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Reagan's marines, Caribbean stooges

TROOPS OUT OF GRENADA!



GRENADA is still fighting back against the US and Caribbean invaders as we go to press on Wednesday, more than 24 hours after the invasion.

Some reports talk of "fierce fighting" between the invaders and the forces of the 1200-strong Grenadian army and units of the popular militia.

But it can only be a matter of time before the small island,

whose entire population is only 110,000, is overrun by the vastly superior invading force.

Nobody believes the official US explanation for the invasion, put out by the mad dog in the White House - that it was to protect the lives of US citizens on the island. The US has been looking for its chance, probing for an opening, ever since the left-wing coup in 1979.

Former Prime Minister Maurice Bishop had repeatedly warned the people to be prepared for an invasion.

All the US needed was an opening, and the bloody split in the New Jewel Movement gave it to them.

Much is still unknown about exactly what happened in Grenada in the ten days before the invasion, but the outline seems clear enough. Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and his close ministerial colleagues were ousted and locked up by a faction of the New Jewel Movement, led by Bernard Coard, backed at the beginning by the leaders of the

new revolutionary army (though Coard quickly dropped out of sight).

A mass demonstration involving perhaps one out of every 20 Grenadians freed Bishop. The army opened fire on the crowd and either then, or in cold blood afterwards, Bishop and his close colleagues were slaughtered.

The anti-Bishop coup was hailed by Moscow, but condemned by Fidel Castro.

Frightened right-wing West Indian governments - Dominica, which itself was invaded by the US in 1965, Barbados, Jamaica, etc - spurred each other and Reagan on to invasion. After the mass killing of American soldiers in Beirut, Reagan badly needed his own Falklands war, a chance to be seen throwing America's weight about.

Early on Tuesday morning, 25 October, 2,000 US and 300 Caribbean troops launched their assault on the people of Grenada, telling them and the world that they had come to bring back democracy and law and order.

The stiff resistance shows

what the people of Grenada think about it.

The danger of seriously stepped-up US military pressure against Nicaragua is now very great. The US military is already directly involved on the Honduras-Nicaraguan border. But Nicaragua would be harder to take than Grenada, whose resistance is a small taste of what they can expect from the Nicaraguans.

Grenada will either whet their appetite and thus put Nicaragua in immediate danger of massively stepped-up military action by the US's proxies and agents in the area, and even possibly US invasion. Or the adverse reaction to the criminal invasion of Grenada will inhibit further American action in the area.

It looks as if a powerful backlash against Reagan is already under way in the USA. And even Reagan's 'closest ally', Thatcher, advised against invasion and now stands publicly humiliated as US and Commonwealth

Continued back page



'Get US Troops Out of Grenada' picket at US Embassy on day of invasion



STEFANO CAGNONI (IFL)

EDITORIAL

Tebbit's law caught short

"WE have tip-toed through the minefields — so far without treading on a mine. Indeed the only casualties so far have been on the TUC side."

In these words, to guffaws of bourgeois merriment, Norman Tebbit complacently assured sceptics in the Tory conference that the government had successfully neutralised the unions.

A week later — with Tebbit having meantime moved on to the greener pastures of Cecil Parkinson's Department of Privatisation and Speed-up — his boast was made to sound strangely hollow.

From the bench of the High Court, Mr Justice Mervyn Davies refused to grant an injunction to Mercury Communications, the private telecommunications group, to prevent the Post Office Engineering Union "blacking" its interconnection with the British Telecom network.

The injunction had been sought under the provisions of Tebbit's 1982 anti-union legislation, which makes "secondary" action and political action by trade unions unlawful, and restricts trade union immunities from damages to actions "wholly or mainly" related to a trades dispute with the workers' own employer.

It appears that BT management's over-eagerness to adopt a tough line with POEU militants — and suspend those who "blackened" work on Mercury was the decisive factor in swinging the judgement against Mercury and in favour of the POEU. Judge Davies decided that the suspensions were evidence of a real dispute between the POEU and BT.

There is no doubt that the court ruling has been a humiliating setback for Mercury, for BT and for the Tory government (which appears scarcely to have put a foot right since its June election victory).

Mercury claims to have lost £1.5 million as a direct result of the POEU action, a further £4.5 million in orders and investment and to face losses of £500,000 per week.

But this was brushed aside by the judge, who ruled that the "balance of convenience" favoured the union: if the status quo were altered by allowing Mercury to proceed, POEU members might lose jobs, he declared.

This is not the kind of decisions which hawkish employers like Mercury, or their political vanguard in the Tory Party were expecting to hear after the passage of the Tebbit Act.

As the Financial Times legal correspondent pointed out: "There can be little doubt that the Government, in framing the terms of the Employment Act 1982, expected that any union which ordered industrial action over anything other than wages and conditions, involving anyone other than the direct employer, would not be able to claim immunity from legal action. More particularly, it was hoped that even the slightest hint of political motive would vitiate the limited immunity conferred on trade unions."

Of course the imposition of such swingeing restrictions on trade union rights requires more than simply establishing a form of words on paper. If such legislation is to mean anything it must be tested, tempered and interpreted in practice.

In essence the Tory drive to discipline the trade unions does not depend exclusively or even primarily upon the law and its enforcement by the courts.

But the law provides a framework of intimidation which enables the Tories to maximise this pressure upon the trade union bureaucracy — forcing them into a succession of retreats and betrayals, creating more favourable conditions to confront and defeat individual struggles.

To do this, the legislation needs to be interpreted in the way the Tories intended, and needs to be used initially with discretion against selected soft targets in the trade union hierarchy. So far, this has not occurred with the Tebbit Act.

In Stockport, a maverick newspaper boss invoked the 1982 Act against journalists giving solidarity support to NGA printworkers. But the right wing dominated NUJ leadership voted to defy the injunction and stand firm.

Now the second major trial of the Act — the Mercury case — has shown that its application depends a great deal on the disposition of top judges.

Hard-line employers are already demanding that the anti-union laws and the Telecommunications Bill be tightened up to eliminate this element of discretion. Others look with rather more confidence to the hope that Friday's ruling will be reversed on appeal, by the House of Lords, or at the full hearing of the case in the New Year.

None of that will be of any immediate consolation to Mercury, whose £90 million investment and ambitious plans to cream off a lucrative slice of BT business now appear in serious jeopardy: other privatising vulture firms hovering around the nationalised industries will also be alarmed at the potential dangers.

But before the workers' movement gets carried away with enthusiasm for Judge Davies, two notes of caution are vital.

Firstly, we must remember that through its periodic displays of independence the judiciary in Britain and other countries builds up its authority to impose unpopular and reactionary judgements.

The second warning must be against illusions or deference to the courts within the labour movement. With a case as complex and tenuous as this, the ruling could almost as easily have gone the other way.

What would the POEU's right wing General Secretary Bryan Stanley and the Broad Left-dominated POEU Executive — who called off the highly effective blacking of Mercury's financial backers in advance of the High Court action — have done if Judge Davies had ruled the other way?

Would they have taken the only correct course, and stood firm against the injunction, building towards all-out strike action by the whole membership if the union's assets were touched by the courts?

Or would they have emerged crestfallen from the courts to wind up the "blackening" action and revert to a posters-and-postcards campaign against the Tebbit Act?

There may be a temporary — but valuable — respite in which POEU members could be encouraged to ensure that any future injunctions that may be granted are met by the necessary firm repudiation. It is to be hoped that this is not wasted.

Mercury and the Tory government will be back — looking for vengeance.

Waldorf case brings new views of "self defence"

By Harry Sloan

THE two policemen who fired five bullets into film director Steven Waldorf and then beat him about the head walked free from court last week, astoundingly cleared of all charges arising from the incident last January.

Their trial had come conveniently after the well publicised trial of David Martin — the wanted criminal for whom Waldorf was mistaken by the policemen — even though Martin's eventual arrest (alive) came some weeks after the Waldorf shooting.

The defence case for the accused police officers was focussed on a novel interpretation of the "self defence" argument. If Waldorf had been Martin, dangerous and armed, then he might, inside the yellow mini where he was a passenger, have been reaching for a gun.

The judge, Mr Justice Croom-Johnson made much of this point, insisting to the jury that prosecution evidence had not ruled out "the possibility that the officer acted in self defence when he fired at the Mini . . . and later hit him across the head with a pistol."

"If the circumstances are justified you can get your blow in first to prevent attack."

The problem with this definition of "self-defence" is that it

eliminates any necessity for violence or even intended violence on the part of the victim.

How many people would sit impassively in their cars if — in a queue of traffic — they found themselves suddenly menaced by armed policemen? Remember — the slightest move could be used as a pretext for you to be riddled with bullets in "self defence".

Even to roll down the window to find out what was happening could be your last move.

Detective Constable Finch told the court that he shouted the warning "armed police", but "it did not come out very well at all". Then — thinking he saw the "suspect" reach for a gun — he shot Steven Waldorf; and his shots were followed up by others from Detective Constable Jardine.

The story makes it clear: nobody — innocent or "guilty" — subjected to such treatment would be safe from the danger of being shot at close range — and

then, if they were foolish enough to twitch, writhe or groan in their agony, be beaten about the head with a pistol butt.

The additional stark truth to emerge is that the case would most likely never have gone to court if it had actually been David Martin in the car — whether or not he had been killed.

The court decision effectively upholds a police policy of "fire at will" so long as the target is a wanted criminal — in effect a policy of endorsing summary execution of those suspected of crime. And in a case where a criminal is wanted for using violence against the police there is the additional possibility of an element of revenge.

Execution

Summary execution of suspects is commonly the case in countries where police forces are armed; and it has been the case for many years in the six counties of Northern Ireland, where police and army gunmen, with boots, batons and plastic bullets exert a reign of terror against the Catholic minority irrespective of their age, sex or

occupation.

But to have such behaviour again endorsed by the courts in Britain itself came as a shock to liberal public opinion — and has even proved somewhat of an embarrassment to the police hierarchy itself, whose guidelines on firearms are shown to be powerless to influence police behaviour.

This is why, hoping to dissuade Steven Waldorf from pursuing a civil suit against the police — who have not so much as apologised to him for his fearful injuries and suffering — Scotland Yard top brass last week began debating the amount that should be offered in compensation.

Police Federation leaders however are looking for even more sweeping discretion in the use of firearms — backed up by the implicit threat to refuse to use guns unless given much more of a "license to kill".

For the labour movement the lesson must be to step up the campaign work against the Tory Police Bill, which aims to offer increased powers to the cops in their harassment of working class people — particularly youth and blacks — on the streets.

Hospital walk-out

HOSPITAL workers from Halifax General Hospital staged a one-hour token walk-out on Tuesday, 25th. The strike was in response to government proposals to prioritise Calderdale's in-house hospital laundry and to hive off catering facilities.

The government has also proposed the closure of five hospital wards which are mainly for geriatric patients.

Later in the day a bus-load of mainly women workers picketed the monthly meeting of the District Health Authority, held in a hospital in a remote part of the Pennine Hills.

After being allowed into the

meeting, the women staged a walk-out when Labour councillor Alice Mahon's proposals to scrap the privatisation plans were defeated by the inbuilt Tory majority.

The campaign in Halifax stands a real chance of success, particularly if it links up with workers in neighbouring Bradford who are already well into an occupation of the Thornton View Geriatric Hospital.

If industrial action escalates it is likely that the West Yorkshire Area may become a focus of the fight to save the national health service and of confrontation with the government.

Anti-cuts lobby

THE Lewisham and North Southwark Health Action Campaign will be lobbying the next meeting of the District Health Authority on October 31.

The campaign is demanding that the DHA refuse to implement the cuts, resist any privatisation; and make all information freely available to the public.


The campaign has held two successful public meetings since being initiated by an East Lewisham ward Labour Party and together with other local campaigns, mobilised over 300 people to lobby the last meeting of the DHA.

The response from local

hospital union branches has been excellent and they are fully involved in the campaign. The campaign is at present trying to enhance moves towards joint shop stewards committees across the borough and is also involved in steps to coordinate activity on a London-wide basis.

The next lobby is at 4pm in the Florence Shepherd Building, Guys Hospital, SE1 and will be followed by a public meeting on November 2 at 7.30 at Deptford Town Hall.

The campaign can be contacted at 191, Hither Green Lane, Lewisham, SE13. Tel: 01-852 5088 or 318 1179.



Labour Campaign for Gay Rights
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Idrish setback

DESPITE the 2,000-strong national demonstration in his support two weeks ago, the High Court last week decided to confirm the order for the deportation of Bengali social worker Mohammad Idrish.

Idrish came to Britain in 1976 as a student and married a British woman with whom he lived for five years. Now the breakdown of that marriage is being used as the basis for the Home Office to seek his deportation.

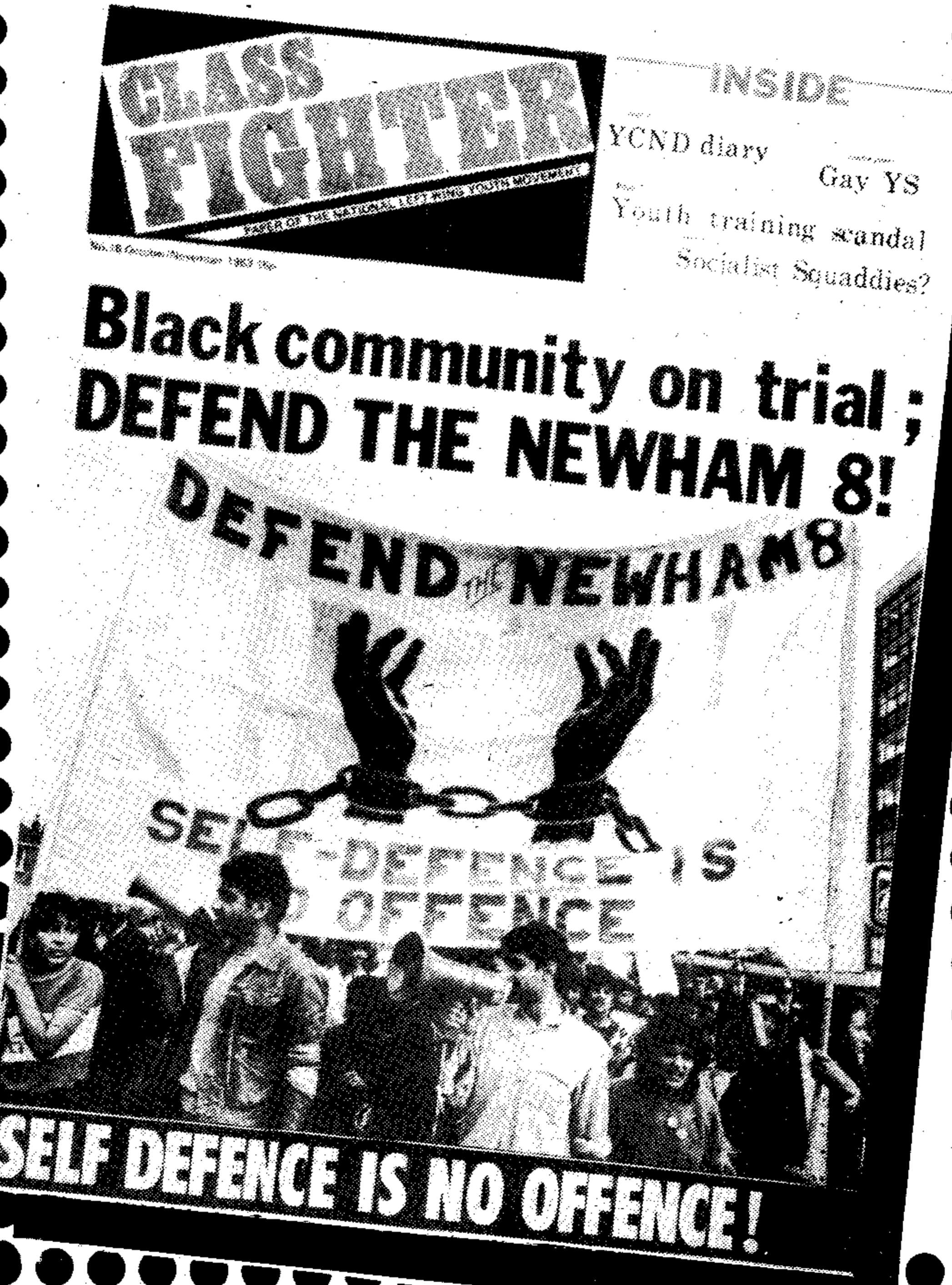
He works in West Bromwich as a social worker, and his

struggle against deportation has been officially backed by his union, NALGO, as well as other labour movement and anti-racist organisations.

The campaign is asking that members of SCPS, CPISA and TGWU in particular send urgent branch resolutions to their union leaderships opposing the deportation and demanding action to boycott all work around it.

Support meetings, letters to the Home Secretary, MPs and the press must also be organised as soon as possible if the deportation is to be halted.

New issue of Class Fighter now out — 12 pages for 15p plus postage from 214 Sickert Court, Essex Road, London N1 2SY.



INSIDE
YCN diary
Gay YS
Youth training scandal
Socialist Squaddies?

Black community on trial; DEFEND THE NEWHAM 8!

SELF DEFENCE IS NO OFFENCE!

After Oct 22 Is CND waiting for 1988?

AS Saturday's vast crowds made their way home from the biggest British demonstration in the post-war period, the bitter reality is that the CND leadership has explicitly rejected any perspective of taking action now to halt the deployment of Cruise.

By Tom Rigby

Their new message seems to be, 'wait until the next election'.

This was put forward quite clearly by CND chairperson Joan Ruddock on Sunday October 22, as she launched a new 'Send Cruise home' campaign for CND.

"We shall be taking a long-term view towards the next general election, when voters will have a choice of one major party committed to the removal of all nuclear weapons from this country, and another (SDP/Liberal Alliance) which has expressed grave doubts about their wisdom".

We cannot afford to wait until the next election.

CND, the Labour Party, and the trade unions must go out and fight for their existing policies.

But they also need to clear up the contradictions in those policies. In particular, we must recognise that unilateral nuclear disarmament and membership of NATO are not compatible. The NATO generals will not be prepared to see the second biggest military power in the capitalist world opt out of its nuclear 'commitments', and we should not pretend otherwise.

We will need to challenge the witch-hunting, bureaucratic, and right-wing leadership of CND.

That means rejecting the call for a bilateral US-Soviet nuclear 'freeze', defending the autonomy of Youth CND and Labour CND, and building a hard, firm unilateralist core within the disarmament movement, drawing in Constituency Labour Parties, trade unions, active CND groups, Youth CND, Labour CND, and the more radical sections of the women's peace movement.

Link up

We will also need to link up the struggle against the missiles with all the other battles going on against the Tories.

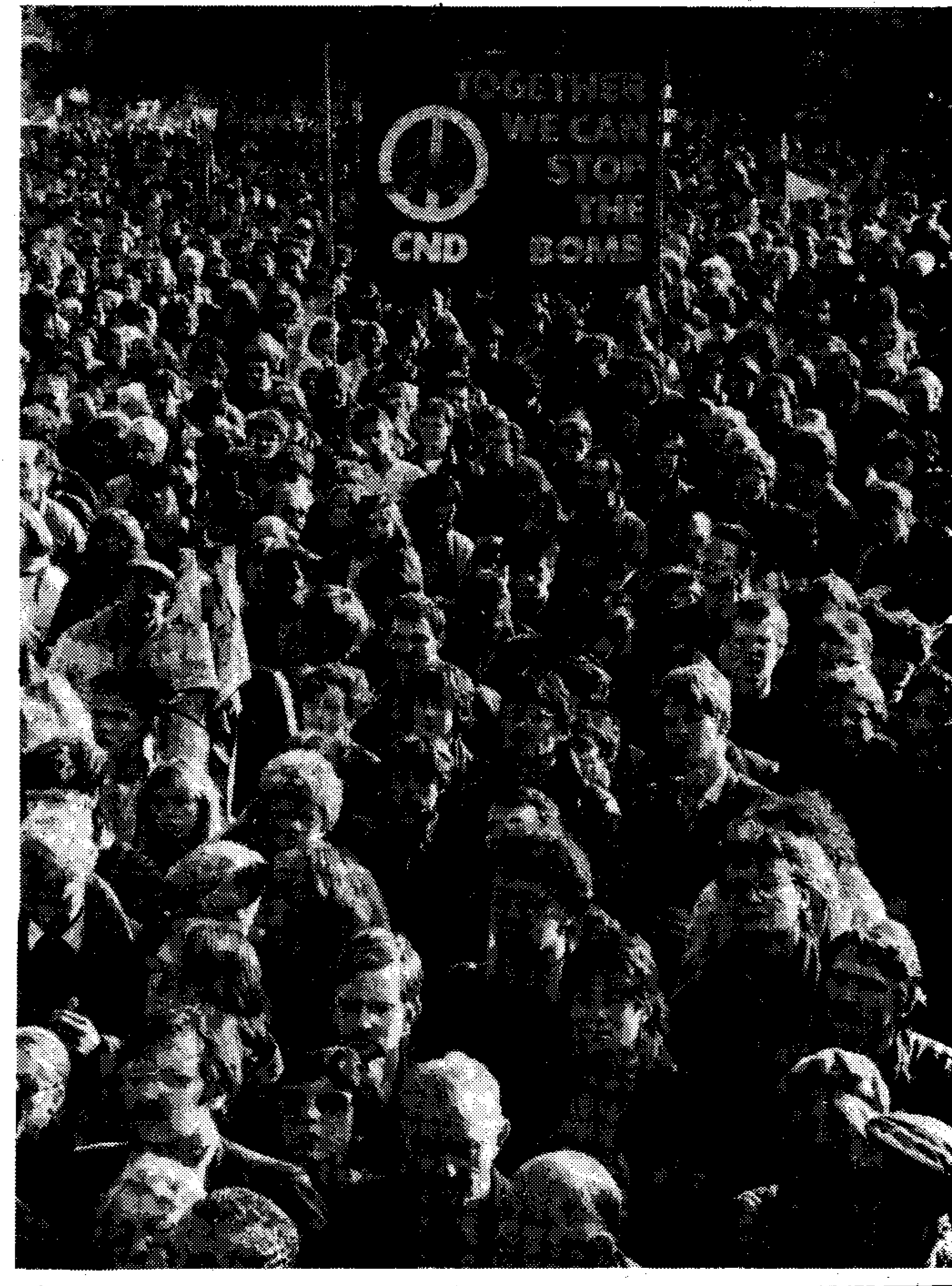
Finally we must recognise that if - as seems likely - the Tories are successful and Cruise missiles are deployed, then that does not mean the end for CND.

That may happen, if the CND leadership get their way; but it is not inevitable.

The basis for a mass movement against war still exists. We should go out and build it.



PHOTOS: JOHN HARRIS



TUC leaders bow to King

IN THE topsy-turvy world of TUC bureaucrats, the passing of Norman Tebbit and the arrival of Tom King at the laughingly-entitled 'Department of Employment' has provoked alarm and some regret.

From the standpoint of top union leaders, the recent period - which has seen Tebbit's anti-union laws enacted, the first injunctions issues, and legal wrangles proliferate - has been one of 'improvement' in union-Government relations.

And as supreme collaborators, capitulators, trimmers, fixers, and turners with the wind, the union leaders found it hard to conceal their admira-

tion for the brutal hard line and uncompromising defence of ruling class interests epitomised in Tebbit.

So Bill Keys - the supposed 'left' of the TUC's top-level team sent to talk with Tebbit - told the Guardian quite firmly that:

"In a peculiar way I am sad to see Mr Tebbit go. As an abrasive man myself, I used to like meeting him".

Like a maltreated mongrel grateful to be given even scraps of food and relieved at not being kicked, Keys celebrated their relationship:

"He has been prepared to listen to us, and we were able to have long and detailed discussions with him".

But if Keys was pleased simply to receive a bone or two,

the CPSA's right wing leader Alastair Graham had looked forward to getting his own basket in Tebbit's living room - by reaching political agreement with Tebbit!

"As this Government finds itself in increasing economic difficulties, it will need to get a wider consensus."

"The TUC at its last Congress showed that it is prepared to be realistic in its demands (!) on this government".

While NUPE and GMBU leaders pointed to King's intervention to hold down water workers' pay, Graham expressed the hope that King would not try to be more 'macho' than Tebbit.

With this as a warm-up to the meeting last Wednesday, it is scarcely surprising that TUC leaders came out enthusiastically

ly talking of King's 'willingness to listen' and his eagerness to see the TUC's own package of measures to restrict the present operation of union political funds.

They have now pledged themselves to engage in 'detailed negotiations' on the third phase of Tory anti-union legislation.

Chances

And King - like Tebbit before him - knows that as long as he can tie down the TUC chiefs to piecemeal 'negotiations' on the political levy, his chances are increased of forcing through the other aspects of the new anti-union laws - the imposition of ballots before strikes and ballots for the election of union executive committees.

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Question marks over the Pill Using women as guinea pigs

By Les Hearn

FOR the past 30 years women's bodies have been used as laboratories in a gigantic drug test.

The contraceptive pill was tested first on Puerto Rican women before being prescribed for Western women, and it was very successful in reliably preventing conception.

The pill works by drastically altering hormone levels, so fooling the body into believing it is pregnant each month — and no one knows the long-term effects of this. Now we are finding out.

Already high oestrogen pills are being prescribed much less often, because of the danger of blood clots and damage to the blood system. Now, two articles in last week's *Lancet* suggest cancer risks from the pill.

High level

The first one concerns only those pills with a high progesterone level. Women under 25 who take this type of pill for several years run an increased risk of breast cancer later on. Some 2.6 million women are taking such pills, though many will be over 25.

The second study concerns all pill-users and states that they run a 35% greater risk of cervical cancer. Women using the pill for more than eight years run double

the normal risk of cervical cancer.

On a positive note, all women diagnosed to have cervical cancer in the study seemed to be cured by their treatment. Therefore the authors of the study recommend routine smear testing of all long-term pill users.

Incidentally, official advice to use up your prescription before seeing your doctor has been criticised because many women get a year's supply at once. These studies have been criti-

cised and in fact conflict with the results of previous studies. Other research seems to show that the pill reduces the risk of cancers of the ovary and the womb.

But one thing is sure, the chemical approach is severely limited and physical approaches (setting up a physical barrier between the sperm and the egg) are likely to become more popular in future. These include the cervical cap, the sheath, and vasectomy.

Only now they tell us!

Cervical and breast cancers kill more than 16,000 women every year in Britain.

This is not a new phenomenon. It's been going on for more than 20 years.

The Pill has been used by hundreds of thousands of women for more than 20 years.

Now (nearly 1984) we find out that there is a high risk of contracting these cancers if you use a high-dosage pill for more than four years. Since low-dosage pills have only been prescribed relatively recently, that means that most women using the Pill are at risk of contracting cancer.

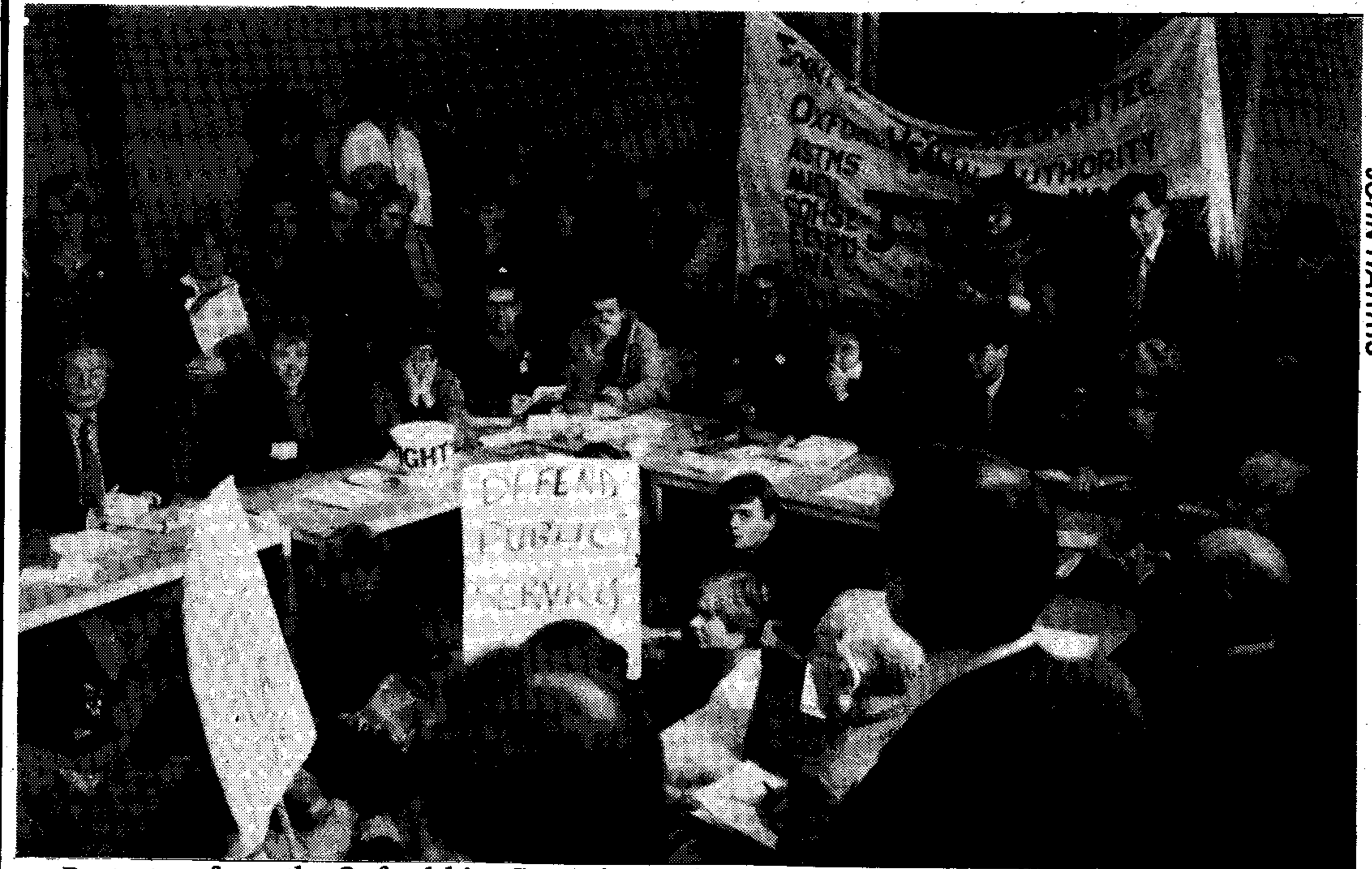
There have been cancer 'scare' before, yet major investigations have not been carried out. Even the latest studies, done by

By Jo Thwaites

Vessey and Pike, still aren't conclusive, and allow doctors to say: 'Well, this needs to be confirmed by other investigators'.

It is scandalous that a drug can be prescribed for over 20 years to so many women without proper conclusive tests having been carried out as to its safety.

But is it surprising? How many millions have been made by the drug companies? How much more simple and profitable to carry on with the Wonderpill, which sets so many women's fears of pregnancy to one



Protestors from the Oxfordshire Campaign against NHS cuts moved in to occupy a meeting of the District Health Authority on Tuesday.

JOHN HARRIS

Factors the report did not look at

By Sue Lister

IT IS fairly obvious to anyone who has followed the recent correspondence in the *Guardian*, that the fact that the Pill may induce various forms of cancer has been known for a long time.

Just because hard evidence has taken longer to appear is no excuse for not warning people (or more to the point warning women).

There are a lot of flippant comments from the medical profession on how women would rather take the risks of the Pill than risk pregnancy.

Firstly, taking the Pill is not the only way of avoiding pregnancy. Other forms of contraception can be very effective.

Secondly, the last so-called "pill scare" had the medical profession making the same remarks in relation to the report on thrombosis risks.

Yet every woman known to have read the report gave up the Pill!

It is interesting to note that very few of the workers in Family Planning Clinics use the Pill as their form of contraception.

Which only goes to show that if women actually know what risks they are taking, the vast majority decided not to continue taking those risks.

It is also true that the research did not go into other factors possibly linked to the incidence of cervical cancer — such as the number of sexual partners and frequency of sex at an "early" age.

Hygiene

Nor did it go into the personal hygiene or circumcision of those partners.

This seems to be a factor, because the incidence of cervical cancer in orthodox jewesses is very low... if there was a reverse of incidence of cancer female circumcision would be compulsory!

The Housing Benefit rip-off

HOUSING Benefit was introduced in April 1983 to combine local authority rent/rate rebate schemes and the supplementary benefit rent addition, so that all 'housing costs', where appropriate, would be paid by the local authority.

The scheme, though introduced as a simplification, has been horrendously complex. It is too early to discuss the longer-term implications of it; however, even now there are important points to raise.

Supplementary Benefit claimants

Claimants must now deal

BARBARA BROOKS, an Executive member of the civil service union SCPS, writes here in her personal capacity on the implications of the new Tory Scheme.

with both DHSS and the local authority. Unemployed claimants must also deal with the Department of Employment.

There is evidence that many do not understand that the local authority now pays their rent and it is to that authority that relevant changes should be notified. Many that do understand believe that all departments automatically pass on information — this is not the case.

Consequently, although it is impossible to quantify the magnitude of the problem, many claimants are receiving incorrect amounts of housing benefit.

2. Even if the information is fully recorded, there is anecdotal evidence that local authorities are not fully equipped to deal with it.

In one case a summons was issued for non-payment of rates and only days before the court case it was discovered that payment of rates was the full responsibility of the local authority. They had been unable to amend their action on receipt of further information once the scheme had been initiated.

Obviously, for a system where constant reappraisal is necessary, this is unacceptable.

3. Many claimants retain responsibility for some part of their rent or rates (e.g. because a charge for heating is inclusive in the rent, but is not covered by the scheme, or whether another adult living in the house-

hold is expected to make a contribution, etc.)

It is apparent that there is great confusion over this, and that many are incurring debts simply because they are unaware of the charges which remain their responsibility. This can result in prosecution and eviction.

4. Little or no explanation of the individual entitlement to Housing Benefit is provided to the claimant.

5. Claimants in various local authorities in Oxfordshire used to receive 'free rent weeks' — often at Christmas. Although supplementary benefit was averaged over the full year, most people paid a few extra pence each week and therefore had the full benefit of their rent allowance as spending money during the free weeks.

We do not know how many depended on this as additional 'savings' and will now face hardship over the Christmas period.

6. There is no evidence as to whether housing benefit supplement is being paid to those entitled, or not paid. Staff shortages in DHSS and general pressure of work make it likely that the latter is the case.

Rent and rates rebates or allowance

There is little evidence of the impact of the scheme on people previously receiving rent or rates rebates. However, the application form is considerably more complex and this must cause problems.

One local authority issued payment by crossed cheques, and claimants without bank accounts were unable to cash them.

The scheme generally

1. Introduction was delayed due to industrial action at DHSS, but even when this ceased the local authorities had problems with the numbers of people involved.

2. Some councils provide a good information service (as in Oxford). Others do not. One denied that there was such a system.

3. There are problems with obtaining quick payments of benefit to secure housing.

Other points

1. Supplementary benefit claimants and local authority tenants are now unable to go on rent strike. This freedom was withdrawn by direct payment.

2. Many people are aware that their neighbours now know that they are receiving housing benefit, as they no longer 'pay rent'. This particularly upsets pensioners.

3. The system was introduced at a 'no cost' basis — i.e., some winners, some losers. At poverty level we can afford no losers.

4. Civil servants are covered by the Official Secrets Act and the Disclosure of Information code. This means, in effect, that they may not discuss cases unless as part of an investigation of a serious crime.

As far as I am aware, no such rules cover local authority staff despite their acquisition under the scheme of large amounts of personal information on those claiming.

Other points

There are many other points, but I think it must be concluded that the introduction of housing benefit was not a welcome simplification of the benefit

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Residential workers stiffen the fight

Bury

By Sue Arnall

50 RESIDENTIAL social workers are now out on strike in Bury, Lancashire, as a result of the senior management's escalation of the national NALGO dispute for a 35 hour week and paid overtime.

Monday October 17 was a national day of action, and staff from residential homes throughout the country were on 24 hour strike. Everywhere but in Bury, it was expected that senior staff would keep the homes ticking over.

In Bury, confrontation was forced by senior management going into three children's homes on Monday morning, cooking breakfast, sending the children to school, and then, while they were away, packing clothes into dustbin bags ready to move the children out without prior warning on their return from school.

Social workers weren't told, parents weren't informed of their removal, and 27 children were shunted round the north west, some as far away as Wales, Southport and Liverpool. The striking residential workers got back to work on Tuesday morning to find themselves locked out.

These 25 have now been joined on strike by a further 25 NALGO members in solidarity against this victimisation.

These workers simply took part in a one-day strike, and have now found themselves prevented from working or drawing their pay. Tory councillors are saying that the three homes will stay closed until the workers give an undertaking not to continue with the industrial action.

Some are talking of privatising the care of children and the elderly, and closing the homes altogether.

Distressed children have run away from their new 'homes'; some have been phoning their social workers and the NALGO office all week asking to be brought back to Bury. Parents have been demanding

to know the whereabouts of their children, and senior staff seem not to know in some cases. Children have been moved to as many as three successive places with no proper records being kept.

Some children were sent back to their parents without any clear assurance that they were welcome. The whole thing is unbelievable unless you know Bury council's record on social services.

In 1976-7 the Tories tried to close seven establishments to make cuts, but were stopped by the united action of the unions and community groups in the Bury Action Group. The councillors seem to have no concern for the welfare of their dependent clients.

In this present dispute some children have been taken to homes under false pretences, and most have been wrongly placed. For example, one child in care because of parent's illness has been placed in a school for maladjusted children, and another has been placed in a locked room with a child accused of murder!

All the children have had their schooling disrupted, and for some in their fifth year this will have a lasting effect. None has been moved because it was thought to be in their long-term interest. There have been no long-term plans, no case-conferences. They have been moved as pawns in the management's attempt to force the workers to capitulate.

NALGO in Bury has called a day of strike action in the social services department for Wednesday October 26, and the dispute is sure to escalate if the council refuses to reinstate the locked-out workers and return the children home.

Bury North constituency Labour Party has passed a motion of support for the workers. This support now needs to be transformed into active solidarity on the picket-lines and lobbies.

Notts

IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE six establishments were on strike.

The strike was extended to cover another four establishments following management's scabbing over the weekend.

A further children's home struck from Thursday when it became clear that management would not provide experienced cover to care for problem children. It is likely that the first ten establishments will prolong their strike in support until adequate cover is provided.

On Monday the strikers met with an excellent response when they visited other homes across the county lobbying for support.

Senior shop steward Ann Crowder said that by the weekend up to 20 establishments could be closed.

The local council in Nottingham has declared open warfare on the social workers, saying that they would take any measures necessary to undermine the action.



Social workers protest in Bury

Solidarity in Southwark

By Jeff Slee and Steve Macarthur

AN all-out strike by NALGO members of Labour-run Southwark Council in South London, has prevented victimisation of residential social workers taking action in the current dispute.

On Monday morning, 24 October, 32 residential social workers were sent home from work and, in the Council's words "taken off the payroll" - in effect, suspended. The 32 had, following national NALGO guidelines, refused Council attempts to redeploy them.

Following these suspensions, there was a complete walkout - first by the social services section and then by the whole of the Council's NALGO workforce.

The same evening, a Labour Group meeting - lobbied by over 200 NALGO members - voted to back down and reinstate the 32.

After the group meeting, Southwark NALGO members described the day's events to Socialist Organiser.

"The 32 who were suspended all had letters delivered over the weekend instructing them to arrive at Social Services head office at 9.00 this morning. They were seen by senior management and asked whether they'd abide by management instructions and agree to be redeployed - against union instructions. When they refused, they were immediately 'taken off the payroll'. The management even had someone in the meeting noting down the exact time at which each one was suspended.

"Each member involved went in with a section or branch officer. As soon as 12 had been 'taken off the payroll' NALGO members in all the residential homes, all the Social Service field-work offices, and the administrative sections were told to walk out. It has been section policy that this would happen if there were any suspensions.

"Immediately all other sections of the branch - borough engineers, development, housing, planning, town clerks and so on - began to walk out, again in accordance with a branch decision. By lunchtime the whole council had come to a standstill.

"The next thing that happened was that there was a section meeting, which agreed to come out on indefinite strike until the 32 were reinstated. We all stayed out on strike for the rest of the day."

The terrific response by the NALGO branch and the lobby of the group meeting shocked the Labour Group into ordering the reinstatement of the 32. The Council is still, however, using scabs and 'volunteers' to do the work of residential staff taking industrial action.

Some Labour councillors are threatening to 'smash NALGO' in order to be able to make cuts and redundancies when the Tories

'rate-capping' comes into effect. A NALGO member said about the strike: "This leaves NALGO in a stronger position in order to secure a better settlement for the residential workers, and in a stronger position to fight any action that may be coming in the future."

* As we go to press, it appears that local-level talks aimed at a settlement are making progress

between the Labour council and NALGO representatives.

AN ORGANISATION of children campaigning for improvements in Southwark residential care has come out strongly in support of the struggle. A delegation was sent to lobby social services chief John Briggs - who attempted to placate the leaders by taking them to a local MacDonalds at cost of some £37. The youth were not so easily dissuaded.

NALGO militants are now sporting badges proclaiming "Mine's a Big Mac, John!"

Lothian

IN LOTHIAN region, 169 residential social workers from children's and old people's homes have been on all-out strike for two weeks.

Their move to escalate the dispute came earlier than other parts of the country because of their ban on overtime which was met by the use of "temporary workers" over weekends - and the social workers refused to work with these strikebreakers.

An additional demand in Lothian is that nine workers on temporary contracts be offered permanent status: management withdrew an offer of permanent contracts as the dispute began.

Lambeth council opts to fight workers

By Les Hearn

LOCAL authority residential workers have finally been goaded into fighting for payments which every other worker in the land would expect as of right and have been met with a half-hearted rejection.

Socialists might expect left-wing Labour councils to give a lead in such a situation - and indeed they have. They are showing Tory councils how to fight workers with scab labour (Strathclyde and Southwark) and with spurious offers of negotiations, coupled with a crackdown on NALGO shop floor activities and a tactic of divide and rule (Lambeth).

In Lambeth, NALGO has attempted to get local negotiations, but the council has instead offered negotiations with the Association of London Authorities, on an offer which they will not reveal.

Understandably NALGO has turned this down, since the ALA is not a recognised negotiating body and has no role in the National Joint Council structure.

Pressure to open local negotiations has included closing unstaffed children's homes, disrupting council committee meetings (with a sometimes violent response), as well as a one-day strike with a magnificent contingent of 400 for a lobby of the national negotiations on October 17.

NALGO is now balloting members on non-cooperation with councillors. In response the council has imposed a literal translation of the trade union facilities agreement, so all union meetings in worktime must have prior agreement - and no agreement is forthcoming for meetings

discussing the dispute.

This is contrary to established custom and practice over several years. The council even tried to discipline a leading NALGO convenor, who insisted on defending his members' interests over an "unauthorised" shop meeting.

The reason for this behaviour has come out in two ways - firstly in a letter to NALGO members urging them not to boycott councillors, the council refers to the great cost of the

residential workers' claims.

Secondly, in a crude attempt to divide manual from white collar workers, the council has told manual unions that granting the claim would mean manual redundancies.

In other words, given the choice of fighting the Tories or the residential workers a leading left wing Labour council chooses to fight one of the most exploited groups of workers.

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International news

The rise and fall of the Lebanese National Movement

HOW did the Movement develop and what were the conditions of its collapse?

There is a long history of alliances in post-war Lebanese politics. This history of the alliances of the left reads rather like a political history of Kemal Jumblatt, father of the present leader of the Progressive Socialist Party.

When Jumblatt started his political activity in 1943, he was not on the left but in the centre. Nor was he then a pan-Arabist. He became in time a good friend of Nasser's and his main political ally in Lebanon.

In the middle sixties there was an alliance between the Socialists, the Communist Party, the Ba'athists and the Arab National Movement. The leaders of this last group were George Habbash and Mohsin Ibrahim.

Habbash went on to form the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Ibrahim, after the split with Habbash in 1968, continued as leader of the ANM, but later the group fused with the Lebanese Socialists, a group led by Fawaz Trabulsi, to form the Organisation of Lebanese Socialists, which after two years changed its name to Organisation of Communist Action.

This alliance lasted two or three years — until the late '60s. Then Jumblatt broke the alliance because of Mohsin Ibrahim's dispute with Nasser. For two or three years there was no alliance in any formal sense.

If there was an alliance of sorts, its members were simply those who met in Kemal Jumblatt's home. In the early '70s there were really two alliances in one: on one side you had Jumblatt, the Communist Party, the pro-Syrian Ba'athists and the Nasserites; on the other side there were the PLO, the OCA, the Iraqi Ba'athists and the Lebanese linked with the PLO.

In 1974 things re-shaped. Kemal Jumblatt was once again the undisputed leader of the left, but there was no organised body until the beginning of the civil war, which I would date as the bus incident of 13 April 1975.

Conclusion of an interview with Mohammed Kabbani, a left wing Lebanese Muslim politician.

In 1976 the Lebanese National Movement was formalised, and a Central Political Council, its Executive, set up. This was composed of 13 parties and seven independent political personalities.

What were the parties?

There was the Progressive Socialist Party, which I have described before.

There was the Lebanese Communist Party led by George Hawi. This is in general a pro-Moscow CP but has consistently had better positions than the CP USSR in relation to the Palestinian question.

The Organisation of Communist Action, which generally stands to the left of the CP.

Then there are the Ba'athists: at the beginning there was only one group, but in 1981 the Movement also included the pro-Syrian Ba'athists as yet another grouping.

The Syrian Nationalist Socialist Party (PPS, after its French name, Parti Populaire Syrien) was a member, too, although in 1958 it had been with Chamoun against the left. Ideologically it had been a party of the right, but after the arrest and imprisonment of its leaders following an attempted coup d'état in 1961 the party turned somewhat to the left in practice.

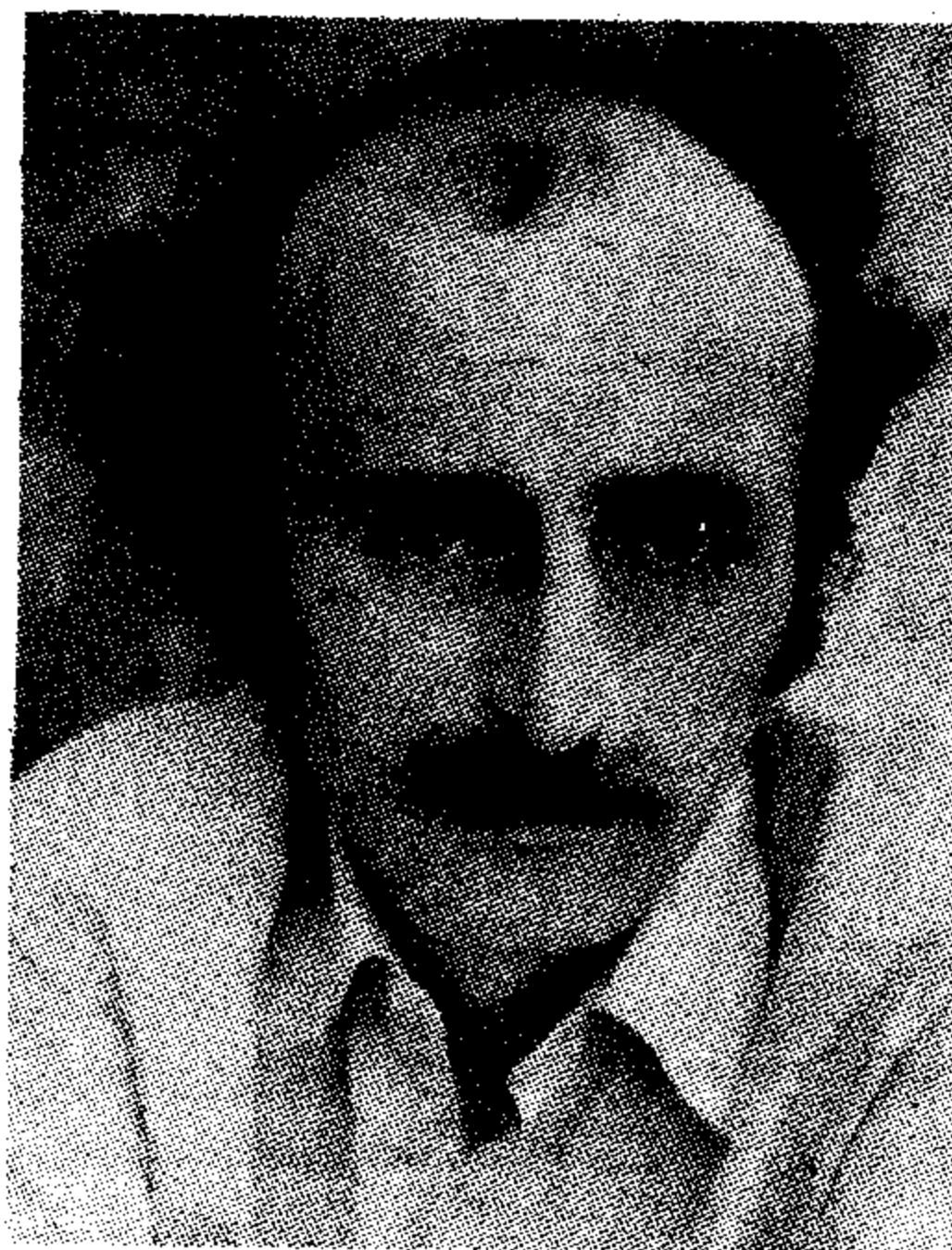
There were several Nasserite groups: Morabitoun, who are close to Fatah, the Arab Socialist Union, who are closer to Libya, and the Arab Battalions, which are also close to Fatah.

In addition there was the Lebanese Movement in support of Fatah, the Organisation of Leftist Kurds, which was allied to the CP, the Arab Social Action Party which is the Lebanese counterpart of the PFLP, the leftist Lebanese Democrats who are not really a party at all, and the Makhassad Alumni Organisation. This was the graduate association of a network of Sunnite schools, which today is controlled by Sa'eb Salam, but was then further to the left.

How did the executive function? Was it democratic?

In theory it was. In practice the Lebanese National Movement followed Kemal Jumblatt's ideas.

This was not a matter of force — everything was properly discussed and debated — but, you see, Jumblatt had the majority of the Druze behind him and consequently was a decisive force.



Walid Jumblatt

In practice there seems to have been a united front with the Palestinians, despite official PLO statements that they would not involve themselves on domestic affairs. Did PLO representatives participate in these discussions?

From time to time there were meetings with Palestinians present. From the list of parties you will see that in any case a number of members of the Movement had close relations with the PLO or its constituent organisations, above all Fatah.

As to the declarations of non-involvement, these might have been meant seriously and had some consequences in Jordan in 1970, but there can be no doubt they were just polite formulae as far as Lebanon was concerned.

The Palestinians played a particularly important role on the military level because the militias of the right were generally better trained than those on the left, many of whom were quite inexperienced.

You see, the Christians had already started their militias in the late '60s — the Phalangists had a long militaristic tradition — and they intensified this build-up after 1973 when the Lebanese army failed to occupy the Palestinian camps. There had been leftist militias in 1958, but these had quickly disappeared.

What was the programme of the Lebanese National Movement?

Of course, the individual groups making up the LNM each had their own programmes, but the common programme of the LNM can be summarised under three headings: unity of Lebanon, its Arab identity, and its democratic progress.

We wanted an end to confessionalism and a move towards secularism. We changed the way we posed this last question after the entry of the Arab Deterrent Forces.

Then we called for a 'non-sectarian political system', a slogan which, it was felt, would be acceptable to right-wing Muslims who rejected or were confused by the slogan of 'secularism' or 'laicism'.



Israeli soldiers in Beirut — invasion did not stop the banks

Banks collapse as Shamir takes over

THE Tel-Aviv stock exchange didn't close for so much as a day when the Israeli tanks and bombers stormed into Lebanon a year and a half ago.

Many soldiers in the middle of the battle were calling their banks and not their families.

Begin found it so exhilarating that he celebrated his 69th birthday, in the middle of the siege of Beirut, with a tank-shaped cake, and even the news of 19 dead Israeli soldiers the same day cast no shadows on the cheerful toast.

Now Begin has resigned his post, with the only admitted and apparent reason being gloom so deep that he didn't even care to make the five minutes' journey from his house to visit the president, but instead sent a letter.

But the event that shocked the 'nation' much more was the closure of the stock exchange for over a week.

It was the end of 2½ years of the so-called 'correct economy'. During this period, the policy of pouring out American dollars and printing Israeli shekels to provide rapid increases in the standard of living had lifted the popularity of Begin's Likud party from a low of less than 10% to almost 50%, to win it a second term in government and ensure popular support for the government at the time of the war.

The Israeli banks had their part in what was nicknamed the economic 'celebration'. They own a bigger part of the economy than the banks in any other capitalist country, including that country of banks, Switzerland.

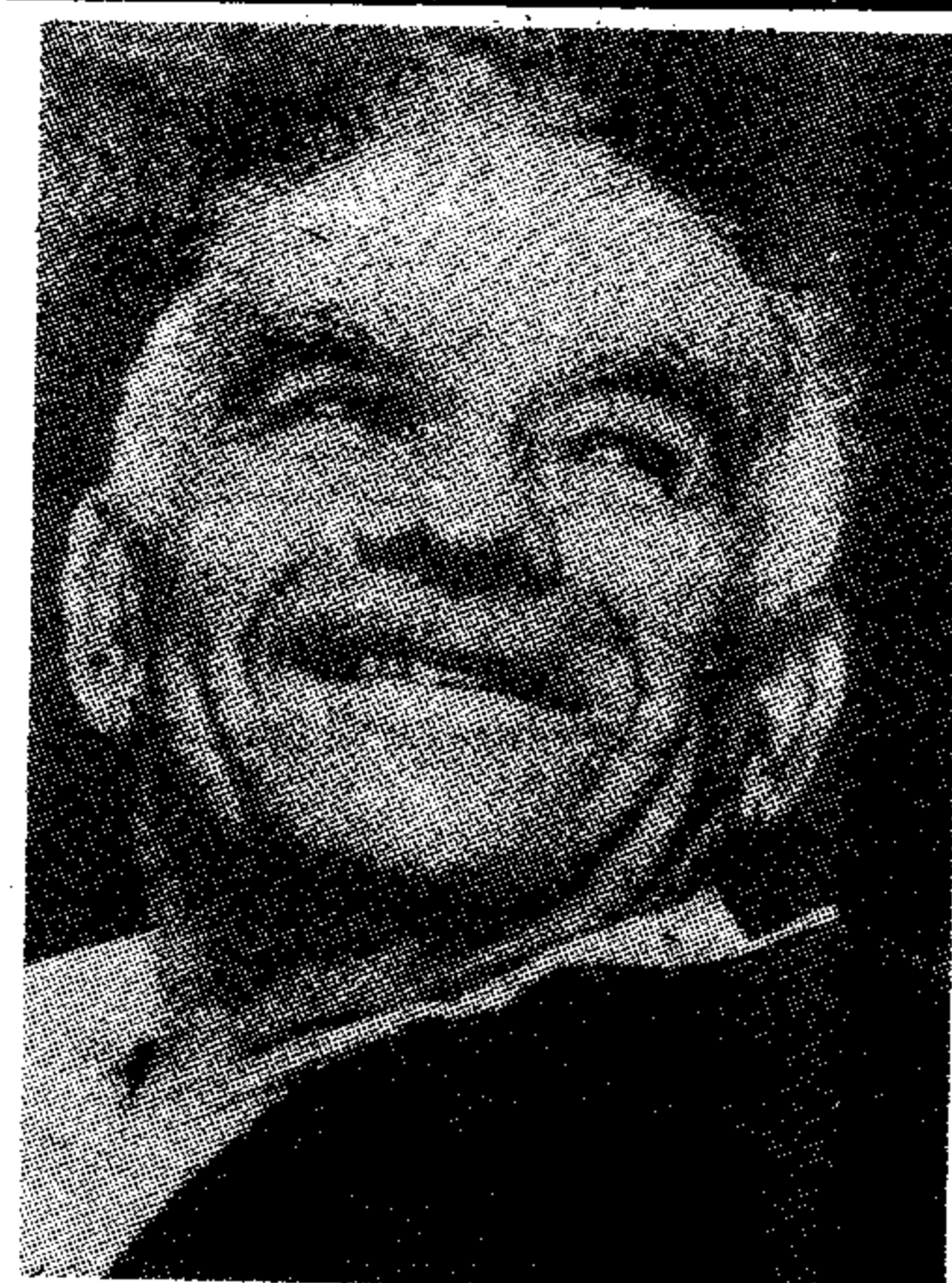
Two of them, including the Bank-Hapoalim of the Histadrut 'trade union', rank in the world's 100 biggest. In the stock exchange they are the sole agents through which ordinary citizens can conduct business.

For years the banks saw to it that their own shares could only go up, giving a hefty percentage profit each year, and selling \$6 billion of non-voting shares to the public as against the owners' \$2 billion.

Some stockbrokers had been doing the same with other share prices, to entice workers to put their money in. But in January they took their money out, and let all the shares go into free fall.

The public was selling even bank shares to buy dollars. The banks said they would not buy any more, and closed the stock exchange before it crashed.

On the spot report from our correspondent in Haifa.



Shamir

The government stepped in to get the banks off the hook, and promised to give everybody their money within five years.

Many workers will lose much of their savings.

The day after the bank shares crashed, all basic food prices were raised by 50%.

The Histadrut, claiming that "going onto the streets is undemocratic", declared a two-hour general strike for Sunday October 16.

The workers' committees of Ashdod declared it a whole day strike.

Inflation is now way above its 'controlled' 130% level, and heading for 200%.

Confidence in the shekel and the banks is lower than ever. Yet there is almost no unemployment, and standards of living are higher than a few years ago.

Now that the economic fraud has been exposed, it is up to Israel's foreign paymasters to continue to keep it afloat or to force the Zionist bourgeoisie to confront the workers.

Meanwhile the new Shamir government has scraped into office.

This should be seen as Zionism putting the tin lid on its own mythology. At the time that the Nazis were slaughtering Europe's Jews, the new Israeli prime minister was busy trying to get cooperation with the same German Nazis to promote Israeli colonialism in Palestine.

His links with the Nazis are documented, and he didn't even care to denounce the charges or apologise.

In the debate in the Knesset (parliament), the fact that a Nazi-collaborator is to become Israel's new premier did not even raise an eyebrow, though it featured in many press reports.

At the time of his underground activity, Shamir is said to have shot the man who escaped with him from a British concentration camp, in a dispute about the movement's methods.

Together with the 'Labour' Israeli president Herzog, he grew to national responsibility in Israel's 'Mossad' — the arm of the secret service for actions abroad.

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International news

Bush hastens to bolster US troops

300 US marines have been rushed to the Lebanon to replace those slaughtered last Sunday (23rd) when two massive mobile truck bombs were hurled by suicide drivers against buildings occupied by US and French troops of the so-called peace-keeping force.

The US death toll now stands at 214: the French at 62, with nearly as many more still listed as 'missing', but probably dead.

Who was responsible for the bombing is not known. The Palestine Liberation Organisation denies responsibility. A spokesman said: "The PLO has nothing to do with the explosions. But what has happened is not a surprise because he who comes into a bear's den must expect to get bitten."

The visit to Beirut of French President Mitterrand and of US Vice-president Bush immediately after the bombings showed the determination of both governments to hang on in the Lebanon. They are staying there to stabilise the Maronite communalist government of Amin Gemayel which is opposed by the Muslim majority of the people of Lebanon.

But the slaughter will inevitably stir into renewed life opposition in America to US involvement.



The last major target in Beirut was the US Embassy: Secretary of State Schultz visited the wreckage

Brazil Congress votes 'no' on wage cuts

THE VOTE last week by Brazil's Congress to reject heavy cuts in wages demanded by the IMF has disrupted the bankers' timetable to bail out the debt-ridden Brazilian economy.

The wage-cutting issue is crucial not only for the internal politics of Brazil — which owes a staggering \$95 billion to the bankers — but also for Brazil's relations with the International Monetary Fund and thus for the whole world financial system.

It has become a key test of the IMF's ability to enforce its demands — and thus those of the Western bankers — on Third World and debtor countries.

Since it was introduced to head off a mass strike movement in 1979, Brazil has had a system of wage indexation whereby pay increases are granted every six months in line with the official inflation figures.

The system has loopholes, because the official inflation

figures do not reflect the real rise in the cost of living as a working class price index would. It has also been accompanied by rigid controls over union action to win any pay rise above the cost of living increases.

Nevertheless, it is too much for the IMF. In line with IMF demands, the government introduced a decree to cut the cost-of-living pay rises to 80% of the inflation figure. At a time when inflation is something over 250% a year, this means serious cuts in workers' living standards.

Rebounced

The military-dominated government's tentative moves towards political liberalisation have rebounded on it. The highly-manipulated Congress has proved to be not manipulated enough, and produced a majority against the decree.

The rejection of the wage-

cutting law was followed by the immediate decree of a revised measure which leaves alone the poverty-line wages of two thirds of the working population, but imposes cuts of between 5% and 70% in the indexation of wages and salaries which are more than five times the minimum wage of £23 a month.

Substitute

The IMF has yet to state whether or not this proposal is regarded as an acceptable substitute for an across-the-board cut in wages.

But last week's resistance by Congress to the initial package — like the contortions of the Argentine ruling class as they grapple with the country's vast debts — reflects a strong popular resistance to the imposition of brutal cuts in Latin American living standards at the behest of bankers in London, Paris and New York.

Double standards on rights

By Frank Higgins

campaigns against torture and the death penalty.

In a preface which underlines obstacles to protecting human rights, the report deals with the reactions of governments of all types to the politically explosive aspects of human rights.

"Statements about human rights have been misused to make political propaganda," it says. Among examples, the report cites: reporting by Soviet news media on Poland; statements by US officials on Central America; and the sudden attention given in Britain during its conflict with Argentina to torture and "disappearances" in that country.

"The concealment of facts,

the dissemination of half-truths or lies and other forms of manipulation of public opinion by governments must be challenged," the report says.

It stresses the need for accurate, unbiased information and "a single, universal standard for the protection of rights everywhere, regardless of politics or nationality."

The report makes no comparisons or rankings of countries' human rights records. It explains that this is partly because of the difficulty of obtaining complete information, as well as the impossibility of comparing types of repression or suffering. Any comparisons would be open to political misuse, it says, and could obscure the principle that violations of human rights must be confronted wherever they occur.

A body blow to 'supergrass' tactics

BRITISH RULE in Northern Ireland has tended more and more to become lawless rule. The British Parliament can be relied upon — under Tories and Labour alike — to rubber-stamp what the British Army in Northern Ireland does.

It even retrospectively legalised the shooting down of 13 civilians in Derry on January 30 1972.

First there was internment without charge or trial, in 1971. Then there was the introduction of no-jury Diplock courts by the Labour government in the mid-'70s. In the last two years there has developed a system of convicting people in these no-jury courts on the word of informers who often have a massive gain to make from their testimony.

Most receive either immunity or massively reduced sentences on their own charges. All the information made available by informers who later changed their minds, and by people who refused to become informers, shows that vast sums of money are also on offer.

Robert Lean was touted as the ultimate in 'supergrasses', allegedly deputy head of the Belfast IRA.

His spectacular turn-around and retraction of his testimony has dealt a serious blow to the informer system — though he may have to pay dearly for it. Others will probably follow his example and retract.

We print here An Phoblacht's account (written by Maeve Armstrong) of the dramatic Belfast press conference at which Lean retracted. The article has been shortened.

Paddy Dollard

BALLYMURPHY man Robert Lean, the man whom the RUC boasted six weeks ago would devastate the IRA and Sinn Fein in Belfast, made a dramatic appearance at a press conference on Wednesday afternoon at the Felons' Club in West Belfast.

And he told the assembled journalists that, having lulled his RUC 'minders' into a false sense of security, he had escaped from Palace Barracks at Hollywood the previous night, taken an RUC car and driven to Belfast where he rejoined his wife and five children.

Fifteen minutes before the press conference Lean had sworn an affidavit retracting his evidence and previously signed statements against 28 people including well-known Belfast republican Ivor Bell.

Lean outlined events from the time of his arrest at the end of August on the word of [informer] William Skelly, how the RUC used Skelly's statement — implicating him in a rocket attack and kidnapping charge — to intimidate him, and how they had concentrated on his fears that his family would be split up if he did not cooperate.

"I was in a bad way because I knew he had also mentioned the wife. The RUC told me he had and they were going to arrest and charge her."

"We have five children and I felt intimidated. They offered that if I turned informer they would supply me with the relevant information, the people they wanted to put away, and all I would have to do would be agree to it."

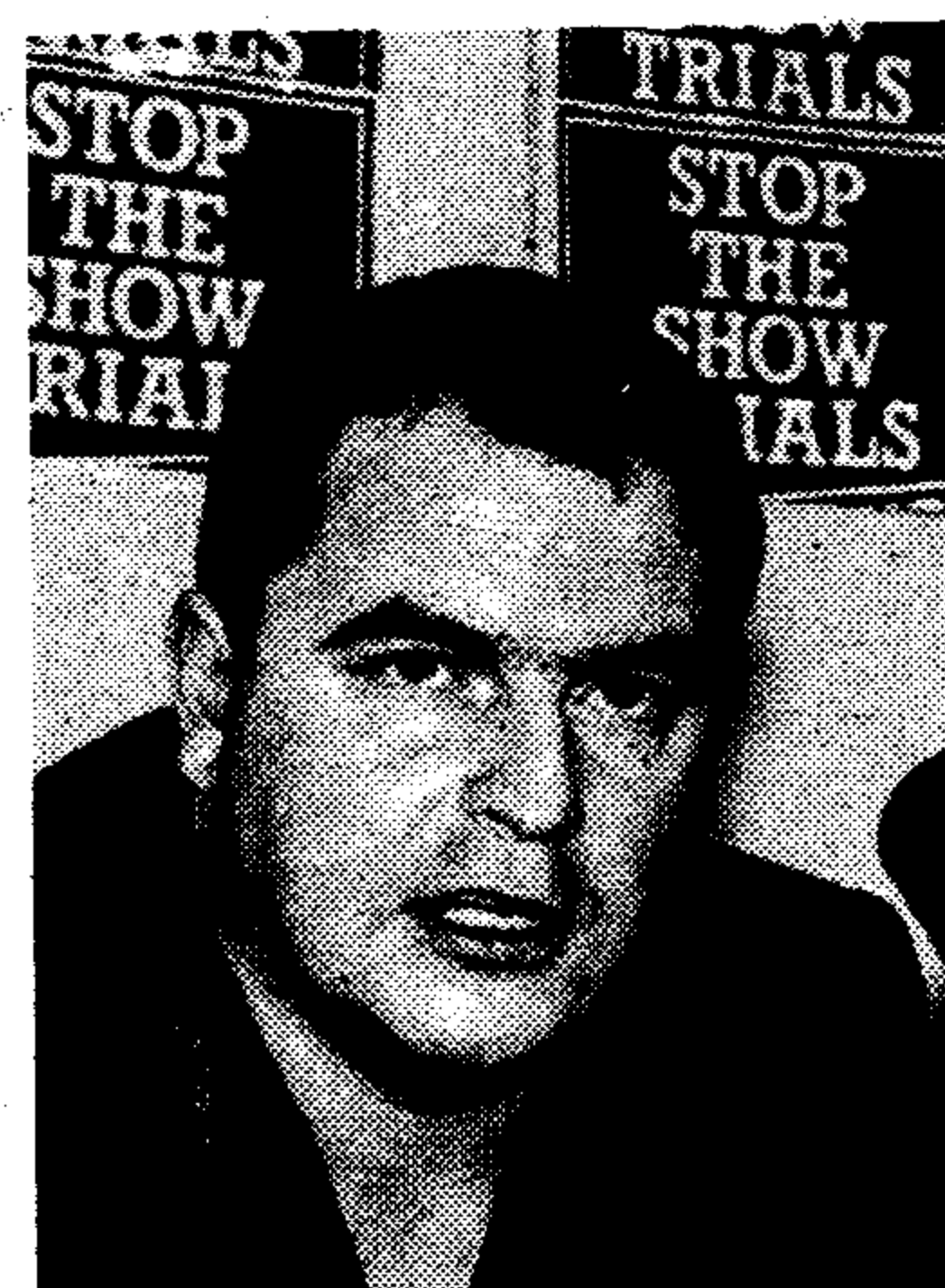
I was supplied with photographs of people whom they wanted named, statements of what they termed 'terrorist acts'. I was given the whole run-down on it, the whole issue of what way I should put it across. In fact, the RUC did all the writing. They read it over to me, then I signed it."

Concocted

In reply to a question asking if they had specified particular people whom they wished to remove, Lean said that they 'wanted Gerry Adams badly'. He said they concocted a statement of an alleged meeting he had attended with Adams and a number of other men, which discussed the end of IRA punishment shootings [kneecapping etc.].

However, Lean said he would not have confronted Gerry Adams in Castlereagh because "I have a lot of respect for Gerry Adams and also I didn't want to put unnecessary pressure on my family; he's a very popular person in West Belfast".

Asked how he now felt about



Robert Lean at the press conference

having had to confront people in Castlereagh, implicating them on a range of serious charges, Lean said:

"I felt sick after seeing those people. I didn't think very much of myself, but I had to do it. They said if I didn't confront these people I would go to jail, so obviously I took what I thought was the easy way out."

"I am not, and never was, a member of the IRA. I'm a member of Sinn Fein, I was a member of Sinn Fein."

"My intentions were always to withdraw. I knew from the start I would always retract and I knew that when the opportunity arose I would take that opportunity and that the people in there would be released."

Influence

An essential ingredient which largely contributed to Lean's retraction was the positive influence of his wife Geraldine who had been in custody with him since September 6 and who returned home with her children just three weeks ago. Lean said that he knew she was safe, as he received all the newspapers, but that he was already certain that no harm would come to him or his wife from the Republican Movement if he retracted.

"I knew the policy of Sinn Fein and the Republican Movement. They understand that people can be intimidated and threatened, and they've been trying to prove it these past lot of months. It was stated many times in AP/RN of the IRA's stand on 'supergrasses', that nobody has any fear if they retract their evidence. I believe that this is the case."

In describing how he was treated in RUC custody and the events leading to his escape, Lean said that the RUC told him — without mentioning specific sums of money — that he would be "resettled in a country of my own choosing and get 'pensioned-off'". There would not be any large amounts though."



He was guarded by armed RUC 'minders' and was moved about from one army base to another, but never left the six counties and refused to leave on one occasion. He said he was fairly comfortable and when they moved him to Palace Barracks, "the security sort of relaxed. There were only two 'minders' with me and, as I said, I bided my time until the opportunity arose."

Lean said that he had been planning an escape for a few weeks, and at around 12.30 on Wednesday October 19 he took his chance:

"One of the 'minders' left his car-keys on the mantelpiece and went up to bed. I had a growl so I shaved the growth around my moustache off. I climbed out the window, took the policeman's car, drove by the main entrance where I was waved on, and landed with my family in Belfast."

Following the end of the press conference, Lean remained for 10 to 15 minutes awaiting his legal counsel, but as they attempted to drive away to meet his family, a large force of British RUC personnel, led by a high-ranking plainclothes Special Branch man, stopped the car, opened the doors, and told him he was being arrested under Section 12.

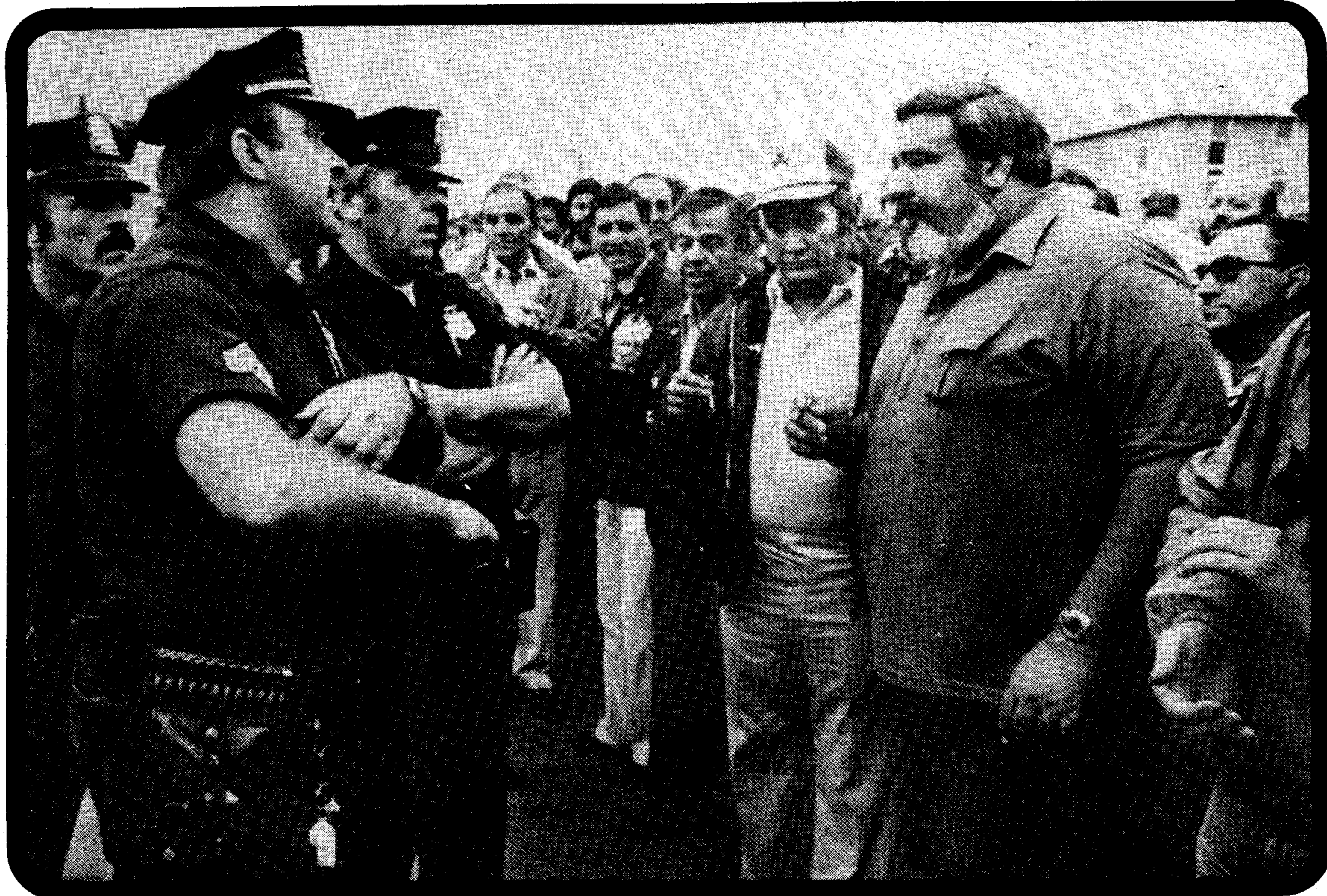
He was then physically removed from the car. Amidst a general furore, the senior RUC man was heard to say in an intimidating and sinister fashion:

"Come on, Robert, for your family's sake."

Lean was then bundled into the back of an RUC landrover and was driven off to Castlereagh.



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UAW strikers at loggerheads with US cops: anti-union laws restrict lawful picketing



Oakland teachers let out a cheer as strike vote is carried

US bosses go for wages

WE HAVE become accustomed since 1979 to the Thatcher government's relentless offensive on shop floor trade union rights and working conditions.

But in few if any plants in Britain have employers felt confident enough to press for the outright cuts in wages and established working conditions which have been sought — and in many cases obtained — by many big American corporations.

With unionisation below 20% and a union leadership committed to a policy of class collaboration, US bosses have pushed through packages of 'concessions' in a wide range of industries — the best-known here being those on US airlines and in the motor industry.

In fact, since 1979, wholesale 'givebacks' have been agreed by union leaders in the aluminium, construction, glass, grocery, meat-packing, mining, newspapers, oil, railways, rubber, steel and trucking industries.

But as American workers have seen wage concessions fail to stop wholesale plant closures and lay-offs, and have become aware that the motor corporations — Ford, GM and Chrysler — have sprung back into massive profitability while keeping wages at the new, depressed levels, the resistance to further concessions has grown.

Most British readers will be well aware of Ronald Reagan's foreign policy: but the extent of the US bosses' offensive against the working class is less well documented. And the scale of the workers' fight back barely reaches the capitalist press in Britain or the USA. HARRY SLOAN pieced together this picture of events during a recent US tour.

Just recently, Chrysler workers forced their leaders in the United Auto Workers' union to reopen their contract negotiations and press — with some success — for a major step back towards parity with Ford workers.

Telephone workers employed by the giant and enormously profitable American Telephone and Telegraph walked out on strike for 19 days against a draft contract which would have taken "literally billions of dollars out of our members' pockets", according to Glenn Watts of the Communication Workers of America — and succeeded in defeating the worst of the company demands.

Lorry drivers covered by the Teamsters (transport) union's National Master Freight Agreement delivered another crushing blow against concessions.

88% of the 107,000 participating in a postal ballot voted to throw out a 'relief rider' which would have created a new, reduced wage level for new drivers and for laid-off workers rehired by the employers, and scrapped their cost-of-living protection and sickness benefits.

This new proposed agreement had been 'negotiated' by the Teamsters' new General President, millionaire Jackie Presser, whose union salary is currently \$565,000 (£382,000) a year. The successful rank and file campaign for rejection of the deal conducted by the 'Teamsters for a Democratic Union' organisation also brought numerous demands for Presser's resignation.

At General Motors' Packard Electric plant in Warren, Ohio, workers voted two-to-one to throw out a union recommendation that they accept a cut in pay and benefits from \$19 an hour (£12.80) to \$6 (£4) for new entrants. GM argued (and the International Union of Electrical Workers, IUE, agreed) that this draconian cut was needed to enable the plant to compete with low-wage plants in Mexico, and to fulfil the 'social responsibility' to create new jobs in the area. The US magazine 'Industry Week' lamented:

"the resounding defeat in Warren makes it clear that the rank and file remains wedded to the uniform wage-rate concept even when union leadership counsels compromise".

Further south, too, companies demands for concessions are spurring bitter struggles. Arizona copper miners — members of 13 unions — have been on strike since July 1 in the fight to defend the automatic cost of living increases which for years have been a component of their three-year pay contracts. Management of the Phelps Dodge Corporation have been able to maintain at least partial production using scab labour brought through pickets with the aid of the National Guard.

But the determination of the strikers was underlined during the recent flood disaster in the area: undeterred, strikers turned out to harass Phelps Dodge scabs driving company lorries and earthmoving equipment in the clean-up operation.

Poland

Local steelworkers' leader Cass Alvin regards the struggle as a trial of strength of national significance. Management, he has said,

"are playing it right to the hilt, because somewhere on a street in the city of New York with a church on one end and a bank at the other end, someone decided we're going to spend all the money it takes to break these unions.

Looking at the National Guard intervention, he asked,

"Is this any different than the way the Polish government operates?"

The fact that most of this type

of resistance to company ultimatums comes from the local rank and file rather than union leaderships, however, brings its problems and weaknesses.

At Ford's River Rouge complex near Detroit, for example, a ballot of 13,000 workers in UAW Local 600 was held to decide — whether a section of only 3,500 workers in the steel mill should take a pay cut of \$4.13 an hour.

It is a safe bet that most of the 3,033 votes against came from the minority employed in the steel mill itself, while the base of the 5,788 votes for acceptance came from workers not faced with any sacrifice themselves.

UAW local President Rinaldi, having arranged this gerrymandered vote, hailed the result, but admitted that it was, "not a complete victory (!) — it's very saddening, because of the concessions".

Another setback brought about by top-level betrayal was in the hotel unions of San Francisco. The initial contract proposals from the Hotel Employers' Association contained concessions including a four-year pay freeze, an end to seniority rights and a management withdrawal from medical and dental provision. It was rejected in a ballot which gave 94% support to strike action.

NEW anti-union legislation creeping through the Senate is in Bill S.462, which would allow a court to rule that self-defence on a picket line is "extortion".

This would invoke an anti-racketeering Bill from the 1930s — and bring sentences of up to 12 years in jail, or \$250,000 in fines.

Yet even given this clear mandate and an ideal opportunity to hit employers at a vulnerable time, hotel union bureaucrats hastened back to the negotiating table and — over the heads of the members — signed a deal establishing a 25% lower rate for new employees, cutting staffing levels and holidays, and accepting minimal pay increases.

Of course the best known current demands for concessions are currently the US airlines. Several in the past year have successfully forced through pay cuts — 10% at Republic, 10% at

Western and 20% at Eastern — while Continental have used the bankruptcy laws as a pretext to axe 60% of their staff and halve salaries across the board in an attack that has prompted an all-out strike by the unionised section of the workforce.

But the employers' attack is all-sided and relentless. One small engineering plant in St Louis has tried twice to secure ballot acceptance of wage cuts — on the second occasion failing only by a handful of votes.

Greyhound, the nationwide bus corporation, is demanding 30% wage cuts in contract negotiations due to be settled by the end of October.

In the food industry, workers at Armour Food voted 10-to-one to reject a \$2.69 an hour wage cut, while in Milwaukee on the other hand, grocery workers whose firm had been take over were persuaded by their union leaders to accept pay cuts ranging from 30 to 45%, having been told that the alternative was to be "out on the street with nothing".

The call for concessions also reaches into the state sector. State government employees have in several cases rejected attempts to cut their health benefits, forcing them to pay out extra each week.

In several areas (including Chicago, Detroit and Boston),

Workers Review
Crisis for U.S. Trotskyism
Stalinist Purge in S.W.P.

Workers' Review is published by the Proletarian Tasks Tendency, PO Box 40458, San Francisco, CA. 94140. Copies available, 70p plus postage, from Socialist Organiser.

Over 25 million American workers have lost their health insurance through unemployment. How bad is it? A jobless man recently used stolen insurance papers to get an operation on his bleeding ulcers. He was caught, and sentenced to five years in jail.

UAW Journal

CP heads for crisis Congress

By Bruce Robinson

EVERY Congress of the Communist Party brings further evidence of its decline and crisis.

Party membership, the readership of the Morning Star, industrial influence — all have spiralled downwards.

Since the last Congress in 1981 CP membership has dropped from 18,458 to 15,691 — many of whom are inactive. The Morning Star faces bankruptcy and the Young Communist League has 623 members!

The 'Parliamentary Road' also looks black: a mere 11,598 votes were cast in June for CP candidates — a fall in most areas.

And — horror of horrors, as one contributor to the conference discussion puts it, "in a number of unions we have been reduced to junior partnership with a mish-mash of Trotskyites".

According to various factions, the CP is too pro-Moscow or not pro-Moscow enough; has abandoned the industrial working class or not taken seriously enough the 'broad democratic alliance' with other social forces; has become 'revisionist' or still remains 'sectarian'.

As the crisis goes on, the factional warfare becomes more intense. This November's conference faces the deepest divisions since 1977 when the pro-Moscow New Communist Party split away.

Factions

Two main factions have emerged. The present majority leadership takes the Eurocommunist line and interprets the 'Broad Democratic Alliance' to mean that the CP should no longer focus particularly on the labour movement but take more seriously the women's movement, peace movements, etc., and 'all those' opposed to 'the main enemy, the Tory government' (who do you think they could mean?)

The opposition consists of two groups. Firstly, there are those who share to a greater or lesser extent the uncritical pro-Moscow views of the NCP but remained inside the CP in 1977.

They remain vocal but lack the numbers or prestige to represent much of a threat to the leadership.

A second group has now emerged around Mick Costello, until recently CP Industrial Organiser, and Tony Chater, editor of the Morning Star, both of whom were until recently in the leadership group.

Their opposition has its origins at the 1981 Congress, where secretary Gordon McLennan backed a resolution criticising the Morning Star for insufficiently reflecting the Eurocommunist line of the CP.

This split was fought out publicly earlier this year at the time of the AGM of the 'People's Press Printing Society', the front organisation which is responsible for the management of the Morning Star.

Rival slates

After arguments about the appointment of Costello as a journalist and over the degree of fictional (or was it factional?) autonomy the Morning Star should have from the CP, two rival slates were put up for the management committee.

One was supported by the CP leadership, and the other (consisting of the retiring mem-



General Secretary McLennan

bers plus some trade union leaders) by Costello and Chater.

Both sides mobilised CP members to attend the AGM, which resulted in a victory for the Costello-Chater slate.

Costello's main criticism of the Eurocommunists is that they have given up a serious industrial focus for their work.

In addition, he makes a bid for the old-style Stalinists' support by accusing the leadership of saying "nothing positive" about the "socialist countries".

(The 'hard' pro-Moscow faction, however, do not trust Costello, who was previously a major exponent of the CP's policy on Poland and Afghanistan).

Much of Costello's argument relates to the way he has been treated by McLennan.

It could hardly be otherwise, as until very recently he shared central political responsibility for the way the CP has developed, and therefore has an interest in not looking too closely at the past.

The forthcoming Congress will not resolve any of the problems of the CP.

Most of the documents are bland and make no attempt to analyse the CP's crisis. The only one dealing with a controversial question — the relationship between the Morning Star and the CP — is contradictory and unintelligible.

On the one hand, "It was always agreed that it [the Morning Star] would continue to express the policy of the Communist Party", and "Attempts to change the paper's editorial policy will not succeed in the future"; on the other hand, "there is no conflict between the democratic right of the Communist Party to express its views and the democratic right of shareholders to accept or reject them". In other words, you have your democratic rights for as long as you agree with the CP!

The indications are that the Costello-Chater group will be heavily defeated at the Congress, probably losing any positions on the Executive Committee.

They will still retain control of the Morning Star, however, and a further battle, which might prove fatal to the whole enterprise, is likely as the CP leadership tries to assert its 'democratic rights'.

The CP Congress is also incapable of solving the political problems which lie behind the organisational decline and fragmentation of the CP.

The move to the left in the Labour Party after 1979 left the CP as an insignificant group well to the right of Labour's hard left, whom they now describe as 'Labour sectarians' for rejecting alliances with the SDP, 'progressive Tories' in CND and so on.

Even for those who agree with the woolly ideas of 'Marxism Today', there is little appeal in joining a marginalised and chronically declining group, tainted with an openly Stalinist past.

Far better to join the Labour Party, where the path to advancement and influence over such prominent supporters of 'Marxism Today' ideas as Neil Kinnock is much surer.

Thus, while a more or less clearly identifiable Stalinist trend grows as a result of the demoralisation and retreat of the Labour left, the CP reaps none of the dividends, apart from increased circulation for 'Marxism Today' — a recent issue of which included a 'Gramscian' analysis of the role of the Women's Institute!

In the unions, the CP are caught by a rightward lurch of the union bureaucracies, who increasingly feel that the CP, weakened by the decline of the stewards' movement, cannot provide the support and 'left' cover which they once offered, and are a political liability in their quest to become respectable talkers with the Tories.

The Broad Lefts, for long regarded by the CP as reliable electoral machines and nothing else, have largely escaped their control as active militants have turned them towards practical struggles against the employers and the union leaderships.

Neither Costello's call for more industrial work, nor the hard-line Stalinists' call for a return to the good old days of pro-Moscow monolithism, pose an alternative strategy to get the CP out of its terminal illness.

The Eurocommunist leadership has merely drawn out the unpalatable conclusions of the class-collaborationist 'British Road to Socialism' which the CP has followed since 1952.

Diary of a People's Marcher

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



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

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Arizona copper miners — 3 months on strike — confront Department of Public Safety Officer

ge-cutting

teachers have taken extremely militant action against 'give-backs' and for substantial pay increases in their forthcoming contracts. In Oakland, on the West Coast, a massive ballot vote for strike action by 2,500 union members was greeted by loud cheers from a teachers' rally and followed up by mass pickets, while a mere 250 scabs attempted to keep schools open.

As in Boston, the class confrontation at workplace level is supplemented in the USA by legal moves designed to undermine the unions.

Bankruptcy

Specialist firms of lawyers have been established in various cities to advise employers on how to use the law to bust unions. And there is a wealth of legislation and other techniques that can assist them.

Workplace ballots are often required to secure union recognition: but recall ballots can be forced, under conditions created to benefit the employers, and 'decertify' unions prior to contract negotiations.

Alternatively, bankruptcy laws, takeovers, mergers, or the closure and removal of plant and equipment by 'runaway' firms can be used to tear up existing union contracts or dispose cheaply of militant and well-organised workers.

One firm on the west coast moved its entire operation to another plant 80 miles down the road in order to cut wages and bust the Electrical Workers' union. In Seattle, a combined force of engineering employers deliberately provoked strikes by the Machinists' union, IAM, having prepared a body of scabs to come in and maintain production.

Six months later it seems unlikely the strikers will get their jobs back.

In the construction industry, what is called the 'two gate' provision in anti-strike legislation restricts legal picketing. Construction sites by law have two gates — one for union members, and one for non-union members. The law presumes that the construction unions will act together — and allows a limited number of workers to picket only the non-union gate.

Since in practice construction unions all too often instruct their

members to cross picket lines of other construction unions, the outcome can be union members working side-by-side with non-union scabs to break strikes.

In some areas, a militant resistance to this is being waged by carpenters', painters' and other unions, conducting mass pickets and organising drives on construction sites in defiance of anti-union laws.

In Southern California carpenters have been leading a militant struggle in defence of a master contract stipulation that only union subcontractors be hired on union sites. The carpenters — who make up over half of unionised building workers in the USA — won substantial solidarity action from other construction unions.

But elsewhere setbacks are occurring as employers seize the opportunity to divide and break the unions.

Another crucial way in which the law assists the employers is in the form of the legally-enforceable three-year contracts which are the most common pay deals in the USA. Among other advantages, these contracts offer the employer virtual immunity from spontaneous unofficial strike action during the life of the contract — thus making it eas-

ier to victimise individual militants.

The only standard trade union comeback against such victimisations is through the National Labour Relations Board.

Unlike the toothless industrial tribunals in this country, the NLRB has been known on occasion to secure the eventual reinstatement of victimised militants.

But the process takes months or years and successfully diverts attention away from the need for immediate shop-floor strike action into a long-drawn-out succession of legalistic wrangles.

Similarly, almost any other grievance arising during the life of a contract — be it speed-up or health and safety — has to be taken up by the unions in the absence of strike action, thus stacking the odds in management's favour.

But the process of struggles outlined above shows that despite the odds the organised US working class is ready and able to fight back for its rights.

The central problem to be confronted is the construction of a leadership rooted in the rank and file, offering an independent political line and programme for the battles to come.

Discussing a Brighton balance sheet



After Kinnock's win, Labour must face a new learning process

Some of the old left have defected for good

By Reg Race

AT PRESENT, most members of the Labour Party are concerned with the short term.

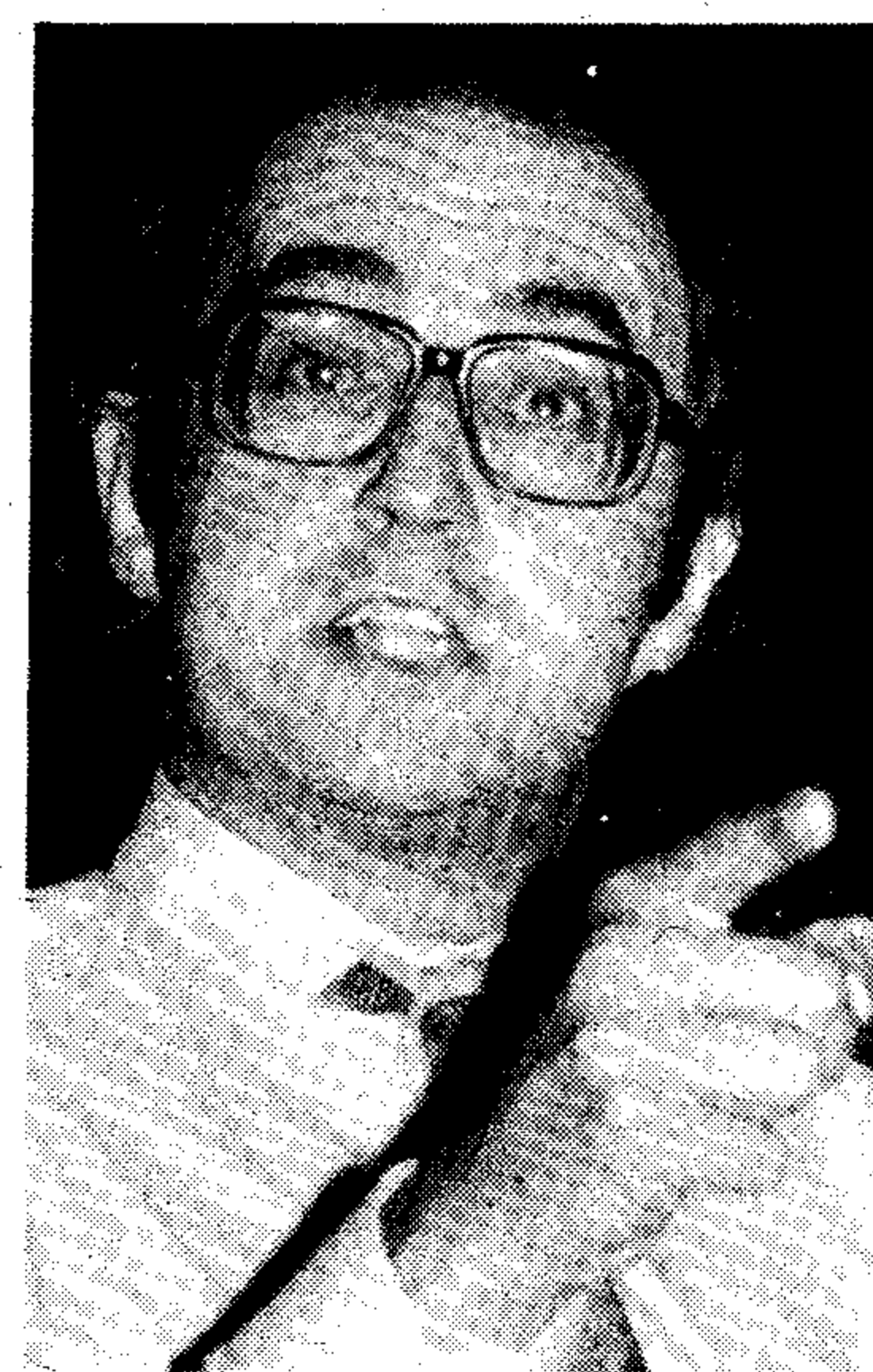
They were concerned at conference, quite properly, with *who* won the leadership election: and the Kinnock/Hattersley team having won, they are now concerned with the immediate prospects for rebuilding Labour's political base in the working class.

our Party; and the firm creation of links between the political and industrial wings of the labour movement.

Rebuild

This is the prime lesson of conference. We must reconstruct a left alliance. Not based on sectarianism, not based on individuals, based only on the clear understanding that the present honeymoon between the leadership and the Press will not last beyond Christmas.

We need people of vision who recognise that this is the time to save the next Labour government from its own inadequacies. The labour movement has been here before: but this time the possibility of a reformist solution to the crisis of capitalism is non-existent.



Reg Race

This time a reformist solution to the crisis is non-existent

Handbooks with little analysis

Straightforward, clear, easy to read and easy to understand — that describes two new books on militarism and nuclear war, 'Crisis over Cruise' by Philip Webber, Graeme Wilkinson and Barry Rubin, and Andrew Wilson's 'The Disarmer's Handbook of military technology and organisation'.

Both books are full of facts, figures and information. 'Crisis over Cruise' is more specialised, but brings out the major points about the missiles.

"Large numbers of air-launched cruise missiles (with some accuracy and first-strike potential) are being deployed on B52 (and forthcoming B-1) bombers, both in Europe and the US.

"In a few years, when 'stealth' cruise missiles and bombers, virtually undetectable to radar, become available, the total force of air, ground and

TOM RIGBY casts a critical eye over two new books on the arms race recently published by Penguin.

sea-launched cruise missiles, plus the other weapons of high accuracy, may then have a first strike capability against the Soviet Union".

"The Disarmer's Handbook' is more wide-ranging, providing information on virtually every conceivable aspect of the question, with particularly interesting chapters on 'sick war' (chemical and biological weapons) and 'para-war' (intelligence and security).

Both books will provide useful sources for socialists and disarmament activists who wish to increase their knowledge about the arms race.

However, the books share some failings. Both focus mainly on NATO. Though this is understandable, bearing in mind capitalism's responsibility for the current climate of cold war, it provides a distorted view.

We need more information on Soviet militarism, produced by someone other than the traditional sources — Western propagandists or Stalinist apologists.

Deeper

Neither book seriously analyses the deeper forces generating the 'new cold war'.

Most of the arguments are of the traditional 'arms race' style of explanation, in which a whole set of factors: big business profits, research and development programmes, ideologies of war, etc, are all jumbled together to produce this overarching phenomenon, 'the arms race'.

This creates tunnel-vision in the politics of both books. For Webber, Wilkinson and Rubin, the answer to their question, 'Who is responsible?' is, 'all of them and all of us'.

Andrew Wilson is more sophisticated, "Arms alone are not the real threat to peace — the real threat lies in the fear or hostility behind their acquisition". But this kind of explanation is unconvincing, and leads only to pacifism.

Marxism

Socialists active in CND should read these books. But we still need a rounded and developed Marxist account of the new cold war, one that avoids mechanical explanations, be they of the 'permanent arms economy' or whatever.

We need an analysis of the relationship between war, capitalism, Stalinism, and nuclear weapons that is more than a Marxist gloss to traditional CND style arguments.

This is a natural enough pre-occupation, because all members of the party wish to see the foundations laid for a sweeping socialist victory at the next general election. But there is a feeling of *deja vu* in the air.

Wilson

The parallel is with 1963. Harold Wilson was elected as leader by the votes of the left in the Parliamentary Labour Party; and there were those, myself included, who believed that it was sufficient for a Labour government under such leadership to be elected to produce a radical transformation of society.

We were thoroughly disillusioned by the Labour government of 1964-70; we learnt, at great cost, that reality was deeper than the image.

The Labour Party now looks as if it faces another learning process. The present leadership team sometimes gives the impression that it wants a re-run of 1963-4. The press is being nice to Neil Kinnock so far. Everyone is therefore living in a purple, LSD haze: all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

No concessions

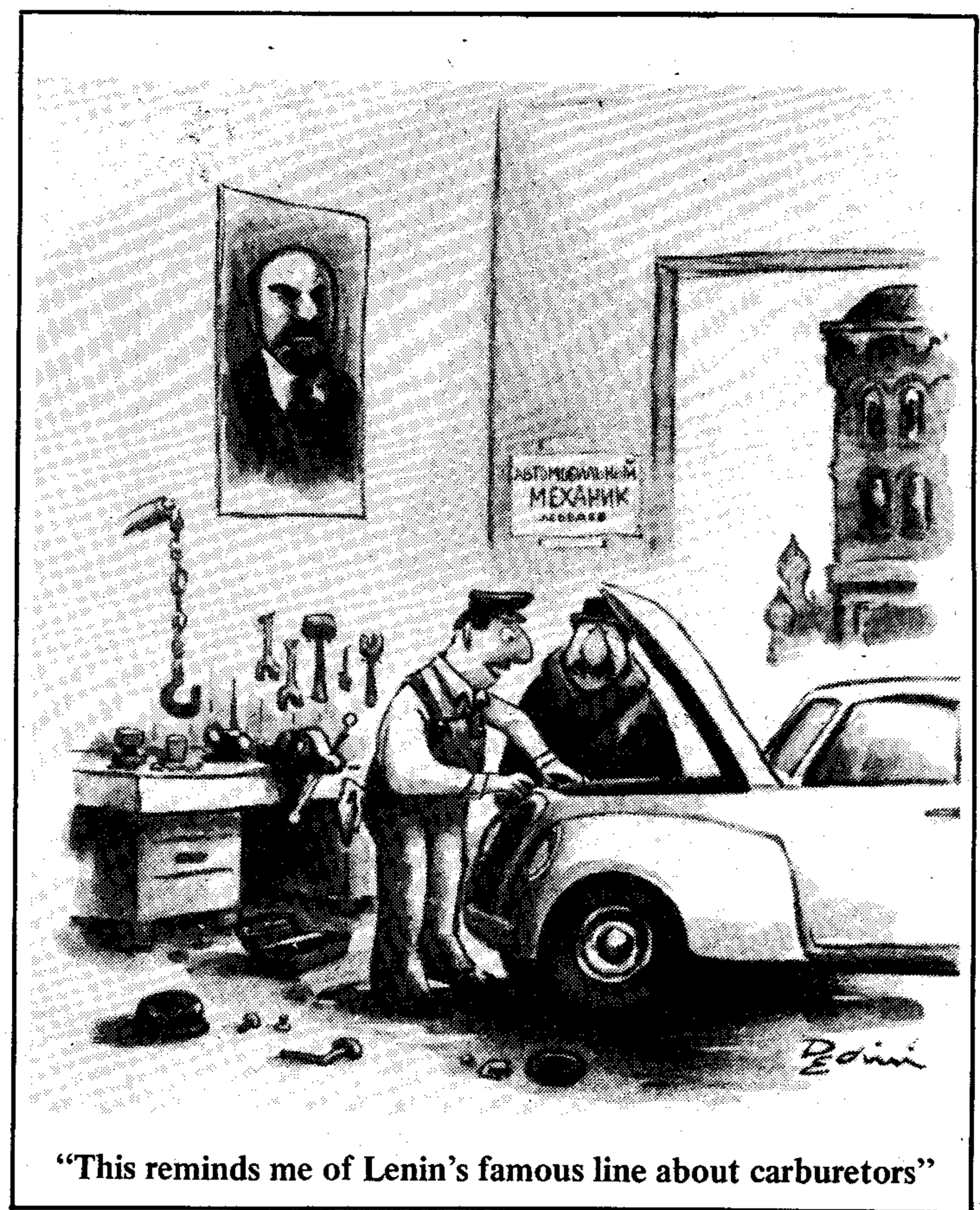
This Panglossian creation will not last. The difference with 1963 is that British capitalism has lost the ability to make concessions to the working class; therefore, if the Kinnock/Hattersley team begin to make demands which go beyond the 'modernisation' of capitalism, they will be denounced up hill and down dale by the very media that are now so supportive of the idea that Labour needs a new, image-conscious leadership.

There is a new contour to the face of the Labour Party. The left alliance, based on a coalition of interests around the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, the Parliamentary left, some left wing trade unions, and left groupings amongst the rank and file, has fallen apart. It badly needs to be reconstructed.

Brazen

It cannot be the same alliance, as some parts of the old left consensus have defected for good — witness the brazen backing of Hattersley by elements of the Labour Coordinating Committee, the National Organisation of Labour Students, and Clause Four.

We need to develop a new alliance on the left of the Labour Party. It must be based on clear principles: an end to the pathetic toy-town witch-hunt of socialists inside the party; defence of the policies agreed by conference; the further democratisation of the party, with particular emphasis on the role of the Parliamentary Lab-



"This reminds me of Lenin's famous line about carburetors"

Solidarnosc

UNDERGROUND

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

Trotsky on Stalinism

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

SPOTLIGHT

How Woody Allen does it

WANT to watch a very funny hour-and-three-quarters-long Jewish joke? Then go and see Woody Allen's latest film, "Zelig".

It is a bit like "Portnoy's Complaint" without the sex. What's left? you might ask. Answer: the dilemma of the assimilated Jew, fearful of being recognised, eager to ape those who will despise him for being Jewish and despise him even more for trying not to be.

In Philip Roth's book, Alex Portnoy's search for Thereal McCoy — the ultimate desirable female — means giving up his identity (I wish you well to wear it!) and his character (who needs it?). "But who wants character?" is Alex's rhetorical question to his analyst. "I want Thereal McCoy! In her blue parka and her red earmuffs and her big white mittens — Miss America . . ."

Zelig (played by Woody Allen) actually meets and mates with his Miss McCoy (one Eudora Fletcher). But if Portnoy denies his Jewishness to please non-Jewish girls, Zelig denies his whole self to please anybody whose company he happens to be in. And while Portnoy struggles at self-denial (not to mention self-abuse) but is constantly betrayed by his physical form, Leonard Zelig's adaptation to his surroundings is totally automatic and extends to changes of physical form. When he talks to Irishmen his hair turns red and his nose turns up!

Hiding out in Chinatown Zelig looks Chinese, in Nuremberg he falls in with the Nazis, in the company of psychiatrists the patient claims that he too is a psychiatrist. "I worked many years with Freud in Vienna, but we broke up after a disagreement over penis envy. He wanted to limit it to females . . ."

Chameleon

Faced with fat men, Zelig puts on weight in minutes, questioned by French doctors he instantly acquires a foreign language, sitting in a cockpit for the first time he flies a plane . . .

The American public fall for the freak as the media milk the discovery of the "human chameleon" for all it's not worth.

Millions flock to see him turn into an aged Red Indian and back again, into a youthful black man in black company and sprout a beard and side-locks while standing between two rabbis. Dancers are encouraged to "Do the chameleon" and "Leonard the Lizzard" becomes a hit song.

Meanwhile Zelig (the German for "soulful") is an object of psychiatric investigation. The shrinks are a gaggle of idiots, except one, Dr. Eudora Fletcher (played by Mia Farrow looking more like singer Joni Mitchell). Hundreds of outrageous improbabilities later, the gentle nebbich has won Dr. Fletcher's mutable heart and is finally also re-instated in the hearts of the American public.

If all this is hard to imagine, remember that the film is in the same form as documentaries like "Rosie the Riveter" or "The Wobblies": black and white archival footage (most of it fake of course) is punctuated now and

ANDREW HORNUNG reviews Allen's latest movie 'Zelig', and attempts to draw out the elements which make up "a comic Kafka hero that is both durable and universal".

again by short contemporary interviews in colour with people who had some direct contact with the past events. Thus Bruno Bettelheim, Irving Howe and others add their intellectual comments and memories to help interpret the life of Leonard Zelig as an allegory of the Jewish condition and so on.

Of course this allegory is there. At the same time, the anxieties identified as a or even the Jewish condition stand for much more general and global insecurities. And they also relate to a more restricted group, actors, whose very success lies in their dispensing with their selves — even physically! — and allowing themselves to become public property.

The achievement of the film lies in its ability to explore a number of such themes with unflagging wit, throwing in sight-gags and one liners, surrealism and satire.

Like the best Jewish jokes, it mixes these elements to make a poignant and universal human comment.

How does Woody Allen do it? He works hard at his material, but even before the evidence of these comic labours there is the man himself. He is the Jewish boy-next-door: bespectacled, nervous, lousy at sports, looks like a zero and behaves like a minus.

He follows a long line of lovable screen jerks — Buster Keaton, Stan Laurel, Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, Jerry Lewis — but has transformed their central feature, innocence, into something else: self-conscious urban angst — insecurities about identity, sex and survival.

His pre-Freudian forerunners grappled with the world outside themselves: Everyman versus everything else (apart from true love, of course). There is a good deal of this kind of humour in Woody Allen films, but his real enemies are his own sense of guilt, his fears and phobias.

One of his problems is America. England only expects every man to do his duty. America expects every underprivileged schlemiel to become President. In reality only very privileged schlemiels ever make it, but the dream is more powerful than the truth. The American dream — an amalgam of all the film-set cliches going, true-love, rags-to-riches, manhood as the Bunline Special bringing law to the frontier — drives the dreamers to the point of break-up.

After all, any failure must be your own fault. If you want an explanation don't ask a sociologist, go to the psychiatrist. Through the Jewish image — and it is an image used to express a truth, it isn't the truth itself — Woody Allen has created a comic Kafka hero that is both durable and universal.



Manchester factory workers, 1938: Allen's picture is true to reality

After the 'Days of Hope'

By Frank Higgins

WITH a long string of television plays over 20 years, Jim Allen has established himself as something like a modern bard of the working class — chronicler, poet, political genealogist, myth-maker. He has celebrated our victories and crooned laments for the socialism that might have been but never was because the working class has repeatedly been defeated, betrayed and diverted.

In Allen's work the sense of a personal yearning deeper than mere nostalgia for the lost past — scenes, events, people, early affections, certainties and clarities — is always mixed up with the yearning for a socialist future and rejection of the present.

It gives it resonance and depth, and nourishes and helps fix Allen's enduring class identity. In nothing of his which I've seen is it so clearly expressed as in his six-part "The Gathering Seed", just finished on BBC TV, which is said to be semi-autobiographical.

The first episode (which I missed) was set in the '30s when the hero, Joe Henshaw, was a child. The other five cover about a year in 1945-6 when, demobbed from the army, he seeks his place in the world.

It is set in Collyhurst, a working class suburb in North Manchester, heavily Irish and oppressively Catholic.

A friend of mine, a long-time socialist of middle-class background, saw some of "The Gathering Seed" and found it too grim — bleak, unrelieved and ultimately depressing.

True to reality

I can see why. But I — from a similar background in the adjoining Cheetham area of Manchester — found it marvelously well-reconstructed and essentially true to reality — perhaps even the romanticised Irish socialist grandfather.

lieutenants of their order on the exploited and beaten-down workers, the ebbing-back of the working-class upsurge into the constricted channels of narrow private concerns and the 'depressed' average routine of the slaves of Capital.

It is not the cosy world idealised by well-meaning but essentially conservative sociologists and by some socialists from outside the working class who praise the 'old' working class communities for such strengths as their solidarity.

Jim Allen's picture is grimmer because it is the view of an insider — not of one who sympathises or identifies with the proletariat, but of one whose ineradicable identity has been shaped and defined by the sort of conditions that Allen depicts.

It is the view of one who knew that world to be one in which — as a poet speaking of an oppressed nation once put it:

"The men and women whom I have loved, whose hands have held mine, whose touch is familiar to me, have had masters over them, have been under the mean and cruel".

The conditions are foul: the people are inevitably shaped by them.

Identity

In fact Allen's great strength is a rock-basic sense of his own identity — together with an ambivalence towards his own working-class background. He angrily rejects the conditions, but sees the answer in the common struggle for a class emancipation, for (in James Connolly's words) "a full, free, happy life — for all or for none".

Allen was active in the Trotskyist movement for 15 years from about 1950. His politics are a honed-down variant of the late 1950s Socialist Labour League — direct action is central, the Parliamentarians and bureaucrats are the enemies who stand between the masses and the bourgeoisie. It is a working-class politics honed down to its syndicalist blood and guts.

Indeed, Allen has done more than perhaps anyone else to



Atlee

popularise basic ideas common to Trotskyism, syndicalism, and all the other rebellious, rejectionist, and anti-establishment trends in the labour movement.

It is pretty potent stuff when he skilfully clothes it in accounts of working class life and struggles, and explores working-class history using it as a probe.

The series had serious faults — especially the characteristic fault of the school of drama that Jim Allen belongs to, flat didacticism. There are lots of pauses while people 'explain' points and issues to each other.

It slows the series down, badly. Some of these 'intermissions' are plain tedious, whether it is a small lecture on basic socialism, or we drop in on a YS meeting at Collyhurst Labour Club and stop for a chunk of it.

The series was too loose seemingly unedited and self-indulgent. This creates an impression of being rambling and directionless.

This is especially unfortunate because the series is conceived on a massive scale, to unfold slowly, with a series of long set-piece scenes — political meetings, a social, a strike meeting, the old man's funeral — strewn like big boulders through the six episodes.

"The Gathering Seed" ends with the hero still not even sure if he wants to be a fighter for socialism. It seems to be intended as the first instalment of drama-memoirs — perhaps modelled on Sean O'Casey's six volumes of quasi-fictionalised memoirs, in which case this is Jim Allen's "I Knock at the Door".

What is to come — if it is — will be the most interesting. Allen was a leading militant during very important struggles in the ports and mines in the '50s. I look forward to it.

A grimmer picture of working class life, painted by an insider

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

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

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

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

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

*It is essential to achieve the fullest democracy in the labour movement. Automatic 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.

National day school

Saturday October 29

10.30am to 7pm at Crouch Hill Recreation Centre, Hillrise Road, London N19.



Workshops

Organising an SO group; producing factory bulletins; speaking at meetings; working as a councillor; organising against sexism; building solidarity with Ireland; open forum on Socialist Organiser.

Plenary sessions

Debate: A workers' programme for Europe
Cuts and privatisation - Socialist Organiser
and the fight for leadership

Videos

'Carry Greenham Home', 'The Red and the Blue', 'Questions of Leadership' (if available); 'Harlan County'; and a video on YOPs.

Plus

Caucuses of SO supporters in different unions and campaigns, including meetings for Women's Fightback and Class Fighter supporters.

Registration £3 (£1.50 unwaged) for dayschool and AGM, £2 (£1 unwaged) for one day.

Creche available. Cheap food.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER AGM

Sunday October 30, 10am to 4.30pm at County Hall, London SE1.

SOCIAL

Saturday 8pm to midnight.
At 'The Cock', Phoenix Rd, London NW1.

Two pamphlets summing up the ideas of Socialist Organiser.

'Where We Stand' - 20p plus 15p postage. 'How to fight the Tories' - 10p plus 15p postage. Or the two together, 45p including postage. From Socialist Organiser, 28, Middle Lane, London N8.



SCOTLAND

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

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

NORTH-WEST

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

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

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

Liverpool. Contact 733 5553. SO is sold at Progressive Books, Berry St, and at News from Nowhere, White-chapel.

Hyndburn. Contact Acerrington 395753.

Stoke. Meets 1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month. Next meeting 'What is Marxism' with video.

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

YORKSHIRE AND NORTH-EAST

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

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

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

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

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

Sunderland. Contact c/o Durham.

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

NORWICH/ Cambridge Troops Out day school. Saturday November 5, from 9.30am at Kings College, Cambridge. Registration £1. Details: Cambridge 881113. Creche provided if booked in advanced, pooled fare.

SOUTHAMPTON Irish Solidarity Committee Study Programme. For a copy of the Programme and details of the discussions please write to SISC, c/o BM Box 4835, London WC1N 3XX.

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

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

LONDON Campaign for Gay Rights now meets regularly every four weeks at Marchmont Community Centre, Marchmont St, WC1, at 6pm. Next meeting November 6.

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

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

CLASS FIGHTER conference, 26-27 November in South London. Two days of workshops, videos and discussion on perspectives for Class Fighter. For details write to 214 Sickert Court, London N1 or phone Jane on 263 9484.

Where to find Socialist Organiser

Southwark/Lambeth meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm at Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5. 8 November, Alan Thornett on The Fight for Leadership in the Unions; 22 November, James Dunkerly on Central America.

Next SO Marxist discussion, Sunday October 30 at 8.00 p.m. on South Africa. Phone Ian on 670 3279 for details.

Haringey. Meeting on Central America, with Jeremy Corbyn MP and a speaker from the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign. 8.30, Thursday October 27, at Harringay Grove Community Centre, Denmark Road, N8. Sponsored by Haringay ward Labour Party.

North-West London. Contact Mick, 624 1931.

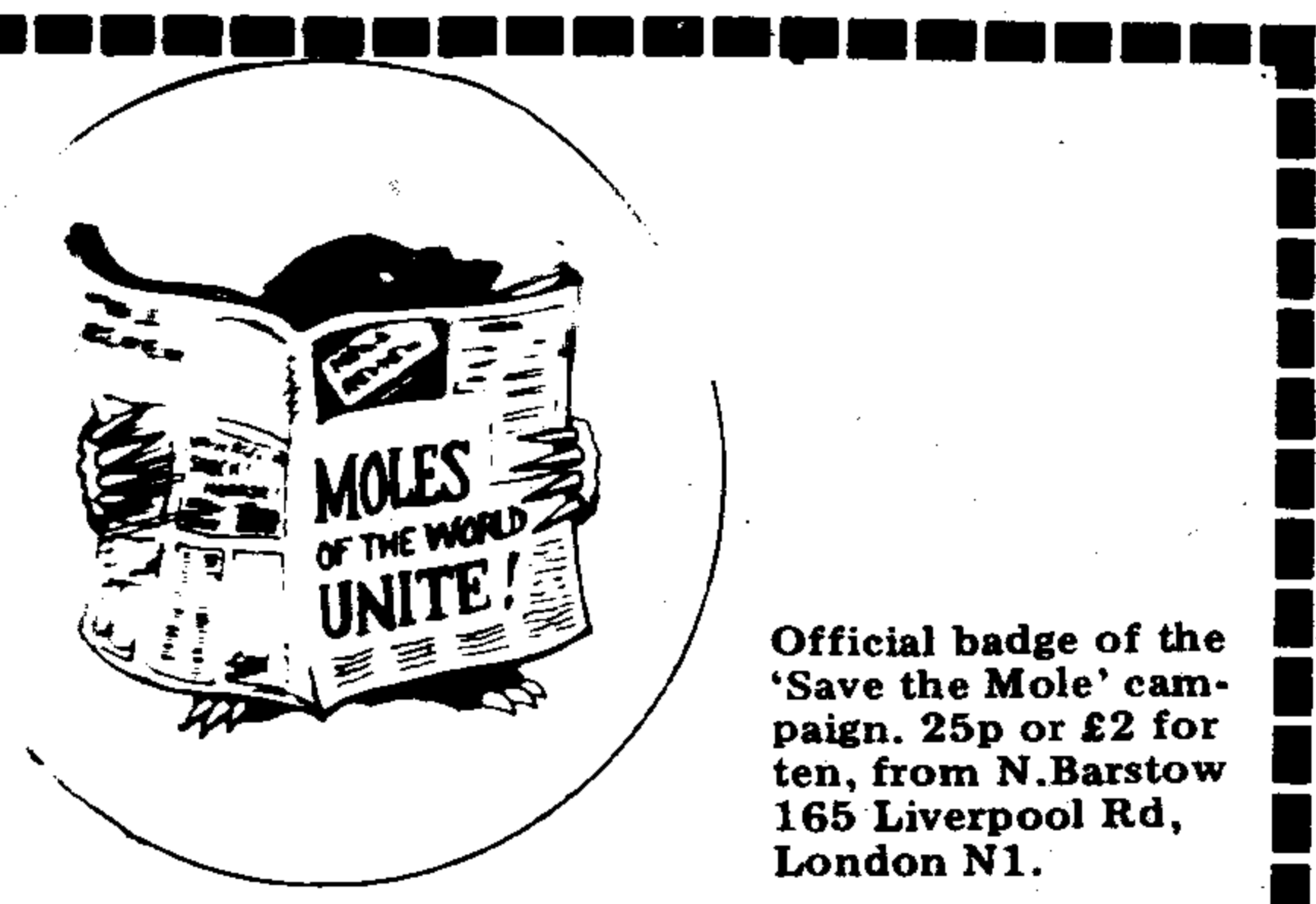
South-East London. Contact Siu Ming, 691 1141.

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

Richmond. SO is sold at All Saints Church, Hounslow High St, Saturdays 10.30 to 12. Contact Chris, 898 6961. Islington. Next meeting on Grenada, Sunday November 6. Details: Linda, 278 1341.

Orpington. Contact c/o South East London.

Hounslow. SO is sold outside All Saints Church, Hounslow High St, Saturdays 10.30 to 12. Contact Chris, 898 6961. Islington. Next meeting on Grenada, Sunday November 6. Details: Linda, 278 1341.



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

How serious was the Cowley witch-hunt?

WHY is Alan Thornett so touchy? Everyone writes bad articles sometimes: I'm considered to be pretty good at it myself.

I don't think I misrepresented his article (SO144).

In my letter I wrote: "It is wrong to see the BL witch-hunt as part of a concerted and integrated campaign to smash the labour movement".

I argued that though it had been possible for BL "management to sweep out the 13 with very little trouble", conditions did not exist for a general purge. "It takes more than a few horror stories in the press for purges in every industry and every area of society".

I put the argument starkly for clarity and brevity. I do not think that I accused Alan Thornett of specifically predicting "purges in every industry..."

Exaggerated

Still, when I first read Alan Thornett's letter I thought that maybe I had exaggerated, or slipped up and commented on something he had said in a private discussion, rather than on his article. Not so. Re-read the article.

With the discovery of the 13, it says, "BL decided, along with the media and the government (who followed events very closely) that this was the basis for a massive witch-hunt against socialists in industry" (emphasis mine).

The article also says that the "powerful defence of the 13 and condemnation of the witch-hunt" by Oxford TGWU district secre-

tary David Buckle "defused the situation... at a time when it was becoming very dangerous for the labour movement".

Distance

Alan Thornett quotes Buckle further: "In response to questions from the press, he said he could 'smell fascism around in this country'. Such comments from someone like David Buckle show how deep were the dangers for the workers' movement that had developed at that time".

Alan Thornett seems to distance himself from the letter of Buckle's comment. But he does use the comment to back up his own picture of the dangers to the whole labour movement.

In his letter Alan Thornett quoted his comments on Buckle, but he chose to omit the remarks of Buckle that he was approving.

But his letter itself shows how far from misrepresenting him I was: it refers to the witch-hunt "by the media at the time by forces which posed a danger to the labour movement as a whole". (My emphasis).

He also says: "The Cowley sackings and the witch-hunt around them was one of the factors (his emphasis) which have created a significant new situation in industry".

Since when? What were the others? To illustrate the 'new situation', he cites "the pits... the Stockport Messenger... the hardening of BT management and their injunction against the POEU".



Buckle, right winger who opposed witch-hunt

Was the Cowley witch-hunt a major factor in causing all this? Or wasn't it? Clearly his line of thought is that the Cowley witch hunt was a major turning point.

Wriggling around as Alan Thornett does in his letter is also a "very destructive way of conducting a polemic" - and of conducting political life in general.

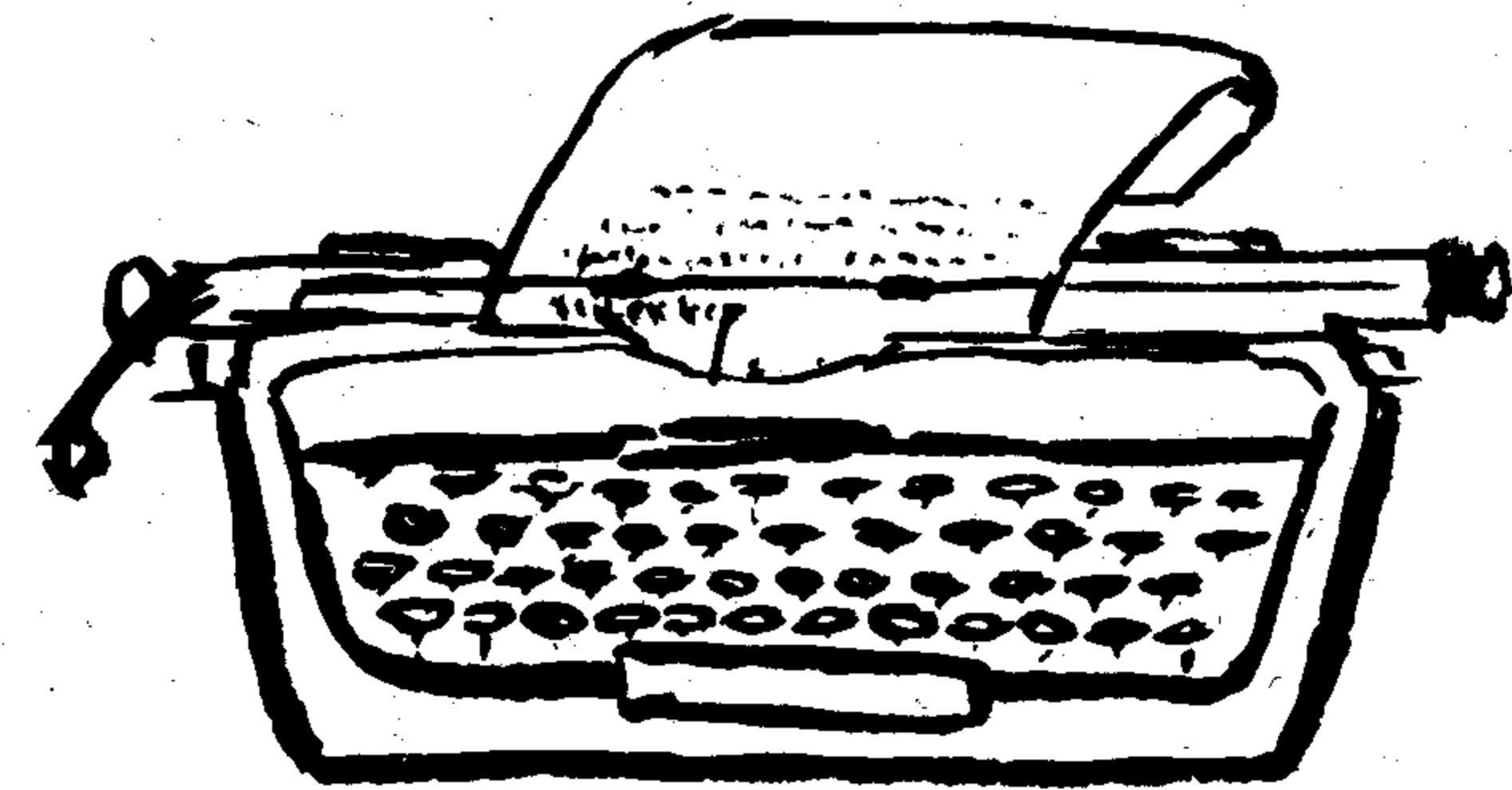
On the Socialist League, Alan Thornett evades my point: that

his criticism of the SL was internally incoherent. On the one hand, he mis-read and exaggerated the forces and power behind the witch-hunt, on the other he said that this major effort by the ruling class depended on such small beer of routine journalism as finding 'an angle', 'personalities', etc.

Of course the press needed 'an angle'. Alan Thornett is right here, as far as it goes. 'Red

JOHN HARRIS

Writeback



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

Steph's press conference was 'an angle', and was used.

But they can find or invent 'angles' - they do it all the time just to spice up newspapers. If it was really a decision by 'BL, along with the media and the government' to launch a 'massive witch-hunt' against socialists in industry generally, then they could certainly have found fuel.

Alan Thornett asserts that it is within the bounds of 'fraternal solidarity' and not 'sectarian intent' to criticise the SL (as he did) when the witch-hunt is only beginning to die down, for daring to try to have their say at a press conference; but it is outside these bounds to criticise the political content of their press conference some weeks later, when the witch-hunt is clearly over.

He attacks them arbitrarily for disagreeing with him on the tactical issue of whether to lie low physically or not: he then attacks me as sectarian for commenting on their decision to lie low politically, to disavow themselves publicly.

Another contrast: he criticises the SL for daring to have the impulse to make a stand, while praising Buckle - and ridiculously exaggerating his role - for making a stand. I can't understand any of this.

Perhaps the key to the whole dispute is in Alan Thornett's final two paragraphs: "Jack Cleary should be playing up (his emphasis) the significance of BL, not playing it down" - because it has "a significant and long-established tradition of Trotskyism within it".

When he accuses me of playing down BL, he means I don't agree with some things he says in his letter, such as that the BL management is "the single most important industrial asset the capitalist class have".

"The very fact that it was BL who sacked the 15 in this way was absolutely not by chance. It may have come up in a 'haphazard' way, but it was not dealt with as such. It was dealt with with all the authority BL management has amongst the employers, and they were all strengthened by it".

Not Cowley management, he asserts, but only the central BL management (possibly, from what Alan Thornett says elsewhere, after consulting the Cabinet) could decide to sack 13 sitting ducks who had little chance of

getting even token strike action in their defence!

There are bits and pieces of truth scattered in this, but it is all exaggerated and distorted, according (I suppose) to Alan Thornett's injunction to "play up BL". To describe BL management as 'the single most important industrial asset' is perilously close to the 'bad King John' theory of history - capitalist class power certainly needs ruthless men, but serious class struggle issues are decided by something more fundamental than the personal qualities of managers.

It is not that I play down or deny the importance of the 'Edwardes Revolution' in BL, but that Alan Thornett paints his picture with no sense of proportion, perspective or balance. Indeed, he openly disavows and condemns objectivity.

But if you decide in advance that, for whatever reason, you are going to play something up or down before you analyse the facts, then you part company with Marxism. You necessarily increase the risk of getting lost in your own wishes, dreams, fears and fantasies. As someone probably said, don't play up, don't play down, first understand.

First work out and define what is happening and your own objective place in it - and then map out what you can do to affect what happens next. The fact that there is a 'Trotskyist tradition' at Cowley has no proper bearing on what we are discussing.

A BL-centred or Oxford-centred view of the world is inevitably a distorted one - as useless as the view that the sun revolves around the earth, and pretty close to being its political equivalent.

'Story-lining' for clear presentation is very important: but if it is not woven around a framework of determinedly objective assessment of how things in the world really stand, then such story-weaving is the weaving of ideological cataracts on our own eyes.

On this issue Alan Thornett has mistaken the art of weaving facets and impressions of reality together into a plausible story around the axis of one's own preconceptions, for the job of making an objective Marxist assessment of reality. These are very different arts.

JACK CLEARY, London.

Hazy data on smoking

SCIENCE

By Les Hearn

FOR THOSE who believe that there is a rational basis to the activities of scientists, a revelation in last week's New Scientist may come as a disappointment.

Following the controversy about the 'Ultra-Low Tar' cigarettes that aren't, New Scientist decided to look further into the way that official cigarette tar league tables are established.

SO readers may recall that cigarettes are tested using a robot smoking machine, programmed to take a puff of two seconds' duration, once a minute. These puffs are 35 cubic centimetres (cc) in volume (about a mouthful).

New Scientist was intrigued to know the reason for this particular method, and asked scientists at the laboratory of the Government Chemist. They thought

the test was based on observations on people during the '60s.

However, NS traced the method back to the labs of American Tobacco in 1936. Here, scientists led by J.A. Bradford had developed a machine to take regular puffs of a cigarette until it had burned to a standard length.

Bradford then looked for some research to determine the size and frequency of puffs, and found a paper written by a German, B.Pfyl. Pfyl had measured the volume of smoke inhaled per puff for the massive number of seven people.

He had found it to vary between 29 and 61 cc. Bradford decided to use puffs of uniform size, and chose 35cc. He then assumed a puff lasting two seconds, once a minute.

This guess remains the basis for cigarette testing by the British government nearly 50 years later, when cigarette size and design have changed drastically!

Meanwhile, more reliable research is available. One study, in 1980, looking at 517 medical patients, found an average puff size of 43.5 cc, lasting slightly more than 2 seconds, once every 25.8 seconds. These people were, on average, inhaling three times as much smoke per minute as assumed in the official test.

More smoke

This means that more of the smoke from each cigarette goes into the lungs, instead of straight into the atmosphere, as with less frequent puffing. The different rate of burning will also affect the type of tars present in the inhaled smoke.

Of course, it may be that these 517 people are no more representative of the average than the seven in the 50-year-old German study. After all, they were medical patients - perhaps because of their smoking!

But all this goes to show just

how meaningless the official tar tables are. The average of the 1980 study was probably taking in twice as much nicotine and tar as the mythological model, so the tar tables underestimate risk for all but a minority of smokers.

Instead of (or as well as) the most realistic tar tables, smokers need the fullest information so they can assess the risk associated with their own particular way of smoking.

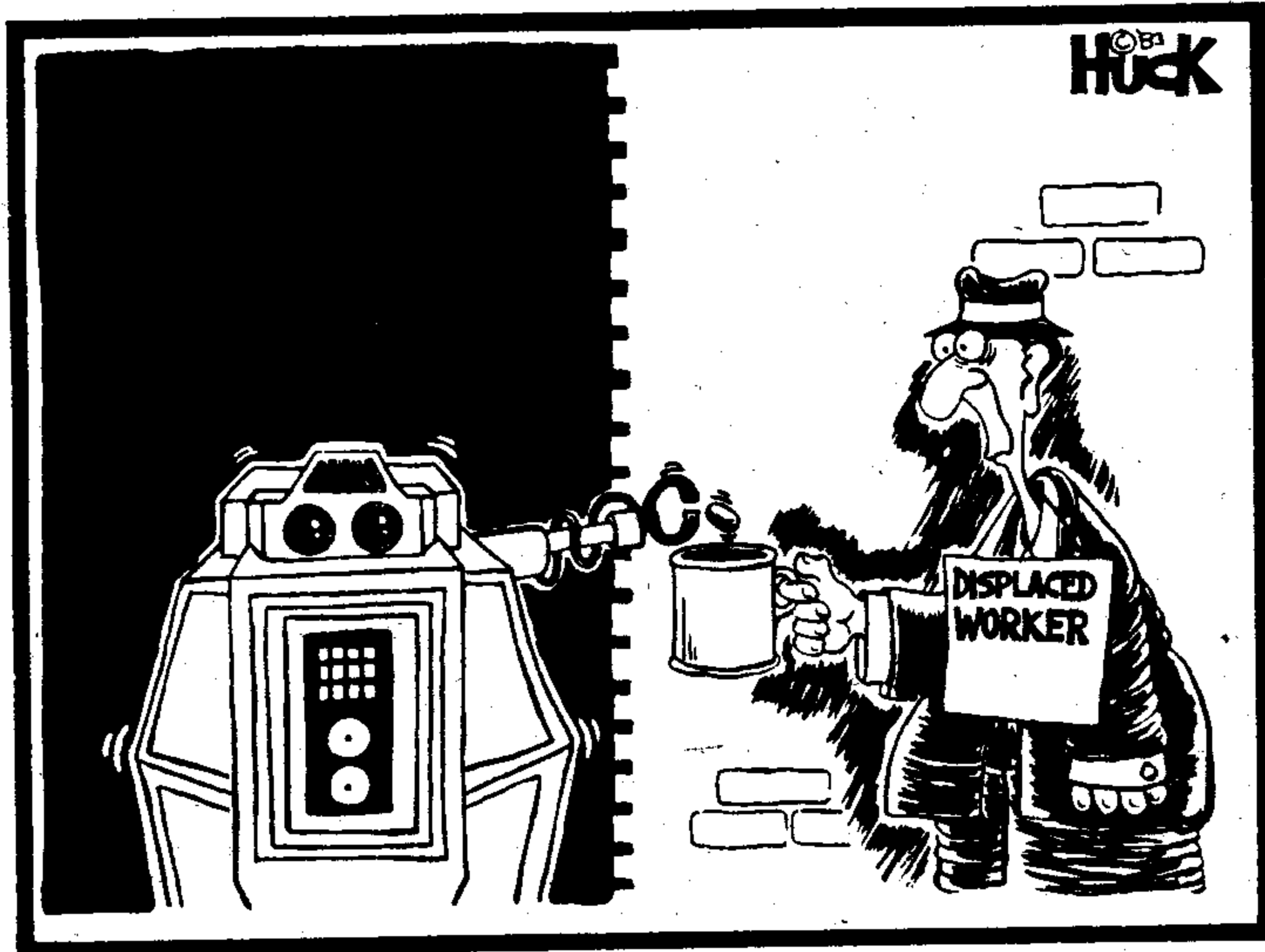
FOOTNOTE: In California, with 10% of the US population, lung cancer has overtaken breast cancer as a cause of death in women. This year some 4100 women will die, a rate of 30 per 100,000. This is due to increased cigarette smoking.

ASTRONOMERS have discovered bizarre facts about Triton, one of the moons of Neptune.

Unlike our moon, but like some of the moons of Jupiter and Saturn, Triton has an atmosphere. However, it is unlikely that life could survive there, as the gases present are nitrogen and methane, both rather inert substances.

Furthermore, as Triton is 30 times further from the sun than us, it is so cold that there are oceans of liquid nitrogen, probably with 'land' and 'icebergs' made of solid methane.

And finally Triton has such an odd orbit that once every 650 years it gets completely cut off from the sun's rays and its atmosphere liquefies and shrinks to a tiny volume. 325 years after such a super-winter, Triton gets an unusually high dose of sun, and the oceans evaporate to expand the atmosphere to 1000 times its minimum size.



TROOPS OUT NOW!

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

TUC, Labour conferences: Swing to right strengthens bosses

THE post-election period has seen a significant shift to the right in the TUC and Labour Party conferences.

The shift represents the reaction of both the Labour Party and trade union leaders to Labour's election defeat.

They are now determined to win the next election at any cost. This involves, as they have seen it since June 9, establishing and consolidating a centre-right leadership of the party; the promotion of a 'unity' platform around it; the neutralisation of the left; and moves to begin systematically to change the 'left' policies which the right wing see as having contributed to the election defeat.

Since the shift to the right at the TUC Congress was a central part of this process, all this has significant implications for the industrial situation.

After the election Arthur Scargill's correct, although demagogic, call to 'fight them on the picket lines' was cast contemptuously aside by the trade union leaders and the TUC itself, despite the fact that Scargill's statement found significant support in the working class.

Determined

The TUC were determined that the practical reflection of what they wanted to see inside the Labour Party would be an absence of industrial struggles against the Government (or against the employers for that matter, since such struggles would tend to strengthen the left in the Party and disrupt the 'unity' drive).

Thus in the post-election period the TUC have added reason to oppose struggles, over and above their betrayals in the Tories' first term of office, which flowed from their reformist politics.

A number of factors helped the right wing in the TUC move their objective at the September conference. Some of these factors have had a lasting effect on the working class.

There was a building-up of anti-union sentiment in the TUC conference which helped the

This is the second part of a two-part analysis of the current industrial situation by ALAN THORNETT. Last week's article looked at some length at the problems facing the struggle in the coal industry. This week Alan looks at the impact on the shop floor of the political shift by trade union and Labour leaders.

right wing to seriously isolate the left.

It started with the political victimisation of the Cowley 13 — which may have come up to some extent by chance, but was then used skilfully by both BL management and the media to promote a campaign of anti-communism.

This had some impact in significantly increasing the isolation of militants in industries where the struggle is sharp, since they were increasingly seen as outsiders.

It continued and was built up further by Scargill's visit to the USSR just before the TUC Congress, and then focused on the South Korean jet.

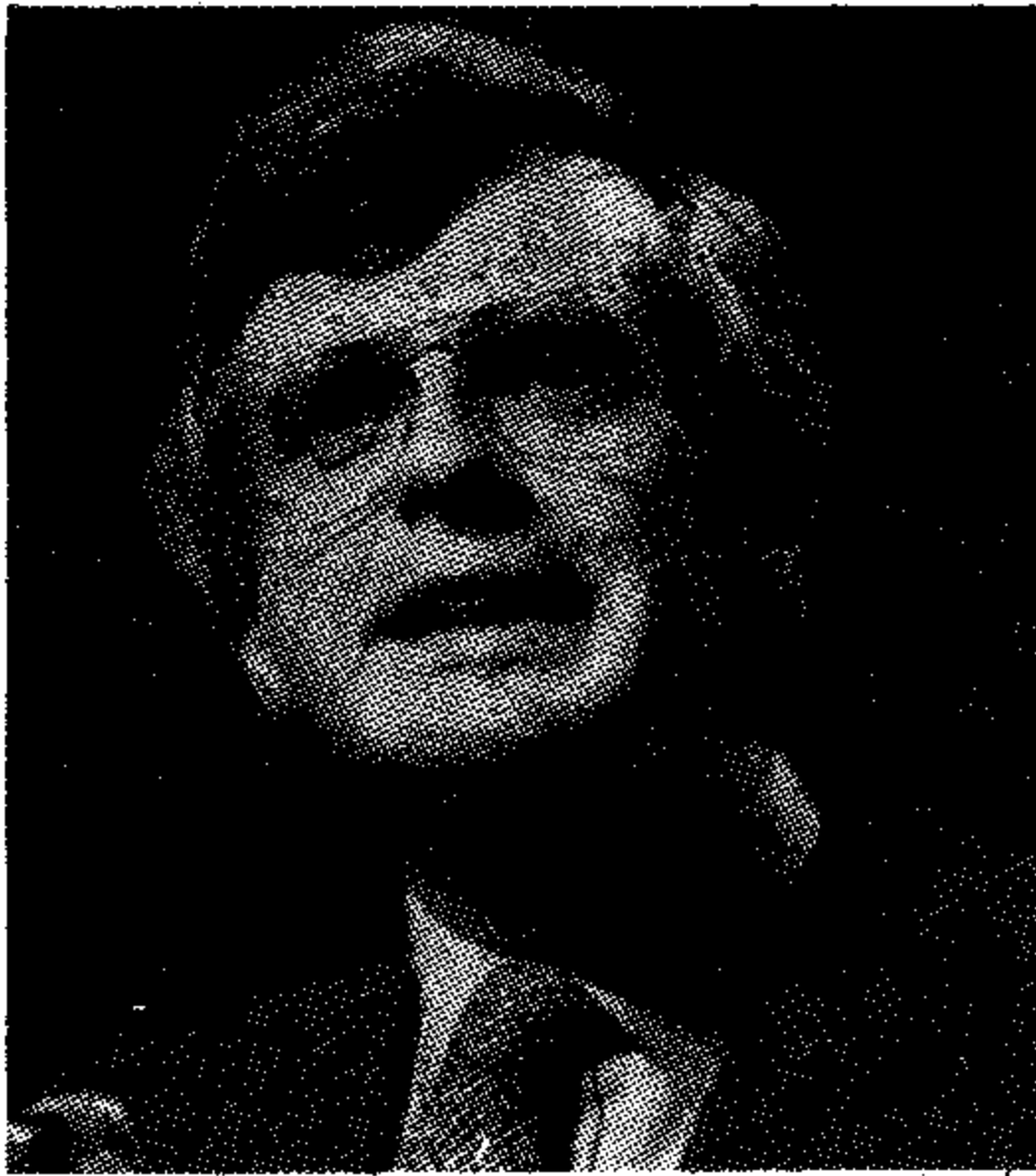
These developments became the basis both for a pro-Reagan resolution on the Korean jet at the beginning of the Congress and for Frank Chapple's strident anti-communist opening speech which very much set the tone of the conference.

Chapple could suddenly be presented as a major TUC leader speaking for the TUC, and not an ultra-right on the fringes.

This left Scargill and the left beleaguered and on the defensive, although of course still retaining much support amongst the rank and file.

These retreats are in sharp contrast to the mood within the working class where, despite the pressure of mass unemployment, the General Election result and the successes of the employers' offensive, there have been a number of tenacious struggles amongst sections of workers, some of which have scored important victories: Greenings and Michelin are examples.

The decision of the NUJ executive to resist the injunc-



The emergence of right winger Alastair Graham (CPSA) summed up this year's TUC.

tion at the Stockport Messenger reflected this mood: other struggles like Vauxhall have been demobilised by the leadership but have shown the potential. The current strikes in the pits — at Monktonhall and Cronton — show this as well, as does the determination of the Chloride strikers.

All this result in a wholly negative TUC Congress. The only time the platform came to life was when something left was said and the right wing sprang to attack it.

It created the right conditions for the decisions to enter into talks with Tebbit (from the position that the 'only' way to change the Tebbit proposals was to talk to him and persuade him to change them!), to loosen links with the Labour Party, and implicitly move away from unilateralism.

Coming after the Tory election victory which itself strengthened the employers, the retreats, however, added to the employers' confidence. The result has been a very significant sharpening of the employers' offensive.

This has come both in terms of a sharpening of the attacks of the employers themselves at the point of production, and through their willingness to use Prior and Tebbit in the courts.

The Cowley 13 reflected it; the massive speed-up imposed on parts of Cowley since then reflects it; the Stockport Messenger injunction reflected it very clearly; the current situation in the Post Office and BT reflects it even more, both through the victimisation of a leading postal worker militant in Basingstoke for alleged time-keeping offences and of course the current situation with the telecom engineers.

In BT a previously relatively soft-line management has been given the job of implementing the major single privatisation move of the Tory government. After months of a careful soft approach they have decided that now is the time to put the boot in and create a confrontation.

They proceeded to send 2000 workers home until the POEU was prepared to remove the sanctions. At the same time Michael Edwardes, now running the Mercury project, took a High Court injunction to restrain the POEU from taking sanctions against Mercury or its backers.

Politically, however, the most fundamental development is taking place in the coal industry.

Ian MacGregor is now in control of the National Coal Board and is programmed to do to

jobs and conditions there what he has already done in BL and the steel industry.

Even before he had taken office, however, the success of the management offensive and the virtual collapse of the Scargill leadership in the face of it has been a very major and central gain for the Thatcher government, a collapse which has a serious effect on the whole working class. (This was covered in detail in last week's article).

The Tory bandwagon has gone forward in one industry after another.

Shipbuilding workers have been told that there will be no pay increases this year unless they are tied to job losses, and this under conditions where they have had no rise for 18 months.

One yard will be closed on the Tyne, and British Shipbuilders want a further 2000 jobs to go. Two yards on the Tyne are earmarked for privatisation.

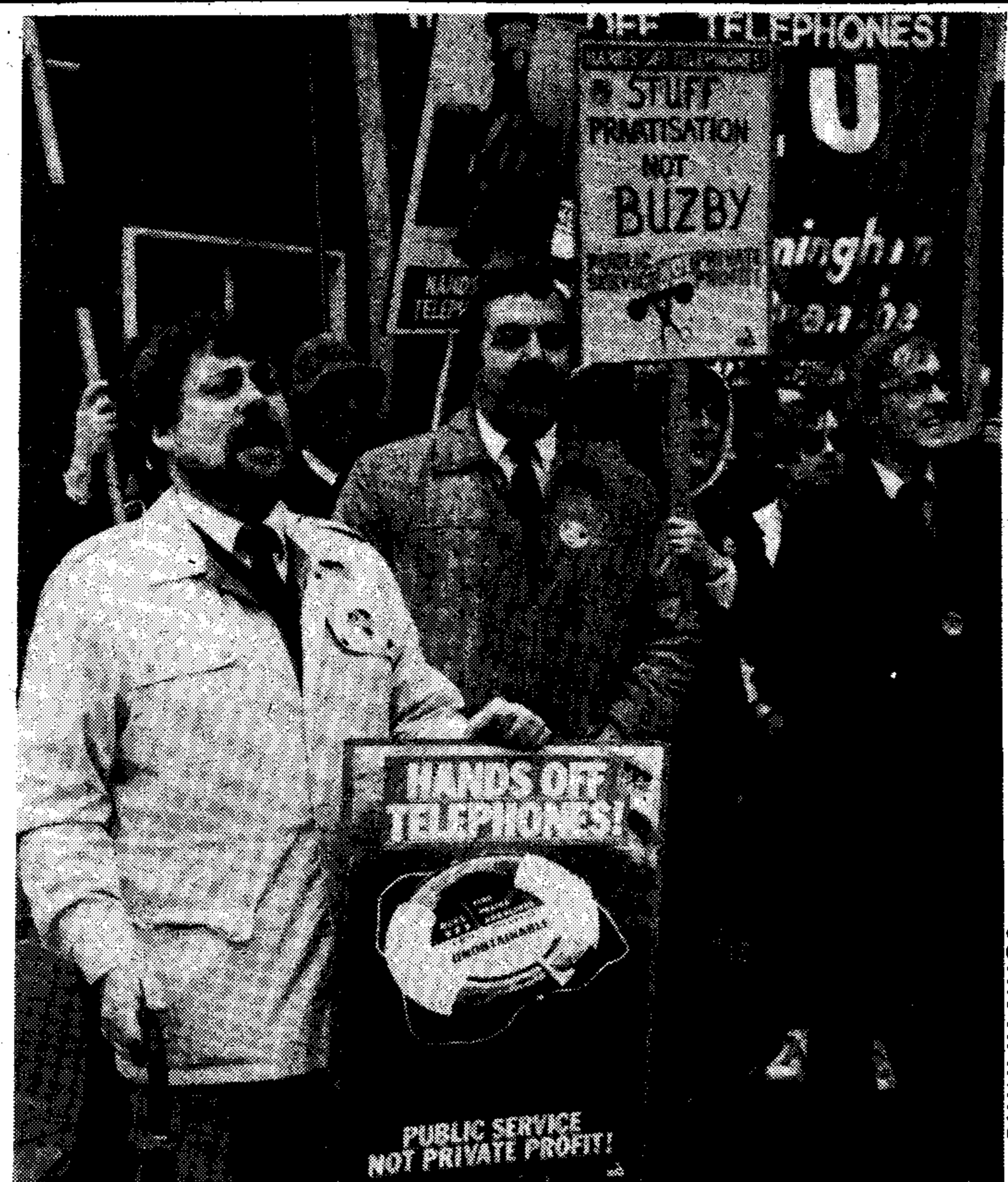
The employers are demanding an end to all so-called restrictive practices and are proposing new working conditions along the lines of those demanded at Highland Fabricators at Nigg recently.

In the water industry the employers are demanding an end to the closed shop even before the Tebbit provisions on the closed shop have come into force.

It is clearly a preparatory move, and must be seen as Government policy for the public sector. Wholesale moves to break up the closed shop would pose a very major problem for the trade union movement.

All this does not imply that Tory industrial strategy will continue to be successful any more than it implies that the right wing in the TUC or the Labour Party will remain on top.

Vauxhall car workers have recently shown how quickly struggles can emerge (and how quickly they meet the same problems of leadership).



British Telecom...relatively soft management turning to a hard line

The new Tory cuts in the NHS, representing the real Tory position after a lying election campaign, are probably the biggest single attack on the working class by direct decision of the Government. 5000 jobs are to go and massive privatisation put into effect.

Hostile

We are now being told the shape of the future NHS, and it is nothing like what has existed for the past 30 years. This goes alongside drastic cuts in the social services and education, with moves towards cuts in DHSS benefits.

There is little chance of the NHS cuts going through without serious opposition. Indeed, the NHS is likely to be one of the major areas of struggle against the government in the present period.

The hostile reaction to the latest cuts goes very deep and beyond the labour movement, although Tories protesting at the Tory Party conference of course were calling for the sacking of ancillary workers rather than medical staff.

The resistance of District Health Authorities like Brent is significant, but they are being replaced, therefore, is meaningless, unless backed up by the trade union movement.

Where a clear lead has been given, the response has been very strong. Hackney, Lewisham, Hillingdon, Stockport and Northumberland have all seen

important mobilisations. In Cardiff, health workers have struck demanding more staff. The possibility is raised of fighting to reverse some of the cuts.

In Bradford, the Thornton View hospital occupation points the way forward against closures. It is a very powerful occupation, with a remarkable degree of workers' control. Management have been removed from the site, and forced to 'recognise' and negotiate with the occupation committee. This strength points towards other workers' control demands — like opening the books of the health authorities — which are capable of developing the struggle still further.

The basis clearly exists for a national movement against NHS cuts. It is an area where the TUC can be challenged to halt the retreat and make a stand.

Local campaigns based on trades councils, Labour councils, community health councils and labour movement organisations could play a major role in this.

It is plain that the emergence of major struggles in the NHS or elsewhere would have a significant impact on the political situation and pose the possibility of challenging the retreats of the trade union leaders.

It would give the opportunity for Marxists to intervene and give a lead which starts not from class collaboration in the face of the economic crisis, or the Parliamentary considerations of the right wing of the Labour Party, but from the independent interests of the working class.

Working alliance?

THE NEW Triple Alliance pamphlet, 'Coal, Rail and Steel: Fighting for the future', launched at the Labour Party conference, did manage to include in its 9-point programme supporting industrial action if any of the industries were threatened.

But the Yorkshire Triple Alliance conference in Barnsley on September 15 showed that we will have none of that if the bureaucrats get their way.

Only two motions were allowed, both of them fixed weeks previously by a meeting of full-timers and both of them designed to make the Triple Alliance a body which merely collects relevant information and publishes it so as to 'convince the public' of the need for the three basic industries.

As Yorkshire mineworkers'

president Jack Taylor said at the beginning of the October 15 conference, "This is not a conference calling for industrial action, but looking for consensus... We are providing what we believe is an asset to our nation and to our people".

And Sandy Feather of the steel union ISTC offered us this ray of hope, "George Younger is the favourite candidate for Parkinson's job at the Department of Trade and Industry. He was part of the Triple Alliance in Scotland. Let's hope he fights for Ravenscraig in that job". With that perspective, what do we hope for now that Tebbit's got the job?

From the floor, however, the tone was different. "We've tried all the other ideas but strike action". "Getting the point over to the membership is more important than getting it across to the public".

"Two years ago in this room we talked about getting it down to the grassroots — we're still talking about it". "Either we take on the Tories and strike, or

we pack up the Triple Alliance". "We need pamphlets, leaflets, communication, rank and file organisation and a national conference".

An executive was agreed. The platform originally wanted it to be made up of just one full-timer from each of the seven unions, but under pressure they agreed that it could also include one lay delegate from each union.

These union bureaucrats have sat on the Triple Alliance long enough, and left to themselves they will continue to do so, occasionally putting out a statement but doing nothing to defend our jobs and industries.

Every way of putting pressure on them must be applied, and every avenue sought to find ways of linking up the activists in the various industries and unions, to exchange information and build up organisation.

Only then can we begin to resist closures and job losses and build a Triple Alliance that means an alliance for action rather than a means of trying to persuade the Tories.

Get ORGANISED!

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

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Address

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



Industrial digest

1460 TGWU and 900 AUEW workers at Shell's biggest UK refinery, Stanlow (Cheshire), began an all-out strike on Tuesday 18 October, against the company's 4.5% "final" pay offer.

This escalation from a previously imposed overtime ban came in response to management provocation in taking disciplinary action the weekend before against a night shift worker.

TGWU members at Shellhaven, in Essex, also began an overtime ban on Saturday 22 October, and seem likely to move to strike action themselves in support of the pay claim, dependent on the outcome of "a delegate meeting in Manchester (Monday 24 October) of all Shell UK shop stewards. Incidentally, directors have been given a 17% pay increase this year!

From Monday 24 October the National Association of Colliery Overmen, Deputies and Shot-firers (NACODS) are withdrawing "safety coverage" at Monktonhall colliery in support of the five week NUM strike there over closure.

Since government moves to rescind the Fair Wages Resolution on September 21, described by them as "... irrelevant in modern conditions, was out of step with governmental thinking on market forces, it created an anomalous differential between public and private contracts, and it hampered productivity bargaining" cleaning companies have started cutting wages by 10% or more, and reducing working conditions of cleaners (mostly women) who are employed on government contracts, in response to demands for savings in department budgets.

The Northumberland and Tyne-and-Wear Regional Health Authority, have agreed in principle to a restructuring scheme for the area's ambulance service. One of their programme's principal features is a two-tier service separating accident and emergency services from domestic patient transport. The proposals which are separate from cuts imposed as a result of new government restrictions include a 37% reduction in vehicles, and a 19% reduction in ambulance crews. This in fact means crews being reduced from 577 to 467; officers being reduced from 95 to 78; depots from 29 to 24 and ambulances from 256 to 161.

35,500 firefighters, and fire control officers have been awarded a 7.8% increase on basic wages, more than twice the government's 3% pay limit set for public sector wage rises. However, taking into account allowances on top of basic wage rates this reduces to 7.58% and from November 1, by another 2% to 5.58% because of a second stage of an employee pension contribution increase coming into effect.

IND COOPE Brewery (Burton-on-Trent) is cutting its workforce by 400 over the next five years.

Metal Box is to make a further 355 people (after recent job losses) redundant at five of its factories in its general line metal packaging division. Since April 1980 the company has shut 15 plants in the UK and reduced employment by more than 10,000 to 22,500.

Bosses dismayed by court ruling

AS WE go to press, it appears that British Telecom management have pulled back from the threatened sacking of 19 Post Office Engineering Union members at Walton-on-Thames.

This — at least temporary — stay of execution appears to be part of the re-think of management tactics following the body-blow of last Friday's High Court judgment, which denied an injunction to restrain the POEU from its industrial action.

The private telecommunications consortium, Mercury, failed to secure a court order demanding the POEU lift its 'blacking' of work on the inter-connection of Mercury with the BT network.

The injunction had been pursued under Norman Tebbit's 1982 anti-union laws. The failure to secure court intervention at this stage has plainly shocked both Mercury and BT. The sackings — designed as a brutal follow-up to the expected injunction — would have forced

POEU leaders either to escalate the dispute far beyond the present 'selective' action, or to allow militants to be picked off and victimised one by one for implementing union policy.

The union's general secretary, Bryan Stanley, came out confidently from the court — and boasted that selective action would go on.

But what would he and his right-wing friends have done if the judgment had — as expected by many — gone the other way? What will they do if it is reversed on appeal or in the House of Lords?

Rather than simply celebrating the judgment, POEU militants should be maintaining the fight for a national ban on overtime and other policies which can spread the action to involve the whole membership and create conditions to repel the next, inevitable round of the bosses' offensive on their jobs and conditions.

BL ducks out of Thornett case

By Harry Sloan

IN AN eleventh-hour out-of-court settlement prior to an Industrial Tribunal hearing, BL management have paid £8,000 compensation to sacked Cowley militant Alan Thornett.

Thornett is a nationally known Trotskyist, and had been a long-standing shop steward in the Cowley plant (which he helped to unionise), and was an elected Deputy Convenor denied recognition by management.

He was summarily sacked by management last November, using a trivial driving infringement as their pretext for a brazen victimisation.

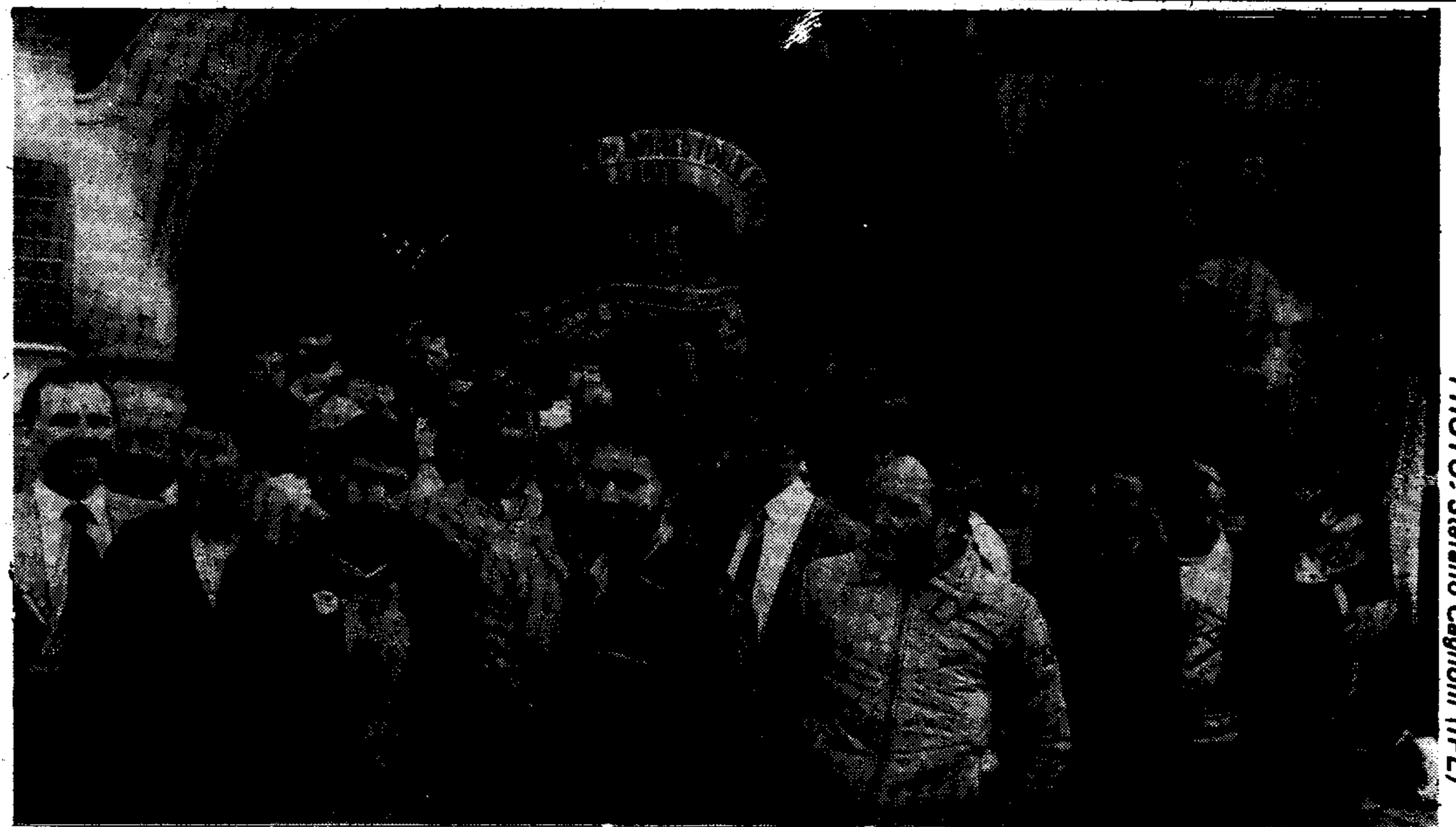
Any prospect of action in Thornett's defence was blocked by deft manoeuvring from TGWU District Secretary David Buckle, who failed to make any public statement in Thornett's support and refused to attend the crucial mass meeting which decided for or against a strike.

Only after this avenue of struggle was firmly closed did Thornett agree to go to the Industrial Tribunal — armed with evidence that BL consciously planned his sacking well in advance, but aware that the most that could be gained was a sum of compensation, since BL have refused in the past to reinstate unfairly dismissed militants.

In one case, that of Cowley worker Dennis Kilgariff, the Tribunal found 100% in his favour and ordered his reinstatement. BL refused — and in

the event was ordered to pay £8,250 compensation instead.

The out-of-court £8,000 settlement in Thornett's case is therefore a clear admission of guilt by the company.



NUM militants lobby the Special Conference

Miners ban overtime

LAST Friday's special delegate conference of the National Union of Mineworkers, held in London, voted unanimously to begin a national overtime ban from October 31 in protest against the 5.2% pay offer made by the National Coal Board and the NCB's programme of pit closures.

The decision was another serious retreat from the fight to save jobs in the industry. The decision does nothing to support the miners at Monktonhall in Scotland and Cronton in Lancashire, who have been on strike for many weeks defending their jobs against closure.

In fact no specific decision at all was taken in support of those pits who had been told that their appeals for support would be considered at the conference and who now face a very serious problem of isolation.

A delegation from Cronton which lobbied the conference was bitter that no lead had been given to the conference by the leadership of the NUM who put no recommendation at all.

Scargill, however, turned this failure of leadership into a virtue by saying that the overtime ban represented the grass roots reaction of miners against the closure programme.

There is, perhaps, some truth in that, but it only reemphasises that the responsibility of the leadership was to take that reaction, give it confidence and lead it towards some real action that does stand a chance of defending jobs.

The reaction of Ian MacGregor to the overtime ban was predictably arrogant. He has stocks equal to six months production of the

entire industry behind him and it is organised to give even longer cover at strategic points like power stations. He knows that he can sit back and see the worthlessness and divisive nature of the overtime ban do its job.

In true Edwardes style he said he was quite prepared to sit out the overtime ban and the only losers would be the miners at Christmas and he was very sorry for them. He said the "enormously generous" offer he had made would not be improved. "We have told the boys that it is the best we can do for them and it seems to me that it is going to take a little time for them to understand that."

If this style of management is going to be defeated in the coal mining industry the present retreat of the NUM leadership will have to be reversed.

Shipyards: unite and fight!

FRIDAY 28 October is the date, when delegates from all British Shipbuilders yards will be faced with the decision to recommend action against management attacks on jobs, wages and working conditions or give in and prepare themselves for 9,000 redundancies, a wage freeze, casual labour and privatisation.

At a shop stewards combine committee in Carlisle last Saturday, the reports coming back from the yards that had held mass meetings was that management's proposals had been rejected unanimously with a majority of the yards who were still to hold mass meetings confident of a similar result.

Before the lay delegates conference the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee will be meeting to decide on what recommendation to put to the conference. There are a number of lay delegates on this committee and they will be pushing for a recommendation to give full support

to the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee on any action necessary to achieve a realistic wage rise and also support for the previous decisions to oppose

enforced redundancies.

The reports from some yards seem to indicate that there is room for discussion on management proposals if they come up

100 support Carousel fight

100 people turned up to a public meeting in Shettleston (Glasgow) last week in support of the Carousel strikers, whose fight for reinstatement is now in its fifteenth week. The meeting was addressed by the local MP, union representatives, and the strikers themselves.

Unfortunately, though, the support for the meeting has not been matched by support for the weekly mass pickets, attendance

at which continues to remain limited, despite the official backing of the TGWU.

And last week also saw the first test case of those sacked go before an industrial tribunal for a preliminary hearing to see whether or not there was a case to be answered.

The tribunal, as with a similar dispute at Glencroft Knitwear in Glasgow two years ago, ruled that there is no case to answer.

The woman whose dismissal came up before the tribunal dropped out of the dispute after losing her case, as, too, has a second striker after getting another job, leaving just eight to carry on the fight.

An additional blow to the strike occurred last week when two vans made deliveries to the firm late on Saturday night, at a time when there were no pickets at the factory gates.

What the vans were supplying, and from which firm, is not known.

On a more positive note, however, the Cooperative Wholesale Society in Glasgow have now decided to withdraw all stocks of Carousel wafers from its shelves, and send them back to the factory as well as refusing to take any more supplies from the factory until the sacked strikers are reinstated.

And despite recent setbacks, the strikers have no intention of throwing in the towel. On the contrary, they are stepping up their action by organising a demonstration through Shettleston on Saturday 5 November.

For details of the demonstration, requests for speakers, phone Carousel strike headquarters on 041-763 0922.

Esso sold out

THE SIX week old strike by Esso (Fawley) contract workers ended last Thursday, October 13, with the strikers voting two to one for a return to work on the basis of the company's original offer.

The employer conceded nothing on workers' claims for a 38 hour week and pension scheme. The only concession was an extra 2% on basic pay rates starting next January. Since the annual agreement nominally runs from July, even this is not the gain it appears.

Naturally enough the sell-out deal was fixed up through the government arbitration service ACAS, called in two weeks ago by Confed Area 5 officials with a brief to negotiate a quick settlement.

Despite a lot of scabbing by refinery workers, the real turning point in this dispute came the moment two hundred pick-

ets took possession of the TGWU regional offices in Southampton (see SO148).

From this point on, the local union hierarchy tried every trick in the book to dissipate and sabotage the workers' control of their strike.

Mass pickets

For example, scheduled mass pickets that attracted hundreds of supporters were then split up into sectional mass meetings.

It is a disgrace that neither at national nor at local level did the TGWU attempt to enforce blacking of Esso products.

In fact, oil tanker drivers were clearly under union instructions to bust Fawley picket lines.

Pickets who bravely set up an alternative blockade on oil tanker movements had to contend with violent threats

with an acceptable wage rise. This idea leaves room open for splits between the yards.

The issues of jobs, wages and working conditions have to be linked if the fightback is going to be effective.

Moves have already been made to take the Tyne ship repair workers out of the fight by getting them to take the redundancy money with an indication by the management planning to take over the yards and run them as a private concern, that they will get their jobs back.

Instead of putting forward recommendations on how to fight back against British Shipbuilders attacks, most yards have just pledged their support for the SNC in what ever action they propose.

Those who support this line should remember what happened to the Robb Caledon yard when it was faced with closure. At that time the SNC proposed an overtime ban and a strike on Monday of each week. Meanwhile a deal was made to sell off the yard to Kestrel Marine with many of the workers there being thrown on the dole.

The yards have got to support the previously agreed action of taking over the yards. We have also got to build the links with other sections of workers facing similar attacks such as the health workers and the miners.



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

Piling the heat on Nicaragua

RONALD Reagan's hypocritical attack on "left wing thugs" as a pretext for his brutal invasion of Grenada contrasts vividly with US support for extreme right wing thugs in the ruling junta of El Salvador and CIA-run mercenary forces harassing the Nicaraguan Sandinista regime.

Indeed prior to the upheavals in Grenada which gave Reagan an opportunity to implement long-standing CIA-Pentagon plans for the invasion, Nicaragua was quite clearly in the front line of resistance to US aggression.

Bands of gunmen organised, financed and controlled by the CIA have for many months been mounting cross-border raids into Nicaragua from bases in Honduras in the North and Costa Rica in the south.

Bombed

Most recently, in moves which Washington has proudly admitted were planned by the CIA, Nicaraguan oil ports and installations have been bombed and sabotaged, with claims that mines have been laid to obstruct oil tankers arriving from the country's sole supplier, Mexico.

The result of this has been the announcement by Esso that it will no longer carry oil to Nicaragua, while freight rates for the trip have already quadrupled and may go as high as ten times the previous \$90,000 per trip.

The Sandinistas have been forced to bring in severe measures to cut fuel and electricity consumption - including a cut in the working week from 5½ days to five, cutbacks in streetlighting and airconditioning, and rationing of petrol and diesel.

Grave danger

The regime has stated it may be forced to evacuate the whole 25,000 population of the oil port of Corinto, who would be in grave danger if raiders were to blow up gasoline and diesel tanks.

Significantly it has been this selective hit and run action against economic targets - which also include power plants and Nicaragua's gold mining industry - which has scored the most dramatic successes for the USA.

Until recently, the claimed force of some 7,000 Honduran-based "contra" guerrillas had failed dismally to make any headway in the more populated areas of Nicaragua or win any measure of popular support. They have been beaten back by Sandinista army and militia units.

Politically they are recognised as reactionary left-overs of the hated Somoza dictatorship ousted

By Harry Sloan

by the Sandinistas in 1979. Despite the very real problems of the Nicaraguan economy and the shortcomings of the Sandinista leadership, the working people of Nicaragua are prepared to fight rather than face the reimposition by the contras of a US puppet dictatorship.

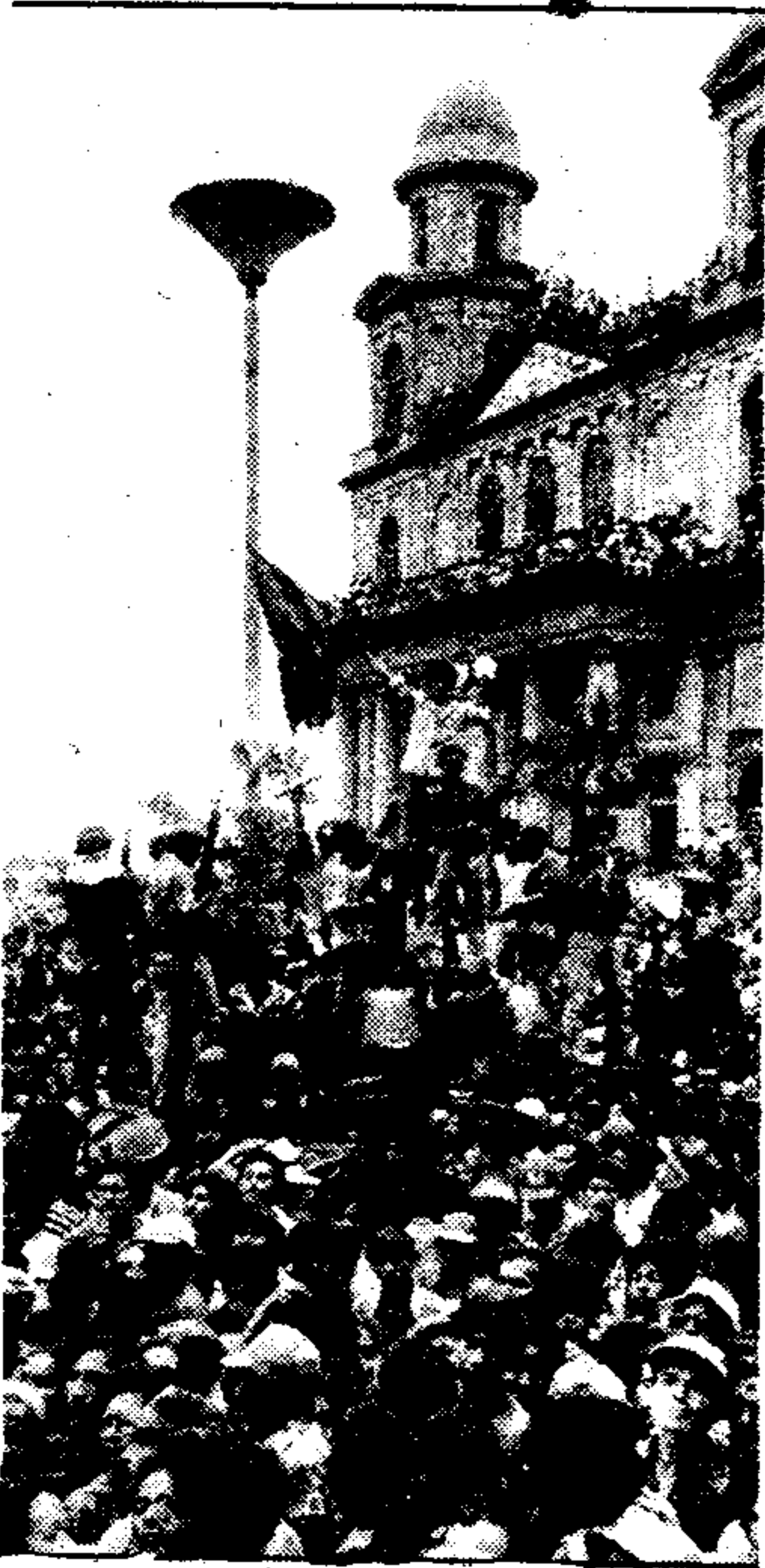
With the situation of the blockaded, sabotaged and pitifully weak Nicaraguan economy increasingly desperate, there is no doubt that if Reagan gets away with the invasion of Grenada, the pressures on the Sandinistas - and the dangers of a US-inspired Honduran invasion - will be substantially increased.

Great urgency

And - as the Grenadan experience shows - neither Cuba nor the USSR can be relied upon to provide military support if such an invasion takes place.

The international workers' movement must take up with great urgency the fight in defence of Nicaragua and Grenada.

US hands off Central America! Troops out of Grenada!



Scenes in Managua during the Nicaraguan revolution

Socialist ORGANISER



JOHN HARRIS

IT WAS the biggest political demonstration any of us have seen in Britain. Police estimates of 200,000-250,000 were plainly conservative.

So indeed were a fair number of the demonstrators. Ironical cheers greeted one group of "Tories Against Cruise and Trident" placards, while Christian and ecological contingents pulled out forces seldom if ever seen in political life.

Socialists, pacifists, liberals and not so liberals - all converged on bus and rail stations, bringing huge queues and bumper takings. The London tube system struggled to cope with unprecedented Saturday crowds.

They came from all over - and there were some rarely seen contingents. "Historians against the Bomb" complained about the threat to their livelihoods if world history is

ended by nuclear holocaust.

"Eighteenth century fops against the Bomb" seemed to have a less defined programme - but appeared at least as clear on the issue and the next step forward as many of the Hyde Park platform speakers.

Gestures

Indeed for many of the demonstrators, October 22

was a final gesture of resistance before what they saw as the inevitable deployment of Cruise missiles next month.

But that anti-war sentiment and hostility to nuclear barbarism need not be allowed to die away. A stubborn defence of unilateralism and a continuing fight for labour movement action is vital to prevent the momentum being lost.

See page 3

Grenada - from page 1

forces invade a Commonwealth country, pushing aside the objections of the British government.

That should see off what's left of the Falklands Factor in British politics.

The Caribbean states are bitterly divided about the invasion. Trinidad and Tobago is opposed to it and Forbes Burnham of Guyana has talked idly but significantly about sending Guyanese soldiers to defend the integrity of Grenada.

The disgusting hypocrisy and double standards in play when Reagan, for example, denounces the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan are now going to be visible to more people than at any time since the Vietnam war ended in 1975.

In Britain the main casualty of Reagan's invasion, apart from Thatcher's cheap Churchillian pretences that Britain is a great power, is the credibility of US guarantees that there will be joint US-British control of US missiles in Britain. Even Dennis Healey has asked what credence now be given to such guarantees. None at all.

We must raise a storm of opposition in Britain to the invasion and in support of the Labour Party's demand that the government should condemn the invasion, and around the demand for the withdrawal of the invading armies - West Indian as well as US - from Grenada.

Monthly Fund

£800 short!

TWO cheques from York supporters arrived just in time to more than treble our fund total this week: from £8 to £28.

Donations of £10 from Carolyn Lord, and £10 from Richard Bayley were added to a £5 donation from Birmingham, £2 from supporters in South East London, and £1 brought in by Simon Temple for extra paper sales.

So we close the October fund at £197.50: EIGHT HUNDRED POUNDS short of our target!!!

Our £1,000 target isn't just a round figure plucked out of the air, a nice sum to buy some luxuries. We rely on that £1,000 to buy vital supplies for our weekly socialist newspaper.

The need for a socialist newspaper can hardly ever have been more obvious; we're not just fighting the effects the working class will suffer from a re-elected Thatcher government in Britain - one look at our front page will show the extent of the forces we're fighting.

It's up to every comrade who supports us in that fight to dig into their pockets now. Bring your donations to the AGM, so we can start November with a healthy boost, ask everyone who buys a paper this week for an extra donation, and get your money in the post no later than Tuesday morning.

It's up to all comrades who support the fight for socialism to show their support with donations now. We can't win socialism with words alone.

Donations to 214 Sickert Court, Essex Road, London N1 2SY.

GROUP	August, Sept and October
Glasgow	20.50
Edinburgh	26.00
Liverpool	40.00
Manchester	141.00
Rochdale	33.00
Stockport	15.00
Wirral	20.75
Durham	11.85
Halifax	13.20
Harrrogate	14.50
Huddersfield	
Hull	38.00
Leeds	32.50
Leicester	15.75
Sheffield	45.70
York	30.00
Birmingham	71.00
Coventry	166.10
Northampton	10.00
Nottingham	53.90
Stoke	23.40
Basingstoke	1.50
Oxford	108.24
Cardiff	205.47
NW London	53.30
Hackney	
Haringey	58.00
Hounslow	34.75
Islington	88.50
SE London	50.60
E. London	48.50
Southwark	79.50
Others	483.94

Dayschool and AGM

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

