 'state socialist' attitudes to liberty is still what the bourgeoisie makes of the cry for 'liberty'. And that liberty alone is not enough.

Liberty which includes the right of the capitalist to exploit and to monopolise ownership and control of the means of production is at best a negative freedom from tyranny, not a positive liberty to share freely and equally in the good things of life.

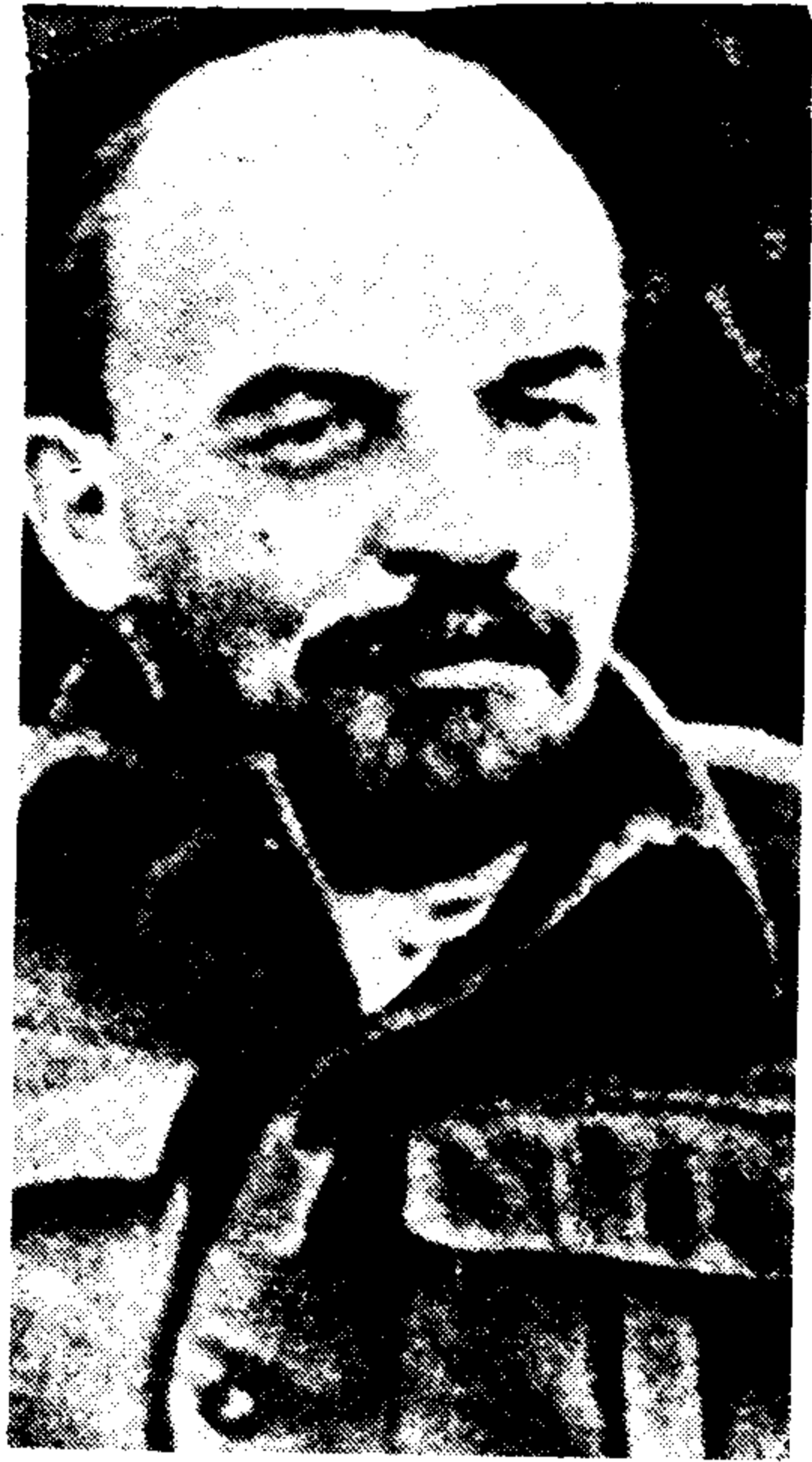
Anatole France delivered the classic socialist indictment of the limits of bourgeois liberty when he wrote: "The law in its majestic equality forbids the rich as well as the poor to steal bread, to sleep under bridges, and to beg for food".

It does not help if Reagan now permits the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges

LABOUR AGAINST THE WITCH-HUNT

National Council meeting, Saturday February 11, from 11.30 at County Hall, London SE1 (Island Block Cinema). Creche available.

Orwell told the truth Lenin after 60 years



Republican troops on their way to the front

WHAT is the political message purveyed by the booming industry built around the reputation and literary products of George Orwell? The Orwell industry is working flat out to convince people that capitalism is not so bad after all — at least when compared to Orwell's nightmare vision of the collectivised bureaucratic society. But while TV plays and documentaries, articles and personal reminiscences about George Orwell abound, there is one aspect of him which the Orwell industry chooses not to examine too closely, and that is the very considerable attempt in the 1930s to suppress his reports and analysis of the Spanish Civil War and the political conclusions he drew from it. For a while George Orwell was an outspoken champion of revolutionary socialism.

For most of his life, Orwell was a political maverick. He was for a time a member of the Independent Labour Party and in the 1940s to his death a supporter of the Labour Party. He was a maverick in the sense that he only took part in organised working class activity once and that was in Spain.

There, he was able to experience workers' democracy and solidarity as a member of the POUM workers' militia. The POUM was the Workers Party of Marxist Unification, a vacillating would-be revolutionary organisation.

On his return from Spain, he wrote 'Spilling the Spanish Beans' in the summer of 1937 in which he attempts — and succeeds — to provide a political analysis of his experiences in the Spanish Civil War. "The real struggle is between revolution and counter-revolu-

By John Douglas

tion: between the workers who are vainly trying to hold on to a little of what they won in 1936, and the Liberal-Communist bloc who are so successfully taking it away from them."

For Orwell the disbandment of the workers' militias, the return of factories to capitalists combined with the setting up of an army with a privileged officer caste structure and the jailing by the Stalinists and Liberals of workers opposed to this policy — these were actions which placed the interests of the Russian bureaucracy foremost, above those of the Spanish and international working class because "the spectacle of a genuine revolution in Spain would rouse unwanted echoes in Russia."

Orwell showed that the jailing and execution of workers pre-

pared to fight and die for the revolution was accompanied by a systematic lying campaign:

"In Spain, to some extent even in England anyone professing revolutionary socialism (i.e. professing the things the CP professed until a few years ago) is under suspicion of being a Trotskyist in the pay of Franco or Hitler."

The central role in this campaign of lies fell to the Daily

well as its fascist forms. This was the policy of the left wing of the ILP to which Orwell then belonged.

At the outbreak of war with Germany Orwell left the ILP because of its pacifism. He believed Britain had to be supported against Hitler's Germany. He withdrew altogether from organised politics. After the signing of the Russo-German pact Orwell retreated into despairing isolation and assumed the exclusive role of 'writer'.

"In sentiment I am definitely 'left'. But I believe that a writer can only remain honest if he keeps free of party labels."

His success as a writer dates from this time as does the fundamental pessimism which runs like a seam through his writings, particularly 'Animal Farm'. His journalism is a mixture of desperation and confusion — for example the fusion of patriotism and 'war socialism' in 'The Lion and the Unicorn'.

Slanderous

At the war's end echoes of his earlier disgust at the lies and slanderous methods of the Stalinists are to be found in a letter to the magazine 'Forward' and to the 'Manchester Guardian'. This letter was published only by 'Forward' and concerned the defamation of Trotsky.

Signed by H.G. Wells among others, the letter recalls that Trotsky had been exonerated from the charges made by Stalin that he was "an agent of



Death of a Republican soldier

Worker, now renamed the Morning Star. Its reporter in Spain was Frank Pitcairn, better known as Claude Cockburn (latterly of Private Eye and the Irish Times). In a recent TV program he admitted that he knowingly sent lying reports 'for the good of the cause'.

Two camps

So all pervasive was the "two camps" version of what was going on in Spain — the Francoist, supported by the international right, and the Republican, supported by the left — that Orwell was unable to find a left publisher for his book 'Homage to Catalonia'. Gollancz, publishers of the Left Book Club refused to touch it. The New Statesman even refused an article by Orwell presenting facts about the repression of the POUM. It was "against editorial policy" to take account of such facts.

Orwell rightly regarded the Stalinist tactic of the Popular Front as an unnatural alliance of enemies, with the working class subordinate. It would, in Orwell's words, "have the effect of fixing the capitalist more firmly in the saddle." He believed that fascism could only be combatted by attacking capitalism in its non-fascist as

Hitler" as a result of the investigations carried out by the "Commission of Inquiry into the Moscow Trials" chaired and named after the prominent American philosopher and educationalist John Dewey.

The charge that Trotsky was an agent of the Nazi government and the Gestapo had been demolished. The letter called for the release of all relevant Gestapo papers and records in the hands of the Allied Powers so that the definitive historical truth about Trotsky could be established.

It requested that Natalia Sedov-Trotsky be allowed to go to Nurnberg to cross-examine witnesses. Needless to say this request was ignored.

Class conscious militants should read 'Homage to Catalonia'. Reading 'Animal Farm' and '1984' we must remember they were products of the politics of the time.

Today, with confidence and optimism we can expose those methods of lies and deceit so grimly portrayed by Orwell. They are part of the armoury of class rule and class collaboration and of bureaucratic Stalinist rule.

The nightmares of Orwell's '1984' will be forestalled by the living force of independent working class action to establish a workers' democracy in place of both capitalism and Stalinism.

Lenin after 60 years

VLADIMIR Ilyich Ulyanov — known to history as Lenin — died sixty years ago. Few ghosts haunt the world so powerfully as Lenin's. Elevated to the status of something approaching a messiah in the Soviet Union and its satellites, feared and detested by the ruling class in the West as the anti-Christ, arch-subversive, architect of communism and everything evil in the world, Lenin is one of the most important figures in the history of the international working class movement.

The fact is that Lenin's life and ideas have been distorted and lied about both by those who portray him as right-hand man to the Devil, and — especially — the big majority of those who supposedly defend his heritage and base their actions on his thinking.

The Soviet Union, and the political movement that has come out of it, Stalinism, are a monstrous perversion both of Lenin's ideas and of the sort of society he and his comrades were seeking to build.

The police states that exist in the USSR and in other countries where the governments claim to be Marxist-Leninist, are a far cry from the programme fought for by Lenin and his party, the Bolsheviks, who led the Russian Revolution in October 1917.

The Stalinist states have enormous, anti-working class anti-democratic bureaucracies. Lenin's life was devoted to creating genuine working-class democracies, quite different from the caricature of socialism that exists in these countries.

In 1917, in his book State and Revolution, Lenin outlined what a workers' state should consist of, and what he thought the working class in Russia and internationally should fight for.

All officials were to be elected, subject to recall, and be paid no more than the average wage of workers. Officers were to be rotated, so that "where everyone is a bureaucrat, no one is a bureaucrat."

The repressive apparatus — police, army, courts, prisons — would no longer stand above society.

The working class was able to police itself and defend itself against counter-revolutionaries. Justice would be organised by the working class instead of the capitalists.

In short, the working class was to be the ruling class and govern itself and society accordingly in the most democratic form of government imaginable.

In time class distinction would be eradicated and all need to defend working class rule from the old rulers would disappear, so all forms of state coercion, the very notion of a 'state' — would 'wither away'.

In the 1920s, the genuine working class revolutionaries lost power in the Soviet Union to the Stalinists, who based themselves on a privileged bureaucratic caste which became increasingly anti-working class, both inside the USSR itself and outside it.

But that degeneration of the Russian Revolution was avoidable. And in his last

By Clive Bradley

years Lenin fought against it. The fight was continued by Trotsky and the Left Opposition, seeking to return the Russian Revolution to the democratic, working class tradition of Lenin.

The goal of a workers' democracy is still the goal of genuine Leninists: a state controlled by the working class far more democratic than anything that exists or has existed in the pathetically inadequate bourgeois democracies of the capitalist countries.

But what we also need to learn from Lenin's thinking is that such a state cannot be achieved by 'taking over' the existing institutions of capitalist society — that all of those institutions, including the very partial democracy of Parliament, are there — in the last analysis — to defend capitalism.

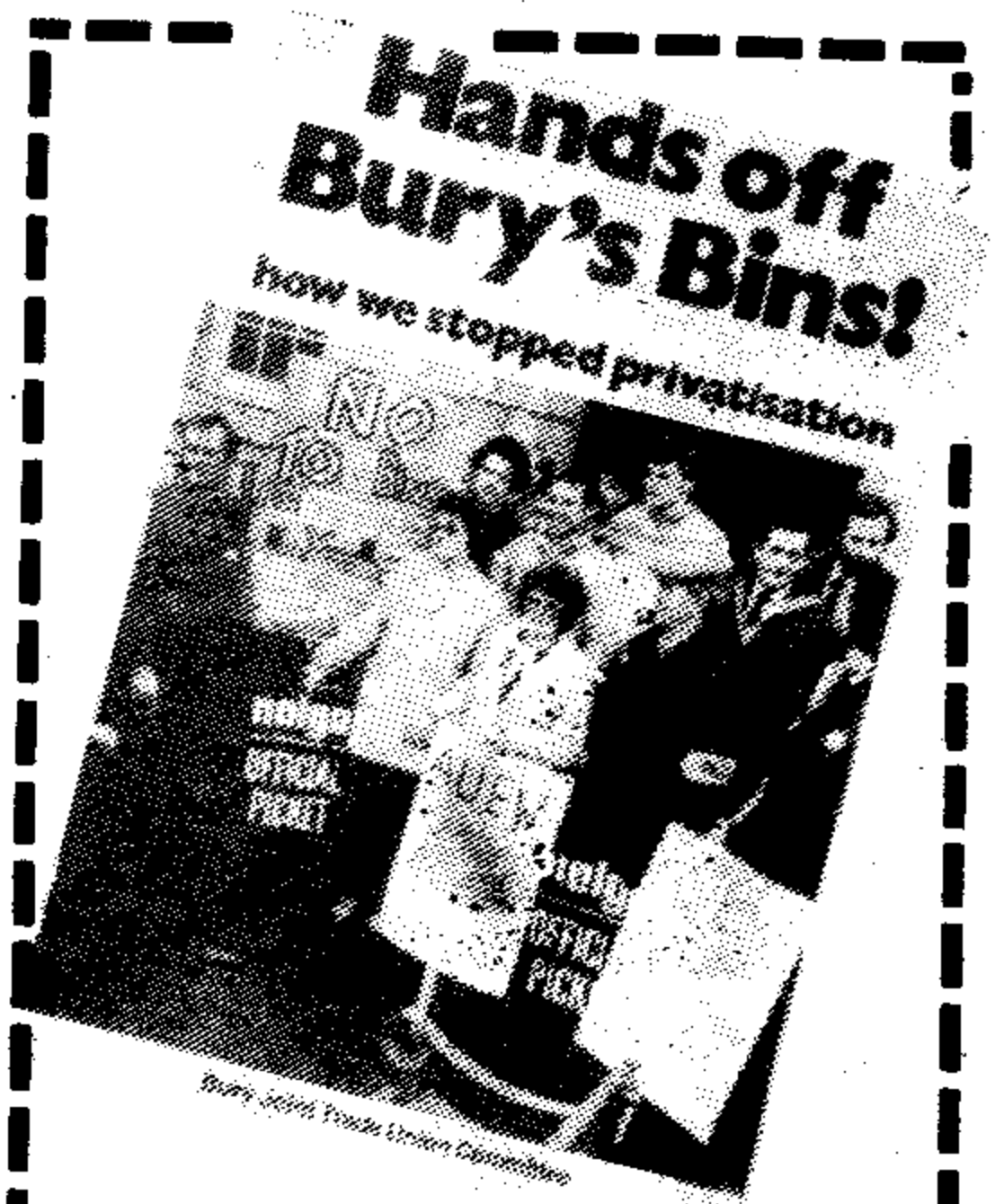
The capitalist state machine (standing army, police, civil service, etc) will need to be destroyed — 'smashed' as Marx and, after him, Lenin put it.

The bureaucratic Stalinist states too will have to be smashed and dismantled.

In Britain we must be prepared for violent resistance from the capitalist class to prevent us smashing the state apparatus which guarantees a monopoly of organised violence in our society.

Like Lenin, we need to build a revolutionary organisation fighting for the leadership of the working class, to win the mass of workers to a perspective of creating a workers' democracy, and able to defeat the resistance of the capitalists.

That is the significance of Lenin for the British labour movement on the 60th anniversary of his death.



Available from Ian Stephenson, NALGO Branch Secretary, NALGO Office, Town Hall, Bury.



The streets of Madrid after a bombing raid by Fascists

Feminist cinema

The ghost of revolution betrayed

RECIPE for a sure-fire hit on the alternative cinema circuit. Make a film about the sexual and racial contradictions of a post-revolutionary society; direct action feminism uniting white and black women; a zappy narrative embracing women's anti-rape vigilantes; state sanctioned murder of a political activist and its ensuing cover-up.

Throw in some stylish and clean violence, make the martyr a black, lesbian, grass-roots organiser from a deprived background; cast extremely vibrant, attractive black and white women for all the major roles; fill the background with exciting black and rock music (by women's bands of course).

That may be a very cynical presentation. I don't suppose Lizzie Borden's motives in making 'Born in Flames' were in the least unworthy. It's just that a film with apparently all the right ingredients should turn out so disappointing.

It works fine on the level of entertainment, but somehow promises much more.

For anyone interested in the interrelationship of socialist revolution and women's oppression, it not only doesn't provide any answers, but doesn't even ask the questions.

One minute into the film and I was already perplexed. A newsreel tells us we are watching the tenth anniversary celebration of the American social democratic revolution, "the most peaceful revolution in history." You what?

The USA? The same US which hoards enough bombs to blow up half the galaxy? That US has a peaceful transition to socialism? What were the capitalists, militarists, the IMF, World Bank,

By Gerry Byrne

the CIA, the FBI etc doing while this was going on? I waited expectantly for an answer.

Well, the FBI was continuing, apparently uninterrupted, its surveillance of political activists. CBS also seems to have been left untouched.

What kind of a revolution was this? What sort of a society had it ushered in?

The general feel was of a Scandinavian-style social democratic welfare government. It seems improbable that even a "revolution" of such limited scope, leaving the framework of capitalism intact, would be permitted in the US without a violent backlash from the capitalist class.

This situated the film for me firmly in fantasy-land. The rest really follows on from that. The state machine is liberalised but still intact. The media continues to peddle a slick brand of misinformation. Women's jobs and childcare are the first victims of economic recession. Rape and sexual abuse are still features of everyday life.

What we are offered is not an examination of the real problems that face every socialist revolution in eliminating the oppression of women and blacks, but a "socialist revolution" with no socialist content.

Instead of some insight into some very touchy problems, we get an escapist entertainment based on an ill-thought out feminist dream. Women unite against oppression - without locating where that oppression comes from.

The traditional racist cliché that black and white characterisations make bad cinema, (where white is equated with goodness and black with badness) still holds true when you reverse the polarities.

Just making the goodies black women, and the baddies white men might make for easier viewing, but doesn't create much dramatic tension.

There's lots of fast-moving action, but that doesn't make up for the lack of elements of real drama - moral dilemmas, divided loyalties, characters internally torn about what to do.

The only people in the film who seem to suffer any heart-searching at all are the (women) editors of the ruling socialist party's youth newspaper.

Having dismissed the Women's Army as separatist, and therefore counter-revolutionary, they are forced to decide whether to condone the official cover-up of the death of Women's Army founder Adelaide Norris in mysterious circumstances in prison or to expose it and place themselves in the camp of 'counter-revolution'.

They decide with relative ease to come down on the side of honesty, decency and sisterhood. It is an easy decision because the conflicting pressures are not shown as equally compelling - there doesn't seem to be much to weigh on the side of the 'revolution', no real gains to be sacrificed.

The acclaim the film has received in the trendy left/feminist milieu reflects rather tellingly the confusion which passes for consensus there. Hovering over the film and over much of what passes for debate on Marxism and feminism, is the ghost of revolution betrayed.

The argument runs thus: Look at existing 'socialist' societies and the position of women in them. Doesn't that prove that socialism is no guarantee of women's liberation. The two are entirely separable. Well, yes, if you ignore history, how those societies came into being, the horrendous blood-letting necessary before the present rulers could consolidate their power over those who made the revolution, if, if, if.

Perhaps the most useful accomplishment of this film will be the laying bare of the assumptions which are the common coin of its most receptive audiences.

The 'revolution' we are told, is made when organised labour deserts the traditional bourgeois parties in the US and forms its own class socialist party.

Yet organised labour plays no role in the film. Are we seriously supposed to believe that a labour movement capable of such an enormous political break, and numerically and organisationally the strongest on earth, has no independent reaction to the economic hardships imposed by the regime? Feels no solidarity with the oppressed women and ethnic minority workers? Are women and blacks not part of this labour movement? Do they feel no pull of class solidarity as well as sexual and racial oppression? How was this 'revolution' accomplished without the support of the majority - women, blacks, etc.?

One would have expected that as the most oppressed, they would have been in the vanguard. How does the party come to be dominated by slimy, Stalinoid white men?

There are two themes in the film which could have explored these contradictions, but instead confirm that the film-maker is outside the struggle she is presenting.

A Latin woman is hassled and nearly raped by two Latin men. Only the intervention of the anti-rape bicycle brigade of the Women's Army prevents this. Sisterhood prevails. But the other side isn't presented. Why is the woman attacked by men of her own ethnic group? We aren't shown black women suffering as blacks - with the implication that there are circumstances in which they feel solidarity with black men overrides their solidarity with white women.

The point about sisterhood is made at the expense of denying the reality of other forms of oppression.

Similarly in the scene where women picket a construction site in protest at their being laid off first, their appeal to male workers to join them on strike is cut short by the police arriving and battering the demonstrators. All very exciting stuff but a cowardly device to avoid answering the question of whether the men would have come out in support of the women.

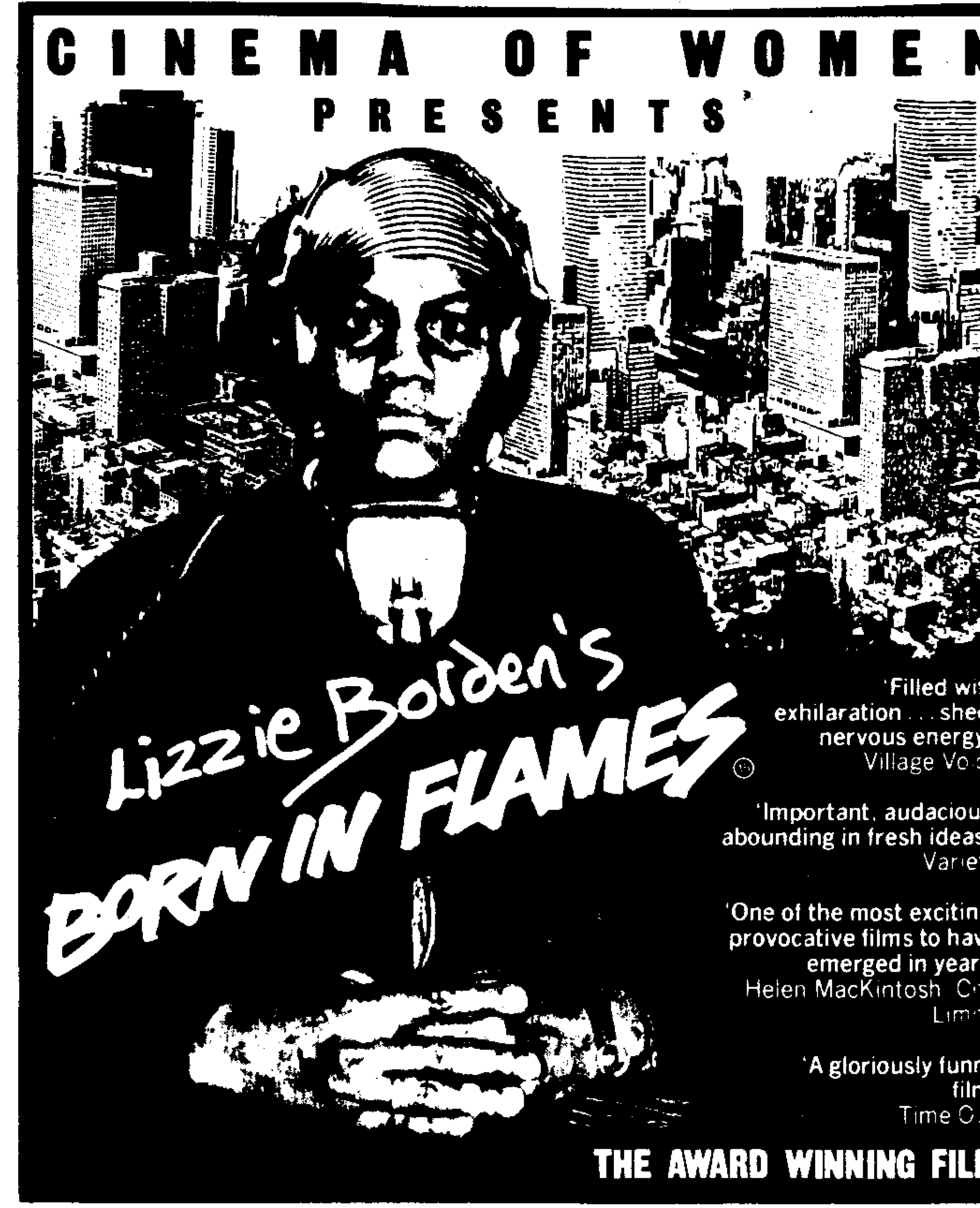
I suppose the film-maker couldn't envisage that class solidarity and shared oppression could be a reality and a life-or-death necessity for millions of women.

Apart from the muddle-headedness over what socialism could really entail, there are two other fashionable prejudices/confusions which the film probably shares with its intended audiences on the role of the media and violence/direct action.

The developing consciousness of the participants is signalled by their increasing willingness to engage in violent direct action and the climax of the film is the spectacular blowing up of a broadcasting transmitter.

It might seem that this equation of radicalism with violence contradicts the assumptions of 'the peaceful revolution' which is the starting point of the film.

But they are part and parcel of the same classless, facile leftism. Without any understanding of the real forces involved in the fundamental transformation of society i.e. without class political principles, then the only way to distinguish those who are seriously committed as against the softies is by their rhetorical bloodthirstiness. Of course it's not real blood. The only realistic violence in the film is perpetrated by the state or



individual men, which neatly sidesteps any moral or political dilemmas.

Black feminists have, not accidentally, been the sharpest critics of the film, objecting to the portrayal of black women, standing alongside white women, pointing guns at black men. Maybe the contradiction would have hit home more had they actually fired and we'd seen the real blood and anguish involved.

The violence is symbolic and harmless, so the issues aren't faced. It put me in mind of the very contemporary sight of

Labour leftists unconditionally swallowing every dot and com of the republican movement programme until the bombs off and then running for cover. Such rhetorical bravery! Such political cowardice!

By all means see this film if you want a good night out, change from men with guns to fast cars chatting up women, shooting each other in pursuit of 'freedom', anti-communism and the American Way of Life. I don't delude yourself it's got anything to do with politics changing the world.

Why the satellite got lost

PRESS

By Patrick Spilling

GANG

THE failure of two commercial communications satellites, launched from the US space shuttle Challenger, has been blamed squarely on protesting union members at GCHQ, Cheltenham.

The dramatic news was given to a shocked House of Commons by Mrs Thatcher in her 49th explanation of the ban on trade unions at the base.

The first satellite to fail was launched for Western Union and insured for £52 million. It was despatched from the shuttle Challenger exactly as planned and all seemed well. But to the dismay of the British government it was the GCHQ base at Cheltenham that lost the satellite.

Two highly trained staff were watching the satellite from Cheltenham through binoculars. A third civil servant was giving instructions to mission control who relayed them to the crew of Challenger.

A tape of the incident reveals all was going well for some time. The instruction: "Left a bit . . .

steady . . . right a bit . . . your way a bit," were being received as normal. Then in a moment of industrial sabotage the civil servants - all of them members of trade unions - threw away the work of ten years and billions of dollars.

At 10.20 am two of them stopped for tea and the third sat down to write a letter to the Times.

Immediately the communications satellite was lost in space and although teams of US technicians have been scouring the sky no trace of it has yet been found.

Next a balloon which astronauts were due to use to conduct important scientific experiments exploded. At first this was thought to be because of unknown factors in space.

However, according to Mrs Thatcher, it exploded after the same civil servants flicked missiles at it using rulers and drawing pins, from the windows at Cheltenham which had been left open as a concession to staff.

To complete the disaster, the second satellite was lost in similar fashion.

The civil servants concerned went home saying it was five o'clock.

Tory MPs erupted in protest when Mrs Thatcher revealed these damning facts and called for the civil servants concerned to be tried for treason.

They were critical of Sir Geoffrey Howe for not revealing sooner that trade union membership automatically leads to acts of gross negligence and open sabotage of American missions.

Meanwhile the Sunday Times has revealed that the ban on unions was ordered by CIA officials. The former head of the secret service in Britain told a Sunday Times reporter that the request came from the Pentagon last Wednesday and was put into effect straight away. Later, however, after the government contradicted this version, the man - known simply as M - said he had been misquoted. All that had happened was the Americans had sent him a postcard wishing he was there.

Leaders of civil service unions continued their campaign today by publishing details of the deal they are offering the government in return for lifting the ban on unions.

In addition to agreeing to a ban on strikes and industrial tribunals, the union leaders are putting forward four other points.

1. No staff will attend union meetings.
 2. Any member of staff who has a grievance of any sort will keep it to themselves.
 3. Votes will be registered during general elections by the unions, en bloc, for the Tory Party.
 4. All GCHQ staff will agree to read only the Times and Daily Telegraph and watch television programmes from a list drawn up by the Ministry of Defence.
- A spokesperson for the civil service unions said this offer would allow them to defend the basic rights of staff at GCHQ to belong to a trade union, even if they couldn't notice the difference.

He said national security had never been put at risk by his members who sang the national anthem during every union meeting they had attended.

But Cabinet ministers were still insisting that the ban must stay. Furious American NASA officials have been blaming the British for the biggest humiliation they have ever suffered in space. The Prime Minister's statement was due to be transmitted live to Washington last night but unfortunately nobody could find the communications satellite.

BROAD LEFTS ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Conference. Saturday March 24, 10am to 5.30 at the Octagon Centre, Western Bank, Sheffield. Credentials for up to 5 delegates per trade union body from George Williamson, 11 Sutton Place, London E9 6EH.



Health Fightback



'Health Fightback 84' conference: at Community Buildings, Bradford University, Great Hordon Rd, Bradford Saturday February 25, 11am to 5pm.

- Workshops on: • Occupations: how and why you should occupy, • Law: How to get the law on your side, • Health Authorities and CHCs: how you can use them, • Nurses: organising nurses in a campaign, • Publicity/media: how to get your views across, • Privatisation: how to fight it, • Campaigns: how to set up an anti-cuts campaign, • Creeping cuts, ward closures, unfilled vacancies: how to fight them. Also: Thornton View occupation video.

A crèche will be available. Open to all health workers and to delegates from health campaigns, CLPs, and trade union bodies. For credentials send £2.50 to Health Fightback 84, 12 Shiplake House, Calvert Avenue, London E2.



Victims of the repression of the 1956 rising

Kadar's kingdom

Janos Kadar, secretary-general of the Hungarian Communist Party, was installed by Soviet troops after they crushed the Hungarian revolution in 1956.

After a long period of repression, Kadar's government began moves to 'liberalise' the Hungarian economy in the late '60s and 1970s. They began to use free-market capitalist mechanisms - within a framework of state control - to stimulate its economy. Simultaneously they opened the economy up to trade with, and investment from, the West.

Agriculture is the most important part of the Hungarian economy. Hungary exports 30% more food than it consumes, and agriculture accounts for 25% of exports.

In Hungary, the peasantry has neither been destroyed, as in Russia or alienated as in Poland. It has gained benefits under Kadar. Private farms are organised into co-ops, which have recently started branching out into manufacturing and engineering. In addition, 3% of agricultural production comes from smaller private plots.

Industry has been stagnating since the 1960s. Over the last six years, 150,000 workers have left manufacturing to work in retail and services.

It was to alleviate this and other economic problems that Kadar began to move towards cooperation

with foreign capital.

There are thirteen joint ventures with foreign capitalist companies in Hungary. By comparison there are 150 in Yugoslavia, for example.

A high-up official explained in 1976: "We are aware that an epoch-making rearrangement in the international division of labour is taking place. We must find our place in this new international economic order" - that is, seek a reintegration, albeit a partial one, into the capitalist world economy. In 1982, it joined the IMF.

Hungary now imports slightly more from the developed capitalist countries than from the USSR; and the developed capitalist countries account for 25% of exports.

Internally, as the Financial Times put it, "The dead hand of detailed central planning has been removed. The new economic indicators are supposed to be the market instruments of tax and interest rates."

So far, Hungary's economy is still in a mess. Growth in 1981 was minus 0.02%, inflation was 8% and the external debt was 6%. For Hungary's bureaucrats, the way out is by strengthening their ties with the capitalist system.

Iraq: one woman's story

FAREEDA SALMAN of Basra had two sons, Selim, an engineer, and Amir, a fourth year medical student. On December 29, 1981, Amir left the house and never came back. He'd been taken by the police. No information was given to his family, either that he'd been taken or why.

What did you do to find your son?

Some people told us to go to the transit centre and ask about him there... when we went to the transit centre I saw nearly three hundred mothers, not counting fathers, asking about their sons... definitely some of

From a pamphlet published by the Committee Against Repression and for Democratic Rights in Iraq, PO Box 210, London N16

them were there is a big room... the windows of one room and doors however were covered with galvanised iron sheets, eiderdowns and blankets so that the mothers and fathers couldn't see them... we could only see their fingers, which they poke through a small window, and their lips which looked dry and drained of blood.

The room in which the political prisoners are kept is five metres high, four metres wide and about 10-12 metres long... we went around to the back of the prison and there were small

windows at the top... but we could not see them and they could not see us because the windows are so high and right at the top of the wall.

After four months, one of Amir's colleagues, whose name I cannot mention, telephoned us and said "Amir and the other students with him are all in Baghdad in the Abu Ghraib Prison... there are no charges against them and they should be released in three months' time."

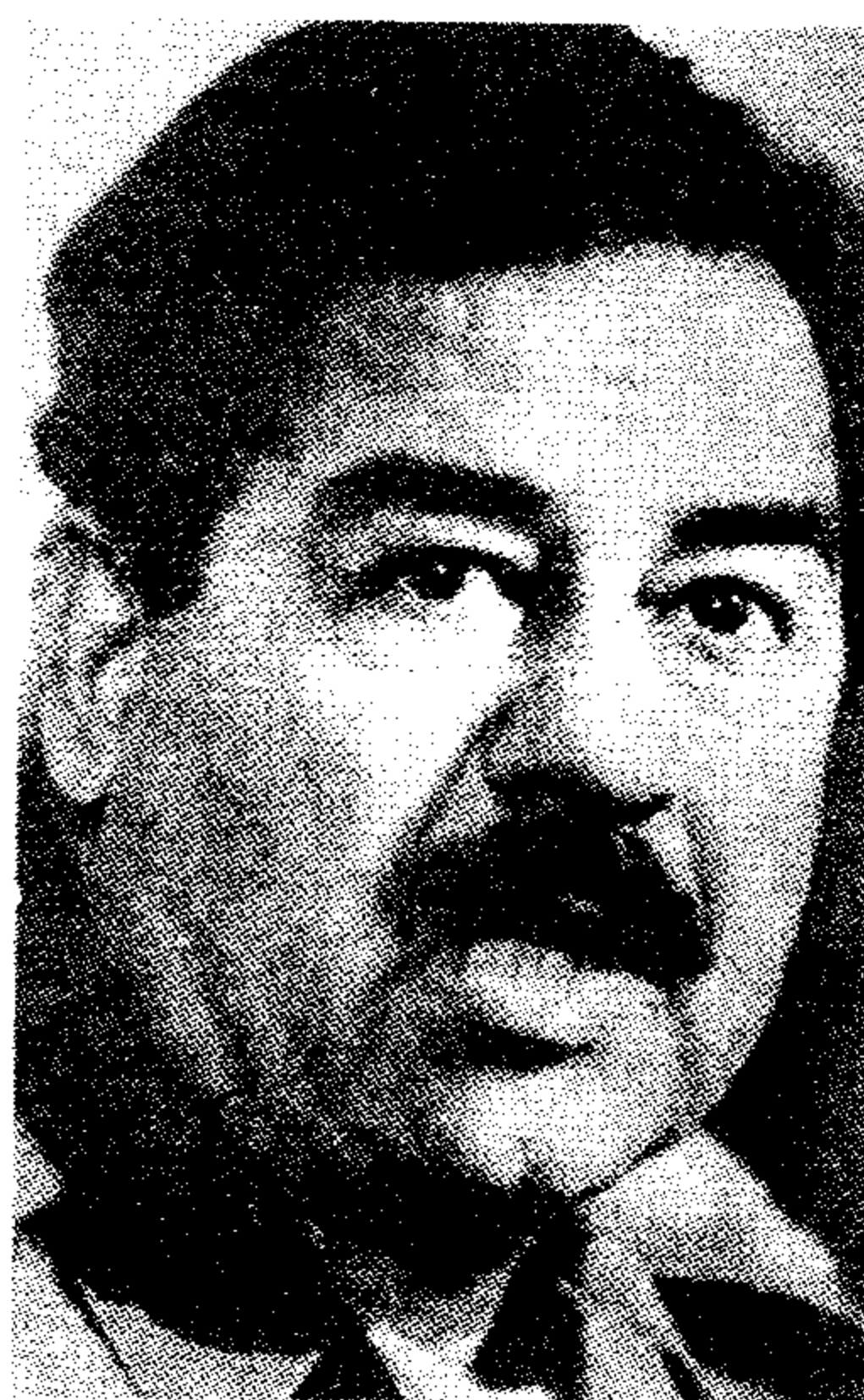
What happened after this?

After this we were to have travelled on 5 July to Abu Ghraib but I became ill and could not go... the other mothers went to Abu Ghraib but got nothing. When they came back to Basrah another wave of arrests took place, a very big one.

By the end of July and the beginning of August (1982) they started distributing questionnaire forms throughout Iraq... in it they asked for the names of all our sons, names of the father and mother and anyone else living with us.

The purpose was to know all the families that had any members in detention and to indicate this on the forms... we were given two days to have the forms ready.

After they collected the questionnaire forms a huge wave of arrests swept the area. From every household that had one of its members already under detention they took away either a brother or a father... when there is no brother the father is taken away... among those taken away was my son Salim... on 14 August 1982. When he



Saddam Hussein

went to work in the morning, it was on Saturday, he never came back home... I petitioned the Governor asking about my son. I went to the Governor's office and explained to the secretary that a week ago I had petitioned the Governor and asked about my son who was taken away by the security from his place of work in Sheaba. He stared at me and shouted, "Get out of here... do you want to follow your son to the same place? We can't allow things like this... for he attacks the party and the revolution, do you expect us to pat him on the shoulder and tell him to go away in peace?"

What happened after this?

Two days later, on 7 September, there was a knock at the door and when I opened it I

asked me if I was Amir's mother... I said "Yes I am". They said "Go to the Medical City Mortuary and collect the carcass of your son"... I started screaming and wailing.

When the others heard my screams they also started screaming and wailing.

After this I went to Baghdad on the 8th and we found many people there.

As you enter the road leading to the mortuary a strong stench assails you. So strong is the stench that people walking in the road have to cover their noses. From the beginning of the road, the mortuary is about 100 to 150 metres and the stench could be smelt at the entrance to the road. There were many people there waiting for the same thing as me. I wanted to take my son and they also wanted to take their sons. At the start there were some 10-16 families - about 30-40 people... the number kept growing... by ten o'clock there were about 150 people or more.

I was led to the room where my son was. When I entered I saw what was inside and I could not believe that there are people who could do such things to other human beings. The room is square and about six metres by six metres. There was a door on the left and another on the right (which led to two rooms) and facing you was a big door which is that of the refrigerator. My son was not in the refrigerator but was thrown on the floor of one of the rooms. I looked around and saw nine bodies stretched out on the floor with him, but my son was in a chair form... that is a sitting form, not sleeping or stretched. He had blood all over him and his body was very eaten away and bleeding. I looked at the others stretched out on the floor alongside him... all burnt... I don't know with what... one of them had his chest slit with a knife, another's body carried the marks of a hot domestic iron all over his head to his feet... another was burnt in such a way, even his hair, like someone who has been incinerated... and every one was burnt in a different way.

Thatcher plays the dove

Margaret Thatcher has just finished a visit to Hungary - a Warsaw Pact country. Geoffrey Howe was meanwhile meeting Soviet foreign minister Gromyko. And Soviet sources suggest that a visit by Thatcher to the USSR itself is possible in the not too distant future.

Thatcher gushed: "While I am known as the Iron Lady, I also have an iron resolve for the easing of tension and for a fair and more prosperous world."

Coming after Reagan's speeches supposedly aiming to 'ease tension' between East and West and thaw the cold war, Thatcher's visit suggests that there may be more to these moves - by principal spokespeople for the Western alliance - than merely electioneering by Reagan.

It is too early to tell. But the deployment of the new missile systems shows no signs of relenting - and Anglo-US involvement in Lebanon (against Soviet ally Syria) continues, as does US backing of the rebels in Nicaragua.

Large profits can be made by sophisticated Western companies in Hungary. The Hungarian economy has been opening up to the West for the last ten years or so (see above).

The cold war notwithstanding, if there is a possibility of expanding overseas investment and trade, Western capitalism will make the most of it.

And the bureaucrats in Hungary, for their part, are centrally concerned with increasing their own wealth in alliance with foreign capital - on the backs of the Hungarian working class.

Hungary is about to negotiate for a trade agreement with the EEC, and Thatcher promised a favourable attitude.



Egyptian president Mubarak (right) with Yassir Arafat

Egypt back in fold

IN January, Egypt was readmitted to the Islamic Conference Organisation (ICO) from which it was expelled after signing the Camp David Agreement - a 'separate peace' with Israel - in 1978. Egypt has not renounced Camp David, so the 1979 Peace Treaty with Israel still stands.

Coming hard and fast after the visit to Cairo by PLO leader Yassir Arafat, the ICO decision signals the possibility of a complete renunciation of Egypt's ties with the Arab fold. The new step will be Egypt's re-admission to the Arab League.

The socialist Arab states - Libya, Syria and South Yemen - were verbally opposed to the decision, but were conveniently out of the hall when the vote was taken.

In reality, Egypt's exclusion from the 'Arab fold' has only ever been formal - diplomatic and political rather than economic. Official Arab aid was suspended, but not private investment, and there was never interference in the important

migration of Egyptian workers throughout the region. And over the last two years, the diplomatic heat has been easing off a lot.

Egypt is the most populous Arab state, and militarily the most powerful. It used to be the most politically important, and has not ceased to be politically central to the region since Camp David.

Both the Egyptian-Israeli-US Camp David Agreement and the Reagan 'Peace Plan' are part of an attempt to establish a tight network of pro-imperialist states in the Middle East. Israel would be central to this network. But Egypt is vital.

Arafat's trip to Cairo in December signalled that the PLO might be incorporated into this plan. Its aim is to defend the interests of imperialism in the region - especially those of US imperialism - against internal subversion, regional disruption and against the perceived 'Soviet threat'.

If Egypt is made 'acceptable' in the eyes of the other reactionary states in the Middle East, it strengthens this aim and thus Egypt is taken back into the Islamic fold.

Polish prices rise



Oppositionist Jacek Kuron

THE Polish government raised food prices by an average of 10% at the end of January. But for strong opposi-

tion, the increase would have been 15%. Pork chops go up 23% and ham 41%. This means that from now on Poles will spend up to 10% of their income on meat alone.

The government says that restrictions on meat will get tighter in the future.

Protests have come from the official trade unions as well as - and more importantly - the Solidarity union banned when Jaruzelski came to power in 1981.

The price rises indicate the continuing crisis of the heavily-indebted Polish economy. Like their capitalist partners, the bureaucrats seek to resolve this crisis at the expense of Polish workers.

THE Merseyside Trade Union and Labour Campaign Committee has launched a national appeal for a fund to pay the fines of those arrested at the Warrington picket line.

Sponsors include Moss Evans, Alan Sapper, Ray Buckton, Arthur Scargill, Rodney Bickerstaffe, Bill Keys, Eric Heffer, Terry Fields, Bob Wareing, Bob Parry, Allan Roberts and Eddie Loyden.

Please send donations c/o Paul Davies, T WU, Transport House, Islington, Liverpool 3.

Duke visits UDR

THE VISIT of the Duke of Edinburgh to the Ulster Defence Regiment base in Armagh has put the chill back into British/26 Counties relations.

Since the Fine Gael/Labour coalition took office last year, both London and Dublin have been working hard to repair the rift which developed when Fianna Fail's Charles Haughey was Taoiseach (prime minister). It found its most dramatic expression when Ireland gave its active diplomatic support to Argentina during the Falklands war.

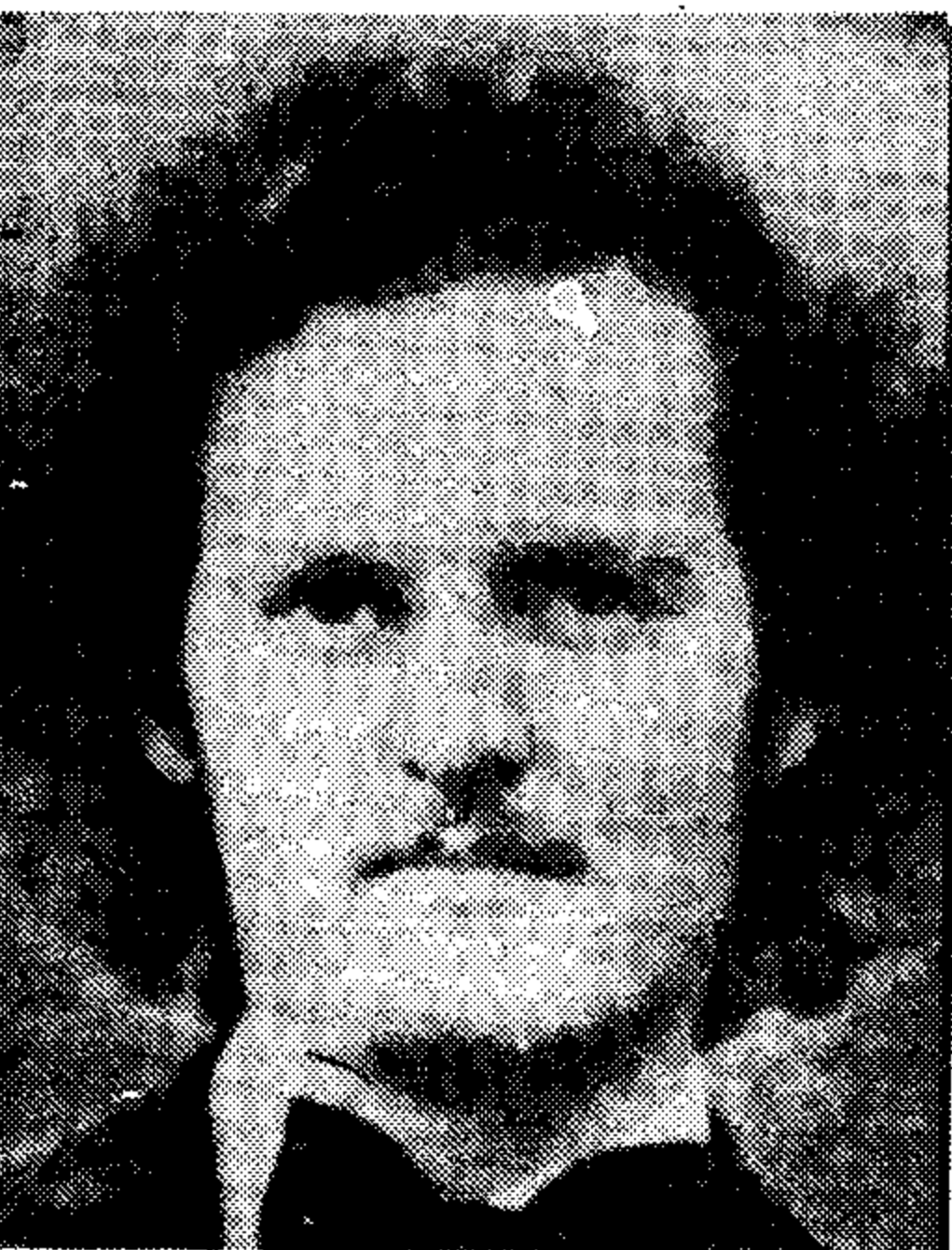
The Northern Ireland Office responded to criticisms with the statement: "A visit by a member of the Royal Family to a regiment in the UK of which he is colonel is an internal matter for the UK".

The outrage has been caused because right now eight members of the Armagh Ulster Defence Regiment are being held for sectarian murder and others are being investigated.

But that is probably the point of the visit — to shore up UDR morale, which must be in a pretty bad state.

The following account from An Phoblacht of one of the recent sectarian killings shows that sectarian killers in the 'security forces' are still on the loose.

"In the latest in a series of sectarian attacks on North Armagh nationalists in recent months, a 28 year old Lurgan man, Daniel McIntyre, was shot dead by a Loyalist murder gang



Victim: Daniel McIntyre



North and South

By Paddy Dollard

in the early hours of Friday January 27.

McIntyre, an unemployed coach-builder, was on his way to his Dingwall Park home in the nationalist Teghnaven estate.

At about 1.40am, as McIntyre walked along the Old Portadown Road near the junction with Manor Drive, a car pulled up alongside him.

Several shots rang out and Daniel McIntyre fell to the ground, fatally injured, having suffered four bullet wounds to the head and neck.

The Loyalist gunman coldly held his weapon to McIntyre's head, as he ensured his victim was dead, and then returned to the car, which drove off through the Teghnaven estate.

The confident marksmanship of McIntyre's assassin, and the indications that the gang had carefully staked out their escape route, at one part of which a large force of RUC had been positioned several hours earlier, have fuelled local anxiety at the possibility of RUC involvement, or connivance, in Daniel McIntyre's murder. It has also made eye-witnesses reluctant to come forward, especially as the RUC has markedly stepped up its harassment of local youth in the days following the shooting.

Subsequently the Protestant Action Force was linked with the killing by the RUC, who stated that the weapon used to kill Daniel McIntyre had been used in two previous sectarian attacks in the town, one of which had been claimed by the Protestant Action Force.

The name has been frequently used as a cover by the UVF, and members of the UDR are at present facing murder charges for the killing of nationalists in Armagh which had been claimed by the group."

Relatively simple measures to improve nutrition and health could save the lives of seven million children each year, according to the United Nations Children's Fund.

"In the last year alone", they report, "the number of children who have died in the developing world is the equivalent of the entire under-five population of the United States."

"On a European scale, it is as if the combined young child populations of Britain, France, Italy, Spain and West Germany had been wiped out."

Sometimes it is straight starvation that kills children in the Third World, as in large areas of Africa hit by famine this year. More often it is the combination of malnutrition and disease.

Poor diet makes children more liable to disease, and it makes the diseases more dangerous. For example, children with even moderate malnutrition are ten times more likely to die from measles.

While eleven children in every 1,000 born in the UK die before the age of one, 60 die in Mexico, 130 in India, and between 150 and 200 in many countries in Africa.



French Left

Rumbles continue in French Left following the Talbot Poissy strike.

The CP has been talking about the government conceding to the pressure of the bosses, and some people in the Socialist Party have also been criticising it.

But it's all very limited: the alternative proposed is nothing more precise than more efforts by the government to get industrial growth.

The CFDT trade union confederation, after a period of attacking the government from the right, has also taken a more combative stand.

Four more years of Reagan?

By Clive Bradley

RONALD Reagan announced last week that he will be standing for a second term as US President. It comes as no great surprise to anybody.

In his "State of the Union" speech, Reagan added a new element to his traditional "three big issues". Along with steady economic growth, peace and the commercial conquest of space, he now emphasises "Traditional values".

"Steady economic growth" equals resolving the crisis of US capitalism. Reagan promises recovery and says things will get better. Inflation, at 3.8%, is at its lowest since 1972. The employment situation is improving.

"Peace" is Reagan's apt 1984 Newspeak for "War". The Reagan administration is increasing military aid to the dictatorships in Central America. It shows no signs of ending its current war drive despite Reagan's electioneering speech about "unfreezing the cold war".

"The commercial conquest of space" is also partly to do with the war drive. In March 1983 Reagan announced his fantastic "Star Wars" programme of research into "lasers, microwave devices, particle beams and projectile beams" to shoot enemy missiles out of the stratosphere: space is to become another theatre of war.

Reagan has announced an \$8 billion project to build a permanent space station within the next ten years — at a time when the Administration is also seeking to reduce its Federal Budget deficit by making cuts in services.

"Traditional values" means religion, the family, work and 'freedom' — from all of which we can foresee an increased attack on the rights of women, gays, the unions and political opponents. Backed by a move to the right and the growth of movements like the Moral Majority, Reagan is set for another term of reactionary government in which the victims will be America's oppressed and the oppressed of the world.



Air raids on Nicaragua



Above: digging trenches to prepare for a full-scale invasion. Top: US-backed counter-revolutionaries. Nicaragua is in real danger.

LAST week, Honduras carried out two US-inspired air raids on Sandinista military bases on the Nicaraguan border. The air strikes go hand in hand with the subversion being carried out inside Nicaragua by CIA-backed, anti-Sandinista rebels.

In response, the Sandinista government has postponed preparations for elections that were due to be held in 1985. A Nicaraguan official explained that "neither the US nor Honduras wants these elections to happen so they are once again trying to provoke a war; we have to prepare for that eventuality."

Whilst it may seem strange logic to therefore postpone the elections — and it may be that the Sandinistas, who are not working class socialists, are using it as an excuse — there is no doubt that there is a serious threat of an invasion of Nicaragua, either by the US or by one of its local clients such as Honduras.

The Nicaraguan government denies that the postponement is a cancellation of the elections. Daniel Ortega, the Sandinista head of state, said that the elections will be held and that "for the time being the attacks do not impede the institutionalisation (of democracy) in the Sandinista revolution."

Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries have suffered a setback recently. Edgar Chamorro of the Fuerza Democratica de Nicaragua (FDN) — the leading 'contra' group — admitted that they were "not able to liberate land or control territory". The FDN, which is based in Honduras, blame the CIA for their setbacks, claiming that they need yet more aid from their imperialist backers.

Meanwhile, it was announced that 347 US-backed rebels surrendered to the Sandinistas in December and have been granted an amnesty by the Nicaraguan government.

Despite these setbacks for the contras, the threat of a Grenada-style intervention into Nicaragua remains a real one.

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Back to the 3Rs

As the Tories' education cuts begin to bite, Angela Brittain, a member of the National Union of Teachers and of the London Labour Party executive, writes about what the cuts mean for primary schools — the pupils and the teachers.

AS the basic right to decent housing is a fading possibility under the Tories it looks as though education is going the same way. Especially the sort of education which teaches children to think for themselves.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, progressive education alists had a field day. Often using children as guinea pigs in their newly designed schools, several of the new ideas failed but the concept of child-centred education as opposed to rote-learning was established.

The aim was to tailor education to the needs of each child and the curriculum was built around each individual child. Most importantly education was to be enjoyed. Children learnt because they wanted to.

The 1960s brought open-plan schools, a school without individual closed-off classrooms but with activity areas and quiet corners.

Team teaching where teachers worked together using their own individual skills, was introduced, as was the integrated day, where activities were to be all day long, giving play as much importance as mathematics. By the end of the 1970s and into the 1980s primary education, especially infant education, had developed into a very wide education.

Classes were usually smaller than 30 children, materials were plentiful and teachers were being paid a little better. The picture is

rapidly changing.

The Tories' cuts are well and truly backed by Tory ideology. No longer are we concerned with child-centred education, allowing a child to spend as much time playing in water as writing stories, but with back-to-basics and the three 'R's.

No longer have we plenty of materials with which to build exciting models, no longer have teachers the energy to provide exciting topic work.

Instead teachers have to work hard trying to cope with children disturbed by their parents who are suffering from the capitalist recession.

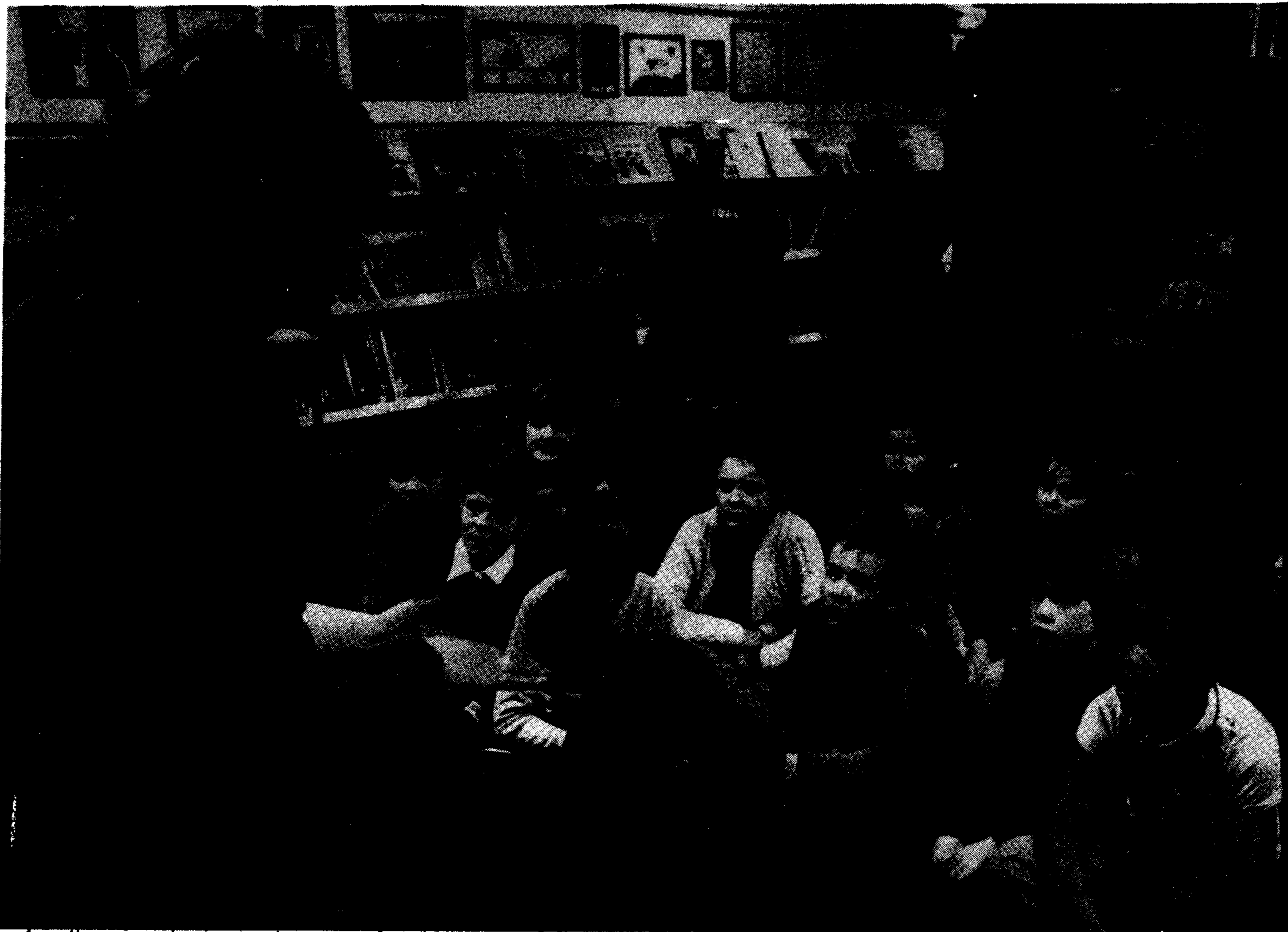
Instead, teachers have been known to whitewash newspapers for the children to draw on.

Instead, class sizes are rapidly increasing as heads try to fill up their school in constant fear of being the next school to be closed or amalgamated.

Child-centred education is becoming impossible under these conditions. In large classes children have to sit in one place and not move around activities. Blackboard work and rote-learning are the only ways a harassed teacher can control so many children. Even school dinners, the only hot meal many children get, are becoming a thing of the past.

Slowly the Tories are destroying good schools. Obviously they find them dangerous places as they do teach children to question and think for themselves.

From Education



A well equipped primary classroom - but for how much longer?

Tories step up state co

LAST Tuesday, suddenly, without the usual gestures towards 'consultation', the government brought out a White Paper called 'Training for Jobs'.

In this they propose to cut 25% off the money which they pay to local authorities to provide non-advanced further education (e.g. technical colleges), and give it to the Manpower Services Commission.

In its editorial on Friday, the Times Educational Supplement commented that the resentment provoked by such a move "is more likely to bring this government down than anything which any of the opposition parties look likely to do." So what is really going on here?

Basically, this annexation of further education by the government is no surprise; it is a continuation of something it was already doing, with the TUC's approval.

To understand the developments in further education we have to go back twenty years. Up to 1964 industrial training was simply a matter for negotiation between unions and employers in each industry, while technical education was something people had to get mainly by going to evening classes in technical colleges provided by local authorities.

In that year, an Act was passed setting up industrial training boards for most industries. These had the power to levy money from employers, and to pay it back in grants only to those firms which provided training to an agreed standard.

This in turn led to a big increase in day-release to colleges for apprentices. Provision for these new students then became further education's bread and butter.

However, many employers delayed cooperating with this arrangement, in part because it threatened their freedom to use apprentices as cheap labour. And in 1973, as the post-war boom was clearly coming to an end, the Heath government passed an Act drawing what few

Colin Waugh, a member of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education, looks at the history behind the Government's announcement that it will cut 25% from local authorities' further education budgets and give it to the Manpower Services Commission.

teeth the training boards possessed.

The same Act also brought a new state body — the Manpower Services Commission — into existence.

As youth unemployment grew through the 1970s, this onetime quango was expanded massively. Accountable only to the Secretary of State for Employment, it was fully supported by the TUC, who sat on it with the CBI.

It was given the role of containing the social effects of youth unemployment under the guise of providing industrial training. This it did mainly through the Youth Opportunities Programme (two-thirds of which was the notorious WEEP — Work Experience on Employers' Premises).

The industrial training boards were ceasing to have any real function, and one of the Thatcher government's first acts was to wind most of them up. In 1981, when youth unemployment finally exploded in uprisings across the country, Tebbit rapidly announced the Youth Training Scheme.

This was designed to turn the majority of 16 year olds into an army of cheap labour on an allowance fixed by the state.

The TUC successfully opposed compulsion and demanded an increased allowance, but otherwise it supported the scheme, on the grounds that it represented a real expansion of training.

In fact, the Youth Task Group

Report, in which the details of implementation were spelt out, is believed to have been actually written by the TUC Education Secretary, Roy Jackson.

However, as YTS was introduced — from April 1983 — it soon became clear that young people themselves thought differently, and huge numbers of them have simply stayed away from the scheme.

One effect of this has been financial crises and threatened redundancies in FE colleges, which had been urged, both by the MSC and the lecturers' union NATFHE, to budget for an influx of new students under YTS.

At the same time as it took a tighter grip on the purse strings of further education, the MSC has all along been saying that colleges are too expensive and inflexible to deliver YTS, and implicitly pressing for changes in both lecturers' conditions of service and the curriculum.

Recently it has been announced that in its second year YTS will be still more heavily concentrated in firms rather than colleges, and nothing is being done by the MSC to check the flood of private profitmaking 'trainers' cashing in. Under this pressure and the threat of rate-capping, local authorities have started to build up a cut price further education system on the fringes of mainstream provision, using staff employed on temporary contracts and inferior conditions in 'training workshops'.

On top of this, both the MSC and the government directly have tried to intervene in the curriculum, with directives banning political and social education from YTS courses.

YTS, then, is quite close to crisis, and last week's White Paper can be seen as part of the Tories' efforts to get a grip on it, by seizing direct control of a big chunk of local authority provision.



Tory thumbs down on learning through play



Not many new schools are going to be built under this government

n to Training



Trimming research for private profit

By Simon Pottinger

THE government isn't just cutting and changing schools and tech colleges. The Polys and Universities are being moulded to the new conservatism too.

Since the mid-'60s higher education is supposed to have been available to any and every qualified applicant. Of course there were wide discrepancies from college to college about what 'qualified' actually means, but when it came down to the vast majority of would-be entrants, the school leavers, a couple of A levels would get you into a college.

As the cuts have turned on to the Polys and Universities, this old principle which directed higher education for about 15 years has gone by the board. The White Paper, A Framework for Expansion, published in 1972 when Thatcher was at the DES proposed expanding college places up to 1.2 million. Now the number of full-time students is

only 600,000 and resources are being cut.

Polytechnics are partially funded by local authorities and with rate-capping a substantial number are expected to reduce their contribution to nothing, which is what the government wants. Oxford Poly, for example, will lose 6.5% of the budget when the Council pulls out.

But while both Universities and Polytechnics are having their budgets cut between 5 and 10% over the next ten years, student numbers are to be slightly increased until 1990 when an 8% drop is timetabled. More students, with less money available, means fewer resources and larger class sizes.

As well as the financial attacks on higher education, which will result in some college closures, certain course closures, redundancies, a large number of mergers and probably privatisation of ancillary services, the government is waging an ideological battle.

Redirecting education to meet the needs of industry doesn't just mean propping up and encouraging science and technology courses (in fact the last round of university cuts did attack scientific universities. UMIST were told to cut by 24% and Salford by 40%).

It involves cutting back on social science and humanities courses.

While Universities and Polytechnics are juggling with their under-graduate teaching, post-graduate research is to be increasingly funded by industry, and private funds mean private control of the type of research carried out.

The University Grants Committee accepts this and has warned against expecting student choice to continue to be the arbiter of research direction.

From now on industry and charities will decide, in the main, what research goes on, and more alarmingly what doesn't.

TVEI is fool's gold

By Tony Brockman

LAST YEAR the government put forward a 'pilot scheme' known as the 'Technical and Vocational Education Initiative' (TVEI) under which local education authorities (LEAs) could apply for money to run courses for 14 to 18 year olds.

Given that most government edicts now involve taking away money from education, you might be forgiven for being suspicious about their motives.

Essentially, the government is only paying out under TVEI in order to get control over what is taught in schools. The funds are not administered by the Department of Education and Science, but by the Manpower Services Commission, so there is not even a token input from the educational establishment.

In order to get the money, the local education authority has to satisfy the MSC that its schemes will fall into line with the MSC's 'criteria'.

Last year's 'pilot scheme' was not even finished before the MSC announced a massive expansion to involve half the authorities in the country. Labour councils joined Tories in the scramble. Council officers worked weekends to write the applications. Consultation with teacher unions was minimal or absent.

The scheme as it stands presents a major threat to comprehensive education. To qualify, a local education authority must in effect select a group of students who will be labelled as a 'technical stream'.

The definition is left up to schools or local authorities, and will depend on the employment conditions in a particular town or the discipline problems of a particular school.

In an area of highly skilled engineering work, for instance, the stream could well be genuinely technical, but in an-

other area where employment chances are down to zero, the stream might be used by head teachers to get rid of 'problem' students for a while.

Instead of receiving a wide education, this technical stream will be given training for jobs — which usually do not exist.

Local employers have to have a say in the course, and there has to be 'work experience' — unpaid labour in school hours. Control of what is taught will pass out of the hands of teachers to the Department of Trade and Industry and Norman Tebbit.

Just as the Youth Training Scheme tries to train youth to accept low wages, so TVEI will train students to accept working life without question. More subtly, the blame for unemployment is transferred from the Government to teachers and, ultimately, the kids themselves.

Resolution

The last conference of the National Union of Teachers passed an emergency resolution which pointed out the dangers of the scheme and called on local branches to monitor it. Yet there is a danger that teachers and Labour councils, faced with rate-capping and cuts, will try to get TVEI money, thinking that they will be able to 'get round' the MSC's control, and spend the money to keep the schools running.

Once a scheme has started, even if it has managed to get through the initial MSC scrutiny, teachers given jobs under the scheme will be very vulnerable to the threat of funds being cut off if they displease the MSC. It is likely that many of these teachers will be appointed on fixed-term contracts.

This further strengthens MSC control, because they can easily be got rid of.

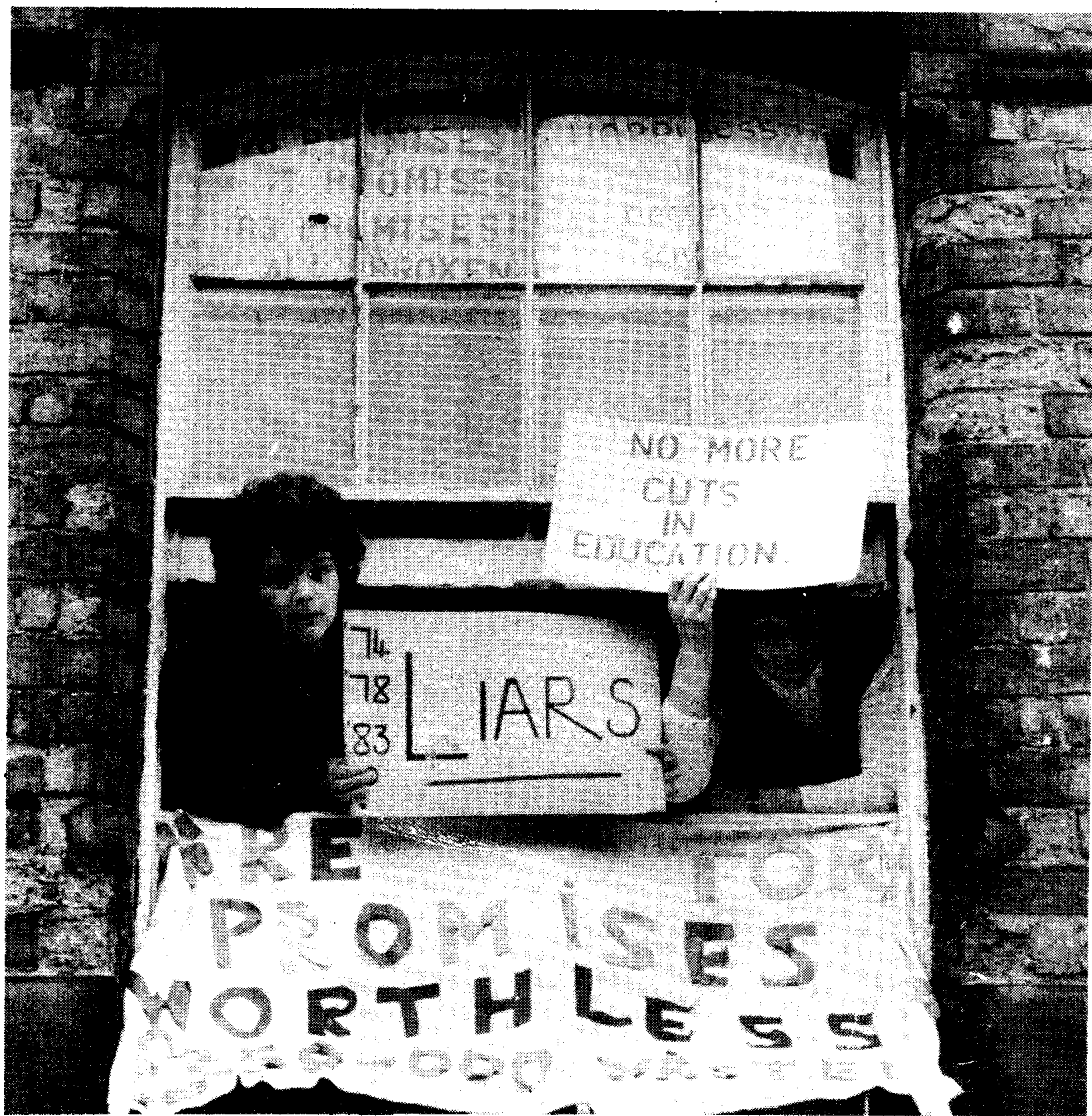
Taking the MSC's 'fool's gold' is no substitute for fighting to keep and improve our schools.

Control

Simultaneously, they are also trying to reintroduce compulsion by pressuring careers workers to report YTS refusals to the DHSS, so that their benefit can be docked.

In addition, the government is also using the MSC to attack the school system (through something called the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative) and Adult Education through its Adult Training Strategy). The obvious implication is that fighting back must involve fighting for TUC withdrawal from the MSC.

What is less obvious — but no less vital — is that we must, at the same time, start putting together an explicitly socialist perspective on the content and aims of education and training, and that means going back to the archives where the educational ideas of the Chartists, the Plebs League and John MacLean are at present gathering dust.



Community occupation to save this Birmingham school

Hull - a case study

BY the end of 1986 Hull's Labour controlled council intends to close 37 schools. There will be 450 less teaching jobs than the council originally planned for, threatening their no-redundancy agreement with the NUT.

£250,000 is going to be cut from the allowance for furniture, cleaning and school equipment. The wages for non-teaching staff will be frozen at a maximum of 75% of the pay scale instead of the present 80% maximum. Even the buildings are to be kept at one degree centigrade cooler to save 5% of the heating bill. Humberside College is to lose £600,000 of the council's contribution to its budget.

Hull council want to revert to "neighbourhood" 11-16 schools which would stop students from the inner city sharing a school with students from the "leafy" suburbs. 'Chalkface', the Socialist Teachers Alliance bulletin for Humberside argues that going back to neighbourhood schools would be a "tailor-made eleven plus set-up for any future Tory administration" with the inner city schools becoming the secondary moderns as resources are directed to the 'better' schools in the suburbs.



The education cuts affect nursery schools



The Minneapolis Teamsters strike, 1934

By Simon Temple



Left: pickets clash with police.

IN THE early 1930s, the narrowly craft based organisations, which dominated the American trade union movement, were losing members rapidly. This was due partly to the Depression but also to the inability of these unions (organised by the American Federation of Labour) to organise effectively in the basic, mass-production sections of American industry.

The Minneapolis Teamsters were one of three groups that started the revolt in 1934 and paved the way for industrial unionism. The others were the Electric Auto-Lite workers in Toledo, Ohio, and the West Coast dockers.

In three hard-fought strikes between February and August 1934, the General Drivers Local (branch) 574 won union recognition, first from the coal merchants and then from most other transport concerns.

In the course of the strikes, car-loads of pickets toured the streets, stopping any scab trucks they found. A picket despatcher at the strike headquarters could rush reinforcements to any picket line where there was trouble. A canteen was established so that pickets did not have to go home to eat; and a temporary hospital was established to prevent injured strikers being arrested at the regular hospitals.

Daily paper

A Women's Auxiliary was formed which staffed the strike headquarters, and throughout the later part of the strike the drivers published a four-page daily paper, "The Organiser".

Minneapolis was at that time a notoriously anti-union town, and the bosses' organisation — the Citizens Alliance — organised a number of attempts to beat down the pickets by brute force. When that failed, the police turned to cold-blooded murder, shooting several dozen pickets and killing two of them.

But despite all this and even the intervention of the National Guard, the transport firms couldn't break the strike and had to give in. Minneapolis was on the way to becoming a union town.

Over the next few years the drivers won big improvements in conditions, including paid holidays and a seniority system for lay-offs.

Wages were pushed up from an average of \$11 for a 60-hour week in 1933 to \$23 for 44 hours in 1940.

The growing militancy within the ranks did not go down at all well with Daniel J. Tobin, president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. In April 1935 he revoked the Local's charter with the inten-

tion of splitting up the membership and expelling the militants.

He reckoned without the base which Local 574 had built for itself in the labour movement around it. His various attempts to isolate the Trotskyist leadership of the drivers failed completely and the alternative branch that he set up — Local 500 — never had more than a few dozen members. Even when the AFL president William Green sent a special representative to Minneapolis he was unable to break the strength of the drivers' union.

After 18 months Tobin gave up and they were reinstated, as Local 544, on terms that were, in effect though not on paper, a complete victory over the bureaucracy.

Despite continued sniping from Tobin, an organising drive

was launched which culminated in the creation of an 11-state Area Contract for long distance drivers, signed in August 1938. This campaign alone recruited 200,000 members to the IBT, compared with a total membership of 80,000 in 1933, and put the Teamsters on the road to becoming America's largest union.

Unemployed

From the start, the Trotskyists recognised the need to unite the struggles of employed and unemployed workers.

Many of the employed had joined the picket lines and fought alongside the drivers during the 1934 strikes. Afterwards an auxiliary section of the union with its own offices and regular meetings was formed to

organise the unemployed. It fought a series of battles with the city relief authorities and the managers of federal "make work" projects — to such effect that Minneapolis soon had the highest relief rates in the country.

When a fascist organisation, the Silver Shirts, tried to organise in the city, Local 544 established a Union Defence Guard which drilled regularly and prepared to deal with any fascist attacks. The one attempt of the fascists to hold a rally in Minneapolis was called off when the Defence Guard occupied the hall where the meeting was to be held.

After that they had to seek other towns, where the workers were not so well organised.

Through most of the period after 1934, the local union pub-

lished a weekly paper, "The Northwest Organiser", which played an important role in the organising drives of the late 1930s.

Imperialist war

But as well as dealing with everyday trade union matters, the NWO right from 1937 was warning of the danger of a new imperialist war. It denounced the course the Roosevelt administration was taking which led towards US participation in the slaughter.

The paper argued that war would come about as the capitalists of different countries sought to get a bigger share of the world market and that the workers had no interest in such a struggle.

Saltley Gates, 1972



By Pete Radcliff

The picket of Saltley Gate in February of 1972 was an event of historical importance for the British trade union movement.

Like virtually all innovations of working class struggle, the flying mass pickets of the miners' strike, of which Saltley was the most dramatic, came from rank and file initiative.

The major core of the pickets from the Yorkshire Area were under the leadership of Arthur Scargill, at that time a minor local leader.

The first few days brought small numbers of miners from other areas. The determination of the pickets, numbering a few hundred at that time, to stop the lorries taking coke out of the depot, soon captivated the imagination of both the miners and other trade unionists.

Generally, they were unsuccessful in physically preventing scab lorries getting across. But the demonstration of mass solidarity by the pickets and the implicit consequences for future picket line breakers, turned many

The first days brought many frustrations. Messages of support from other areas of the NUM were received, but promises of more pickets never materialised.

A trainload of Scots miners was reported to have been cancelled by their officials.

The Yorkshire pickets were billeted in Birmingham through local trade unionists and those unable to find a bed often slept on the floor of university student unions.

Many meetings were organised at workplaces with shop stewards, where rank and file miners explained the reasons and the need of their new tactic of the mass picket.

Talking with student revolutionaries of the post-'68 generation, the miners were warm in friendship but bemused at their refusal to unite inside the left of the Labour Party.

Condescendingly the student revolutionaries explained the obsolescence of the Labour Party, and in more drunken moments, some talked about guerrilla warfare to the further bemusement of the miners.

But after the first week of the mass picket, it was clear that the police were growing in confidence in dealing with the picket lines.

In between the confrontations the police turned round and chatted to the pickets and offered them Polos.

The police on the lines were replaced at very frequent inter-



vals so that the convivial atmosphere would not affect their determination. And it didn't stop the police laying into the pickets when the time came, arresting them by the dozen, and snatching the identified leaders.

If the miners were to be successful it was clear by the weekend that they needed drastic reinforcements. And it was to come in the following week, in an amazing wave of solidarity.

Responding to the Birmingham East District Committee of the AUEW call for a strike, 40,000 downed tools on the Thursday. On that morning, the workers of Birmingham turned up in their thousands on the picket line. It was nothing less than a festival of solidarity.

The Chief Constable of Bir-

mingham, seeing the situation was impossible, agreed to close the gates. A roar passed down the streets outside as they clanged shut.

And still the trade unionists poured in. Hundreds of workers from Fort Dunlop marched on the depot chanting 'Close the Gates! Close the Gates!' On hearing that the gates were closed they changed their chant to 'Open the Gates! Open the Gates!' wanting the moment of victory to be relived in their presence.

Arthur Scargill, addressing the assembled thousands, from the roof of a dilapidated toilet outside the gates claimed the Saltley Gate closure to be a major victory for the working class in this country. And despite TUC codes of conduct and declarations of abhorrence and intimidation of mass pickets by trade union and Labour leaders, flying pickets were firmly established at Saltley in the arsenal of the British working class movement.



Farrell Dobbs

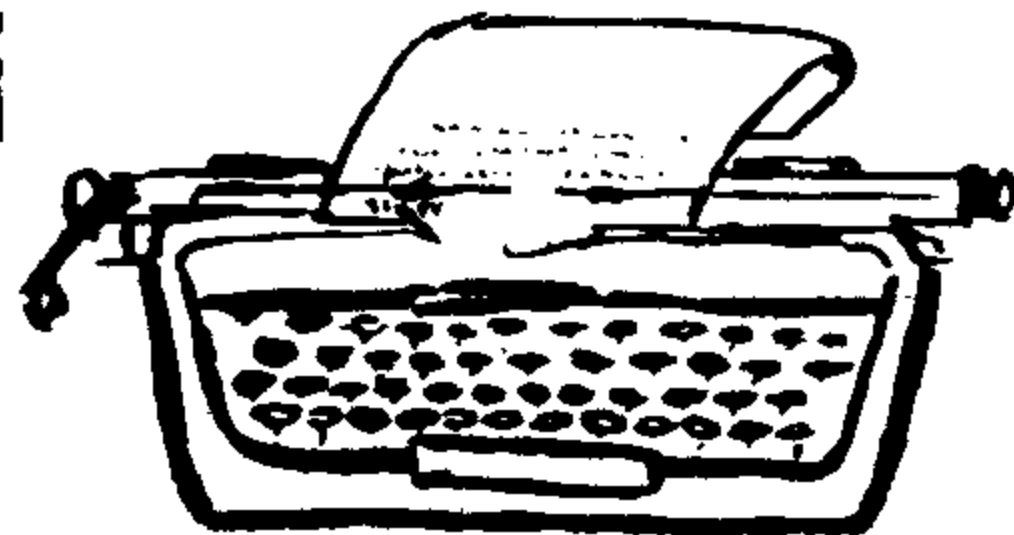
'When the working people of this country unite, they can achieve anything'

Arthur Scargill at Saltley

'In Minneapolis we saw the native militancy of the workers fused with a politically conscious leadership. In that combination one can see the power that will conquer the whole world'.

J P Cannon

WRITEBACK



Send letters to 28 Middle Lane, London N8. No more than 400 words, please; we may have to cut longer letters.

Learning socialism

CLIVE Bradley's review of Gavin Kitching's book 'Re-thinking Socialism' is very timely. The ideas expressed by the likes of Kitching may begin to have a real grip in these days of 'realism'.

I want to take up just one of those ideas, that right now we have to wait for the working class to 'mature' under capitalism, that capitalism lays the basis for socialism by developing a cultured, educated and 'imaginative' working class.

Whilst partly true, this view is, I think, hopelessly one-sided. It is marked by a passive idea of how workers' ideas change. It doesn't grasp the crucial importance of mass self-activity and self-organisation in the 'education' of the working class.

To the idea that capitalism was a 'school' in which workers matured, Rosa Luxemburg used to say:

"What is there in common between the regulated docility of an oppressed class and the self-discipline and organisation of a class struggling for its emancipation... The working class will acquire the sense



of a new discipline not as a result of the discipline imposed on it by the capitalist state, but by extirpating, to the last root, its old habits of obedience and servility."

Luxemburg talked of a different 'school', the 'living political school' that is the mass strike. She called it the 'method of motion' of the workers' movement, the mechanism by which workers' consciousness, ideas and, yes their imaginations can be transformed.

As she put it, "The working class must learn how to use power by using power, there is no other way."

This is no mere truism. It is a hard-headed strategic insight into both the nature of capitalist power and how workers can challenge it. A power that can only be shaken off in periods of immense self-organisation and self-activity. A power that cannot be eroded by the extraction of "concessions" that are bought at the price of "whole-hearted cooperation with capitalism" as Kitching would have it.

And there lies the real role for a fighting socialist organisation. Jim Cannon, the great American socialist once said of the marvellous Teamsters' strike of 1934:

"In Minneapolis we saw the native militancy of the workers fused with a politically conscious leadership. In that combination one can see the power that will conquer the whole world."

ALAN JOHNSON
Manchester



Editor,
We are trying to research a series of articles about the activities of the Special Branch of the Security Service, MI5, particularly in relation to domestic politics, trade unions, pressure groups, etc.

Our experience is that many individuals and organisations

Special Branch

have come across these people in some way or another: questions being asked, mail going astray, even physical surveill-

ance.
If you can supply us with any information on these subjects please write to either of us at

this address. It would be helpful if you can give your telephone number so we can contact you quickly if necessary.

Yours sincerely
IAN BLAIR
NICK DAVIES
The Guardian
119 Farringdon Road
London EC1R 3JH

Labour lead against racism

The GLC's anti-racist year is a significant event and has the potential to raise the consciousness of Londoners and become the focal point in the struggle for economic and cultural justice.

It can really help the struggle against racism on a significant scale.

Let London take the lead in the campaign to raise all the issues - overt and covert - of racism in Britain.

The Labour Party as well as trade union branches, feminists

and socialists obviously have a key role to play in the campaign for social justice.

The Afro-Caribbean, Asian, Jewish and other ethnic groups have developed their own organisations in recent years and must not be ignored even if their beliefs differ from those of the labour movement.

Employment is a major issue and must be seen as a fundamental part of the campaign.

Events like the Deptford fire, the trial of the Newham 8, and the ban on Kwame Ture are all

clearly part of the institutionalised racism which pervades British society.

It is not only the 'Jackbooted' thugs of the various fascist parties who need to be monitored but also those with the 'gentler' approach (such as the Conservative Party and businessmen).

If this must take the form of positive discrimination then so be it.

MICHAEL CALVERT
JACK HUGHES
London

Malvinas

JIM Denham's letter attacking my short note is full of political venom over what seems to have been a typesetting error in my original article.

My own political positions on the struggle against imperialism are quite clear and in line with the standard position held by Marxists since 1917 and before.

That is, one fights the imperialists under the separate banner of the working class. No time does one give support to one's own ruling class. This means fighting alongside capitalist governments against imperialist aggression.

The sharpest example of Lenin's own lifetime is the struggle against Kornilov in Russia in August 1917. This involved organising alongside the capitalist government of Kerensky.

In fact the Kerensky/Kornilov struggle was between different layers of the Russian ruling class on how they may best pursue their aims of their imperialist machine in London and Paris.

That judgement of Lenin endorsed by Trotsky - who gave the same advice to sailors of Kronstadt who wanted to try to remove Kerensky and Kornilov together - laid the foundations for the isolation of the Kerensky government at the victory of the October revolution.

The same circumstances occurred in Argentina, unfortunately the British imperialists won. The result was the removal of the military junta was done on the basis of a deal at the hands of the imperialists.

This resulted in the victory of an anti-socialist government in the election and the votes of the revolutionary left collapsed from their large 1973 totals.

The British attack on Malvinas could not have been defeated by the military junta could only have been defeated by the independent mobilisation of the working class.

This mobilisation and the defeat of British imperialism would have gone on to deal with the junta.

The defeat of British imperialism would have been the defeat of the Thatcher government.

The question of a popular united front is obviously irrelevant under these circumstances.

Yours fraternal
Cllr. Garth Frankland
Leeds

Don't be pessimistic about councils

MARXISTS defend every working class gain. They seek at all times and on the widest political front to extend these victories. The aim is to exhaust capitalism and to bring about socialism.

In this last period, most of our struggles have been defensive. We cannot, as Marxists, choose our own battle ground. We have to defend both our wage levels and our nurseries.

At the centre of each conflict Marxists must provide that element of programme and leadership which directs towards the source of the problem - capitalism itself. Conscious direction is the only road to final victory and in most cases today even half-victories.

Socialist Organiser has stood at the forefront of all the anti-cuts fights. We have campaigned for occupations, supporting strike action, etc. The supporters of the paper have played an active day by day leadership role in these battles. Local authorities are closely connected with these services threatened by the Tories. In many cases they run them, and in others, like the hospital service, have their representatives on the management committees.

They are in a central position in the resistance to the government. Members of the Socialist Organiser Alliance are involved in this struggle up to their necks.

There has been an increase in the number of SO supporters on local councils.

Alongside this has gone the widespread formation of local Labour Lefts and the increased weight of the various Labour Briefings. Today we have a much bigger potential for taking the lead in the struggle against the Tories and to help to stop them in their tracks.

But instead of building on these positive sides Martin Thomas's article seeks to wallow in the problems of building a strong class struggle leadership in local councils.

There are, of course, such problems and as Marxists we have to bring them out in our paper. But we set these problems in the context of how we solve them. The material conditions for such a resolution now exist: two years ago they did not.

Forum
By cllr Garth Frankland

There is no doubt that the local government lefts will go the same way as Knight in Lambeth unless we in the Socialist Organiser Alliance intervene strongly. This means more than conducting a debate with Livingstone or London Labour Briefing. It means taking responsibility for the fight. It means organisation and commitment of resources.

If Martin Thomas follows his reason through, he would not support the Labour Party at all. In fact, he should really join the Socialist Workers Party. His pessimistic article represents a turning back on everything that is most attractive and essential in the Socialist Organiser tradition. Comrade Thomas's direction could be applied to every field of work of Socialist Organiser supporters. It must be rejected totally. Dear Martin, please lead us towards the battle, and not away from it.

Labour-controlled Liverpool Council stands at the forefront of the fight against the Tories. The defence of Liverpool must be one of our highest priorities. It is in this defence we can gain the hearing of tens of thousands of Labour Party supporters, and the thousands of supporters of the Militancy Tendency. In our campaign in defence of local democracy and services we have to prove, and we get the opportunity to prove in practice, that our programme and our organisation can defeat the Tories.

We should begin by our supporters in Islington calling upon the local council to organise a conference to plan the defence of Liverpool and all local councils in the London area. Liverpool has to be made central.

We have, of course, a responsibility to prevent comrades from becoming part of the 'political corruption' of local government. I have every confidence in the level of political knowledge of the Socialist Organiser groups and of the new layer of left militants inside the Labour Party in stopping such corruption.

We should carry more discussion of these aspects within our paper. Some good expose work on councillors' special privileges should help to inoculate the left. Some of the problems, such as being a 'boss', being part of a huge bureaucratic machine, are difficulties we have to solve if we are going to get a socialist society. We should welcome the opportunities to learn and to experiment and to pass this experience into the working class. Lenin utilised the experience of the Bolshevik MPs and local officials both during and after the Revolution.

We should stress the positive developments of local government. Its dual nature as a provider of services under local control and as a point of resistance to the Tory attacks. This, of course, must be linked through the local Labour Party in order to develop a relationship with the working class in the council estates.

The changes which have taken place in local government politics over the last few years have been enormous.

To some extent, therefore, it is possible to build local bases which will stand the Tory ideological offensives. Some of that vote was due to the determination and political direction of comrades in the Socialist Organiser Alliance. For instance we were at the forefront of the campaign to prioritise nurseries when the Labour Group took power in Leeds in 1980. The number of nursery places in Leeds has quadrupled over the last three years. As the chairperson of the Libraries Working Party of the Council I helped to open eight new libraries in the same period. This is not socialism, but neither does it represent capitulation to the Tory cuts machine.

We now need to develop in detail socialist strategies for changing the very nature of the local authority services particularly the fields of education, social services and housing. We have to examine ways of giving the workers involved in the council and those served by the council democratic and grass roots control of the services and, above all, the money. This will strengthen our fight to defeat the Tories and to bring about socialism.

Along with this must go increasing financial support to non-council bodies such as workers' co-ops and, above all, to the activities of the women's movement. These actions should be seen as building a movement determined and rich in all levels of experience to defend and to extend the gains of the working class.

Every Socialist Organiser supporter should consider standing as their local Labour candidate this May. That is where one of the front lines is going to be against the Tories.

New!

Solidarity betrayed

LESSONS OF THE BASINGSTOKE 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.

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

*The capitalist police are an enemy of 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.

Leicester Socialist Organiser day school

Saturday February 18, 10am to 4pm at the LUCA centre, 72 Rutland Street.

Agenda includes: Fighting to change the labour movement, Middle East, Central America and Ireland, combatting racism, campaigning for nuclear disarmament.



Lawyers, Moonies, & WRP

LOS ANGELES — Sometime in the mid-1970s, a number of Los Angeles lawyers associated with liberal and radical groups began to get a series of unusual phone calls. The voice on the phone was that of a famous movie actress, inviting them personally to meet with her and some of her friends.

Those who accepted the invitation — and evidently quite a few did — were given the time and location of a private political meeting with the actress, Vanessa Redgrave.

The evenings consisted of a talk by Redgrave, followed by more intimate conversations with those who responded positively to what she had to say. In her speeches, Redgrave presented the line of the British Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP), of which she is a member. The United States branch of the WRP goes under the name 'Workers League' (WL). These events were never publicised, even by word of mouth, within the radical movement. Rather, they were exclusive, by-invitation-only, soirees. Those attending were primarily lawyers, perhaps some law students, other professionals, and a few Hollywood personalities...

Out of this series of Redgrave performances, the WRP-WL recruited a small circle of lawyers in Los Angeles. These converts have been an essential element in the campaign of slander and disruption carried out by the WRP-WL against the Socialist Workers Party.

For more than four years, that international campaign has centred on a lawsuit against the SWP. The suit has been organised and financed by the WRP-WL, using as its base of operations the coterie of lawyers recruited out of Redgrave's private sessions.

The suit was filed in July 1979 by one of this group, Alan Gelfand, a lawyer for Los Angeles County, who had entered the SWP to disrupt it from within. Gelfand was expelled from the SWP in January 1979 after he filed a legal brief in federal court charging that the

SWP is a front for the FBI. Circulating this slander against the SWP and similar charges against other revolutionaries internationally has been the major activity of the WRP-WL for nearly a decade.

When he was expelled, Gelfand opened the next prearranged stage of the disruption operation. He filed suit against the SWP, asking a federal judge to remove the party's elected leadership and reinstate him to membership on the grounds that he had been expelled by government agents who had taken over the SWP. United States District Court Judge Mariana Pfaelzer rejected every effort by the SWP to have the case thrown out of court. Pfaelzer said Gelfand was entitled to his 'day in court'.

Yet when the case finally came to trial last spring, Pfaelzer was forced to admit that Gelfand had never had any evidence and that the entire lawsuit had been 'outrageous'.

At the end of the trial Pfaelzer declared to Gelfand and his attorneys from the firm of Fisher and Moest: "You have not proved anything you said you were going to prove. Nothing... I can only assume that there was a motive somewhere in here to paralyse the Socialist Workers Party. I don't know how much the rival political party (the WRP-WL) paid for your attorneys' fees. I suppose in another forum that will come up as an issue..."

Following this verdict, the SWP aided by the Political Rights Defence Fund and other defenders of the First Amendment went on a counteroffensive to defend the rights of the SWP to be free from this kind of disruptive lawsuit and to help deter similar suits

Socialist Organiser readers have not heard much lately about the libel case the WRP set in motion against us three years ago. As a matter of fact, neither have we. However, the mills of God are said to grind slowly but surely, and so does the law. The case is still 'pending', still hanging over Socialist Organiser.

The following account of the strange legal activities of the WRP in the USA is reprinted for the information of our readers.

Abridged from the 'Militant' (USA)



Vanessa Redgrave

against other working class organisations. The focus of this fight has been a campaign to force Pfaelzer to order the attorneys in the case to repay the SWP its expenses and legal fees incurred in the fight.

As the battle to hold the lawyers accountable has unfolded, the spotlight has turned onto the role of the small group of WRP-WL lawyers in Los Angeles and on the connection between this group of WRP-WL converts and other lawyers who have fronted for them, not out of political commitment but because they were well paid to do so...

No less than four Los Angeles lawyers whose political loyalty to the WRP-WL is beyond dispute have now made an appearance in this anti-SWP lawsuit. And it is not

over yet.

WRP-WL lawyer no.1, of course, is Gelfand himself. No.2 is John Burton, who is employed by Fisher and Moest. Burton conducted virtually all the pre-trial depositions, and was the chief trial lawyer for Gelfand.

It is now a matter of record that Burton joined Fisher and Moest right after they agreed to take the anti-SWP case and was immediately placed in charge of the operation. By all appearances Burton's job was part of the deal between the WRP-WL and Fisher and Moest...

WRP lawyers nos. 3 and 4 are Donald Norris and Charles Rosenberg. They formally entered their appearance after the March 1983 trial, when the SWP filed for attorney's fees

against Fisher and Moest. At that point Fisher and Moest declared that they might have a conflict of interest with Gelfand therefore could not continue to represent him. Norris and Rosenberg replaced them.

Despite the outcome of the trial, Norris and Rosenberg submitted legal briefs arguing that no fees should be paid to the SWP because Gelfand actually had proved his case, even though the judge did not recognise it. At an October 24 hearing on the attorney's fees issue, Rosenberg argued with Pfaelzer over the quality of Gelfand's 'evidence'.

Although neither Gelfand, Burton, Norris or Rosenberg has ever publicly proclaimed their adherence to the WRP-WL, no one who has listened to them for more than five minutes can doubt where their political loyalties lie.

Lucrative

Fisher and Moest, however, are a different kettle of fish. They are lawyers on the make. They have carved out a very specialised, very lucrative, law practice.

In an affidavit opposing the SWP's motion for attorney's fees, Barry Fisher asserted that his firm's "principal speciality is in First Amendment and civil rights litigation..."

The 'First Amendment and civil rights' cases cited by Fisher to back up this claim turn out to be, virtually without exception, cases involving the Hare Krishna religious sect and the Unification Church of Reverend Moon, a right-wing political outfit.

This image is also what makes Fisher and Moest the ideal firm for the WRP-WL slander-suit against the SWP. Lawyers who fraudulently advertise themselves as 'civil rights' attorneys and will do anything for a buck were essential to the WRP-WL operation. What better choice than the best-known 'Moonie' law firm in Los Angeles?...

Where to find Socialist Organiser

SCOTLAND

EDINBURGH. Contact Dave 229-4591. SO is sold at Muirhouse (Sat.10.30-12.30) and at the First of May book shop, Candlemaker Row.

GLASGOW. Contact Stan Crooke, 63 Dixon Ave, G42. Paper sales: Friday lunch-time, Springburn shopping arcade; Saturday morning, Coatbridge shopping arcade; Tuesday morning, Maryhill UBO; also, West End bookshop.

NORTH-WEST

HYNDBURN. Contact Ac-crington 395753.

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

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

ROCHDALE. Contact c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

STOKE: Contact Arthur Bough, 23 Russell Road, Sandyford. SO is sold at Ker-maise Books, The Market

Arcade, Newcastle-u-Lyme.

STOCKPORT. Contact 40 Fox St, Edgley (429 6359).

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

YORKSHIRE AND NORTH EAST

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

HALIFAX. Contact: 52156. SO is sold at Hebden Bridge Books.

HARROGATE. Contact Dan 69640. SO is sold at Harrogate Market, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday lunch-times.

HUDDERSFIELD. Contact Alan Brooke, 59 Magdale, Holley, HD7 2LX.

HULL. Contact c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

LEEDS. Contact Garth, 6233?? SO is sold at Books and Corner Books, Woodhouse Lane.

NEWCASTLE - ON - TYNE. SO is sold at the Days of

Hope bookshop, 115 West-gate Road.

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

SUNDERLAND. Contact c/o Durham.

YORK. Contact: 414118. SO is sold at the University (Friday mornings), Coney St (Saturday mornings), the dole office (most mornings), and at the Community Bookshop.

WALES AND WEST

BRISTOL. Contact c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

CARDIFF. Contact 492988.

MIDLANDS

BIRMINGHAM. Contact Godfrey Webster, 169 Barclay Road, Bearwood, Smethwick. SO is sold at the Other Bookshop.

COVENTRY. Contact Keith, 75623. SO is sold at the Wedge Bookshop.

LEICESTER. Contact Phil, 857908. SO is sold at Black-thorne Books, High St.

NORTHAMPTON. Contact Ross, 713606.

NOTTINGHAM. Contact Pete, 585640. SO is sold at the Victoria Centre (Saturday 11 to 1), and at Mushroom Bookshop, Heathcote Street.

SOUTH

BASINGSTOKE. Contact 75 Freemantle Close. SO is sold at Good News bookshop, London Rd.

OXFORD. Contact c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8. SO is sold at EOA Books, Cowley Road.

LONDON

BRENT/ NORTH-WEST. Contact Mick, 624 1931.

CAMDEN. Mike, 267 4806.

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HARINGEY & ISLINGTON. Nik, 278 1341.

HOUNSLOW. Chris, 898 6961.

ORPINGTON. Contact c/o Siu Ming, 691 1141.

PUTNEY. Tom, 789 7587.

RICHMOND. Nick 876 6715

S.E.LONDON. Siu Ming, 691 1141.

SOUTHWARK/ LAMBETH. Jeff, 635 8468.

TOWER HAMLETS. Susan, 377 1328.

Socialist Organiser is sold at the following bookshops in London: Central Books, Colletts, The Other Bookshop, Bookmarks, Bookplace (Peckham Rd, SE15), Kilburn Books, Reading Matters (Wood Green shopping centre).



'Murray Must Go' — from 'Mole Badges' c/o 28 Middle Lane. 25p each.

Micky Spillane, USSR style

"On the way home, a punk stopped me on the street — he said, 'You gotta light mac?' I said, 'No, but I gotta dark brown overcoat.'

ARKADY Renko, private eye — except that this is the Soviet Union and Arkasha is a Militia Investigator.

Based on the book by Martin Cruz Smith, 'Gorky Park' opens with the discovery of three corpses under the snow in this popular Moscow park.

Faces and fingertips have been sliced off to prevent identification — "it looks like a KGB job".

To Renko (William Hurt) it smells like a set up, but his boss promises him all the official protection he feels he needs to go with the investigation. He needs to put faces to the skulls, so he goes to see the professor who probably put Lenin back together when he started crumbling in the mausoleum.

Meanwhile a decadent American, name of Osborne (Lee Marvin) dealing in sable fur and cracking jokes about Soviet justice to an equally decadent audience of cynical bureaucrats, becomes the main suspect.

I'd read the book and went to see 'the film of the book', but it might as well have been

Martin Barclay reviews the film 'Gorky Park'

Micky Spillane's Mike Hammer as Comrade Renko. Even the sexual, sexist, interest is there in the form of a woman Siberian dissident with an out-of-town accent who wants to get to the West.

I kept looking for the neon sign lazily flashing on and off outside the apartment window, but the only adverts were wall-sized portraits of this funny looking guy with a bald head and pointed beard.

Gone are the book's subtle social observations about Moscow life — the queues, the winter cold and the closeness of it all. Gone too is the delicate sense of balance of a middle rank bureaucrat in a big, brutal bureaucracy.

Otherwise the first two-thirds of the film follow the intricate plot of the book fairly closely, even improving it in



parts — Alexei Sayle's black-marketeer is not to be missed. But the rest of the film could

be straight out of 'Dirty Harry' — it's the avenging cop against the system routine

which seems to dominate American film and TV detective stories.



The long, intense and dramatic sequence where Renko is spirited away by the KGB and psychologically broken in the classic Stalinist way is scrapped for a few slick scenes in Stockholm.

The final showdown in New York is swapped for a shoot-out at the sable corral before the hero walks off into the (red) sunset.

If you've read the book then don't see the film. If you want to see a good detective story that's a bit out of the ordinary, this is for you. But read the book afterwards and see what you missed.

AN ABSURDITY

A man tried to kill Ronald Reagan. He was interrogated by psychiatrists. Ronald Reagan said "I can envisage limited nuclear war in Europe." Nobody questioned his sanity. His sanity was never questioned.

Gary Scott

The Red Dubliner



LUKE KELLY was the one with the broad mouth and harsh Dublin accent and the red hair. He died last week at the age of 44, after twenty years with "The Dubliners" at the top of the Irish and international commercial folk scene.

Luke Kelly was also a communist. He was a communist from way back, from the days when communists were very scarce in Ireland and the tiny Communist Party in the South felt it safer to call itself the Irish Workers Party.

In the mid-'60s, he had some contact with the London-based Irish Communist Group, a rather inchoate organisation of would-be revolutionaries which soon divided into its Maoist, Trotskyist and other elements.

In 1966 he appeared on the election platform of the Secretary of the Irish stalinist party, Spanish Civil War veteran, Michael O'Riordan.

(This organisation, the IWP, united with the NICP in 1970 to form the Communist Party of Ireland).

The days when bigoted mobs led by pogrom-preaching Catholic priests attacked Irish communist premises and broke up communist meetings were just about over by 1966. It was still a very brave public stand to make for an entertainer whose bread and butter depended on public favour.

In the repertoire of The Dubliners Kelly sang and recorded songs like "Joe Hill", "there's a Valley in Spain", "The Banks are Made of Marble" and other songs of the revolutionary workers' movement.

By Fergus Ennis

I remember a Dubliners concert somewhere on the Euston Road about 15 year ago, when Luke Kelly played "The Battle of the Somme".

The Battle of the Somme opened in July 1916, soon after the Easter Rising in Dublin, and between July and November well over a million men died. The 'Allies' — Britain and France — lost 600,000 soldiers to take ten miles of blood-drenched mud. 400,000 of these were British and Irish.

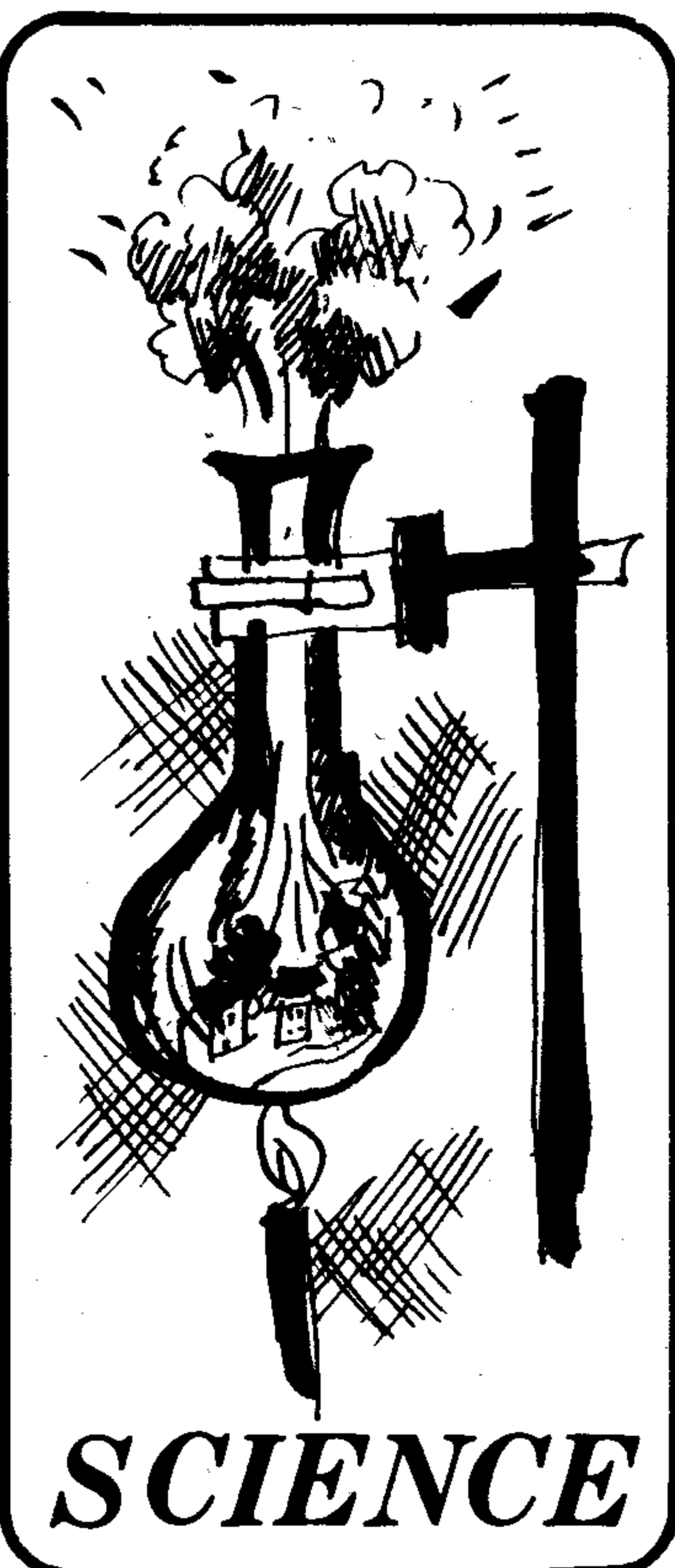
Of the Irish, many thousands of the slaughtered had been members of the Protestant Unionist Ulster Volunteer

Force. Others had been in the mainly Catholic National Volunteers. Members of both had joined up at the call of their leaders. Others were forced in by 'economic conscription'.

That was the only time I ever heard this haunting Irish lament for the flower of Ireland's youth, Protestant and Catholic, who were capable of uniting only under the war flag of the British imperialist ruling class and then in the quicklime graves of the Somme and other World War 1 battlefields.

The news of Luke Kelly's death brought the tune back to me, vivid and disturbing. I must find out if he ever recorded it.

CIA brainwasher



Instead of one shock of 100 volts for half a second (the usual for severe depression), Cameron would give 150 volts for one second, repeated up to nine times. Instead of two or three shocks a week, he would give two or three a day for three to four weeks.

The result was "de-patterned" patients who forgot who or where they were. Cameron's theory was that their amnesia would be selective. The patients would tend to forget their mentally ill patterns of behaviour more than their healthy patterns.

Cameron would then commence "psychic driving" of the de-patterned patients. This involved up to 16 hours per day of repeating messages designed to "re-pattern" their brains in a "less neurotic" form.

Some patients refused to co-operate with this and had to be "kept alert with amphetamines, receptive with amytal" and paralysed with curare "because of a tendency to leave the repetition area." In other words, they tried to escape from the maniacal Cameron.

Many patients had barely been ill before "treatment". One had post-natal depression, another had supposedly psychosomatic leg pains, while a psychiatrist who came for a job interview was told by Cameron that she was "nervous" and ended up being de-patterned.

All patients so far traced have since suffered severe depression, amnesia, migraine, anxiety and insomnia. Others became suicidal or were "reduced to vegetables."

So why should the CIA fund activities more at home in a torture-chamber than a hospital? The answer is MK-ULTRA, the CIA brain-washing project, supposed to be the answer to an alleged threat from Communist brain-washers. The part of the "treatment" that gets the patient to forget she or he ever had it would be important to such as the CIA.

Civil liberties activists are looking for the victims of eleven similar projects in the US, while

there are suspicions that more experiments were done abroad.

CIA documents refer to "allied governments where the security service has people under its control". In other words, vicious dictatorships with thousands of expendable political prisoners.

Meanwhile, eleven identified victims of Cameron are suing the US government for the lasting psychiatric damage done by treatment they were actually charged for.

(Info: New Scientist).

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SCIENCE COLUMN

Socialist Organiser's first science column appeared three years ago this week, with articles on valium and cancer, and leaks from a nuclear waste plant in France.

Elsewhere on the left, science languishes, unless it's on the front page in the capitalist press. Socialist Worker now has an occasional science column and New Statesman has quite good coverage. London Labour Briefing is attempting a monthly science page, coordinated by Piers Corbyn, with me as henchperson.

The SO Science Column is still, regrettably, a one-comrade show. I would be only too pleased if others were to write for it. At the very least I would like to hear from readers with comments, ideas, questions and information.

Anyway, I enjoy writing this column. My thanks to SO for allowing me the space.

BIRTHDAY FUND

If you have enjoyed the SO Science Column over the last one, two or three years, then how about a small gift (cash or kind) to show your appreciation. Either hand your donation to SO sellers or send it to: Science Column Birthday Prezzie, 214 Sickert Court, London N1.

SO sellers: make sure you remind buyers of this anniversary, and let us know sums raised, so that figures for the SCBP can be published.

TWENTY years ago in Montreal a crackpot psychiatrist ruined the lives of dozens of people ... with CIA funding.

The psychiatrist was the late Dr. Ewan Cameron of the Allan Memorial Psychiatric Institute and first President of the World Psychiatric Association.

Cameron based his treatment on the electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) developed in Britain to treat severe psychotics. But Cameron's patients were not "psychotics", but victims of mild "psychoneurosis". And while British psychiatrists recommended stopping treatment if the patient became disoriented, this was exactly what Cameron wished to achieve.

Cameron's treatment involved a severe form of ECT, followed by several weeks of drugged sleep to make the patient forget the treatment!

Two pamphlets summing up the ideas of Socialist Organiser.

'Where We Stand' - 20p plus 16p postage. 'How to fight the Tories' - 10p plus 16p postage. Or the two together for 45p including postage. From Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8

Shipyard stewards decide to hold national conference

By Lol Duffy

BRITISH Shipbuilders' national shop stewards' combine committee met on Saturday February 4 to hear reports from the yards on their reaction to the enabling agreement signed by the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, and the local shipyard managements' proposals in line with that agreement.

Judging from the reports from most yards, management plan to introduce exactly the same type of across-the-board flexibility and use of subcontractors, term contracts, etc. that were rejected last year at mass meetings. In fact a national strike was called against those proposals.

However, the reaction from the stewards seemed very different this time. Most said that it was up to the individual yards to accept or reject flexibility.

The only thing that was agreed was that a national meeting of all shop stewards should be called to discuss the way forward now that the so-called Blackpool Agreement has been discarded.

The Blackpool Agreement has become a bit of a myth. Some stewards believe that British Shipbuilders actually gave an agreement not to implement enforced redundancies. But what it actually says is: 'Until alternative avenues have been exhausted, there will be no compulsory redundancies declared, and then not without further consultation with the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee'.

The national shop stewards' meeting should take place within



JOHN HARRIS

the next ten days. By that time the yards should have made a decision one way or another on their local proposals, and the deals that are supposed to be signed by February 10 to get back pay.

A decision has got to be taken in the yards to oppose these flexi-

bility deals and all that goes with them. Any yard that does say no will be up against the union leadership, and those yards that have accepted the deal. But the alternative is more closures, more redundancies, privatisation, and an attack on the trade unions in British Shipbuilders.

Between 1979 and 1982, British total assets abroad went up from £194 billion to £399 billion. That includes short-term assets. But long-term assets also increased.

The stock of direct investment abroad (in branches or subsidiaries of British firms) went up from £30 billion to £49 billion. The stock of portfolio investment (foreign stocks, shares and bonds) increased faster, from £12 billion to £38 billion.

More and more, British insurance companies and pension funds have been investing in foreign securities rather than British government bonds. (The percentage of their funds that they have put into British company securities has remained fairly stable).

The Tories' abolition of exchange controls has stimulated this flow. But it is also closely associated with more deepgoing economic changes.

Capital has flowed into Britain too fast, too. The stock of private direct investment from abroad into Britain grew from £21 billion in 1979 to £31 billion in 1982; portfolio investment grew from £4½ billion to £7 billion.

But foreign investment in Britain used to be mostly in manufacturing. Over the last few years it has shifted dramatically into oil and into services, with only a minor part now in manufacturing.

Meanwhile British manufac-

turing companies have shifted more and more of their operations overseas.

Israel's economy

A RECENT article in the Financial Times gave some instructive facts about Israel's economy.

Israel's national income is a bit over \$20 billion per year. Of this, about 30% goes in military spending. (For comparison: Britain and the US put about 5% of their national income into military spending, and most West European states less than 3%. Syria, however, puts in 17%).

About 15% of the national income, however, is contributed by straight grants from abroad. And Israel is also more heavily indebted than any other country in the world — its foreign debt per head is seven times Brazil's, for example — but much of its debt is long-term and/or at low, fixed interest rates.

Israel receives between one-quarter and one-third of all the US's foreign aid. As an Israeli Labour Party politician put it, the US "can buy more defence for every dollar they invest in Israel than in any other way — and all without risking one American life."

For the working class in Israel, however, this economic structure means incredible inflation rates — prices went up about 80% in October, 60% each in November and December — and the threat now of drastic cuts in social spending.

Bosses' medicine

BY 1983, 65% of all managers were receiving free private medical insurance as a fringe benefit from their employers. In 1978 it was only 44%.

Other fringe benefits have also increased: 94% of managers now have subsidised life assurance, 83% a company car or car allowance, and 67% subsidised lunches.

Scott Lithgow: fight still needed

By Stan Crooke

IT LOOKS more and more as if privatisation of Scott Lithgow was the Tories' strategy all along.

The government owns 48% of Britoil. The cancellation of Britoil's contract with the fully-nationalised British Shipbuilders must have had a go-ahead from the government.

A formula for keeping the Britoil contract at the yard had been agreed last year by both Britoil and British Shipbuilders. Both withdrew their support for that formula suddenly last September. The government must have been in on that too.

Now Thatcher has offered to 'wipe the slate clean' for Scott Lithgow as long as the yard goes under private ownership.

There are rich picking for Trafalgar House or whatever company takes over Scott Lithgow. The government is promising to write off the yard's £100 million of debts, provide about £15 million for redundancy payments, and supply further money for new capital investment.

But for the workforce, privatisation will mean up to 3,500 job losses and worse working conditions.

In spite of all this, the trade union leadership continues to duck out of confrontation with the Tories. This became all too clear at the Glasgow rally on February 1, jointly organised by the Clydeside Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and the Scottish TUC.

This rally drew together Scott Lithgow and Henry Robb workers, Polmaise miners, BL workers from Albion and Bathgate, and shop stewards and union branch delegates from all over Scotland. It could have launched a real fight back.

But Donald Dewar, the Labour spokesperson on Scotland, declared we should be ready to accept any proposal (i.e. including privatisation) which would guarantee the future of the yards. Alex Ferry of the Confed put the same view.

Veteran Communist Party member and Scottish miners' president Mick McGahey called for a 'day of action' which would 'bring Scotland to a halt', without defining what he meant by a 'day of action' or proposing a date for it. He then demanded an old favourite of the Commun-

ist Party: a Convention of the Scottish People, to be a forum for trade unions, Churches, all political parties, local councils, 'sympathetic media', etc.

Meanwhile the Scottish TUC General Council was also meeting in Glasgow. STUC General Secretary Jimmy Milne ruled out McGahey's Scottish Convention: "This is unlikely to achieve our objectives". Given the Tories' Parliamentary majority, Milne said, "we have to adopt the best [i.e. least militant] tactics possible".

Day of action? That would be considered at the next meeting of the General Council, in March...

Thus, apart from setting up a Clydeside Fighting Fund for financial support, the outcome of this rally of 1000 trade unionists was nil.

Shop stewards' committees in individual workplaces and industries threatened with job losses will have to take the initiative from the present leadership, and call a Scottish regional conference of labour movement delegates to map out a real strategy to defend jobs in unity with workers in the rest of the country.



JOHN HARRIS

Pit closures put NUM on spot

WHILE the National Union of Mineworkers continues with its overtime ban, the Coal Board is upping the stakes.

On Friday 3rd the Coal Board announced that Bogside colliery would join the long list of closed pits. (Picture above: a shut-down pit in South Wales). The closure was blamed on the overtime ban. Because maintenance work had not been done, the Coal Board said, the pit was in bad condition.

The Scottish NUM leadership condemned the closure, but proposed no action. They recommended the Bogside miners to accept transfers to other pits, and then to organise a forlorn campaign for the redevelopment of Bogside.

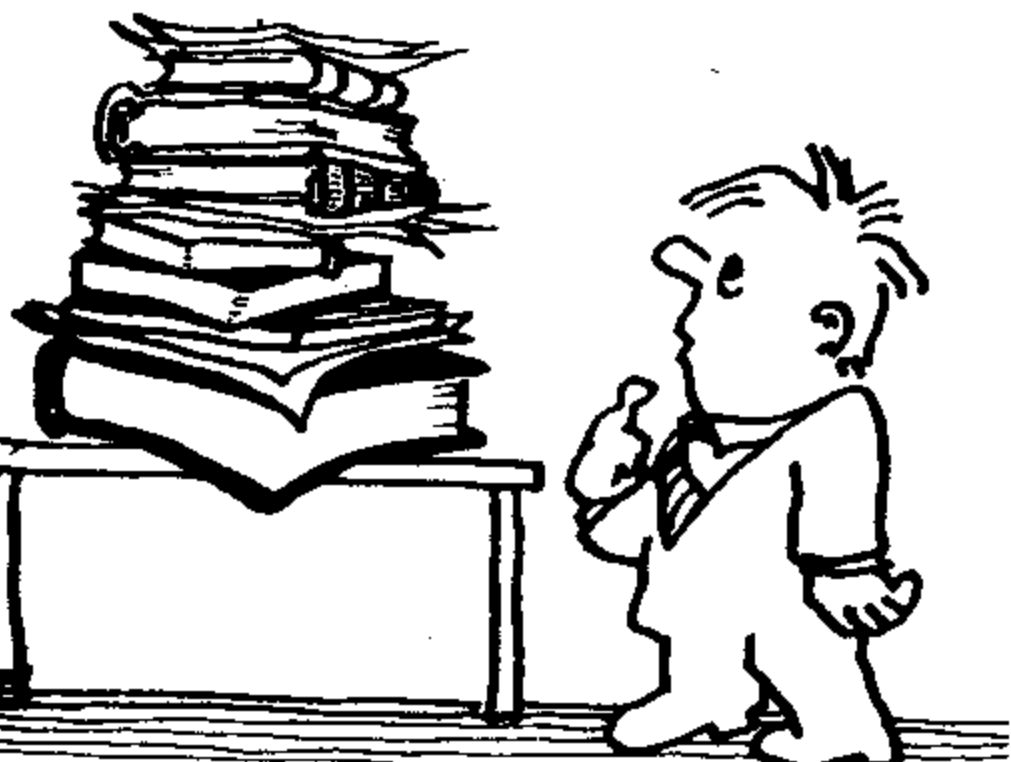
The Scottish NUM leaders have also proposed no action over the closure of another Scottish pit, Polmaise, announced late in January. The Polmaise miners had voted to strike from Monday 6th, but agreed to put off the action to Monday 13th, under pressure from the area union leadership, which is dominated by the Communist Party.

Meanwhile, despite much press agitation after the close result of the ballot for NUM general secretary, there is no sign of further revolt against the overtime ban like the winders' actions early in January. But the British Association of Colliery Management has accepted the Coal Board's 5.2% pay offer, and the supervisory union NACODS has also accepted it in principle. Both these groups normally tie their pay negotiations to the NUM's.

15,000 miners were laid off on Monday February 6 because of maintenance work not done at the weekend. This compares with 12,000 on Monday January 30, and 19,000 on January 23 (Coal Board figures).

Both NUM president Arthur Scargill and newly-elected general secretary Peter Heathfield have reaffirmed their faith in the overtime ban, and said it is proving effective. Their estimate of coal stocks is lower than the Coal Board's or the Electricity Board's, but certainly stocks are still high.

With the Coal Board becoming more aggressive, it is more and more urgent that the NUM move towards strike action to win its fight over pay and closures.



FACTS & FIGURES

By Martin Thomas

US imperialised?

IN 1983 the US — long the world's greatest exporter of capital — was a net importer of capital.

The latest figures published by the Bank for International Settlements, covering the third quarter of 1983, show an inflow of \$40 billion on capital account.

Reasons for this turnaround seem to include a decline in overseas lending by US banks, and a big rush to invest in the US by (especially) European capitalists. There are also substantial capital flows into the US from Japan, the Middle East, and Latin America.

Where the money goes

ONE of the major flows of capital into the US has been from Britain.

No. 29 December 1983
WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK 10p
 Paper of the women's Campaign for Labour Party
 Magazine for Women's Rights

The nightmare arrives,
 The latest Women's Fightback — 10p plus 16p postage,
 from 106 Landseer Road, London N19.

Industrial

Lay-offs at Lairds

CAMELL Lairds, Merseyside, management have announced 168 lay-offs starting on Monday February 13.

The 168 have been cabined up since Tuesday February 7, despite there being work for them to do. In fact, most of them were taken off jobs that were part-finished.

These lay-offs come after about 300 fixed-term contract workers were sent home on full pay.

A meeting of boilermakers' shop stewards is due to take place on Wednesday February 8th, with a mass meeting on Thursday 9th to decide on what action to take over the national enabling agreement and local management's proposals.

A mass meeting of boilermakers two weeks ago decided to oppose all moves to implement greater flexibility.

NALGO and NGA

London NALGO has passed this resolution on the NGA and the anti-union laws.

THIS Metropolitan District Council [of NALGO] notes with concern the lack of support for the NGA in its fight against the government's anti-union legislation.

In particular it criticises severely the two NALGO reps on the TUC General Council who voted against support for the NGA and also criticises the General Secretary of the TUC for repudiating the decision of the Employment Committee to recommend full support for the NGA to the General Council.

It further criticises the NEC for deciding on 16 December 1983 to limit NALGO's support for the NGA, which this District believes to be in clear breach of this trade union's policy decided at the 1982 Conference.

This District Council further notes the effects of this decision on NALGO's policies of fighting government proposals and legislation on issues such as trade union rights, cuts, civil defence, rate capping, etc., and agrees to urge the NEC to restore its policy to that of the Conference decision.

In the event of the NEC not following this course, then the District agrees to submit a resolution to Conference instructing them to follow NALGO policies.

Kings X ASLEF fights on rosters

SINCE the beginning of the New Year, the local agreements and trade union organisation of ASLEF members at King's Cross have come under sustained attack from the management. This attack has taken the form of an attempt to break King's Cross's unique agreement on flexible rostering. This agreement prevents management from extending footplate workers' hours outside of major changes in the train timetables in May and October.

At other depots, hours of staff may be extended or adjusted at the completion of the eight week cycle of 312 hours which forms the operating basis of flexible rostering.

The King's Cross agreement (Minute No. 4671), prevented management from exercising variable rostering to the full, so they set out to smash it.

The first attack came on January 6. Local ASLEF reps were informed that 17 of the work programmes would be extended on January 23 at the beginning of the next eight-week cycle. The ASLEF Local Departmental Committees objected and were then told that these "amendments" would be imposed come what may.

In taking this action, local management were acting on orders from the Regional management of the Eastern Region.

In spite of a "failure to agree" being registered at local level and the whole issue being referred to the next level in the machinery of negotiation — Sectional Council — the local management broke the national agreement that the status quo should prevail at King's Cross until the matter was resolved at a higher level.

King's Cross ASLEF branch reacted quickly with a work-to-rule, an overtime ban and refused to accept the additional work which had been added to the amended diagrams.

Then, less than 48 hours into the dispute regional manage-

By Steve Good

ment changed their tack and instructed local management to recognise the status quo and reaffirm agreement 4671.

On Thursday 26 January the dispute was discussed by representatives of the two sides at a Sectional Council meeting in York.

The outcome was that regional management declared that the amendments would be imposed on the following Sunday, 29th.

It was clear by now that part of management's strategy was to try to demoralise and disorientate King's Cross ASLEF members by creating an on-again, off-again dispute.

Since 27 January, the dispute has followed this on-again, off-again pattern with the membership reacting just as decisively and the management backing down. It has been discussed at the level of the British Railways Board (!) with ASLEF EC members. This is where the crucial weakness of the dispute begins to emerge.

King's Cross members remain strong but they have had virtually no practical support from the union's official structures.

Under the national agreement on flexible rostering it is the Local Departmental Committees which work out the precise flexible rostering agreements with local management. Such local agreements, therefore,



JOHN HARRIS

Steve Good

carry as much weight as an agreement between the ASLEF Executive Committee and the British Railways Board.

However, longstanding working conditions are now being ditched. And since the 1982 strike, the defence of local agreements by ASLEF members is treated by the leadership with indifference if not contempt.

When a depot at local level wins an agreement which protects its members from some of the worst aspects of variable rostering, the EC will not defend the agreement. The only EC resolution the King's Cross dispute has defended the machinery where management has broken it, but does not defend the local agreement made by locally elected ASLEF reps.

The EC's concern is to defuse the dispute and have everything

resolved in a machinery which serves the management.

The management's strategy of imposing amendments, then 'relenting' and then imposing them once again has led to ASLEF agreeing to a compromise destroying local agreement 4671.

Management now look to the ASLEF EC to present such a "compromise" as an ultimatum to King's Cross members and thereby police their membership.

King's Cross ASLEF branch has called on the EC to get off the fence and support the right of the LDC to make agreements. Further pressure must be put on the ASLEF EC to reject any compromise. King's Cross branch must not bow to any pressure from ASLEF officials which dilutes strong local agreements.

SOGAT calls off boycott

THE Radio Times returned to the streets of London last week, as the print union

SOGAT 82 withdrew its boycott action.

The solidarity action called by SOGAT for its members in dispute at Robert Maxwell's Park Royal works, who used to print the Radio Times, has now been effectively liquidated under the pressure of court action.

All that is left is talks between the SOGAT leaders and Maxwell over terms for a new printworks to be opened by Maxwell in East London —

and the Park Royal workers still occupying their works.

The SOGAT leaders made one final gesture by refusing to pay a £10,000 fine imposed on the union for contempt of court. They told the press that Maxwell would probably pay it in order to smooth matters over, but Maxwell has denied this.

The court, however, has powers to take the £10,000 straight out of SOGAT funds without seizing the lot.

Libraries

NALGO members in Westminster libraries may strike from February 15.

They have already started refusing to accept fines for overdue books or charges for reserving books, and are balloting on a strike against the Tory council's plan to close three libraries.

The council's environment committee is meeting on February 14, and could reverse the closures. The decisive meeting of the full council is on March 5.

Manchester strikers face sacking threat

By Tony Dale

110 strikers at Philips Rubber in Manchester have been threatened with the sack. Despite the threat, the five week-long strike for an increase on the £48 basic wage is continuing.

Last week, letters were sent out stating that the workers would be sacked if they did not return to work on Monday. The meeting of strikers on Friday 3 February was solid in its decision to stay out. On Monday only three non-union strikers decided to cross the picket line and return to work.

Threatening mass sackings is becoming an increasingly common tactic used by management in strikes. Only a few months ago the same tactic was used against the strikers at Chlorides in Salford.

No doubt the threat of the sack will be repeated. The response of the Philips strikers in future must be to call mass pickets. This would show management that the strike is solid and would give the strikers a morale boost. It would also give the local labour movement a chance to show the growing support for the strike.

A delegation is going up to the company's sister factory in Stranraer this weekend. Workers in Stranraer have a pay claim coming up soon. Their demands must be brought forward and linked up with the struggle in Manchester. United action by both plants would increase the power and strength of the workers in their fight for decent wages. The strikers are only receiving £12 a week strike pay. Support is vital.

Low pay

THE TUC has now updated its low pay guidelines which now stand at £98 a week. This figure is based on two-thirds of average male manual earnings.

Although it represents a family income which is scarcely above the poverty line it is still considerably more than the wages paid to many workers, including some on Government contracts.

The TUC says that its research shows that low pay is a growing problem and the gap between the highest paid and lowest paid is widening. This has been partly the result of government policies. The government has abolished the Fair Wages Resolution and encouraged privatisation.

Government propaganda blaming "high wage rates" for unemployment has also created a climate hostile to the poorest paid sections of the workforce.

The TUC's failure to fight back and sabotage of unions like the NGA which have tried to fight back, has combined with government policy to depress wages.

An official TUC conference on low pay is to be held later this year to discuss the objectives for a low pay campaign and ways in which the campaign can be best developed.



TAX office workers — members of the Inland Revenue Staff Federation — voted last Friday (February 3) to continue their fight against the operation of pilot Pay-As-You-Earn computer equipment.

The decision by ballot, by 379 to 20, comes despite the High Court ruling earlier in the week against eight IRSF members representing the union who had sought legal support — claiming that their terms of employment had been breached by the Inland Revenue — for their action.

So far 438 staff have been suspended at 14 West Midlands offices where the scheme has been introduced for refusing to use the computers, which the Inland Revenue plan to have fully operational throughout the country by 1987.

Talks are now taking place between the IRSF and the Inland Revenue over terms for a national new technology agreement with the union continuing to insist on a "no redundancies" clause as a pre-condition for co-operation with PAYE computerisation.

Land Rover lay-offs

OVER 1,500 Land Rover workers were laid off on Friday night [February 3] because of a strike by six TGWU members begun on Wednesday over a pay grading dispute.

The six — stock-keepers at the company's chasis-making Garrison Street, Birmingham plant — have so far won the support of 40 colleagues who work in the plant's stores.

Sizewell order placed

IN A move that seems to confirm suspicions that the Sizewell B pressurised water nuclear reactor power station (which the Central Electricity Generating Board hopes to begin building in Suffolk in 1986) will be given the government go-ahead, the CEB has already placed a £12 million order (with government approval) for steel forgings for the pressure vessel.

The order has gone in even though a public inquiry, begun about 13 months ago and thought to be only half-way through its work, into the future of the Sizewell B project is still continuing.

600 more steel jobs go

600 jobs are to go with the sudden announcement at the weekend of a further three steel plant closures in the West Midlands — a move in effect signalling the demise of the steel industry in the region.

The British Steel Corporation and Sheerness Steel are involved in the closure plans of the F.H. Lloyd and Brockhouse Group owned steel plants — John Bagnall & Sons of Wednesbury, Lloyds of Dudley, and District Steel of Smethwick — handling the compensation dealings and taking over the order books.

Steel workers are expected to meet this week to discuss possibilities of a fightback against the closure plans.

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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.

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

Civil service unions' day of action on union rights at GCHQ

Tuesday February 28. CPSA is calling for branches to decide their own action: militants in the union are pressing for strikes. The Council of Civil Service Unions has also called a lobby of Parliament for February 23.

Chesterfield Socialist test for left ORGANISER

By John Bloxam

GCHQ Cheltenham

STRIKE TO SAVE WORKERS' RIGHTS

THE Chesterfield by-election is an event of tremendous importance for the labour movement. Not only because it could put Tony Benn back in Parliament — but also because it is not impossible that Labour could lose.

By-elections often produce bizarre results. Tory and Alliance popularity is not what it was last June, and that will help. But the volume of ignorant prejudice and blind hatred and possible right-wing Labour sabotage — remember Peter Tatchell and Bermondsey — could all combine to inflict a wounding and bruising defeat on Labour. And on the left.

Tribune

Out of the Chesterfield by-election the left will get one of two things. Either its most popular tribune will be back in Parliament and centre stage once more, or it will get a bad political bloody nose.

If we face that possibility now — squarely — we have time to mobilise the forces to beat the Tories and the Alliance. Complacency would be unforgivable.

Labour's campaign for the Chesterfield by-election begins officially on Monday February 13.

But Tony Benn is already visiting schools, trade union meetings and pits, and canvassing in Chesterfield.

Response

The campaign press officer, Monica Foot, paints this picture of Benn in Chesterfield.

"It is difficult to remain neutral about Mr. Benn. There has been a very good response when he has met people. But those who haven't met him sometimes have an alarming impression of him."

The main themes of the campaign are industrial renewal, the health service, and youth unemployment.

The Labour Party health cuts campaign ambulance will be in Chesterfield on February 22-24, and a 'defend the Health Service' rally is being organised for February 24. Polling day is March 1.

The campaign headquarters is Chesterfield Labour Club, Unity House, 113 Saltergate, Chesterfield, (0246 208387).

Help from Labour activists from outside Chesterfield will be welcomed. Benn must win — and we must see that he does.

THE Civil Service unions have designated February 28 as a "Day of Action" in protest at the government's decision to ban trade unions at GCHQ Cheltenham (and at seven out-stations, scattered across the country from Cornwall to Fife).

But what action?

Although CPSA has authorised branches to take strike action on the 28th, there will be no national call for this. Basically, local union branches will be left to decide what action they want to take: lunch-time protest meetings, token stoppages; walk-outs . . . or maybe a mass session of letter-writing to Maggie?

In fact strike action is being quietly discouraged, for

By Mick Horne

fear that it would damage "public opinion".

It has been clear from the very start that the TUC, and the Civil Service unions themselves, have no intention of leading a real fight. The hope in the back of their minds is that the Tories will be talked out of imposing a full ban on union membership . . . and some shabby compromise cobbled together.

In the CoCSU (Council of Civil Service Unions) "Statement of Case" on the issue, it says:

"The Civil Service unions themselves have always been extremely reticent about disclosing any information relating to GCHQ, and they are fully alive to the special status of its operations. They would have been prepared to consider, and would consider even now, any reasonable proposals from the Government."

The same readiness to compromise, and of underlying patriotism, runs through the whole statement.

"All the staff at GCHQ have been subjected to a rigorous positive vetting procedure," boasts the CoCSU document, "and are intensely loyal to the interests of their country — playing their full part, for example, during the Falkland crisis. They would never do anything to jeopardise national security . . ."

In the same spirit, Alistair Graham, general secretary of CPSA, has called on branches to take immediate action . . . "to write to, and to lobby, their local Members of Parliament about the GCHQ situation."

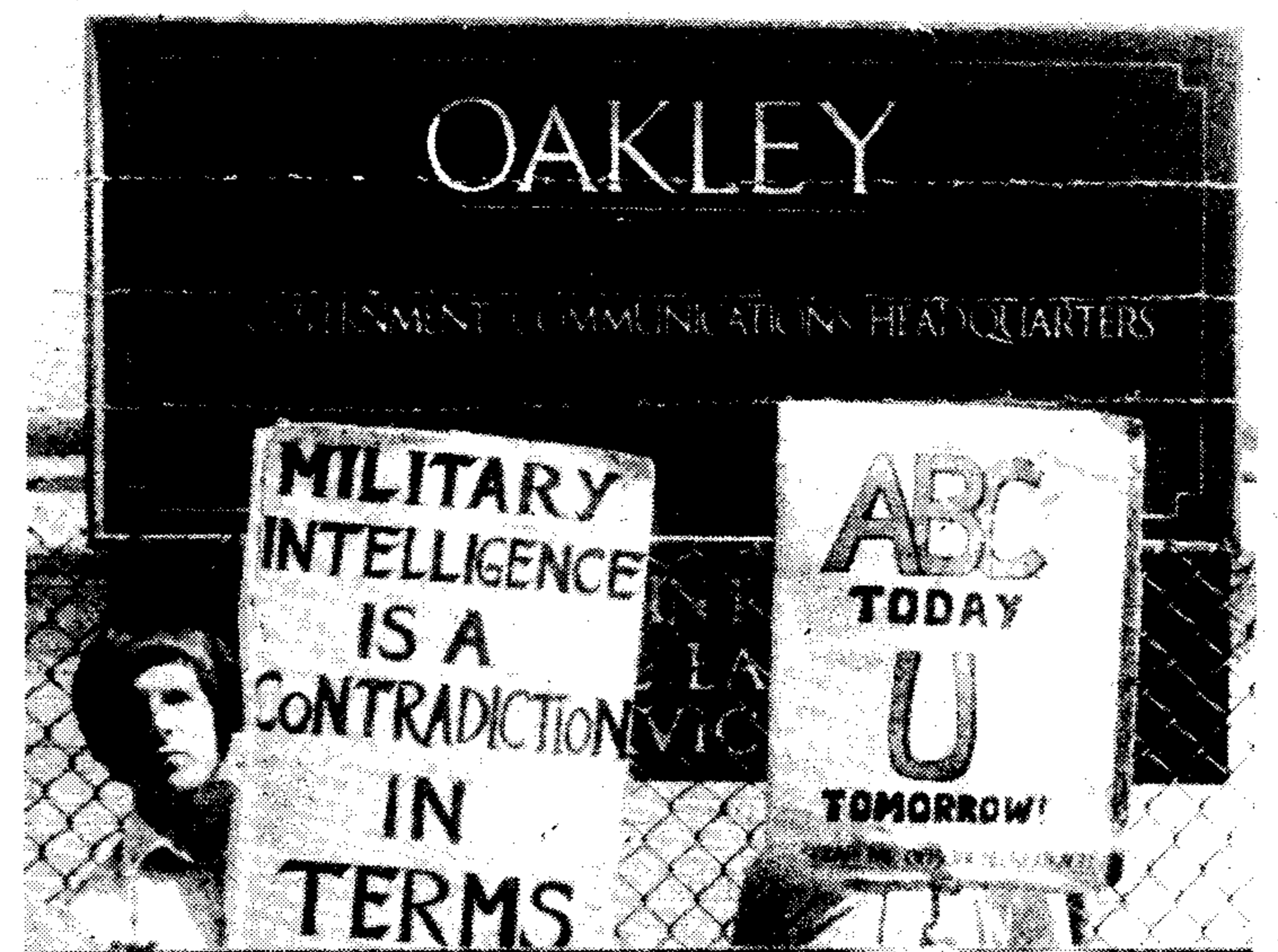
When the leadership won't lead, it's up to the rank and

file. Activists must argue in their branches to make February 28 a full day strike, as the start of a militant campaign to force the Tories to back down.

Where possible, branches should before the 28th pass motions demanding that the NEC makes a clear call for strike action on that day. Activists elsewhere in the labour movement — especially in public sector unions — should argue for supportive action on the 28th, although this will be harder to win without a directive from the CoCSU unions themselves.

The Tory attack on unions at the Government Communications Headquarters is an attack on the whole movement. It shows how the anti-union laws will be stretched and twisted until the very existence of trade unions is threatened by them.

The time has come for trade unionists to make a stand — despite the cowardly inaction of their leaders. Make February 28 a national one-day strike.



International Telecommunication Convention
Malaga-Torremolinos, 25 October 1973
(ratified by United Kingdom 1974)

ARTICLE 22

Secrecy of Telecommunications

Members agree to take all possible measures, compatible with the telecommunication used, with a view to ensuring the secrecy of correspondence.



Whose security does GCHQ serve? See inside, page 3

Come off it, comrades!

THE Gerry Birmingham affair gets stranger and stranger. And more mysterious.

He had a couple of messy and, perhaps, unwise love affairs. And because of this — so we understand — the General Management Committee of St. Helens Labour Party agrees, without dissent [?] to inflict the political death penalty on him!

Or at least on his career as an MP.

Is Birmingham's love-life all there is to this nasty business? Can it be all there is to it? We don't know. But publicly the answer must be yes. That's the only way it's been presented. If there is anything else — some hidden issue or half buried conflict — it should be unearthed immediately.

Right now St. Helens CLP appears to be an organisation of

intolerant, puritanical, oppressive and prying people who recognise neither the conventional distinction between public and private life nor a limit to their own collective power to regulate, supervise and punish Birmingham.

It may be that some — but surely not many — derive these attitudes from a misguided "feminism" — or think it is part of the battle to make MPs accountable.

But the result is indistinguishable — in St Helens CLP itself — from the suffocating and restrictive Christian moralism against which champions of personal liberty and the advanced labour movement and its allies had to fight long and hard. Attitudes like those always, in the end, serve the status quo and bear down most heavily on women, gays and heretics.

FUND

DONATIONS from individuals and groups total £85 this week. That's not a bad week, compared to some we've had, but we will need to improve on this as the month goes on.

Fieldwork by the Fund Column bloodhounds reveals that groups are using the lull after the Xmas Fund Drive to prepare for the Spring Appeal.

Reports have come in that Brent SO supporters, flushed with their success at topping the target-table last quarter, plan a weekend away in the hide-out in the Essex marshes, to map out their assault on future fund targets.

Meanwhile, other London comrades are throwing down the gauntlet now, and revealing their future plans.

Two comrades are planning sponsored events. Siu-Ming Cheung, recovering from a bout of physical inactivity, is now in training for a session of sponsored sit-ups. Tom Rigby, revealing the technological side of his nature, will be making a sponsored journey with the aid of a bicycle. There are two jumble sales planned and a series of video evenings.

Next week, our bloodhounds will be out and about in the regions, reporting on fund-raising plans from outside London.

This week we thank: Martin Barclay, £20; Birmingham supporters, £40; Jeff Slee, £10; Glasgow reader, £5; Steve Battlemuch, £5; Lyn Ferguson, £4; Bev Wood, £1.

Send donations to: Socialist Organiser Fund, 214 Sickert Court, Essex Road, London N1.