

workers' ACTION

No.135

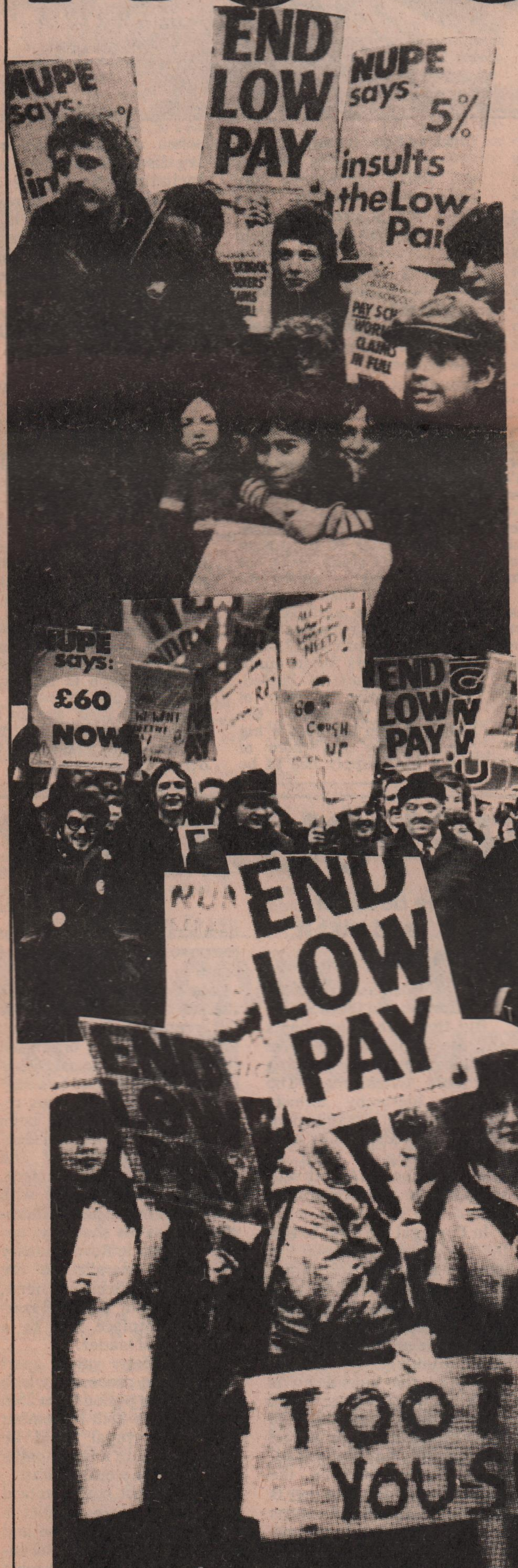
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10p

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NO SELL-OUT



THE LOW-PAID strikers are demanding £60 for a 35 hour week, a rise of about 40%. Yet the leaders of our unions — NUPE, CoHSE, GMWU, and TGWU — are talking in terms of a 9% pay deal to end the strike. And there has been no reported concession on hours.

To soften the sell-out, they are talking about 'comparability', an 'independent inquiry', and productivity deals. These are just swindles which at best will nudge up wages by a tiny amount in exchange for more work and loss of jobs.

NUPE leader Alan Fisher's get-out, announced on January 22nd, is that the present claim is only a target, not a figure we can really hope to achieve this time round. It is an insult to all the workers who have been fighting for the full claim here and now.

NUPE leaders have already advised ambulance crews to delay strike action and told Edinburgh dustmen to call off theirs. And NUPE is a model of militancy compared with the other unions involved.

Fortunately, the union leaders' instructions are being rejected by many members who really do take the full claim seriously.

That has to be the starting point for a fight to stop the sell-out.

In the last pay round, in 1977, Fisher accepted an offer way below the union's claim and got away with it. The decision to ratify the deal was made at area committee level, and the branches simply got a letter telling us what had been fixed.

This time the bureaucrats won't be able to do that. Too many people have come out who will demand a voice in the way the union settles. But although probably the executive will organise voting on the deal at branch and district branch committee level, they know full well how long it will take. They are hoping that by the time the members get any say, the action will have stopped, the members will have lost confidence, and a good few could well leave the union in disgust rather than stay and fight, they will feel so let down.

We need to keep action going and not be forced back until the members have voted. That would give confidence to stay in the fight rather than accept a fait accompli. We need to press for a special delegate conference on the low pay campaign and the offer, though it's the last thing the leaders would like to see.

We've got to do everything we can to keep the action going and keep alive both the high morale the sections on strike had and the anger that virtually every member feels about the sell-out. If there was a vote by the members NOW on the deal, and a real alternative to the leaders, we could win. We've got to try to make sure it can still be done in the next few weeks.

by TIM THORPE,
secretary, Nottingham NUPE Social Services branch.



Soldiers say: Sack all the generals

"The new government is a government of bazaar men, merchants, and capitalists, which does not measure up to the workers' ideals", said the banner on a demonstration by the left-wing Fedayeen guerillas on Thursday 15th. The 10,000-strong march in Tehran was right about that.

Khomeini's nominated prime minister, Mehdi Bazargan, ran a heating firm for years and was a stalwart of the bourgeois National Front, rather more conservative in his social ideas than most. His ministers are men of the same stripe, like National Front leader Karim Sandjabi — who not long ago favoured a constitutional monarchy.

The only difference between these men and the prime minister they replaced, Shapour Bakhtiar, is that they guessed better which way to jump.

The Bazargan government's first concern is to reconstruct the army. Many units, in Tehran at least, disintegrated after the armed uprising on 9th-11th February which brought down Bakhtiar and the remnants of the monarchy. Last week General Qarani, the new Commander-in-Chief, held a meeting of senior officers of what is now called the National Army. A few pro-Shah die-hards among the generals are being purged, but apart from that, 'return to normal' is the order of the day.

This army policy was one of the chief targets of the

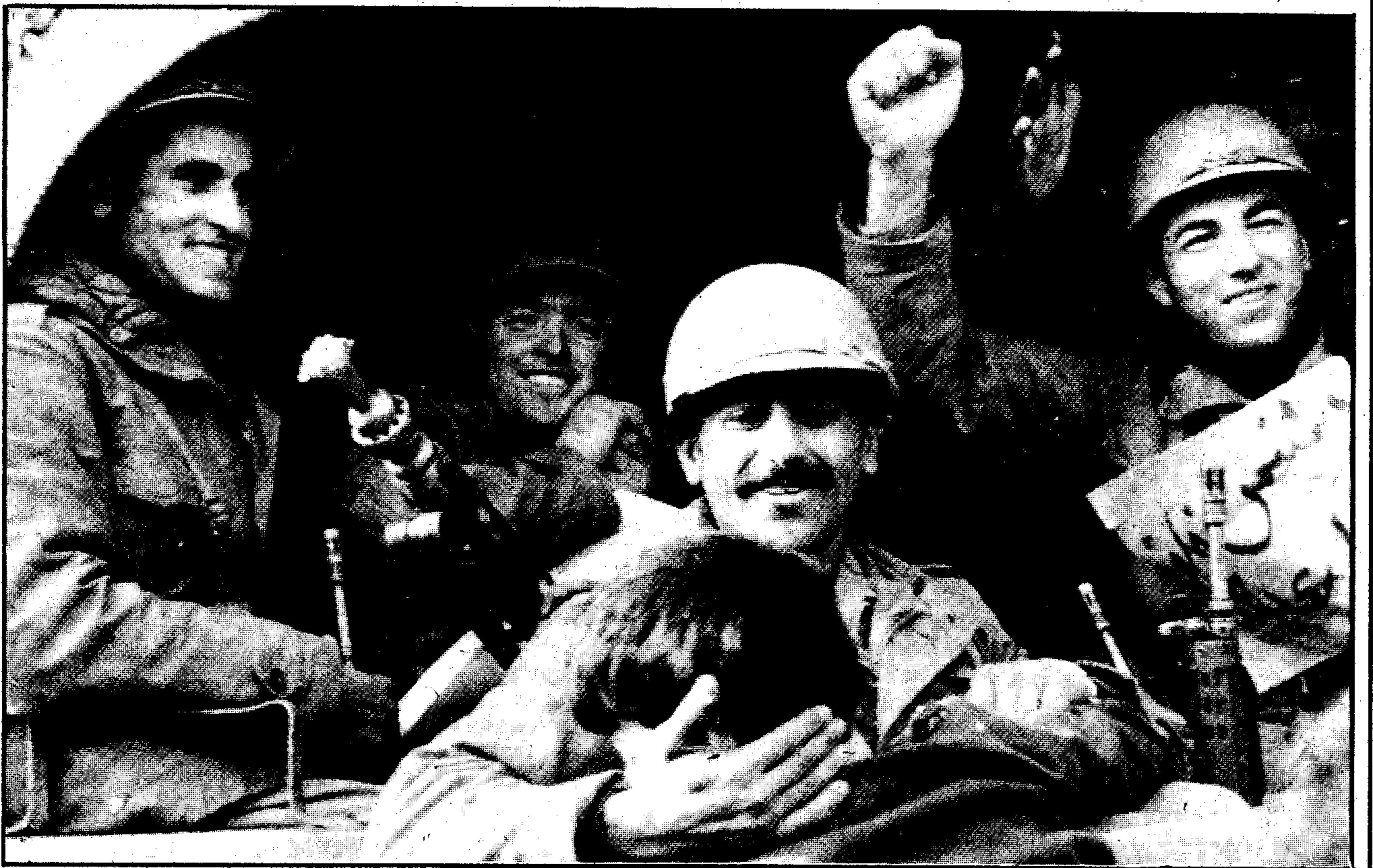
Fedayeen's protest. At a rally before the march, in the Tehran University football ground, they called for officers to be elected by committees of soldiers, guerillas and 'vanguard popular forces'.

Two army lieutenants told the correspondent of the Paris daily *Le Monde*: 'We are Muslims, but our democratic demands are not the same as the ayatollah's.' They attacked the 'new censorship' on the radio and TV, expressed their suspicion of generals who had suddenly switched over to the people's side, and complained that 'we don't know what compromises have been fixed up between the military chiefs and the mullahs'. Their demand: sack all the generals.

The left wing demands seem to be getting through to the army ranks. The air force technicians (whose clash with the Imperial Guard started the uprising of 9th-11th February) had their old commander arrested, then pushed out his successor, and are now clamouring for the removal of the third nominee.

Hand in hand with the policy of restabilising the army goes the efforts of Khomeini and Bazargan to disarm the street militants, or at least to concentrate the arms in the hands of the more compliant Islamic guerillas. But the Fedayeen still have their guns, and so do thousands of others.

The Bazargan government faces other conflicts. When a



lieutenant of Khomeini's was nominated as director of the television service, the workers staged a protest strike. They didn't want censorship, they didn't want new bosses imposed on them and they didn't want their strike committee deprived of control over the running of the service.

Latest press reports are that Khomeini's call for the strikes to end on Saturday

17th has been widely followed. This does not necessarily mean that Khomeini has the workers' movement under control. There have been five months of continual strikes to bring down the Shah's regime. Now that the regime has gone, and no left-wing force is yet strong enough to present a direct challenge to Khomeini, it is natural that the movement should subside slightly, to regroup, re-

think and reorientate.

The key issue is whether the strike committees stay organised, whether they fight for workers' control, and whether they link up with each other and with the left-wing revolutionaries in the universities and in the streets.

The Bazargan government has promised elections for a constituent assembly, though it hasn't yet said

when and how; and it has legalised all political parties, including left-wing ones. The coming struggle will revolve around the efforts of the working class to take the lead in the struggle for democracy, against Khomeini's and Bazargan's attempts to halt the revolution, and for the organisation of workers' power.

KEITH JAMES

Peasants begin to seize the land

UNDER the Shah, every grievance and discontent was suppressed, and thus channelled into growing resentment of the dictatorship. Now the Shah's regime has gone, each class will begin to define its own social demands.

About a third of Iran's workforce is employed in agriculture. The Shah's land reform in the early 1960s — the 'White Revolution' — was supposed to give 'land to the tiller'. But less than half the rural population got anything at all from the reform — and most of them got patches too small to be viable.

About half of Iran's peasants are still landless: agri-

cultural wage-labourers, sharecroppers, or unemployed. They are even more thoroughly excluded from Iran's oil riches than the urban workers. Tehran, with a fifth of the country's population, accounts for twice as much consumer spending as all of rural Iran (with nearly half the country's population).

Land seizures by the peasants have already been reported, especially from the north of the country. Those who already possess small land plots have their demands, too. Chief among the peasants' grievances are shortage of credit, and the fact that the state has forced them into cooperatives

dominated by richer peasants and state officials.

State credit to cooperatives, has been meagre, and even more so to independent peasants — allowing private money lenders to take rich pickings. The one sector of agriculture where lavish state credit has been available — mostly for the sake of the Shah's prestige — is large-scale 'agribusiness'.

These 'agribusinesses' have not been very successful, even for their owners (often multinational corporations). Indeed, from the point of view of agricultural production, the Shah's reform has been a big failure. More and more of Iran's food supply has to be

made up by imports.

In another way, too, the Shah's policy was a failure. The political aspect was an important part of the White Revolution. As Fred Halliday puts it in his recent book on Iran, 'In all villages in Iran, whether incorporated into farm corporations or not, the state has replaced the landowner as the dominant power'.

Now that elaborate network of state control has broken down, Khomeini and Bazargan will soon have to face up to the peasants' demands for 'land to the tiller' and for low-interest credit... and perhaps also moves by peasants to take over Mosque-owned land.

CAN KHOMEINY HALT THE REVOLUTION?

OF ALL capitalist regimes, democracy gives the best conditions for socialists to develop the class struggle; and it is also the most resilient regime in containing, deflecting and absorbing the impact of the class struggle, principally through the medium of reformist labour bureaucracies.

For dictatorships the opposite holds: they are rigid, but brittle.

The usual history of 20th century capitalist dictatorships, then, is that they beat down all opposition until finally their power hollows out to a shell — then they collapse at the first assault of revolution.

Iran has been different. A monarchy which obviously still had strong and solid bases of support has been beaten down and finally smashed by a whole year of mass confrontations.

The contrast is clear with the other great revolutionary struggle of recent years, Portugal 1974-75. The foundations of the Portuguese dictatorship had been rooted away by Portugal's economic decline and its losing war in

Analysing the development of Iran's revolution and comparing it with the revolution in Portugal, RHODRI EVANS

the African colonies. With the Armed Forces Movement coup on 25th April 1974, the previously formidable Salazar/Caetano regime broke like a dry stick.

For a year after the coup — until May 1975, when the Socialist Party and the right wing began to organise around the *Republica* affair — victories for the revolution came quickly, easily and apparently unstopably. Iran shows just the opposite pattern. From January 1978 to January 1979, the victories were few and won at enormous cost.

There are two reasons for the difference. The Iranian monarchy had not gone through a long period of decay, turning it more and more into a dried-up crust imposed on society. It was developing Iranian society, in its own way, energetically and rapidly. The revolution was provoked not by the monarchy's decay but by the tremendous shake-up taking place in Iran as a result of the 'oil boom' after 1973 —

followed by sudden economic slowdown.

The Iranian revolution has also been like a war against foreign intervention — without a large-scale foreign presence. For the huge Iranian army, the pillar of the Shah's authority, was hardly Iran's army. It was imperialism's army, built up and armed by the US and Britain, for policing the whole Gulf region.

It gave the monarchy a strength out of all proportion to its real support in Iranian society.

During the first year of revolution in Portugal the workers organised, discussed politics, and defined their socialist aims. The pro-capitalist forces organised too, of course: through the openly bourgeois parties, the CDS and PPD, and also through the social-democratic Socialist Party that was hastily cobbled together and boosted to fill a necessary gap for the bourgeoisie.

In Iran the pro-capitalist forces have been able to

concludes a clash is inevitable between Khomeiny and the workers... and that it will come sooner rather than later.

organise much more extensively than the workers, who until now could only organise illegally, underground.

For a year, the movement threw itself again and again at the dictatorship. All differences of ultimate political aim were submerged in the common cause against the Shah. Thus the movement was able to reach tremendously militant peaks — near general strike for four months, people's militias in some areas, towns being taken over by their population — while still remaining, more or less, behind the banner of outdated, largely irrelevant, and partly reactionary religious fundamentalism.

Iran's tomorrow was able to appear in the guise of Iran's yesterday.

The Iranian workers have been organising — how extensively, and with what degree of political independence, it is not possible to know from Britain. Their cause has been strengthened by the return of hund-

reds of socialist students from Europe and the USA.

But the bazaar merchants and the National Front have doubtless been organising far more extensively. The Muslim hierarchy already had a strong organisation. Behind the scenes, they have been working to build up links with the USA and with sympathetic officers in the army.

In Portugal the fight to halt the revolution, begun in earnest in May 1975, didn't go onto the offensive until six months later. Even after that, the 'social 25th November' has been a long process, still continuing.

In Iran the showdown is likely to be far more rapid and drastic. Instead of building up during a period of apparently harmonious advance of the revolution, the workers' socialist militancy is likely to explode abruptly. The pro-capitalist forces are already intent on their task of halting the revolution. And there is little basis for them to use bourgeois-

democratic forms for that purpose for any length of time.

The Communist Party is on the sidelines (in Portugal the CP commanded a disciplined and, very well organised following) and Social Democracy is nowhere to be seen.

One safety valve does remain. Khomeini has been careful to put a certain distance between himself and the Bazargan government. Bazargan has differed with Khomeini in the past; Khomeini retains his shadowy, unnamed Islamic Revolutionary Council in parallel to the Government. In case of need, Khomeini can dump Bazargan and replace him by a more radical leader.

That safety valve apart many of the processes which spanned the period from 25th April 1974 to 25th November 1975 in Portugal could be condensed into a few months or even a few weeks in Iran.

With almost mathematical certainty we can predict a clash between Khomeini and the workers. British socialists must be ready to give every support we can to the Iranian workers.

French steelworkers show 'anger of the masses'

'VIOLENCE IS the only way', said a right-wing union leader. Another trade union bureaucrat declared: 'This is no marginal violence. This is anger stemming from the masses'.

A storm of militancy continues to rage against the French government's plans to cut 22,000 jobs in steel, and the union leaders are doing their best to keep ahead of it.

On 16th February there was a one-day general strike in the steel industry. In the main steel-making areas, the North and Lorraine (eastern France) many other workers supported the strike call: dockers, miners and car workers, chemical workers, teachers... The Lille Philharmonic Orchestra joined the strike. Shops and town-halls closed down in solidarity. In the Lorraine steel town of Longwy, police went round before the 16th telling shopkeepers that it would be 'risky' not to shut down in solidarity.

The strike was backed up by demonstrations and dozens of militant actions.

Most of the main roads in the steel-making regions were blocked by strikers. In Longwy trade unionists hijacked lorries and made the drivers

park them in front of supermarket entrances, so that the supermarkets had to shut down.

Employment exchanges and offices of the bosses' federation were occupied by trade unionists. In one town, demonstrators attacked the local police station, smashing its windows. A delegation went over the border and occupied the French embassy in Luxembourg.

Anger at the sackings is running so high that there is little talk about 'the unions wrecking the country' in response to this militancy. Gaullist councillors joined the demonstrations in some areas, and the Gaullists have had much the same as the Communist Party to say about the run-down in steel: they say it is all the fault of the Common Market, and especially of West Germany.

The UDF, the political alliance to which president Giscard d'Estaing and prime minister Raymond Barre belong, has called for a wealth tax in order to provide a fund to help those affected by unemployment. 'We need an effort of national solidarity'

they say. 'It will mean some sacrifices for the privileged classes. Our task is to explain to them that they should have the courage to accept a more fraternal shaping of the sacrifices'.

But Barre is quite inflexible about the sackings. And from the trade union side, the grand conclusion from the day of action on the 16th is a round of negotiations with the government on the 23rd.

The CGT, the trade union federation dominated by the Communist Party, repeats the CP's anti-German line. And the CGT and the other main union federation, the Socialist-inclined CFDT, are squabbling over tactics: the CGT wants a big march on Paris, the CFDT says a wide range of local actions would be better.

What the workers need is a leadership which can organise their militancy, not just for more gestures but for a serious all-out fight for work-sharing with no loss of pay. And they need to link up with British and West German steelworkers who face exactly the same problems.

RHODRI EVANS

IRAQ - a new wave of repression and torture

AN APPEAL sent to the United Nations last week by the Movement of Iraqi Democrats accuses the Iraqi regime of 'repression and torture'. According to the appeal, not only Kurdish nationalists and oppositionists, but anyone refusing to join the ruling Ba'ath party, faces this repression.

'Arrests, mass killings and pogroms in which Assyrians, Armenians and Turks are attacked so as to provoke their flight from Iraq - all these are daily facts... Under a pretext of closing the Iraqi-Iranian border, the authorities have sent 30,000 troops to the north of the country to scour the area and eliminate all traces of Kurdish nationalism...'

Other reports confirm this picture. The Morning Star has given details of the large number of Iraqi Communist Party members who have been tortured and jailed... by the same Ba'ath Party which they supported in 1958 and again in 1973.

Behind these events lie two

recent developments, themselves interconnected. Firstly, Iraq and Syria have made a series of treaties and agreements that aim at creating a confederation. They have agreed to merge their foreign, defence and information ministries with a view to creating a single state, headed by Syria's President Assad, and a single Ba'ath Party, to be led by the leader of the Iraqi Ba'ath.

The claimed ideological unity of the two Ba'ath parties - both petty bourgeois nationalist parties founded in the late '40s - counts for less in this than the instability of the Iraqi and Syrian regimes and their attempt to create a counterweight to Egypt in the Middle East.

Secondly, there is the upheaval in Iran. This could give the Kurdish national movement a base of operations - and from the late '50s onwards, Iraq has been the central area of Kurdish national struggle.

The Kurds are one of many

national minorities within the Middle East - Assyrians, Armenians, and Turks are others - and easily the largest of those minorities. Areas where Kurds are in the majority cover eastern Turkey, northern Iraq, western Iran, and corners of Syria and the USSR. Iraq's richest oil-fields are in Kurdish areas.

Since early 1975 the Kurdish struggle in Iraq has been at a low ebb, but it has revived a lot recently.

The increased repression in Iraq and Syria and the drawing together of these two states is meant to form a bulwark of Arab nationalism. It is meant as a counterweight to the strengthened front of imperialism in the area, and a block to radical movements. Although both states have close ties with the USSR, they probably hope through a merger or confederation to achieve a greater amount of independence from their present ally and trade partner.

JAMES DAVIES

PERU GIVES THE CHARIOT OF WAR ANOTHER PUSH

THE PERUVIAN government has opted out of the international designation of 1979 as 'Year of the Child' in favour of its own 'Year of the Heroes of the War of the Pacific'. Its celebrations so far include the expulsion of three Chilean 'spies' from the country, the shooting of a 'traitorous' air force sergeant accused of leaking information to Chile, and a declaration that the Chilean Ambassador is persona non grata.

The Pacific War was fought a hundred years ago. Financed by British, German and US capital, Chile, Bolivia and Peru fought over the nitrate-rich desert territory between Copiapo and Arica. Chile won, briefly occupying the Peruvian capital of Lima and annexing the desired territory.

The centennial war noises would seem to have two purposes. First, Peru hopes for some kind of military alliance

with the Videla dictatorship in Argentina, which is currently in dispute with Chile over the ownership of three islands in the Beagle Channel off the coast of Tierra del Fuego. These islands are rich in both oil and fish.

Second, as the Peruvian Trotskyist leader Hugo Blanco commented, 'This is an attempt by the governments involved to gain support from their people'. He continued: 'We cannot support this conspiracy in any way... It is quite clear that the war propaganda, the war itself if it comes to it, will be used to repress the masses and their organisations, who will be called traitors.'

This is especially so in Peru, where the working class has staged two general strikes in the past two years and given the revolutionary left forces of FOCEP 16% of the vote on a

restricted franchise (illiterates were excluded from voting). Clearly the rulers of Peru hope to chain the labour movement to the war chariot and also impose military law on the organisations of the working masses.

But war can only postpone the crisis for the ruling classes and their US masters, making things far worse for them in the long term. A military setback for either Videla or Chile's Pinochet would provide an opening for the repressed masses in those countries. For Peru, war can only serve to speed up the process of decay for a capitalist class facing a militant and undefeated working class.

For there to be talk of war at all indicates that all the three ruling classes involved are facing a political and social impasse and reaching desperately for one last card.

BAS HARDY

Devolution: a nationalist blind alley

Scotland: TRYING TO BEAT THE S.N.P AT THEIR OWN GAME

THE referendum on whether or not to set up a Scottish Assembly takes place on March 1st, with the Labour Government firmly behind the 'Vote Yes' camp - it has even made the establishment of the Assembly a plank of its 'Concordat' with the TUC leaders.

The Labour Party in Scotland has been converted to a 'Yes' vote on the grounds that an Assembly will mean 'more democracy' for the Scottish people. In the abstract this is so: it is of course better to have the activities of the Secretary of State for Scotland supervised by an elected parliament than by the Scottish Office with occasional report-backs to the House of Commons.

Problems

But that is not what this referendum is about, and the 'Yes' camp knows it. To win support for the Assembly they have to promise more than a minor democratic reform of administrative procedures. They have to persuade people that the Assembly will begin to answer the real problems that face the Scottish working class: low wages, high unemployment (especially in the run-down West Coast area around Glasgow) and bad housing.

This idea of the Assembly is potentially more important than the institution itself: and as such it is a dangerous diversion for the Scottish working class and labour movement: an illusory

alternative to the real and necessary fightback which is a class-wide and not a regional one.

The lorry drivers did more in a few weeks to fight low pay than the Scottish Assembly ever will. And the strike could do that partly because Scottish, English and Welsh workers were united - with, in this case, Scottish workers in the lead. If Scottish workers start looking for Scottish solutions and Welsh workers for Welsh solutions, that unity would be broken up.

Devolution looks like a new political answer. In reality it's just the old answer (cast your vote and hope the parliamentary politicians keep some of their promises) in a tartan get-up.

And it can block genuinely new political answers - socialist ones - by giving the Nationalists more stamping ground.

The Labour leaders want devolution to do the opposite - to take the wind out of the sails of the SNP. But it is far more likely that devolution will be a victory for the SNP, allowing them to grow. The real problem is that the Labour leaders can't give political answers to the social discontent on which the SNP feeds.

It is because the setting up of an Assembly is a sordid attempt to beat the Nationalists at their own game that a 'Yes' vote will mean a political defeat for socialists in Scotland. Socialists should vote 'No', against Scottish nationalism and for working-class unity across the border.

Far from being an oppressed nation, Scotland has shared in Britain's imperial-

ist plunder of Asia and Africa all along the line. Scottish nationalism is just as reactionary as British nationalism is: there can be no combining of socialist ideas with the ideas of the SNP.

Equally, socialists have nothing in common with the majority of the 'No' campaign - the Tory Party, the Scottish CBI, and sections of the Labour Party, especially those around the *Tribune* group. They are not fighting against the Assembly to counter nationalist influence or division of the working class - they are fighting for British nationalism, opposing the Assembly as a step toward the breaking up of the 'unity of the UK'.

Class

None of the Tribunes who are against the Assembly have made the slightest attempt to argue their case on a class basis. And some of them have shown themselves quite happy to trample on the basic democratic rights of the Scottish people by passing a rule in Parliament which says that a majority for devolution won't count unless it includes 40% of the total electorate - voting and non-voting.

There are hints that the Government may legislate for the Assembly if there is any majority for it, regardless of this 40% rule. And in this, for once, the Government will be right - even if it is motivated by pure electoral opportunism.

GORDON BREWER
Edinburgh

Wales: SELLING A NEW WONDER DRUG



IT'S THE latest product and it's being sold as a new wonder cure-all for Welsh and Scottish aches and pains. There seems to be no end to the magical properties of devolved government.

The 'Devolution Special' issued by the T&GWU Wales region, for example, lists at least a dozen reasons for voting 'Yes' on March 1st.

But it all boils down to just two arguments.

The first is quite reasonable-looking. 'An assembly will bring decisions closer to the people'. It will extend democracy to the decisions made by civil servants and nominated bodies packed with Tories.

In fact, the nominated bodies will stay and the Assembly will only get to nominate some of the members. The top civil servants will retain their grip. The Assembly won't even have control over the size of its budget.

'But', the argument goes, 'this would only be the first step to getting democratic control'.

It's strange that people who can muster the fight for

such minimal democratic reforms as scrapping the House of Lords and the monarchy suddenly become so enthusiastic about democracy! In fact (if we take the nationalist case to its conclusion) there is no reason to suppose a Welsh state would be any less bureaucratic than the British one. Local government in South Wales has already been shown up by a long series of corruption trials.

We get to the heart of the matter with the second main argument. The Assembly would be able to assert the particular needs of Wales, over and above the English regions.

Some 'Yes' campaigners try to make this argument look less swinish by arguing that Wales is a historically oppressed nation, which needs its own Assembly to hoist itself up to a position of equality.

The fact is that Wales is not and never has been an oppressed nation, nor even a separate nation. It has been part of a single economic and political system with Eng-

land since the Act of Union of 1536. Along with the English regions, Wales shared in the proceeds of the British Empire. Along with the English regions, Wales has suffered unemployment and depopulation as British imperialism declines.

Welsh nationalism has been cashing in on this decline only because the labour movement has failed to fight for a socialist alternative. For most workers, and most Labour Party members, devolution is a huge irrelevancy.

It should be firmly opposed with a big 'No' vote.

Whatever the benefits of this 'democratic reform', and they are precious few, they will be completely outweighed by divisions opened up in the labour movement. The problems of Wales can only be solved by a working class that looks outward to international workers' unity. Devolution can only strengthen the Nationalists and turn a section of the working class in Britain in on itself.

MARTIN BARCLAY
Cardiff

Labour Party activists launched the strike support committee in Haringey, with the backing of this statement from Norman Atkinson, MP for Tottenham, and Ted Knight and Reg Race, the Labour candidates for the borough's other two constituencies, Hornsey and Wood Green.

'Unite to finish off wage curbs'

THE CURRENT industrial disputes involving the low paid workers in our public services have to be seen in their national context.

In 1974 the Labour Government was elected on a policy of a fundamental redistribution of wealth and power in favour of working people and their families.

A year later, faced with mounting economic difficulties, the Government yielded to enormous pressure from big business, international finance, the civil service and the press, and persuaded the TUC (and) the Labour Movement to accept a policy of wage restraint.

The Labour Party, the TUC

and most Trade Unions have now rejected this approach to our economic problems and at Conference last year resolutions were passed calling for an end to wage controls and a return to free collective bargaining.

In the face of this opposition the Government has tried to impose its 5% policy without the general agreement of the labour movement. But because it has no powers over private industry its efforts are mainly directed against workers in the public sector, many of whom are among the lowest paid in the country.

The struggle that these workers are now engaged in is a just fight for a living

wage. It must also be recognised as a fight against wages policy in general.

The Haringey Labour Parties support their demands for a fair deal. We also support the labour movement's call for an end to wage restraint.

We believe that the only solution to Britain's economic difficulties lies in a strong Labour Government pursuing the policies on which it was elected in 1974 and implementing the manifesto.

We also believe that it is vital to answer the attacks that are now being made both on the strikers themselves and on the entire Trade Union movement, by the press and by our tradit-

ional oppon-

Party. We therefore support a movement to put the case for the low paid and for an end of wage restraint.

We invite the parties, their Trades Councils, the borough, and local strike organisations, to send delegates on February 1 to the organisational campaign on the

We ask your suggestion in organisations, mobilise the support for our

Why local deals aren't the answer

WITH A national sell-out looming, council workers in some areas are looking for local deals. In Haringey the strike committee is pressing the Labour Council, which has declared it supports the strikers' claim, to pay up on a local basis. And in Camden the controlling Labour group has passed a motion backing the £60/35 hours claim and instructing the council leadership to open negotiations locally.

The Camden motion also insisted that the reduction in hours should mean more jobs, not more overtime. If this were done throughout London, it would mean 6,000 new jobs.

As Ken Livingstone, one of the councillors who passed the resolution calling for payment of the full claim, told WA: "What the right wing have done is convert a demand for a 40% wage rise into little more than a guaranteed week agreement".

This is particularly mean as Camden is a very rich borough in terms of rateable value of commercial property.

NUPE welcomed the Camden Labour group resolution, while saying that NUPE still wanted a national settlement rather than local deals.

The resolution was radical. But the right wing council leadership is twisting it out of all recognition. In negotiations they have said that the national settlement — whatever that turns out to be — will be incorporated into the basic rate; the 35 hour week will be brought in; and workers will receive a special low pay supplement to bring them up to £60.

This last clause is a rotten trick. With bonus payments, most public service manual workers in the borough already get over £60.

SUPPORT

The question of local deals is complicated, but some things are clear. If workers fight for a local claim, we support them without any question. But we argue for national claims and national settlements. In the longer term, a system of local deals always tends to spell disunity and low pay. And right now we advise against any action that might divert struggle away from the national claim.

The national negotiations might well produce an agreement acceptable to

the union leaders tomorrow, but the struggle would then continue, to reject any inadequate deal and keep up the fight for a better one. The decision to go for a local deal before a national settlement has been agreed by the rank and file weakens the national struggle.

There is also the question of the rates. Originally the government said that it would cover the cost of a 5% increase, adding that if any council went over that limit it would be punished by having its rate support grant reduced by however much it paid over the odds. Now the government says it will cover something up to 9%, though perhaps not completely.

RATES

When the Haringey Labour group called on the Government to pay the full claim, it meant exactly that: the Government should cover the whole cost. If the Council had to pay the full claim itself, it would inevitably mean rate rises.

In Haringey, with few big commercial and industrial owners, a rent or rate rise would fall directly on the working class.

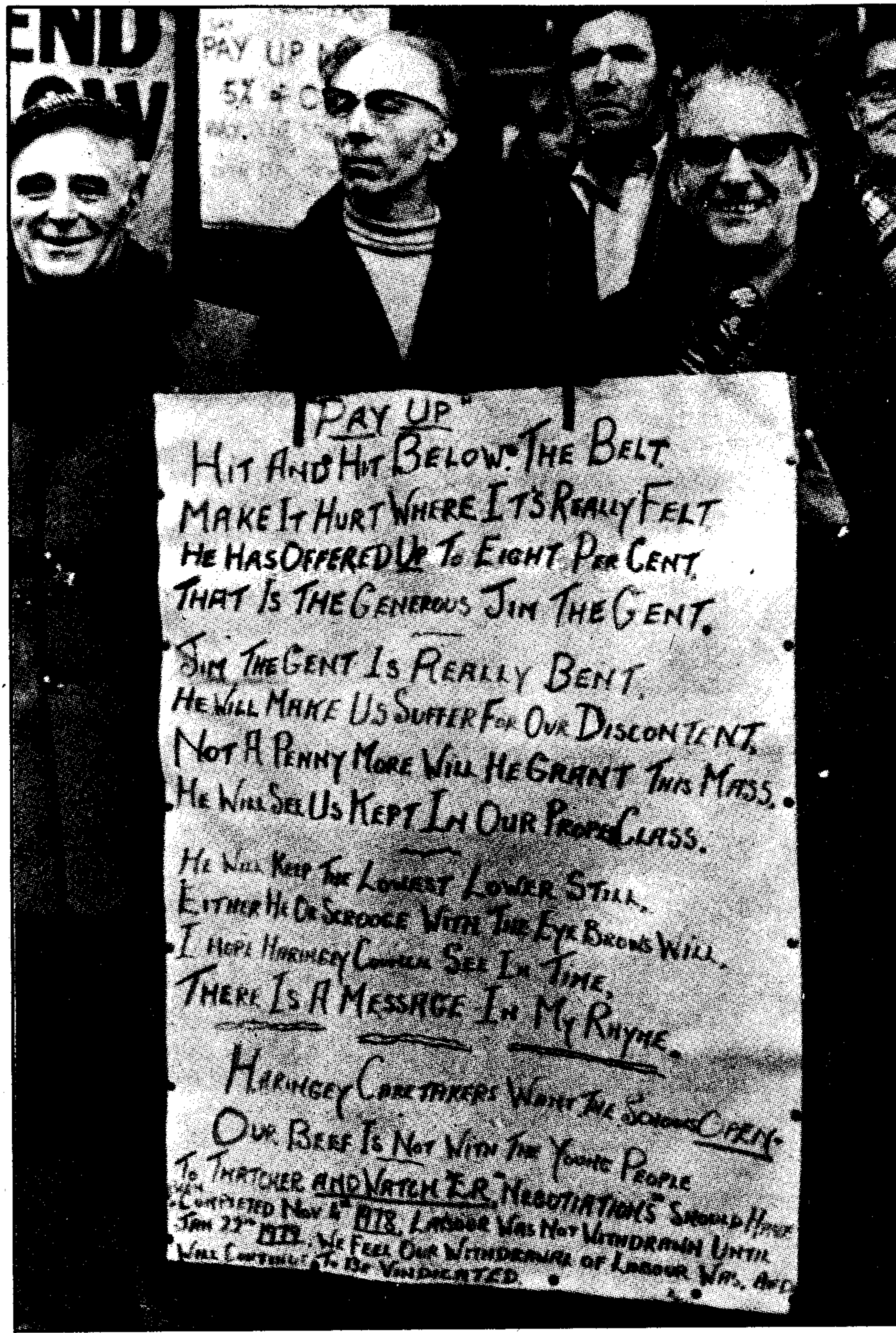
Of course, the strikers are right in arguing that rents and rates should not be subsidised by their poverty. On the other hand, a wage rise that comes from levying workers rather than the bosses is a miserable step forward.

The answer in principle is simple: councils should find the money by defaulting on the interest payments which can siphon off up to a third of their budgets. But to carry through this radical defiance of capitalism successfully will need a tremendous fight... more of a fight than is likely in the aftermath of a national strike sell-out, even with the best will possible from the local council.

This dilemma — which in our view makes local deals a bad tactic, though we unconditionally support workers fighting for them and councils granting them — finds its root cause in the lack of fight of the labour movement's leadership, and their failure to link up the struggles against low pay and the cuts into a concerted assault on capitalism. We must step up the struggle for a new leadership.

RAY SAUNDERS

Haringey: organ back the low-pa



Striking Haringey school caretakers with members of the 'Parents for the Caretakers' support group.

A SUPPORT committee for the low-pay strike was set up in Haringey, North London, at a meeting on Saturday 17th. Workers Action talked to Michael O'Sullivan, chairman of Tottenham Labour Party Young Socialists and Secretary of the committee.

ON MONDAY we leafleted the major GLC supplies depot at Ferry Lane, Tottenham, with about 15 supporters of the committee. We got an excellent response from the workers, especially the drivers, who have been banning overtime in support of the claim. It's just a pity we didn't do it in the first week of the dispute; we might have been able to close down the depot.

On Tuesday, about 20 members of the support committee, together with some of the strikers, picketed one of the local papers, the *Hornsey Journal*, which has been raising an outcry against 'union power'. We handed in letters to the NUJ Mother of Chapel and to the Assistant Editor (who wrote one of the worst articles).

A delegation from the strike committee and the support committee insisted on and were granted an interview with the Assistant Editor. He was persuaded to grant our demand that this week's paper carry a statement prepared by the support committee.

We are also sending out a letter to trade union branches asking for moral and financial support for the strike. There is a social this Friday to raise money for the strike fund, and we are producing a leaflet for general distribution explaining the strikers' case.

In our view speed is vital in countering the Government and media campaign against the strikers.

How did support comm

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Why Haringey workers want a local deal

PETER SPENCER, NUPE education branch secretary and chairman of the strike committee in Haringey, explains why Haringey local authority manual workers are now going for a local settlement.

TO START with, no-one should say that in Haringey we've been fighting for a local settlement rather than a national one.

We've been out since the day of action on January 22nd for a national settlement. We've played our part. We're not leaving the members who live out in the sticks to look after themselves. Our struggle will have helped them get a national settlement over what the Government was offering at first.

I used to work outside London myself. I was caretaker at a school in Buckinghamshire and we did a lot to build up the union there and fight the cuts the council was planning. When I went to that school again recently, I found it hadn't even come out on the day of action. Still,

everyone will the national and we will ha for it. No-on out in the cold for everyone.

But we're something ov now. Obviou problem of m borough that high rates. Th is this: the co it supports ou government l the full claim viously isn't g if there's a se next couple of had agreed to

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Ted Knight (PPC Hornsey) and Norman Atkinson MP [right] backed call for a support committee in Haringey.

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of the people who took part came from the Labour Party. The Trades Council also agreed to organise a march to support an 'End Low Pay' rally on the 15th organised by the Labour Party and NUPE.

At a 'Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory' meeting on Thursday 8th, the idea of a support committee was put forward. The meeting was enthusiastic. We soon got the backing of leading activists in the three local constituency Labour Parties.

The next step was to get a statement in favour of the support committee from Norman Atkinson (Labour MP for Tottenham) and the two other local Prospective Parliamentary Candidates, Ted Knight (Hornsey), and Reg Race (Wood Green), who is a NUPE official.

They launched the appeal for the committee at the

Why was that?

It's partly due to the routine-ism of the labour movement. There was a lot of strike support activity going on earlier — what I've already mentioned, plus the Haringey 'Parents for the Caretakers' — but people felt that coordination was really the business of the Trades Council... which was doing very little.

How did the inaugural meeting of the support committee go?

There were about 50 people there, with the NUR, the POEU, ACTSS, and the Co-Op represented as well as the NUT and the three constituency Labour Parties.

The argument centred around the question of national and local settlements. The support committee favours a national settlement, and the strike committee, who are now going for a local settlement, were worried that the support committee could be a 'left cover' for the Labour Council's opposition to a local settlement.

We made it clear that we supported the strikers unconditionally, whatever their tactics on local settlements and national settlements. The support committee is backing the strikers' lobby of the council's Labour group on Thursday 22nd.

The other objections was raised by Harry Lister, secretary of the Trades Council and a Communist Party member, who said that the dispute was a trade union issue and the Trades Council, as the trade union wing of the movement, should look after it. We replied that we wanted a broad campaign, based on the unions, but drawing in the widest possible support in the working class community in Haringey.

as we see it, the local council would have had to pay a fair proportion of this. That proportion wouldn't just have been the amount of a 5% pay rise.

If they really support our claim being settled in full nationally, then they must be ready to pay us what they would have had to pay us had the £60 figure been reached nationally. We're just asking them to put their money where their mouth is.

Obviously, we don't want higher rates in Haringey. But the argument that we shouldn't ask working class ratepayers to fund our pay

claim cuts two ways. After all, why should the residents of Haringey have good public services at our expense. It doesn't make sense for the low-paid to be subsidising local rates.

We're happy to get support whoever it's from, but we want those who support us to come out clearly and say that they will support us if we go in for a local deal over and above the national one. It's no good if Labour Party people in the Support Committee duck out of backing us as soon as we ask the local council to

STRIKE ROUND-UP

'Another leaflet, and we'll sack you' Cornish ambulancemen offered speed-up scheme

TWO MILITANT workers at St Thomas's Hospital, South London, have been warned by management that leafletting on the premises during working hours is a 'sackable offence'.

This follows a leaflet given out before recent CoHSE and NUPE branch meetings which argued for lightning strikes in support of the £60 and 35 hours claim.

The stewards of both unions argued for keeping action at a token minimum in return for a statement by the Area Health Authority earlier in the week supporting the unions' claim. There has been no action at all in St Thomas's apart from the strike on January 22nd.

The leaflet argued: 'No victory can be won by a cosy chat with management. The only way to win the full £60 for 35 hours is by strike action throughout the Health Service. "Strike action won the lorry drivers' claim. Strike action won the Ford workers' claim. Strike action is the only way to win our claim".'

At the CoHSE meeting last Thursday, 15th, rattled stewards attacked the leaflet, and were evidently relieved when their recommendation was passed, with a majority of one vote!

By Tuesday 19th, the stewards in NUPE, who had adopted the same attitude, were better prepared. They stayed off action with phrases like: "You young lads don't know what it's like to be on strike. This time we only had to lose one day's pay..."

AMBULANCEMEN in Cornwall have stopped covering all but emergencies and a few other exceptions. They are to vote this week on a bonus scheme hastily thrown together by the Health Authority's Organisation & Methods (O & M) Department which claims to offer a rise of more than 8% — about £1.50 a week.

The amazing thing about this bonus scheme is the extra jobs that go with it: ambulancemen will be expected to sweep the station floors daily, polish them once a week, clean the station windows and cooker weekly, keep the flower beds tidy, and suchlike.

At the same time there are bonuses for getting patients to the hospital quicker! Imagine: 'No time for a cup of tea, Mrs. Jones. Get in quick or we'll lose our bonus' To the O&M people, patients

have just become units and numbers.

What makes this miserable bonus scheme even less popular is that the O&M people have already spent £30,000 on a works study which has not yet been implemented. Money is apparently no object in some areas. And the new conference room for the Health Authority in Truro is reported to have cost over £10,000 — to include crystal chandeliers and the lot. And ambulancemen are expected to clean windows and hoe round flower beds to get a miserable increase in their wages.

Meanwhile in Liskeard one GP refused to treat a patient, an ambulanceman, telling him to come back 'when he was an emergency'. But this sort of thing just stiffens the resolve to stick out for a decent wage.

Some ambulancemen have

been arguing that they should be compared to other emergency services like firemen and the police, who have higher pay and fringe benefits. They feel that if they had their own union like the FBU they would get better treatment, whereas lumped together with other hospital workers they're doomed to low pay.

But the firemen made what gains they did through militant action, not through having a separate union. And they failed to break the 10% limit because they lacked active support — partly through being a separate union.

A separate union for ambulancemen would just split up the workers' struggle further, and help to perpetuate low pay. The answer has to be getting a new leadership in NUPE and Cohse which will effectively fight for ambulancemen and for all public service workers.

Short reports

SHARP PRACTICE IN CARDIFF

JIM CALLAGHAN was embarrassed at the annual meeting of his own Constituency Labour Party last Friday when he was greeted by a picket by NUPE and GMWU members. They were urging the Cardiff South East Labour Party to support their claim.

Inside the meeting, Callaghan's embarrassment was saved by some sharp bureaucratic practice. An emergency resolution calling for support for the public sector workers' action was ruled out of order because the meeting was the AGM. The local party bureaucrats could hardly use the

usual excuse, 'lack of time'. The meeting finished at quarter past eight.

Some wards are attempting to keep the pressure up. The Adamsdown ward of Cardiff South East passed a resolution which will go to the next meeting of the GMC, supporting the claim and the workers' actions, and calling on the Government to pay up. It also calls on local councils to settle on the full claim, councillors to support the strike, and the Labour Party to join up with other labour movement bodies in setting up a support committee.

A MASS meeting on Sunday of binmen at Manchester's main depot at Water St rejected a proposal to go back to work and accept 9%. They also rejected a proposal to go back to work while other G&MWU workers would be called out in their place. The meeting overwhelmingly supported a call to continue the strike and to try to get other binmen in the area, as in Oldham, out as well.

UNITED Manchester Hospitals NUPE branch is to hold a day of action on Tuesday 20th at the city hospitals, and pickets are to be set up. NUPE strikers will also lobby the NUPE divisional meeting on Thursday 22nd against any settlement short of the full claim for £60 and 35 hours.

SIX gravediggers at Crosby, in the Merseyside borough of Sefton, have been threatened with the sack for taking part in the official strike of gravediggers in the North West that ended two weeks ago. Local NUPE officials have said that there will be an all-out strike by local authority manual workers on Merseyside if the threat is carried out.

STOCKPORT Trades Council have called a demonstration in support of the low pay campaign on Friday 23rd, and are encouraging workplaces in the area to send delegations. The Trades Council has opened its meeting to workers involved in the action, and is distributing collection sheets and information on the claim and the actions.

CARDIFF Council offered striking refuse men a lump sum of £3,000, to go to a charity of their choice, if they cleaned up the town centre. The men refused. Local NUPE full-timer Ian Spence said: 'pay the money, and we'll clear the refuse, but from the Cardiff Royal Infirmary, not the town centre.'

Only £500 for that, the council said. Despite this penny-pinching attitude, the refuse men cleared the rubbish. Who says it's the workers who are being anti-social?

Edinburgh goes all out

STRIKE ACTION to win the claim spread through the Edinburgh area from Friday 16th.

All Edinburgh's schools have been closed since the janitors stepped up their action from an overtime ban to an all-out strike. The road-griters also started strike action, at the weekend when the snow was at its worst. Bin men came out on the 16th, and the sewage workers have stayed on strike.

The chance of a full-scale attack to get the £60 for 35 hours is there. But it has been marred by reports that NUPE's national negotiators are about to settle. The newly called out groups of workers feel frustrated and angry.

Perhaps the most furious against the NUPE leaders' downright treachery are workers in five of Edinburgh's hospitals, who have gone on unofficial strike after operating a work to rule since January 22nd. On Friday 16th the catering workers at the Royal Infirmary walked out when the management broke agreements that had been made over the work to rule. Fifty porters came out in sympathy and helped mount a picket at the gates.

The action was immediately backed by porters' strikes at City Hospital, Princess Margaret Rose, and

Elsie Ingles. On Saturday the action at Craighouse joined the picket, but were persuaded to go back by NUPE Scottish organiser Ron Curran. However, porters at the Sick Children's Hospital also came out over the weekend.

All five hospitals were still out on Monday, and the workers have formed a strike committee with delegates from each hospital. Their aim is to spread the action to the other Edinburgh hospitals and force the union to make it official. It's abundantly clear to the strikers that the unions' strategy of a work to rule has not paid off, that spreading the strikes is the only way forward, and that it's the union officials who are holding them back, trying to break the unofficial action.

At the branch meeting of NUPE South Hospitals (covering the five hospitals) on the 14th, branch treasurer Paul Maclean made it clear: "The union is limbering up for a sell-out. We are the union: if the leadership don't fight, we must". In answer, local full-timer Andy Wilson, a Communist Party member, was full of praise for the 8% plus consolidation deal, trying to sway members who were afraid of taking unofficial

WEEKEND JOURNAL TV

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In my opinion the biggest pity is that we didn't get the support committee set up earlier.

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by G Brewer

BEHIND THE whole debate on separation and devolution the basic theoretical issue is this: is Scotland an oppressed nation?

Certainly it is difficult to pinpoint specifically national oppression in Scotland. The major nationalist organisation, the SNP, is perfectly legal. The gaelic language can be spoken with impunity. The Scottish national flag — the Saltire — can be flown freely, and in fact is never more freely flown than on the occasion of visits by the British monarch north of the border.

Scotland has no serious history of national struggle, and the present wave of regionalism largely dates from the onset of capitalist crisis in 1969 and the discovery of oil in the North Sea.

Far from being plundered by imperialism Scotland has benefitted from the profits of the oldest imperialist power in the world, the British state. Far from Scotland suffering from military occupation, Scottish troops have willingly played a prominent role in British colonialism's conquests. Scottish regiments have figured prominently right up to Britain's last colonial repressions in Aden and Northern Ireland.

Bourgeois thought sees the nation (like the bourgeois family) as a natural unit. Marxists see the nation (and the bourgeois family) as a temporary form of human association, specific to a particular historical period.

Under the feudal system of the Middle Ages, nation states in the modern sense did not exist. Even if a country was nominally a unit, ruled by a monarch, real power lay with each feudal lord in his own area. The lords controlled the armed forces, taxes, law and order.

Language, customs, and economic relations varied from one area to another within the same country.

The absolute monarchies of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries generally went no further than clamping disparate provinces together into one political unit. The real formation of nations as economic and social units was the work of the bourgeoisie. As Marx put it, 'Independent or but loosely connected provinces, with separate interests, laws, governments and systems of taxation, became lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class-interest, one frontier, and one customs-tariff'.

DRIVE

The drive to form such national units was a major aspect of the bourgeois democratic revolutions in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries. Marx considered it progressive and supported, for example, the struggle for a united German Republic.

But the West European nations were already giving a new aspect to the national question, by their colonising raids on Asia and Africa. In the 20th century, the struggle for national liberation has been as powerful a revolutionary factor in the 'Third

World' as was the unification of nations in Europe 100 or 200 years before.

For the 'Third World' countries, national independence represents the right to national self-respect, an end to colonial oppression, and a beginning of national economic development: it is the precondition for any real equality between nations. For the advanced countries, 'national interest' has become a cover for class exploitation, a banner for plunder of the 'Third World', and a reactionary obstacle to the international association called for by modern productive forces.

PATTERN

There are dozens of exceptions to the general pattern of national development; but in the case of Scotland, its history is one of substantial integration in the British nation. Scottish nationalism, as an answer to Scotland's problems, is as reactionary as the idea that Britain should solve its social problems by trying to cut loose from the West European-US nexus.

At the time of the beginnings of capitalism in Britain, Scotland was an independent country, although it makes little sense to talk of it as a nation. There was no national language (a mixture of English, Scots and Gaelic being spoken) and no national culture. Communications between the north of the country and the central belt were minimal. Most importantly, there was no economic unity in Scotland.

In the north of the country (the Highlands) the old, pre-feudal clan system reigned supreme. The Southern uplands were feudal. The central belt was the most advanced area economically. Here a capitalist economy was beginning to develop.

THREAT

The first development of merchant capital was on the east coast, with Edinburgh as the main centre. The rise of Glasgow merchants came later, and by the time of the Union they were already posing a serious threat to the east coast merchants.

The Scottish bourgeoisie found it could not successfully compete with its English neighbour. England had already embarked on its colonising spree. And in 1651 the English Parliament passed the Navigation Acts, which banned Scottish ships from the use of English ports. Although the right was restored by Cromwell, it was taken away again in 1660 by the Stuart Restoration.

The Scottish bourgeoisie made their first and last attempt to go it alone. In 1698 a Scottish expedition set off to colonise the Isthmus of Darien in Central America. The attempt was a disaster, mainly due to English opposition. From then on the Scottish capitalists seem to have realised that Union with England was the best way to further their interests, and it was carried through by the Union of Parliaments in 1707.

The English bourgeoisie wanted to include Scotland in

an extended national market. Their motives were not benevolent, and indeed the English at that time regarded the Scots in a hostile and pre-judged way, as little better than barbarians.

But the Scottish bourgeoisie was not forced or coerced into Union by the English. They took a rational decision that capitalism could only develop in Scotland as part of the British nation state. Far from being colonised, the Scottish bourgeoisie went into the Union the better to join in colonising others.

Nor was Union used, as it was in Ireland a century later, to stunt capitalist development and ensure the hegemony of English capital.

The less dynamic east coast merchants were against Union. They feared it would mean their complete demise in the face of open competition with England as

well as with Glasgow. In their fight against the Union, they were supported by the Presbyterian church.

They did not succeed in stopping the Union, but they did succeed in maintaining an independent church, legal and educational system in Scotland which survive to this day.

It is the existence of these separate institutions that is often used to support the claim that there is a genuine Scottish nation. But this misses the point. It is doubtful if even the institutions that remained under separate jurisdiction could have developed to the extent they did if the tasks of the bourgeois revolution had been attempted within the con-

ditions of an independent Scotland.

After the Union, the alliance of the English and Scottish bourgeoisie set about extending capitalism over the whole of Scotland — with a vengeance. In the course of the 18th century, capitalism began to flourish, with the building up of the iron and the cotton industries. The Union meant that Scotland could take advantage of English trade, and also that the two regions could jointly develop and launch their industrial revolution.

COTTON

With the cotton and tobacco trades, Glasgow became one of the major centres of industry in Britain. Between 1708 and 1750 its population doubled to 25,000



Scotland's problems of housing and unemployment won't be solved by yet another Parliament with no answers.

and it had grown to 200,000 by 1831.

The rising bourgeoisie set about eliminating the old feudal and pre-feudal order, driving the population off the land to become urban workers. They carried this out in the most brutal manner imaginable.

After the Union the clans rose up in arms in a series of rebellions, the most serious being the Jacobite rising of 1745. Under the leadership of Charles Edward Stuart, the 'Young Pretender', they took over most of Scotland and launched an invasion of England, claiming not just the throne of Scotland but that of England as well.

Prince Charlie's army got as far as Derby before being

turned back and eventually routed at Culloden, near Inverness, in April 1746.

In the years after the stamping out of the Jacobites came the notorious Highland Clearances. The clan chiefs, who had nominal rights over the clan lands, allied with the bourgeoisie to transform this nominal right into a real property right and drive their clanspeople out to make way for sheep-walks and deerparks.

In the mythology of Scottish nationalism, the Jacobite rising occupies a hallowed position rivalled only by the defeat inflicted on the English by Robert the Bruce at Bannockburn in 1314. The Jacobites prove the resilient nationalism of the Scots, and their suppression shows that the Scottish nation was and is suppressed by the English.

In fact it was not a battle

a Scottish culture. But this culture was marked by the fact that the dominant class force in Scotland had nothing to gain from asserting its separate identity. Scottish romantics like Sir Walter Scott were 'patriots' in the sense that they felt proud of their heritage, but they feared separation like the plague.

RUPTURE

As Scott himself put it, 'We had better remain in Union with England, even at the risk of becoming a subordinate species of Northumberland, as far as national consequence is concerned, than remedy ourselves by even hinting at the possibility of a rupture'. Not for him the militant cultural nationalism of his counterparts in Hungary or Poland of that time.

Eventually Scotland developed a sort of degenerate ersatz culture catering for the taste of tourists and the Victorian English gentry, what Tom Nairn (one of the foremost left wing proponents of Scottish nationalism) calls 'cultural sub-nationalism'. Scottish culture, devoid of any real development because of the integral development of the Scottish intelligentsia within the mainstream of British bourgeois culture, consists of gaudy displays of tartan, the Edinburgh Military Tattoo, and delirious displays of enthusiasm for the repeated failures of the Scottish national football team.

Attempts by sections of the Scottish intelligentsia, like those around Hugh MacDiarmid to develop a genuine Scottish culture have largely been failures.

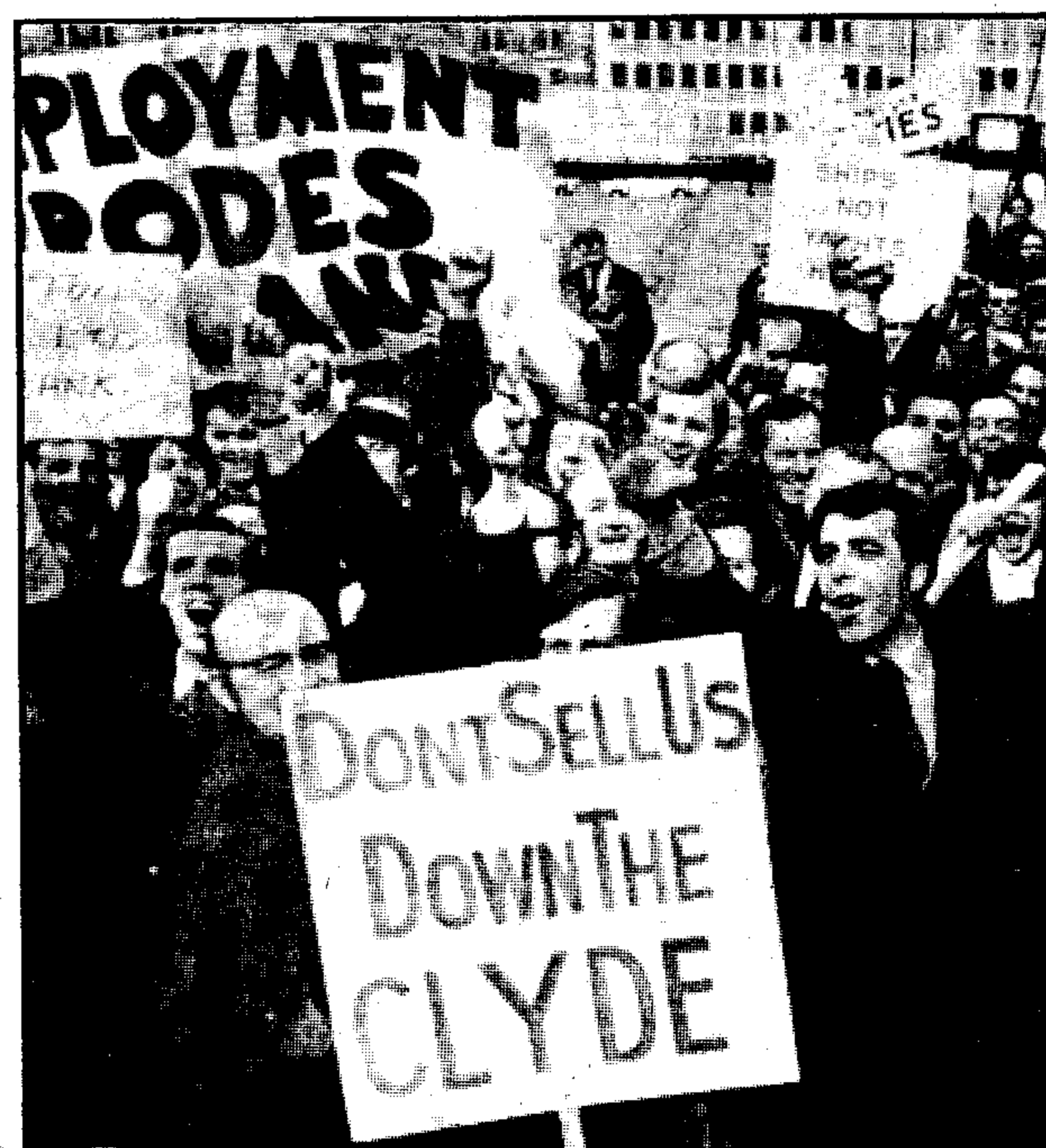
Nevertheless, enough national characteristics have accumulated to enable Scottish particularism to don its nationalistic cloak. Today the emotional appeal of the SNP spans the past but not quite forgotten glories of William Wallace and Robert the Bruce, and future glories to be achieved with the help of Esso, Shell and British Petroleum.

The supporters of independence and/or devolution generally back up their arguments about Scotland being a nation with the argument that Scotland is economically disadvantaged. Much is made of the external control of the 'Scottish economy'. To get to the root of these arguments, it is necessary to look at the structure of this economy.

PROBLEM

The problem with the Scottish economy is not that the emergent Scottish bourgeoisie were prevented by a dominant nation from developing an economic base. It stems from broader patterns of the centralisation of capital.

The decline of the traditional textile and iron industries (which were based on the availability of raw materials and water supplies rather than the proximity to the market) brought no equivalent replacement. Thus there are high unemployment levels and a disproportionately high level of social deprivation. Glasgow



UCS workers: would their fight have been helped by the Scottish Assembly any more than by 'friends' like Benn at Westminster?

between Scotland and England, but a battle between capitalism and pre-capitalist reactionary forces. This marks off the Jacobite rebellion from genuine bourgeois nationalist movements such as the Irish struggle, which had as their aim the winning of the right to develop capitalism independently of foreign domination, and which developed radical, democratic politics.

FRANCE

The Jacobites were anything but radical. Led by a man driven by nothing but personal ambition, they failed to mobilise even the whole of the Highlands behind their cause, let alone anyone further south, and looked for support to the court of Louis 15th of France, where Prince Charles eventually escaped.

Engels summed up the Jacobite movement in characteristically scathing terms: 'There is no country in Europe that does not possess, in some remote corner, at least one remnant-people, left over from an earlier population, forced back and subjugated by the nation which later became the repository of historical development. ... [It] is always the fanatical representative of the counter revolution and remains until it is completely exterminated or de-nationalised, as its whole existence is in itself a protest against a great historical revolution.'

'In Scotland, for example, the Gaels, supporters of the Stuarts from 1640 to 1745...'

The Union did not leave Scotland without 'national characteristics' and traits of

join them?

(centre of engineering and shipbuilding) and Dundee (jute) have become high unemployment areas, with little to offer the prospective investor.

With the decline of the home-based industries, Scottish capital did not just vanish into thin air. The Scottish bourgeoisie began to export capital abroad in a big way as early as the 1860s. The original stakes came from Edinburgh shipowners and the Dundee jute industry and the heavy industry of the west coast followed later.

At first, shares in foreign industry were purchased via the City of London, but to cut out the London banks the Scottish ruling class began to create investment trusts formed through syndicates of local businessmen. By the time of the First World War Scotland was, according to the historian John Foster, 'contributing more than its fair share of the British total' of exported capital.

As finance capital developed, employment stagnated. This is not a specially Scottish problem; it is shared by most areas of Britain outside the south-east of England. And the problems of these areas are most certainly not caused by any form of 'national oppression' but by the world-wide and European centralisation of capital.

If, instead of comparing unemployment in Scotland with that of England, and Wales, you compare it with regions of Britain outside London and the Midlands, they all have comparable rates.

REGIONS

Thus the 'problem of the regions' is an inherent problem of capitalism. It has been tackled by the central governments using stick and carrot techniques (applied to Scotland as to other regions). The Distribution of Industry Acts in 1945 set up various financial incentive schemes to draw investment to the regions. As the main accent was on grants to cover fixed capital costs, the result was an influx of high productivity industries which contributed very few new jobs.

Intensive attempts to attract industry to Scotland were begun in 1960, and their effect on unemployment through the following decade can be judged by comparing the figures for unemployment in 1960 (4.3%) with the figure for the beginning of the '70s (4.7%).

With the incentive schemes, foreign capital was attracted to Scotland, especially (in the post war instrument engineering industries) American capital. Scotland became dominated by branches of industry, branches which would be shut down wholesale at the first signs of a crisis or which could be played off against branches in other countries in the face of a militant trade union struggle. But though the effects in Scotland may be more pronounced; this is something which affects the entire British economy.

It has been fuelled since the Second World War by two factors — on the one hand the increasing international centralisation of capital which allows multinationals to threaten workers with

transfer of plant to another country and even to play off large capitalist powers like Britain and France against each other in the bid for contracts; on the other hand, the general penetration of US capital in Europe which followed the Marshall plan and the establishment of the dominance of US capitalism after the war.

SOLUTION

Of all capitalist adversaries, the multi-nationals are best fought through international workers' solidarity, and not through regionalism.



St. Andrew's Square, Edinburgh: a centre of Scotland's powerful finance industry.

When Chrysler tries to play off its Linwood factory against its plant in Europe, nobody has the brass to suggest that a Scottish Assembly, or even a 'Scottish Workers' Government', will in any way provide a solution.

In the operation of policies designed to boost the regions Scotland has scarcely been discriminated against. In 1974 a report of the Scottish Council Research Institute found that over the previous decade Scotland had received on average more than 30% of all expenditure under the Local Employment legis-



SLP MPs Jim Sillars [above] and John Robertson. Labour is trying to steal their colours.

lation, around 30-40% of regional employment premiums, and nearly 40% of the expenditure under the 1972 Industry Act. Even so, 'unemployment continues unabated... as though regional policy had never existed.'

The ability of industry in Scotland to live on handouts from Westminster explains the attitude of the Scottish CBI to Devolution. They are against 'political' devolution (fearing moves towards independence, trade obstacles, isolationism and the cutting of regional aid) but in favour of 'industrial devolution', by which they mean even greater government handouts.

An Assembly would not bring more jobs, except for politicians. All it could do is increase the handouts, using oil money, which would merely perpetuate the problems.

The idea that an Assembly

with oil revenues could challenge the economic problems in Scotland is a complete illusion. The oil industry itself creates relatively few jobs, and the nature of the product means that it does not directly give rise to new industries around it. What jobs are created are mainly in the construction industry and those will quickly fall off as the rigs are built and full scale production is begun.

The fate of the regional aid programme dramatically shows up the impossibility of really planning the capitalist system, oil money or no oil money. But to attack the system means an all-out attack on the bosses by the working class — an all-out attack which is only defused by the regionalist illusions spread by the devolutionists.

Until the end of the 1960s the SNP had no serious backing either from the Scottish bourgeoisie or from the Scottish working class. Then after the October 1974 elections, the SNP found themselves with 11 MPs in the Commons and 30% of the Scottish electorate behind them.

OIL

The real factor in the growth of the SNP was oil. It provided an apparent economic basis for the pipe-dreams of the Nats. They were no longer confined to the petty bourgeoisie and a few cranky intellectuals, and began to gain working class votes, on the slogan: 'It's Scotland's Oil'.

The workers' organisations had failed to fight the bosses' solutions to the crisis. Now the SNP offered a Scottish solution: North Sea revenues controlled by a Scottish parliament. Thus equipped the Scottish Nation would begin to tackle the problems of structural unemployment and low wages, products of years of English mismanagement and neg-

lect. Along with the populist cant about using the oil revenues for the benefit of 'the Scottish people', the SNP had to make sure not to alienate big business. This of course became much more important as they gathered votes. William Wolfe, Bathgate businessman and the then chairman of the SNP, scurried off to the USA to assure the oil companies that the SNP would not dream of nationalising their Scottish operations...

UNION

The SNP has put together some big business backers. But most of the Scottish bourgeoisie still see their interests lying with the Union as much today as in 1707.

Thus the official labour movement's backing for devolution gives the issue a left-wing appearance. But Labour's shift in favour of devolution came not from a

desire to fight for civil service reform (as the devolutionists now claim) but from a desperate attempt to stop the SNP eating into Labour's votes in Scotland — and to gain the alliance of the Nationalist MPs at Westminster for the minority Labour government.

The Kilbrandon commission on devolution reported in October 1973. Nobody was particularly interested, and it was only with the rise of the SNP in the next election that the devolution Bill became a major issue. Faced with the prospect of an SNP landslide within a few years, the Labour leaders had to do something to undercut the SNP's working class support. And since working class policies are not an option the Labour leadership even considers, they tried instead to steal the SNP's nationalist clothes.

LABOUR

In March 1974 the Executive Committee of the Scottish Council of the Labour Party moved closer to devolution: 'We welcome Kilbrandon's emphatic rejection of the Nationalist case. We do, however, accept there is a real need to ensure that decisions affecting Scotland are taken in Scotland wherever possible'. This was ratified at the Scottish party conference that year.

In 1976 the Scottish conference of the Labour Party, facing a threat from Jim Sillars' break-away SLP, came out in favour of an Assembly with economic powers... leaving the Labour Party with the same position as the SLP, and Jim Sillars complaining that the Labour Party weren't being serious.

The fact is, even for many of its backers, devolution is just a sop to avoid facing up to the real social problems of Scotland — and the socialist answers to those problems.

OUR ELDERS AND BETTERS

ACCORDING TO the Radio Times the Good Old Days should have been on, but it was more like the Bad New Days. Instead of Leonard Sachs banging his gavel there was the Prime Minister banging his fist. 'Responsibility must be handed back to those who know how to exercise it', roared Jim.

The programme had a sick title, something like 'The British Disease', and it featured a number of Britain's greatest men with diagnoses and ideas for the perfect cure. John Boyd of the AUEW came on saying that things were happening in the unions that he wouldn't have believed possible a year ago — responsible leaders (like himself, presumably) were being defied by sinister unrepresentative forces (the membership, presumably).

A man called Tolley who claimed to represent a (sinister unrepresentative?) body called the British Institute of Management bemoaned the 'wrong attitude' to productivity among workers. 'Management can do it' (what, produce?); 'given the will to get up and work from the shop floor'.

Then Bob Swingometer McKenzie appeared with some incomprehensible statistics about the number of Ford Cortina doors produced in Cologne compared to Dagenham. It all led back to the same message — 'Can we not perhaps move towards the really rather sensible, er, er, eminently sensible German approach where rational people decide on what the economy can afford'.

Of course! That's it! the scales fell from my eyes. All our troubles stem from a single source — that unfortunate impulse that occasional-

ly comes over the unwashed masses to take action without first consulting sensible and rational great men like Messrs Callaghan, Boyd, Tolley and McKenzie.

The programme closed with another pearl of Callaghanian wisdom, solemnly intoned by his priest Robin Day: 'We all live in one country and what each of us does has an effect on everyone else'.

Who would dare defy a man who could come out with that?

Just in case anyone should think that the labour movement's ability to produce great men, able to transcend the ties of class loyalty, has been a recent development, BBC2 put out yet another episode of *When the Boat Comes In*. The series is set in the 1920s and concerns the affairs of a union boss called Jack Ford.

Our Jack used to be the scourge of the employers — he'd even been inside for his union activities — so he keeps telling everyone. But now he's taken to hob-nobbing with the toffs who live on the hill, he's left the union and very thoughtfully passed on all his posts to his old mates: 'How'd yer like to be branch secretary Mat?'. 'Oh no Jack, I could never follow you!'. 'Don't be a fool Mat, have the job bonnie lad!'

Now Jack's a gaffer himself, boss of a mysterious outfit that seems to specialise in blowing up country houses to make way for new estates — I'm sure that's significant somehow.

I didn't see the series when it was first put out and they didn't invite me to the press preview, so you'll have to find out for yourself whether our Jack ends up in the House of Lords.

JIM DENHAM

EVENTS

Wednesday 21 February. What should the Labour Party be doing? Cuts, low pay, housing. Speakers: Bernie Grant (Wood Green CLP & NUPE), Cllr Jenny Morris, representatives from Islington's GMWU and NALGO Social Workers' strike committee, and a speaker on the crisis in North Islington Labour Party. Organised by Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory. 7.45pm, Caxton House, St Johns Way, N19.

Friday 23 February. Demonstration to support the low pay fight, called by Stockport Trades Council. Assemble 3.30pm, Hollywood Park, Stockport.

Saturday 3 March. Demonstration against Low Pay. 11am, The Crown, Cricklewood Broadway, London NW2. Rally at Kilburn Square.

Saturday 10 March. Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory fund-raising social, at Caxton House, 129 St Johns Way, N19 (Archway tube). 8pm to midnight, with 'Embryo' plus disco. Tickets £1.

Saturday 10 March. Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions conference, at Friends House, Euston Rd, London. Credentials for TU delegates £1 from J.Hiles, 137 Wanstead Park Rd, Ilford, Essex.

Monday 12 March. Debate: why vote Labour? Speakers: Keith Veness (SCLV), Les Burt (Communist Party), and Roger Cox (SWP). Plenty of time for discussion! 7.30pm, Kent Room, Anson Hall, Anson Rd/Chichele Rd, NW2.

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CHINA OUT OF VIETNAM

THE CHINESE invasion of Vietnam is a coolly calculated act of aggression. It is no rash or accidental flare-up of the months-long border friction. Observers have noted the steady build-up of 160,000 troops, 700 aircraft and large amounts of armory and artillery in the past fortnight along the border.

The Vietnamese have expected it for months, laying mines and bamboo spikes along all possible paths through the mountainous border region.

Over the centuries, the rebellious Annam people have stood up for their independence, prompting many a Chinese Emperor to 'teach Vietnam a lesson'. The present rulers in Peking, schooled in the nationalistic bureaucratic stable of Stalinism, has set out to do the same, furthering the sordid tradition of Great-Chinese chauvinism.

Relations between China and Vietnam have got worse since the early '70s, when the Chinese leaders went behind Vietnam's back to befriend and appease the West. Mao greeted Richard Nixon in Peking in 1972 at the height of the B52 bombing of Hanoi. Vietnam had to look to the Soviet Union for

by CHEUNG
SIU MING

support.

After the defeat of the USA and its Saigon puppets, Chinese merchants in Cholon were subjected to a clamp-down, and in the past year possibly thousands of ethnic Chinese have left Vietnam, many across the Chinese border. China stirred up a chauvinistic hostility to Vietnam, accusing its regime of oppressing 'our brethren'. But at the same time China was quietly holding talks with the Vietnamese, in the hope of dissuading them from closer links with Russia.

But Vietnam remained distrustful of China's intentions, specifically of its backing for the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia. Eventually Vietnam signed a treaty with the USSR, and was denounced by China as 'Asia's Cuba'.

The epithet reveals just how much China's obsessive opposition to the USSR led it to identify with the United States!

The last straw for the arrogant Chinese leaders was their loss of face when

Vietnamese forces overthrew Pol Pot's regime — even though China was increasingly embarrassed by its ally's excesses.

The timing of last week's invasion shows that Peking has weighed up the consequences carefully. Coming after Vice-Premier Deng's visit to the USA and a propaganda campaign over the border incidents, Peking hopes to get its revenge for Vietnam's Cambodia invasion with a short punitive raid which will not provoke any substantial military reaction from Russia.

Socialists must condemn this invasion unreservedly. This invasion in no way promotes the interests of the workers and peasants in either China or Vietnam. It reinforces divisions along nationalistic lines between the masses in South East Asia, and ties them closer to their own ruling cliques at the expense of international solidarity — the solidarity which defeated US imperialism.

Such is the reactionary consequence — and at a cost of thousands of innocent lives — of China's anti-Soviet policies, themselves a product of the theory of 'socialism in one country'.



Workers' ACTION

Civil servants: All out Friday 23rd!

THE STRIKE of 300,000 civil servants is on. Speculation that the strike would be called off at the last minute proved to be unfounded as both the CPSA and the SCPS National Executives agreed unanimously that there was no reason to call off the action.

The strike is being called to force the government to honour its pay agreement with the civil service unions. This agreement, called 'Pay Research', has been in force since 1955, and is basically a fair comparison exercise — the same sort of agreement that the Government is offering NUPE. The Government has refused to honour it for the last four years.

Already the screws are on the two unions, not only from the Government but also from the TUC General Secretary. Len Murray has told Ken Thomas, the CPSA general secretary, that the General Council would not approve of the CPSA and the SCPS breaking their beloved 'Concordat' with the Govern-

ment.

So far the Government's only response has been to say that they are prepared to implement Pay Research, but that the deal would have to be staged. Thomas made it quite clear at the CPSA National Executive Committee meeting that he was prepared to accept staging — his only reason for recommending continuation of action was that the Government was too imprecise about the exact nature of staging, for instance, how much the first payment would be, when would the second payment be, and how many stages would there be.

This, of course, was only to be expected. It is now up to the members to show by their action that they are not prepared to accept anything less than full implementation of 'Pay Research' from April 1st.

NORMAN JACOBS
NEC member, CPSA

FOUR AREA Committees
of the CPSA in London have

called for a national conference of area committees to organise the civil servants' pay battle. The two objectives they set are further action, beyond the one-day strike on Friday 23rd, and support for selective strikes in computer centres.

Civil service militants see the issue as a struggle against the TUC-Government Concordat. The Government has promised to negotiate on the basis of the Pay Research Unit comparisons between civil service and private sector pay — but, even apart from the problems of the PRU system, the promise isn't as good as it looks. The Government is considering a 'staged' deal based on keeping the pay bill within public sector cash limits — that is, chopping jobs to pay the wages bill.

To win a decent increase, we must organise local strike committees and build for the national conference of area committees to organise action, unofficially if need be.

STEPHEN CORBISHLEY

Why teachers don't want the NUT's 34pc claim

MILITANT teachers are picketing the National Union of Teachers' National Executive meeting this Saturday morning, 24th. They will be demonstrating against the present 35% pay claim, and urging the Union to go for a flat-rate increase instead.

The 35% claim is based on a study, not disputed by the management panel, that the average teacher's salary has fallen by about 25% since May 1974, the date of the Houghton Award, in comparison with other non-manual workers.

So why oppose the claim? Because the Houghton Award built in massive differentials between headteachers and classroom teachers, most of whom are on the bottom scales, 1 and 2. The claim seeks to re-establish those differentials, which have narrowed during the years of pay restraint.

It does not go for a 35% across the board increase. It demands increases of £15 a week (26%) for those starting teaching, but £57 to £97 a week for head teachers (43%)! The increases sought for top-paid head teachers amount to twice the average wage of a school-keeper, and a top head teacher would then earn more than

four times the salary of someone just starting teaching.

Many teachers have written to the Observer about its 'league table' of wages which put the 'average' teacher in Division 1, with over £100 a week. In fact, because of the enormous differentials in teaching, 70% of all teachers earn less than this 'average' wage. Women teachers, after 30 years of equal pay, are crowded into the bottom rungs of the Houghton structure, and still earn, on average, only four-fifths of the average male teacher's salary. The present National Executive of the NUT is crammed with male headteachers...

The present NUT claim has failed to mobilise any enthusiasm among the members, for those who are likely to take action have the least to gain. The Executive will no doubt blame the members' inactivity and sell out for whatever the going rate might be.

Translating the present claim into a flat-rate claim would mean £34 a week increase for all teachers. That would benefit all those on lower scales — about 70% of all teachers — and would be more like a claim which could unite teachers for a real fight.

CHEUNG SIU MING

Xmas spirit

RETURN to normal working — or we'll pick one worker from each office and sack them! That was the warning from their bosses in a letter to every worker in Manchester's Housing Department.

The NUPE Housing branch had refused to handle housing repair complaints in protest at the sacking of Housing Superintendent Henry Whiteside — and when Whiteside's appeal was turned down, all 360 staged a sit-in at their workplace.

The NUPE members replied to the bosses' sack threat by calling a strike from 19th February.

Whiteside's sacking followed an incident on the last working day before Christmas, when three of his staff came back drunk at lunchtime. When they said he had allowed them to have a drink in the office that morning, he was sacked.

Socialist Organiser

Paper of the Socialist
Campaign for a Labour
Victory

The March issue will be
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March: 12 pages for 15p.
Bundles can be ordered in
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Hill, London N16.

To enable Workers'
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