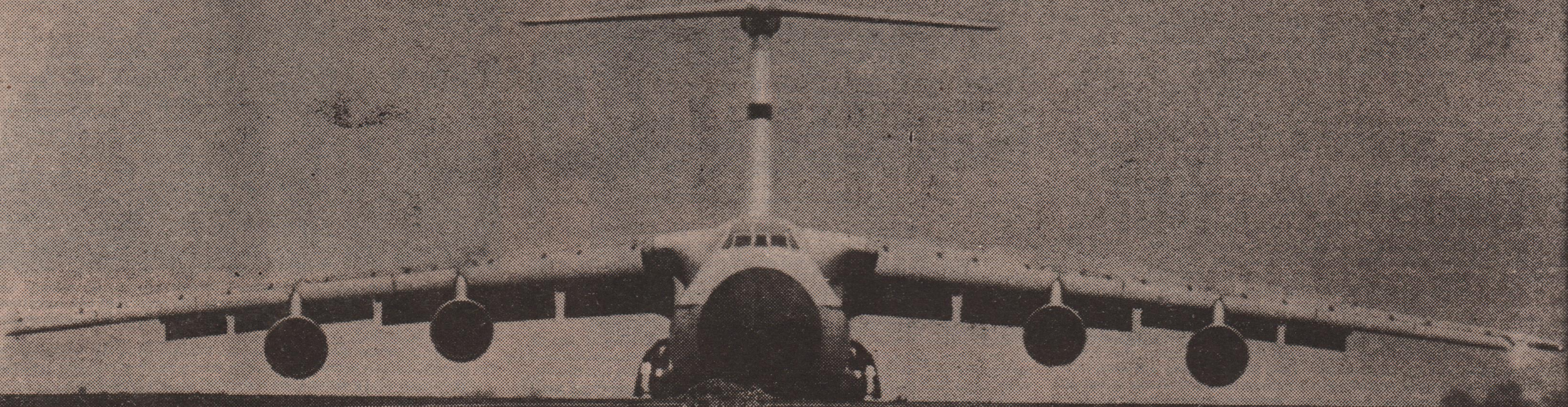


Break
links
with
Tories

Socialist ORGANISER

Join the
Labour
Party

Paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance No. 153 November 3 1983 25p Claimants and strikers 10p



A Galaxy freighter arrives with missile parts to Greenham, while troops are put on alert. PHOTO: Daily Express

Thatcher defends "democracy"

PROTESTORS WILL BE SHOT!



QUITE DELIBERATE statements from both Margaret Thatcher and Michael Heseltine in Parliament have made it clear that protestors who take direct action against US and British nuclear bases could be gunned down by troops.

Troops guarding nuclear weapons have orders to 'shoot to kill' if the weapons are threatened.

Heseltine 'categorically' refused to give any assurance to Labour MPs that protestors would not be shot. Meanwhile para-troopers seasoned in ruthless violence were drafted into the Green-

ham Common air base where US Cruise missiles are currently being readied for use.

While the Tories threatened the growing anti-war movement, the US forces at Greenham Com-

By Harry Sloan

mon were busily flying in added equipment to prepare their Cruise missiles for firing at any time from the end of this year.

Ironically, while the Tories use the argument of the need to safeguard nuclear weapons from the public as a pretext for their threats of violence, the US air force plans for Cruise involve the unhindered regular transportation of the missiles on mobile launchers around neighbouring country roads.

Elusive

This plan - to make them a more elusive target for any possible Soviet counter-strike - is one factor which ensures that the missiles' arrival at Greenham Common endangers not just the immediate neighbourhood, but tens of millions of people across Southern England.

The mere construction of Cruise - which is an offensive, first strike weapon, and a deliberate new American escalation of the arms race - brings the danger of nuclear war and mass slaughter that much closer.



JOHN HARRIS

Thatcher

The siting of the missiles in Europe - under the exclusive control of a US President whose itchy trigger finger and indifference to world opinion have been revealed in Grenada - can only be carried through by attacking the democratic rights and ignoring the clear wishes of the people.

But if Thatcher is showing her teeth in the latest threats, she is also showing the need for the labour movement to defy the threat and fight back with the kind of courage and tenacity shown by the Greenham Common women.

Unions: black the bases! Stop the missiles! Britain out of NATO!

Grenada: the thieves fall out

BONNIE and Clyde have fallen out. Bonnie thinks Clyde is becoming too reckless and that he shouldn't ignore her interests and wishes as he did when he invaded Grenada.

Clyde says Bonnie has gone chicken. He feels bitter that she refuses to back him and publicly warns him not to invade Nicaragua.

Reagan's invasion of Grenada has estranged and alarmed a lot of people other than Margaret Thatcher. It has shaken America's European allies and divided Caribbean critics of the invasion, Trinidad and Guyana, from the other Caribbean states.

Most of America's European capitalist allies are alarmed that American backwoods politics should be given expression on the stage of world politics.

The invasion has to be understood on two levels.

On the level of the global competition of the two power blocs, the Reagan administration did fear that Grenada would be bolted and bonded to Cuba, which is itself dependent on the USSR.

By Frank Higgins

They reacted by cutting off aid and by military threats - thus in fact pushing Grenada in the direction of links with Cuba.

Everything the US did must have helped what we now know as the anti-Bishop faction of the New Jewel movement.

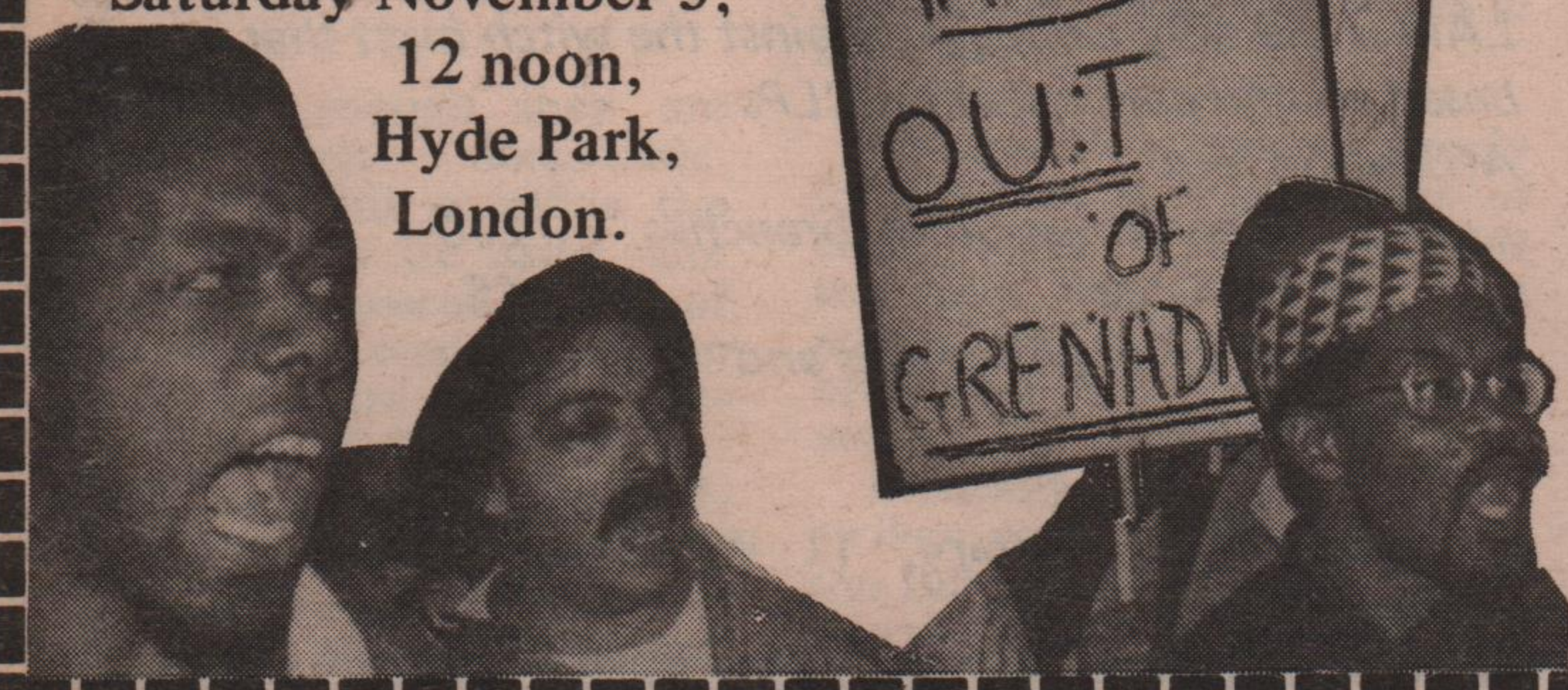
While the Reagan administration was piling on the pressure that probably helped split the New Jewel movement, the European capitalists were trying to keep Grenada on a middle-of-the-road development.

They tried to tie down Grenada with aid and even investment in the Point Saline airport which

Continued back page

US hands off Grenada!

Demonstrate
Saturday November 5,
12 noon,
Hyde Park,
London.



Reply to Labour Coordinating Committee Open Letter

Unity: on what policies?



JOHN HARRIS

Dear Comrades,
We welcome your open letter. As you say, dialogue within the left is important and it has fallen off a bit lately. Let's remedy that.
You are right — we must rebuild the Party's 'shattered base'. We must turn outwards to campaign against the Tories and for socialist values, etc. etc.

Most of your formal proposals and suggestions are sensible, indeed commonplace. They are very much common ground on the left. Therefore let us seek dialogue about those that are not.

In the first place, you fail to make your own position sufficiently clear. You say — end the witch-hunt. You also say support the existing leadership and leave them unchallenged for at least five years. But this is a leadership committed to the witch-hunt and which is continuing it. Look at the case of Tariq Ali, ominously expelled for his ideas.

Where do you stand? You have to choose between your declared opposition to the witch-hunt and commitment to the leadership. Will you still be for the leadership even if they don't take your advice and 'stop the witch-hunt'? And are you saying you will fight the leadership unless they call off the witch-hunt? In which case — *campaign*.

You talk about the need to discuss policy. Yet you declare support for Kinnock/Hattersley the "prerequisite" for unity. The same question arises here as above — when Kinnock/Hattersley retreat, fudge and abandon Party policy are you for the leadership or for the policies?

Unity is a sweet sounding word, like Salaam or Shalom or 'Peace on earth to men of good will'. (And usually just as empty).

Why is it that in your mouths it sounds like a threat? Why do you edge it with menace and imply an unspoken "or else"? Is it not that you consider yourselves to be doing a job for the leadership, that your real unity slogan is Peace in Kinnock's Time and on Kinnock's terms?

You know very well what Kinnock's game is and what his scenario for the Party is — to recreate a situation where the Labour Party leadership is free to do what it likes with Party policy. To gut and tame reselection. To recreate a 'faking culture' in the Labour Party to reconcile Left and Right on a basis of the left accepting right wing control in exchange for occasional left words from the leadership.

Here the question of who and what the LCC is forces itself to the forefront. Commitment to unity is new for you, isn't it? The LCC was the first group to leave the Rank and File Mobilising Committee. You refused to participate in its proposed replacement, Labour Liaison '82. But then, of course, you aren't talking about the unity of the left, for socialist goals. You are talking about Party unity around the status quo.

Your message is that those who don't accept the old status quo, with its new face are disruptors. This is the view of all proponents of authoritarian parties, right wing and Stalinist alike. Logically the impli-

Last week we received an Open Letter from Peter Hain on behalf of the Labour Coordinating Committee (reprinted on page 11 of this issue). It raises important questions for the left in the Labour Party and the unions. Here is our reply.

EDITORIAL

cations of what you say will line you up completely with the purgers and witch-hunters.

You talk about Kinnock and Hattersley being chosen by the Electoral College and thus having an exceptional legitimacy.

But comrades, you had an almost identical attitude to the old establishment. You said the same about Foot and Healey. Last April you appealed for 'Party unity' on the basis of "the existing policies, the existing leadership, the existing membership, the existing parliamentary candidates and the existing selection procedure". So what's new?

What's new is that you feel yourselves to be in power and part of the new establishment. Your talk of unity is a demand on the left and against the left. Its political content is the demand that the left disarm. Your letter for unity is probably best regarded as the point of your break from any pretence of being of the left.

Choices have to be made and your choice is clear. Either it is possible to regard the present situation in the Party as satisfactory, as offering hope that the future of the Party under Kinnock will be different from its past under the Foots, Callaghans and Wilsons — and plainly it isn't. Or else the fight must go on.

You are mistaken that that fight is necessarily disruptive of Party unity and effectiveness against the Tories. The serious left will back Kinnock and Hattersley if they fight the Tories. We are for this sort of Party unity even under the existing leadership. But the left that confines itself to this in the present state of the Labour Party will cease to be a left.

As well as unity of the Party's ranks to fight the Tories we must unite the left to fight to ensure that we have a real alternative to the

Labour's NEC hive off powers to new committee

By John Bloxam

Basnett

THE first meeting of Labour's new NEC last Wednesday continued where the last one left off. Tariq Ali was brought before the Committee to determine whether his ideas were acceptable; NEC members were denied the right to question him; then they expelled the person they had said was never a member of the Party by 14 votes to 10.

The technician of the witch-hunt so far, Jim Mortimer, balked at this — it was alright to deal with 'organisations' but not an individual because of their ideas — but new leader Kinnock had no qualms.

The Labour Party is a Parliamentary Party and not a Revolutionary Party, and therefore Tariq Ali had to go.

In doing this Kinnock and his right wing friends exposed as hollow the view that this year's NEC represented some kind of 'left' shift. In the process some of this year's 'left slate' also

showed which side they were on. Renee Short for one voted consistently with the right.

Despite Kinnock's clear centre-right majority, however, the Party establishment is not content to leave Party issues still focussed on the NEC, which is relatively open and still has a solid core of left wingers, particularly in the CLP section. Two separate moves illustrated the way they want to take things.

Towards the end of the meeting Sam McCluskie proposed the establishment of a new NEC committee to deal with disciplinary matters, which would report back to the NEC

every four months! Largely because of time this was referred back for further discussion. The earlier proposal to set up a Campaign Committee was, however, agreed at the meeting.

The proposal originated in the composite moved at this year's Party Conference by David Basnett of the GMBATU, and seconded by Putney CLP (dominated by the Labour Coordinating Committee): but it also draws in the content of a composite from the UCW that was remitted.

But its origin goes further back. It resembles the closed off Committee which drafted Labour's Manifesto, with an organisational side grafted on.

It is obviously not going to be just a technical or administrative committee, but will have a major role in not only presenting but directly shaping policy. Its powers include "overseeing the detailed articulation of party policy", conducting "centrally directed nationwide campaigns" and reviewing "the priorities, management and staffing of the party's press, publicity, education and campaigning organisations."

Answerable

The NEC rejected the proposal that the Campaign Committee should be a sub-committee, but instead should be answerable to both the NEC and the Shadow Cabinet.

The composition of the 23 person committee reflects the approach. There are only six representatives from the NEC, and two only (David Blunkett and Jo Richardson) from the

CLP section; Eric Heffer gets on as Party Chair.

The other positions are made up by the Leader, Deputy Leader, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, General Secretary, six from the Shadow Cabinet/PLP, one from the EEC Labour Group and four from the TULV.

It is likely that the four from the TULV will be Moss Evans, Clive Jenkins, David Basnett and Rodney Bickerstaffe, thus cementing a formal role for an entirely unaccountable cabal of trade union leaders.

Bickerstaffe's likely inclusion on the committee probably explains the vote for it by NUPE deputy leader Tom Sawyer on the NEC; its origins in the LCC could explain why Michael Meacher abstained rather than opposing it.

The Committee will be dominated by the bastions of the right wing in the Party — the PLP and the trade union leadership.

Away

Its similarity with Basnett's 1981 proposal for a Council of Labour is no accident, and the intentions are identical — to transfer the decision-making apparatus in the Party as much as possible away from the existing structures and place it formally in the hands of those who have done most of the string-pulling in the past.

It is part of the process of gutting the gains of the last three years in democratising the Party, and the aim is to smuggle these changes in — as with Kinnock's whole approach — under the facade of 'turning outwards', and on the backs of the real feeling in the rank and file to transform the Party into a genuine campaigning organisation.

Labour Campaign for Gay Rights
fighting in the Labour movement for lesbian and gay male liberation

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

Tories. The fight against Thatcher's Tories cannot be merely one more round in the Parliamentary see-saw. We must root out everything they specifically stand for. The Labour Party under its present leadership will not do that.

To get a Labour Party that will do that we need left unity against the present Labour establishment. We need a left that is clearly defined. We suggest that a serious left is defined by this platform:

- 1) The goal of socialism — of going beyond capitalism and wage slavery — as the governing principle in the labour movement and immediately of its left wing which fights to make it the governing principle of the labour movement.
- 2) Commitment to the working class and its struggle and to the fight for its emancipation from economic exploitation and oppression. Commitment to achieving working class rule in society which can only be democratic self-rule. Commitment to these goals in all conditions, including those where the state controls the means of production.
- 3) Commitment to the transformation of the existing labour movement into an instrument of the working class, capable of promoting and fighting for these goals, or, minimally, of making propaganda for them.

From these three points many conclusions follow:

* It means rejection of the treasonable talk of Labour coalition with the Alliance and a fight against the coalitionists in our own ranks.

* It means rejection of the approach of choosing the lesser evil and scaling down even our reforming goals under pressure of the ideological offensive of Thatcher and Co. It means, for example, rejecting Kinnock's approach to restoring Tory cuts.

* It means opposing the reimposition of the old "faking culture" as a solution to the crisis in the Labour Party.

* It means — necessarily — opposition to Stalinism and all forms of bureaucratic state socialism in the labour movement and in the Labour Party: opposition to both the Stalinist states and to the conception of socialism as state socialism, common alike to Stalinists and Fabians.

* It means an uncompromising commitment to democracy in the labour movement and to a fight to expand it under capitalism and to sustain and develop it under socialism.

* It means recognition that the labour movement is indivisible and, therefore, that the unions must be democratised and made into fighting organs of the working class.

* It means commitment to the real struggles of the working class — on picket lines, occupations against closures, etc., etc. It means more than just the "on the knocker" campaigning you have in mind, comrades of the LCC.

* It means working class internationalism and a rejection of the narrow-minded insularity which is such an unfortunate feature of the British labour movement. Some of you have abandoned the idea of leaving the EEC, for shamefully opportunistic reasons. Are you willing to fight to create European working class unity?

* It means a break from the criminal record of the Labour Party on Ireland and a commitment to find a solution and get Britain out of the affairs of the Irish.

It means support for the fight of oppressed minorities — including women, blacks and gay people.

We await your reply on these points. The left would be especially interested to learn what the LCC thinks of those who hint that the way forward may be a coalition with the Alliance.

Yours fraternally,
The Editors

AGAINST THE WITCH-HUNT!

NATIONAL COUNCIL AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
12.00 Saturday November 26
at Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, London NW1
Deadline for resolutions and nominations for a new LAW Secretariat: Friday November 18

AFFILIATE NOW!
LAW is the only campaign against the witch hunt that is based on and controlled by CLPs

Affiliation fees:

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

Contact: The Secretary, 11 Wilderton Road, London N16

Residential workers

We need a rank and file conference!

2,000 residential workers picketed their national pay talks last month



A MEETING of the residential social workers national employing body was held on 27 October and a motion calling for negotiations to be opened with the trade union side was defeated by only one vote.

Clearly management are feeling the pressure and the dispute now in its eighth week is reaching a crucial stage.

Ann Crowder, senior shop steward in NALGO, outlined to Penny Barnett what has happened so far and what direction she sees the dispute taking.

AC: In Notts, we began escalation after the employers' meeting on the 17th, when they failed to come up with anything. We're using selective rolling strikes - six establishments were out last weekend and 13 this weekend.

People have seen that the minimal action isn't getting anywhere and see the need to step up the action, whereas if we had started off with an all-out strike call I believe we'd have got less support.

Is an all-out strike on the cards now?

Yes. I believe we ought to be working towards it. The call has got to come nationally because the people who are involved are becoming more aware of the national situation and the need for the whole country to put the pressure on and take strike action. Branches need to demand that the executive call a delegate conference which can authorise the action.

A recent article in SO talked about closing homes by strike action. How do you view this tactic?

In Notts we'll oppose closures.

All we can see management doing is taking all the kids and putting them in one large establishment which can easily be manned by scab labour. I think this would be very divisive. It takes away the focus for the strikers, does more damage to the residents and in cost terms is cheaper for the employers. So it's got a lot of advantages for them.

Here in Notts a document is ready for discussion which proposes closure of at least eight homes. Some members are worried that the ban on admissions is showing that care isn't needed so much for kids which may be good in a professional sense but it's not allowing the debate to go on in a proper way. It means closing homes from cutbacks rather than because the kids don't need to be in care.

So we've allowed temporary staff to go in to establishments instead. They can't provide the

Southwark

Southwark residential workers, who thought they had forced the council into 'meaningful negotiations' after a Labour group decision last Sunday night, found that negotiators were in fact unwilling to drop their strings and preconditions.

So the strikers are stepping up their campaign of disruption against council meetings with aggressive mass picketing. Monday night saw over 50 NALGO militants picketing the town hall.

same services we do but they can ensure that people are safe and fed.

We have recruited many of these temps into NALGO and they support the action of the residential workers.

This is a similar problem to the one faced during the health workers' dispute. It's too simplistic either to adopt the position of the Socialist Workers Party, that all-out strikes should be taken without cover, or of Militant, that sections of the working class doing this kind of work should be held back from strike action.

The question needs a full debate inside NALGO and throughout the labour movement.

Is there any kind of link-up between shop stewards and rank and file members in different parts of the country?

No. And there is a problem with the union delegate meetings which are supposed to be made

up of one residential worker and one officer from each branch. But it appears that some branches do not even send a social worker. So we need to get residential social workers together on an unofficial basis to have a full discussion and come to a broad left perspective.

In Notts we have called such a conference (see advert).

The dispute has exposed the need for a broad left based on the rank and file, not on people at District level who just vote each other in.

Many broad left candidates are not on the left at all but may just support Labour Party affiliation or something like that so they've got on the broad left slate when their politics leave a lot to be desired.

What sort of role has the local council played?

Where you've got Labour councils it has caused quite a lot of problems. They argue that they are doing as much as they can and we're putting the boot in. They are trying to divide the rest of the NALGO branch against us. People get caught up with the argument that you can't criticise a Labour council because after all they are better than the Tories. But often they aren't and our council certainly hasn't been.

Councillors have been trying to persuade people not to go on strike, threatening closure of homes and suspensions without pay. They've been going back on agreements and letting management get away with making these threats and calling police to peaceful picket lines, so to us they appear like Tories.

I know that the council leader has objected to the fact that things he says in negotiations are raised at County Labour Party meetings, so this seems to raise questions about the control of councillors.

Yes, definitely. We need to firm up our control and accountability over councillors. We have raised criticisms right from the start when they refused to meet with us until two weeks into the dispute.

And every time they see us now they complain that anything they say will be used against them. But I think it is quite right that elected representatives of the labour movement should always be looking over their shoulders and know that they are answerable to the movement.

What sort of things would you like to see the councils doing?

They should support the full claim and be campaigning with us, while not expecting us to reduce our action. They should be united with us in the fight against the Tory cuts, because that's what is being thrown in our face - cut backs and rate capping.

They can have a far more united fight if they support their workers now and pay proper rates and give proper conditions.

Then they could use the base that we've built up to help fight government legislation. We would then be in the forefront of that fight. But obviously they don't want to stand up and fight.

Bury

IN BURY, three children's homes remain closed, with the NALGO members locked out by management.

Chaos still reigns in relation to these children who have been arbitrarily moved by management to alternative accommodation as far away as Wales, Southport and Liverpool, without informing the social workers or the children's parents.

Suspensions are growing that the council now intends to keep these homes closed as some form of back-stairs privatisation.

A lobby of the council is planned for this coming Wednesday as we go to press.

King unveils anti-union Bill

By Harry Sloan

BENEATH misleading headlines proclaiming variants of 'Bill to extend union democracy', the latest Tory anti-union proposals were published last Wednesday.

Naturally enough they are anything but democratic. Though the Bill specifies the regular election by ballot (not necessarily a postal ballot) of union executive committees, the bulk of these are already composed of elected, lay members.

With few exceptions the hardened bureaucratic core of full-time officials who actually run the unions - and act as the best compromisers and collaborators

with the employers - are left exempt from election or re-election.

In any event, this 'democratic reform' rests not upon the mobilisation of union members to active participation, but upon the threats of sanctions from the capitalist courts at the behest of individual, disgruntled right-wingers.

The Bill insists that official strikes will only be granted their immunity from civil claims for damages if a ballot has been held not more than four weeks in advance.

The objective here is plainly to interrupt the movement of class solidarity which provides the most solid basis for strike action, and which rests most effectively on mass meeting votes.

Ironically, since unofficial strikes retain their immunity, the Bill actually offers an incentive to take unofficial action.

As the Observer's Robert

Taylor pointed out:

'Yet in the real world - not the legal jungle - union officials intervene in strikes to gain control of them and in response to the pleas of the employer who wants to reach a settlement.'

Political fund

Taylor also highlights an aspect of the Bill's insistence upon 10-yearly ballots on whether or not unions should maintain a political fund: participating in those ballots will be those who do not even now pay the political levy. He asks:

'Why should those who don't pay the political levy now have a say whether their union should have a political fund?'

Though proposals to change the rules on individual 'contracting out' of the payment of the political levy have been left vague, the brunt of the Tory proposals will certainly be



JOHN HARRIS

Tom King

felt by the Labour Party.

Even the SDP has condemned these provisions as political discrimination: but will TUC leaders already on their knees before Tom King, be able to mount any fight at all against this nasty piece of legislation?

"Not low paid?"

NORWOOD CLP last week considered a motion which would cut the ground from under the Labour council's union-bashing opposition to the Residential Workers' parity claim.

The motion was in two parts:

- 1) Expressing support for the claim;
- 2) Calling on the council to open local negotiations on the claim.

Speakers for the motion described the longer basic working week of residential workers than other council workers. This basic week includes irregular and unsocial hours, weekend and bank holiday working, all paid at the basic rate, while compulsory sleep-ins (8 hours on-call) are recompensed at £6.32.

A Lambeth residential worker and Labour Party member described the strain of working such hours as well as the problems of the job itself. This leads to frequent sickness, high staff turnover and vacancy rates (30% in Lambeth) and frequent overtime, paid at the basic rate.

The pay-slip of a residential worker revealed a take-home salary of £90 per week (including

extra pay for sleep-ins).

In spite of this, Comrade Ted Knight claimed that residential workers were not low paid.

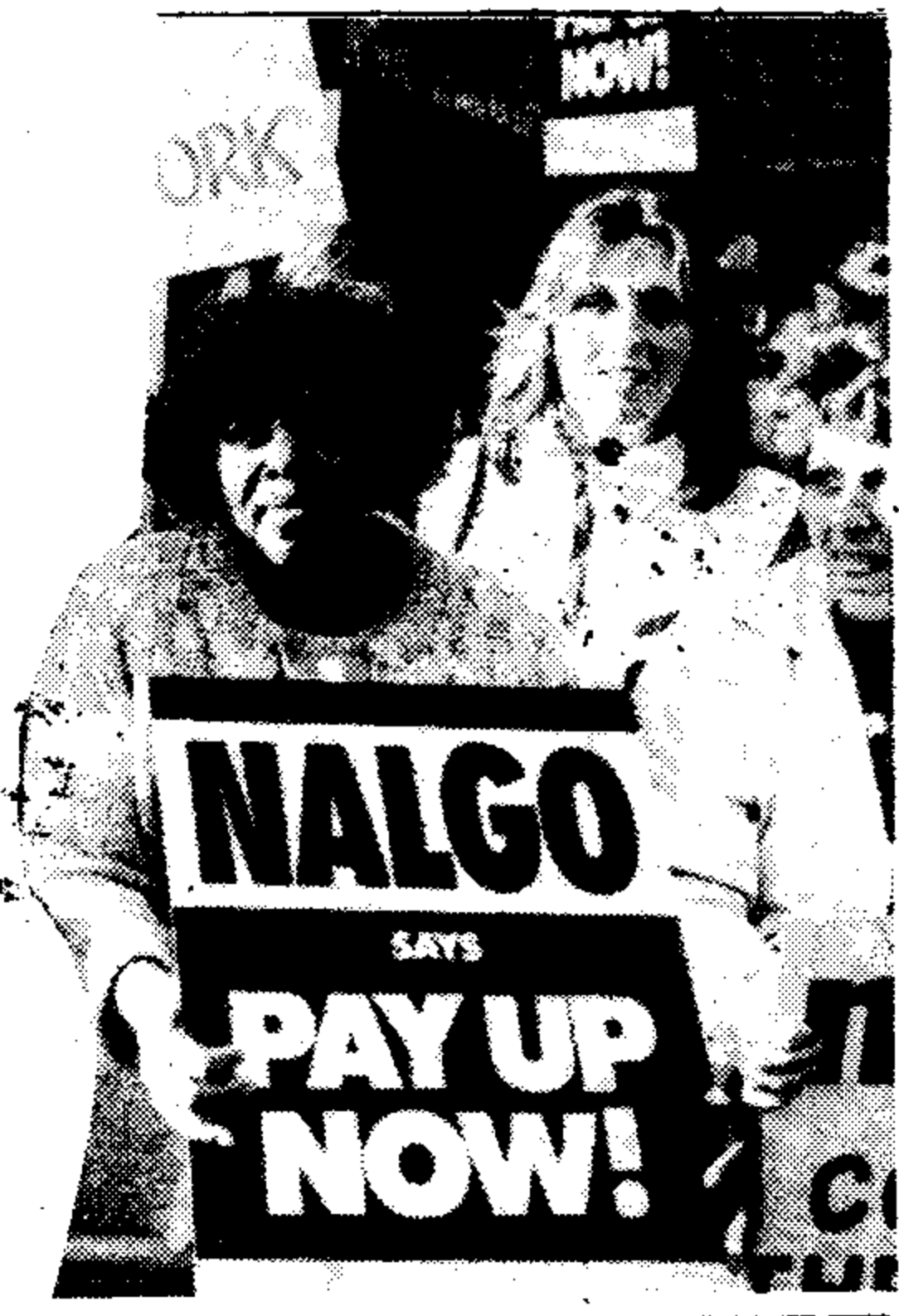
Arguments against were of three types. Either the claim was too expensive, or NALGO shouldn't be pressing for local negotiations as this would leave workers in Tory boroughs out on a limb, or NALGO should negotiate with the 11 Labour boroughs in the Association of London Authorities.

The argument against local negotiations would also apply to negotiations with the ALA, though comrade Knight did not seem to understand this. In fact, local settlements could free resources for supporting and spreading the battle against the Tory boroughs as well as encouraging workers in such areas.

The first argument, about expense, is the most bankrupt of all. By this, comrade Knight is arguing that residential workers should continue to subsidise Lambeth's failure to fight the government by working cut-price.

Conference Nottingham Nov 11

*National Conference of Rank and File Residential Social Workers, called by Nottinghamshire Branch Action Committee, Queen's Walk Community Centre, starting at 10.30 am on Friday 11 November. Contact Nottingham 810405 for details.





JOHN HARRIS

Organise to fight back!

THE Class Fighter conference will be on November 26/27. We are working to ensure a big turn-out.

It's going to be a much more useful conference than YS annual conference, because everyone will be able to have their say in the workshops, and we will actually discuss how to build campaigns. YS annual conference is just set-piece debates. There is no opportunity to talk to other comrades about what they're actually doing.

We'll be showing videos, too, and on the Saturday night there's a couple of bands.

What is Class Fighter all about?

Class Fighter sponsors Socialist Organiser (which is why, I guess, you're interviewing us), and we have much the same policies and orientation to the labour movement. Like SO, Class Fighter is trying to transform the labour movement.

We are trying to organise a youth movement which unites young people to fight the Tories. We want to work in single-issue campaigns like YCND, the women's movement, lesbian and gay groups, and the black movement, to try to pull them together in a massive anti-Tory campaign.

What will you be talking about at the conference?

The conference will be talking about YTS [the govern-

ment's Youth Training Scheme]. There is an official Labour Party Young Socialists Young Workers' Conference on December 10 in Manchester, and we want to take YTS 'trainees' with us.

Youth need to get organised against the Tory attack. Socialist Organiser spoke with Jane Ashworth about the forthcoming Class Fighter conference.

At the moment most CF supporters are working around YTS: some are doing work, together with the unions, to unionise trainees, and some are leafletting 16- and 17-year olds about their right not to go on schemes.

And lots more besides, of course... How do you relate to the Labour Party Young Socialists? We are a YS tendency. That's our aim, to take over the YS.

But we know that won't happen by just going along to YS meetings and conferences and arguing with the Militant. And anyway we wouldn't want to run the YS like they do.

We'll win a majority in the YS by building it as the organisation which pulls together the different campaigns and movements youth are involved in.

YTS: would you risk it?

By Jim Denham

AFTER JUST two months of existence, the government's much vaunted Youth Training Scheme is already in big trouble.

For a start, only 220,000 of the target 463,000 places have so far been taken up, according to official Manpower Services Commission figures. And already many trainees who started in September have voted with their feet and left, disillusioned by poor training, inadequate supervision, lousy conditions, lack of health and safety monitoring, and the miserly £25 per week pay.

The October report of the Birmingham/Solihull Manpower Board (the local advisory body that approves schemes and supervises local managing agencies and sponsors) contains the following diplomatically-worded passage:

"Within the next few weeks we shall be running a marketing campaign to ensure that as many young people as possible who have still not entered the scheme become fully aware of what is available".

Lost benefit

Exactly what the Birmingham/Solihull AMB mean by "marketing campaign" isn't known, but elsewhere youth are being openly threatened with losing benefits if they don't go on a scheme - something the government had previously denied would happen.

A circular from at least one MSC employment office in London is sent out to unemployed youth calling them to interviews to "discuss" and threatening loss of benefit if the individual does not turn up.

A further embarrassment to the MSC is the publication by the charity Youthisaid of figures showing that trainees on the old YOPs scheme (fore-runner of YTS) were at greater risk of being killed or seriously injured than workers in all but the four most dangerous occupations - mining, shipbuild-

ing, construction, and metal manufacture.

In reality Youthisaid proved that someone on a YOPs scheme was twice as likely to suffer serious injury as a worker in normal industry. And the chance of being killed was nearly one and a half times that of an ordinary worker.

Despite the MSC's protestations that YOPs' safety record was good, and YTS "should be better still because it is a better scheme", there have already been two deaths on YTS.

Within one week of the start of the scheme, David Brookes died after falling down a disused mine-shaft during a YTS 'Outward Bound' course. The scheme had not been vetted by the MSC - that job had been privatised out to the Newcastle Chamber of Commerce.

The next victim was Sean O'Brien, who was burned to death in an engineering factory in Coatbridge, Scotland.

He had been left unsupervised to clean rollers with paraffin. Sean's overalls became soaked in paraffin and burst into flames when he warmed himself in front of an unguarded heater. The company, Rosehall engineering, were fined just £800.

All in all, there is a lot of work to be done by socialists and trade union activists who want to fight the exploitation of young people on YTS. In some workplaces YTS has been boycotted altogether: but in most areas the battle has gone beyond that stage, and the task is now to prevent job substitution, to fight on health and safety, to prevent exploitation of trainees, and to organise them into the unions.

A good start is to set up a YTS action group through the local



YTS. Inadequate safety brings soaring casualty rate

Trades Council, bringing together trade unionists from workplaces where Mode A schemes are in operation, sympathetic supervisors from Mode B schemes, NATFHE (lecturers' union) members from colleges, local National Union of Students representatives, CPSA members working in the MSC, representatives of any local unemployed organisations, LPYSs, etc.

Such bodies already exist in many areas (notably Birmingham, Newcastle and Sheffield), and the Birmingham YTS action group will be calling a conference in the New Year.

Problem

Trade union organisation of trainees can be a problem on Mode B schemes (where the MSC itself, or other public bodies such as charities, councils or colleges, are the managing agents, and arrange schemes with the sponsors of training workshops and community projects); and on Mode A schemes (run by employers) where the trainees are in a non-union workplace.

The AUEW and AUEW-TASS have moved fast to offer trainees free membership. But in most areas the AUEW officials are right wing Duffy supporters, who are unlikely to take the problems of trainees seriously, or to allow

them the right to organise within the union.

The small National Society of Metal Mechanics is now also offering free 'probationary' membership to trainees, but only in workplaces where NSMM members are already employed.

The GMBATU appears to be taking the issue seriously, and has produced a useful pamphlet on YTS. They charge a reduced rate of 10p per week for trainees.

NUPE in many areas is keen to recruit trainees, and is often responsive to their requirements. However, the 26p dues rates is a problem.

The TGWU has been caught on the hop by the AUEW decision to offer free membership, and presently charges 25p per week. However, it is widely expected that next year's TGWU Rules Revision Conference will introduce free membership, and several larger TGWU branches are simply asking trainees for an initial payment of 25p and then subsidising their weekly payments out of branch funds.

All in all, there is no rule of thumb as to which union to recruit trainees into. The method which the Birmingham group is operating is to encourage trainees to form their own autonomous 'trainee groups' and then to go 'shopping' round the local union offices to see who offers the best deal.

Caught red-handed

Daily Mail EXPRESS Press FINANCIAL TIMES Gang The Daily Telegraph THE Sun

By Patrick Spilling

denied that Cuba had planned to invade Grenada, a claim immediately dismissed by reporters on this paper who will not bore you with the details.

Our reporter on the spot, cowering in the basement of a St. George hotel, asked the doorman whether the invasion was welcomed.

"Oh yes, boss. We am so happy to see the fun-loving American marines enjoying our island paradise," he said.

The interview was cut short as he was hit by a stray bullet and died in our reporter's arms, another victim of this Marxist attempt at a take-over.

Meanwhile, in London the row over the invasion continues. The Governor-General, Sir Paul Scoon rang her majesty at 3 am with an official request to send some Grenadier guards to join the peace-keeping force.

This report was denied by the Palace and by Downing Street. But the Americans said that they expected soon to have obtained a written request from Scoon pre-dating their arrival, asking for help.

We are conducting interviews with him now, said an American spokesman and we expect him to have asked us for permission at any stage.

This point has been seized on by Mr Denis Healey with devastating effect in a Parliamentary performance which reestablished the Labour Party with the lobby correspondents.

Mr Healey went straight to the root of the situation - the insult to her majesty.

As gloomy Tories looked at their shoes, Mr Healey castigated them for embarrassing the Queen and allowing the invasion to go ahead. If Labour had been in power, he said, they never would have allowed an island paradise to be left in the hands of a governor general, but would have had it ruled by Prince Andrew as part of his training for a life of idleness.

The Palace today said it was delighted that Sir Paul Scoon was safe and had managed to escape from American custody.

Now the focus of attention will concentrate on restoring the island to democracy: President Reagan is arranging a poll of right wing exiles from the island to see who should be given the tourist franchise on license from the American government.

The British are believed to prefer a government chosen from distinguished Caribbean leaders in favour of the invasion.

Once the leader has been

democratically chosen and the inhabitants of Grenada have been informed of their new choice, the way will be open to return to normality.

*President Reagan in two statements today said he had received a request from Caribbean leaders to "restore democracy to Cuba" and that the request was being considered. In a separate message to Margaret Thatcher the President said he was concerned by reports at the size of the M40 motorway, planned for the English Midlands. He said he would regard the construction of a three-lane motorway in a two-bit country as a "sinister development".

VOICE of Solidarnosc

Voice of Solidarnosc is published fortnightly by NSZZ Solidarnosc. Subscription rates are £8 for six months [UK] and £10 for six months [overseas]. Cheques and postal orders payable to NSZZ Solidarnosc should be sent to the NSZZ Solidarnosc Information Office, 314-320 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP. Tel: 01-837 9464.

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YTS APPLY HERE

Further details from [unclear] Court, London N1

THOUSANDS of happy, fun-loving Grenadians went on a non-stop fiesta here, writes our intrepid reporter, to welcome the peace-keeping American liberators.

Relieved inhabitants of this island paradise handed flowers to the troops as US planes celebrated overhead by firing rockets into their homes.

Meanwhile, pockets of Cuban-inspired rebels continued to try to overthrow the rightful American administration. These highly trained regiments of Cuban airport workers, disguised in t-shirts and shorts and carrying rifles, downed four helicopters and killed more than two dozen US troops in a Marxist-backed attempt to stay alive against the wishes of the American president.

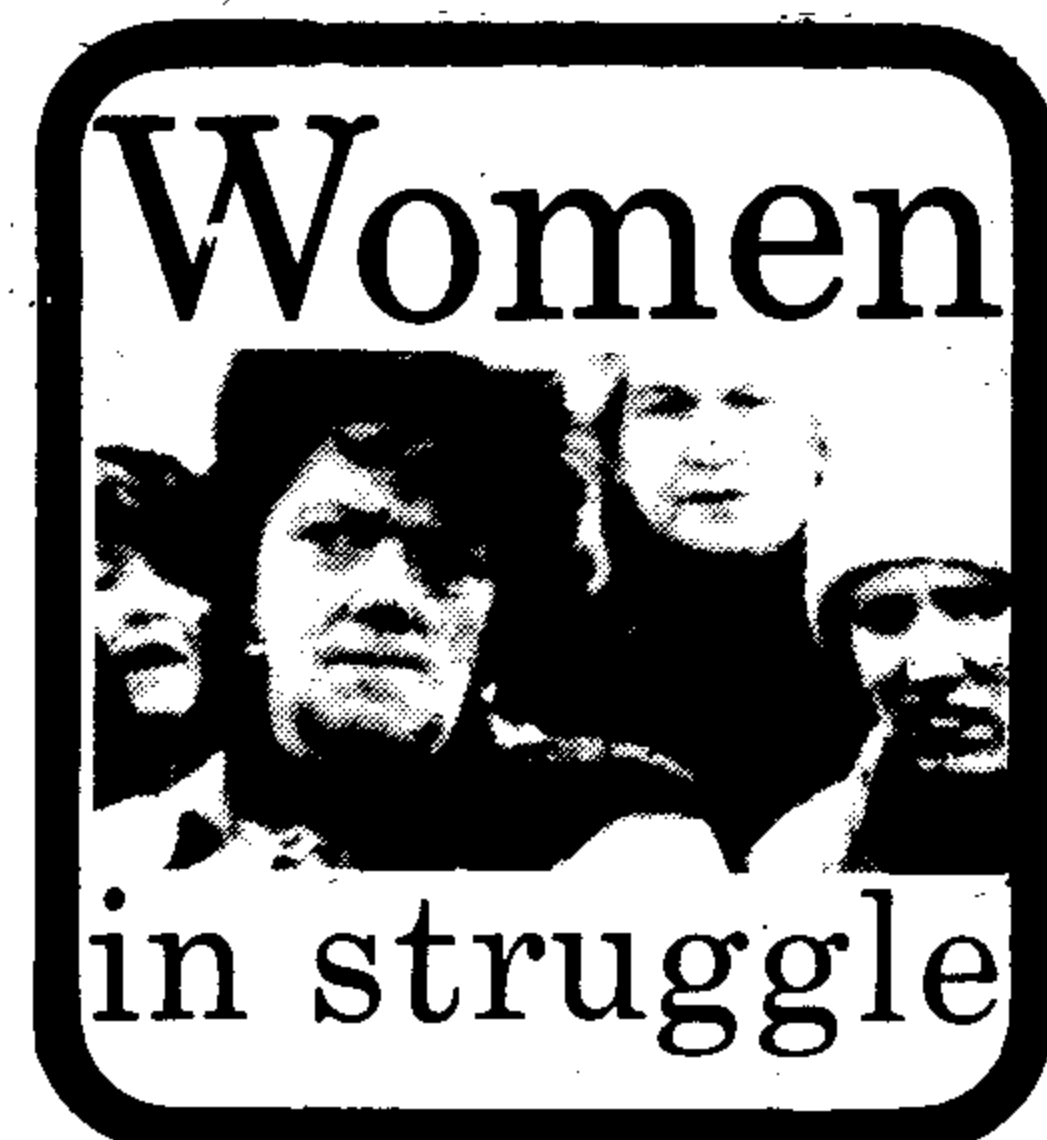
The Cuban airport team is believed to be a front for highly trained troops. American sources said that the airport was much too large to have been built by airport construction workers.

President Reagan praised the efforts of his forces against "overwhelming odds". In a heart-warming speech to the American nation, President Reagan said:

"They told us Grenada was an island paradise for tourism. But we have found warehouses stacked to the ceiling with tarmac, bulldozers, and paint. It was clear that Grenada was to be used as a staging post for hard-faced thugs to spread airports all over Central America and to undermine the US itself by turning our freeways into airstrips. We got there just in time."

In Havana, President Castro

Lessons from Thornton View hospital: Occupation is the only way!



WORKERS from Thornton View Hospital in Bradford have now been in occupation for twelve weeks, against its threatened closure.

Betty Elie is an auxiliary nurse and a COHSE shop steward, and has worked at Thornton View for nearly eight years. Mary Johnston and Ian McCondach spoke to her.

Thornton View is a long-term geriatric hospital with 82 beds. The patients see it as a home. Some of them have been here for about 15 years. We are in a block of six geriatric units in Bradford, some smaller than ours, but this is the largest long stay unit that we have.

Are there enough beds in Bradford for geriatrics at present?

Last year we were 50 beds below the Authority's 'norm'. If Thornton View is closed, we'll be 82 more beds down and Birchlands is also on the cards for closing — that's another 90 beds, and we've never had enough beds in Bradford for the elderly.

Did you expect Thornton View to be included in this round of hospital closures?

No we didn't because a lot of work has been put into Thornton View — but we were treated like eleven year old children; we



JOHN SMITH (JFL)

Thornton View... under workers' control

were given no notification from the Authority, we learnt of the closures on the wireless. Some members of staff heard of it and brought the news in — that's how we got to know about it.

What was your reaction when you heard the news?

Absolutely horrified, because we were more concerned with the patients that we had nursed for years — especially as you get so attached. I know it's the wrong thing to do, but they just didn't know where they were going to put them, because they didn't have any room and I don't think they still do.

Exactly how and why did the

occupation begin?

Last October we formed a cuts committee, when we heard of the closure — there were five of us on it — the stewards from Thornton View. We worked for Shipley Hospital as well as Thornton View and we were busy with public meetings. The health authority took no notice at all of what was going on, so the only way to make them and the public take notice was to occupy and this we did on August 5.

Did the occupation start as a result of your union leadership or from pressure from the rank and file members?

Not exactly, it came because of the pressures of the unions in the cuts committee — that's how the occupation came to be.

Did any of you have experience of this type of action?

No, what we did have was someone who had been in an occupation and they came and gave us advice to show us the mistakes they had made, so that we wouldn't make them. They helped us all they could in the first few weeks and this is how we learned — from outsiders — but now we're grateful for what they have taught us and we're able to carry on on our own.

How does the occupation work in practice?

Excellent! We have no management, as you know, we are the management, the nursing staff of Thornton View. We feel that we have done a better job, than when we had management in. Our patients couldn't say that they are better looked after, because we always made a point that patient care was the first priority and this we have done in the occupation. In the first week we concentrated on the patients' care and privacy and since then we have just carried on.

Have you had any problems with the occupation so far?

No, none at all — we're too well organised.

What support have you had from your union officials?

We have regional NUPE and COHSE officers coming in, and have their phone numbers in case of emergency. We also have branch secretaries, and

quite a lot of block bookings for picketing from places like York and Halifax union branches for which we are very grateful.

So what has the support for the occupation been like? From the workforce at Thornton View, the relatives of the patients, the public in Bradford and the labour movement?

I'll deal with staff first. At first they weren't all with us, but now we have a very solid backing from the staff night and day. The relatives — we had to work on them a little bit but now we have very solid backing from them. The people of Bradford are becoming more aware of what's going on and more are coming each week to help us on the picket line — and the Labour Party — well, I couldn't thank them enough, because without the Labour Party, I don't think we could have carried on — they have been marvellous.

What action do you expect the government and the District Health Authority to take in response to the occupation? How do you think they will try to close the hospital eventually?

We'll just have to wait and see what happens. We're hoping they are not going to rush in and take it that way — but we don't feel they will as the Authorities have been very quiet. We don't feel they will make a rush on us. They will send for us to talk and we hope that's what happens.

Shipley Hospital is threatened with closure and five wards are due to be closed in Halifax. What sort of advice do you have for workers there, who want to save their jobs and save their hospitals?

Go into occupation — definitely it's the only way and if they want any help, we're here to help them.

Do you think the attacks on the NHS will become a major point of confrontation between the government and the unions, in the same way as it did in last year's pay strike?

Definitely, because we're not in agreement with what they're doing and we're prepared to

fight against whatever cuts are made — but yes I think it could end up like last year's pay dispute.

So you think that the government has chosen the wrong issue to fight on this time?

Definitely, yes.

It is women who are playing the leading role in this occupation and in recent years women have

been coming to the forefront of industrial action. Do you think there is any reason for this?

Well, in years gone by women used to work for pin money, but now with the depression and unemployment, I think most women work because they have to make ends meet and support their families and I feel this is why we're becoming involved in unions and in these kinds of disputes.

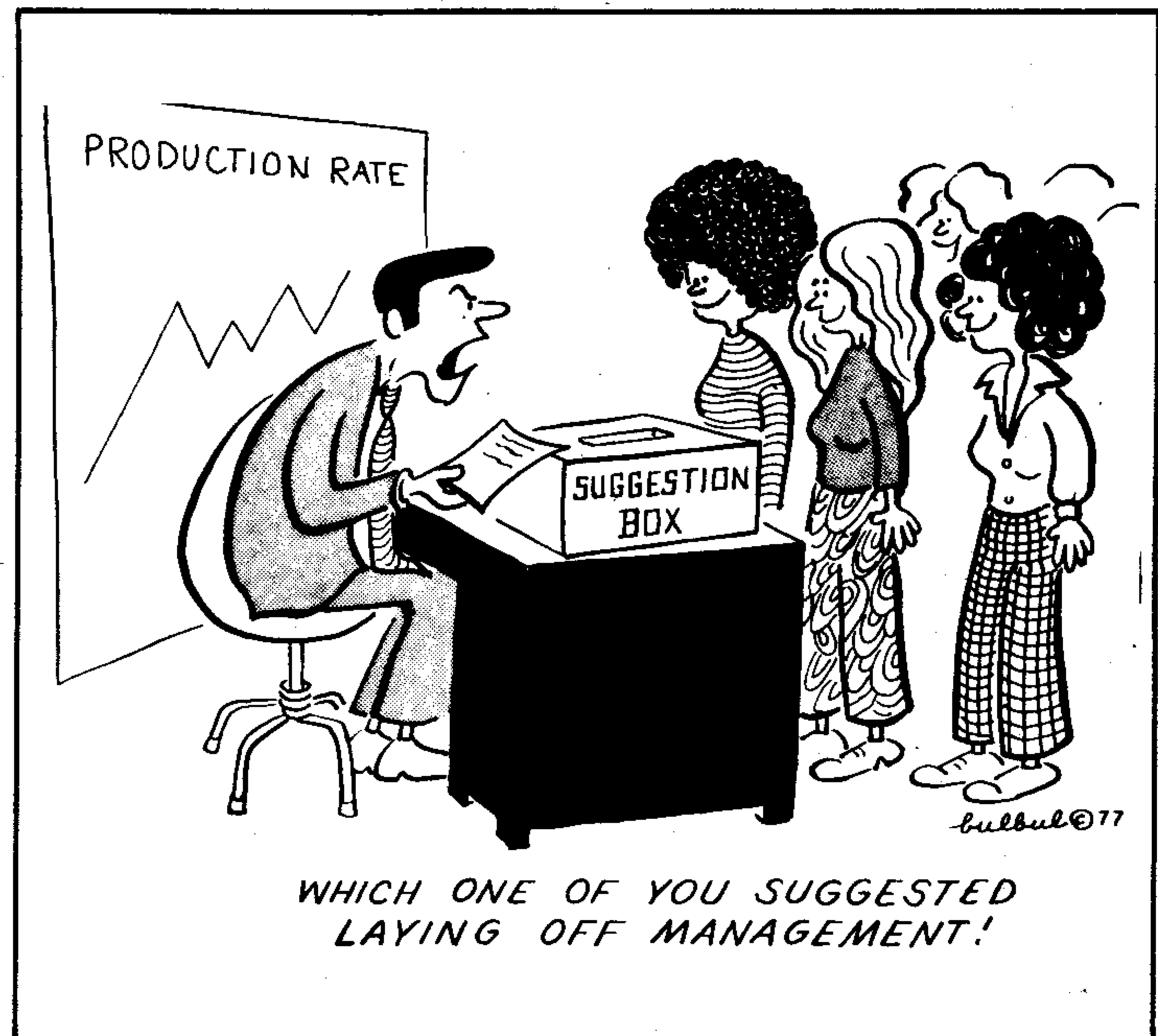
What sort of problems have you faced as women taking this action that men wouldn't normally face?

Divorce... no seriously, my kids think I'm the lodger, but I think most of us have got round the problems by getting baby-sitters or trying to work it between us, but I don't think our homes have suffered. It has been hard because we're still working normally in the hospital as well as running the occupation as well as running a home — but if you don't have a husband that agrees with what you're doing, it could be very difficult.

Have you and your fellow workers political views changed since you have been in occupation?

We did have a few that voted Conservative, I believe, but now they're regretting it. I think now if they all had the chance to go back to the polls, Labour would succeed, because I think we are all Labour minded.

Although none of us are members of the Labour Party, I think if they pushed hard enough, the Labour Party could get some members here.



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

Advertisement for 'CLASS FIGHTER' magazine. The cover features the headline 'Black community on trial; DEFEND THE NEWHAM 8!' and 'DEFEND THE NEWHAM 8! SELF-DEFENCE IS NO OFFENCE!'. Other text on the cover includes 'INSIDE: YCND diary, Gay YS, Youth training scandal, Socialist Squaddies?'.

Advertisement for 'WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK' magazine. The cover features the headline 'Women won't wait!' and 'Latest issue — 10p plus 12½p postage from 10B Landseer Road, London N19'. It also lists 'Editor: Betty Elie' and 'Publisher: Women's Fightback'.

International news

Polish prisoner interviewed

'It will be a truly monstrous trial'

ADAM MICHNIK is a 37-year old historian and one of the leading members of the former Workers' Defence Committee, KOR. Like other democratic opposition activists, he was harassed continuously by the authorities for his independent publishing and other activities, and was imprisoned several times. After August 1980, he became an advisor to the Mazowsze Region of Solidarnosc. He was interned at Bailoleka Internment Camp on 13 December 1981, and in September 1982, transferred to prison in Rakowiecka Street, Warsaw, where he has remained under investigative arrest ever since. In mid-October his indictment, along with that of three other imprisoned KOR members, was announced by the Polish government.

We reprint here an interview with Adam Michnik published in Voice of Solidarnosc No. 73, October 22 1983.



Adam Michnik

KOR — the Workers Defence Committee — later renamed the Committee of Social Self Defence — was formed after the events in Radom and Ursus in June 1976 to help persecuted workers and their families, by providing legal, financial and medical aid to those who were arrested, sentenced, beaten and thrown out of work.

Its aims were the creation of a network of social organisations to spread the idea of social self-organisation, ultimately leading to the control of the authorities in Poland.

However, the idea that 'an understanding' favourable to the workers could be reached through a gradual increase of social control over the Stalinist bureaucracy is purely idealist and un-Marxist.

It was a concept of a self-limiting revolution, of slow, two-sided compromise, shown as being unrealistic and impossible through the actual history of the Solidarnosc movement.

expose them, and we are therefore very eager for it to take place. The indictment is a mine of information, not so much about KOR, but about the ruling powers. I will relate what I have read in the indictment about the "sad engine-drivers of prison trains", as Milosz would say, at the trial. Jaruzelski believes in the discipline of the judges who will be sentencing us. He should not believe in the discipline of the accused.

Your "Letters from Bialoleka" prove that a dialogue through prison bars is possible. You were not mistaken when you

stated in your diagnosis of April 1982 that we have to be prepared for a "long march" and not for a "sudden change". What scenario of future events is it worth considering?

In my opinion, a scenario of agreement with the present (ruling) team is certainly not worthy of consideration today. It would be a waste of time. This team may chew at the "concrete" (reference to a hard-line faction within the CP); they may leap at each others' throats, but they are in complete agreement on one issue: in Poland, there is room for Solidarnosc only behind prison walls.

The struggle that is being waged within the ruling apparatus must be understood, but we should not expect anything good from any of the struggling cliques. Our only chance lies in the building of a broad, multi-faceted front of citizens' activities and hard resistance.

I am not a prophet, and therefore cannot foretell either the when or wherefore of the impulses for the next changes. But changes in the direction delineated by Solidarnosc are inevitable. The existence of organised structures is a phenomenon that cannot be treasured too much, creating as it does a chance that the next occasion will not be wasted. But the march is indeed likely to be a long one. The movement must have a perspective counted in years. We must also observe the situation in the USSR with particular attention. There the tremors are ever closer. Two qualities are of primary importance today — on both sides of the bars: consistency and patience.

In your lectures for the 'Flying University' [TKK] you explained that the tragic nature of Poland's fate lies in the fact that, irrespective of Polish actions, society has been sentenced to Sovietisation. What in Poland and in the world today inclines you to optimism?

I am an optimist by nature. You have to believe that things can change in order to attempt anything. Were it not for the resistance of contemporary optimists like Cardinal Wyszynski, Kisiel (dissident Catholic writer) and Herbert (famous contemporary Polish poet), we would not even have what we have today.

Resistance always pays off for society. Today, communism has exhausted its power both as a social system and as an ideology. It is but a conservative dictatorship of a narrow elite — the nomenklatura. The process of raising resistance against its totalitarian structure has an international character and it will intensify. We — and the entire so-called socialist camp — face two possibilities: democratisation or progressive decay and possible war. We are working for democratisation and for peace, while Jaruzelski believes in the possibility of restoring traditional communism through army methods, with us as the subjects and him as a more or less benign monarch. But this is a utopia. He is a greater utopian than Gierek. The true realists are today with Solidarnosc.

You were always an opponent of conspiracy. Now you have altered your views...

The situation has changed. The leaders who are in hiding are indispensable — they are the symbols of the whole

r. tional movement. I know how difficult their lives must be, and sincerely admire them. I am aware of the dangers facing the underground, and wrote about this honestly in one of my "Letters from Bialoleki". But we have no other option. We were pushed underground, along with the entire nation — because, in practice, everyone is conspiring today. Abortion of the conspiracy on the terms of the regime would signify surrender. And I would reiterate here that after 1947, following the appeals for people to emerge from hiding and the declaration of an amnesty, all the leaders of the Home Army (anti-Nazi nation-wide guerrilla organisation, later hunted down by the Soviets), were returned to prison. Jaruzelski will not rest until his regional operational groups break our moral backbone. This is why we must defend ourselves.

There has been an amnesty, but you have remained in prison as one of the hostages of the regime. What is your opinion of the amnesty and the lifting of martial law?

This appears to be yet another sham manufactured by the ruling team. I am, of course, pleased that many people have been released, and particularly so for those who provided an example of how one should behave under investigation and during a trial — like Zofia Romaszewska. But what kind of an amnesty is it that leaves in prison Frasnjuk and Bednarz, Slowik and Modwelewski, Gwiazda and Jurczyk?

As for the lifting of martial law, this can only be a ritual gesture for the benefit of foreigners and those who are less informed, because nothing has changed here for the better, nothing at all.

Even artists, actors and writers still appear to pose a danger to the social order that Jaruzelski dreams of. Martial law was allegedly imposed to prevent a civil war. It now appears that the spokesmen for this war are artists, actors and writers. We have already been through this situation, though, during the Stalinist era, and we know how it ends. In terror.

Are you afraid of being deported?

It has been suggested to Jacek Kuron — even quite recently — that he could emigrate at any time. The same suggestion has been put to me, and we are probably not the exceptions. It could be that Jaruzelski considers this to be a 'umanitarian gesture'; I could, after all, be shot for spying for, let us say, the United States. Why not? The Polish judiciary are the most liberal in the world when it comes to interpreting the evidence. But emigration does not interest me at all.

It would be far more useful for Poland if Jaruzelski, Olszowski and Kiszczak were to leave. Life in this country suits me, even in prison. I prefer not to think about deportation — Polish penal law does not foresee such a possibility. I understand however, that the government may be considering this. As long as we remain in prison, no one with any intelligence will believe that "order prevails in Warsaw".

[Tygodnik Mazowsze, No. 61, 8 September 1983].



North and South

by Paddy Dollard

Not so super

LAST week we told the story of Robert Lean, the informer who changed his mind and exposed the supergrass system in Northern Ireland. But not all grasses are supergrasses. The following account from An Phoblacht (by Jack Madden) shows the methods used by the 'security forces' to press gang local informers into service.

THE RUC's continuing efforts to ensnare people into becoming informers, side by side with their paid perjurer policy, was illustrated once again this week by the experience of a 29-year-old man from the Markets area of Belfast who contacted Sinn Fein.

William McKee, a married man with three children, was arrested on Thursday, October 20, and taken to Castlereagh.

His interrogators made a series of threats and offers of bribes — ranging from £20 to £50 per week — to induce him to report regularly on the movements of seven men in the area.

When McKee agreed to cooperate, he was told to meet the Special Branch in Bedford Street on Wednesday, October 26, at 11.30am, where he was to get into a blue transit van and would then be given a code name, a contact phone number and a Special Branch handler.

He was released from Castlereagh on Friday afternoon, October 21, and on the following morning approached Sinn Fein with his story.

Not so wise was a man from the nearby Short Strand area,

who confessed in an interview with the Irish News (Belfast's Catholic newspaper) on Tuesday this week that he had acted as an informer for over two years.

Michael 'Herbie' Devlin, a father of four, was recruited as an informer in June 1981 for the princely sum of £10 a week. His task was to inform on the movements and activities of republicans in his own locality.

After being detained in Castlereagh on suspicion of killing an RUC man, Devlin, a former Long Kesh prisoner, was released without charge and then subjected to constant harassment, arrest and raids until, he claims, on the verge of a mental breakdown, he agreed to cooperate with the RUC.

Devlin told the Irish News that as his conscience became increasingly guilty, he took to heavy drinking and later started petty thieving, hoping to be arrested, eventually succeeding in being sentenced to a six-month sentence in Crumlin Road Jail.

During his stay in prison, and since his release, the demands of his handlers increased to the point that they encouraged him to shoot a republican he knew, telling him "to put six in the 'scone of the bastard'."

Devlin fled the six counties. He says of his experience:

"The Special Branch kept on telling me that I was a brave man. The problem was that I stopped feeling like a human being the moment I accepted their money."

Trade Union work

ONE aspect of the turn by the Provos towards politics and 'the community' is an attempt to organise in the trade unions. The following report from An Phoblacht shows how they see their work in the unions.

ABOUT 40 people from Derry, Dungiven, Dublin and Belfast attended a day school on Republicanism and Socialism — Developing Revolutionary Politics, in Derry city on Saturday October 22. The day school focussed on ways trade unionists can raise socialist issues in the trade union movement.

Paddy Bolger, Sinn Fein national organiser, led the morning session on Republicanism and Trade Unions. He stated that the only period of history where republicans were active within the trade union movement on a major scale was during Connolly's time.

After Connolly, the trade union movement distanced itself from the national question. Bolger argued that the emphasis on trade union activity must be in the twenty-six counties where it would be possible to raise the national question with workers using this to develop our socialist aims. The major difficulty facing republican trade unionists in the six counties is the autonomy of the Northern Ireland Committee of the ICTU, granted by the ICTU in 1964.

In the afternoon two workshops were held. In the plenary session following the workshops suggestions for possible activities were made. The Youth Unemployment workshop suggested the following activities.

*Gathering accurate figures on the level of unemployment among youth in nationalist and loyalist areas.

*Preparing a document recording young people's experiences, good and bad, of the various youth training schemes.

*It was felt that Sinn Fein should not be telling people not to join the YTP, but rather demand better training, content and activities.

*Sinn Fein, it was felt, should not control action but rather facilitate any activity by young people.

*Trade unionists should take up the demand for union rates for work done when young people go out on 'work experience'.

Suggestions from the three workshops on Sectarianism in the Workplace were that:

*Trade unionists could quite easily raise discussion and possible action around the FEA (Fair Employment Agency)...

*A very important area of work would be developing propaganda for twenty-six counties consumption around the FEA.

No concrete conclusions were made by the day school as it was widely recognised that this was simply a beginning, and a useful one, for those participating. The overall emphasis was aimed at trade union activities being co-ordinated, and related to activities within the community, with particular emphasis on the need to provide information and propaganda to workers in the twenty-six counties.

SOLIDARNOSCI

UNDERGROUND

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

International news

Peronists lose Argentine elections

THE Radical Party won the general election in Argentina on October 30 with 52% of the vote. Its vote was even higher in the big industrial cities like Buenos Aires (65%) and Cordoba (56%).

In the last general election, in 1973, the Radicals scored only 21%.

They were Argentina's first real political party, emerging as a middle-class reform movement against the landowning oligarchy in the late 19th century, and ruled from 1916 to 1930.

But in the economic chaos of 1930 they were ousted by the military. And after World War 2 they were marginalised by the rise of Peronist nationalism.

The Radicals' current revival seems in some ways similar to that of the Liberals in Britain: an old party which has been an 'outsider' for long enough that it can now present itself as new.

On substantive questions the Radical manifesto was very little different from the Peronist. Both called for renegotiation of the foreign debt, and struck a nationalist stance; both promised improved welfare services and economic expansion; both called for an amnesty for political prisoners and an investigation of the activities of the military since 1976.

The Radical presidential candidate, Raúl Alfonsín, even

By Martin Thomas

identified himself with the Peronist tradition: "After Yrigoyen (the Radical leader of 1916-30), after Peron, Raúl Alfonsín."

But the two parties did strike a different note in their rhetoric. Alfonsín was almost alone among leading Argentine politicians to criticise Galtieri's war in the Falklands at the time, and now calls it a 'lunatic adventure.' He calls for the islands to be incorporated into Argentina (like the Peronists), but with much more stress on negotiation.

And, according to the Paris daily Le Monde, "To the alternative of a political nature posed by Mr Alfonsín, 'democracy or fascism', the Peronists reply with a more economic and geo-strategic alternative, 'national unity or dependence.'"

Voters seem to have been not so much attracted to the parties as repelled by the military. And that made Alfonsín, with his stress on internal reform, better able to gain support than the more nationalist Peronists.

Besides, the Peronists were internally divided, and discredited by the last period of Peron-



Raúl Alfonsín

ist rule, in 1973-6, which was accompanied by an anti-Left and anti-Semitic terror campaign as well as economic chaos.

The Radicals' anti-militarist stance is largely a fake: according to Le Monde, in 1976 Radical leaders knew about the coming military coup in advance and endorsed it. But the election result certainly shows a strong anti-militarist mood in the Argentinian working class, and a reaction against the nationalism of the South Atlantic war.

The problem is that socialists in Argentina have not been able to build on that mood. With the two main trade union confederations under Peronist leadership, the Communist Party and



some other groups supported the Peronists in the election, while the would-be Trotskyist 'Movement Towards Socialism' has made Argentina's 'Second Independence' its leading slogan.

The catastrophic economic situation — unemployment at 25%, inflation variously estimated between 300% and 900% per year, a foreign debt of \$40 billion, and only enough liquid foreign reserves to cover one month's imports — means that Radical rule is unlikely to be stable.

But unless the working class can reorient and find an independent programme, the military will be able to recover from their acute disarray and make a comeback.

Reagan's alibi collapses

By Harry Sloan

EVEN before the dust settles on the latest US military adventure — the invasion of Grenada — the fragile framework of lies put out by Reagan as justification of his intervention has begun to fall apart.

Abandoned within hours was the claim that the US sent in the marines to "protect US lives". No lives were ever in danger except from US artillery, and Reagan soon switched to emphasise the claim that he had acted "just in time" to prevent a full-scale Cuban takeover.

There were vast numbers of Cuban troops and armament on the island, he claimed: these were part of a Moscow-led "network of surrogates and terrorists".

Exactly why the Cubans — or the USSR — needed to establish a base on a tiny Caribbean island when they already have Cuba, or how a handful of rifles and pistols in a shed in Grenada could menace the power of US imperialism, Reagan of course never attempted to explain.

Since these allegations were made, however, even US Senate committees have begun to tear them apart: there was no evidence of plans for a "Cuban takeover"; Reagan's claim of over 1,000 Cuban soldiers has been refuted with a tally of only 738 Cubans (now all accounted for by US forces); the stock of small arms discovered and publicised by the State Department were for the island's 10,000-strong part-time militia.

And far from the resistance being solely conducted by Cubans, it has been admitted that Grenadian militia forces are still fighting the US invaders.

Meanwhile the Washington Post has begun to uncover the behind-the-scenes arm-twisting and manoeuvres — dating back to before the Grenada coup — that lined up the "invitation" for the US invasion from stooge right-wing Caribbean governments — in particular the Barbados government.

None of this is new.

The last US Caribbean invasion — in the Dominican Republic in April 1965 — was prefaced by President Johnson's demand that the leader of the right wing ruling junta make a written request for US intervention, citing the "danger to lives and property" as the reason. Johnson then described the invasion as a "rescue mission".

The US ambassador in Santo Domingo cabled horror stories of communist agitation, murder and atrocities, which were published by the American press

and used by Johnson: every one of them proved to be false.

In the aftermath of the invasion, Johnson's story switched from "rescue" to the suppression of an imminent "communist takeover". Subsequently this, too, was toned down to talk of a "very serious threat" or even a "possibility".

Three weeks after the landing Johnson came out openly arguing against the principle of non-intervention — and in effect setting the scene for the escalation of the Vietnam war.

A precedent to Reagan's Grenadan "arms dump" scandal came in 1954 as the USA prepared an invasion of right wing mercenary exiles to topple the reformist government of President Arbenz of Guatemala.

Arbenz — in desperation — ordered a shipment of small arms from the USSR to ward off attacks from the CIA-backed gunmen, based in Honduras and Nicaragua.

The Eisenhower administration promptly claimed that the pistols and rifles might be used to attack the Panama Canal — 100 miles away!

The shipment was then used as a pretext to step up the offensive against Guatemala and oust Arbenz.

There is even a precedent for the US disregard for the feelings of Thatcher's British government. In 1961, the election victory of left reformist Cheddi Jagan in British Guiana was regarded as unacceptable by the Kennedy administration. Though Macmillan's Tories were prepared to work with Jagan, they bowed to US pressure, and cooperated with CIA plans to establish "yellow unions and eventually topple Jagan in 1963.

Fall of "New Jewel"

THIRTY men of Maurice Bishop's New Jewel Movement seized power on March 13 1979 in an armed rising against the police and army of prime minister Eric Gairy.

Only three lives were lost. The army was disbanded and replaced by the People's Revolutionary Army, drawn from supporters of New Jewel*.

New Jewel already had a chequered career behind it. Bishop was leader of the official Parliamentary opposition, and New Jewel was part of the Socialist International, but politically and ideologically the movement had been shaped by black power and by Castroism.

The US Black Power movement of the late '60s spilled over into the Caribbean and merged with discontent and disappoint-

ment with the fruits of independence, then a decade old.

There was much to be discontented with in Grenada. With 100,000 people in 32 square miles, and the economy heavily dependent on cocoa, nutmeg and bananas, it had been dominated since the '50s by Eric Gairy.

Gairy had risen to prominence as the leader of a powerful revolt of the semi-proletarianised farmers, whose high point was a General Strike in 1951. Gairy organised them into a union, created a political party — and promptly formed an alliance with the ruling class.

By the '70s he ran a vicious, corrupt and repressive regime, modelled in part on Duvalier's Haiti. Gairy's Tonton Macoute terror outfit was known as the Mongoose Gang. He believed in flying saucers and tried to convince the UN to get in contact with them.

By John O'Mahony

Parliament was intact but feeble, and didn't meet very often. Gairy became more and more rapacious and, like the Somoza family in Nicaragua, alienated the local bourgeoisie by being too greedy and competitive, using the state to back him up.

New Jewel formed a coalition in the mid '70s with two bourgeois groups, together with whom they fought the last general election. There was a series of mass struggles involving the small working class in 1973-4. Three 'general strikes' occurred, actively backed by sections of the bourgeoisie.

Finally, New Jewel created a clandestine military group and seized power from the discredited Gairy. Avowedly bourgeois representatives were in the new revolutionary government.

The New Jewel leaders were all middle class — Bishop a London-trained barrister, his opponent Coard a British- and American-educated university teacher. They created political structures loosely modelled on Cuba.

'Mass organisations' were supposed to 'involve' the masses, and did, but power remained in the hands of the New Jewel elite. They would consult and listen, but they decided.

The New Jewel movement itself also lacked democratic structures, though it had the trappings of a party.

Three factors brought the Grenada revolution to ruin.

• The objective conditions. Grenada is a tiny, poor island, with few resources. It needed aid and support to develop. The US immediately cut off IMF aid

and credits, though European capitalist countries and Canada made loans and grants, and the airport was partly built with capitalist funds. Inevitably Grenada developed a certain dependence on Cuba and indirectly the USSR.

• The elitism of the movement. If they didn't keep Bishop's promise to hold elections — which they would surely have won — it was because they really believed in a system modelled on Cuba, with 'mass organisations' in practice completely dominated by an elite. They committed themselves to a mixed economy, but the New Jewel exercised a real dictatorship. Their political model was essentially Stalinist.

• Political confusion. Various-ly the leaders talked of going for 'real independence', of a 'non-capitalist road' of development. Circumstantial evidence suggests that the split which led to the killing of Bishop and his supporters was around a drive for full state control of the economy, represented by Coard and a majority of the elite. Bishop was publicly committed to placating the USA and developing the economy by way of tourism.

The private faction fight in the elite only went public when it was ready to get bloody. Bishop was vastly popular. His killing must have spread tremendous confusion and demoralisation — just when the Americans came.

They had been waiting their chance, and Reagan was desperate to be seen doing something after the slaughter of US troops in Lebanon.

* New Jewel was formed from two previous organisations in 1973. Jewel is derived from 'Joint Effort for Welfare, Education, and Labour'.



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ANDREW WILKINSON REPORT



Saturday October 29: Greenham women storm the base



Heseltine: threat to shoot protestors



Troops and cops join forces against G

Tony Benn on US nuclear bases in Britain

'No limit on the US missiles is en

THE invasion of Grenada has posed very clearly the key question of who will control the new American missiles in Britain. Reagan's decision to invade a Commonwealth country in defiance of the wishes of the British government suggests that the British government of the day would have no control at all over the missiles. There is only one finger on the button — the Pentagon's. British governments no longer have the power to decide whether Britain goes to war or not. A MORI poll in the Sunday Times shows that 73% distrust American assurances about joint control.

In his 1981 article "Britain as a Colony" Tony Benn analysed this situation.

It is in the area of defence policy that American dominance has become most pronounced. In analysing this process, I am basing my argument upon my personal experience as a minister who has had many dealings with the United States administration.

It began during the war, when Washington and London were the twin pillars of the Western Alliance. Britain desperately needed American support — financial and industrial as well as military — and we got it but on strict terms laid down by the USA.

Lend/Lease sustained us, but at a cost of selling our overseas assets. The post-war American loan was granted on condition that the UK adopted a policy of convertibility which collapsed as soon as it was tried. Our military mission in Washington became a major arm of Whitehall government and the integration of our research and atomic weapons was purchased at a very heavy price. The need to be just after the war... through which our scientific skills were merged with those of America... the Strategic and Nagasaki bombs was halted at the end of the war. It only restarted on the basis of complete American supervision of Britain's security arrangements. Through these supervisory arrangements which are still in force, the Americans are entitled to lay down the

framework of our intelligence systems and to have access to the framework of our intelligence systems and to have access to what they produce; in return they provide some information from their own world-wide intelligence network.

In the field of atomic research we are both dependent upon their skills and obliged to seek their consent for our own developments. On one occasion I was obliged to appear before the United States Atomic Energy Commission to explain, and in effect to secure their consent for, changes in the structure of the British Atomic Energy Authority for which I was responsible. On another occasion it was necessary to clear a technical development with the US authorities.

This close relationship certainly assisted the build-up of Britain's own nuclear weapons. It also alienated the French and triggered off de Gaulle's first veto of Britain's application to join the EEC. But its most important effect was to give the USA a commanding position in the deployment of its own nuclear weapons in Britain.

Though I have been the minister responsible for the Atomic

Research Centre at Aldermaston, and have served in four Cabinets and on occasions as a member of the key Overseas Policy and Defence Committee, as well as other, smaller committees dealing with nuclear policy, I was never told, and still do not know, the basis upon which US nuclear weapons sited in the UK can be fired.

The general assumption is that guidelines have been drawn up that constitute a working agreement governing their use and provide for consultation between president and prime minister, if that is practical. No Cabinet in which I have served has ever been told the true position and I can only suppose that the key US/UK arrangements are in effect only known to the president and the prime minister.

Decision

The essence of national sovereignty and independence lies in the capacity for a nation and its parliament to decide to go to war or to make peace. I believe that the sovereign right has long been ceded in law through a secret agreement with the USA; and in practice, by the very fact that no limitation on the use of US nuclear weapons

based in Britain would be enforceable. Yet every student learning about the British Constitution is told how Parliament won from a reluctant Crown the right of control over the 'purse and the sword'. That is to say it demanded, and obtained, the right to an annual vote of all moneys required by the government; and the right to renew annually or not to renew the military discipline laws which gave our forces their legitimacy.

Today, both these democratic safeguards have gone. The

expenditure on nuclear weapons and the programmes for which they are designed are concealed from Cabinets as well as Parliament; and we have on our soil the armed forces of a foreign power, armed with weapons of mass destruction that can be fired without Parliament's approval.

Those are, in effect, colonial arrangements under which, in a crucial area of government, we are a part of an American world-wide military system. They will soon be supplemented by a US-inspired Rapid Deployment

Force within which British troops will be engaged in operations never explicitly authorised by our elected representatives.

One final comment needs to be made here. The 1980 Labour Party conference resolved that all US nuclear bases in the UK shall be closed and that Britain shall adopt a non-nuclear defence strategy.

If that policy were to be incorporated in the manifesto upon which the next Labour government is elected and formal representations were made to Washington to withdraw those

CND: clarity is vi

By Tom Rigby

"THE peace movement has got to be much more political, much more international, linked much more directly with the struggle of workers for other things like homes and jobs".

So says Tony Benn in the latest edition of 'Briefing'.

The main lines of his argument are basically sound: that CND needs to move away from moral revulsion against war, and instead develop "a cutting edge... more explicitly political in character".

Benn also draws out the importance of opposing all nuclear weapons and bases, and not limiting CND to a campaign around a bilateral nuclear 'freeze'.

However, on several important issues he does not make it clear where he stands.

On Cruise missiles, for instance, he places the emphasis on the propaganda to be made out of their arrival, and not the pressing need at the moment, which is to organise the most effective and widespread action possible.

This is linked to his attitude to internal debates within the dis-

armament movement. Benn points to the need for 'tolerance' and 'unity' within a broad movement. But why no comment on the manifestly intolerant actions of the CND leadership — in particular, their attitudes on Labour CND and Youth CND?

It is important that CND activists do not respond to the arrival of Cruise by attempting to patch together a fake 'unity' based on generalities about not 'splitting the movement' or 'playing into the hands of our enemies'. Considerations like that can

be important, but the answer is real unity on the policies and in the campaign.

This can only be built through a serious attempt to explain both the victories and the setbacks that CND has experienced over the last three or four years, and the future perspectives for the campaign.

This task is a particularly urgent one in the labour movement, where we have failed to build on paper policies and turn them into action.

It is especially urgent when



JOHN HARRIS

CND leaders: E P Thompson, Bruce Kent, Joan Ruddock, Fenner Br

Scrap the Bomb! Britain ou

Printed in full in 'Arguments for Democracy' by Tony Benn, published by Penguin Books.



Newham women

ANDREW WIARD, Report

Tory Bill a lurch towards police state

By Bob Fine

THE TORIES have announced their revised version of the Police Bill. Like its predecessor it grants the police extensive new powers.

Its stated rationale is to create a 'balance' between the rights of individuals and the powers of the community and to 'rationalise' the large number of laws and bye-laws governing police powers.

It assumes that the police represent the 'community', even though the 'community' are — increasingly — deprived of any means of holding the police accountable for what they do in our name.

It assumes that the 'community' has an interest in its members being subjected to police harassment, arrest, detention and search.

It assumes that the 'war against crime' will be aided by the further alienation of the police from the people.

It assumes that where the police in practice currently violate their legitimate powers, the extent of their powers should be increased rather than their abuses suppressed.

All these assumptions are of course rubbish.

Transition

What is in fact going on is one further step — this time a legislative one — in the transition from a social democratic police force to the emergence of a police state.

The fact that both sorts of police represent the repressive arm of the bourgeois state should not blind us to the deep significance of what is taking place.

While the government's extension of police powers marks a real attack on democratic rights and specifically on working class communities, it hides behind the veil of defending the needs of individuals to be secure from crime and the needs of communities to suppress crime. While these needs are real, the government's solutions are entirely illusory.

Take the issue of stop and search. The police throughout the country will get the power to stop and search people on the streets if they have 'reasonable suspicion' that the suspect possesses stolen goods — a power that previously existed only in London.

In addition they will receive an entirely new power to stop and search for offensive weapons which has not previously existed at all.

New power

The police will also be empowered to stop and search people inside houses and gardens if they suspect that the person being searched does not live there or is there without the owner's consent.

For the first time the police will be given the power to use 'reasonable force' if they think it necessary, whether or not there is resistance.

The new Bill states that a constable need give no information about the reason for a 'frisking', nor give his name and police station, if he or she believes that it will not be understood by the person searched.



ANDREW WIARD, Report

The trial of the Newham 8 opens on November 10 at Snaresbrook Crown Court, Hollybush Hill, London E11 (near Snaresbrook underground station), and the Defence Committee is calling for a mass picket outside the court room.

As it happens, this week an official report by the Policy Studies Institute criticised the Met, for the way they enforce their existing stop and search powers. The criterion of 'reasonable suspicion', it said, does not act as an effective constraint on how the police decide whether to make a stop.

In a third of the stops observed, no good reason could be seen. Only about one in twelve stops led to further legal action being taken. There were numerous cases of abusive and rude behaviour by the police.

Numerous other accounts of the use of stop and search powers by the Met as a means of racial harassment have been made. The response of the government is to generalise and extend these powers.

Take the power of arrest. It has been considerably extended to legitimise the arrest of people for any offence — including minor ones like littering or parking — if the police are not satisfied as to the identity of the suspect or the permanence of his or her address; or if the police think that the arrest is necessary to prevent injury to persons or property, "an affront to public decency" or an obstruction to the highway.

This vast extension of powers will hit particularly hard the homeless and gays, who could be arrested not for any criminal offence but for their "affront to public decency".

Take the powers of detention. As in the old Bill, detention without charge is to be permitted for up to four days in the case of a "serious arrestable offence". Detentions of longer than 36 hours must be authorised by a magistrate's court.

Access to a lawyer may also be delayed for up to 36 hours. Existing rights of "habeas corpus" — long upheld by liberals as the symbol and foundations of liberty before the law — will be abolished.

What this means in effect is that the existing abuse of "habeas corpus" by the police and the judges, to give the police time to interrogate suspects for a few days without access to the outside world, will in effect be legally sanctioned.

Further, the definition of what counts as a "serious arrestable offence" is made even more nebulous.

It lists a number of specific crimes — murder, manslaughter,

firearms, hijacking, hostage taking etc — but adds that any crime may be called serious if its commission leads to or is likely to lead to a) serious harm to the security of the state or to public order; b) serious interference with the administration of justice; c) anyone's death; d) serious injury; e) substantial financial gain; or f) serious financial loss to anyone.

This definition embraces public order offences like obstruction and threatening behaviour as well a petty theft, where the police feel that the victim feels that he or she has suffered a "serious loss".

Take the question of road blocks. The existing absence of statutory definitions of police powers to set up roadblocks will be changed into an explicit legal power to establish roadblocks for indefinite periods wherever the "pattern of crime" calls for it.

SDP apologists, like the Guardian's Michael Zander, treat this as a "restriction" on police powers by treating the previous lack of statutory definition as a carte blanche for the police to do whatever they like!

The new Bill, like the old one, allows the police to search under warrant the homes and premises of people not suspected of committing any criminal offence.

"Fishing"

A search warrant may be issued where refusal of entry is considered "unreasonable" or where "the purpose of the search may be frustrated" unless immediate entry is gained by the police.

This will legitimise all kinds of "fishing expeditions" for evidence by the police, and to use any evidence found with regard to any offence.

Exemptions have been made — after much lobbying — for social workers, councillors, doctors and "journalistic material", though what legally counts as journalism is up for grabs.

The police will be given the power to conduct intimate body searches of vaginas and anuses of suspects, with or without their consent, with or without the cooperation of doctors, to search for articles which could be used to cause physical injury.

The Bill also allows the police to use force to take finger-

prints and body samples from suspects detained in police stations, a power which could in effect legalise assaults on suspects by the police.

The 'safeguards' proposed by the Bill are paltry. It mentions tape-recording of interrogation, but postpones its establishment for years.

It replaces the Police Complaints Board with a Police Complaints Authority, but this nominal change does little or nothing to create an independent investigation of complaints about police malpractice.

It establishes an "independent prosecutor" under the central direction of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the effect of which is to set up another bureaucratic layer and to remove the tiny amount of accountability to police authorities to which police prosecutors are currently subject.

The Bill in general, like the Royal Commission before it, removes sanctions for the greater part of police malpractice and abuse of powers away from the sphere of legal sanction by the courts and recasts them solely as matters for internal police discipline.

Nowhere to be seen is even Scarman's recommendation that police racism should be made into a punishable offence.

The idea that the police are servants either of the community or the law becomes ever more an empty phrase.

The government has undertaken an unprecedented public relations exercise to justify the Bill and disguise its real nature. This includes the publication of a 67-page Home Office document.

We must expose the extension of police powers which this Bill actually means and the repressiveness of its provisions. The National Campaign Against the Police Bill is holding a general meeting open to all members on Monday 14 November at 7.00pm at Holborn Town Hall; a National Conference on Saturday November 19 at Sir William Collins School, Charrington St., London NW1; and a march on Saturday 21 January from Brockwell Park to Trafalgar Square. We need to think hard about the strategies that are being and should be used to combat this escalation in police repression.

'forceable'

weapons and close those bases, it is not at all clear that the US administration would agree to do so. They would almost certainly respond by pointing to agreements reached with earlier British governments under which these bases were made available and express their view that these agreements must be upheld and could not be unilaterally abrogated by a British government.

Only at that stage would the British House of Commons and the British people be made aware of the surrender of sover-

eignty and democratic control by Parliament over peace and war which has already taken place secretly, reducing us to colonial status in our relations with the US and its armed forces.

*Footnote: Socialist Organiser carried a series of articles disputing Tony Benn's central political conclusion that the labour movement must lead a fight for "British national liberation". Copies are available from Socialist Organiser.

tal for unity

we have a Labour Party leadership that is prepared to fudge on issues like Polaris and the bases, and still maintains 100% support for NATO.

Benn has pointed towards this important task: "the Labour Party has got to shift beyond simply being in favour of giving up a particular weapon... towards non-alignment; a different foreign policy which breaks with the stranglehold of the rest of Western foreign policy, which is simply a back-up for American global military and economic

interests throughout the world".

But what this means has to be clarified. Does it mean getting out of NATO? Does it mean breaking with the military and economic interests of the British state as well as the American?

Turn

In particular, Benn should explain his view of how such a political turn within CND could be accomplished at a time when the leadership is increasingly compromising on even its existing policies of unilateralism.



Blackway

t of Nato!

Ben Tillet

Pioneer of the new union bureaucracy

BEN TILLET was one of the most important leaders of the 'new' unionism of the 1890s and 1900s. He was a leading light in the 1889 Dockers Strike and from then until 1922 General Secretary of the Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Labourers Union, the formative influence in the amalgamation which produced the TGWU. Involved in most of the big strikes from 1890-1926, he was a founder of the ILP and the Labour Representation Committee (the forerunner of the Labour Party) and later for many years a member of the Marxist Social Democratic Party and its successor, the British Socialist Party.

A long time member of the TUC General Council, Tillet was also an MP during the first two Labour governments.

His long career has much to teach us about the formation of many of the institutions which still today structure the workers movement, specifically the development and the dynamics of the trade union bureaucracy.

Compared with today's sophisticated and integrated bureaucracy, the leadership of Tillet's day was primitive, 'irrational' and close to the ranks from which it had so recently evolved.

Sectional

When Tillet was born in Bristol in 1860 trade unionism covered a tiny proportion of the workforce. Its practice was explicitly sectional, closed to the vast majority of the working class, collaborative, in return for the crumbs a favourable economic situation produced and, only in the most minimal sense, reformist supporting both the capitalist system and a capitalist party, the Liberals.

The craft union bureaucracy was tiny. Six years after Tillet's birth the best known organisation the Amalgamated Society of Engineers had only one full-time official. Tillet was of the generation that changed all that.

Coming to manhood as a supporter of the Liberals who saw the path to progress through liberal reform, Tillet was able to use to his own effect, working amongst the People of the Abyss in London's docklands.

As secretary of the Tea Operatives he began to recruit the unemployed but soon despaired of the possibility of any strong effective organisation in the face of casual labour, a divided workforce and employer blacklists. His remedy was state backed conciliation and arbitration to be achieved by pleading with Liberal politicians such as former trade union leader, Henry Broadhurst.

The 1889 strike aided by favourable economic circum-

Noel Hibbert reviews "Ben Tillet" by Jonathan Schneer, published by Croom-Helm.

stances and divided employers, erupted from below to his complete astonishment. "The men wanted to strike" he wrote, "I could scarcely believe my ears. It had never occurred to me that they were ready for such a thing."

If a pessimistic view of the membership is a primary trait of the bureaucracy, so is a speedy willingness to grasp with both hands opportunities provided by the membership. The success of the strike and the formation of the Dockers Union established Tillet's position as a bureaucrat with some security. Whereas he previously had 500 members, 18,000 now paid their dues.

Despite Tillet's having disowned the influence of the Socialists during the strike the union aspired, in distinction to the craft unions, to be a fighting organisation with Tom Mann as president and strike pay in place of unemployment, sickness and funeral benefits. Nonetheless, a centralised structure concentrating power in the hands of the executive (not as with previous dock unions in the branches) was adopted.

The utility of this and the limits of the fighting organisation could be seen once sectional strikes began over employer encroachments on such things as payment during the dinner hour. These incursions, Tillet argued, must be stomached. Now was the time to build and consolidate. Words which were to be familiar to dock militants for the next three generations began to pour out from HQ. "To those who have been misled by mischief-makers whose disloyalty and underhand work can only do harm... the executive instructions are: Resume work at once taking orders only from properly appointed officials."

The ranks

Restriction of labour supply was adopted and recruitment closed. The membership, Tillet declared would have to toe the line.

"The tail would not be allowed to wag the head. They must fall into their proper places, must await orders and be ready to fight when they were called upon to do so — and not before. There must be generals and privates in every army... loyalty and obedience to orders were necessary." Not a word, of course, about the missing link — democratic control of the generals by the privates in a war fought for common objectives.

Ben Tillet (second from left in foreground) before a conference with the government in the 1912 dock strike



Like many of his contemporaries and unlike many of today's leaders, Tillet had experience of struggle. Company thugs broke his nose, cracked his ribs and ruptured his hernia. But his personal struggle was at an end. He was free from and had no desire to return to the world of deprivation and insecurity. As Keir Hardie's rhyme began, 'I'm Alderman Ben Tillet and I've got a first class billet'.

He had no strong socialist views let alone any developed theory. He reflected the incoherence and prejudices of the mass without its impetus, its necessity to struggle. The security of the organisation even in a weakened form even at the expense of the membership was his bill of passage.

Nothing better illustrates Tillet's view of the ranks than his speech after his defeat at Bradford in an election in 1892. "He had spent the best years of his life and the best energies he had for the benefit of his class... He believed in a division of labour and if his part was working, speaking and travelling, it was their part to contribute the means for his doing so. There had been a meanness shown which was despicable."

Manoeuvring

As Schneer comments, "Tillet developed towards the rank and file a condescending attitude which at times verged upon contempt."

One means of escaping from the tension between organisational and personal security and rank and file insurgency was to turn to the state to regulate the conflict between capital and labour and in the process the conflict between bureaucracy and rank and file. Tillet was a life-long advocate of state arbitration. In the early '90s, he shed his liberalism and became a self-styled socialist.

The leaders of the new unionism are usually portrayed in contrast with their craft predecessors as socialists. Tillet's activities in the early '90s show just how limited this socialism was and how it was a response to the weak bargaining position of unions of the unskilled (relative to the labour aristocrat) and the

employers' vigorous counter-attack.

What he believed in was classic labourism — more regulation of the capitalist economy by the capitalist state.

The working class would be admitted to citizenship right within capitalism and its leaders would be legitimised as brokers between state and labour. He denounced 'the harebrained chattering and magpies of continental revolutionists' and celebrated English muddle and empiricism. The workers could not run things. "There was no class of people whom he would fear more to have in their possession unlimited power."

In accordance with these views he joined the Fabian Society.

But if Tillet was a bureaucrat every bureaucrat was not Tillet. Despite the formation of the LRC, the situation was still fluid as illustrated by Tillet's idiosyncratic twists and turns. He moved 'left'. The early years of the century found him attacking the Labour leaders and forsaking his initial teetotalism for peans of praise for wine, horse-racing and the music hall and abuse for "British prudery".

Between 1908 and the war he was a pillar of the SDP/BSP proclaiming: "There is no solution without revolution". With the outbreak of hostilities his collaboration and patriotism were equally strident.

If his oscillations are in part explained by his erratic and extreme temperament and the strange — for example, jingoistic — Marxism of Hyndman's organisation, this had to be related to the bureaucratic desire to find a satisfactory perch within the movement, the bureaucrat's eternal divorce between rhetoric and action, and of course Tillet's sensitivity to the necessity to react to, in order to influence, movements within the rank and file.

Tillet always used left rhetoric as a means to disarm and control the members. It had no discernible impact on his practice. As early as 1892 in the Bristol strike he was thundering, "It must not finish at trade unionism. It must not finish until the workers of all grades and degrees commanded absolutely the whole machinery of the state."

A few months later he was the first union leader to use the new Board of Trade arbitration system and claiming "The unions most efficient work is the prevention of strikes."

Tillet's advocacy of syndicalist ideas during the Great

Unrest of 1910-14 increased his stature with trade unionists. Yet in the 1911 Dock Strike he was characteristically 'militant and conciliatory by turns' and his comment on the 1912 dispute when the government requested food and fuel be allowed out of the docks summed up his one enduring consistency, the desire for recognition by the state. "But think of it. The government coming to us for permission."

An excellent example of Tillet's manoeuvring was his attack on James Larkin during the 1913 Dublin Lockout. Small groups of British workers blacked goods but the TUC failed to give a lead. Asked for solidarity action they refused and instead confined themselves to giving financial contributions to the workers in Dublin.

As the most prominent 'left' and castigator of the official leaders, Tillet went on a

British speaking tour with Larkin. Whilst Larkin attacked the union leaders and urged the rank and file to take independent action, Tillet, inbetween calling for the arming of the workers, simply urged a special TUC conference to call a General Strike. When the conference was called, he immediately moved a resolution of confidence in the TUC leaders, denouncing Larkin's criticisms.

Chauvinism

The chauvinism that had governed Tillet since his support for anti-immigration leagues in the docks provided him with his last star turn as a warmonger. Manoeuvred by Bevin out of any position in the TGWU he ended his days poor and usually drunk, soliciting money from the Tories in return for information on Communist activities in the unions.

The real growth of bureaucracy occurred after Tillet's heyday. Union membership went from 2.6 million to 8.3 million between 1910 and 1920. Size of organisation was transformed and national collective bargaining developed. When he died in 1940 it was just making its full entry into the portals of the state. Nonetheless, his story illustrates in the chemically pure form, many of its tendencies. Jonathan Schneer's book despite its relative exclusion of what was happening within the ranks and within the state is well worth reading even if at almost £15 for 214 pages it is a prohibitive purchase.

* Founded as the Democratic Federation in 1881, the organisation became socialist as the Social Democratic Federation in 1883. Afterwards it became the Social Democratic Party, and in 1911, after fusing with breakaway branches of the Independent Labour Party, it became the British Socialist Party.

The BSP was by far the biggest component of the Communist Party of Great Britain established in 1920. The Hyndman minority section of the BSP split off to pursue their jingo politics in 1916, and called themselves the National Socialist Party.

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The membership would have to toe the line

Open letter from the Labour Coordinating Committee

A new basis for Left unity?

Socialist Organiser has received the following Open Letter from Peter Hain, Vice-Chair of the Labour Coordinating Committee. Our response is to be found on page 2.

THE LCC is anxious to explore the basis for a new unity on the Labour left. Our anxiety is underlined by the different reactions to the Brighton '83 Conference and to the new Party leadership amongst various left groups.

Even before the Conference, the left was severely split, not least between those based in London and those in the rest of the country.

Such divisions reflect a serious fragmentation since 1981, with some groups almost completely marginalising themselves at Brighton, and with the LCC one of the few groups correctly judging both the leadership election and the post-General Election mood at rank and file level.

Just as the Party has been damaged in recent years by a rigid left/right divide, so the current fragmentation of the left into warring factions prevents dialogue and joint action on the many points of agreement which unquestionably do exist.

However, the LCC remains

sceptical about the kind of unity operating in the recent past which — although effective in promoting activity on a narrow range of issues such as the constitutional reforms — has suppressed real political differences between various left groups.

The absence of an open and honest political basis for the compromises involved in left unity has contributed to recent fragmentation.

In finding out whether there is any basis for a new left unity, the LCC believes a prerequisite for it is a constructive attitude to the new leadership. It has already boosted the Party internally and externally.

In Neil Kinnock we have the kind of left Leader who would never have won as recently as three years ago, before the electoral college. Even Roy Hattersley is more radical and more committed to the majority of Party policies than were many of his predecessors from the right in leadership positions.

We should recognise that the new leadership has created a new political space in which the left can prosper. We must also insist that the Party abides by the democratic verdict of the electoral college — our electoral college.

This applies both to Leader and Deputy who each won majorities in all sections of the College. It does not mean giving

the leadership a blank cheque.

Rather it means giving a priority to other matters. In recent years Labour's left has developed almost an obsession with the leadership, perhaps understandable after the appalling Wilson/Callaghan legacy, but strategically shortsighted in its neglect of the overwhelming necessity to rebuild the shattered base of our movement.

Luxury

For historic and other reasons the left has had to adopt an 'oppositionalist' stance in the Party. In the current circumstances that is a luxury we cannot afford.

Instead, the left must take the initiative in turning the Party outwards to construct a new, wide base of support.

Above all, the LCC believes there must now be an absolute priority given to campaigning to re-create support for socialist values and Party policies. However, such 'campaigning' is not simply a matter of better or slicker presentation of policy, it is or should be aimed at encouraging people to fight for themselves. Within this context, we suggest the following basis for unity:

1) Joint discussion on policy areas which have been neglected: notably, social policy; decentralisation (including devolution); ecology; Ireland; a

genuinely non-aligned foreign policy; and an updated alternative economic strategy capable of tackling a deepening crisis.

2) Joint campaigning to win union ballots for affiliation to the Party and to strengthen Party/union links.

3) Joint action to ensure that the Party campaigns effectively from national to branch level.

4) An absolute commitment to unilateralism as part of a non-nuclear defence strategy.

5) Building support for the new statutory minimum wage policy, and for campaigns to defend local democracy and the health service.

6) Unless circumstances alter in a dramatic and unexpected way, no challenges to the new Leader and Deputy, at least until after the next general election.

Reselection

7) Defence of mandatory reselection and the electoral college, and opposition to any new witch-hunt.

8) Support for constitutional reforms to extend women's rights. 9) Encouragement of wider consultation and involvement in decision-making through local CLP and union branches, whilst maintaining opposition to postal ballots.

10) Support for Tribune's continued existence as an independent paper, free from legal attacks by Party members.



Kinnock — 'the kind of Left leader we would never have won before'

11) Support for a broad, tolerant Party, with no left group putting its own interests above those of the Party.

We look forward to your comments and to seeing whether you can agree with this 11-point plan for unity in action.

Pavement artists?

EVERYDAY, British dogs deposit 500 tonnes of dung on the streets and open spaces (not to mention five million litres of urine), to the hazard not only of those who stride in open-toed sandals with heads held high.

Nowadays, despite notices threatening fines of "40 shillings" to the owners of polluting pooches, the excrement remains where deposited until dispersed by the action of insects, wind and rain, or by people's shoes or vehicle tyres.

But in the squalor of London's dockland slums 150 years ago, upwards of 200 people made a living collecting and selling "pure", as dog turds were known.

The "pure-finders" used to search out the valuable "pure", armed with a covered basket and (sometimes) one black leather glove.

They sold their collections to the 30 or so tanneries of Bermondsey, which paid 3 or 4 shillings a standard pailful at one time, though the price had fallen to between 8d and 1s 2d by the 1850s, according to Henry Mayhew.

Apparently, the tanners' workmen would rub the shit into

SCIENCE

By Les Hearn

goat-, lamb- and calfskins with their bare hands, to "purify" the leather. This made the high quality leather necessary for kid-gloves, bookcovers and best quality uppers for boots and shoes.

The ordures were valued for their alkaline and astringent properties, which seemed to help get rid of the traces of moisture that remained in badly dressed leather.

The best faeces, according to Mayhew, were the "dry limy-looking sort", though some tanners preferred the "dark moist variety". The average earnings were 5 to 6 bob a week, though some pure-finders grossed 15 shillings a week, living very comfortably.

The vast number of pet dogs in Britain presents a mounting problem. 18,000 tonnes of dog do's will not just

go away, particularly when street-cleaning services are being run down. One result could be a rise in parasitic diseases such as tapeworm.

The privatised solution in Britain is the "Sooper Dooper Pooper Scooper". However, in France, several municipal councils have set up fleets of "caninettes" — motorcycles which patrol the pavements, trailing a sweeper with a sanitised bag.

Offending

On locating a turd, the rider backs up to the offending object so that the four brushes can sweep it into the bag.

The 70 Caninettes of Paris can collect 1.5 tonnes of poo per day.

Meanwhile, in China, the government sees the urban dog population as a serious hygiene problem and has decreed their destruction.

Research in the West suggests however that a supposedly parasitic pet can actually have a beneficial effect on its owner's health. Old people leaving hospital after treatment seem to survive better if they own a pet.

Greens

SERA (Socialist Environment and Resources Association) and Green CND are holding a conference on "Socialism and the Green Movement" at Coventry Polytechnic on 12-13 November. Further details: SERA, 9 Poland Street, London W1. 01-439 3749.

Partners in revolt

THE two lives of the title are those of Louis Hodgkiss and his wife Winifred Haward. They were each born at around the turn of this century, and at first glance would appear to be a strange match. Louis went to work in the Lancashire coal mines at the age of fourteen, but a year after the outbreak of the First World War went to enlist in the Navy.

His father, "a self-taught scholar, a convinced atheist and a member of the Independent Labour Party" (as well as an alcoholic, which accounted for the family's chronic poverty) insisted that the boy's "religion" was stated on his enlistment form for the Navy as "humanitarian" — thus making him the only man in the Navy without a religion!

Dishonourable

Louis' time in the navy was colourful to say the least — before he was twenty he was given a dishonourable discharge having "over three hundred offences against him — none for any failure in seamanship."

Winifred, on the other hand, was born into a family of well-to-do Suffolk gentleman farmers. She won a scholarship to Girton College in Cambridge where, in 1917 — incredible as it may seem today — the overwhelming majority of the students were women. The young men of Winifred's age were either fighting in the war or had already given their lives to it and Winifred was aware that it was unlikely that she would find fulfillment in marriage and children.

Outdoor

Nonetheless, her career as a University teacher enabled her to travel widely in Europe and to spend time in New Zealand where she developed a liking for the harsh outdoor life and exper-



WENDY FRANKLAND reviews "Two Lives", by Winifred Haward Hodgkiss, which is published by Yorkshire Art Circus.

enced at first hand the absurdities of class distinction whilst working for a period as a govern-ess-nanny.

Meanwhile, Louis had begun to gain a reputation as a writer of novels and plays depicting the mining life he knew so well and met Winifred when she was working as Talks Producer for the BBC in Manchester. Louis was invited to broadcast one of his scripts, and they were drawn to each other because as Winifred says "He was in revolt against a society that denied him a career. I was in revolt against a society that offered me a career but no partner."

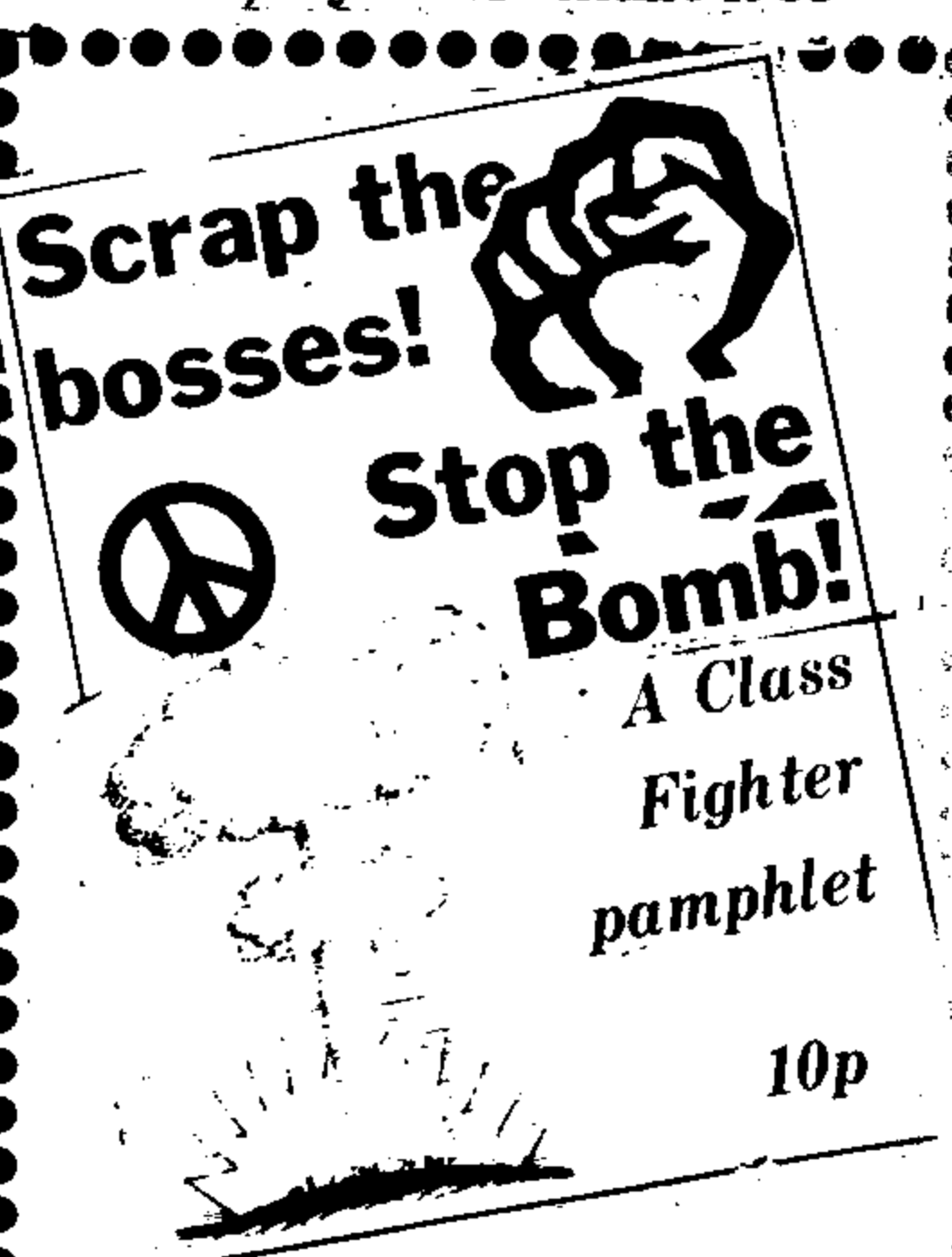
They decided to make a life together, and took over a near-derelect cottage in the remote village of Hawkswick in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales. Here they spent nearly thirty years together working on the cottage and garden, writing and establishing friendships with their many visitors as well as the local people.

In 1978 Louis died in the garden he loved; he is buried there — these are the lines by the seventeenth century poet Walter that Winifred read at his funeral as his memorial: "The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed

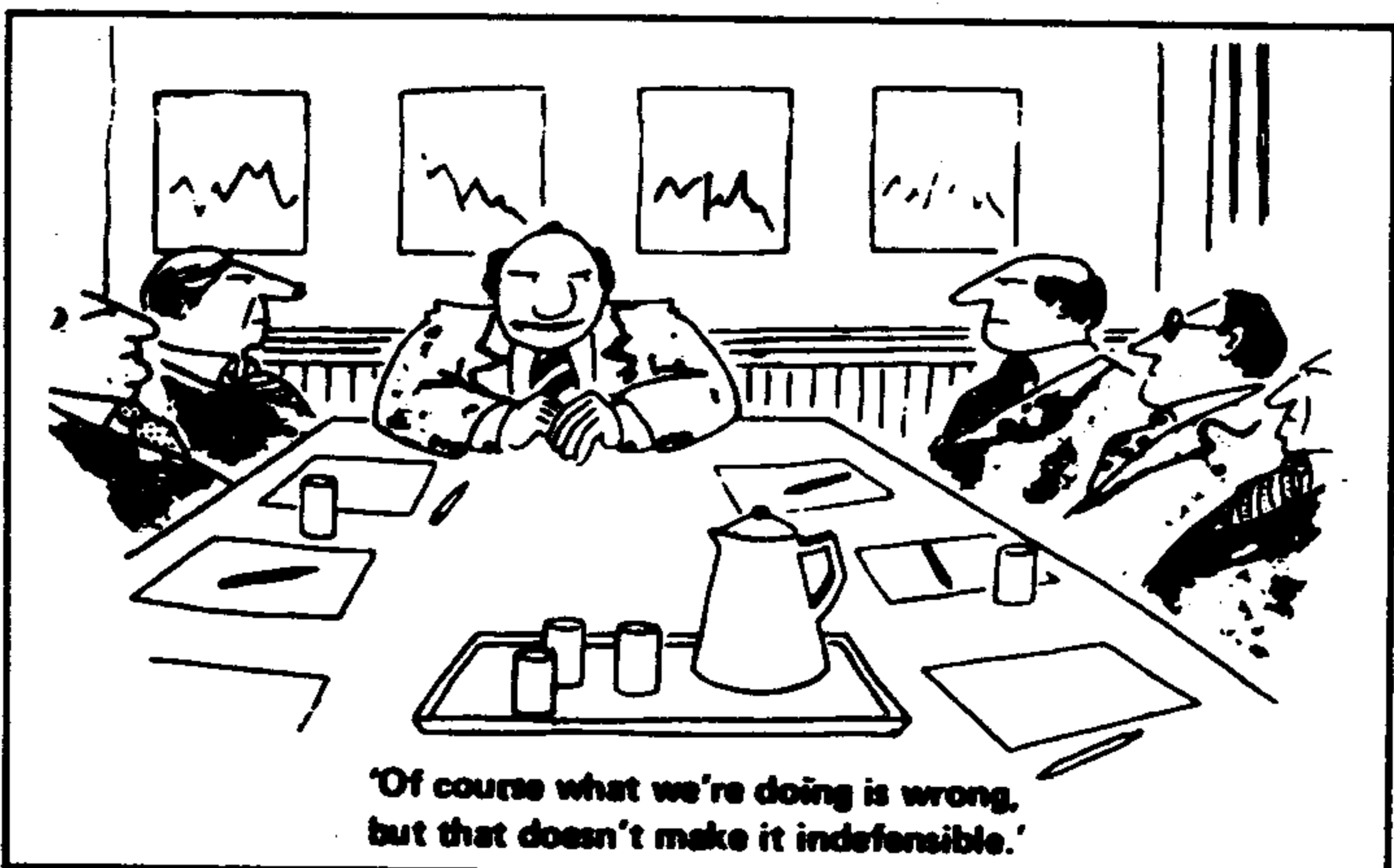
Lets in new light through chinks that time hath made Stronger with weakness, wiser men become As they draw near to their eternal home. Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view That stand upon the threshold of the new."

Now in her eighties, Winifred still lives in her home in the Dales and is active in the Peace Movement.

"... I have lived through two World Wars, and know that war is obscene, bringing not glory but suffering. Preserve the world, you who are my successors. There is love and there is sorrow, but the gain outweighs the loss, if you will make it so"



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



Socialist ORGANISER

Where we stand

*Organise the left to beat back the Tories' attacks! No to attacks on union rights; defend the picket line; no state interference in our unions! No to any wage curbs. Labour must support all struggles for better living standards and conditions.

*Wage rises should at the very least keep up with price increases. For a price index calculated by working class organisations, as the basis for clauses in all wage agreements to provide automatic monthly rises in line with the true cost of living for the working class. The same inflation-proofing should apply to state benefits, grants and pensions.

*Fight for improvements in the social services, and against cuts. Protection for those services against inflation by automatic inflation-proofing of expenditure. For occupations and supporting strike action to defend jobs and services.

*End unemployment. Cut hours, not jobs. Fight for a 35 hour week and an end to overtime. Demand work-sharing without loss of pay. Organise the unemployed - campaign for a programme of useful public works to create new jobs for the unemployed.

*Defend all jobs! Open the books of those firms that threaten closure or redundancies, along with those of their suppliers and bankers, to elected trade union committees. For occupation and blacking action to halt the closures. For nationalisation without compensation under workers' management.

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

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

*The capitalist police are an enemy for the working class. Support all demands to weaken them as a bosses' striking force: dissolution of special squads (SPG, Special Branch, MI5, etc), public accountability, etc.

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

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

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

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

*It is essential to achieve the fullest democracy in the labour movement. Automatic reselection of MPs during each Parliament and the election by annual conference of party leaders. Annual election of all trade union officials, who should be paid the average for the trade.

*The chaos, waste, human suffering and misery of capitalism now - in Britain and throughout the world - show the urgent need to establish rational, democratic, human control over the economy, to make the decisive sectors of industry social property, under workers' control. The strength of the labour movement lies in the rank and file. Our perspective must be working class action to raze the capitalist system down to its foundations, and to put a working class socialist alternative in its place - rather than having our representatives run the system and waiting for crumbs from the tables of the bankers and bosses.

SO AGM sets next targets

HEALTH cuts, anti-union laws and Labour Party workplace branches were among the priorities for campaigning work decided at the Socialist Organiser Alliance AGM last Sunday, 30th.

The political resolution, passed unanimously, recognised that: "We are in a bad period. The labour movement is depressed." But it focused on the possibilities for fighting to change that situation.

Tony Richardson from Cowley said that despite repeated sell-outs by the leadership there was an explosive situation in the working class. Big confrontations on the anti-union laws were possible. We must gear into these possibilities.

John Douglas from Barnsley supported the resolution's proposal that: "We should take steps to revive the Mobilising Committee for the Defence of Trade Union Rights - experimentally at first." This would make us better able to intervene in industrial disputes, he said.

Nik Barstow from Islington spoke about the situation under the new Kinnock leadership in the Labour Party. Socialist Organiser had been relatively isolated at the Labour Party conference because of our stand

Martin Thomas reports on the Socialist Organiser Annual General Meeting

against Kinnock. That stand was correct: but now it must be combined with initiatives to turn the Labour Party outwards.

The resolution also noted that the Labour left is differentiating. Many are falling in behind Kinnock; "but others are moving in the opposite direction... greater numbers on the Left are open to serious discussion about internationalist, socialist alternatives to the nationalist, statist, bureaucratic politics of the 'Alternative Economic Strategy'".

The biggest controversy of the AGM came not over the political resolution but over a draft resolution on local government. The AGM agreed to refer it to the groups for further discussion.

Moving the resolution, I argued that it is high time to draw a balance sheet of the 'local government left'. This left, lacking clear strategy, has failed at the crunch every time, and has become in effect a force for reconciling the labour movement with the limits of the existing system.

And the SOA needs to take a

candid look at itself, too. On the whole our council positions are not proving an asset to our political work. We have not managed to crystallise a clear opposition to the rightward slide of the 'local government left'. Our councillors are not sufficiently integrated into the SOA.

The main speaker against this view was Islington councillor and Labour Chief Whip Alan Clinton. My document would, he said, take the SOA back to the sectarianism of yesteryear, always demanding confrontation with the Tories tomorrow if not today. Councils cannot at present confront the government head-on, and must instead use guerrilla tactics, fighting for the welfare of the working class as best they can.

Some other comrades opposed my document's recommendation of 'caution' in standing more comrades for councils, while not necessarily disagreeing with its criticism of the local government left.

There was also a debate on Ireland. Ian McConach from Halifax moved a resolution criticising SO's coverage on Ireland as "appeasement to Protestants". Patrick Murphy from Stockport replied that SO had not "appeased" the Protes-

tants - the paper, uniquely on the left, has combined solidarity for the Republican struggle with serious discussion of the Protestant working class, rather than dismissing the Protestant workers as a marginal detail or an appendage of the British Army. The Halifax resolution was defeated.

Another resolution from Halifax called for improved communications within the SOA, and was carried. The AGM asked a future delegate meeting to discuss establishing a discussion bulletin for the SOA.

A new secretariat was elected, with councillor Susan Carlyle from Tower Hamlets replacing the late Jonathan Hammond as chairperson.

The AGM passed a resolution on Palestine, supporting the fight of the Palestine Liberation Organisation but also affirming "the right of Israeli Jews to live in Israel/Palestine with social and political rights". There was a solidarity resolution on Grenada and reports on organisation, finances and the paper.

Other areas of work were discussed in a day school on the Saturday, 29th, which also included a debate on our attitude to the EEC.

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



Agenda

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

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

LABOUR movement conference on Ireland: Peace through Democracy. Saturday November 26: speakers

include Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone, Clive Soley.

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCOTLAND

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

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

NORTH-WEST

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

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

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

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

Stoke. Meets first and third Tuesdays of every month. Next meeting November 15, 8pm: 'Socialists and CND', with showing of 'Carry Greenham Home' video. For venue and other details, phone Paul Barnett, 328198.

Hyndburn. Contact Accrington 395753.

YORKSHIRE AND NORTH-EAST

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

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

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

Sheffield. SO is sold outside Boots in Fargate (Saturday 12.30-1), and at the Independent Bookshop, Glossop Rd. Contact Rob, 589307.

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

Sunderland. Contact c/o Durham.

Halifax. Contact 52156. SO is sold at Hebden Bridge Books.

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

Hull. Meets every Wednesday, 8pm. Details from SO sellers. Childcare available.

WALES AND WEST

Cardiff. Contact 492988.

Bristol. Contact c/o 28 Middle Lane.

MIDLANDS

Birmingham. Discussion meetings on 'Imperialism', alternate Wednesdays, 7.30 at 169 Barclay Rd, Bearswood, Smethwick. Next meeting November 16. 'The multinationals, the international banks, and inter-imperialist rivalries'. SO is sold at the Other Bookshop.

Leicester. SO is sold at Blackthorne Books, High St. Contact Phil, 857908.

Northampton. Contact Ross, 713606.

Coventry. Contact Keith, 75623.

Nottingham. Meets 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 7.30 at the International Community Centre. SO is sold outside the Victoria Centre (Saturday 11 to 1) and at the Mushroom Bookshop, Heathcote St. Contact Pete Radcliff, 585640.

SOUTH

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

LONDON

Richmond. SO is sold at Richmond Quadrant every Saturday, 11.30-1.30. Further details, contact Nick De Marco, 876 6715.

Islington. Next meeting: What happened in Grenada? Speakers: councillor Pat Longman, who visited Grenada last year, and a representative of the New Jewel Movement. 7.30 Sunday November 6 at the Co-Op Hall, 129 Seven Sisters Rd. Contact: Linda, 278 1341.

Where to find Socialist Organiser

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

Socialist Organiser London educationals.

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

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

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

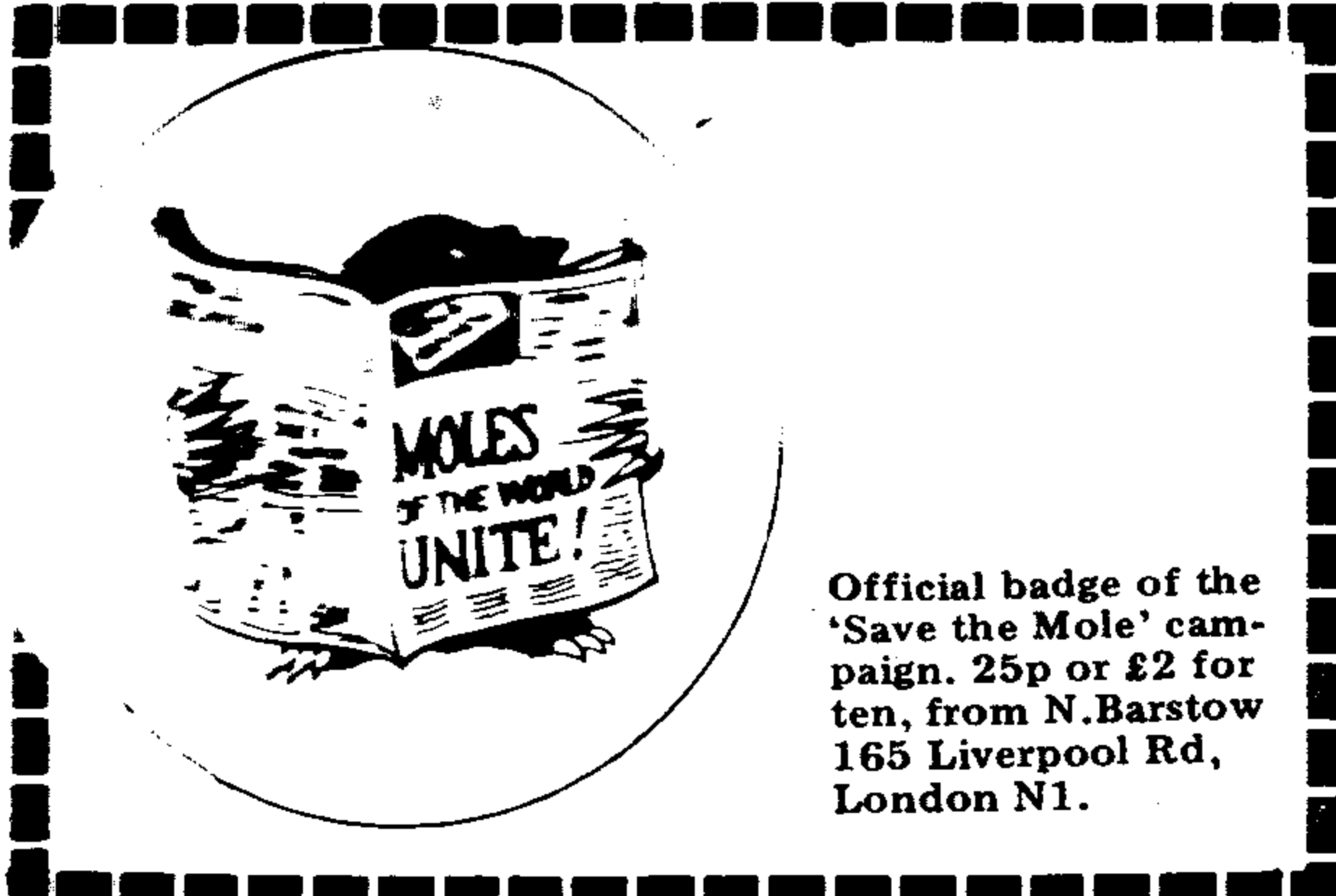
November 13: Black nationalism. To follow: Rise and fall of the Benn movement; Castroism.

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

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

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

November 10: Multinationals and the EEC. To follow: The New International Division of Labour, Lenin on imperialism; The economics and politics of 3rd World development. Is the USSR imperialist? For details of preparatory reading etc. contact 609 7459, 278 1341 or 354 1050.



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

EEC election policy

KEITH White's letter on the EEC Parliament raises questions about Marxist attitudes to Parliament as well as attitudes to the EEC.

Keith presents his argument as if Marxists relate to Parliament in a country like Britain merely because it is "deeply rooted in the political culture of society" and because workers have illusions in it.

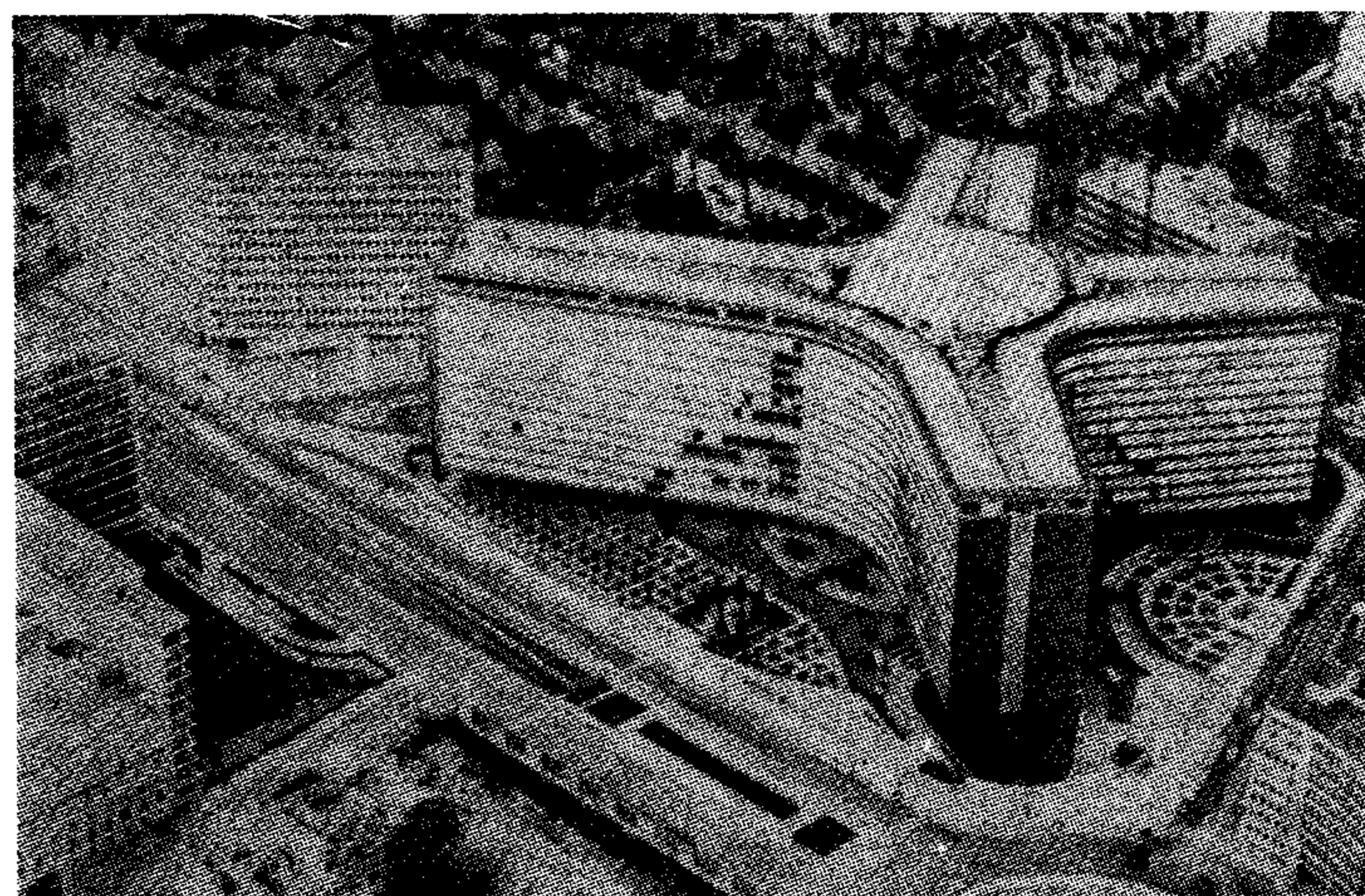
This is only part of the case: we also consider Parliament as a platform for making propaganda, elections as a means of testing the strength of indepen-

dent working class organisation. Short of a revolutionary situation, general political questions of the administration of society occur at the level of governments based on Parliament. Even in countries with no Parliamentary traditions at all, Marxists have traditionally raised the demand for a 'Constituent Assembly', a basically Parliamentary institution.

Keith ignores these considerations in his attack on Martin Thomas's view of the European Parliament. As far as Britain is concerned the workers are so imbued with parliamentarism that we (following the Austro-Marxists!) have to find a way to "incorporate Parliamentary institutions into the higher socialist democracy". (In practice these two antagonistic forms of democracy can never both rule at the same time).

But when it comes to Europe... the workers have no such illusions. Instead we are faced with the syndicalist conception that European workers' unity will occur through common material interests with no political reflections.

Of course it is not 'pre-ordained' that EEC institutions play a role in the development of European workers' unity. No more is it 'pre-ordained' that economic or disarmament issues will actually create European workers' unity.



The EEC Parliament

The issue is not crystal-ball gazing but what demands Marxists put forward to help bring that unity into existence. Clearly we must put forward economic demands on a Europe-wide basis, but alone they are not enough. Any serious united struggle against multinational capital and governmental austerity plans would begin to throw up issues that can only be resolved by political action on a European scale.

Incomplete

Nationalisation of a company like Ford is incomplete on a nat-

ional level given the interdependence of plants across Europe making different parts for Ford cars. Action to equalise working conditions and benefits, and on issues such as equal pay — let alone more clearly 'political' issues — all have legislative aspects on a European scale, as well as being the object of struggle in the workplaces.

Clearly the EEC Assembly is not the ideal institution around which to focus demands. But next year we will be faced with elections to the Assembly in which we will have to put forward a programme for the labour movement: are we to

Writeback

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

Socialist Action exposed

RECENT issues of Socialist Organiser performed a useful role in exposing the sectarian factionalism of Socialist Action supporters at Brighton and their current factional manoeuvring in London Labour Briefing.

Unfortunately, if the experiences in Glasgow are anything to go by, their inveterate and destructive factionalism is manifesting itself on a national scale, in relation to the National Briefing Supplement recently launched at the initiative of London Labour Briefing.

Last month's meeting of Strathclyde Labour Briefing discussed whether or not to take the supplement. There are valid, rational arguments both for and against taking it, and no-one would have believed it to be a major issue.

Except for Socialist Action supporters that is, who, for the first time ever, made an input into an SLB meeting. Grandiose images were conjured up of the mass circulation SLB could achieve if it took the supplement; the Briefing supplement was what the Labour left was organising around; SLB could not afford to go without it; those who had the temerity to refer to technical and financial problems lacked vision, blah, blah, blah.

This was not a case of long-standing SLB activists putting forward rational arguments for taking the supplement. If it had been so, then fair enough.

What was involved, however, was a factional coup by Socialist Action supporters, forcing their latest fad onto the SLB (hitherto ignored by them), pushed through the meeting in a whelmer of vaudeville demagoguery delivered in the arrogant, supercilious, holier-than-thou manner which is their hallmark.

Whilst not denying the value of a national Briefing supplement, which SO, of course, has supported, on balance I feel it wrong for the SLB to take it. But the real problem is to have a genuine discussion about it when the political gadflies from Socialist Action are concerned only with dishonest manoeuvres to foist their latest political fetish onto people who have spent a lot of time, energy and money in order to make the SLB a respected bulletin.

Of course, the ultimate irony is that Socialist Action likes to profile as non-sectarian, whilst in fact being the most sectarian grouping on the Labour left today.

Like so many others, I impatiently await the day when Socialist Action discovers yet another "mass vanguard" as far away from the labour movement as possible, thus leaving serious socialists to get on with the job in peace.

STAN CROOKE
Glasgow

Discussion article: Grenada and the Falklands

Behind Reagan's invasion

LIKE many SO supporters at the time, Alan Thornett partly disagreed with the attitude SO took to the Falklands War. He believed that after the sinking of the Argentinian ship Belgrano SO should have turned to positive support of Argentina.

SO opposed the war with the slogan, carried on our mast-head every week, "The enemy is at home". We called for working class action to stop the war. We did not, however, support Argentina.

In the following article Alan Thornett argues that the invasion of Grenada is organically linked to the Falklands war.

He argues that Thatcher's victory over Argentina "opened up hope of beginning to turn the tide against national liberation struggles and hopefully beginning to roll them back".

The "new climate", he argues, allowed Begin to invade the Lebanon. "Thatcher's South Atlantic victory turned the balance of forces on a world scale significantly to the advantage of imperialism".

The reactionary consequences can also be seen in the Iran-Iraq war: France is supplying Iraq with "advanced jets and Exocet missiles... to tip the balance against Iran in the Gulf War." But this can lead to Iran trying to block the Gulf shipping lanes — that in turn can lead to American Middle East action to free them. "Logically", invasion of Nicaragua is the next step. "Grenada demonstrates that politically Reagan might be prepared to do it despite international outrage." "The Falklands Factor has become a major issue in world politics." (AT's emphasis).

An alternative view will be argued next week.

THE invasion of Grenada by the USA is a major escalation of the US war drive on a world scale.

It is an open act of war designed to establish a government in Grenada which is acceptable to the USA: but also to push the balance of forces on a world scale further to the advantage of the US.

It is designed to create a situation in which the USA can use military force as a matter of course.

It creates conditions in which the danger of the invasion of Nicaragua by US-led forces is seriously increased. An increase in US intervention into El Salvador is very likely.

Reagan's television speech on Thursday night, three days after the invasion, spells out the change in the world situation which is taking place.

Despite previous talk of "peace-keeping", the USA was in Lebanon, he said, "in order to protect the vital interests of the

USA":

He went on:

"Can the United States or the free world for that matter stand by and see the Middle East incorporated into the Soviet Block? What of Western Europe and Japan's dependence on Middle East oil for the energy to fuel their industries."

When turning to the invasion of Grenada he went further. "The world has changed," he said.

The defence of the USA used to mean defending our shores and our shipping lanes. Now the defence of the USA means defending our interests in "far away places". We have to be able to identify those places and take the appropriate action.

This is the language of imperialism on the offensive. It is the product of a world situation which has changed drastically in the last four years.

The previous period, from 1975 to 1979, saw a number of successes for the anti-imperial-

ist struggle. Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Iran and Nicaragua were victories which threw the imperialists into retreat.

The local agents of imperialism were weakened, and weak capitalist governments facing an upsurge in mass militant struggles and anti-imperialist feeling were unable to rely on direct military aid to back them up.

After the Nicaraguan revolution, Carter, under pressure from Pentagon generals, stepped up the US war-drive and drew the line. The US was not prepared to see El Salvador go next. Carter began to escalate military intervention in El Salvador and the Central American region. That same policy was echoed and amplified by Reagan.

It is against this background that Thatcher's war in the South Atlantic had a major international significance.

Thatcher's victory over Argentina broke through the 'Vietnam Syndrome' and gave a green light for imperialism to use military force openly once again.

It opened up hopes of beginning to turn the tide against national liberation struggles and hopefully beginning to roll them back.

Sensing the new climate, Israeli leader Begin justified his invasion of the Lebanon in that way. If Mrs Thatcher could defend her interests 8,000 miles away, he said, he could defend his 60 miles away.

Thatcher's South Atlantic victory turned the balance of forces on a world scale significantly to the advantage of imperialism.

Although the Argentine junta was defeated and fell, and they were forced to legalise political parties and call an election, the masses throughout Latin America as a whole were reminded of the power of imperialism. They were weakened and made far more vulnerable as a result.

The economic conditions in Argentina are such that the danger of military rule will still

be there.

The real results of Thatcher's victory was seen in Israeli barbarism in Lebanon. Since then we have seen French imperialism under Mitterrand enter the multi-national force in open military support of the Falangist regime.

The French imperialist leaders have also decided to supply advanced jets and Exocet missiles to Iraq as an effort to tip the balance against Iran in the Gulf war.

That is also an intervention which has huge implications throughout the world.

If the Exocets are used by Iraq against Iran it could lead rapidly to Iranian attempts to block the Gulf shipping lanes: this in turn would prompt the use by Reagan of the US Rapid Deployment Force to free them.

Though it is often viewed in Britain as simply one of the major factors in Thatcher's election victory, the Falklands Factor has become a major issue in world politics.

Though Reagan and Thatcher have different tactical views on the Grenada situation, Reagan's own actions are influenced by the post-Falklands situation.

These are the conditions under which the US invaded Grenada in defiance of the UN Charter and international law which they claim to uphold.

Since the Vietnam defeat, US public opinion has opposed US involvement in further wars: but the popularity of Thatcher and the rise of national chauvinism in Britain after the Falklands now appears to be echoed in the USA after Grenada.

Reagan presumably hopes that if the support continues it will win him the next election as it did Thatcher.

Already he has dramatically shifted his grounds for the invasion. At first it was to "rescue" US nationals (who did not need rescuing); now it is simply to stop communist subversion in the region.

Nicaragua is now quite clearly in the front line against the US war drive.

CIA operations into Nicaragua

We have to say positively that we are for a United States of Europe — not just on the basis of the present EEC. This is far from creating illusions.

The national stage — including Parliament — is no longer an adequate arena for politics. The capitalists realised this many years ago, but, because of their conflicting interests, they are unable to carry that integration through. We need to make sure the labour movement realises this too. Creating a Europe-wide political arena is part of that fight.

BRUCE ROBINSON,
Islington.

from Honduras and Costa Rica have been escalating for months. 7,000 Contra guerrillas have been unsuccessfully undertaking operations into Nicaragua out of Honduras where the USA has been pouring in troops for "exercises".

An invasion of Nicaragua would be a huge step for the USA to take even now. But it must be seen as a real danger and everything done to warn about it.

Logically it is the next step. Grenada demonstrates that politically Reagan might be prepared to do it despite international outrage.

Militarily it is a very much bigger task. Reagan however may calculate that it is militarily possible. Nicaragua is not South Vietnam with a border with North Vietnam and the Soviet Union and China in the background.

Grenada has shown that neither Cuba nor the Soviet Union can be relied upon to give assistance in such conditions.

The international workers movement is the only force which can influence the situation. It must be alerted, and mobilised in defence of Nicaragua and against the US war drive.

*Troops out of Grenada!
*US hands off Central America!



New issue now out!
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10p plus postage from LMCfP, 28 Carlton Mansions, Holmleigh Rd., London N16.

Facts & Figures



FIGURES recently published in the Economist illustrate the continuing shift of the UK engineering industry to overseas operations.

In 1982, none of Britain's nine biggest engineering companies did less than 42% of their business abroad. Every single one shows an increasing overseas proportion since 1973.

Overseas production was between 30% and 60% of total turnover.

THE TREND is levelling off now, but in 1981 and 1982 the US was a substantial net importer of capital.

Since World War 2 the US has been by far the world's leading power in direct foreign investment. Over 40% of the world stock of direct foreign investment is US-owned.

But in the 1980s there has been a big 'reverse' flow of West European and (less so) Japanese and OPEC direct investment into the US. The UK and the Netherlands are the biggest investors.

Foreign direct investment in the US is now about one-fifth of the world total stock. Of all takeovers in the US in 1981, 25% by value were by foreign firms.

What price Tony Benn's ideas of Britain as a 'US colony' now?

ANOTHER side to the world debt crisis: since the second half of 1981 the flow of funds from OPEC countries has dried up.

In 1980 the OPEC countries had a huge combined current account surplus of \$110 billion, and poured some \$35 billion into the western banks — which, in their turn, sent out a similar amount in loans to non-OPEC Third World countries.

But since then OPEC's position has markedly weakened.

Oil consumption has dropped — in the US, for example, from 19 m.b/d in 1979 to about 15 m.b/d today — and OPEC now accounts for only 40% or so of capitalist world oil production, as against 60% in 1979.

OPEC had a combined current account deficit of \$4 billion last year, and are estimated to be heading for a \$29 billion deficit this year.

OPEC countries have been pulling their funds out of western banks — to the tune of \$16 billion in the first half of 1983 — and that is matched by a decline to a mere \$2 billion in net bank lending to the non-OPEC Third World.

Source: Economist).

Miners: MacGregor plays it rough

AS Treasury minister John Moore raised the prospect of government action to privatise the National Coal Board, Thatcher's axeman at the head of the NCB was already in full cry against the NUM's overtime ban.

Ian MacGregor has lost no time in establishing an Edwardes-style regime, in which the slightest sign of independence or

opposition by the union will be ruthlessly attacked.

So even while the NCB officially declares that the overtime ban is having only negligible impact on production, MacGregor has gone out campaigning heavily against it.

Among the areas he has targeted as a 'soft spot' is South Wales — where militant strike action against pit closures was left isolated and eventually betrayed by other NUM areas earlier this year.

MacGregor's aggressive stance has been made easier by the weakness of the overtime ban as a tactic to fight for a decent pay settlement.

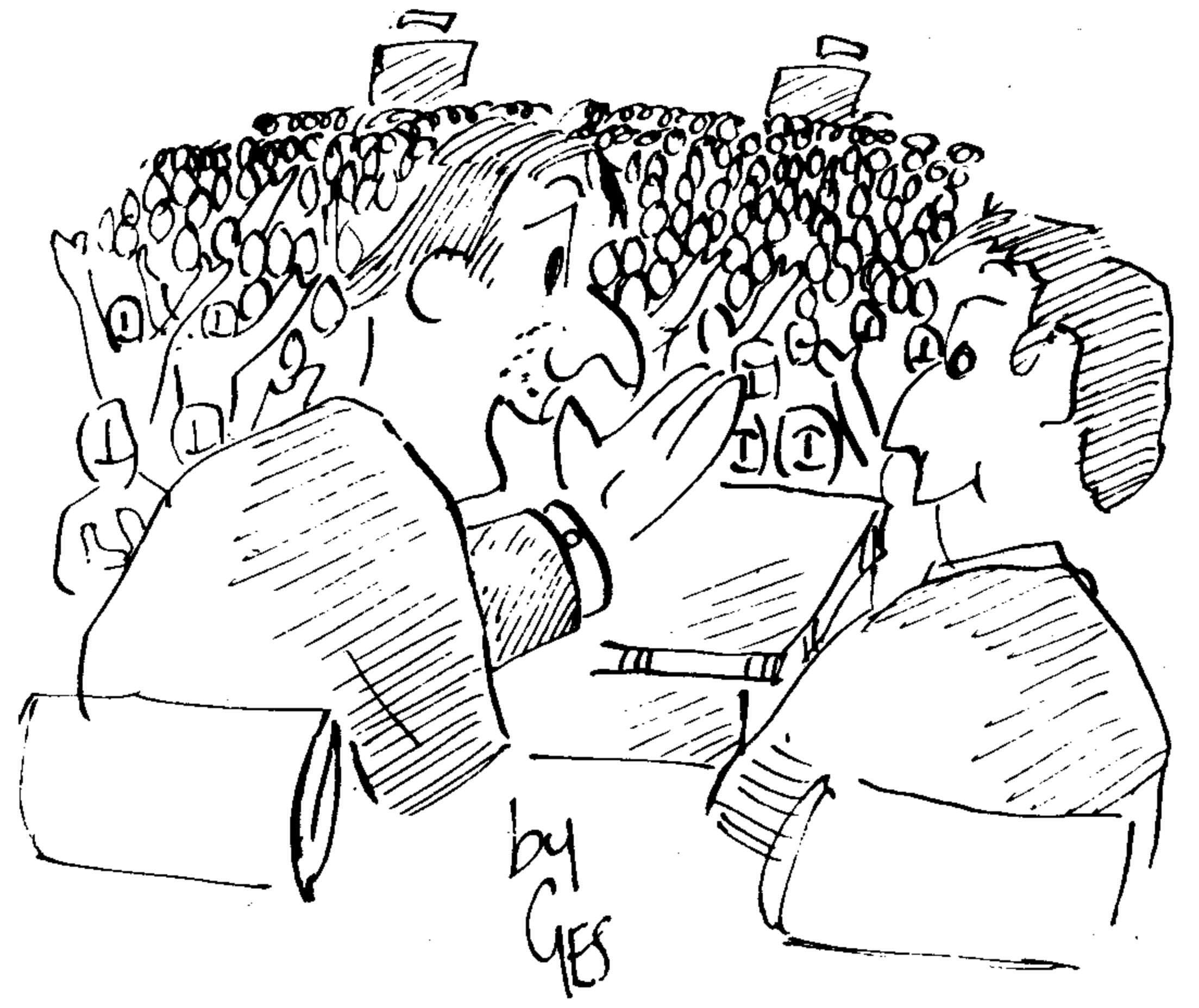
With massive coal stocks, it is widely recognised as an inadequate means of hitting the employer: but it is also profoundly divisive, since it relies for its

impact on being implemented by the highest-paid miners — often in right wing-led areas — while those not working overtime lose nothing.

Coming at a time when the tenacious strikes against closure at Monktonhall and Cronton collieries are being left isolated by the NUM nationally, the divisions and frustration create fertile conditions for right wing saboteurs like Trevor Bell to argue for ballots.

Meanwhile, an overtime ban denies miners the leverage to invoke solidarity "blacking" action by rail and transport unions, which alone could paralyse the NCB's use of coal stocks.

The fight must be stepped up for an all-out strike to unite the union and whole sections of the working class against the Tories.



"You know sometimes I feel really bad about having to stitch these bastards up!!"

Crunch in the print

HUNDREDS of printworkers and trade union members showed their support for a fight against the Tebbit laws as a second newspaper owner launched an all-out attack on the union.

About 800 people attended a public meeting in Manchester called by the NGA, the NUJ and SOGAT over the Stockport Messenger dispute.

Owner Eddie Shah has set up an anti-union printshop, broken an agreement with the NGA, and thrown injunctions under the Employment Act like confetti at the unions. This has not stopped the unions calling out their members and picketing the plant.

Meanwhile, in the leafy suburb of Richmond, broadcaster David Dimbleby has been threatening writs of his own.

He sacked his NGA members and transferred the printing of the Dimbleby newspapers group to the notorious anti-union firm of T.Bailey Foreman in Nottingham. NUJ members on his staff have struck in protest against this liaison with the firm that prints the Nottingham Evening Post — which sacked its entire NUJ membership for taking part in the 1978 national pay strike.

Dimbleby, personally virulently anti-union, has a second paper, separately owned, at Wandsworth, where almost all the staff are members of a little heard-of scab outfit, the Printers' Trades Association.

Journalists and printers at Richmond are now picketing and need support.

Dimbleby has threatened NUJ general secretary Ken Ashton with a writ under the Employment Act, and has also threatened his striking journalists that he will name some of them personally when he seeks an injunction.

It is extremely unlikely that the NUJ would bow to this threat, as he has taken his printing to the most hated anti-union employer in the whole of the newspaper industry.

Shell pickets defy Tory injunctions

By Bryan Edmands

SHELL UK faces the threat of escalated industrial action by many of its 4,300 craft and manual workers in its oil refineries over its 4.5% "final" pay offer, as strikers defy Tory anti-union laws.

At Shell's biggest UK refinery Stanlow (Cheshire), the dispute began with an overtime ban and work-to-rule by the 903 AUEW craft workers on Monday 10 October, being joined by the 1460 TGWU process workers there on Tuesday October 18, on all-out strike.

Since then, from Monday 24 October, flying pickets have been attempting to stop petrol deliveries from Shell's major distribution terminal at Haydock near St. Helens (Merseyside).

This has brought an injunction from the company taken out against two Stanlow refinery shop stewards involved in the secondary picketing, granted on Wednesday October 26, under the 1980 Employment Act.

five sites — Stanlow, Shellhaven (Essex), Teesport (Cleveland), Ardrossan (Scotland), and the Carrington chemical complex (Manchester).

An overtime ban has begun at all of these sites, with the 500 TGWU members at Shellhaven, Shell's second largest refinery, voting to join the Stanlow workers on all-out indefinite strike from Wednesday 2 November.

However a one-day strike for Tuesday, 1 November has received a patchy response, with AUEW craft workers at the Carrington plant supporting the action, and the TGWU members there voting not to join the stoppage, along with a similar response by workers at the Teesport refinery.

Union claims vary from 12% at Shellhaven to 15% at Teesport and "substantial increases" at Stanlow. The Shell dispute is an important test, early in the pay round, of the employers' response to the Confederation of British Industry's call for lower pay deals. Last year's settlement was 7%.

*As we go to press the dispute shows signs of spreading to the Teesport plant in Cleveland, where TGWU stewards are to recommend strike action on Friday, and to the tanker drivers, whose stewards are expected to ballot members calling for rejection of the company's 4.5% offer.

However, this picketing continues despite the High Court decision, and the 70 TGWU tanker drivers at Haydock who have refused to cross the picket lines since Thursday have now been taken off pay by management.

This latest action by Shell is seen as a deliberate escalation to bring the tanker drivers into the dispute, who are themselves the first in line in this year's round of tanker-driver pay negotiations. (A first meeting took place on Monday October 31 between management and TGWU representatives over the drivers' "substantial" claim).

Unions now fear that independent contractors may be brought in to act as scabs to deliver supplies from Haydock, and they plan to maintain round-the-clock picketing when the depot reopens this week.

The 4.5% offer has been made in separate talks at Shell's

Council manual claim pleases employers

A "new approach", altering the traditional pay negotiating stance with employers, was made by trade union leaders of 900,000 local authority manual workers in talks over their annual wage claim at Portsmouth last month.

During the talks the Conservative-controlled employers side refrained from their usual reference to tight financial circumstances, at least partly because the unions openly acknowledged the "acute" financial pressures on councils, and because they were impressed with the "quality" of the claim which offers "savings" to make room for a bigger increase.

These points were received favourably by the employers; they represent savings for them because implicit in the proposals (particularly the last two) is that the numbers of council white collar workers needed to process and deal with wages and bonuses can be greatly reduced, while the proposals on job flexibility offer the prospect of more speed-up and less jobs.

Sectional

Thus this so-called "new approach" is in effect leaders of manual trade unions pushing for the sectional interests of some of their members at the expense of fellow workers in town hall clerical unions; no wonder the Tories are sitting up and taking notice!

OOPS!

We apologise to readers for the careless howler that crept into last week's front page article.

Of course the island of Dominica — which was amongst the stooge Caribbean regimes persuaded to "invite" the US invasion of Grenada is different from the Dominican Republic — which was itself invaded by US marines under President Johnson in 1965.

Hard line

This increases the likelihood of an offer in December in line with the 3% public sector pay target instead of the originally more hard-line Conservative idea of as low as 1%.

Four new approaches to the claim were proposed by the unions:

*Staging increases to achieve their pay target.

*Restructuring wages and job definitions to help councils overcome "labour inflexibility".

*Reexamining the value of the bonus system.

*A move towards eliminating payment by cash.

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How politics were kept out of the People's March

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

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Saturday November 5, 12 noon
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Jane McKay (Sec., Glasgow Trades Council)



POEU must prepare all-out action on privatisation

By Ricky Houston

MAJOR decisions on some tough issues hang over the heads of delegates to the reconvened conference of the Post Office Engineering Union this week.

The threat by British Telecom management to sack 19 engineers for refusing to cross picket lines has now been extended to a much larger number.

BT initially gave the first group of engineers a four-day deadline for the sack, timed to follow up the expected High Court injunction against the union's "blacking" of work involving the private Project Mercury.

When the Court ruled in the

Union's favour, management retreated on the deadline, while the POEU threatened to escalate the dispute beyond the London area, and secured promises of support from the UCW and CPSA.

But the threat has been increasingly raised by BT of mass sackings to follow the POEU conference, which could

force the union's leadership to switch from its rigid schema of partial, selective action.

There will almost certainly be an emergency resolution from the NEC to the conference on this issue: but to judge from the NEC's unwillingness to reach the more militant proposals on the agenda at the September Special Conference, they seem unlikely to propose all-out strike action or preparation for it.

While it seems that the mood at the Special Conference could have led to the defeat of such an escalation of the struggle, the very real threat of sackings might now change matters.

But in any event the present strategy of running selective action — in which members in dispute are paid their full average take-home pay through a strike fund raised from a compulsory levy on the whole membership — must be reassessed.

Its obvious limitations have already been exploited by BT management — whose 'operation black hole' attempted to multiply the numbers of POEU members in dispute, and thus bankrupt the strike fund.

Last week's decision by the NEC to step up the fight, the NUR's decision to black Mercury lines along the rail network, and the beginning of industrial action by UCW telephone operators clearly indicate the need to go beyond the present limitations of the dispute.

The twin policies of restructuring the numbers involved in the fight (and thereby largely confining action to London) and paying full average earnings threaten to strangle the POEU's struggle against privatisation which, though not the only topic on the agenda, is the most weighty item before the delegates.

Many of the other conference

issues can be directly linked to the Tories' privatisation plans — such as job threats facing the POEU through the introduction of new technology. This has led a number of branches to table propositions calling for a shorter working week; some local disputes over job levels have already taken place over the past year.

Area reorganisation is another issue for POEU members in BT which can be directly linked with privatisation in a number of ways.

The enormity of the struggle the POEU faces is now becoming apparent as every day brings further developments in the hardening of BT management's stance and new threats to the union's membership currently taking action.

But the industrial action has been slow to increase and spread outside of London although during the last week this has changed.

However if the POEU are to win, then the present selective action must be used not as a tactic in itself but to prepare for all out strike.

That is not an easy task for a union with the POEU's history: but nevertheless a necessary one.

Unions representing more than 70,000 local authority building and civil engineering workers submitted a 15-point pay and conditions claim on October 25, which includes a "substantial" increase in basic rates, and moves towards a 35 hour working week from the present 39 hours and towards six weeks annual leave from the present four weeks entitlement.

NUPE and other health unions are mounting a series of actions in protest against staff cuts and privatisation plans in the NHS.

Staff are occupying two hospitals in North London — Hayes Cottage Hospital and Northwood and Pinner Hospital — both earmarked for closure on Monday October 31.

In Wakefield 1000 ambulance and ancillary staff took part in a total stand down for 15 minutes in protest at manpower reductions and privatisation by West Yorkshire metropolitan ambulance service.

In Dorset it was announced that maintenance and repairs of ambulances would go out to private tender after a ten-day notice period to staff.

In Lancashire, 37 jobs will go in the ambulance service by next March — and talks are to begin on a further 125 jobs.

In Greater Manchester, 73 jobs will be lost and 44 ambulances will be cut.

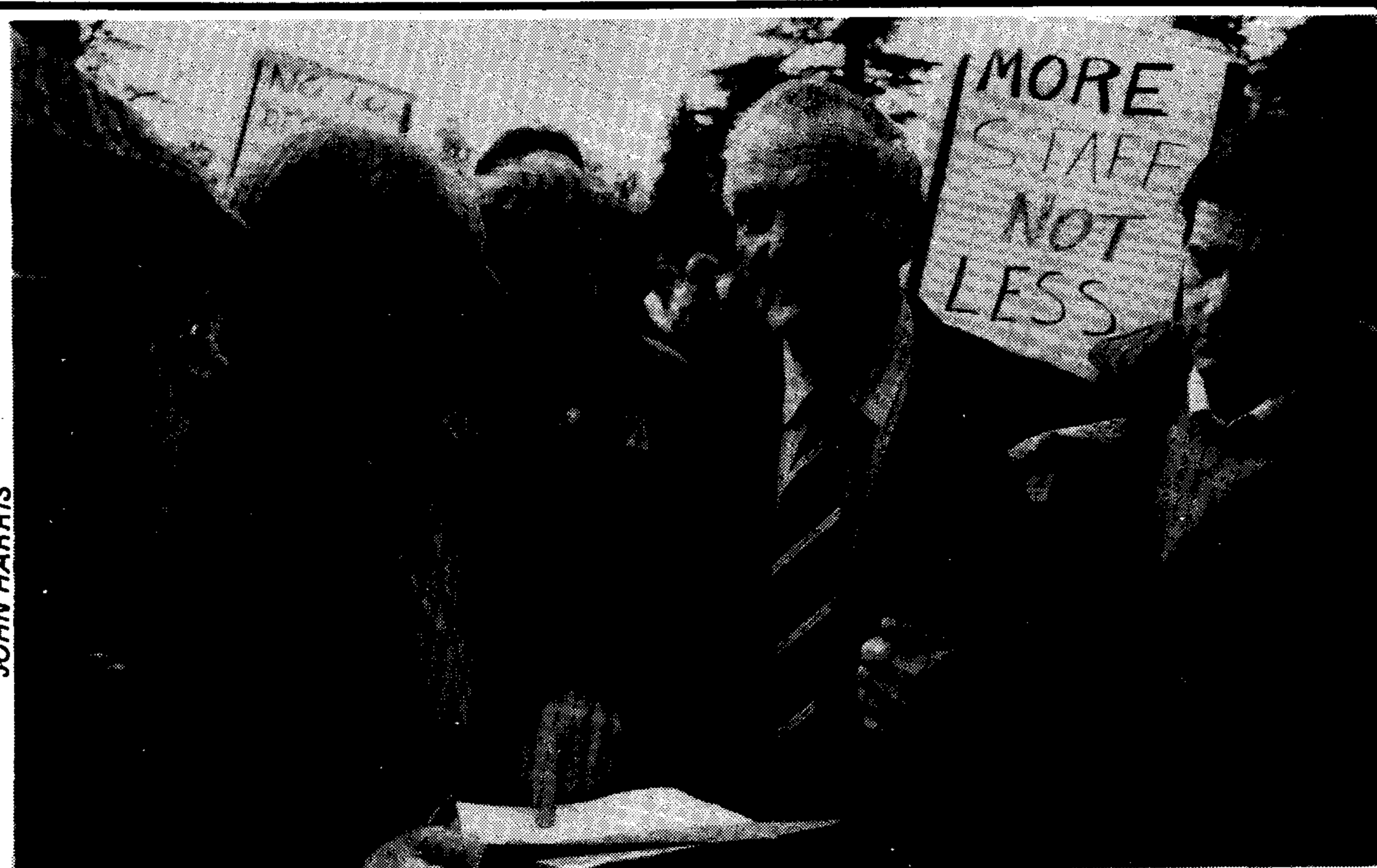
In Northumberland, 100 jobs and 19 ambulances are scheduled to go following cuts in emergency services in Sunderland, Washington and Herrington.

Ford made an opening pay offer worth 4.1%, comprising a 4% increase in basic rates and 5.5% rise in attendance allowances, to its 44,500 hourly paid workers on Friday October 28. Included was a rejection of a claim for an extra seven days holiday, and improvements in lay-off, sickness and pension schemes. The company package was rejected by unions who are claiming 15 to 16% increases on basic rates.

The Durham area of the NUM said it will freeze all stocks of coal (some five million tonnes) in the area when the national overtime ban begins. Support had been promised from TGWU in invoking the triple alliance of coal, rail and steel unions to stop coal being transported from the pit-head.

Strike action by all 2,800 Rolls Royce manual workers which started on Monday 24 October, in support of a 10% wage claim has stopped all production at the company's Pym's Lane car plant in Crewe. This first all-out strike action in 20 years is over the company's first and final offer of 4%.

A "major decline in business confidence" over the prospects for economic recovery, showing that uncertainty in the UK's most buoyant region has grown strongly since the summer, is revealed in a company survey of manufacturing industry in London and the South East. (The London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Economic Report and Survey: covering 247 manufacturing companies).



JOHN HARRIS

The October 25 mass lobby was followed up by an even larger lobby of the adjourned meeting the following Monday, supported by some 200 protestors, including striking health workers from the John Radcliffe and Littlemore hospitals and pensioners from nearby Didcot. 150 were allowed into the public gallery of the County Council chamber, and witnessed the DHA rubber-stamping the planned cuts. Campaigners have vowed that every further DHA meeting will be a target for action.

Cuts campaigners invade DHA sanctum

by Ted Dowd

ON Tuesday October 25 the Oxfordshire DHA abandoned attempts to hold its meeting after angry exchanges between DHA officers and 100 members of the public.

The Oxon Campaign for the Defence of the NHS, backed by the local JTUC and Trades Council, had called for a lobby of the DHA in order to protest at the latest round of staff cuts (77), privatisation, and a proposal to build a private hospital (BUPA) on NHS land.

Offensive

But the lobby had a second purpose, as secretary of the Campaign, Michael Dulieu, explained, "we are not only defending Health Service facilities and jobs but also moving on to the offensive. One of our prime targets is the DHA itself.

"Its meetings are open to the public and we want the public to see just how their decisions are made. However, the room in which the Authority meets is too small to allow proper access."

The Campaign had organised a letter-writing protest through its affiliates, the JTUC and Trades Council asking that the DHA meeting be held in a more public place and at a time when working people could attend.

Both requests were refused. After the lobby, whilst the DHA members were in another part of

the building, about 100 lobbyists moved into the meeting room to await the start of the meeting.

When the DHA refused to start, the lobbyists sent a delegation to mediate between themselves and the officers. After refusing an 'offer' to stand in a corridor and listen to proceedings, the lobbyists cleared space in the room for the DHA members to squeeze into.

Members did just squeeze round their tables, surrounded by a solid bank of lobbyists pressed up against the walls.

By this time, however, feelings were running high and after some angry exchanges about why the DHA had not changed the venue and about their accountability, the Chair, Sir John Habbakkuk, abandoned the meeting.

The lobbyists sent the delegation back to the officers with their original demands for a change of venue and time plus a request that space be given at DHA meetings for public participation in discussion.

This was rejected out of hand but as Michael Dulieu explained:

"This will be pursued as our next strategy. The Regional Health Authority tells us that the buck stops at the DHA, it makes crucial decisions and yet

the Chair tells us that they just do as they are told. We don't believe this and will be pressurising them to operate in a more public arena. They tell us we can only listen and not participate, but once you actually get people in there listening to the ways in which they sweep away a third of Oxfordshire's family planning facilities, listening to the way in which they discover that the District is now 141 staff short and recommending that nothing be done, it will be impossible to prevent public 'participation'.

Participation

"This is why we are demanding space in DHA meetings for orderly public participation in discussion. They only manage the consequences of their decisions, we have to live them, and we want our say."

The Campaign is now mounting as much pressure as possible in order to get this demand met. The Campaign's strength is that it is able to draw on a wide range of support from crucial trade union participation to affiliated political bodies, from community organisations to concerned individuals. Many people felt their strength on Tuesday and the Authority knows that its days of taking decisions in the quiet of their own company are over.

NUR must join Mercury fight

PROJECT Mercury — the private telecommunications network which the POEU is refusing to connect up to BT — is at the forefront of raking off profit from privatisation.

Mercury intends — with BR agreement — to run its cables alongside British Rail tracks and have them connected up by BR staff. The NUR national executive has so far failed to respond to this challenge, beyond saying that local reps should not enter into consultation with BR over Mercury — but this simply means that BR goes ahead anyway!

Mercury will operate with eight radio aerial towers around the country, built on railway land. At least one of these towers — at Willesden in North West London — has already

been built, using railworkers to deliver materials, provide look-outs, etc. The blame for this lies with the national union.

Having seen this 'awful tower' spring up, and having heard POEU members speak on their fight, Willesden No. 1 NUR decided last Tuesday, 25th, not only to call on the NEC to adopt a policy of non-cooperation with Mercury, but to instruct members not to do any work directly or indirectly connected with Mercury.

Since then, Slade Green depot on the Southern Region has blacked the cable-laying trains.

Despite the sometimes half-hearted tactics adopted by the POEU, it is important that other militants take up the fight in their support.

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Scargill gets it right

BREAK LINKS WITH TORIES!

By Harry Sheen

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Socialist ORGANISER SHIPYARDS SHOWDOWN

By Lol Duffy

OCCUPATION committees are being formed in Tyne-side shipyards, and a militant mass lobby is ranged outside shipbuilding industry pay talks as we go to press.

Stewards have declared themselves ready to occupy Swan Hunters and Tyne Ship-repairers — which faces closure on Friday of this week — in opposition to British Ship-builders' so-called "survival plan."

Among the other yards currently under threat as management try to bludgeon workers into acceptance of an extension of their wage freeze plus more, compulsory, redundancies and closures, is Scott Lithgow on the Clyde.

But after years of miserable retreats and capitulations by their leadership, shipyard workers have plainly had enough. Unmistakable evidence of the new, militant mood came in the 5,000-strong lobby of the October 28 delegate conference of shipbuilding unions in Whitley Bay.

Jim Murray, chairperson of the unions' Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee, attempted to address those lobbying and was met with shouts of "No sell-out!" and "Stop the talks, start the

action!"

Eventually, he had to be escorted into the hall by police.

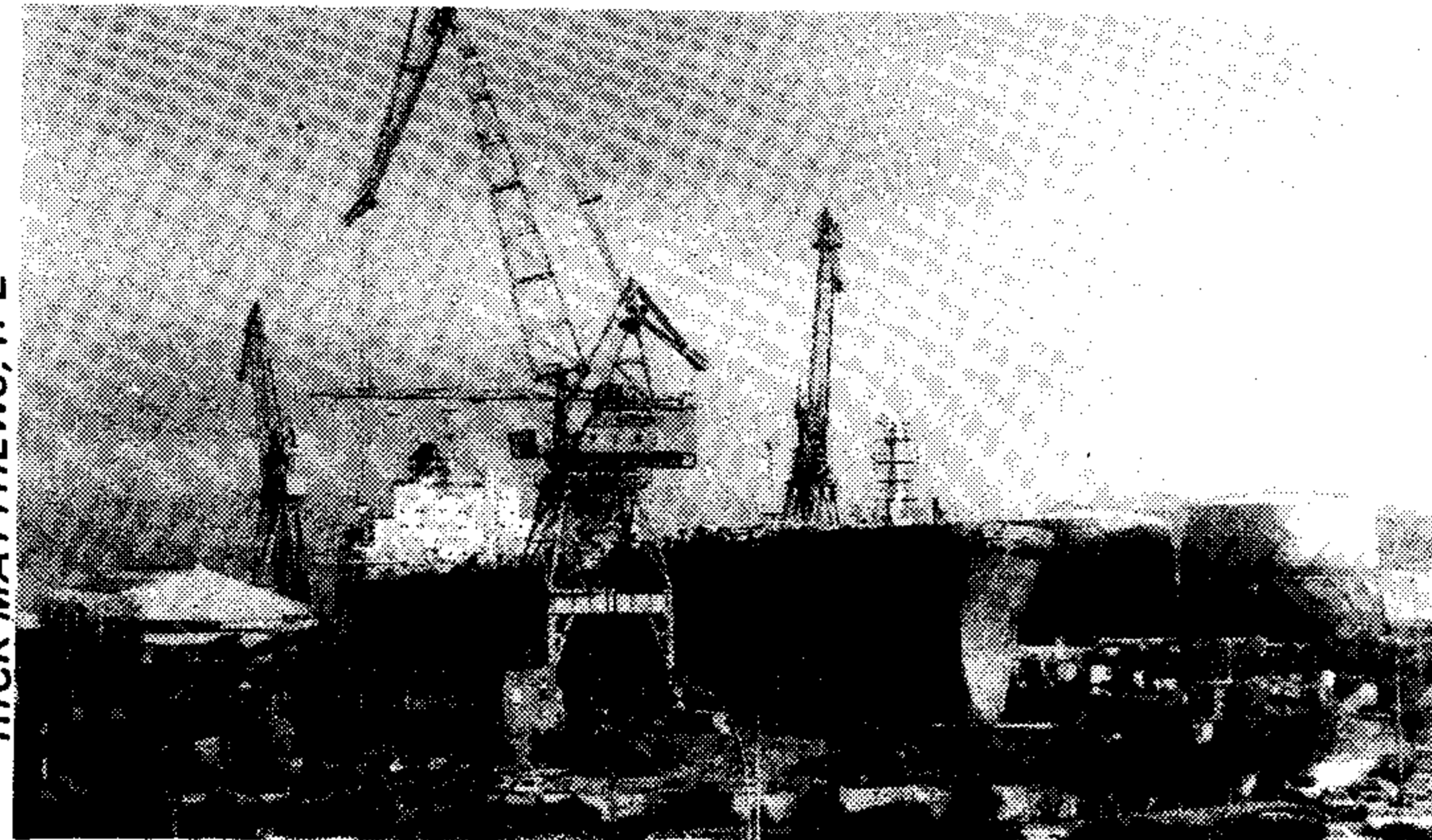
Inside the conference hall Murray blamed a few disruptive elements at the front of the lobby rather than the shipyard workers' past experience of wage cuts and job losses at the hands of the SNC.

The conference opened with the platform informing delegates that the meeting planned between the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee and British Shipbuilders on Wednesday 2 November was the last scheduled meeting and if there was no substantial change in British Shipbuilders' proposals of a wage freeze, compulsory redundancies and closures there would have to be some form of action.

After a number of reports from the yards, and with the overwhelming majority rejecting British Shipbuilders' proposals, and pledging support to the SNC, the platform then read out their resolution.

This called on the lay delegates' conference to reaffirm its support for a British shipbuilding industry under nationalisation.

The resolution condemned and rejected British Shipbuilders' so-called survival plan and called for an up-front increase in wages. It also stated that if no agreement was reached in future talks then the yards would give their full support to the SNC in any action they deem necessary up to and including occupation of the yards or all-out strike action.



RICK MATTHEWS, IFL

The discussion after the resolution was mainly in support, although many yards want action, especially over wages.

The Boilermakers delegate from Cammell Laird Yards in Birkenhead moved an amendment calling for the impounding of vessels in the yards and a national overtime ban as from the end of the conference.

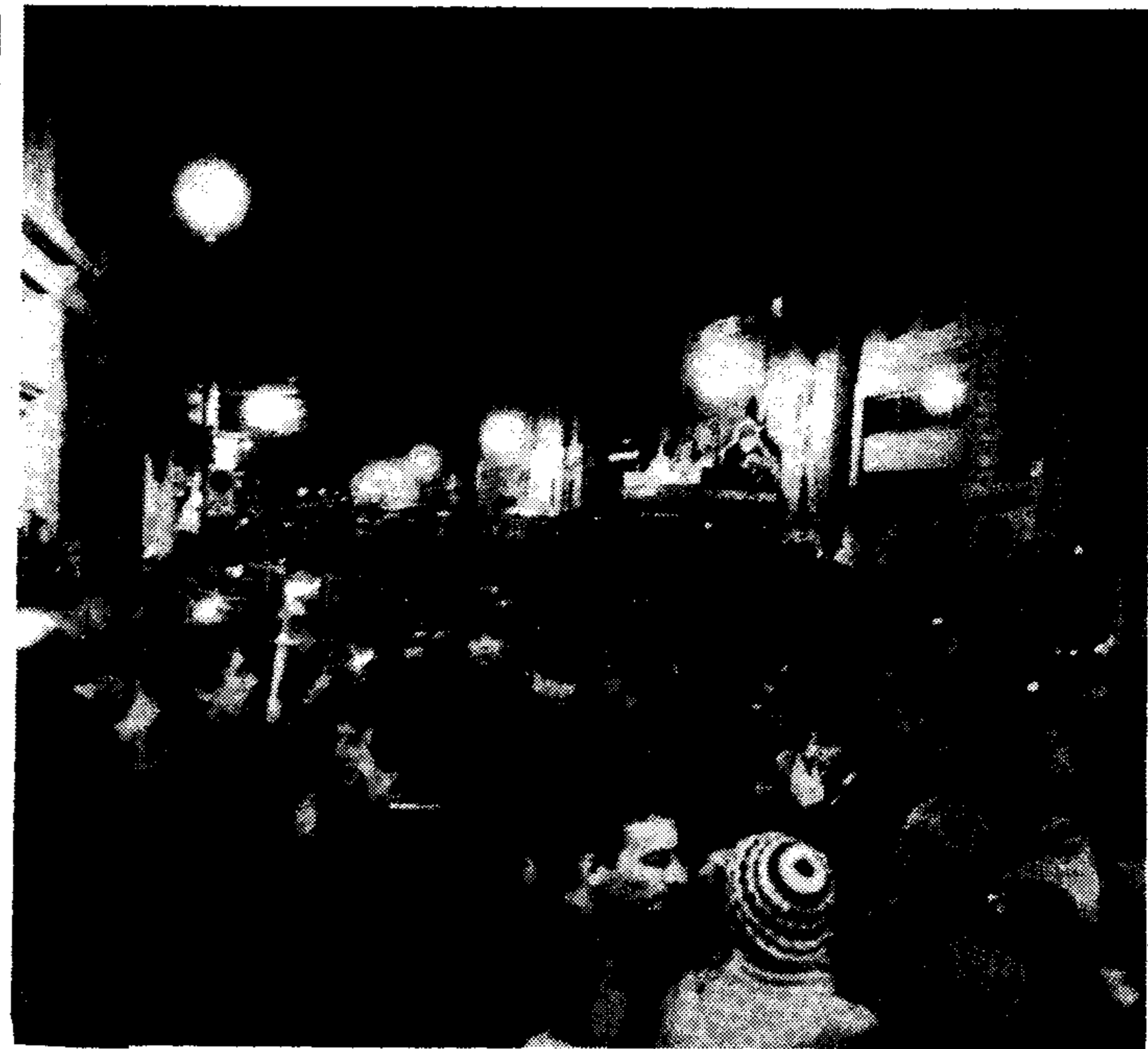
Although nobody spoke against this amendment, the Lairds Boilermakers were asked by the platform at least three times to withdraw the amendment for the sake of unity. Lairds Boilermakers refused, saying that immediate action had to be taken before the vessels went out. In the end the amendment was massively defeated and the SNC resolution carried.

Every worker in British Ship-builders should now be on their guard for attempts by British Shipbuilders' management and the SNC to split the yards' action. At the meeting on November 2 it is quite possible that British Shipbuilders will offer a small increase in wages in an attempt to buy off yards that have achieved their full quota of redundancies.

Productivity

British Shipbuilders have already offered Harland and Wolff workers an £8.50 increase if they accept the survival plan and are trying to buy off other yards with a £3.50 locally monitored productivity scheme.

Leaving the decision as to what action is to be taken in the yards to the SNC was a dereliction of the stewards' duty to their members. We now have to make sure that when the fight starts, it is total occupation of all the yards and a fight which gives us victory and not the face-saving compromise between BS and the SNC.



PAUL MATTHEWS, IFL

High wire act

By Judith Bonner

WE'RE in trouble girls! Apparently, the MoD think the events at Greenham Common last weekend were all a conspiracy.

Well honestly! Now you all know what happened at Greenham so I suppose it's OK to disclose a few well-kept secrets.

It goes like this. Gender division and sexism prevent women from participation in a variety of male-dominated skills: one such skill is the use and application of wire-cutters.

To break down this male appropriation of skills, women have recognised the need to organise ourselves into training groups, thus acquiring skill in the technique of wire cutting free from male intimidation.

Quite coincidentally a lot of women — well all the women at a party at Greenham Common on Saturday — were interested in wire cutting.

So most of the afternoon was spent doing training workshops, learning how to cut very high fences. It's quite easy and takes three women: one below, one on top of her shoulders, and one to pass the cutters to the one on top who cuts.

At four o'clock lots of women dashed out from the woods and at precisely 4.03 the first cuts started.

Nearly 2,000 women had arrived for the wire-cutting party.

Most women were sure that M15 would know what was happening. On the way down women felt they'd be stopped and prevented from getting to Greenham.

But on arriving just one small battalion of police turned up.

As they arrested one of the most open teams, women further on had got the first section down.

Soldiers started pouring out of the base. Their action ranged from the pathetic to the violently aggressive.

Some tried pinning back the fence with planks which was burned with candles!

On other sections, soldiers used blocks of wood as batons to beat the women, rapping knuckles as police tried to pull others away.

Some soldiers had to give up: others ran out of the base and dragged inside 30 women who were taken to the MoD.

In all, about 4½ miles of fence were damaged or pulled down completely.

Court cases

The first court cases start this Friday, 4th, and there will be more on the 10th, 17th, 18th, 24th and 25th.

Women-only demonstrations will be held outside Newbury Court on those days.

On Monday one of four women who were detained received a sentence of 18 months for her activities at Greenham.

This may be setting a new precedent.

After Saturday news coverage was severely censored. No publicity is being given by the media to Greenham.

CND will not be prepared to support Greenham. We must build support now.

On November 9 Greenham women against Cruise are hoping that 102 peace camps will be set up throughout the country, next to the 102 US bases.

Get your trade union, Labour party, women's group banner to your local peace camp.

Raise money, support socials for Greenham. Get your trade union or Labour Party branch, your YS or YCND group to sponsor women to go to the peace camp.

New targets fixed Monthly Fund

IT'S going to be a long, hard winter. November will see Socialist Organiser supporters involved in actions to defend the National Health Service; joining in increased anti-Cruise protest; and participating in the protests against the USA's invasion of Grenada.

And in all these situations we'll be going in with our paper, our pamphlets and our leaflets.

A time of increased activity — when there's so much to do to maintain the gains of the working class, to halt, and to turn, the onward march of the ruling class, brings with it an increased need for socialists to get organised, and so, an increasing need for an active Socialist Organiser Alliance.

With these ideas in front of us, we launch a new "Xmas/New Year Fund Drive". Enthusiasm and energy will help us; but we need the money to turn those feelings into practical realities — like a weekly socialist paper.

Each supporters group has a new target to raise by January 31. As announced at our AGM, some groups still have to clear their last targets before they get down to the new ones. But others, like table-toppers Nottingham, can get going now!

Xmas and the New Year is the best time for fund-raising — and we must make the most of it. We've had £207.19 to start with; now let's build on that!

Thanks this week to: Brent supporters who provided coffee and lunch at SO's Day School last Saturday, £24.89; Sheffield supporters, particularly Ellen, for organising coffee and tea at Sunday's AGM, £10.70; and to Cheung Siu Ming and Les Hearn for Sunday's lunch, £13.50. For donations, thanks to: Rochdale supporters £12.50, Tom Cashman, £50, Sue Carlyle, £40, John Shields, £15; Mark Starr, £10; Martin Barclay, £8, a Castleford miner, £5; Ellen Taylor, £5; Terry Connolly and Amanda Richardson, £5; Jean Lane, £3, Brent supporters, £2.60; Andy Barrett, £2.

Send donations to: 214 Sickert Court, Essex Road, London N1 2SY.

Group	Target
Basingstoke	100
Birmingham	90
Bristol	15
Cardiff	60
Chelmsford	30
Coventry	300
Durham	50
Edinburgh	90
Glasgow	120
Harrrogate	30
Huddersfield	20
Hull	120
Leeds	40
Leicester	30
Leigh	20
Liverpool	30
Manchester	200
Middlesbrough	30
Northampton	100
Nottingham	100
Oxford	300
Rochdale	50
Sheffield	120
Stockport	50
Stoke	50
Wallasey	75
York	50
Brent	60
Camden	50
Hackney	70
Haringey	70
Hounslow	70
Islington	120
Putney	30
Southwark	100
SE London	90
Tower Hamlets	70

GRENADA

Continued from front page

gave Reagan nightmares.

The 'Europeans' and the Americans have thus had a different approach all the way through. (Partly, this is a matter not just of different political views but of different real interests. The US has a much more immediate strategic interest in Central America and the Caribbean, and a much broader military option. The EEC states have little military option there, and their overriding concern is economic relations with bourgeoisies like Mexico's).

Reagan sees the world in terms of the struggle between the empires of light and darkness, good and evil. There are two blocs and everything in the world is in one or other of the 'class camps'.

Thus the Syrian allies of the USSR who are active in Lebanon are for Reagan indistinguishable from the USSR. Grenada was just an extension of the same evil empire.

Thatcher sometimes uses similar rhetoric, but does not believe it so naively.

Even in US foreign policy,

there are other strands. Bishop and US officials had discussed making a deal, and it seems that such an agreement may have been close before the coup ended that possibility.

The US does not identify itself entirely with the ultra-right even in El Salvador, and keeps open options of a deal with the FDR/FMLN.

But against Grenada, the US government was waiting its chance to strike.

That it struck when and how it did was determined by domestic political considerations. Reagan's constituency is the hard Right, which sincerely believes in the red demons vs. 'free world' angels outlook which Reagan himself spouts and probably believes.

After the slaughter of US troops in Beirut, Reagan needed to be seen not to be like Jimmy Carter, whose helplessness when Americans were held hostage in Iran politically destroyed him.

It was probably the coincidence of the bloody coup in Grenada with the carnage in Lebanon that

made invasion Reagan's inevitable choice. He needed his own 'Falklands war'.

In his TV address to the American people, he linked Lebanon and Grenada, in effect pleading 'I've done something to get even'. The effect on American allies like Thatcher probably had little weight in Reagan's calculations.

The most important effects of the invasion, however, are not those at government-to-government level. Rifts there can soon be mended.

But among ordinary people the invasion has massively increased the feelings of alarm in Europe that nuclear war is a real and immediate threat.

The invasion of Grenada looks like having the same effect in boosting the anti-war movement in Europe (and, unfortunately, giving it a sharp anti-American bias) as the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 had in boosting the Right in the USA and in helping the US government justify its war drive.