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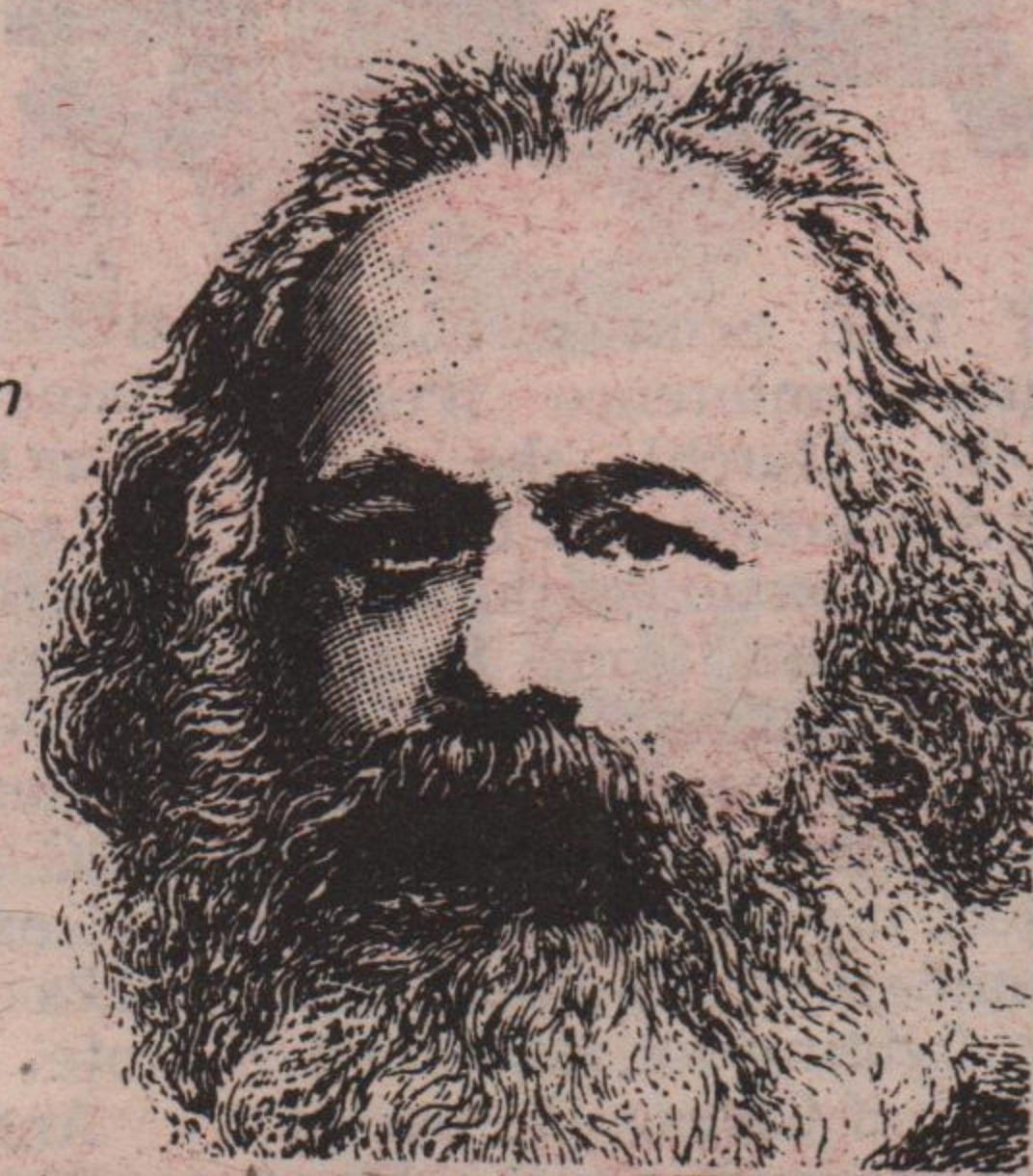
Socialist Organiser

Against all bans and proscriptions!

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Marx Centenary

Karl Marx
died 100
years ago on
March 14.
On page
11: how
Marx
explained
the secret
of surplus
value



YOU CAN'T FIGHT

by Alan
Thornett

THE VOTE against strike action in the NUM ballot over pit closures is a serious setback for the working class and an important victory at a key time for Thatcher's demolition-squad government.

Previously, throughout their almost four years of office, they have ducked taking on the miners. They have picked off other sections of workers one after another, created mass unemployment, and developed their onslaught against the unions. Now, with coal stocks high, oil plentiful, the TUC in full retreat, and their anti-union crusade well advanced, they decided the time was right to turn their attention to the coal-mining industry.

They started to close pits and accept no compromise. This created a confrontation between two opposing policies: that of the NUM, repeated again and again at conferences, to oppose any pit closure except on the basis of exhaustion — and the policy of the NCB, of closing pits which they choose to regard as economically unviable.

The vote is a major victory for the NCB. But it must be said again, as with the steelworkers, the BL workers, train drivers, and hospital workers, that this was a struggle that could have been won but for the serious unresolved crisis of leadership which dogs the working class at every stage.

We can certainly be proud of the courageous fight of the rank and file of the Welsh miners. Their policy, to give a lead and then fight for the support of the other coalfields, was the most effective way to get a national strike. (Though even there, there was a weakness in tactics. The decision to ballot South Wales, rather than simply call a strike in line with previous decisions, gave the right wing in the other areas an argument).

The strike was 100 per cent solid in South Wales. Their impressive lobbying of the other coalfields on the Monday the strike started was a credit to the rank and file leaders who organised it. It was also very successful, resulting in the Yorkshire, Kent and Scottish executives ordering strikes in their areas to begin on Monday 7th.

Although by Tuesday some right-wing area executives and some pits began calling for a ballot (this was exaggerated out of all proportion by the media), two pits in Derbyshire walked out in support of the Welsh miners. By Wednesday the situation was moving strongly towards a national strike, despite the protests of the right wing.

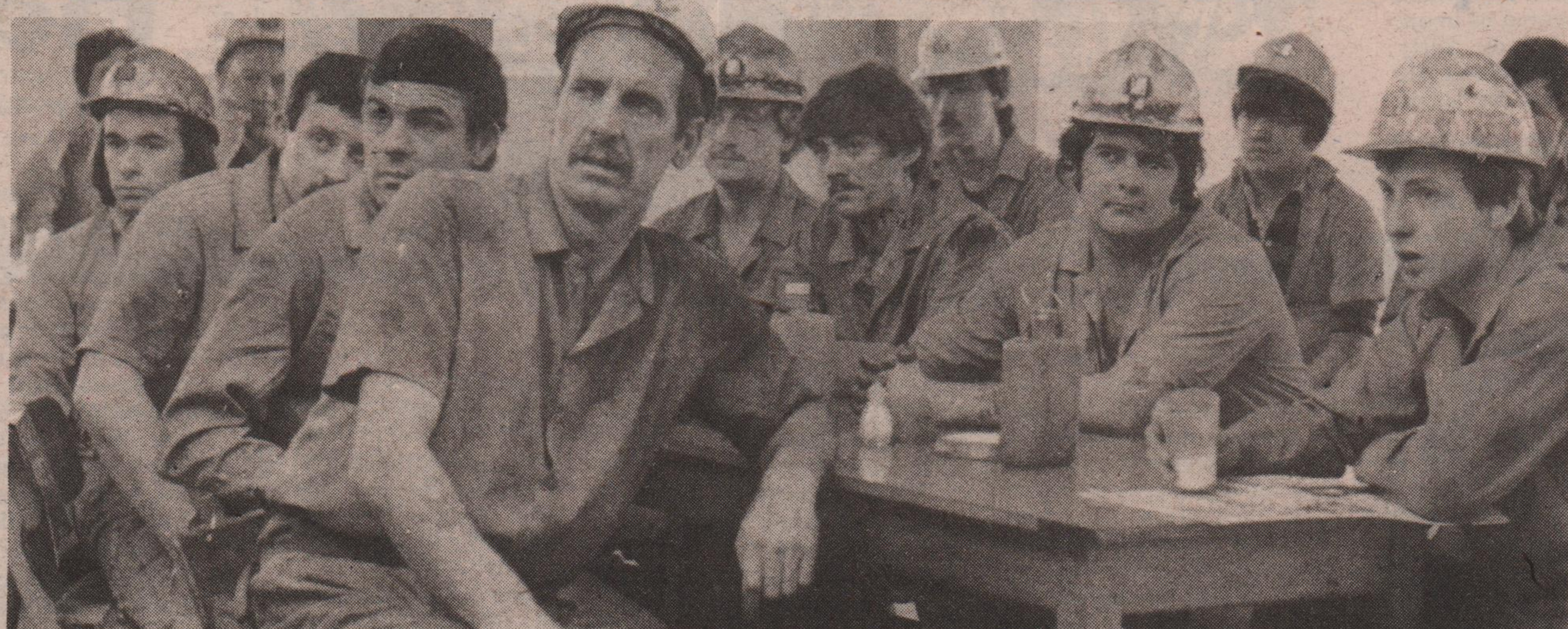
That day, Arthur Scargill broke his silence to announce his support for the strike decision, and went on television to quote Rule 42 to establish that in these circumstances strike action called by the area executives was fully constitutional. He announced that he had called a meeting of the national executive for Thursday and would be urging them to back the strike decision with an unanimous vote.

That meeting turned out to be a disaster for the coalmining industry. Instead of endorsing the strike decisions and the strategy of developing them into a national strike, these were unanimously overturned.

Scargill and the left on the executive collapsed in face of the campaign by the right wing in the union and by the media.

Presumably Scargill and the left calculated that they would lose the ballot issue anyway to the right wing majority on the national executive, and decided it was best

CLOSURES JOINTLY WITH THE RIGHT WING!



Listening and thinking in Yorkshire: "there is a vast job of education to be done among rank and file miners..."

to avoid open defeat by backing the ballot themselves.

Maybe the executive would have gone for a ballot anyway. But, at the very least, by staking out a position and fighting for it, Scargill and the Left could have put down a marker for the battles to come. Inertia and unity-at-all-costs almost always helps the right. So, more than anything else, does retreat without a fight.

Doubtless, the blunder made last October in linking the jobs issue to the wages issue was an intimidating factor as well. This had already been evident at Kinneil and in the acceptance of job cuts in Kent. But it does not make the collapse any less complete.

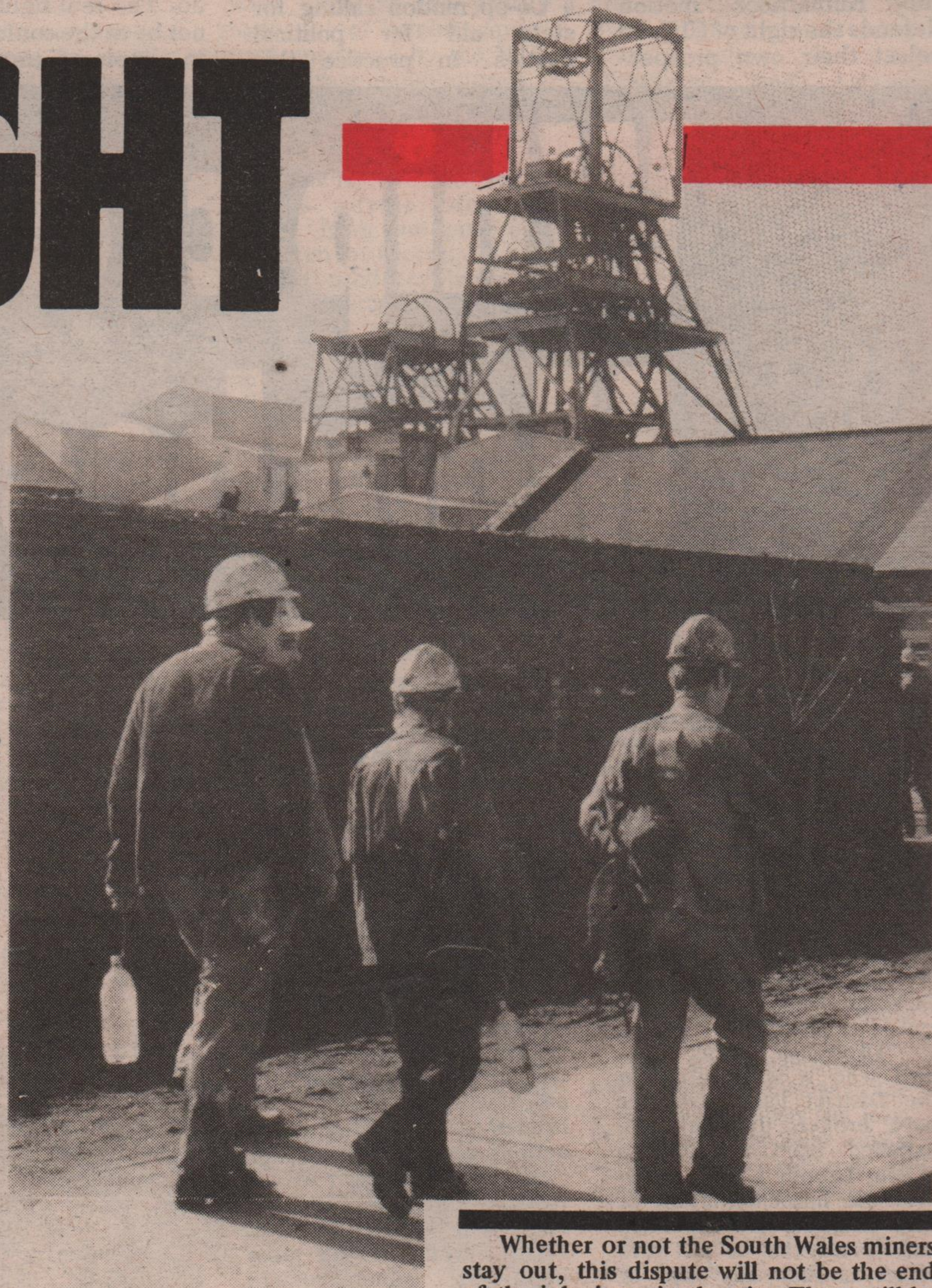
According to his statements on television, Scargill himself moved the resolution to call a national ballot, justifying it on the basis of the unity of the union. The resolution effectively nullified the area strike decisions already taken, and ordered those on strike outside South Wales back to work. The additional decision of the executive to support the South Wales strikers was pious, since they also decided that South Wales would have to ballot again, as part of the national ballot, and this made it more difficult for South Wales to continue their action if the national vote was against.

Such was the retreat. And according to reports Scargill even phoned the NCB

during the EC meeting to urge a compromise. The Board, of course, turned him down flat.

Militant miners throughout the NUM were shattered by the executive decision for a national ballot. The pickets in South Wales on Friday morning found it almost impossible to believe. Scargill had changed horses in mid-stream. The developing strike movement had been demobilised in front of their eyes. The militants knew that it would now be very difficult to win the national vote.

Scargill had retreated before the right wing at exactly the time when it was necessary to stand firm. It is simply not possible to fight pit closures in unity with



JOHN HARRIS

Whether or not the South Wales miners stay out, this dispute will not be the end of the jobs issue in the pits. There will be further cutbacks and closures.

One key lesson from this struggle and from the Kinneil and Kent retreats is that there is a vast job of education to be done amongst rank and file miners to alert them to the scale of the NCB attack on jobs and working conditions.

The closures are only part of a concerted drive towards speed-up and de-manning in the coalfields. Yet since last October's national ballot — despite speeches and rallies by Scargill and other left wingers — there has been no centralised publicity campaign by the NUM to counteract the lies and distortions of the media and present to miners the information that will convince them of the threat to their jobs.

Instead of redoubling efforts after the setbacks last Autumn and earlier this year, the NUM has drifted on with no popular leaflets, broadsheets and pamphlets presenting its case.

The NUM has the information: it submitted lengthy documents to the Parliamentary Select Committee spelling out the fraudulent NCB arguments and the dangers to jobs. This must at once be made accessible to members and the campaign against speed-up and closure stepped up.

The responsibility for this falls upon the left within the NUM, which must combat the sabotage of the right wing by organising the rank and file in preparation for the rounds of struggle yet to come.

the right wing. South Wales became stronger once they were on strike, and so would a national action. South Wales had given a lead, and the only effective way to defend the pits was to pull the rest of the miners behind them.

The decision of the government to announce the probable appointment of Ian MacGregor to the chairmanship of the NCB on the very day of the executive meeting was designed to rub salt into the wounds. Scargill was right to liken his appointment to the opening of a blood-bank to Dracula. He should have concluded that a no-compromise fight was needed, not a compromise with the right wing.

Continued page 3

A key to Scots conference

AT THE Scottish Labour Party conference (Perth, 11-13 March) the two crucial motions for the left on the question of the witch hunt come from Paisley CLP and Kilmarnock CLP.

Paisley calls for the conference to "totally reject the expulsion of any members of the Party who are fighting for implementation of Clause IV, part 4 of the Constitution", whilst the Kilmarnock motion defends the right of CLPs to select their own prospec-

tive parliamentary candidates without interference from the NEC.

Leading the attack from the right is a motion from Hamilton CLP which revives the formula for leadership elections and PPC selections so beloved of ex-Labour, now SDP MPs — one person, one vote.

Another motion in this section deserving defeat is a Co-op motion calling for state aid for political parties. In practice this

would weaken the links between the Labour Party and the unions, replacing them with dependence on handouts from the capitalist state.

On the question of nuclear disarmament, the 14 motions provide a fairly rounded set of policies, both in terms of immediate campaigning and also in terms of what the next Labour government should do. The real fight here will not be at the conference but in implementing policies

afterwards.

The third major issue at the conference is a Scottish Assembly. The motions pander to Scottish nationalism, and provide a smoke-screen for the failure of the labour movement leadership in Scotland to put up a real fight against the Tories.

The absence of a Scottish Assembly has been used in a succession of industrial disputes as an excuse by the union leadership for not putting up a fight,

especially in the recent Timex dispute. The calls for a Scottish Assembly now ringing out from all quarters — especially middle class ones — should not blind the Scottish working class to the fact that labour movement democracy and accountability is key to fighting the Tories, not a Scottish Assembly.

Housing is another particularly important item this year, with 13 motions submitted. Two virtually identical motions from

Kelvingrove CLP and Pollok CLP criticise the record of Labour-controlled councils which have administered the Tories' attacks, call for a united campaign in defence of public sector housing involving Labour Groups/Parties, tenants associations and trade unions, and instruct the Scottish Council to organise an all-Scottish conference and demonstration to this end.

A West Edinburgh CLP motion on housing dismisses the policies in the Labour Programme '82' as 'inadequate to fulfil the fundamental needs and rights of decent housing for all' and proposes a detailed alternative 'socialist housing policy' upon which the Party should campaign, including abolition of public sector housing rents, no sale of public sector housing or land, and immediate cessation of eviction and warrant sales.

International Affairs contains one of the most controversial motions for the conference: a Kinross and

West Perthshire CLP resolution on the Falklands war, which whilst seeing the solution to such conflicts in terms of a stronger United Nations, does seek to commit the conference to 'completely dissociating itself from the action of the Labour opposition' and demands an assurance that 'future Labour governments will never react to a similar crisis in such an aggressive fashion'.

And a motion from North Edinburgh CLP on Ireland is sure to provoke the usual controversy whenever the demand for British withdrawal is raised.

It also calls for the Scottish Council to 'initiate a thorough-going debate in the Scottish labour movement on how best to assist the movement for a united Ireland and to encourage links between the socialist and labour movements in Scotland and Ireland'.

If passed, the motion would pave the way for finally opening up a real debate on Ireland in the Scottish labour movement.

Whip cracks over Manchester left

by Pete Keenlyside

MINUTES before the last Labour Group, the 29 left wing councillors on Manchester City Council were given a copy of a letter sent from the NEC to the Labour Group secretary.

The letter spelt out the decisions of the NEC in regard to the inquiry into the disputes within the Group and the Party that was carried out last December by David Hughes, the national agent, Russell Tuck and John Golding.

"Therefore, those members who it is admitted in the District Party evidence have broken the whip are expelled from membership of the Labour Group. However the implementation of this decision is suspended and is only to be put into effect should any one of those members vote in any future council meeting contrary to a democratically taken Group decision."

Council

At the full council meeting the next day, 28 of us voted against an 88p a week rent increase in line with the policy on which all 69 Labour councillors were elected.

Despite this, the increase was passed with the votes of the right and the Tories. So,

for the fourth year running council house tenants in Manchester will be paying more for less.

As far as the Group leadership and the NEC are concerned, we are now expelled and that's the end of the story.

They can now get on with the business of making cuts without having the bother of defending their actions in group meetings.

But the left can't afford to leave it at that. There are two vital issues involved. Firstly, which is the more important, adherence to Party policy and the commitments made in the manifesto, or to a particular vote in the Group.

The right wing got their cuts budget through the Group this year by a majority of two, with less than half the people there voting for it. Yet on that basis we are supposed to forget the policies the Party democratically decided and which the electorate voted us in on.

The City Labour Party aren't prepared to tolerate a situation where we spend



What do you mean, accountability?

a great deal of time in hammering out policies just to see it ignored by a handful of councillors, representing themselves and very little else.

If they are so confident that their views are superior to those of the Party, let them stand as individuals when they next come up for re-election and see where that gets them.

The other issue involved is just as fundamental — the complete rewriting of the rule book that this present NEC is carrying out in its attack against the left.

To start with none of the 29 councillors have been expelled from anything yet. In my case I haven't even had the interview with the group officers that you normally get before they throw you out. But none of that bothers the NEC. They've decided we're expelled des-

pite the fact that up until now it has always been assumed that only Labour Groups could expel their own members.

It is by no means certain that there would be a majority in the Group to expel us, so this gets the right wing neatly round the problem.

Although it doesn't appear in their letter to us, there have been some mutterings from NEC members of the standing of so-called 'official' candidates against those who have had the whip withdrawn.

It is extremely unlikely that this could be done in time for the May election. But it just goes to show to what lengths some of our opponents will go in their vendetta against the left.

The issues involved here shouldn't be confined to Manchester. They need to be

taken into the Party as a whole. We need a flood of resolutions supporting our stand and condemning the decisions of the NEC to expel us from the Group and the threat to stand candidates against us.

But if constituencies and District Parties really want to show their support then they should start looking at the relation between Labour Groups and the Party in their own areas.

That is why it is important that as many areas as possible send delegates to the conference on the accountability of Labour Groups to the Party, taking place in Manchester (see the What's On column for details). A big attendance there would be the best answer Party activists could give to this other witch-hunt the NEC is carrying out.

7 axed

AT THE Monday (March 7) meeting of the council Labour group in Tower Hamlets (East London), seven councillors were expelled from the Labour group.

The immediate background was that we had voted down the rate in the last council meeting because we had not been able to debate the police precept (the money the council has to pay over to finance the police).

All but one of the seven were newly elected last May, and we have been a new element within the Labour group.

The seven have consistently advocated Labour Party policy, including the following points:

- * Establishment of a housing committee,

- * Refusal to accept a contract for a telephone exchange from Bessy, because of their connections with South Africa,

- * Establishment of an ethnic minorities committee,

- * Refusal to cooperate with the London Docklands Development Corporation. (Council leader Paul Beasley sits on the LDDC board alongside John O'Grady and Bob Mellish).

- * Establishment of a police committee,

- * A freeze on rents.

At the Labour group meeting on Monday there was no prior notice of the motion to expel the seven, and an investigation by the regional Labour Party into the constitutionality of it is expected.

GRAHAM ALLEN
SUSAN CARLYLE

Rates up

"It's only for this year. If there's still a Tory government next year, we'll have to consider other strategies — perhaps resigning."

With this argument, Islington council leader Margaret Hodge won a 59 to 16 majority at a joint meeting of the Labour Group and the Islington Labour Parties' Local Government Committee last Friday, 5th, for a 29.8% rate rise.

The rate rise is part of a budget which provides for no cuts and a small degree of progress on manifesto commitments.

Last Friday's meeting was the culmination of many debates in wards and GCs. The main alternative to Margaret Hodge's package came from 50 supporters and others on the Islington Labour left. We presented a detailed programme for 'no cuts, no rent/rate rises' and confrontation with the Tories, which was moved at the March 5 meeting by St George's Ward, supported by other wards and by Islington Central women's section.

Another issue at the meeting was Building Works pay. The unions and the council Personnel Committee had come to agreement on scrapping the bonus scheme and moving instead to a flat rate of pay for all manual grades — as proposed in the Labour manifesto. But the issue had then got caught up in internal council politics, and no provision for the new pay system appeared in the budget.

Building Works struck on Thursday 4th, and a delegation spoke at the Friday meeting. There was not, however, the necessary two-thirds majority to get a resolution supporting the workers debated. On Monday 7th the workers returned on the basis of a three month trial period for the new pay system being included in the budget.

Behind the internal council politics, the issue here is the same as over rate rises: being good managers for now, and waiting for a 'better time' for confrontation, or operating in a way more responsive to the needs and struggles of working people.

The confrontation may not wait until the 'better time'. In Parliament on Tuesday 8th it was announced that the government may do an extraordinary audit of Islington council. And if that means confrontation, then a 29.8% rate rise and penny-pinching with the council workers are not the best preparation.

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London rebuff to witch-hunters

LABOUR Party general secretary Jim Mortimer was sitting on the platform of the London Labour Party regional conference when this emergency resolution was carried by 496,000 votes to 254,000:

'This Annual Meeting condemns the expulsion of the five members of the Militant editorial board from the Labour Party. We also note the scandalous timing of the meeting to expel the five, which took place on the eve of the important Bermondsey by-election.

This Annual Meeting is disgusted at the attempt to sabotage Peter Tatchell's election campaign by withholding 25,000 election leaflets. We believe that Cambridge Heath Press, as trade union printers, are entitled to print for the Labour Party.

This Annual Meeting demands that the Militant five are reinstated.

In the interests of party unity and a Labour victory, this Annual Meeting further demands that the NEC take no more action against groups in the Party'

Some of the main trade union delegations (GMBU, EETPU, etc.) supported the witch-hunt, but the Constituency Labour Parties, together with trade union delegations like ASTMS and CoHSE, were solidly against.

Greenwich

The Greenwich constitutional amendment (to recognise the right of groups to organise in the Party) was endorsed, and the amendment from Hendon South (a sanitised version of the Register, championed by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy right wing*) was thrown out.

However, when one speaker told the conference: "You don't like what the right wing are doing to the Party, but you're not prepared to do anything about it", there was some truth to it.

Although supported by the Regional Executive, the composite (inspired by Labour Against the Witch-hunt) which included refusing to recognise expulsions was defeated by 338,500 to 400,500.

And the first vote facing the conference was on the status of Keith Dickinson, one of the five Militant editorial board members.

On the Wednesday before the conference, Hammersmith North GC had voted by 35 to 4 to confirm him as a delegate. On the

* Although this proposal was defeated at the CLPD AGM a member of the CLPD Executive told the conference, "You cannot have complete anarchy in the Labour Party", and the CLPD leaflet gave it 'qualified support'. Despite the efforts of CLPD executive members to win support for it (in contrast to their lukewarm support for the Greenwich amendment — clear CLPD AGM policy) this so-called 'acceptable alternative' was heavily defeated.

John Bloxam reports on the London Labour Party conference.



Ted Knight: voted off Regional Executive

same day, the regional official and secretary, George Page, had threatened that the conference would be 'unconstitutional, and any decisions taken, invalid', if it accepted Keith Dickinson as a delegate.

Dickinson was allowed into the conference, but the first item was a statement by the chair, Arthur Latham, that he was only prepared to accept a motion to suspend Standing Orders, to allow Keith Dickinson to attend and speak but not vote. This motion would require a two-thirds majority.

The only way that a vote could have been taken to accept Keith Dickinson as a voting delegate was by challenging the chair. Rather than doing this Hammersmith North moved the suspension of Standing Orders. The TGWU delegation then informed the conference that it would walk

out if Dickinson was allowed to stay. The motion was lost 264,000 to 451,000.

Arthur Latham then rejected Keith Dickinson's request to make a statement. Dickinson left the room, and the Hammersmith North delegation went too.

As Danny Harris explained at a packed lunch-time fringe meeting (jointly organised by London Labour Briefing, Labour Against the Witch-hunt, and London Labour Steering Committee Against the Witch-hunt): "We intend to fight them. This morning was only the beginning of the battle. We withdrew from the conference as a matter of principle".

The voting at the conference underlines the urgency of winning this issue in the trade unions. A number abstained.

Most CLPs voted solidly with the Left. In the region-

al executive elections, Ted Knight was kicked off by a substantial vote because of the role he has played in leading Norwood CLP's 29-21 decision to break ranks with the other CLPs, and not to resist the expulsions.

There was also a significant vote against a composite originating from the Labour Coordinating Committee/Campaign for Labour Party Democracy right wing, the content of which was strongly reflected in Tony Benn's speech last Friday night.

Witch-hunt

It deplored the witch-hunt, but insisted primarily on unity with the 'existing leadership', and hinted that the fight against expulsions 'diverts' from the campaign for Labour's conference policies. It was probably the declaration of support for Foot's leadership which allowed the composite to get carried, by 408,000 to 333,500.

Both Islington Central and Hammersmith North CLPs made it clear at the Conference that they intend to resist the National Executive. Indeed, defiance had been reaffirmed by very large votes in GCs just before the conference, and with the full knowledge of Norwood's retreat.

If anything, the forthcoming boundary changes will strengthen this. Hammersmith North is unaffected; the section of Islington Central where Grant and Taaffe are members will go into the more left-wing Islington South.

Norwood will also change, gaining one ward which supports resisting expulsions, and so its position could be reversed.

These CLPs can win. Hornsey CLPs has forced the NEC to back down over Tariq Ali, and a solid core of supporting votes was shown at this regional conference.

MINERS (from front page)

MacGregor has impeccable credentials for Thatcher. He was the power behind Edwardes on the BL board during the time that 90,000 jobs were destroyed. He was moved to British Steel, where he destroyed another 90,000. When he moves to the NCB, his plan will be to destroy another 60,000 or 70,000 there. South Wales and other smaller coalfields will be virtually wiped out, and the most profitable pits in Yorkshire prepared for privatisation.

But it does not end there. MacGregor is a union-buster. Union facilities will come under attack in the pits, as they have done in BL, British Steel, and elsewhere.

These realities now confront the Welsh miners after the defeat in the ballot. (As we go to press, there is no news of the future of the Welsh strike). Welsh miners have no acceptable alternative, despite the difficulties, but to continue the strike. To accept defeat is to accept the destruction of the coalfield. The valleys will be devastated. The Welsh miners should continue the strike and call for support from other sections of workers, particularly from South Wales. The Triple Alliance

should be made a reality, with steel workers and rail workers giving full support to the miners.

The NCB's policy of closing 'unviable' pits raises issues such as the profits made out of mining equipment purchased by the NCB from private manufacturers.

It highlights the huge sums of interest paid each year to the banks and government by the NCB. This is surplus value extracted from the pits, but not taken into account when the NCB produces figures for justly closures.

Welsh miners should demand that the books of the NCB be opened, and the full facts revealed. This would point towards the more fundamental issues involved, which cannot be ignored in such a struggle — the need for workers' control of the mining industry, and a workers' plan for energy.

Defended

In the short term the NUM policy must be defended: no pit should be closed except on grounds of exhaustion. 'Overcapacity' created by Thatcher's monetarist policies should be met by shorter hours throughout

the industry, without loss of pay.

If the strike in South Wales continues, it must be made the focal point of the struggle against Thatcherism, and actively supported by every progressive trade union branch, shop stewards' committee, and Labour Party throughout Britain.

Cowley victory

WORKERS at BL's Cowley Body Plant have won a victory over jobs and speed-up.

On Tuesday March 8 the company backed down on plans to cut manning.

On Monday 2500 TGWU members had voted at a mass meeting to strike and meet again on Friday morning. There will now be a mass meeting on Wednesday with a stewards' recommendation to return.

The victory owes a lot to a plant policy that if one area of the plant is in confrontation with the company over manning, then they should go out of the plant and the rest should follow them to a mass meeting.

After a series of manning cuts in different parts of the plants, on Monday the Rover Ambassador floor took a stand. They refused to accept management manning, and stopped work.

At a plant mass meeting after lunch, the vote went about four to one for all-out strike action — against the wishes of the plant leadership.

The strike stopped all production of the Maestro, Rover, Ambassador, Acclaim, and Rolls Royce, and indirectly hit the Ital.

BL workers have been on the receiving end of a tremendous onslaught on jobs, wages and conditions, as well as victimisations. This strike showed the possibilities for reversing some of this.



by Patrick Spilling

tion that the British press uses.

You don't write anything unless it is on the official hand-out from the Palace. Columnists soon had the Queen pinned up against the fountain peppering her with questions about sex at the Palace and had she ever thought of swapping places with Marie Antoinette.

Her rather unguarded replies were splashed across the front pages of the American gutter press "Frig Off, Monarch tells Governor" and "Let them eat Hake" being two of them, the latter being something to do with the EEC fishing row.

I wrote a 7,000 word piece on the treachery of the US press which the paper ran on page 1 with a picture and an editorial inside headed, "Who do they think they are?" It would have been more impressive in my view if they hadn't headed the front page "Frig Off row shakes White House" and repeated word for word every American article the Queen had objected to.

Still the drift of it should have brought my knighthood closer.

What with that and the rain this has not however been a highly successful tour. The Duke of Edinburgh insisted on driving a Maestro to the President's ranch through three feet of water and mud. He was dragged from the car as it floundered into a ditch with the voice synthesiser screaming: "Abandon ship". Not the most tactful of remarks what with the Royal ship Britannia having to stay in harbour because it was too rough to go to sea.

That was how they came to check into this hotel instead of wrestling cows with Reagan on his ranch.

We got by until the head of security decided that the lifts were a threat to his system.

Now the lifts are halted for half an hour before and after the Queen goes in or out of the hotel. I was up late today and she had already left. I waited the statutory half an hour (the stairs are all clogged up with American businessmen having coronaries after they tried to jog up to the 36th floor).

It was just my luck that she had forgotten her umbrella and popped back to get it. The secret service were through the lift hatch like greased lightning and here we stay waiting for the red alert to pass.

There was someone from the Daily Telegraph with me who kept saying not to worry, the British police had 'dual control' of the trigger with the US cops and it was unthinkable that they should use their weapons without prior consultation. They shot him through the forehead about half an hour ago. The policeman who now has me in his sights explained that the only worthwhile deterrent was one that you were prepared to use. I keep telling him I believe him. I reckon so long as I look terrified he might not shoot me.

He's been moaning on about having to guard a broad who hasn't even made a decent movie since 1952. I said the Royal Family go down very big back home, nearly as big as Coronation Street, but he didn't seem to have heard of Deidre's little fling. It's no wonder the Royal Family are slipping in the ratings if this is how the press are going to be treated on foreign tours. I reckon I'd have had a better time with the Pope in Central America... if it stops raining I think I'll go and join the demonstration outside.

In Brief

A pattern in the election results?

"A lot of people who had chosen change have not always seen this change day-to-day. We have to refocus our attention towards daily life."

Socialist Party secretary Lionel Jospin put it delicately in his comment on the French left's poor result in last weekend's municipal elections. Since summer 1981 French workers have seen the SP-led government shift from glowing promises to policies barely distinguishable from the previous 23 years of right-wing rule, and many are very disillusioned.

The Left's vote went down 7.6% as compared with the second round of the presidential election in 1981.

The far left did not do well, either. 888 far left candidates got an average vote of 155 each.

THE US is expanding its military base at Diego Garcia to accommodate B52 nuclear bombers and other planes and ships. The Observer last Sunday, 6th, reported that "its main purpose is to provide strike facilities for the Middle East, with back-up aircraft based in the Philippines."

The southern Indian Ocean island was leased by Britain to the US — and Britain also deported the island's whole population to make room for the US military. The new left wing government in nearby Mauritius is demanding sovereignty over Diego Garcia and reinstatement for the islanders, and is boycotting work on the US base.

Together with the reports that Cruise missiles may be sited in South Africa, this news indicates a continuing US military build-up in the East.

"IN a general context of corruption and structural violence . . . the future of the religious life in Central America will depend on the priority we give to the poor".

That's the former chief of the Jesuits in Central America — replying to accusations that his society was practising 'revolutionary Marxist subversion'.

Many Catholic priests in Central America fully sympathise with movements like the Sandinistas and the FMLN; many of their bishops feel that it is prudent to distance themselves politically from the US-supported dictatorships. In this situation, the aim of the Pope's visit in Central America has been to strengthen the most conservative wing of the Church.

INCREASING repression against opponents of the regime in Zimbabwe has this week escalated into a full-scale clampdown. "Four black townships in Bulawayo . . . were sealed off by government troops", reported the Guardian on Tuesday 8th, as "detentions, beatings and house-to-house searches" continued.

The repression is directed mainly against supporters of Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU, and justified by allegations that they are in league with South Africa. Whatever the truth of that, the campaign certainly serves to strengthen the new post-independence regime against the black workers and peasants.

THE weekend's elections resulted in victory for the Australian Labour Party, but defeat for the Social Democratic Party (SPD) in West Germany.

In both countries decades of boom capitalism have recently turned into slump. West Germany, the land of 'the economic miracle', has 2½ million unemployed (9%). In Australia, the official unemployment figure is 10.1%, and the real rate is reckoned to be higher. Inflation is running at 13% p.a.

Industrial production in Australia is 10% down on a year ago; in West Germany, 2% down.

The common element in both elections was that the previous governing party was defeated. In West Germany, the SPD had ruled in coalition with the small Free Democratic Party (FDP) since 1969; in Australia, Malcolm Fraser's Thatcherite Liberal Party had governed together with smaller bourgeois parties since 1975.

In Australia there was a

Martin Thomas looks at W. Germany and Australia

5.5% swing to Labour. In West Germany the SPD lost 4.7% — getting 38.2% of the vote as against 42.9% last time — but the ecology party, the Greens, gained 4.1%, moving from 1.5% to 5.6% and winning representation in parliament for the first time. By all accounts the Green voters will have been mostly young people and left-wingers who might otherwise have voted SPD.

The basic right/left division of the vote therefore changed very little, but the right-wing CDU/CSU gained a big victory thanks to the FDP shifting alliances. The CDU/CSU got 48.8% of the vote (44.5% last time), the FDP

6.9% (10.6% last time), and between them they will have 278 seats in the 498-seat parliament. The CDU/CSU/FDP coalition which took over a few months ago when the FDP switched sides in parliament will therefore continue.

The results give little support to some of the theories now going around to explain the Labour Party's poor results in Britain. Is it that Labour is too left wing? The defeated SPD displayed a moderation that even Dennis Healey could not fault.

Is it (as Socialist Worker would argue) that working class political consciousness in Britain has declined so drastically that Labour cannot win votes? By no reckoning is the level of working class consciousness in Australia (where Labour won) higher than in Britain. Is it the Labour Party's internal divisions? The ALP dumped its previous leader just weeks before the general election.

Despite the fact that its actual policies were none

too left wing, the ALP appeared as a left alternative to Fraser — and it was not tainted by recent experience suggesting that the leftism was simply futile gestures, or by its own leaders denouncing the Labour Left as the worst of the dangers (at least, not to the same extent as in Britain). The ALP has been in office only once since the '40s — and Gough Whitlam's brief administration before he was pushed out in a coup by the Governor-General in 1975 included sufficient reforms to leave Labour a serious reforming image.

For all that, Australian workers will need to look to their own independent struggles to safeguard their interests under the new ALP government.

True, Labour leader Bob Hawke announced after his victory that he was cancelling a £1 billion order for a new aircraft carrier from Britain.

But on the eve of the election he also waved aside ALP policy for making Australia a republic

— the Governor-General, appointed by Britain's Queen, has power to make and un-make governments, and used it in 1975 against Labour! — and said he would like to see references to nationalisation and socialisation deleted from ALP policy.

The ALP platform calls for 'democratic socialisation of industry, production, distribution and exchange to the extent necessary to the elimination of exploitation'. 'I would be just as happy with it out of the platform', said Hawke. No wonder when he had gone into the election with incomes policy as a main plank.

The worst condemnation of the SPD in the West German election campaign came when an opinion poll showed that many more voters had confidence in the CDU/CSU to cure unemployment (50%) than trusted the SPD (21%). The CDU/CSU proposes no answers to unemployment except relying on capitalism to boom again — but the SPD, while making a great noise about being the party that would safeguard workers' jobs, essentially proposes nothing different!

This must have opened the way for the CDU/CSU to tar the SPD with the 'anti-industry' brush of the Greens.

The SPD awkwardly tried to combine an appeal to young voters sympathet-

ic to the Greens with indignant denials of the CDU/CSU's claim that there would be a 'Red/Green alliance'.

The same on nuclear weapons, the other big election issue. The SPD tried to be critical of the NATO moves to install Cruise/Pershing missiles without actually opposing them. Thus they laid themselves open to CDU/CSU red-baiting without giving themselves the possibility of rallying support on the basis of a clear anti-nuclear policy. They created cynicism on all sides.

The big issue now, after the election result, is whether the extreme right-wing CSU leader, Franz Josef Strauss, will get the job of Foreign Minister and/or Vice Chancellor, displacing FDP leader Genscher. If he does, it will be a warning of heavy-handed right-wing policies to come.

What about the West German left? Large sections of it have disappeared into the Greens, and moved away from a focus on the working class.

But there are left-wing stirrings — still very small and weak — in the SPD, and some West German revolutionaries have been trying to develop links with the SPD Left and with trade union militants.

Those are beginnings to build on in the struggle to come.



West Germany: After the boom years, now 2½ million unemployed

WORLD VIEW 1983

Colin Foster reviews "World View 83"

NOT every reader, I suppose, will find 'World View 83' as useful as we do at the Socialist Organiser office. Whenever there is a news item to cover in a country which we don't

know much about (and that happens pretty often!), this book is our best convenient source of up-to-date background information.

But any activist concerned to base their views and arguments on hard fact could hardly spend £6.95 better than on this book.

First

World View was first published in France, in 1982. An English 1982 edition came out later. The 1983 edition has been prepared jointly by Maspere in Paris and Pluto Press in London.

The core of its 500 pages is a country-by-country, or region-by-region, survey of the world. For each major country or region there is a brief article, from a radical left point of view, on recent developments; a map of the region; economic and social statistics (including such information as countries' main suppliers and customers, not usually available in such summary compilations); some basic political information; and recommendations for further reading.

Other useful features are world statistics (the leading mineral producers, the hundred largest industrial corporations, etc.), and a chronology from July 1981 to June 1982.

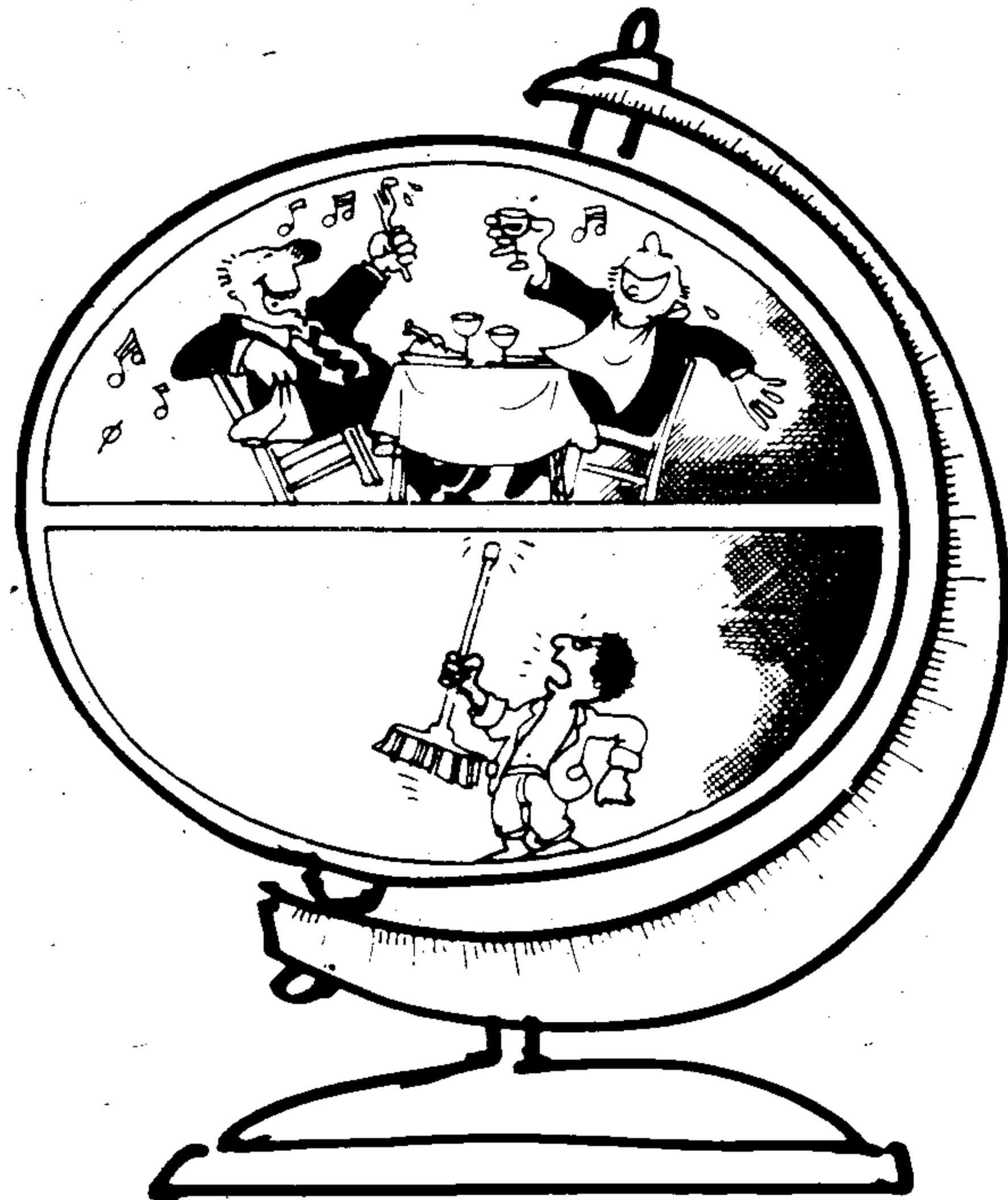
Improvement

I would have a few suggestions for improvements. Much of the first 150 pages is given over to brief articles on recent issues in world politics. The selection of issues is too haphazard to make this section useful for reference, and the articles are too brief to make it useful for anything else. It should be scrapped.

Addition

The country/region surveys come under three separate headings (hot spots/major countries/regions), and this makes reference awkward. They should be put together in a single consecutive list.

Finally, a really valuable addition to the country surveys would be a brief chronology of (say) the last ten years' major events in each country.



A QUESTION OF SOLIDARITY
Independent Trade Unions In South Africa

90p
Bob Fine
Lawrence Welch

New pamphlet from the Socialist Forum for Southern Africa Solidarity. 90p plus 20p postage. available via Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.

Japanese workers face 'unification' threat

In the third article of his series on Japan, Bill Peters describes the employers' latest moves to stifle militant trade unionism — and the workers' fightback.

By
Bill
Peters

THE phenomenal growth rates of the Japanese economy of the years from 1955 to 1970 of over 10% in real terms (easily the highest in the world), come to an abrupt end with the oil crisis of 1973. Average annual growth rate dropped to 4%.

The Japanese economy began to be more affected by the general conditions of crisis in the world capitalist economy. It prompted the employers to begin new drives to increase productivity and efficiency.

Despite the already high levels of exploitation, they were very successful. Many productive industries substantially reduced the labour force while at the same time substantially increasing output. Car manufacture is an example.

This was partly due to new technology but also to a sharp increase in the rate of exploitation of the workforce.

Hold

The Japanese employers managed despite growing redundancies and closures (particularly in the latter part of the 1970s), to retain their hold over the trade union movement. Average wage increases in the 1970s were less than 2%.

Militancy was mostly in the public sector where the Sohyo class struggle line had its strongest effect. An example was the 1975 strike on the Japanese National Railway (JNR) which opposed a management productivity drive and demanded the right to strike.

Another phenomenon in the 1970s was the beginnings of a fight back by progressive unions in a number of industries. Progressive unions split by the employers refused to fade away as they had in the 1960s and began to fight back.

This produced an important tactic of Japanese militants which is to support the growth of such unions against the yellow unions controlled by the employers.

Plant unions

It should be explained that, incredibly, there are 34,163 unions (covering 12 million organised workers) in Japan. This amazing figure results from the individual enterprise or individual plant unions which are unique to Japan.

In most cases a union comprises both manual and clerical workers. Such

enterprise unions cover 93% of organised workers.

In each enterprise or plant, from, for example, a car company with tens of thousands of workers to a small factory with 50 workers, the union is entirely autonomous and financially self-administered and self supporting.

From this, of course, the individual enterprise unions come together to form Federations based on the particular sector of industry and political colour of the union.

Collective bargaining

rights are held with the individual enterprise unions. The various Federations will set guidelines, dates and targets — such as the Shunto — but the negotiating is carried out by the union in the plant or workplace.

This structure has facilitated another significant and progressive development with the Japanese trade unions — the development of small (mostly Sohyo) unions in small and medium enterprises. Management in such workplaces were not so organised and sophisticated and new unions could make headway.

Occupied

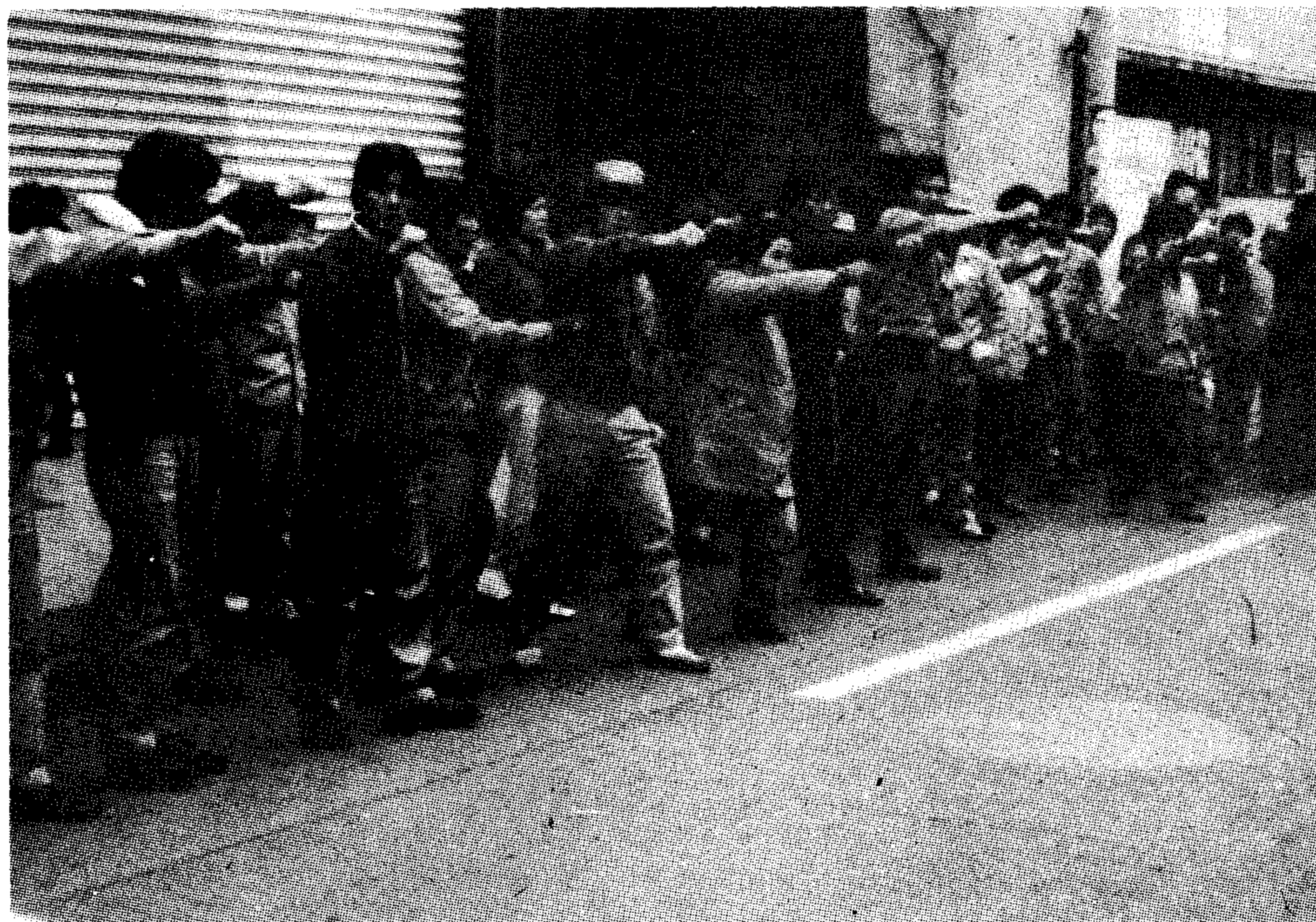
I was able to visit an occupied plant in Yokohama (an industrial city in the Tokyo region) of Toshiba Ampex — a plant which manufactured video equipment — and which is



Toshiba Ampex — workers have occupied to stop closure

Japan's population is 120 million. The total workforce is 55 million of which 38 million are employees (i.e. excluding self-employed, etc). Of these, 13 million are women. The highest organisation rates exist in gas, water, electricity and public services, followed by transportation, communication, finance and insurance.

The organisation rate in mining and manufacturing is nearly 40%. In contrast the lowest organisation rate is in wholesaling, retailing, construction, agriculture, forestry, fishing and service industries such as hotels. Generally speaking, smaller enterprises are less organised.



Osaka: "Once a union is established, militants from the area hold demonstrations outside the factory every lunch time demanding recognition..."

an example of this process even in a small plant of a multi-national.

The plant had been occupied since it was closed in October last year.

At the time of closure the 400 workers were divided between a yellow union and an independent Sohyo union — not a usual situation in Japan. The yellow union accepted the closure meekly but the Sohyo union with its 100 members occupied and began a courageous fight against the closure.

Another example I was able to visit is the occupation and work-in at Tanaka Machinery in south Osaka.

(Osaka is the second city of Japan, 300 miles south-east of Tokyo. South Osaka is an industrial area which is an important centre of militancy for the progressive unions in Japan).

This is a remarkable work-in which has continued for five years since the plant was occupied in 1978.

Closure

The plant is maintained and defended and 100 skilled workers manufacture and market industrial equipment.

The closure itself was a part of the anti-union drive of the employers.

During the 1970s the factory had been the main power base of progressive trade unionism in the south Osaka region, through the union in the factory affiliated to Sohyo.

For years the employers used every method against them including gangsters.

Eventually they created a false bankruptcy. The Mitsubishi bank withdrew finance and Nippon Steel — the factory's main customer — withdrew its orders. The Company declared liquidation and the workers took over.

(Now the whole operation is run by the works committee from the union office and potential customers are interviewed under portraits of Lenin and Mao).

Whilst the work-in

carries all the problems of worker cooperatives, it represents an important act of defiance against the tactics of the employers. Even more it is a beacon and organiser of independent progressive trade unionism.

(For example the 2,000 strong 1979 annual conference of Rodo Joho was held inside the machine shed of the occupied Tenaka machinery works. Rodo Joho is the most important left grouping within the progressive trade union movement in Japan).

The struggle of militant trade union activists in south Osaka, given the difficult conditions of Japan, are very impressive.

The Liberal Democratic Party has 300 Diet seats. The Japanese Socialist Party (JSP) is the largest opposition party with 100 Diet seats resulting from ten million votes and is therefore not a serious contender for power in the current situation. The Democratic Socialist Party, affiliated to Domei — an extreme right wing split from the JSP has 35 seats. The JCP, with 400,000 members, gets four million votes and has 30 seats. The Komei Party (Buddhist-based on "clean government") has 45 seats.

They work to establish unions in the small and medium sized non-aligned factories where the employers are less sophisticated and organised.

Once a union is established, militants from the area, including Tenaka Machinery, hold demonstrations outside the factory every lunch time, demanding recognition.

All this however takes place within a rightward moving political situation and a major part of the response of Japanese capital to the economic crisis is a move — through the right wing and yellow unions — to deal a very serious blow to progressive trade unionism in Japan.

This is a policy, promoted by the right wing, on

behalf of the employers, of "unification of the Federations" — merging all trade union federations in Japan into one Federation covering the whole trade union movement.

The left is correctly mounting a major campaign against this move, since the effect of it would be to virtually eliminate Sohyo as the only major progressive trade union federation in Japan.

Tactic

The moves are very advanced. The tactic of the right wing is to begin by unifying the unions in the private export-based indus-

tries and to move on as quickly as possible to cover the public sector as well. It would not just create one huge trade union federation, but one which was entirely dominated by the overall class collaborationist strategic line of the Domei and IMF-JC unions.

Generally speaking, of course, trade union unity is a very good thing. In Britain the fragmentation of the unions in some industries is a major problem.

But in the Japanese context the success of these moves would be a major blow to trade unionism with an independent class struggle line.

The most important proponents of this "unification" of course are precisely the IMF-JC unions, who echo the policy of the most powerful sections of employers: they include the reactionary 600,000 member Federation of Auto Workers Unions; the Federation of Electrical Workers Unions; the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions; and the Federation of Iron and Steel Workers Unions (Tekko Roren).

Unions

The strategic importance of these unions to the Japanese economy should be noted.

They speak directly for Japanese big capital, and Nakamura Takuhiko, chairman of Tekko Roren outlined the objectives of the 'unification' as follows:

1] eliminating Marxist influence and the concept of class struggle from the Japanese Socialist Party [which is allied with Sohyo] and turning the party into the Japanese counterpart of the West German Social Democratic Party;

2] promotion of nuclear power generation to save the nation's energy crisis.

3] abandonment of the struggle against rationalisation and the "Industrial structural transformation" programme. [The government's plan to move industries overseas].

4] revamping the Japanese National Railways and other unprofitable public corporations through administrative reforms [i.e. closures and redundancies].

[Information taken from AMPO, Japan Asia Quarterly Review

This is more significant since Tekko Roren is a right wing union within Sohyo.

Disastrously the top leaders of Sohyo argue in favour of the "unification", although some Japanese Communist Party (JCP) influenced unions within it argue strongly against and say they will not join the "unification" if it goes ahead with Sohyo in it.

This drive for even more direct control over the Japanese trade union movement is but one aspect of the right wing trajectory of the Japanese political situation under the pressure of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) which has held power for 28 consecutive years.

The LDP, in close alliance with the multi-nationals and every level of Japanese bourgeois society pursues its political objectives with equal vigour.

The new Nakasone cabinet is setting out to build Japan into a more independent imperialist country in direct contradiction to the Japanese constitution, which outlaws any military force.

Japan already has the seventh largest military force in the world.

Home News



Sapper's tale

DELEGATES to the conference of the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians (ACTT) have thrown out a call for regular elections of its General Secretary and officials.

They responded to warnings that such steps towards accountability might encourage officials to ignore duties in favour of seeking easy popularity.

And they endorsed the topsy-turvy argument of General Secretary Alan Sapper that to introduce elections would strengthen the hand of Norman Tebbit in his plans to impose Tory-style "democracy".

Perhaps, following this line, to make doubly sure, the delegates should now take further steps to root out any democracy at all in ACTT - maybe beginning with the scrapping of the union's conference itself?

That would show Tebbit where to get off!

EVIDENCE of the business backing for the Social Democratic Party came to light this week after the misdirection of a £2,000 cheque to the wrong Ron Brown MP.

Instead of being received by reactionary Ron Brown of Hackney and Shoreditch, it wound up in the mail of left winger Ron Brown of Leith - who promptly released the accompanying letter to the press.

The money was collected by a group of businessmen, who "very much welcome the emergence of the SDP" and believe "it is of vital importance to the country that as many as possible SDP MPs are returned at the next general election".

Ron Brown for Leith has proposed to give the £2,000 to a rather more deserving cause - local pensioners.

Meanwhile the SDP candidate in Darlington has confessed to being a Tory Party member as recently as 1979, and initially seeking adoption as a Tory MP. He now claims he was "hoodwinked" by Thatcher's promise to get Britain working again.

MEANWHILE the sections of British capitalism benefitting most from Thatcher's policies are indicated by the changing pattern of donations to the Tory Party, which remains £100,000 in the red, despite cuts and lay-offs.

Between 1980 and 1981 contributions from slump-hit manufacturing companies fell by 19%; but these were offset by increased donations from booming banks and insurance firms, and from construction monopolies.

THE hoary old myth of an impending Soviet invasion of Britain was once again wheeled out this week as a new bunch of retired armed forces top brass attempted to build a massed force of right wing reactionaries.

They plainly hope that the residual 'Falklands Factor', assiduously nurtured by the Tory press, can help them overcome the problems faced in the 1970s by General Sir Walter Walker and others in their attempts to assemble private armies.

The civilian 'brains' behind the new scheme turned out to be industrialist Sir David Wills, whose navel contemplation was interrupted recently by the thought of "what a tremendous amount of empty space there is in this country, where an enemy force of just a few individuals... could arrive by sea or by air and set about its nefarious business, initially undetected and unopposed."

Such fantasies however are not the main factor motivating four leading lights of the Tory establishment to propose the spending of up to £120 million over six years on the establishment of a 700,000-strong nationwide volunteer "defence force".

Plainly the selling point is that it would give an organised structure and continuity to the chauvinism and class collaboration that emerged during the Falklands war - and thus marshall a potentially useful reserve force of reaction to back up the Tory government in any future confrontations with the trade unions.

"Brick wall" Tory response

HOME Office Minister, David Waddington, can 'see no reason' to intervene to stop the deportation of Muhammad Idrish.

This was the result of a meeting between him, Peter Snape and Arthur Palmer on Thursday, February 24. The two Labour MPs had gone to argue Idrish's case, but came out saying that 'It was like talking to a brick wall'.

Supporters of the Muhammad Idrish Defence Campaign came from Bristol and Birmingham to picket the Home Office, but were prevented from mounting an effective presence by the police.

The police initially said that no placards would be allowed, one person would be permitted to give out leaflets outside the door, and six more could stand on the other side of the road.

In the event, we managed to get some people on the very wide pavement outside the Home Office, but only at the cost of constant hassles.

Nonetheless, it provided a first opportunity for supporters of the campaign from different cities to meet and exchange ideas.

It was clear that the Birmingham campaign had achieved more Labour movement support, while the Asian community was more involved in the Bristol committee, which had come out of a long-established Campaign Against Racist Laws group. Clearly, both aspects will have to be built on if the campaign is to succeed. It was generally agreed that the next step would be to build for a large contingent on the March 27 CARL demonstration.

As deportations, and campaigns against them, escalate, a demo has been called against the immigration laws. Organise a contingent now from your trade union or Labour Party.

DEMONSTRATE

Sunday 27 March

12 noon Assemble Jubilee Gardens near Waterloo Station

CAMPAIGN AGAINST RACIST LAWS
■ Repeal the Immigration and Nationality Acts
■ Stop race checks ■ Stop racist deportations
■ Unite the divided families now



Roach inquiry plan

AS the fight goes on for an independent inquiry into the shooting of Colin Roach in Stoke Newington police station, Hackney's Labour council has announced that if the Home Secretary refuses such an inquiry, it may set up its own investigation.

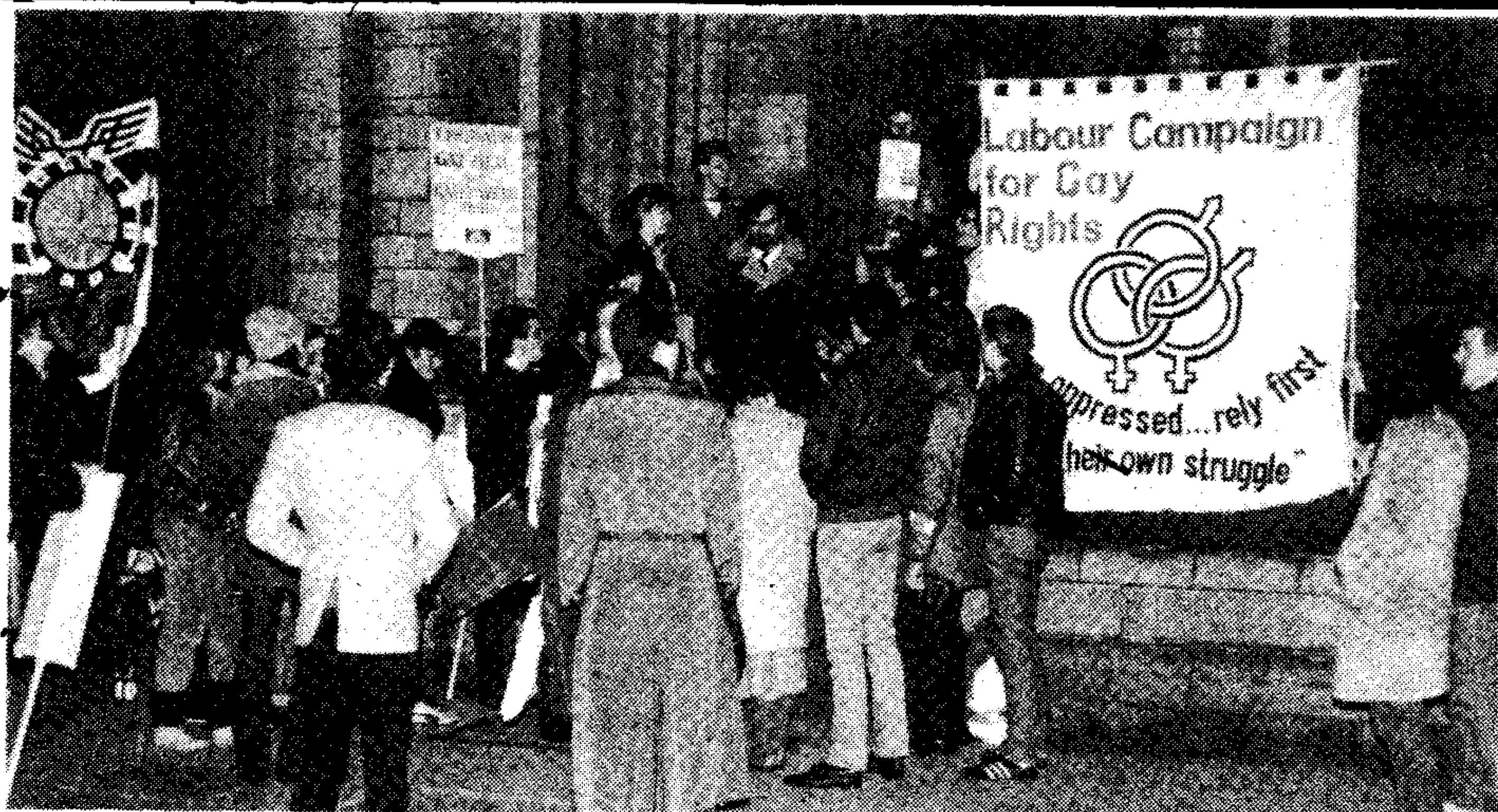
Last week the council voted to withhold rate revenue due to help finance the local police.

While the proposal to inquire into the Roach case should be welcomed, it would be

a mistake to make such an inquiry conditional on Whitelaw's decision.

The Hackney labour movement should act now to assemble all of the available facts on the Roach case and its background, while pursuing the fight for an official, independent inquiry as well.

In this way any lingering illusions in the 'justice' of the state machinery can best be dispelled, and the lessons spelled out for workers - black and white alike.



ABOUT 60 people turned out to lobby the Manchester City Council Labour Group last week, calling on it to reject moves to axe the council's grant to Manchester Gay Centre. There was support especially from the Urban Aid Action Committee and the local Socialist Organiser group. But the right wing dominated Labour Group voted 31-29 to confirm cutting the grant. Manchester Gay Centre is calling on supporters to keep up the pressure until the Council's budget-making meeting on March 16, by sending resolutions, letters or phone calls to Cllr William Egerton, Leader of the Council, Town Hall, Albert Square, Manchester (061 236 3377 x549), with copies to the Gay Centre, 61A Bloom Street, Manchester 1.

Bury Tories' plans!

ON Wednesday March 2 the town centre of Bury in Lancashire was swarming with groups of people wearing armbands.

They were the official pickets of the joint unions, who were out on one day strike in protest at the Tory Council's proposal to sell off the refuse collection service.

The Tories were said to be planning to speed up the sale of the service to the public.

The most impressive thing was the solidarity that workers were displaying in coming out for the bins. It revealed seething distrust and suspicion about the Tories' intentions towards all the departments.

Members of NALGO, NUPE, AUEW and GMWU were unanimous in their lack of faith in the Council to abide by agreements.

The latest example was the decision of the Council leader, Albert Little, to scrap the negotiations about possible savings that the workers were prepared to make (£400,000, involving 60 redundancies!) and offer the refuse service to private tender.

Most people think he is interested less in 'savings' than in the political instructions from Thatcher to speed up the sale of the service to the public. It has been going on for some time between Tory Central Office and Albert, and that they've been told to speed it up.

Quarrel

People in Bury have no quarrel at all with the present system of refuse disposal and are likely to object to most of the proposed systems as a

deterioration in service. The bin men, however, are fed up with the messing about they've had over the past year and a half, and (as the offer to cut 60 jobs shows) are not likely to put up a strong fight unless supported by the other workers and the Labour Party.

This week's action shows that a tremendous potential for opposition does exist in the Bury area. It is only the start.

We need to build on this dissatisfaction with a determination to prevent any of our services being cut or privatised. NALGO members nationally are already in dispute and refusing to use cars because of a cut in allowances. There IS the possibility of a fight-back. Let's go.

Sue Arnall

Gay LPYS

Programme '82 states Labour's intention to continue the discrimination against gay men on the age of consent. Instead of bringing the age down to 16, the proposal is for 18.

Gay LPYS has been set up to join in the fight to commit the labour movement to a positive attitude towards gay liberation and will fight for equality in the age of consent.

Our first meeting, advertised all over London and the left press, attracted over 30 people - many of whom were new contacts for the Gay LPYS.

We agreed to go along to the Gay Youth Movement conference to establish links with them, links that have already started as we went on their lobby of Parliament last month.

We also decided that we should blitz the LPYS conference. It is a priority for us to campaign for the YS to discuss gay rights at this



year's conference. Petitions have been prepared demanding this does happen. The Labour Campaign for Gay Rights "Gay 16 Okay" stickers will be taken to conference, and a gay book-stall too. Hopefully our fringe meeting will have a big name speaker and attract to it YS members who are interested in fighting for gay rights.

Comrades can contact Gay LPYS through the LCGR (we are sort of their youth group) at 61a Bloom Street, Manchester 1 or see you at conference.



Calling all young women: fight back against the Tories! A day conference open to all young women, organised by CLASS FIGHTER

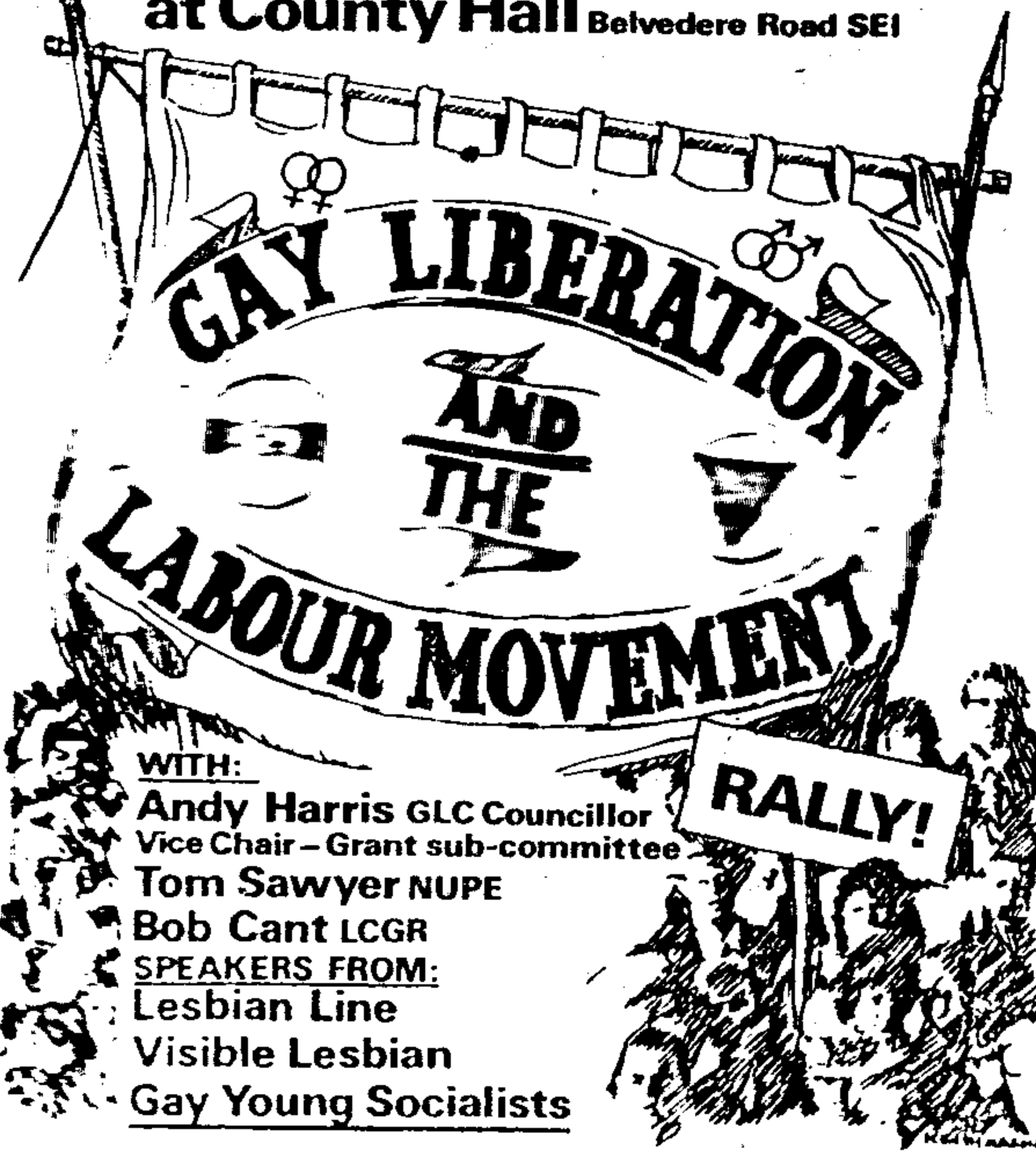
Saturday March 12, 10.30 to 5.30, Wolverhampton Polytechnic Students Union.

Entrance £2, covered 50p. Workshops on: images of women, women's unemployment, state racism, the family, women in the labour movement, women's sexuality, women and the Bomb, violence against women, women and education, and a practical session on self-defence.

More information: phone Jane, (01-) 609 3071.

LABOUR CAMPAIGN FOR GAY RIGHTS

Friday 18 March - 7.30pm at County Hall Belvedere Road SE1



WITH: Andy Harris GLC Councillor Vice Chair - Grant sub-committee Tom Sawyer NUPE Bob Cant LCGR SPEAKERS FROM: Lesbian Line Visible Lesbian Gay Young Socialists

Breaking the sexist grip on education

Women in Education are getting organised. Yvonne Reynolds reports.

OVER 200 women teachers and parents, mainly from Haringey, attended the by now famous conference 'She's Bright for a Girl'

which took place in November at the Haringey Teachers' Centre. The conference was organised by the Haringey Women in Education Group.

Opened by Gaby Weiner on 'the hidden curriculum' — how schools unwittingly prepare girls to be second-class citizens by all kinds of signals and practices which occur no matter what the subject being taught, and occur from the earliest years — the conference went on to examine in depth six areas of school life.

A workshop on primary reading schemes investigated with the aid of slides the ways in which the stereotypes of girls and women (restricted to the home) and boys and men (natural inhabitants of the big world outside) are put

across to children even at the infant stage. Ways of encouraging better practice were discussed.

Groups looking at the reasons why maths and science, though of increasing educational importance, remain 'boys' subjects' beyond all rhyme or reason, heard grim evidence in the form of figures for exam entries and results.

The situation was felt to be one that would take years to remedy, but the group made a start by studying pioneering projects which had already shown some success.

'Invisible Women' was the theme of the history workshop. Only the odd 'famous woman' ever makes it to the pages of history books — let alone school textbooks; the contribution to history of half the human race is missing. Yet this glaring bias has only recently been documented and 'women's history' begun to be unearthed.

The focus of the Women in Literature workshop was

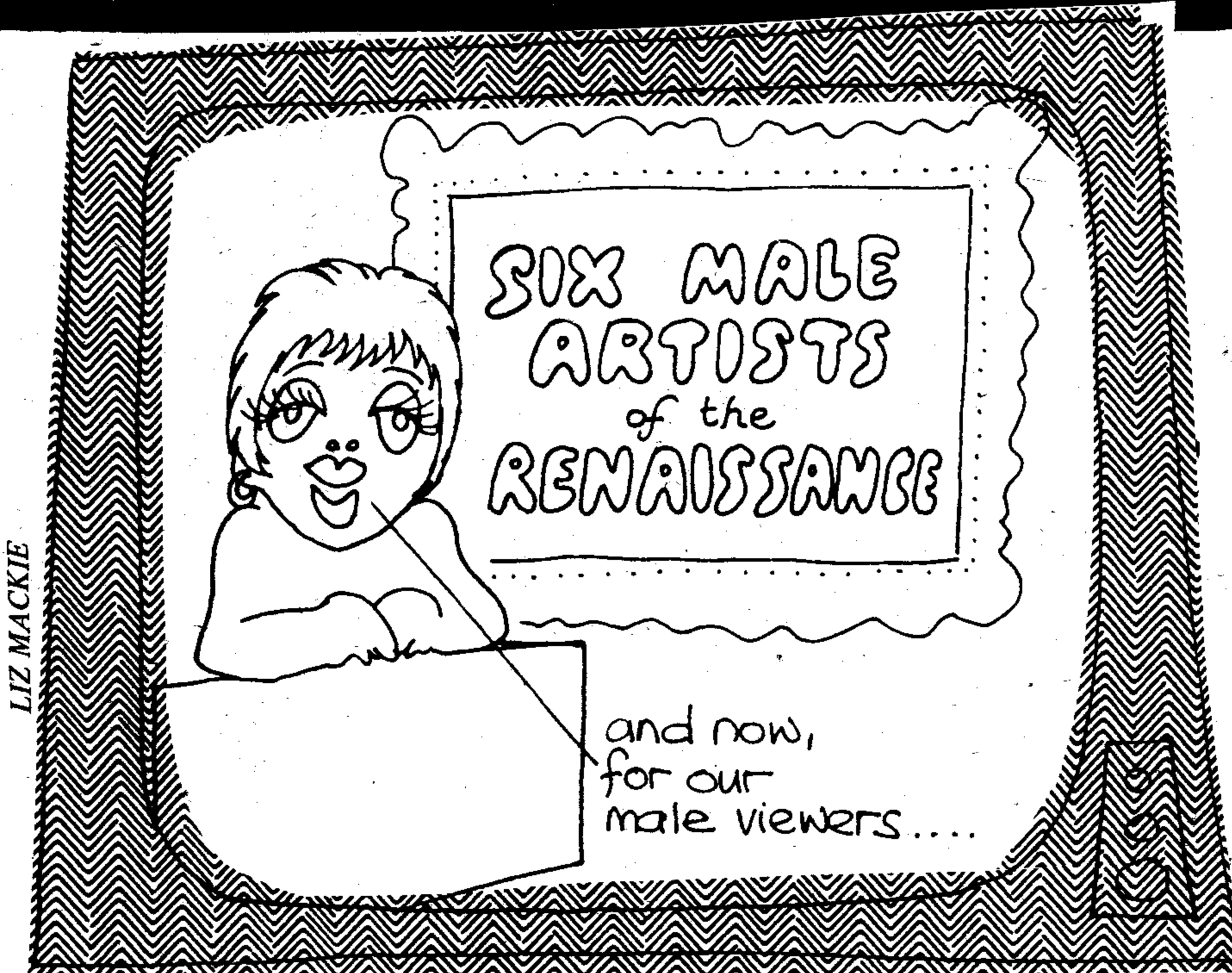
classroom strategies for using non-sexist material in literature lessons. Practical examples were discussed.

Scope

A well-attended 'women only' workshop on sexual harassment in schools allowed women to discuss shared experiences of a daily hazard many working women and many girls at school face, but which is hardly ever acknowledged as a specific problem to be brought into the open and tackled.

The scope of the conference was taken outside the classroom context by two sessions, one on Women and Employment, led by NALGO members from Haringey and Southwark, and one on Media Images of Women and strategies for changing them. Originally intended as a men-only workshop, if requested, this session, well-resourced with video material, ended up as a mixed workshop and proved extremely useful.

YVONNE REYNOLDS



School meals strike

PLACARDS proclaiming that school meals, schools, hospitals go while Cruise, Trident and Defence grow, highlighted Tory priorities during a one-day strike of school meals workers last week in the London Borough of Merton.

Merton Council is taking a leaf from its Tory neighbour, Wandsworth, and is planning massive and ruthless spending cuts for the coming financial year.

The council plans to axe school meals, and cut back on maintenance of school buildings; to privatise school cleaning and shut a children's home and luncheon clubs.

If they succeed in these plans then more cuts will follow.

The first service to come up for the Tory chop is the school meals service. The Education budget is to be cut by £1.2 million. Already "rationalised" to the bone, services and jobs must now go, say the Tories.

But the workers are fighting back. A one-day strike was organised and on the eve of the action I talked to Bette Head, a school meals worker.

Why are you on strike tomorrow?

Because the Tory Council is planning to close down all the school meals. The kids will get no hot meals. Only a handful of kids, whose parents are on supplementary benefit, will get anything — and they will only get a sandwich, not a hot meal. Oh, and an apple!

What is the system for kids getting school meals now and what will the proposed change mean?

Well, all the kids now go in and have their meals. But, under the new system kids on supplementary benefit will be singled out. The other kids will go on at them 'you are poor'. It will be hard for them.

What will be the effect on jobs?

I went to a meeting last night — it will do away with 300 jobs, nearly all the workers are women. I doubt whether we would get jobs anywhere else. It will be very bad. There aren't many jobs around here.

They have been cutting and cutting the school meals service. They've already cut kitchen staff and mid-day supervisors — the hours have been cut by half. Where there were four workers they've cut to three. If you worked two hours it is now one hour.

How was the strike organised?

I don't really know. There are leaflets and meetings. I'm not in a union. I work for 1½ hours a day. I didn't think it



"I didn't think it was worth it being in a union. But now I'm joining tomorrow..."

was worth it, being in a union. But now this has come about I'm joining tomorrow!

The teachers have said they support us. None of the teachers will do our jobs tomorrow. One headmaster has signed a letter supporting us.

The headmistress at my school has had a letter from the Education Chief to say she must report the names of everyone who doesn't go into work. Maybe he wants to give us double time for staying out!

What reason are they giving for these cuts?

Money — they're going to do all this — cut 300 jobs, stop hot dinners to kids for a meagre saving of £7,500 a year. There is a march and lobby of the council next week. I'm doing placards for that. They are cutting everything. It's terrible.

Hospital protest

HOSPITAL workers, consultants, porters, domestics, nurses and midwives joined with the public outside the South London Hospital on International Women's Day to publicise the threat to the hospital and to get support for the march and rally on Saturday March 19.

The workers provided an empty bed to highlight the 850 beds which have already been lost in the District, and a skeleton as a stark reminder of what health cuts and hospital closures mean.

Support for the campaign is growing daily. Saturday meetings in shopping areas have brought widespread support. Thousands are signing petitions. The hospital

workers are making banners and badges and meeting regularly to plan, future action.

The South London is just one of many London hospitals scheduled for the chop. Last week a trial period of experimenting with prescribing generic drugs instead of brand name drugs showed that over £30 million a year could be saved on the NHS budget — money which should be used to keep the working class healthy instead of the drug companies wealthy.

But, instead of changing

the prescription practices, Fowler is cutting beds and closing hospitals instead.

The dismantling of the NHS, coupled with the leak of Cabinet papers which give a clear picture of how the Tories see women (in the home, caring for the young, old and ill), make the fight-back on health and welfare cuts the most important arena for fighting women's oppression.

The demonstration outside the South London Hospital shows the way forward — workers and public united to stop the cuts and kick out the Tories.

Bad news for COHSE

THE results have been published of the election for General Secretary of the Confederation of Health Service Employees (COHSE).

David Williams, the right-wing Assistant General Secretary, was elected with a vote of over 27,500 — nearly 4 times as many

as his nearest rival, Malcolm MacMillan. The total COHSE membership is approximately 230,000.

This was hardly a surprise result, given the situation of the Union in general, and the circumstances of the ballot in particular.

The un-numbered

ballot papers — more than required for the number of members in each Branch — were entirely in the hands of the Branch Secretaries to distribute. This method is wide open to abuse, especially in the many Branches which are kept non-functioning by Branch Secretaries!

COHSE has a reputation of being a right-wing union, but during the mass industrial action in the NHS last year, several attempts were made by Branches ranging from Edinburgh to Guildford to achieve indefinite strike. These attempts were all broken under the weight of the bureaucracy of COHSE and the TUC NHS Committee, headed by COHSE's retiring General Secretary, Albert Spanswick.

Nevertheless, there was a groundswell of feeling against the tactics of this leadership, which eventually procured a sell-out

settlement to the dispute.

The Broad Left, known as 'Group '81', sponsored Andrea Campbell for General Secretary. She stood on the Broad Left platform of democratising the Union to make it work for all the membership, and of support for the membership in the fight not only for pay, but for the Health Service itself.

Address

Her election address spelled out the need for occupations and supporting strike action in the fight against the cuts.

Sister Campbell won 1,761 votes.

Unfortunately, another Group '81 supporter, Haddu Mohammed, stood against Andrea Campbell, as did also the Regional Full-time Secretary for Scotland, and the national Education officer, Malcolm MacMillan.

As runner-up to Williams, Macmillan polled 7,000 votes — far more than the other Left candidates. As a nationally-known figure in the Union, he was seen as progressive in the sense of being outside the traditional closed clique of national bureaucrats.

The Union now faces the need for a fight against mass privatisation and the end of the Health Service as we know it, under a General Secretary more right-wing than Spanswick. It seems a bleak prospect.

But then none of our Union leaders predicted last year's massive pay struggle, which saw the awakening of NHS workers on an unprecedented scale. Hopefully we will not forget the potential strength we realised last year — despite the efforts of our incoming General Secretary.

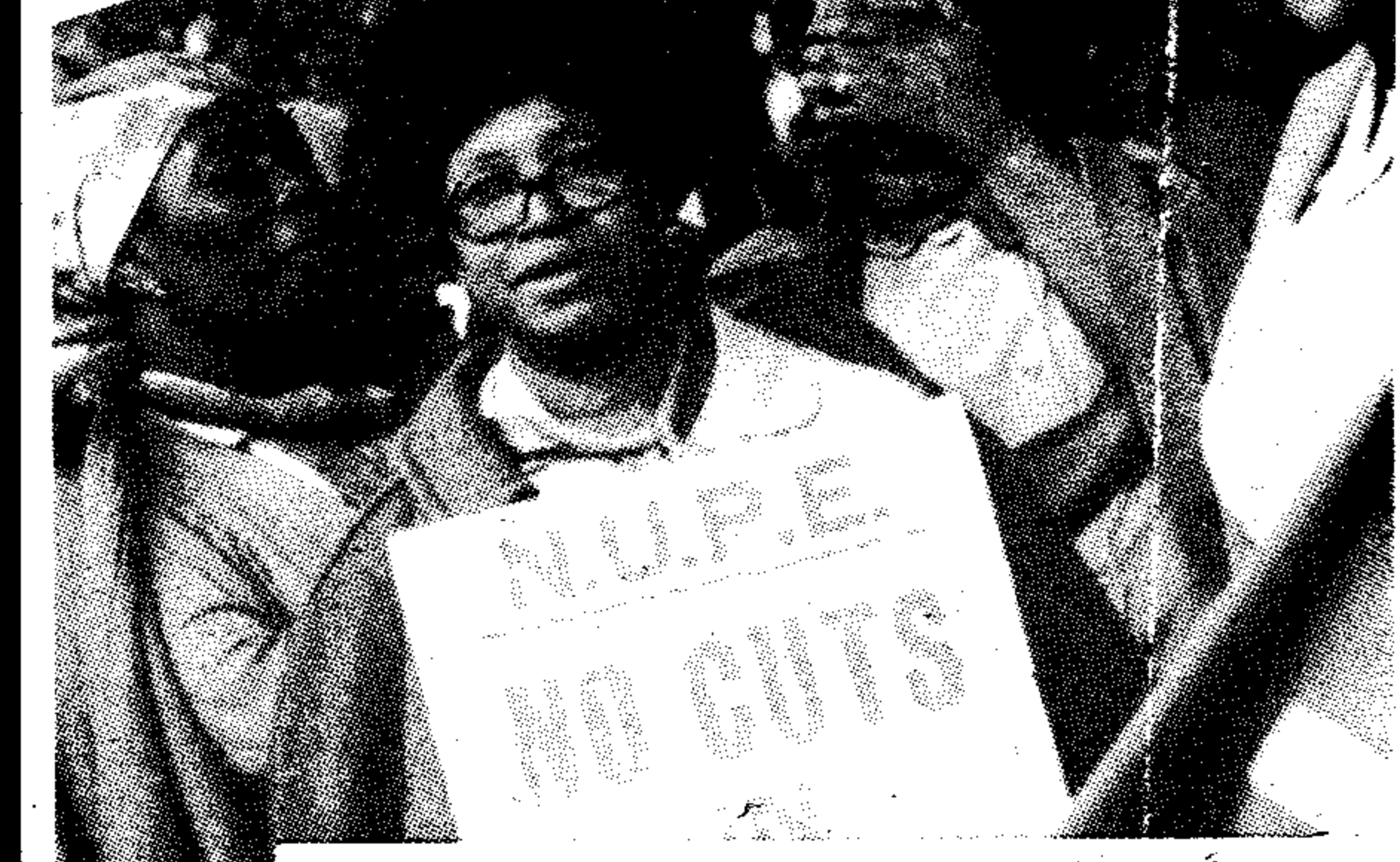
Angela Gregory



JOHN HARRIS

Spanswick — a right-winger elected to succeed him

March to DEFEND



S. London Hospital!

March and rally: March 19, 11am from St Benedict's Hospital, Church Lane, London SW17

British Labour and a united Ireland

Clive Soley is deputy Labour Party spokesperson on Northern Ireland. He has been quoted repeatedly in the press as speaking out for a united Ireland (the official Labour Party policy). He appears to be cast from a different mould from men like former Labour Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland, Roy Mason and Merlyn Rees, not to speak of Don Concannon, the present Labour shadow Secretary of State.

Labour's recent record on Northern Ireland is a crying scandal for the Labour movement. It was the Labour government and Roy Mason who abolished political status, and thus started from the British government side the five years long fight about criminalisation in the H-Blocks which culminated in the death of ten men on hunger strike in 1981.

Jonathan Hammond and John O'Mahony interviewed Clive Soley for Socialist Organiser in mid-February. In the earlier part Soley expounds Labour Party policy and his own views. In the latter part of the interview we discuss some of the issues with him.

Next week: part 2, and a commentary by Jonathan Hammond and John O'Mahony.

vote in British elections, he can vote in Irish elections, and, I would hope, could stand in elections on both sides too.

I think we would be looking very quickly for a major effort to harmonise various matters on the economy, social factors, and political institutions north and south of the Border. I believe the Border has distorted the economies of both North and South alike. One of the things I would want to consider very urgently would be an all-Ireland Economic Development Council. I'd also like to look at some form of all-Ireland council, or a sort of British-Irish council — with elected representatives from the North and the South, and possibly from Britain.

We'd want to consider an all-Ireland police force, recruited — and I emphasise this — from both sides of the Border, trained in a common training school, with a common sense of identity.

I would say to people who are worried about an all-Ireland police force that unless you do consider things like that, then frankly you are not serious about a united Ireland. At the end of the day, there has to be a police force that can cross that border, and it's an important step forward.

There's a whole range of factors of that sort which we'd want to consider.

JH: You seem to be leading towards the idea of a federation between Britain and Ireland, and a united Ireland within that federation.

CS: No. I don't think there is any chance of a federation between Britain and Ireland. If people wanted it, I wouldn't rule it out, but frankly I don't think it is realistic. What I do think would be more likely, although I would stress that I am not looking for this particularly, is a federal Ireland. That makes sense — whether on the existing borders or not, is another matter.

A federal Ireland would, I think, provide a recognition that the Unionists are a significant part of the population, and do have anxieties about certain social legislation, abortion rights, etc. You can deal with that in a federal system quite well. But frankly I don't think there is any chance of a federation between Britain and Ireland. I do think that with the Border out of the way, there could be a much closer, more healthy, relationship.

JO'M: Dick Spring, the Irish Labour Party leader, recently talked about seeking a solution within the broader framework of the EEC.

CS: I wouldn't rule it out. We've got to

Roy Mason



be very open and flexible in our approach. But having said that, again I wouldn't be optimistic.

My view is that the reason why we've always had a problem in Northern Ireland is because we have always dealt with it as though it is a problem of the people of Northern Ireland or Ireland. But in fact it's a British problem as well.

If we believe that Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom, OK, let's integrate it into the UK. But no government ever has. No government has ever treated it as part of the UK. We have always treated it differently, and therefore I think we have to make up our minds.

An EEC intervention — well, it might help, but at the end of the day we're still going to have to make that decision ourselves. If you have a family quarrel, it's no good inviting the neighbours in to sort it out.

JH: You talk about the need to get the consent of the Unionist population. But that's a two-way thing — because you also need to get the consent of the Republican population in Northern Ireland and in the Republic.

What is your view of the growth of Troops Out sentiment, not only in Northern Ireland, but in the Labour Party? What is Labour's current view of Provisional Sinn Fein? Does Labour think they have a contribution to make to bringing about Irish unity? What about Frank Allaun's recent statement that the Labour Party should start recruiting in Northern Ireland? On the face of it, it would seem to be a sensible idea — in the light of the ideas you've just put forward? Do you support it?

CS: When we say consent, what we are talking about is a majority — whether Catholic or Protestant, just a majority — of those people coming out in favour of a united Ireland. Obviously I would prefer it to be more than 750,001, but that's a majority. So it's not as difficult a task as it looks on the face of it.

You are dependent, obviously, on an Irish government wanting this outcome. At the end of the day it's got to be negotiated with them. But we are looking for a majority of the people in the North, measured by a poll or by institutions like a new Assembly, or whatever.

On the Labour Party organising in Northern Ireland — I feel it would be a mistake. I don't think it would work, and I think there is a hidden and very real danger in it that you'll end up with a Catholic trade union movement and a Protestant trade union movement. That would be disastrous.

My view is that nationalism, sadly, is a stronger force than class, and until we resolve the question of national identity we won't resolve the question of class politics. Therefore I think it is a non-starter. But if they are successful, OK, I'll relate to that party.

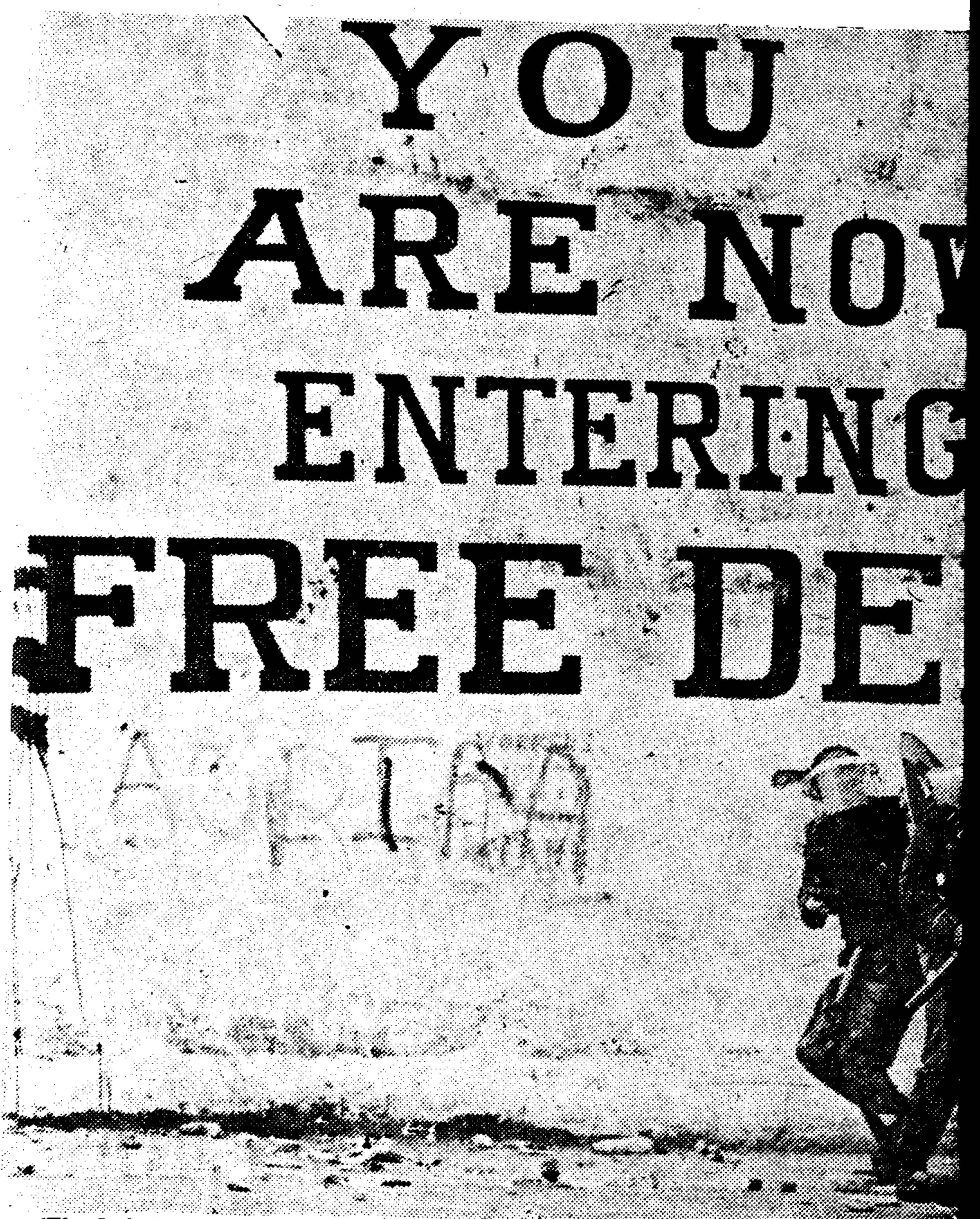
Provisional Sinn Fein? I dearly wish it will do the ballot box and drop the armalite. They can't do both at the same time sensibly or honestly. They might be moving in that direction, though not immediately. It's anybody's guess.

People who have not broken the law are people whom, at the end of the day, you can't refuse to talk to, and that's not a problem as I see it. I still say: drop the armalite.

JH: Do you see withdrawal of troops as an objective of Labour Party policy?

CS: The aim should be troops back to barracks as soon as possible. That is actually happening, but slowly. We want to continue it as quickly as possible.

I'm not a Troops Out man, nor am I



'The Catholic population began to feel the full weight of the British presence'

for setting dates for British withdrawal. I see a policy of British withdrawal from Ireland as opposed to a policy for a united Ireland. It does not follow that if we withdraw our troops then you will have a united Ireland.

We all know that some unionists are prepared to fight for an independent Northern Ireland. I don't think it would work, but I do know that plenty of them are prepared to fight for it.

Therefore my view is that policies that are designed simply to get Britain out don't provide a solution. They simply get Britain out, which might be nice for us but doesn't solve the problem.

JH: As you know, the first post-war Labour government set a precise time-table for withdrawal from India. You don't see that as a realistic option for the next Labour government and Northern Ireland?

CS: No, I don't think so. These areas are always very difficult. We look back on the India operation as a success. It was a success for Britain, in that it got us out. But it wasn't a success for the millions who died — and millions did die. And it created the split Pakistan state which led to yet more wars.

We have got to do this in a manner which does leave a united Ireland and not just an Ireland divided in a different way. We must do it with the minimum loss of life. There is going to be some loss of life whatever we do, no ifs and buts about it. It's a violent situation, and the violence is going to stay for a while whatever we do.

JO'M: How would you define Britain's motive for staying in? There used to be military considerations up to the '40s

and later, and economic considerations a long time ago. How would you define the motives now?

CS: I don't think I would ever have defined it as simply one thing or the other. I agree that the military considerations were major. I don't think they are any more. I think it is a mixture of economic, social, cultural and political, and in part military, things. I don't go into Irish history in depth: there's so much of it you can pursue it forever.

My job as a politician is to recognise that we have got a problem now and try to resolve it. You only need to look at the fact that the vast bulk of the Protestant community come from Scotland to realise that you have a very distinct cultural group there. You then have a distinct cultural group in the Anglo-Irish, and also the original Gaelic Irish. So it's very complex, and I'd hate to say it was purely economic or purely military. That would be to ignore an awful lot of complexities. I think the only similarities to Ireland are places like Cyprus and Israel/Palestine.

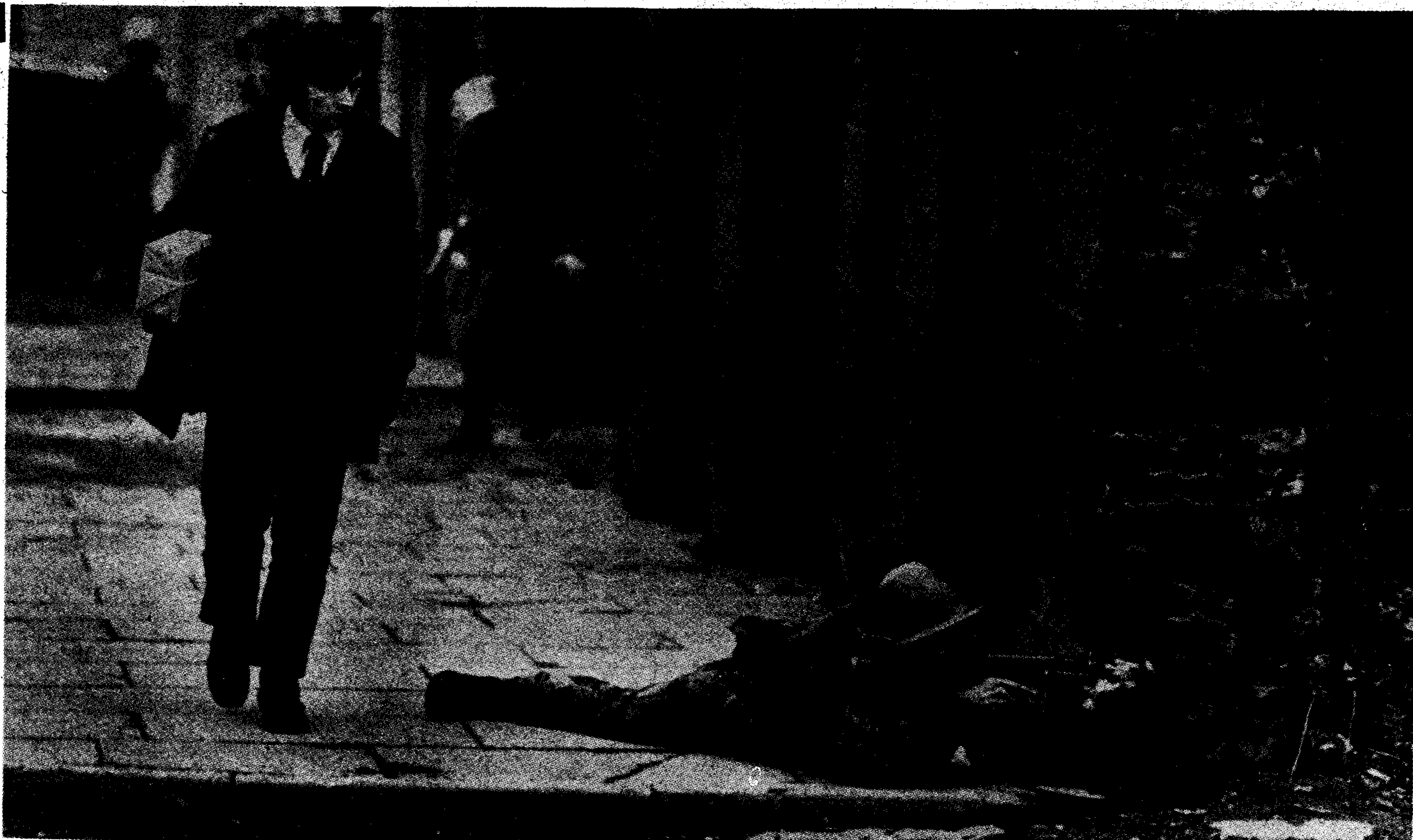
JH: But would the package of economic and social and political reforms you speak of really affect Catholic/Protestant polarisation for the better. Wouldn't it just scratch the surface?

CS: Initially they might not have all that much effect. Some of them would. But as we went on, we would have more and more effect.

Let me give you an example. If we were successful in harmonising pensions on both sides of the Border — which is not impossible — then I would be quite prepared to administer pension pay-

nd

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William Street, Derry: British troops 'trying to hold everything together...'



politics of Ireland until I came into this House in 1979. I always felt there should be a united Ireland. Then when the civil rights movement came along in the late 1960s I got very excited. I thought there was a good chance of real political and economic progress by peaceful means.

I think the destruction of that civil rights movement was a crucial step. A lot of people have got a lot to answer for. The main people are the Stormont government, and then the paramilitaries on both sides of the divide over there.

Because, leaving aside the obvious things the Loyalists and the Stormont government did, the other thing that happened is that the IRA, as it then was, recognised that the initial popularity of the British troops could not be allowed to continue. So they started their policy of shooting at British forces. British forces totally unequipped to deal with that situation, backed by both Labour and Tory ministers, then began to crack down where they thought the threat really came from, which was the Catholic population.

And then you get everything you have described — searches, people being arrested wrongly, etc., so that the Catholic population began to feel the full weight of the British presence, and that is what alienated them.

I don't blame them for being alienated in exactly the same way as the Prevention of Terrorism Act alienated them, because they all get lifted under it. We all know that. That's how it came about.

It's very difficult to reverse that process quickly. At the end of the day it is going to need to be reversed. But in the meantime we must just stick with the main objective of a united Ireland, because all of these things are symptoms of the problem. The problem is the Border.

JO'M: But WHY do you think the civil rights movement of the late '60s turned into the armed offensive led by the IRA?

CS: I think the civil rights movement was a threat to the paramilitary groups on both sides. Certainly it was a massive threat to the Stormont government and the Loyalists generally. There is no doubt in my mind that a whole lot of people who had a very fixed view of how they saw things developing, thinking they represented their particular group, set out to destroy the movement.

JO'M: The IRA scarcely existed in 1969.

CS: Well, it existed all right, and it existed enough to do the damage by turning on the British troops.

JO'M: The Provisionals emerged at the end of 1969 as part of a reaction against the fact that over the previous seven years there had been an evolution towards peaceful methods by the old IRA. They were involved in the civil rights agitation. They had no guns, or scarcely any, during the pogroms of 1969. The IRA didn't in fact...

CS: I'm quite prepared to accept that you know more about the IRA than I do. I wasn't deeply involved. But I put it to you that there was an effort to alienate the minority community from the British

presence there when the troops were first brought in. Is that not correct?

JO'M: I doubt it — not at first. I could, for example, tell you in detail about how the British army was allowed into Catholic Free Derry, and the protective barricades (erected in August 1969) voluntarily taken down, in October 1969. It was actually organised by the Republicans. Later the IRA split and things changed.

But can I put the point in a different way? It seems to me that there was an absolutely necessary political logic in the development from civil rights to the IRA offensive, in that the basic civil right that the Catholics lacked was the right of self determination.

CS: Right.

The whole logic of the struggle for limited objectives led to a Protestant backlash, which in turn pushed the Catholics, in fear and terror, towards self-defence, and then boosted those who wanted to go on an armed offensive, after the IRA split.

That takes us back to what you said about waiting for a majority in the Northern state. The point is that it has been artificially carved out — very artificially. 35% of the population are opposed to the state's existence. Over the past 15 years, in fact from before the violent phase, when it was a question of Britain putting pressure to reform on the old Orange state, the central problem has been that the state was deliberately designed to give a permanent Protestant majority. It was not reformable. You say you want a new beginning. Yet you are committed to remaining within the narrow limitations of a state which has a built-in Protestant sectarian majority.

CS: These are very important points, and I recognise the logic of what you have just said. I'd go along with quite a bit of it. I'd have reservations about some of it. What I would stress to you is that the key to this is having the political skill and determination to go through with the political, social, economic and institutional changes regardless of opposition from the Unionist groups.

I don't mean rough-riding over them. I am saying that we would not accept that they had a veto — for example, on setting up an all-Ireland Economic Development Council, or an all-Ireland police force, and a whole host of other things of that nature.

If you do that, you are saying something you've never said before to the unionists: it's not just that we want to get things better in Northern Ireland. We are saying to you that we don't want you in the UK any more, we want you in a united Ireland. That is a very different message going out to the Unionists than has gone out before.

I don't think you can assume that all unionists are hard-liners who will fight in the last ditch. Obviously there are lots of those. They keep making their presence felt. But there are also a lot of them saying things that would not have said even five years ago, let alone ten. 'Well, we can't go on as we are, can we?', for example. That's a very significant change.

need to remember that we were still in a very early stage of grappling with the problem. We've done a lot more thinking about it. I would hope we've learned from that. I recognise that it would be extremely difficult. But with determination and skill I think we can do it.

JH: There has been a lot of — justified — criticism of one of your fellow spokesmen on Ireland, Don Concannon, for the crassness and insensitivity of his visit to Bobby Sands on his death-bed. Concannon obviously represents a strong point of view in the Labour Party.

CS: I wasn't involved in any discussions with Don about the visit, so therefore I don't know if the popular image is quite right. I think he would have a very different view of it. It ought to be recognised, in fairness, that he was asked to carry out that visit by the then leader of the Party. Whether it was right or wrong, sensitive or insensitive, I can't say.

Don is now committed to the policy that is being described, and that to my mind is good.

Roy Mason's policy

JO'M: Would you defend Roy Mason's policy after the bringing down of the power-sharing executive by the Orange general strike — withdrawal of political status, a hard line 'security policy' for the Catholic areas?

CS: I don't think I'd defend the records of a number of previous Secretaries of State! It's very easy to sit back and criticise when in fact what happened, I think, is that successive Labour governments and successive Labour Parties — it

wasn't just the government, it was the Party as a whole — never really thought about Northern Ireland until it blew up in their face, and then the first thing we did was to try to hold everything together.

We tried to clamp down on violence. I remember the outrage at the time of the 1974 pub bombing. Now everybody is against the Prevention of Terrorism Act. My own view on that has always been the same. But at the time that Act was passed, there was an awful lot of support for it in the labour movement.

I thought we would never crush the violence until we had dealt with the political problems. But some people have forgotten what they were saying at the time.

JO'M: Can I put to you a view of what Mason did? You have a situation where the government balances between the Protestants and the Catholics. The Labour government capitulated to the Orange general strike in May 1974. I think it simply let its strategy (power-sharing and a Council of Ireland) be wiped out. Then it swung in the opposite direction and, after he succeeded Merlyn Rees, Mason adopted a policy that was essentially one of beating down the Catholics.

There is a lot of evidence of very widespread searches of thousands of Catholic homes. It amounted to terrorisation. It was basically a policy of holding the ring, doing nothing, sweating it out — immediately after buckling under the pressure of the Orange strike. That's what happened.

CS: I understand that view. Can I say how I see it? I wasn't involved in the

ts from Dublin. So if you are a hard-unionist, and you get your giro in the from Dublin, then you could tear it or blow it up, but my guess is that would cash it.

hat I'm after is the vast majority of people prepared to enter into a unit-eland.

Back in 1974 we have the very effective Loyalist strike. The Labour government more or less capitulated to it. In the fact that Paisley and other line Protestants might do the same again if you introduced such a change, what guarantees do we have a new Labour government would not be the same as its predecessor?

I don't have any, because all governments when they come under pressure have to move. It is unrealistic to end otherwise.

However, having said that, I think this requires a great deal of political determination and political skill. The is to do it in such a way that you allow either of the main antagonist to bring down our proposals. You going always for what is workable, pushing people in a certain direction. It will be maybe two steps forward, one step back now and then. But got to be very clear progress in a forward.

hope we could deal with a crisis like but my first aim would be to avoid

But Britain's whole strategy was in 1974 by the Orange general

's aren't true, yes. But we

This was no freak result!

WHEN I first became actively involved in politics in 1968, it was only natural that I should join Bermondsey Labour Party. I knew nothing of those radical organisations with the strange initials. The predominance of council housing meant that Bermondsey was anything but cosmopolitan.

At General Election time it was just a straight fight between Labour and the token Tory. The Liberals didn't even bother standing. With my grandparents living in the 'Garden city' socialist paradise of Wilson Grove, and my parents being pre-war members of the Labour League of Youth it had to be the Labour Party for me.

Unfortunately, the Bricklayers Ward in Spa Road 15 years ago was about as inspiring as an omnibus edition of Crossroads. The 'politics' was strictly parish pump - the most heated issue, I seem to remember, was that of dogs fouling the pavements.

Apart from myself, the meeting was attended by five people. Two were pensioners and the other three were councillors. The youngest among them was probably pushing 40 and smoked a Harold Wilson pipe.

When the meeting concluded, I asked about the Young Socialists. "The trouble with them was that they were too political. We had to close them down".

'It wasn't the Liberals that won at Bermondsey; it was the media', argued Kevin Flack in SO last week. Bas Hardy argues that the Liberals not only won, but may well continue to win.

Bermondsey Labour Party was, in 1968, obviously not where things were at.

It was not concerned about Vietnam, South Africa, anti-fascism and all the other burning issues of the day. It was senile, complacent and reactionary. It was Harold Wilson, George Brown, Callaghan and Bob "I think that Enoch Powell talks a lot of sense about immigration" Mellish.

Like a lot of others on the left I sought to bypass the Labour Party until I realised that the revolution was not going to be made between Kings Cross and the Caledonian Road. By the time I properly reintegrated into the Labour Party I had moved to Liverpool, Edge Hill.

Here was something pretty familiar. A working class inner-city area with a

high number of old people. A 'safe' Labour seat for 30 years, and an MP who had done nothing for his constituents for most of that time.

By 1977, the movement for democratisation in the Labour Party was on the up and Edge Hill CLP unanimously kicked out Sir Arthur Irvine as its MP. When he died, however, a by-election in March 1979 turned a large Labour majority into a Liberal majority of over 8,000.

Edge Hill

There are three important differences between the Edge Hill by-election and Bermondsey. Firstly Edge Hill has an extremely low proportion of council housing. Secondly, the Liberals have been in



The Bermondsey count - is this the pattern for other inner-city "safe seats"?

control of Liverpool City Council for a number of years and have used this position to political advantage, especially in the sphere of housing. (The frequent libel writs Liberals issue against opponents prevent me from further comment).

Finally the Edge Hill Labour candidate in 1979 (March and May) had the charisma of a sponge pudding and the local Labour Party was no match for the Liberal campaign machine. In all other respects however the by-elections were very similar.

Smear

In Edge Hill in March 1979 the national officers of the Labour Party gave us the distinct impression that they were out to lose us the seat. It wasn't so much a deliberate ploy as sheer incompetence and ineptitude.

Then of course there was the smear campaign on the lines of "Labour hijacked by Trotskysts". In Bermondsey the Liberals didn't need to go in for this because O'Grady and Fleet Street were doing it for them. Nevertheless, Liverpool Liberals are well-known for their 'dirty politics'.

People said that Ber-

mondsey was a freak result. They said the same about Edge Hill. In my opinion the Liberals will go on winning seats like these over the next five years.

They have the best by-election machinery of all three major parties and can really concentrate their forces. Secondly, many voters will not take the explanation "it has all changed in the Labour Party now that the right wing has been kicked out". They see what has happened to them as a failure of Labour, pure and simple.

In Edge Hill we thought that Alton's victory would be reversed in a General Election. It didn't happen. His majority was cut from 8,000 to 4,000. This is now a safe Liberal seat.

The Liberals are presenting an image locally that they are like what the Labour Party used to be, or rather what people imagine it used to be. In Bermondsey, I think the same thing will happen. I cannot see the Liberal being shifted no matter how 'good' the Labour candidate, and clearly Peter Tatchell is the best Labour MP Bermondsey never had.

A fundamental lesson to learn from these two by-election defeats is the difficulty of trying to relate politically to old working class people. I can't see an

immediate way around this. I am merely pointing out that this section of the oppressed has been very much neglected, if not maligned or patronised by the left.

43% of the Bermondsey electorate were classed as elderly by one of the media surveys. They really were the ones to fall victim to the anti-Tatchell smears put about by the robbers dog O'Grady, probably with the help of fascist elements. Examples of this I heard were "Do you know that if you're gay or lesbian you can get a council flat dead easy?" or "They say Peter Tatchell lives on the Rockingham Estate but he doesn't actually live there. He's a squatter." or "He rides around on a bicycle, but someone saw him driving a car the other day."

If this is the kind of crap working class people actually believe, then it is a real uphill job to change their minds. Old people are passive victims of councils, planners, media and governments. It is really the problem of "ageism", the left must address itself to.

Every bad byelection result might not have a silver lining. In Edge Hill the Liberal vote was a vacuum cleaner sucking up all the fringe votes. In Bermondsey, however, it

was pleasing to find that Screaming Lord Sutch did well, coming fifth in the poll with 97 votes. Pleasing in the sense that it showed the total irrelevance of the Communist Party (50 votes) to the working class.

Despite the press, the right wing ex-Labour mafia, the Foot leadership, the bigotry, etc., Peter Tatchell won nearly 8,000 votes. That in itself is a victory. Tatchell has helped in the restructuring and rebuilding of the Labour Movement. I hope he stands again in the General Election and wins the seat.

It is up to the rest of us to realise that turning the Labour Party into an organisation that truly represents the interests of the working class is not a straight-forward task which can be achieved overnight. It will be a patchy struggle with many setbacks.

The present project of the Labour right is for an SDP mark II. This must be resisted. An exodus from the Labour Party of people who don't like losing elections will be an abject betrayal of socialism.

Peter Tatchell has politicised Bermondsey Labour Party. That is the reason why he is hated by our enemies. We have to carry on that struggle and turn electoral defeats into victory.

What we learned from our strike

WHAT'S the value of the settlement?

I don't know. Till you actually get your wage packet it's difficult to say. Somewhere in the region of 10 to 12%, but it varies. Of course it's over 16 months. It will mean more to me as a shift man than to a day man, and most people are day men.

What's the attitude of the others at the depot?

Well, you've seen our resolution: firstly, an attitude of disgust at the way the whole thing has been handled.

Secondly, we want to see a national body. Firstly to do something about the full time officers, secondly to coordinate the way the Joint Working Party's recommendations are put into effect.

They mean changing the Productivity Payment Schemes, that is Water Industry Productivity

IAN DRAYTON (Sheffield GMBU) spoke to Rob Dawber about the water workers' strike

weeks. By then we would have had a national stewards' committee, and could have organised a co-ordinated response to any new offer.

But the chances are that there will be some sort of national body. Firstly to do something about the full time officers, secondly to coordinate the way the Joint Working Party's recommendations are put into effect.

They mean changing the Productivity Payment Schemes, that is Water Industry Productivity

Payment schemes. They're just a basic tightening up.

Not only do jobs go, but bonuses will fall. Under the old schemes you could earn more than a third, but under the WIPP schemes it's very difficult.

As to the Officers, they've given us no guidance, no leadership or whatever. They've just um-ed and ah-ed.

What do you think you've learnt from the strike?

Firstly, there's no way you can win a strike on your own, you've got to have the support of the labour movement.

To that extent you've got to be prepared to use your own literature, talk to branch meetings, see convenors at workplaces, address worksite meetings.

Secondly that if you want the strike to be successful you've all got to pull together. It's no good saying "I'll just leave it to the

other blokes to get on with it". And I think after about the first week that people did realise this, apart from an extreme minority who would have nothing whatever to do with the strike.

It's brought everyone closer together, and hopefully we can capitalise on that to maintain the turnout to the branch meetings, which has been running at something like 40-50%. Our branch covers more than just Blackburn Meadows, but there it's been 99%.

What's been your experiences of support from other workers and the official labour movement?

The vast majority of workplaces we visited were extremely sympathetic and we chatted to them for about an hour, half an hour. It was only the minority that took a rather cynical view that the only reason we'd got in contact with them was because we



Angry militants corner NUPE negotiator Ron Keating during the settlement talks

wanted some money out of them.

Last year, if we'd approached the branch and asked them for, say, a levy of 10p a week to go into the strike fund, maybe to help other groups of

workers in dispute, they would have told us no way.

Now, when someone asked from the floor what are we going to do with the strike fund, I said we've got two alternatives. We can split it among ourselves or

we can keep it in the fund and dole it out as and when we see fit to other causes or whatever. The second choice was decided unanimously. There was no other thought in their minds.

JOHN HARRIS

ANDREW WARD (REPORT)

Karl Marx died 100 years ago on March 14. We reprint a brief review, by his co-thinker Frederick Engels, of Marx's 'Capital'

AS LONG as there have been capitalists and workers on earth, no book has appeared which is of as much importance for the workers as the one before us. The relation between capital and labour, the hinge on which our entire present system of society turns, is here treated scientifically for the first time...

Political economy up to now has taught us that labour is the source of all wealth and the measure of all values, so that two objects whose production has cost the same labour-time possess the same value and must also be exchanged for each other, since on the average only equal values are exchangeable for one another.

At the same time, however, it teaches that there exists a kind of stored-up labour which it calls capital; that this capital, owing to the auxiliary sources contained in it, raises the productivity of living labour a hundred and a thousand-fold, and in return claims a certain compensation which is termed profit or gain. As we all know, this occurs in reality in such a way that the profits of stored-up, dead labour become ever more massive, the capital of the capitalists becomes ever more colossal, while the wages of living labour constantly decrease, and the mass of workers living solely on wages grows ever more numerous and poverty-stricken.

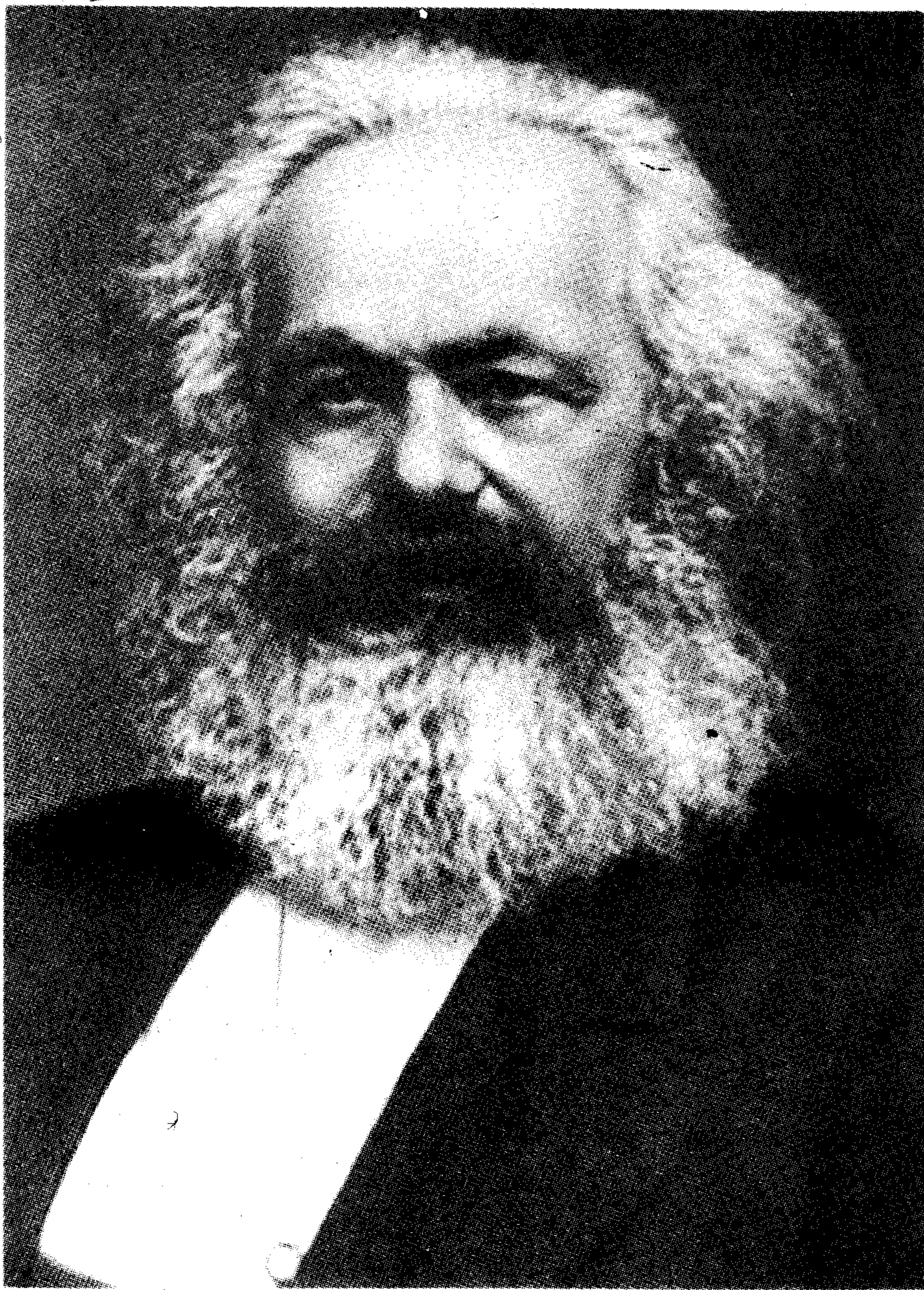
How is this contradiction to be solved? How can there remain a profit for the capitalist if the worker gets back the full value of the labour he adds to his product? And yet this should be the case, since only equal values are exchanged.

Surplus value from unpaid labour

On the other hand, how can equal values be exchanged, how can the worker receive the full value of his product, if, as is admitted by many economists, this product is divided between him and the capitalist? Economics up to now has been helpless in the face of this contradiction and writes or stutters embarrassed meaningless phrases. Even the previous socialist critics of economics were unable to do more than emphasise the contradiction; no one has solved it, until now at last Marx has traced the process by which this profit arises right to its birthplace and has thereby made everything clear.

In tracing the develop-

100 YEARS SINCE KARL MARX



ment of capital, Marx starts from the simple, notoriously obvious fact that the capitalists turn their capital to account by exchange: they buy commodities above their value, or buyers and afterwards sell them for more money than they cost them. For example, a capitalist buys cotton for 1,000 talers and then sells it for 1,100, thus "earning" 100 talers. This excess of 100 talers over the original capital Marx calls surplus value. Where does this surplus value come from? According to the economists' assumption, only equal values are exchanged, and in the sphere of abstract theory this is correct.

Hence, the purchase of cotton and its subsequent sale can just as little yield surplus value as the exchange of a silver taler for thirty silver groschen and the re-exchange of the small coins for a silver

taler, a process by which one becomes neither richer nor poorer.

But surplus value can just as little arise from sellers selling commodities above their value, or buyers buying them below their value, because each one is in turn buyer and seller and this would, therefore, again balance.

No more can it arise from buyers and sellers reciprocally overreaching each other, for this would create no new or surplus value, but would only distribute the existing capital differently between the capitalists. In spite of the fact that the capitalist buys the commodities at their value and sells them at their value, he gets more value out than he put in. How does this happen?

Under present social conditions the capitalist finds on the commodity market a commodity which has the peculiar property

that its use is a source of new value, is a creation of new value. This commodity is labour-power.

What is the value of labour power? The value of every commodity is measured by the labour required for its production. Labour power exists in the shape of the living worker who needs a definite amount of means of subsistence for himself and for his family, which ensures the continuance of labour power even after his death. Hence the labour time necessary for producing these means of subsistence represents the value of labour power. The capitalist pays him weekly and thereby purchases the use of one week's labour of the worker. So far Messrs. the economists will pretty well agree with us as to the value of labour power.

The capitalist now sets his worker to work. In a certain time the worker will have delivered as much labour as was represented by his weekly wage. Supposing that the weekly wage of a worker represents three labour days, then, if the worker begins on Monday he has by Wednesday evening replaced for the capitalist the full value of the wage paid. But does he then stop working? By no means. The capitalist has bought his week's labour and the worker must go on working during the last three days of the week too. This surplus labour of the worker, over and above the time

necessary to replace his wage, is the source of surplus value, of profit, of the continually growing accumulation of capital.

Do not say it is an arbitrary assumption that the worker earns in three days the wages he has received and works the remaining three days for the capitalist. Whether he takes exactly three days to replace his wages, or two or four, is, of course, quite immaterial here and depends upon circumstances; the main point is that the capitalist, besides the labour he pays for, also extracts labour that he does not pay for; and this is no arbitrary assumption, for if the capitalist extracted from the worker over a long period only as much labour as he paid him for in wages, he would shut down his workshops, since indeed his whole profit would come to naught.

Here we have the solution of all those contradictions. The origin of surplus value (of which the capitalist's profit forms an important part) is now quite clear and natural. The value of the labour power is paid for, but this value is far less than that which the capitalist can extract from the labour power, and it is precisely the difference, the unpaid labour, that constitutes the share of the capitalist, or more accurately, of the capitalist class.

For even the profit that the cotton dealer made on his cotton in the above

example must consist of unpaid labour, if cotton prices have not risen. The trader must have sold it to a cotton manufacturer, who is able to extract from his product a profit for himself besides the original 100 talers, and therefore shares with him the unpaid labour he has pocketed. In general, it is this unpaid labour which maintains all the non-working members of society. The state and municipal taxes, as far as they affect the capitalist class, the rent of the landowners, etc., are paid from it. On it rests the whole existing social system.

Let us assume that the worker works three days of the week to replace his wages and three days to produce surplus value for the capitalist. Putting it otherwise, it means that with a twelve-hour working day he works six hours daily for his wages and six hours for the production of surplus value. One can get only six days out of the week, seven at most, even by including Sunday, but one can extract six, eight, ten, twelve, fifteen or even more hours of labour out of every working day. The worker sells the capitalist a working day for his day's wages. But what is a working day?

Eight hours or eighteen? It is in the capitalist's interest to make the working day as long as possible. The longer it is, the more surplus value is produced. The worker correctly feels

that every hour of labour which he performs over and above the replacement of his wage is unjustly taken from him; he experiences with his own body what it means to work excessive hours. The capitalist fights for his profit, the worker for his health, for a few hours of daily rest, to be able, as a human being, to have other occupations than working, sleeping and eating. It may be remarked in passing that it does not depend at all upon the good will of the individual capitalists whether they desire to embark on this struggle or not, since competition compels even the most philanthropic among them to join with his colleagues and to make a working time as long as theirs the rule.

The struggle for the fixing of the working day has lasted from the first appearance of free workers in history up to the present day.

We will pass over a number of other very fine investigations of more theoretical interest and come to the final chapter which deals with the accumulation of capital. Here it is first shown that the capitalist mode of production, i.e., that which presupposes capitalists on the one hand and wage-workers on the other, not only continually reproduces the capital of the capitalist, but also continually reproduces the poverty of the workers at the same time; so that it is ensured that there always exist anew, on the one hand, capitalists who are the owners of all means of subsistence, raw materials and instruments of labour, and, on the other, the great mass of workers who are compelled to sell their labour power to these capitalists for an amount of the means of subsistence which at best just suffices to maintain them capable of working and to bring up a new generation of able-bodied proletarians.

But capital is not merely reproduced; it is continually increased and multiplied — and so is its power over the propertyless workers also on an ever-greater scale and in ever-greater numbers...

The laws of capitalism

These, strictly scientifically proved — and the official economists take great care not to make even an attempt at refutation — are some of the chief laws of the modern, capitalist social system. But with this is everything said? By no means.

Just as sharply Marx stresses the bad sides of capitalist production, does he also clearly prove that this social form was necessary to develop the productive forces of society to a level which will make possible an equal development, worthy of human beings, for all members of society. All earlier forms of society were too poor for this. Capitalist production for the first time creates the wealth and the productive forces necessary for this, but at the same time it also creates in the mass of oppressed workers the social class which is more and more compelled to claim the utilisation of this wealth and these productive forces for the whole of society — instead of as today for a monopolist class.



Revolutionaries in Khabarovsk in the Far East support the Russian Revolution — carrying pictures of Marx.

Next week we'll be publishing a four page special on Marx and Marxism And over the rest of the year we'll be carrying a series of articles on Marx's writings and their background; on their relevance today; and on Marx's critics and opponents.

Loyalists - a tool of imperialism



"The Loyalist working class is the creation of British imperialism in Ireland... Britain's defeat would remove the basis for O'Mahony's problem Protestants"

SOCIALIST Organiser readers have recently been served a mass of different confused ideas about the Loyalist working class. Two long articles by John O'Mahony formed the centre-piece of debate.

His line is a development of the position he held last year, when he issued the familiar radical left calls for working class unity in the Six Counties. Now he has found a barrier to this unity.

The Protestants are a distinct community. (SO 118).

O'Mahony's response to this discovery is to advocate 'autonomy' for the Loyalists 'within the framework of a united Ireland'. Looking into the future, he brings up a point held dear by those who justify the continued partition of Ireland.

"The Protestants of Northern Ireland would be oppressed within a united Ireland which bore any resemblance to the Southern state." (SO119).

Backward

O'Mahony expresses little concern for the Irish nationalists who are suffering today at the hands of British oppression. Nor does he see the contradiction in presuming that a united Ireland could resemble the Southern state. The Twenty-Six Counties set-up is as much a creation of partition as the Six Counties. The backward nature of the society is primarily caused by

Britain's oppression of Ireland.

As a 'consistent democrat', O'Mahony follows through the logic of his position. He wants a new form of partition.

"I think that the best unit for federalism would be the four counties where a very big majority is Protestant." (SO 118).

How this plan can be compatible with the democratic rights of the majority of the Irish people, O'Mahony fails to explain. His conclusions stem from a failure to understand the position of Loyalist workers. He argues that Britain stays in Ireland only because the Protestants want them to, and denies that the Loyalists are a tool of British imperialism.

It is true that Loyalists act as they see it will best defend their own interests — not because they are pro-British for its own sake. But this is the limit of O'Mahony's understanding. He treats Loyalist behaviour as comprehensible in its own terms — the Protestants are different — that's all.

O'Mahony fails to see the material basis for Loyalism. The Loyalist working class is the creation of British imperialism in Ireland — a community built up and sustained on the distorted labour market which operates in the Six Counties.

'Socialists' who advocate class unity or autonomy as solutions to the problem of the Protestants are at the same time declaring their

refusal to oppose British imperialism consistently.

The defeat of Britain is a precondition for any form of unity or co-operation between all workers in Ireland. Britain's defeat would remove the basis for O'Mahony's problem Protestants.

O'Mahony denies that Irish freedom would be a massive defeat for Britain. For him, Britain stays in Ireland because the Protestants want it to. But for Britain to pull out of the Six Counties would be like pulling out of Yorkshire or Kent. Impossible! Britain's oppression of Ireland is no accidental policy. It is a central feature of the very existence of British imperialism.

Britain uses the Loyalists

to justify its oppression. The interests of the Loyalists coincide with British imperialism. Britain holds onto Ireland. The Loyalists keep their privileged social position.

Loyalism

This combination of interests is the key to understanding Loyalist 'opposition' to Britain. The UDA once briefly declared war on the British Army. But this was the opposite of an anti-imperialist action. Like the UWC strike, it was an attempt to strengthen British rule by reacting to situations where Britain wasn't doing quite enough to keep the nationalists down.

Loyalism is a product

of Britain's rule in Ireland. Britain stays to survive — not because of sympathy for Orangemen and DUP voters.

At the end of his articles, after several thousand words, O'Mahony adds a touchingly 'non-sectarian' after-thought.

"Of course, none of this proves I am right about anything." (SO 119).

Balked

This is O'Mahony's only statement that some SO supporters agree with. Many have opposed his views. Some have balked at 'autonomy' and have wanted to retain a belief in class unity. Others have emphasised the need to support Irish unity and the rights of the nationalists — without confronting O'Mahony's views on the

Protestants.

But only a few SO supporters are beginning to realise why O'Mahony is promoting his reactionary arguments. The significance of the debate is that it shows SO making its peace with the labour bureaucracy — a process which can be seen right through the pages of SO.

As the leading lights of SO adapt more and more to the British state, the need arises to destroy what remnants of principled support for Irish freedom remain within the grouping. O'Mahony's concern with the imagined rights of the Loyalist working class is only an attempt to paint a socialist gloss on a theory which is pro-imperialist through and through.

MIKE WALL
Coventry Irish Freedom Movement

Ireland - which way forward?

Following two discussion articles by John O'Mahony (Socialist Organiser nos. 118 and 119), we are offering space beyond our usual letters length to readers who wish to take up a debate on the question of the Protestants in the context of the struggle for a united Ireland

Shopping for science

LAST week I wrote about the Dutch 'Science Shops' — in particular about the University of Amsterdam Science Shop (UvAWW).

The other science shops in Holland have less financial support than the UvAWW but tend to be accepted officially by the universities where they were set up.

While it is good that science shops should be given state funds to help them bring science to the people (and in particular working class people), this does render them susceptible to pressure:

1) Pressure to make their research fit into established patterns of scientific practice, with a scientific elite dispensing knowledge to the ignorant plebs, rather than the cooperative approach that science shop workers would favour.

2) Straight political pressure culminating in cutting off funds if the authorities don't like what they're doing.

Pressure

Already, there has been pressure on the University of Amsterdam to withdraw support from the UvAWW

Les Hearn continues his look at 'Science Shops'

from a right-wing Minister of Education.

The other side of the coin of official support is that there are inadequate funds to pay researchers, so that scientists (staff or students) must do science shop research in their spare time.

Science shops try to get round this by getting their universities to accept science shop projects as part of students' course work, with some success. But this increases the tendency for the nature of the research to conform to accepted patterns.

An illustration of just how different research can be comes from a case dealt with by the independent Chemie Winkel (chemistry shop) at the University of Leiden.

Workers at a shipyard asked about hazards to health associated with repairing ships which had been used for incinerating waste chemicals, since

there had been a lot of headaches, vomiting and skin rashes, etc., amongst the workforce. Chemistry shop researchers found that information on the dangers of complicated mixtures of chemicals was virtually non-existent. So they gathered what information they could on the individual chemicals they thought likely to be in the mixtures. Then they got together a detailed questionnaire for shipyard workers and carried out personal interviews.

The resulting inventory of workers' complaints was published in a pamphlet which motivated the workers to take action on working conditions.

Depression

Another example of the inventive and unconventional approach of the science shops comes from the official science shop in Leiden. They were approached by a women's group, the Women's Foundation on Post-Natal Depression (PND), for information about the causes of PND so as to better understand how to deal with it. They set up a

working party which embarked on:

1) a search of the literature on PND in medical, psychological, feminist and general libraries;

2) research in anthropological literature to compare details with other societies and cultures;

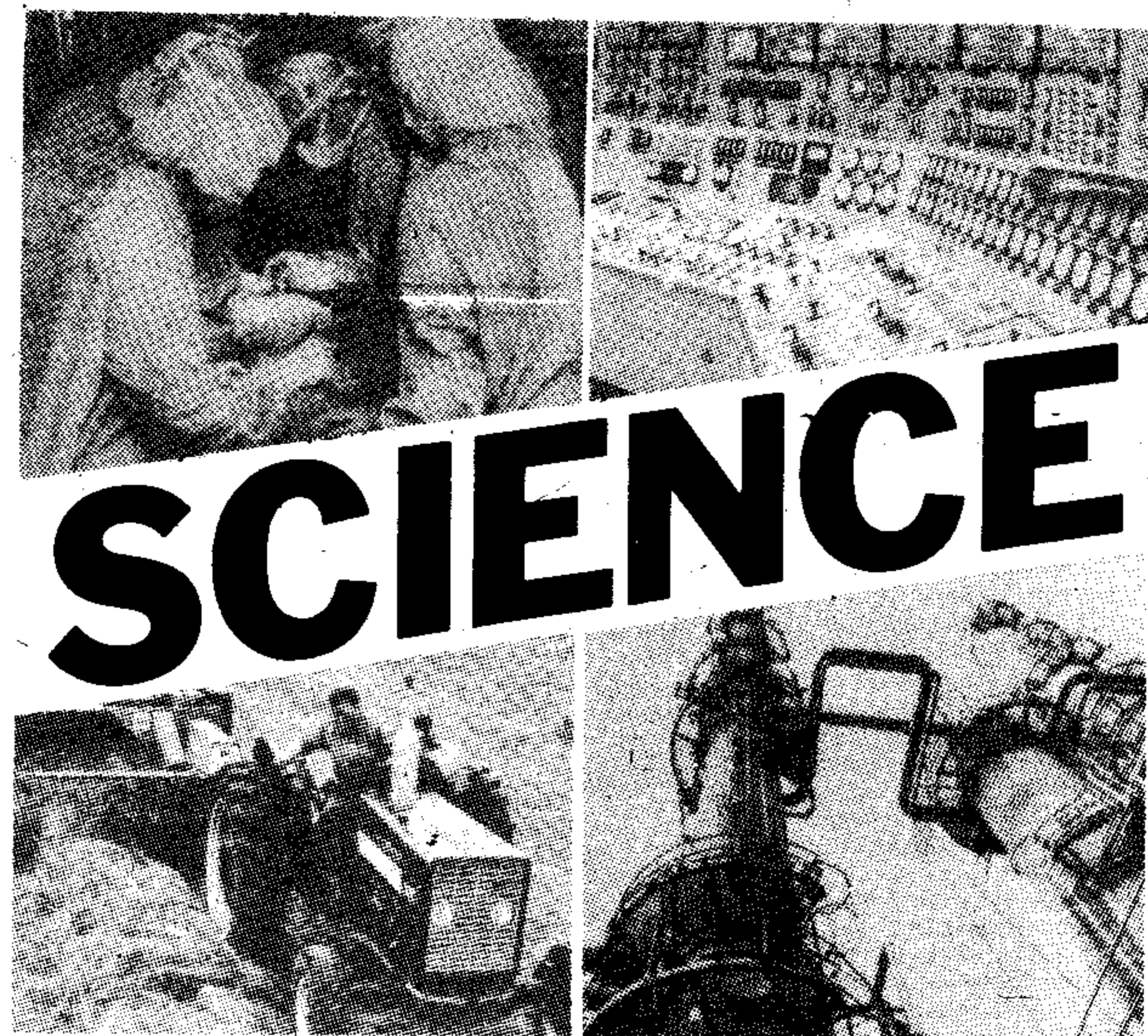
3) looking at how changes in hormone levels after birth and possible vitamin deficiencies might affect how women felt.

4) seeking information from women who had recently given birth, with or

without PND, with a questionnaire asking about the situations of their work and living circumstances, what sort of help they had in the home, what sort of relationships they were having, their psychological states before giving birth, their physical condition during pregnancy, the nature of the birth, the health of the mother and baby, etc.

The result is a more rounded view of PND than a more traditional approach would have achieved.

Science shops in Britain?



SCIENCE

You've probably gathered by now that I think science shops are a good thing! If readers agree with me, the question arises of how can science shops be introduced into Britain. Possible approaches could include the following:

1) Get science shops incorporated into Labour Party science policy.

2) Get local authorities to fund experimental science shops (e.g. the GLC).

3) Groups of socialist scientists might try to get colleges and universities to set up science shops. Socialist scientists have traditionally complained about the remoteness of science from the concerns of working people, but apart from things like the BSSRS Hazards Bulletin, little has been done to remedy this.

What would a science shop in, say, London, look like? Funded by a local authority, its running should be in the hands of groups of scientists and users (e.g. trades unions, women's groups, etc).

Facilities

The problem of getting scientists to do the research and of getting them the facilities to do it might be tackled by negotiation between the local authority, scientific trade unions, student unions and socialist scientists on the one hand, and polytechnics and universities on the other.

As you can see, I don't have all (or indeed, many) of the details worked out, so how about some feedback from readers.

LES HEARN

Letters

Water workers Form for 'Unity Stakes' sold out

Reading SO121's headline on the water workers' dispute almost made me sick. It was appalling and makes me wonder whether I'd picked up a copy of 'The Worker' instead.

Where in last week's article was there a firm denunciation of the sell-out by union leaders? Where? I looked hard enough and I didn't see one. Instead we were treated to such glib observations as "The union leaders ran the whole dispute with the brakes on, and settled for far less than could have been won". True enough — they did. They sold out the water workers. But where was it said? Nowhere!

Into its fifth week, the water workers' action was beginning to bite; in addition, the workers were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the way the dispute was being handled. They were becoming more militant and had begun to organise outside the rhythms of union officialdom, beginning to initiate links with other groups of workers.

This was an obvious threat — if links had been forged with the gas and power workers then we would have really seen "the Tories on the run". But instead, we saw the bureaucracy split in advance powerful sections of the working class.

It was a dispute that could have been won, but that was sold out by union full-timers who acted effectively as an arm of the state and who were able to once again contain the militancy and anger of workers in dispute. Since the Tories came to power we have seen the same thing over and over again, and we must not desist in our condemnation of union bureaucrats who sell workers' struggles down the river.

But there were positive aspects to the dispute. Again we have seen a relatively inexperienced workforce coming out and challenging Tory pay norms, showing that workers are prepared to fight and make

ground — a factor which is bound to inspire confidence in other workers.

Most importantly perhaps, we have seen a group of workers who saw the necessity of linking up with other sections of the class, outside the constraints that the unions impose.

Capital rules by division, and if necessary, will use the unions to maintain that division and prevent the dangerous unity of our class.

So please, no more editorials like last week's which allow the treacherous role of the union bureaucrats in containing and defeating workers' struggles to go unnoticed.

In comradeship,
DAVE SCOTT
Hull

"NEVER place your shilling on a horse without first checking it out in the form book". So spoke Bob Pennington, the most experienced tipster of the IMG/Socialist League when advising his com-

rades on political options. Socialist Organiser supporters should bear this maxim in mind themselves when evaluating the proposal from the SL/IMG for unity with the new paper to be launched by SL/IMG

supporters, Socialist Action. So what has been the SL/IMG's "form" over the last twelve years of so?

In 1970 the United Secretariat of the Fourth International entered a two year-old in that year's "General Election Stakes". Red Mole, sired by Black Dwarf and grandsire of the present Socialist Challenge ran under specific colours. "That the Labour Party was a thoroughly pro-capitalist organisation and that revolutionaries should abstain from voting for it and — Let It Bleed!"

Nowadays, IMG leaders blame the horses' ultra-left course on its two inexperienced jockeys T. Ali and R. Blackburn. Nevertheless, this headstrong filly still succeeded in even breaking up Labour Party meetings.

In 1973/4, the USFI stable made a 180 degree turn. They discovered a whole new Championship Classic, "The Tony Benn Cup". With a new jockey (J. Ross) and new steed (Red Weekly), trainer (E. Mandel) they decided on a "Plan to Beat the Crisis".

Unfortunately, they had overestimated the staying power of "Bennism" which fell at the third fence, and into which Red Weekly and its overweight jockey fell, bringing the comment from Pennington: "I knew that bloody gelding wouldn't last the course".

"Never mind", said the trainer, "there's still the Independent Party Hurdles next year". Consequently,

Socialist Challenge won its first race, the Stechford Backwater Cup by a short head.

As ever, this led to the USFI stable going totally overboard. They generalised from this minor event, that the whole Championship season could be theirs, if only they could mate, sorry 'regroup' Socialist Challenge with some young fillies.

Bolton Marxist Worker Group, League for Socialist Action, the International Socialist Alliance, were all brought to the steed's quarters. The result? 12 Socialist Unity runners in the 1979 General Election.

The argument went like this. These thoroughbreds will so pull in workers' support in the election that we will be propelled, straight into the big time, in short, the Labour Movement Leadership Trophy! Every SO supporter now knows what happened. They never left the starting gates.

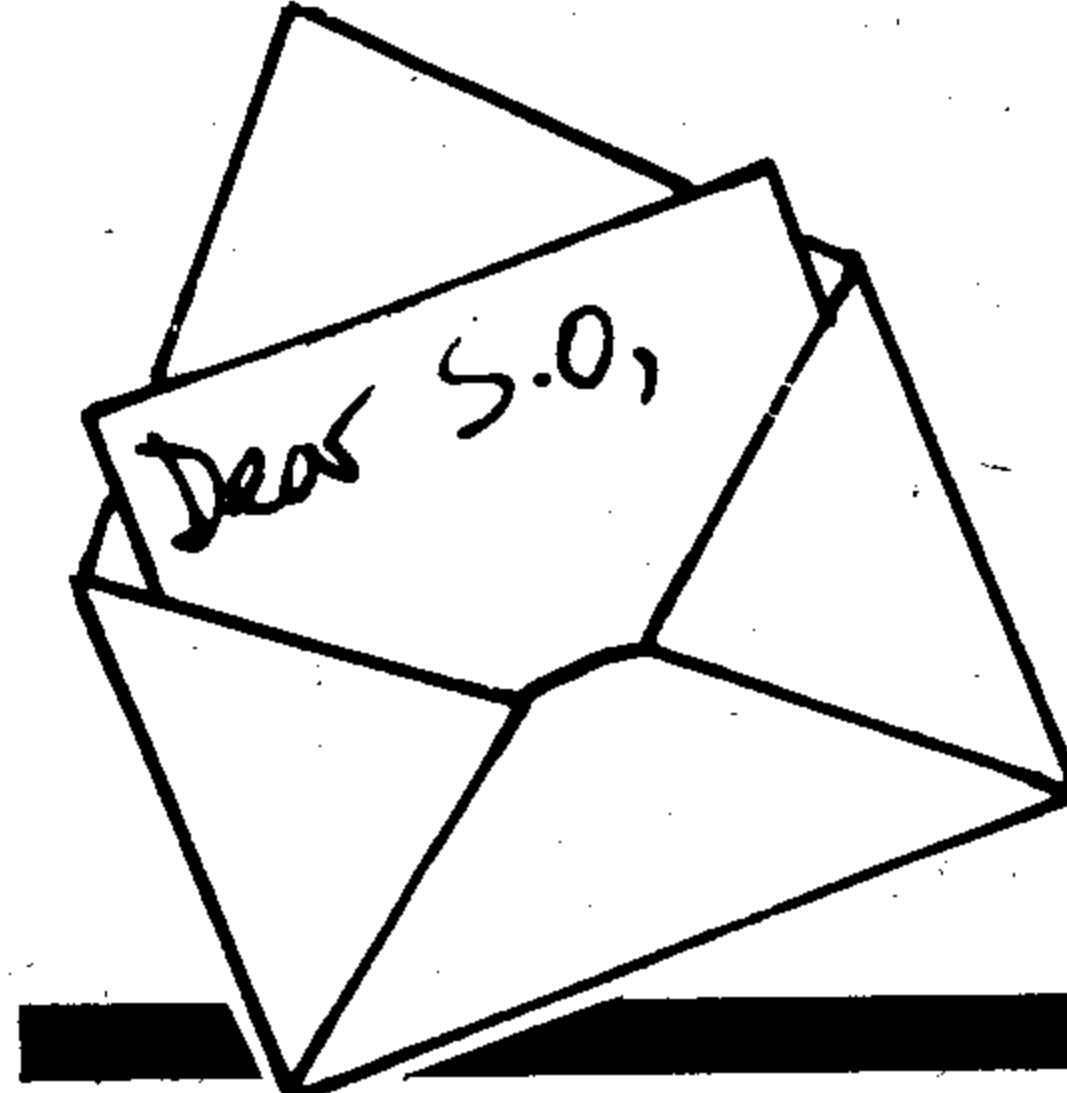
"What should we do next?" asked Brian Grogan. So the stable carried out a Long March back to the old pastures of Red Weekly, the Labour Party.

"What about mating SC with that new up and coming mare, Socialist Organiser?" said J. Ross. "We've got nothing to lose, seeing as we've not won anything," said Bob. "I'll put a tanner on that."

Would you buy a second hand stallion from the USFI stable?

Yours fraternally,
Scobie Petersen
Manchester

Writeback



We invite readers to send us their letters, up to a usual maximum length of 400 words.

Send to
'Writeback',
Socialist Organiser,
c/o 28, Middle Lane,
London N8.

Expulsions and CLPD

THE 3 February 1983 Socialist Organiser report by Martin Thomas and John Bloxam on the CLPD AGM decision to apply to be put on the Register, includes the following passage:

"Despite Vladimir Derer's arguments, the AGM voted to 'call on CLPs not to carry out expulsions, and oppose any consequent action taken against them.' Many who had accepted the 'Conference sovereignty argument on registration drew the line (unlike Vladimir Derer) on expulsions."

The clear implication is,

that the CLPD Secretary, and those who share his views, are actually in favour of expulsions.

It should be well known to all on the Labour Left that Vladimir Derer and CLPD itself have always been — and remain — unequivocally opposed to expulsions. Nor has this opposition been merely general and rhetorical.

Ever since it was founded in 1973, CLPD has consistently taken up cases where individual Party members have been victimised for their views, and has helped in their eventual reinstatement. It should

also be well known that the sole disagreement between Socialist Organiser and CLPD on the issue of expulsions is about what method of fighting them will be the most effective.

The CLPD EC considers that the section of the Socialist Organiser report quoted above amounts to an outright slander on Vladimir Derer. We therefore demand that Socialist Organiser should publish and unqualified retraction and apology.

Yours comradesly,
VLADIMIR DERER
Hon. Secretary
(on behalf of CLPD EC)

"Vladimir Derer did speak against the resolution to 'call on CLPs not to carry out expulsions and oppose any consequent action taken against them.'"

And at the first EC meeting after the AGM Derer said that the resolution could not be implemented because it meant 'unconstitutional action'.

Of course we did not say he is 'actually in favour of expulsions', any more than those who argued for complying with the register are positively in favour of the register!

An alternative view on "Blackstuff"

Realism or radicalism?

By
Paul
Barnett

WATCHING Alan Bleasdale's plays 'Boys from the Blackstuff' the first time it was shown I was simultaneously impressed and depressed. I reached the conclusion that whilst it was skilfully written and the character portrayals memorable pieces of contemporary drama, the plays lacked any real radical content. I feel this lies partly in the dramatic structure of the series but more importantly, it lies within the ideological framework within which the plays are written and actually 'read' by the audience.

I have been in a minority of one arguing that the series lacked radical content. I was surprised to see glowing comments about the plays on the left. The re-showing of the series at peak viewing time, I think, gives some credibility to my criticism. The plays realistically portray the social and environmental conditions which the Liverpool working class has to tolerate. In the same way so did the 'kitchen sink' dramas of the 60's, and does the work of Ken Loach and Tony Garnett. However, unlike Loach-Garnett's work, Bleasdale's plays fail to portray the relationship between the conditions of working class everyday life and political

consciousness, representation, and action. I feel that for a play to carry a radical content the two things are inseparable.

The extent of political comment in the plays is restricted to Snowy Malone, and his father, both of whom die within the course of the drama, implying the death of working class radicalism. This notion is further reinforced in the last play, 'George's Last Ride', when George's sons argue that their workmates are no longer interested in anything but beer and sex. To some extent this is offset by their mother's tirade against their defeatism, but it is the former view of the working class which the series articulates; a class which has given up the struggle. George's last lines before his death reflect his desperation at what he sees (the author sees) as the present state of his class; a class defeated for now and for the future.

Secondly, the pub scene at the end of the series articulates defeat and degeneration. Crissie's comment to Loggo further reinforces this pessimism when he says that what George stood for is dead along with George.

Is it? Can the Toxteth riots, the occupation of the school in Croxteth, the growth of radicalism in



Riots — a sign of demoralisation?

Liverpool (stronghold of Militant) all be explained as giving up or desperation? No matter how inadequate the 'establishment' of the Labour Movement is at the moment this does not mean that the working class has given up.

I suggest that the limits of political activity in the drama reveals the limit of political vision in the author. Indeed Bleasdale denies he has any interest in politics. On a recent TV show he revealed that though he is 40 he has never voted. If the playwright has no oppositional viewpoint then he is left with a status quo view of society; one which sees the working class as a non

revolutionary, non political, and subject to rapid social degeneration under stress.

My second, more important comment, relates to how the play is 'read' by the audience. Whilst the play may reveal to the committed socialist the need for a revolutionary change in society, it may not be read in the same way by people without such an acute state of awareness. Perhaps this has something to do with the nature of TV which detaches the reality it portrays from our own reality, but more importantly, I think there is a fault in this sort of realist production which relies almost entirely on character empathy. For example, empathy with Chrissie

would reinforce the idea that what is happening is not pleasant but unavoidable, natural and beyond the control of ordinary people. Furthermore the boys all have intricately portrayed intensely individual characters and as such encourages interest in them wholly as individuals rather than characters symbolic of their class. As a result the underlying structural relationship between capital, labour and class struggle is subordinated to the personal circumstances of the characters involved.

Nowhere is this more important than with Yosser Hughes. Because of the intense focus on the individual circumstances of Yosser and because of his idiosyncratic characteristics, the appalling tragedy of this man cannot be easily related to his class as a whole. He is an 'extreme' case and as such can be seen as having 'personal' psychological inadequacies rather than being interpreted as an extreme 'victim' of capitalism's requirement for social and psychological insecurity. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Yosser's story has been changed from tragedy to comic circus, the extent of which has caused some offence to the playwright. The catchphrase

'Gis a job; I could do that' has now, because of its misuse by disc jockeys, comedians and their ilk, turned Yosser into a figure of fun and the tragic sentiment into an insult to the unemployed. The fault however, lies in the character construction itself which is open to this sort of treatment.

Finally, a comment about the overall emotional response which the series stimulates. Sympathy, the main by-product of the series, is not in itself a revolutionary sentiment. Whilst an acute political consciousness may turn sympathy into anger at the social system, a non political consciousness would not perform the same conversion, leaving the experience as nothing more than an emotional release. In this society we are brought up on a diet of human suffering whether it be massacres on the evening news, to school children being taught about child labour in the 19th Century. This is not interpreted by the dominant bourgeois consciousness as a need for change, but as a legitimisation of society as it stands. Child labour in the last century points to reform (and usually kind hearted ruling class reformists), torture in South America points to the British sense

of fair play, and the periodic interviews with the unemployed poor reminds us that we all really care. It serves to convince us that we have a caring society and while we wallow in the suffering of others we fail to see why they suffer. While we shed a tear for the plight of the unfortunate we cannot feel anger because this suffering is presented not as the unavoidable effect of a socio-economic structure (which can be changed), but as separate from it and thus implies that it is universal and a natural part of human existence. An awareness of suffering becomes inextricably intertwined with the ideology of the present stage of capitalism. Is it too outrageous to suggest that Dicken's work performed the same function in the last century?

I feel that Bleasdale's plays fall unfortunately into the same category. To break through this sentimentalism a play about deprivation and unemployment requires a political framework to ensure that the content of the play is read as an effect of capitalism as a socio-economic structure and not as something unavoidable in human affairs. Bleasdale's plays lack this political framework.

Lessons of DHSS staffing strike

Rod Bacon reviews the lessons for the CPSA Left of a major cuts battle.

WITHOUT a doubt, the major dispute that took place last year, as far as the CPSA was concerned, was the industrial action in Birmingham and Oxford DHSS.

Most militants and activists are aware of the history of the three month strike and the deals that the Section Executive Committee and the National Executive Committee tried to foist on the strikers and which were rejected.

That the strike was at the local level, in terms of organisation and zeal, a partial success can be accepted. It would be foolish and short-sighted to snipe at the tremendous effort made by the strikers, who for the first time in the DHSS closed down most of the offices in the second city in England for an extended period.

On the other hand, the industrial action failed to achieve the original objectives. The final deal was only slightly better than the previous ones, in that the disgraceful strings — the CPSA dropping their ban on overtime and casuals and signing what was virtually a no-strike pledge on cuts — was dropped. The government, however, did not increase its original offer of 52 extra posts for the eleven offices in Birmingham and the one office in Oxford to share out.

There is a possibility that the Joint Review on the Complementing System may come up with reforms that will ease the staffing pressures in local DHSS offices and create more jobs, but any increase will be offset by the cuts in jobs produced by the introduction of new procedures, including Employers Statutory Sick Pay and Unified Housing Benefit.

Lessons

I feel that there are important lessons that we must learn in order to avoid a similar failure in the future. Many members of the Broad Left, particularly in the DHSS, are feeling somewhat self-satisfied and relieved that the dispute is over.

Some are still murmuring that in reality the union won. Some still cling to the



The CPSA leadership has blamed the failure of the dispute on SCPS members crossing the picket lines. But it was the leaders who crucially weakened the action.

strategy of limited industrial action on a major dispute. It is incumbent upon Socialist Caucus supporters to draw out the lessons and to fight for a totally different approach in the future.

The Guardian reported before Christmas that the government recognised that the reason why the dispute lasted so long in Birmingham was the emergency payment centres, manned by DHSS staff paying out benefits to claimants and thus undermining the effect of the strike. The Broad Left Conference in November threw out the absurd concept of trade union controlled emergency centres (there was no trade union control in Birmingham or Oxford) which would take up to 7,000 members to man an all-out strike. This decision was confirmed at the Pay Conference in December.

But there is a danger of adopting the other policy that no emergency payments should be made at

all and that claimants should be starved. There was an element of this anti-class attitude in some of the contributions at the Pay Conference.

As socialists we should be in favour of emergency payments and should not prevent other unions, if they are willing, providing emergency cover. In the meantime it is incumbent on activists to build solid links with claimants' organisations both before and during a dispute.

It is quite clear that the original strategy of localising the strike in Oxford and Birmingham was a major mistake. The dispute had widespread implications that affected every local DHSS office.

The initial demands of the strikers should have been widened to incorporate the staffing demands in the section as a whole. Every other office that was prepared to fight straight away should have been given full backing. Massive

escalation should have been organised within a week of the start of the dispute, and we should have gone out to the membership with the call for all-out strike.

If this had happened, the strikers would not have been isolated for so long. Management, with the assistance of emergency payment centres, can ride local disputes, particularly if they have the full support and instructions of the government.

Those days of localisation are over. There should have been an extension of the strike, if possible, in the sister section of the DHSS, the Department of Employment. The direct official work that takes place in one section automatically affects the work of the other.

Weak

Admittedly there were claims that the DE in Birmingham was weak, although this has been denied by DE activists in

the area. Nevertheless, there should have been a concerted attempt to extend the dispute into a total benefit strike.

Most sections are facing or will be facing staffing cuts. It is difficult to build a massive all-out strike across the union when the demands and objectives of each constituent part are so varied.

Once again, however, if the intransigence of the government forces the issue, as is likely in future, then we must start considering the strategy of fighting for jobs by mobilising the whole union membership. The fight for jobs, especially when new technology is introduced on a large scale, will be the most important struggle in our history as a union.

At the moment, the government is getting away with setting cash limits, introducing new procedures piecemeal and implementing arbitrary cuts, without any concerted opposition. The union is losing this fight without even trying.

If the strongest and most organised section in the CPSA, the DHSS, has allowed the situation to develop that 7,000 jobs are cut by May 1983, without a whimper, it must augur badly for the rest of the union. At some time the Broad Left leadership will have to come to a decision as to whether it intends to lead a fightback, or drop all of its policies and adapt to the pragmatic and sell-out approach of Alistair Graham.

The Socialist Caucus must argue for the former alternative within and without the Broad Left, arguments that should include organisational demands such as the building of a public sector alliance.

At the 1983 Annual Conference there may well be censure motions on the agenda on the Oxford and Birmingham dispute. These motions should be supported, but only in a positive manner.

There is absolutely no point, in my opinion, in indulging in a sectarian bun-fight.

The main reason for the lack of leadership was inexperience, detachment from the rank and file, bureaucratic pragmatism and plain defeatism. If



"The original strategy of localising the strike was a major mistake..."

they have no ideas on how to fight a campaign and organise a dispute, then it is up to us to force some ideas on them.

Consequently all motions on the dispute should be geared to positive demands for a campaign on cuts, and a recognition that mass rather than localised action is now the only way for-

ward. It would be difficult and rather foolish to lay down a detailed, inflexible strategy, but nevertheless Conference should address itself to a totally different way of making a fightback, and the Socialist Caucus has a role to play in combatting the prevalent defeatism in the Broad Left once and for all.

	March
Monday	7 14 21 28
Tuesday	1 8 15 22 29
Wednesday	2 9 16 23 30
Thursday	3 10 17 24 31
Friday	4 11 18 25
Saturday	5 12 19 26
Sunday	6 13 20 27

WHAT'S ON

PAID ads 5p per word, £4 per column inch. Send copy to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8, to arrive by Saturday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

WOMEN, Immigration and Nationality: meeting to discuss our future as a campaign. Sunday March 13, 1.30 to 4.30pm, County Hall, London SE1. All women welcome. Creche on premises.

LABOUR democracy and local government: day conference for District Labour Parties, Saturday March 26, 10.30 to 4.30, at Manchester Poly Students' Union. Sponsored by Sheffield, Leeds and Manchester DLPs. Contact: Frances Done, Manchester City Labour Party, Hulme Labour Club, 1 Stoneylow Close, Manchester M15.

LABOUR Campaign for Gay Rights public meeting: 'Gay Liberation and the labour movement'. Friday March 18, 7.30 at County Hall, London SE1. Speak-

ers include Andy Harris (GLC) and Tom Sawyer (Assistant General Secretary NUPE).

CALDERDALE March for Jobs. Organised by Sowerby YS. March 19: assemble Cornholme 8.45am. Rallies at Todmorden 10am, at Hebden Bridge 12.15pm, at Sowerby Bridge 3.30pm, at Halifax Town Hall 5pm.

LABOUR Committee on Ireland, London Region: annual general meeting 1983. Sunday March 13, 1.30pm, at Caxton House, St John's Way, London N19

EL SALVADOR Solidarity Campaign: Labour Movement conference, Saturday May 14, 10am to 5pm, County Hall, London SE1. Credentials £2 from ESSC, 29 Islington Park St, London N1.

SHEFFIELD Labour movement conference on Ireland — Saturday March 19, Sheffield University Students' Union, 9.30 to 4.30. Sponsored by Sheffield Trades Council, Sheffield District Labour Party, and Sheffield LCI.

WAR in the Third World and the Third World War: a conference, Saturday March 12, Friends' Centre, Ship St, Brighton, 10am to 6pm. Speakers include Fred Halliday, Uri Davis, Adrian Crewe, Salvador Moncada, Jenny Pearce. Tickets £1.50. Information: Clare (0273) 771284, Indra 739022, Bryn 698111.

ISLINGTON Labour CND meeting on the Civil Defence regulations: Tuesday March 22, 8pm, at the Town Hall, Upper St.

ISLINGTON Labour Against the Witch-Hunt meeting: Tuesday March 15, 7.30 at the John Barnes Library, 275 Camden Road. Invited speakers: Reg Race, Peter Taaffe, Peter Tatchell, Jeremy Corbyn, Jane Andrews. Organised by Islington Labour Parties.

KURDISTAN: A people without a nation. Kurdistan Solidarity Campaign meeting, Monday March 14, 7.30 at Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq. Speakers: Omar Sheikmous (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan), Stan Newens MP.

LABOUR Committee on Ireland Annual General Meeting: Saturday April 23, 10am to 5pm at County Hall, London SE1. Resolutions to be submitted by April 8. Contact: LCI, BM Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX.

LABOUR Campaign for Gay Rights, Glasgow: meeting to discuss future strategy. Tuesday March 22 1983, Trades Council (Room 3), 81 Carlton Place, 7.30pm. Contact: c/o Russell McVean Glasgow School of Art SRC, 168 Renfrew St, Glasgow.

TROTSKYISM or Castroism: a pamphlet analysing the move away from the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution by the Socialist Workers' Party of the USA. Published by the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee: 40p plus postage from PO Box 135, London N10DD.

SPARTACIST Truth Kit — a 68 page analysis by John Lister, published by the Workers' Socialist League. £1 plus 25p postage from WSL, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

Delegates plan next steps

Jenny Fisher reports

THE Socialist Organiser delegate meeting last Saturday discussed our response to the possibility of a miners' strike; a stepping-up in the witch-hunt in the Labour Party; and proposals for a socialist campaign in the General Election.

The resolution (proposed by John O'Mahony) adopted on how SO should approach a national miners' strike sought to make links between trade unions and the Labour Party:

"This SO national delegate meeting resolves that in the event of a miners' strike we will turn the SO groups, and attempt to turn the local Labour Parties, towards urgent support work around the strike. We will organise, where possible through the LPs and TCs, local support meetings, which will include a NUM speaker. We will mobilise in support of miners' pickets to stop the transport of coal.

Where appropriate we will take the initiative in starting such pickets of coal depots, pits, rail yards, steel works, etc. Our supporters in rail, etc., will argue for immediate blacking of all movements of coal."

The meeting also endorsed the motion's call for SO to be produced twice a week in the event of a strike.

Proposals for a socialist campaign within a Labour Party campaign in the General Election were welcomed. The situation in Scotland (where the left is dominated by the LCC) would make it difficult to mobilise much support outside Socialist Organiser, but comrades in the Midlands spoke of the possibility of mobilising thousands of people — as many as

came to the meetings addressed by Benn in the leadership campaign.

Composite

We abandoned attempts to vote between a resolution from Edinburgh SO and an amendment from Coventry SO, and instead passed a quickly-negotiated 'composite', calling for accountability of MPs over

disclosures to the capitalist media, and an end to personal attacks on the left-wing by the right in the capitalist press.

Stockport SO's resolution urging more coverage of black struggle in the paper was amended to welcome the recent improvement there had been and urging it to continue.

The next delegate meeting will be on Sunday

April 24 in London (the day after the LCI AGM).

Items already tabled for discussion are:

□ Sheffield SO's resolution on the use of 'obscene' language in SO.

□ A resolution to include a 'black struggle' column in SO.

□ A resolution to produce an SO pamphlet on black struggle and anti-racist work.

Calling all women!

I'VE always wanted to chair a meeting where I could start by saying 'There's no need to use positive discrimination here'. But I'd hoped to be able to say it because the women there could participate fully — not because there were no women there except me!

We've had drives to encourage groups to send women delegates before — usually with some success. The importance of having women delegates has been seen before — for example, when the delegate meeting before Labour Party Con-

ference discussed whether to have a woman-only platform at our fringe meeting, women delegates all spoke in favour of it (against the male delegates who tried to water it down), and for many it was the only contribution they made in the meeting.

There was only one woman to raise women's interests in all the major discussions. Male delegates did not bring women into debates on the TUC March for Jobs, or the idea for a socialist election campaign. Result: token

woman to pipe up about us in the debates, no women to make political contributions.

So where are you all? Is it that we don't have women Socialist Organiser supporters? Or what's wrong in the groups that means women don't put themselves forward for election? Or what's wrong to mean they don't get elected?

The next delegate meeting is in six weeks: time for groups to work out the answers to these questions.

by Jenny Fisher

Canvassing for SO sales

LAST Sunday two Socialist Organiser supporters from Brent East Constituency Labour Party, joined by two members of St. Raphael Branch Labour Party in Harlesden, set out to do a canvass on that estate.

With the possibility of an election looming over us, we thought it would be useful to prove that the Labour Party doesn't only knock on doors and beg votes in the

three weeks before the election.

In an hour and a half we got ten potential members for the local branch, sold 25 papers, and got a number of tenants onto the electoral register.

Every SO supporter should be going to their Labour Party branches and building up the membership and paper sales now to prepare for the fight to kick out this government.

MICK WOODS

Yorks youth march for jobs

SOWERBY Labour Party Young Socialists are organising for a jobs march from Cornholme (near Todmorden) to Halifax, a distance of about 15 miles, which will take place on Saturday March 19.

We set up the YS branch last October, with about 10 members and have become active in our ward, constituency and district Labour parties. We feel that the Labour Party should be less about monthly meetings and more about campaigning on issues that affect working people.

The Labour Party's record on unemployment, nuclear bombs and cheap labour schemes for youth has been dismal. For this reason, we felt it was necessary in an area of high unemployment, that the Labour Party should take some action, and we as members of Sowerby LPYS have initiated this.

There also seems to be a divide between the employed and the unemployed — and the march for jobs is playing a role in bridging this.

Sponsorship

By seeking sponsorship from trade unions in our area, we have been able to build contacts between young unemployed and trade unionists.

The demonstration will be starting at Cornholme at around 9.00 am on March 19 and we will be picking up marchers at Todmorden around 9.30 am, at the Hebden Bridge and Sowerby Bridge, ending with a rally in Halifax. Further details can be obtained from:

H. Johnston, 37, Claremont St., Sowerby Bridge, W. Yorkshire.

Where to find us

THERE ARE Socialist Organiser groups in most major towns and cities. See below for details of your area — and if you want more details, or if there is no group listed for your area, fill in and return the 'Get Organised' form.

Next Socialist Organiser delegate meeting: Sunday April 24, in London. Please make plans to choose and mandate your group's delegate now.

Topic: 'Social Democracy in the British Labour Party'

• SCOTLAND

Glasgow. For details of meetings contact paper sellers or Stan Croke, 114 Dixon Avenue, Glasgow G42. SO is sold at Maryhill dole (Tuesday mornings) and Rutherglen shopping arcade (Friday lunchtime).

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

• NORTH-WEST

Wirral. Contact Colin Johnstone, 1 Wellington Road, Wallasey. Next meeting: Thursday April 14, 8pm, at the Labour Club, Church Road, Seacombe: 'SO's role in the local and general elections'

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

Manchester. Public meeting, Thursday March 24, 7.30 at the Millstone pub: 'Workers' Democracy or Tebbit's Democracy?' — Speaker: John McIlroy. Business/Educational meeting: March 17, 7.40 pm, UMIST Students Union.

Stockport. Contact c/o 38 Broadhurst St. Meetings every Sunday, 7.30pm: phone 429 6359 for details. SO is sold at Stockport market every Saturday, 11 to 12.30.

Rochdale. Meets on the 2nd Monday of the month, at the Castle Inn. March 14th, 8 pm: Public meeting: 'What future for Palestine?'

Hyndburn. Contact Accrington 39573. Meetings weekly — see SO sellers for day, time and venue. SO is sold at Broadway, Accrington, every Saturday from 11.30 to 1pm.

Stoke. Contact Arthur Bough, 23 Russell road, Sandyford (84170).

• YORKSHIRE AND NORTH-EAST

Durham. Meets every Tuesday, 6.30pm, Students Union bar, Durham university. SO is sold at the Community Co-op, New Elvet.

York. Contact: 425739. SO is sold at Coney St on Saturday mornings, at the community bookshop, outside the dole office most mornings, and at the University on Friday mornings.

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

Bradford. Contact Barry Turner, 636994. SO is sold at the Starry Plough bookshop.

Sheffield. Meets every other Wednesday, 7.30pm at the Brown Cow, The Wick-er.

SO is sold outside Boot's, Foregate (Saturday 12 to 1), and at the Independent Bookshop, Glossop Road. Contact: Rob, 589307

Hull. Meets every Wednesday, 8pm: details from SO sellers. Childcare available. SO is sold at the Prospect Centre (Saturday 11-12). March 10, 7.30 pm, Trades & Labour Club, Beverley Rd.: Hull Labour Co-ordinating/Hull SO public meeting: 'Support the Miners'. Speaker from Dinnington colliery.

Halifax. Contact 52156. SO is sold at Halifax Wholefood, Gibbet St, and at Tower Books, Hebden Bridge.

• WALES

Cardiff. Contact 492988.

• MIDLANDS

Birmingham. Meets alternate Fridays, 7.30, the Labour Club, Bristol St. Next meeting Friday March 17. Next meeting: Thursday March 31: an Islington councillor on 'Can Local Councils fight the Cuts?'

SO is sold at the Other Bookshop, Digbeth High St Coventry. Contact Keith White, 75623. SO is sold at the Wedge Co-Op, High St. Meets on first and last Thursday of each month, 7.30 at 'The Queen', Primrose Hill St, Hillfields.

Next meeting: March 31, 'Rosie the Riveter'. Film on women in the USA, working in the 2nd World War & facing discrimination afterwards.

Leicester. Contact Phil, 857908. SO is sold outside Supasave (Friday 4.30 to 6), the Co-op, Narborough Rd (Saturday 11-12.30), and at Blackthorne Books, High Street.

Northampton. Meets alternate Monday. Next meeting March 21. For details contact 713606.

Nottingham. Meets every Friday, 7.30pm at the International Community Centre, 61B Mansfield Rd. SO is sold outside the Victoria Centre (Saturday 11 to 1) and at the Mushroom Bookshop, Heathcote St.

• SOUTH

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

Basingstoke. Business meeting March 11. Public meeting, March 10: 'Is Marxism obsolete?' All meetings 7.30pm, Chute House.

• LONDON

North-West London. Readers' meetings first Sunday of month. Phone Mick, 62 1931, for details. SO is sold at Kilburn Books.

Islington. Next meeting

Sunday March 13, 3pm at Thornhill Neighbourhood Project, Orkney House, Caledonian Rd/Copenhagen St: 'The coming struggles in Zimbabwe'. For childcare phone Nik, 278 1341.

Haringey Contact 802 0771 or 348 5941. Meets every other Thursday, 7.30 pm, Trade Union Centre, Brabant Rd. Next meeting March 10.

Tower Hamlets. Contact 247 1328. Meets fortnightly on Fridays, 6.30 to 8.30pm. Next meeting March 24.

Southwark/Lambeth meets every other Wednesday, Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, SE5. Business meeting 7.30pm. Open Forum discussion at 8.30pm. Next meeting: Wednesday 16 March on 'Can Labour win the next Election?' Speaker: Tom

Rigby, Peckham LPYS.

Socialist Organiser is sold at Brixton Tube every Thursday, 5-6pm, at Peckham Labour Club, Monday and Friday evenings.

New Southwark SO bulletin, 'The Spark', now out, free (donations welcome) from SO sellers.

Hounslow. Meets fortnightly on Sundays, 8pm. Next meeting Sunday March 13, 8pm, above the Tandoori and Sweet Centre, London Road, Hounslow; Jenny Fisher on Women's Fightback. Contact: 898 6961.

Hackney. Contact c/o Andrew Hornung, 28 Carlton Mansions, Holmleigh Rd, N16.

SO is sold at the following London bookshops: Collets, Central Books, The Other Bookshop, Bookmarks, Bookplace [Peckham Rd, SE15], and Reading Matters [Wood Green Shopping City].

Socialist Organiser Alliance

Get Organised!

Socialist Organiser is not just a paper. We fight to organise workers in the struggle for a new leadership in the labour movement.

If you agree with what we have to say, you can help. Become a supporter of the Socialist Organiser Alliance — groups are established in most large towns.

To 'Get Organised' in the fight, or for more information, write at once to us at 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Name

Address



Socialist election campaign launched

Socialist Organiser

Rally the ranks to defeat Tories!

OVER 100 people packed into a small committee room at the House of Commons last Monday night to form a socialist campaign for the General Election.

The campaign is determined that there will be an appeal to all sections of the community who will benefit from the socialist policies that have been carried by successive Labour Party conferences. The five campaigning points agreed were:

- 1) Total commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament and removal of US bases
- 2) An economic policy which returns to full employment, nationalises the 25 top companies, returns social spending to 1977 levels in real terms, introduces a 35 hour week, withdraws from the EEC and expands the NHS. Massive house building programmes and renationalising of hived-off sections of public industry without compensation.

- 3) A determination that working class living stan-

by Jeremy
Corbyn

dards should grow and that there should be no incomes policy.

- 4) Positive action for women in all aspects of Party policy and a commitment to extend abortion law so that a woman does have the right to choose.
- 5) The repeal of the Nationality Act, the Immigration Act and a determination to eradicate racial prejudice and inequality.

In fighting for these issues the campaign also seeks an end to the witch-hunt of socialists in the party; to fight for socialist policies and at the same time hound socialists out of the Party is incompatible.

The last Labour government entered a coalition deal with the Liberals and that

and even standing up to a threat of disbandment by December 31 last year.

Diana Minns, secretary of Hornsey, commented: "I'm delighted to hear this news from the NEC. Although the battle is not completely won, I'm convinced that the firm stand Hornsey has taken on Tariq's membership is a major factor in this decision. I hope other CLPs will learn a lesson from this in their fight against expulsions."

YS CONFERENCE '83

April 1-4, The Spa Centre, Bridlington
Fringe meetings by Labour Committee on Ireland, YCND, Labour Against the Witch-hunt and more. Accommodation £12 per head - deposits (£5 per head) and numbers as soon as possible please to Class Fighter, 13 Buxton Road, London N19, or phone 01-609 3071.

JOHN HARRIS



The draft for Labour's manifesto makes unilateral nuclear disarmament a goal for the misty future rather than an immediate commitment. Labour left-wingers must join with CND activists to ensure that we campaign for unilateralism - whatever Labour's leaders do.

period saw an attack on working class living standards and introduction of incomes policies. There is no mandate anywhere in the labour movement for a coalition or coalition policies; the campaign will fight for the socialist policies of the Party and no deals of any kind with others.

Accountability of elected representatives matters to all Labour supporters; the campaign will insist on adherence to conference policy by Members of Parliament and a commitment from supporters to account to their Constituency Parties during the lifetime of the next Parliament.

THOSE present at the March 7 meeting included several MPs - Ernie Roberts, Stan Thorne, Jo Richardson, Joan Maynard, Les Huckfield (with apologies from Reg Race, Dennis Skinner and Tony Benn) and also Ken Livingstone, Peter Tatchell and Dave Wetzel.

This campaign is getting underway immediately: 29 people were elected to form

the core of the campaign and produce a statement for circulation to local parties, prospective candidates, MPs, unions and branches.

The joint secretaries will be Andy Harris and Mandy Moore. The committee will be meeting on Thursday 17 March to finalise the statement, including the above five points and also: repeal of anti-union laws; police accountability; a united Ireland and other international issues.

The statement will specifically be put to all groups in the community who are fighting for policies which could only be carried out by a Labour majority at the next election.

Outwards

There was a strong view at the meeting that Labour must turn outwards and link up with struggles in progress to build mass support.

The General Election could be less than twelve weeks away; the time to fight for these policies and set a tidal wave of support in motion is now.



The campaign must relate to black people and to youth

Start now!

The new 'Socialists for a Labour Victory' campaign will differ from the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory in the 1979 general election. It has a more limited political basis. But by basing itself on official Labour Party policy it can organise an immensely greater part of the left wing of the workers' movement and take it through an important experience of rank and file political mobilisation and struggle.

Socialist Organiser will produce an election broadsheet on our own full politics as well as building 'Socialists for a Labour Victory'. The potential and scope of the new campaign is as yet not decided. Much will depend on how disappointing to Labour activists the official manifesto is. And the LCC and the Tribune newspaper, together with the Tribune group of MPs, are launching their own series of election rallies. Much will depend on linking up the two left general election initiatives.

The SLV campaign will be along the general lines suggested in last week's Socialist Organiser. The political platform will include the demand for Britain to withdraw from the Common Market. Many (though by no means all) supporters of Socialist Organiser disagree with this policy - arguing that it cuts across Europe-wide working class unity and fight for a Socialist United States of Europe.

But we are in a smallish minority on the Left (though less isolated than we used to be). Withdrawal from the EEC is official Labour Party policy: that it should be made Labour government policy is a matter of democracy. Participating in the campaign of the Left, Socialist Organiser supporters who think this an important issue will have the chance to argue our position in the paper, and perhaps have fruitful dialogue with those who disagree with us.

Campaign material will appear in about two or three weeks. But the campaign is launched and already in existence.

Some Constituency Labour Parties are already campaigning for the general election. Get yours to join them!

Propose affiliation to 'Socialists for a Labour Victory' at your Labour Party GC or union branch.

Raise in your CND or YCND group the fact that the campaign will unequivocally fight for unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Propose that your women's, gay or black group affiliates and works to make sure that the issues you are fighting for are taken up in the campaign.

Win affiliations from LPYS branches.

Immediately approach other leftists, and left caucuses in the Labour Party and trade unions, and organise a local meeting of committed people who will set up a local campaign and plan winning affiliations.

LABOUR Against the Witch-hunt published an advertisement in the March 4 issue of Tribune, calling on the right wing of Labour's NEC to halt all disciplinary measures against Party members and CLPs and pledging not to recognise or comply with any disciplinary action taken by the NEC.

The advert was signed by 44 CLPs and over a hundred wards, Labour Groups and

individual members.

The advert will reappear on Thursday 31 March to coincide with the LPYS Annual Conference. CLPs, trade unions and Labour Party branches can add their name to the advert by sending £3 per entry and the name of the organisation to Labour Against the Witch-hunt, 11 Wilderton Road, London N16, to arrive by Thursday March 24.

LABOUR AGAINST THE WITCHHUNT NATIONAL COUNCIL

The next meeting of LAW's National Council will be on Saturday April 9, 12 to 5pm, at County Hall, London SE1. Any affiliated CLP may send a delegate. If you're not yet affiliated send for details and a letter of invitation to the secretary, Keith Lichman, 11 Wilderton Rd, London N16.

Trouble!

TROUBLE. Our second paper in March, over a quarter of the way through the month, and we should be a quarter of the way through our March fund target of £1,000.

With £75 in this week, we've raised a miserable £142. The £75 came from donations from four people. One look at the "Where to Find Us" column shows us that there are far more than four groups of Socialist Organiser supporters meeting regularly.

Each group must discuss raising money for the fund. Points to think about:

- *Organise an extra street or estate sale to sell more papers.
- *Ask regular readers for a donation and urge them to buy their paper for £1.
- *Plan a fund-raising event: a raffle, jumble sale, sponsored event.

*Have a collection at your SO meeting and send the money quickly to:

The Treasurer, 214 Sickert Court, Essex Road, London N1.
Thanks for raising this week's money to:
Brian Wood £5 birthday present to the science column; Fred Hessler (Edinburgh) £15; Lynn Gregory (Birmingham) £30; Carla Jamison (proceeds from making banners in Basingstoke) £25.