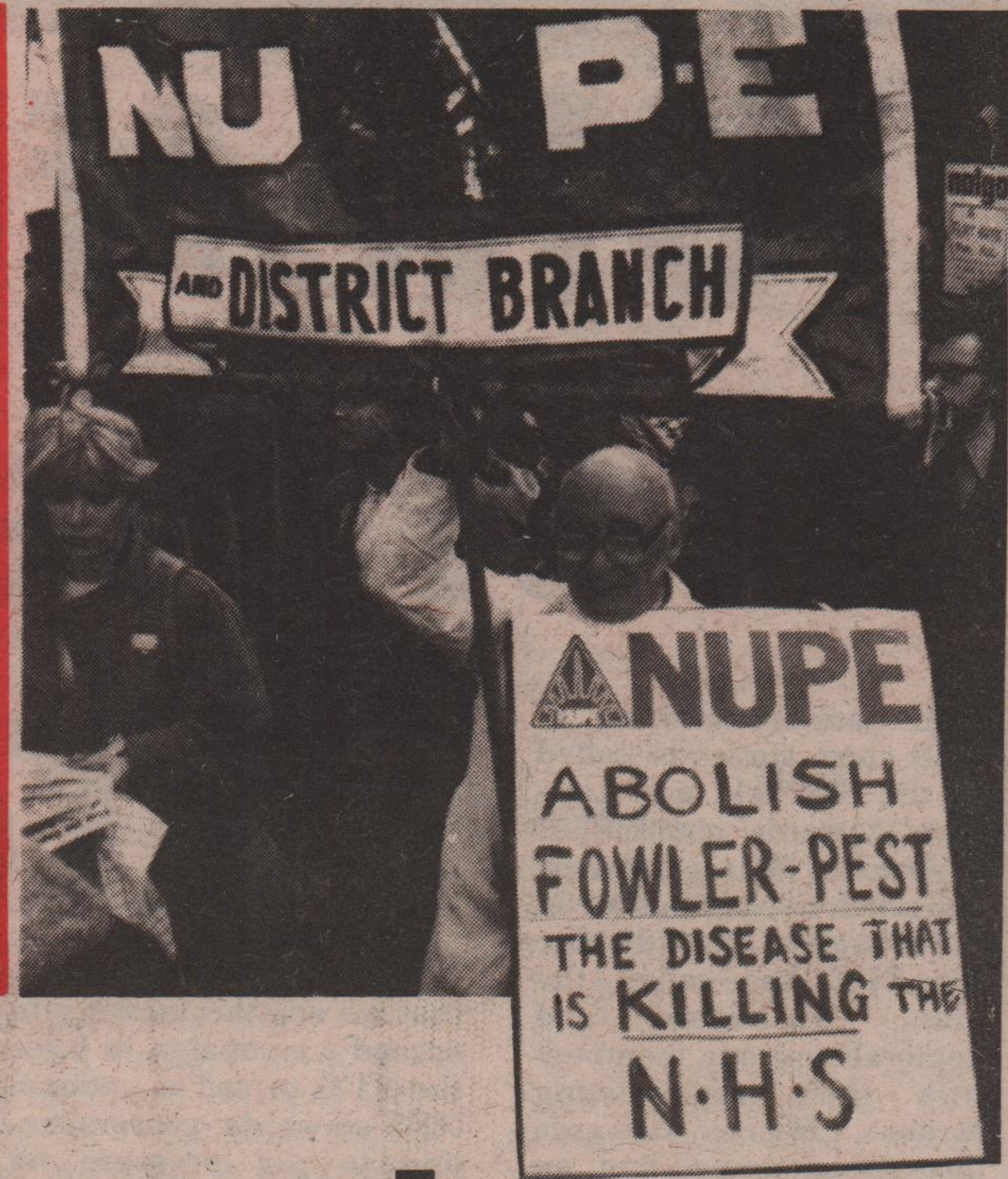


Join the
Labour
Party

Socialist Organiser

Against all bans and proscriptions!



Paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance No.105 October 21, 1982 (Claimants and strikers, 10p) 25p

Pressure grows for general strike

See page 2

NUPE

MUST



TUC chiefs lead September 22 march. But will they lead a fight to win?

GIVE THE LEAD!

AS Albert Spanswick, chairperson of the TUC Health Services Committee, announced his ideas for next steps in the NHS pay campaign, even the top trade union officials beside him could not suppress a groan.

Speaking at a press conference on Tuesday 19th, Spanswick proposed a petition campaign (!) and another TUC day of action on November 24.

Even right-winger Charlie Donnet of the GMWU interrupted to declare that this was only Spanswick's personal opinion.

NUPE general secretary Rodney Bickerstaffe said:

"The membership are not prepared to continue with these long-intervalled single days of industrial action.

"I don't say that our people are getting desperate. But they are frustrated and very, very angry. They want something more, something that bites.

"We want escalation. We will reaffirm even more strongly on this occasion the NUPE conference decision for an all-out strike with accident and emergency cover. Very many people are coming to believe that is the only way forward."

On Friday evening, 15th, at a Tribune/Broad Left meeting in London, NUPE national NHS officer Roger Poole called for an all-out indefinite strike in the NHS, to be coupled with an indefinite general strike of the whole trade union movement.

The TUC Health Services Committee is meeting on Thursday 21st. The Scottish Regional Council of COHSE has demanded a recall conference of the union to consider all-out action, yet COHSE is likely to be the main obstacle to an all-out call. Many NUPE members are demanding that their union should go ahead, give a lead, and drag the other unions along behind it.

There is a real possibility now of escalating action to defeat the Tory government — only TUC policy is dissipating and splitting up militancy.

This week there are four major days of action — all separate! Monday: water workers' strike over pay. Tuesday: NHS south-east day of action and lobby of Parliament. Wednesday: British Telecom strike against privatisation. Friday: steel strike against job cuts.

These struggles should be brought together, and also linked with the miners' campaign for their wage claim and against pit closures, due to go to a strike ballot on October 28-29.

The NHS regional days of action have been a *de-escalation* after September 22. The transport strike called for November 8 could and should be the starting point for a fight to win.

But the union leaders' plans so far are not promising. There is no official campaign for action in the depots and bus garages. Rail union leaders are merely meeting on Wednesday 20th to *decide whether to strike or not!* Leaders of TSSA, the clerical union, have already said that they will not call their members out.

"We lifted the Health Service workers up and we are not going to let them drop", declared Rodney Bickerstaffe on Tuesday. More certainly, the health workers are not going to let themselves be put down! The plan of action we need is:

*All-out indefinite strike in the NHS with emergency cover under workers' control.

*Make November 8 a one-day general strike.

*Organise for an all-out general strike.

A general strike can win the 12% claim and clear away the Tories' proposed 3½% norm for this year. It can demolish the Employment Act and stop the Tebbit Bill. It can block the Tories' cuts and closures.

It can do more. It can make it impossible for the vandal Tories to govern, and drive this Tory government from office. And the level of mobilisation needed by the working class to defeat this entrenched government would open tremendous possibilities beyond the limited objectives of defeating Tory policies or even of bringing down the Tory government.

A general strike poses implicitly — and, as it develops, more and more explicitly — the question of which class is master in the country.

If the Tories retain power after a general strike, they will quickly counter-attack. So indeed would a Labour government led by the present Foot-Shore-Healey team. But that is the round after this one. The task now is to mobilise the full forces of the labour movement to win *this* round — to win the NHS workers' claim and bring down the Tory government.

Sheffield lead for health stewards

THE national meeting of NHS shop stewards called by the Sheffield and Leicester stewards' committees on October 30 is a welcome and much needed initiative.

Throughout this dispute the TUC has called the tune, frustrating and demoralising our members with their time-wasting tactics. Many stewards have been demanding an all-out indefinite strike, recognising that this, linked with solidarity action, is the only way to win the 12% claim.

The TUC has persistently ignored the rank and file's call for leadership. Since there has been no meeting of stewards on a national level, it has been difficult to effectively channel pressure onto the TUC health services committee. The conference gives us an opportunity to start doing that more effectively.

Forge

The meeting can forge valuable links between stewards' committees in different parts of the country, and help make a real assessment of the state of the dispute and the way forward.

Although the event has rightly been billed as a 'meeting' — links between local committees are not yet sufficiently developed that a representative conference of shop stewards can be called unofficially — it can also help to develop the campaign for such a conference.

The organisers have quite rightly invited full time officials and representatives of the TUC health services committee to attend the meeting. It is vital

NUPE's witch hunt

AS we go to press, we have heard that Anne-Marie Sweeney, shop steward for Oxfordshire home helps, and minutes secretary of the Oxford County branch of NUPE, has been suspended from the union, pending a call for her expulsion.

We gather that Anne-Marie's 'crime', for which she was heavily attacked by local official Alf Collier and other branch officials, was to write to the union's NEC querying ballot procedures.

As a delegate from NUPE, Anne-Marie is president of Oxfordshire County Association of Trades Councils. She has been consistently active in local and national campaigns against Tory spending cuts in the NHS, nurseries, social services and school meals.

The branch motion calling for her expulsion has not yet been heard by the union's NEC. NUPE militants concerned at this witch hunt of a dedicated trade unionist should ensure that their views are heard at every level in the union.

that we use the meeting to spread a campaign to force the TUC to call a national NHS stewards' conference, and to put pressure on NUPE to carry out their May conference decision to call all-out indefinite action.

The dispute hangs very much in the balance now. If the militancy of the last

seven months and the support we have built up is not to be squandered, we have to have an all-out strike.

The Sheffield meeting will take place against a background of victimisations, cuts, and threatened privatisation. We are now playing for higher stakes than just the 12 per cent.

As the Tory attacks on the NHS intensify, a national organisation of NHS stewards is becoming more essential. Health service stewards must show that they mean business, by

getting the maximum turnout for the Sheffield meeting, organising for strong action on the 8th, and continuing to press for an all-out indefinite strike.

ANNA LUNTS

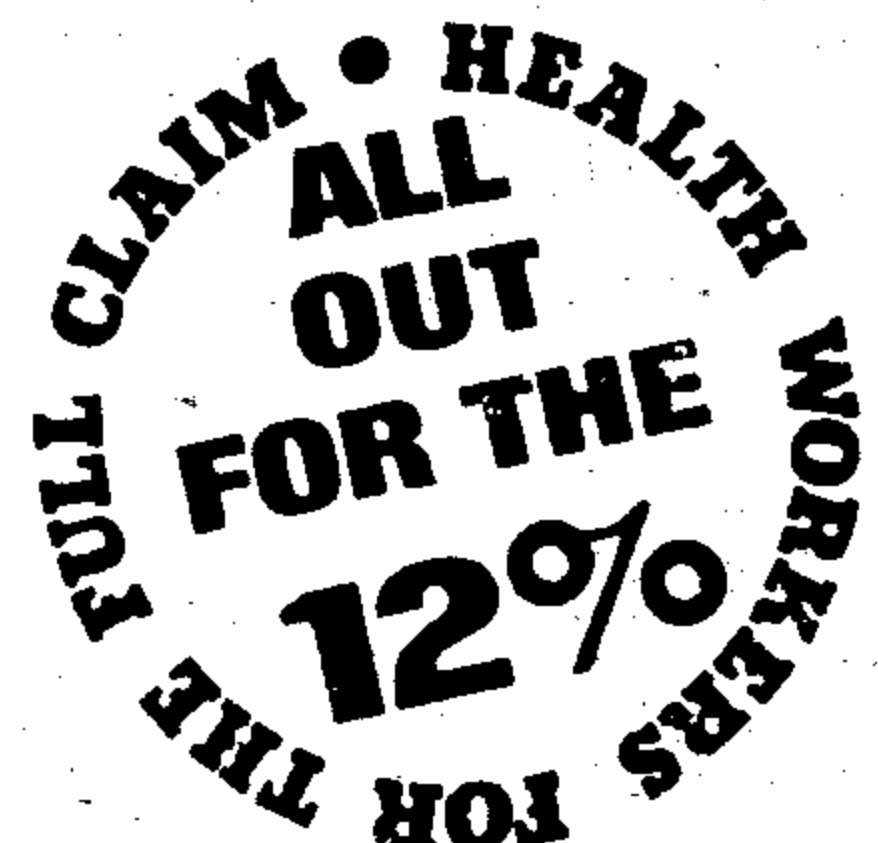
National meeting of health service shop stewards and representatives of strike committees

Saturday October 30, Royal Victoria Hotel, Victoria Station Road, Sheffield: 10.30-4.30

Called: jointly by Leicester Health Service coordinating committee and Sheffield Health Workers Joint Shop Stewards Committee.

Attendance: open to all shop stewards in the NHS,

and members of strike committees, admission by union card. Creche: available. Contact: 0742 26484 x 2896 daytime, 550582 eve.



Save Wood Green Hospital

by Mick O'Sullivan

THE occupation to stop closure at Wood Green and Southgate hospital continues, with the majority of staff fully behind the struggle.

The one black spot is the few nurses in the RCN, who have agreed to go for interviews for new jobs. The vast majority of staff, who are NUPE members, have refused to attend such

interviews, and this has effectively blocked the District Health Authority's first attempt to break the occupation.

Attempts to broaden the support for the occupation continue. Last week saw a lobby of a meeting of the borough Labour group which discussed what practical support they could offer.

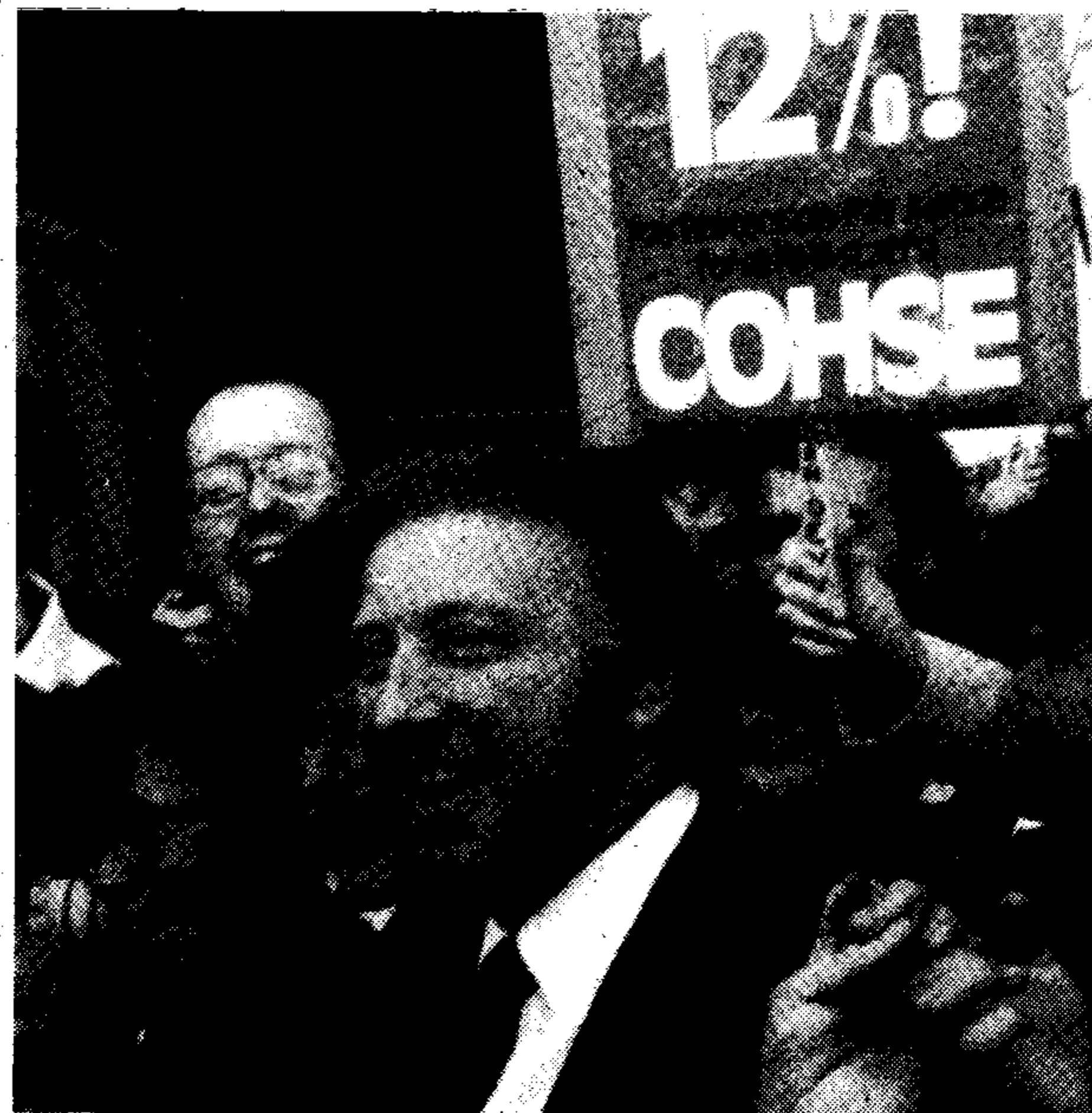
While a certain amount of verbal commitment was forthcoming, practical support was limited to publicising the occupation through the council's local paper.

Occupation supporters are planning a call to all local authority stewards in the borough for a meeting to broaden the support for the occupation into the local Trade Union movement. While it is primarily the job of the local Trade Union to organise this initiative, the council can play a valuable role in giving backing.

Messages/money: Wood Green and Southgate hospital, 135 Bands Green Rd., London N11.

Why miners say 'yes'

by John Cunningham (Dinnington NUM)



WHAT would you do if your employer told you he was going to cut your wages by between £15 and £32 a week? No doubt you would go mad and there would be an immediate strike.

Well, this is what the miners are being faced with. The National Coal Board's offer of 7.2% across the board is, in effect, a wage cut. Since March 1975 prices have shot ahead of wages to such an extent that even if the NUM's claim was conceded in full, all grades of underground workers would still be taking a drop in real wages.

A face worker on the highest grade stands to lose £32.75 in real terms if the NCB offer is accepted. The lowest grade surface worker would lose £15.25 — not a lot to show for seven years'

hard graft. All the talk of the NUM claim being ridiculously extortionate clearly ignores the economic facts of life. Nor will it mean a greater burden on tax payers, although miners are taxpayers too.

Between April 1981 and March 1982 the miners received two wage rises — 9.8% and 8.7%. NCB figures show that wage costs rose by only 5.9% in that period. The NCB can afford the claim and should be made to cough up.

For a start they could cut out overtime. They have already admitted that cutting 1% of overtime would save the NCB £12 million. So by cutting overtime from its current level of 14% to 4%, the NCB could increase the present offer by

about £10 a week.

Coal stocks, it is estimated by the NUM, are currently undervalued to the tune of some £150 million.

NCB accounts show that last year it paid an extra 33% in interest charges, 24% in depreciation, and 29.5% in those mysterious "other charges".

All this money could go to make up the miners' claim in full. And even if the full claim was paid for by raising the price of coal, it would still mean only another £4.50 a ton, still leaving coal as the cheapest source of energy available.

It is doubly and trebly important to go all out for the full claim, particularly as the NCB have said nothing about the other parts of the claim — the four-day week, retirement at 55, and salaried wages.

They have also yet to give a commitment on pit closures.

Linking pay and closures in the ballot is correct, as the NCB themselves are linking jobs and money. They have already stated that they will put more money on the table if the NUM will accept 30,000 so-called technological redundancies.

If the NUM lose on this one, it will be back to the 1960s and the Roberts era of mass closures and redundancies.

But at the end of the day the argument is a political one — if the miners go down, the trade union movement will go down with them.

A victory for the miners will take us forward, but a defeat will take us back decades. We stand at the crossroads. Vote yes for a fight and for a future.

Barnsley support

SOCIALIST Organiser spoke to delegates who attended a meeting for branch officials at Bradsworth Miners Welfare near Doncaster. The meeting was called by Yorkshire NUM President Jack Taylor as part of the NUM campaign for a 30% wage increase and against pit closures.

I asked the delegates:-

Is the operation of the overtime ban solid in Yorkshire?

'Yes. After Jack Taylor reported, he was given a standing ovation by us all.'

What about exemptions? Might not those sections like the Barnsley winders try and use that as an

excuse? 'The only exemptions allowed are for emergencies like flooding, fire and the like. If the Barnsley winders work overtime, then the job is blacked. They didn't even attend the meeting.'

'Who knows what would have happened if they did.'

How do you think the ballot will go for the claim?

'In Yorkshire a majority — definitely. In January 66% voted for it. Its up to us to build for it — build on the support we have already.'

What about pit closures?

'86% were against closures in the last ballot. It's a very emotional issue in the pits.'

'Branch officials and the leadership are mounting a campaign amongst the rank and file.'

'Five major rallies throughout the country — for the rank and file — Sheffield City Hall is the first.'

What now for the triple alliance?

'There was a great cheer last night when the platform announced Sid Weighell had been sacked. Strengthened — definitely.'

Barnsley SO

Stop the deportations!

by Jenny Fisher

NOT CONTENT with trying to deport Afia Begum, the Home Office has now found another immigrant woman in Tower Hamlets, East London, to harass.

Jesoda Luxman, having spent the last 12 years working in many parts of the world as a nanny, now wishes to settle in Britain with her family. In particular, she wants to help her parents in looking after one of her brothers who is physically and mentally handicapped. She has received support in this from teachers at her brother's school and the local social services.

The Home Office have

bought her a ticket to send her to Pakistan, where she has no immediate family. Her case has been taken up by the local MP, Ian Mikardo, and local councillors are organising with the local Labour Party, community groups, and anti-racist groups to defend her. Wider support is needed urgently.

Meanwhile, the campaign to defend Afia Begum is growing. Following a noisy picket of the Home Office and local activity, a campaign meeting has decided to call a demonstration in the Spitalfields area on Saturday November 13. There are reported to be

some 40 deportations from Britain EACH DAY: it is time the labour movement made a stand and stopped this. With your support, we can make that stand on November 13. Without it, the racism and sexism of the Home Office will continue.

Labour movement, community and anti-racist groups are urged to sponsor the demonstration, and send a banner and a delegation or a message of support for us to read out at the rally.

Contact: Susan Carlyle, 36 Bradmore House, Jamaica St, London E1 (01-790 4937).

Conference focus of CLP resistance

John Bloxam calls for a big turnout to organise against the witch-hunt

IT IS still not clear whether the Labour Party NEC will discuss general secretary Jim Mortimer's final proposals on how to purge Militant's 'inner group' at their meeting in October, or delay until November.

Either way, a large conference of Constituency Labour Parties and other Labour organisations on October 30 will give a big jolt to their witch-hunting plans.

Little will concentrate the minds of the right wing better than a large delegate conference agreeing to campaign against all expulsions or disaffiliations.

23 CLPs have already, prior to most October CLP meetings, agreed to send delegates to the Conference. This initial response suggests solid support. In addition, there was unanimous support for the conference at the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy Executive, and CLPD will be sending a speaker.

Trade union branches, Labour Party wards, women's sections, and YEs will also be sending delegates. But the CLP delegates will have centre place in the

conference, because the CLPs will have to make the crucial decisions to refuse to expel left-wingers and face NEC attempts to disband them.

They will be asked to vote separately on the key resolution presented by the Steering Committee:

- 'This CLP resolves to:**
- Fight to reverse the decision to establish the NEC's register of non-affiliated groups of members operating within the Party,
 - Neither to expel nor to recognise the expulsion of any Labour Party member or group of members or the disaffiliation of any CLP or constituency organisation in connection with the operation of the NEC's register'

The trade union delegates will be asked to vote separately on a special resolution for them:

- 'This... resolves to:**
- Fight to reverse the decision to establish the NEC's register of non-affiliated groups of members operating within the Party,
 - Not recognise the expulsion of any LP member or group of members or the disaffiliation of any CLP or constituent organisation in connection with the oper-



JOHN HARRIS

Militant cannot defeat witch-hunt single-handed

ation of the NEC's register, • Give full support to any CLP resisting expulsions, and maintain affiliations to 'disbanded' CLPs and boycott attempts to substitute 'new' CLPs set up by the NEC'

There will be additional proposals about organising nationally and locally after the Conference, and a national Steering Committee will be elected. The right to submit amendments,

and the main voting, will be restricted to those delegates whose organisations can deliver the action (CLPs and trade unions).

The first job will be to defend Militant supporters, and it is because they are now in the firing line that Militant have been asked to send a speaker to the Conference. In fact they appear to have partly changed their attitude to it.

On September 11 they

voted against supporting the Conference. They are now arguing that CLPs should be sending delegates, but the change has scarcely been 180°.

Apparently Militant will argue that the conference should elect two delegates onto the steering committee elected from the September 11 conference, and then dissolve into the one 'united' campaign. But it is fantasy to believe that Mil-

itant can defeat the witch-hunt single-handed, and that everyone else can tag along as a small minority in Militant's project.

The October '30 conference should certainly decide on organising, as far as possible, a joint campaign. The two steering committees from the two conferences should be closely linked. But genuine joint activity seems far from Militant's thinking.

Their decision to try to register was taken without any reference to the steering committee from their own conference. While in principle it is a possible tactical response, to do it now will certainly 'seriously undermine the campaign against the register mounted by many left wing groups within the party' (as Labour Weekly pointed out).

And their hints about taking Labour leaders to court are not only wrong in principle, but can only confuse the campaign to defend them.

At the same time, Canbury East ward in Islington Central CLP — not a specially left-wing ward, in

not a specially left-wing CLP — has passed a resolution calling on their GC 'to have no truck with expulsions'.

It is Ted Grant's and Peter Taaffe's ward. In this case their ward seems to have more idea about the effective way to defend them than they do themselves.

The October 30 conference has to organise such feeling. Delegates should be mandated to oppose the proposal supported by Militant, and to support the proposals from the steering committee.

Help is needed for the last week of the Labour by-election campaigns in Peckham and Northfield, where polling takes place on October 28.

Peckham: Committee rooms, 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5 (01-703 4808).

Northfield: Committee rooms, 30 Hillwood Road, Birmingham B31 (021-478 2903).

SDP conference 'Moderates' reach for their teeth

by Harry Sloan

WHO now can doubt that the SDP is a mighty force for radical change and mould breaking? Last week's "rolling conference" brought the definitive answer to those who doubt the power of mobilised moderation.

It came from a shop steward at BL's Cowley Assembly Plant — one of the very first people to demonstrate that "moderate" is simply a polite word for witch-hunting reactionary.

Charles Hammond told the gasping audience of careerists and closet Tories what he and his ilk had helped do to working conditions in Cowley.

As a result of the "silent majority" getting "off their backsides", production had gone up, the workforce had gone down, and pay packets had been cut. "Now we have a management that rules by fear and not by agreement... There must be a better way of industrial democracy," he concluded.

Small wonder that, as Hammond confessed, the working class at Cowley and elsewhere seem far from enchanted at the prospect of a wholesale "moderate" takeover!

AUEW official Charlie (a lot of Charlies at the SDP conference) Westley also grumbled that the SDP had failed to get its brand of "commonsense" into British politics, or "capture the hearts of working people".

From the platform William Rodgers, proposing the package of anti-union policies, also took a moment to "wonder what the average member of the NUR thinks."

Echoing the previous week's praise for Norman Tebbit, Rodgers too lauded ousted NUR leader Sid Weighell as "one of the outstanding and best trade union leaders."

And he bemoaned the way in which such statesmen "tied hand and foot to

Labour" had to devote time to manoeuvring on political questions instead of concentrating on "the great industrial issues" — (presumably implementing Charlie Hammond's plans for wage cuts ad sackings).

This was why, he suggested, the SDP favours cutting the unions' links with the Labour Party.

Rodgers claimed that the SDP wish to "give the unions back to their members". But the policies he proposed would give substantial control of the unions to the Tory press and mass media — through instituting still further secret postal ballots on industrial action and on union elections as well as on Labour Party affiliation. And the SDP would feather-bed scabs and non-union freeloaders.

Anyone should be able on grounds of "conscience" to refuse to join a union, suggested Rodgers. And the SDP's proposals for "indus-



"Somebody suggested our image would be improved if we ate some fish and chips!"

trial democracy" involves the establishment of 'works councils' on which non-union members should sit side by side with union representatives.

Confused

On top of this, the SDP, though confused as to its precise tactics, favours a policy of government-imposed wage controls.

Party leader Jenkins rowled and his defeated rival Owen grinned as delegates overwhelmingly voted down a call for a "conventional" statutory pay policy.

This made nonsense of Jenkins' major speech on the issue. But the Party's Council carried a vaguer proposal to "seek a specific mandate" for an incomes policy, and the commitment to hold down working class living standards was unquestioned on either side of the "debate".

There was similar equivocation over defence policy. As the party of opportunism par excellence, the SDP can-

not afford to ignore the vast groundswell of support in the middle classes for CND: yet as the party of loyalty to NATO, it cannot offer any real commitment to disarmament — and stands several yards to the right of its Liberal Party allies on the issue.

David Owen offered a virtuoso attempt at straddling this problem, by proposing a vast increase in "conventional" death machines in exchange for nukes.

"You cannot advocate a non-nuclear policy and then go passing resolutions involving slashing cuts in conventional weapons. It doesn't add up.

We have to be prepared to dig deeper into our pockets to provide the resources for a real conventional defence force."

Columns

This vision of columns of new tanks, jets and bombs, he suggested, was the kind of vision to "catch the imagin-

ation of those people in the peace movement troubled by the world they see".

And if all that failed, and the SDP decided instead to allow the siting of Cruise missiles in Britain, they would demand a revolutionary, radical and mould-breaking form of "participation".

"The British people have the right to feel that it is their government's finger on the safety catch. Not the trigger, but the safety catch (!!)"

Volvos

Delegates, uncertain whether to welcome and accommodate to CND, or whether to fend off its "siren sounds of unilateralism" were relieved at Owen's speech, which offered something for everyone present and got a two-minute standing ovation.

Despite repeated angry claims that the SDP is not in fact simply a party of the Volvo-driving middle classes, and includes union officials

as well as headmasters and accountants, every aspect of the conference underlined its petty bourgeois character. A survey suggested that 11% of the delegates were unemployed: one of these proved to be an unemployed antique dealer!

Speech after speech confessed that the SDP has failed to convince working class people, particularly blacks, that it has anything to offer. And the conference showed that it remains less a party than an organised fan club for the repeated hectoring and wooden speeches from the 'Gang of Four' who remain the only reliable spokespeople for the SDP's brand of evasive, utopian or reactionary politics.

Such a party can hope and predict continued success only on the basis of the dire economic and social crisis unleashed by Thatcher and the confusion and bankruptcy of the policies peddled by the bureaucratic leaders of the trade union and Labour movement.

Fraser blows off his foot

THE British press assessment of the Commonwealth Games, held in Brisbane last month, seems to be: "OK, the Aboriginal people of Australia have a bum deal... but the Games were good fun and we won a lot of medals".

It isn't quite what Australian prime minister Malcolm Fraser wanted, but it'll do.

Many reporters revolted by or perhaps just bored with, Rolf Harris trying to remember the words to Waltzing Matilda, or giant kangaroos spewing out Australian athletes from a detachable pouch, wandered off and discovered the Aboriginal Land Rights Campaign.

They noticed a few hundred arrests during the Games, as a few Aborigines were refused entry even though they had tickets, and the Governor General's daughter got arrested, which was a nice story. But apart from that the Press obviously spent most of their time drowning their sorrows.

But the Black Protest Campaign, set up to bring the issue of Aboriginal Land Rights to the attention of the world during the Games, are pleased with their success.

They declared long before the Games began that

Jo Thwaites reports on the Aborigine Land Rights campaign in Australia

they wanted a peaceful protest. The Queensland Government responded to this by rushing the Commonwealth Games Act through Parliament. This Act gave the police immense powers to deal with any demonstration or protest within a 'notified area' around the Games stadium.

Police could declare notified areas within which anyone creating a disturbance, or thought by police to be doing so could be immediately arrested.

Also, if anyone saw such a disturbance, it would be their duty to perform a "citizen's arrest" and if bystanders didn't help the police they could also be arrested. Jail terms were to be the order of the day for those arrested, or huge fines.

While several hundred people were arrested, the police were obviously reluc-

tant to use the full powers of this Act, hampered as they were by the presence of the world's press.

The Fraser government is clearly embarrassed by the number of arrests. Due to pressure from Charles Perkins (an advisor to the government on Aboriginal Affairs appointed during the Whitlam [Labour] government, and still there despite almost monthly attempts by Fraser's Liberals to get rid of him), it seems likely that the Fraser government will grant some sort of amnesty for the arrested protesters.

Charles Perkins had threatened to present a petition to the Queen while she was there, demanding that she do something about the arrests. He was dissuaded and it is generally thought that Fraser promised an amnesty in order to avoid embarrassing the Queen and himself.

Another success claimed by the Black Protest Committee is the resignation of the Queensland Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. This character had said on New Zealand radio that even if Aborigines did have land they wouldn't be able to keep it or run it as they were incapable. He was forced to resign.

Much of the potential publicity the Aboriginal

Land Right campaigners should have got was overshadowed by the corruption scandal rocking the Liberal government. Hardly a day passes without some minister or other 'flying off' resigning due to 'bad health' or 'pressure of work'.

At the root of it all is an inquiry which Fraser ordered be made into corruption in the Painter and Docker's Union, the purpose being to embarrass the Australian Labour Party. Unhappily for Fraser it has back-fired badly, many compare it to firing a gun and blowing off your own foot.

The union corruption was found to be small fry compared to the people who were using them higher up. These bigger fish appear to be almost all of Fraser's government.

Incredible stories are coming out — the Western Australia state government phone number was in Playboy, apparently someone high up was operating a call-girl racket from a government office.

So Fraser's attempt to shove the ALP down a few points in the opinion polls have resulted in quite the opposite — the Liberals are losing ground by the hour as Australians wait for the next 'health' casualty from Canberra.



Brisbane demonstrators condemned Fraser's racism

6 months for Siles?

BOLIVIA'S new civilian government has received offers of economic aid from the US, the EEC, the USSR, and Venezuela. Even Argentina, which played an important role in the 1980 military coup in Bolivia, and which has become the refuge for the top army commanders sacked by incoming president Siles, wants to discuss possible aid.

But the government still faces a huge foreign debt crisis — and the international bankers' price for relieving that crisis will be that Siles use his credit with Bolivia's workers and peasants to impose austerity measures.

The US State Department is reported to reckon



Will he convince them? the Siles government's probable lifespan at six months.

Salvador danger

A JOINT initiative by the presidents of Mexico and Venezuela for peace talks in Central America has received a favourable response from Nicaragua and from the Socialist International.

The presidents sent a letter — contents not yet disclosed — at the end of September to US President Reagan, to the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, and to the Honduran regime. Mexico in alliance with European governments and the Socialist International, has in recent years come out in competition with the US as the champion of an alternative policy for capitalist stability in Central America.

Meanwhile in El Salvador president Magana has proposed the setting-up of a multi-party commission to discuss opening negotiations with the FMLN-FD opposition (as favoured by Mexico and France). Magana has seemingly made tentative contact with FDR leader Guillermo Ungo by the intermediary of the Costa Rica government. US officials are claiming the Ungo — who represents the openly bourgeois component of the FDR — willing to distance himself from the FMLN guerrillas and drop the demand for a purge and restructuring of El Salvador's armed forces.

Prior's gamble

AS WE go to press, polling is taking place in Northern Ireland for a new Six County Assembly.

It has been accompanied by an upsurge of sectarian carnage, and the so-called security forces are on full alert. Over a dozen sectarian killings have occurred in the month before the election, some of them of Protestants. The sectarian bitterness unleashed by the campaign was most terribly expressed two days before polling, when a 61 year old man was gunned down with both barrels of a shotgun in front of a classroom of 10 year old children. A former lieutenant in the part-time British Army local force, the UDR, he retired six years ago.

The Irish National Liberation Army, which continues despite this to call itself republican and even socialist, immediately claimed responsibility and promised more of the same.

The elections are the first attempt in seven years to set up a new political super-structure in Northern Ireland. At the end of 1975 the Convention, created by elections such as the present ones, produced a majority report demanding a return to 'majority rule' for Northern Ireland, and the British government, refusing to comply, scrapped it and settled into the last 7 years of direct rule.

'Majority rule' means Protestant rule such as existed for 50 years until the Northern Ireland parliament was suspended in March 1972.

The British government recognises that no Northern Ireland assembly will agree on a constitution acceptable

to both Protestants and Catholics. The October 20 elections are to produce an assembly which will be a talking shop, but have the possibility of getting control of departments of government in Northern Ireland as and when a sufficient proportion of the Assembly can reach agreement.

This is called 'rolling devolution'. It is 'open ended' and 'flexible'. It is also foredoomed.

For it is a foregone conclusion that there will be a Protestant majority unwilling to share power with the Catholics.

As always there will be two parallel elections, one for each of the communities. On the Protestant side there are now two big blocks — the Official Unionists and Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionists. In the May local elections the OUP got just slightly more votes than the DUP. The OUP wants integration of Northern Ireland with Britain, and the DUP wants majority rule — i.e. restoration of Protestant ascendancy.

On the Catholic side, the SDLP, now a 'green' nationalist party which has shed most of its 'social' element, is standing but pledges to boycott the Assembly. They want London and Dublin government talks to agree a new broad framework for a federated Ireland, and a 'council for a new Ireland'.

Probably rightly, Republicans say that the SDLP will take the first chance to go into the Assembly.

There are 12 Provisional Republicans standing, some of them relatives of dead hunger-strikers. If elected

John O'Mahony looks at the Northern Ireland Assembly elections — and why the Catholics see them as a threat.

they will not take their seats.

Enoch Powell, a Westminster MP for the Official Unionists, has claimed that their DUP rivals will use the Assembly as a launching pad 'for illegality and rebellion' if they are strong there. This raises a question that the Catholic population will have very much in mind.

A Protestant majority parliament is being elected. The Protestants are, however, being told that they can only exercise power if they get the agreement of the Catholics. They raise the cry: majority rule.

If there is democratic validity in the Northern Ireland state, they should have majority rule. But it is an artificial sectarian state carved out by British imperialist violence against the will of the majority of the Irish people. Majority rule would mean restoring Protestant ascendancy over the 35% Catholic minority — whose revolt smashed the old system, and who won't take it lying down.

But what if a Protestant Assembly majority should constitute a government and attempt to seize power? — rather as was done in Dublin in 1919 after the 1918 election

returned a 73% majority of MPs pledged to set up an independent Irish parliament. This is a risk Prior is taking.

The divisions in the Protestant ranks make it improbable immediately. Yet the OUP is as viciously anti-Catholic as the DUP. It may happen.

In this situation the antics of the INLA, which is loosely (perhaps very loosely) linked to the Irish Republican Socialist Party, must intensify sectarian bitterness and help the Paisleyites. They are a million miles from socialism and scarcely less distant from Republicanism — the movement that 200 years ago took as its goal to unite Catholics, dissenters, and Protestants under the common name of Irishman.

While the Provisionals' military campaign focuses on the British Army and its auxiliaries, that of the supposedly left wing INLA focuses more and more on representatives of the Protestant community. This is either stupid beyond credence, or else a deliberate attempt to stoke the fires of sectarian civil war, from which nothing good can conceivably come.

The INLA is a tragic example of what the sectarian bearpit in Northern Ireland, created and maintained by British force, has done to the people of the Six Counties — even those who call themselves by the honourable name Republican and the working class name Socialist.

And that's why nothing good can ever come of that sectarian entity, or of tampering with it instead of abolishing it.

Strike "success"

THE FUT (United Workers' Front) of Ecuador has claimed 'total success' for its 48 hour protest general strike on September 22-23. Other reports (Latin America Weekly Report, October 1; Latin America Regional Report, October 8) describe the strike as a 'very limited success', saying that more than half the factories in the industrial belt round

the capital, Quito, were unaffected. There were street clashes between strikers and troops and police.

Meanwhile, Ecuador has finally demanded rescheduling of its foreign debt. Payments due on its \$6.6 billion total debt would amount to 122% of Ecuador's export income this year.

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International News International News International News

Fearful race which masses cannot win

Yoav Bar reports from Haifa on the threat of more slaughter in Lebanon

A TERRIFYING race is now taking place ... will the crisis around the Israeli war of genocide against the Palestinian masses in Lebanon develop fast enough to stop more and worse of the Sabra-Shatila horrors?

The danger is very real. The Lebanese fascists publicly pride themselves on their latest acts, and promise to continue to kill Palestinians until they see them all out of Lebanon. Israel continues mass murderous repression of the Palestinians and Lebanese left, supplying and giving a free hand to both the Gemayel and Haddad gangs. (Eyewitnesses have found it hard to identify which gang the murderers came from, as 'they all wear the same Israeli uniforms!').

American and European imperialists, who pressurised the fighters out of Beirut and then opened the way for the Israeli-fascist onslaught, now press for a Syrian and PLO withdrawal from the whole of Lebanon. This will open the country for a full scale terrorizing of the population, and the death or expulsion option for hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees.

But a real crisis is developing which can isolate and finally stop the bloody advance of the Zionist invaders. Not least is the crisis in Palestine itself, where the week after the Sabra-Shatila massacre has seen the biggest wave of unrest since the establishment of the Zionist state.

West Bank

The occupied West Bank and Gaza declared a 3 day general strike, which was really general despite repression and the threat of mass murder and expulsion.

The main breakthrough in this week of protest was by the Palestinians in the



The death toll mounts: will the protests mount quickly enough to stop it?

area occupied since 1948 — who now constitute 17% of the 4 million 'official' residents of the Zionist state. From the Sunday that the news of the massacre arrived, there were demonstrations all round the country, and a general strike of the Arab Palestinian population was declared for Wednesday, September 22.

It was the third one day general strike in the '48 territories, following 'The Day of the Land' in 1976, and the general strike on March 30 (the day of the land) this year in support of the West Bank and Gaza struggle. This time the response to the strike call was total, and there was a mass demonstration in every single village or city neighbourhood.

Most of the demonstrations flew the Palestinian national flag, which in itself could lead to 3 years' imprisonment under Israeli law.

The slogans of the masses were very clear, calling for a popular revolution to liberate Palestine. Even in cities like Haifa and Jaffa, where most of the population was expelled in 1948, there were thousands marching and then hours of stone throwing and clashes between the youth and the police.

In many places the demonstrators went out to block main roads. The Bedouin of the Neger desert, who had their land expropriated in the massive military buildup under Camp David, also played an important part in the strike, they didn't know

where to demonstrate on the day itself.

The police couldn't even try to prevent this mass mobilisation. They decided on a bold act of 'revenge' in the most important Arab centre within the 48 territories, the city of Nazareth.

After a peaceful demonstration on Wednesday morning there, policemen and soldiers were smuggled into the city in civilian buses, and began almost immediately shooting live bullets at the people in the main street.

More than 40 were wounded, and only by real luck was nobody killed. Four days later, in Daburiya near Nazareth, a memorial march to the Sabra-Shatila victims was fired on. A young woman worker was

killed, and the police came to arrest more of the marchers.

A wave of arrests, accompanied by brutal beating, has gone on the two weeks since the strike. Workers who took part in the strike were fired in some plants, and in one textile plant the Arab women workers called a strike against the firing of two of them accused in organising for the strike.

The same week opened real cracks in the Jewish society in Palestine, which might topple the present ultra-right leadership. On the Sunday after the massacre, some thousand demonstrators gathered in front of

Begin's home.

There were people from the 'Committee Against the War', as well as 'Peace Now' and some MP's from the 'Israeli Labour Party'. The police called on the protestors to withdraw, and the 'Labour' MP's were taking their people away as the police attacked the demonstrators who were not ready to go, first arresting some and, after the arrests were fiercely resisted, firing tear gas.

A demonstration by a few hundreds that same evening in Tel-Aviv, organised by the 'Committee Against the War', was dispersed by the police, who also beat passers-by and detained some 50 people. Throughout that week small demonstrations in the Jewish population continued, including some Kibbutz people, some soldiers' groups, and even some religious groups.

The 'Peace Now' demonstration on Saturday night, in the centre of Tel-Aviv, was the biggest ever in the history of Israel, with hundreds of thousands of people.

The Begin government was forced to nominate a juridical committee of inquiry into the Sabra-Shatila massacre. But the facts about the massacre are already very well known, including the direct Israeli involvement in sending the Lebanese fascists into the camp and actively helping them for three days when they knew of the mass slaughter taking place.

The inquiry is a ploy to distract attention and postpone any call for the resignation of those responsible in the government.

But if Sharon or even Begin falls, it will be because of the deadlock in Lebanon and their loss of US favour, rather than the protests here. The Likud government party still has the support of the majority of Jews, and this majority is not impressed by the 'Labour' protest, identified with the pro-American well-to-do layers. As long as the US pays for the war, and the war business is booming, any working class political action is made hardly possible by divisions between the super-oppressed Arab workers and the relatively privileged upper layers.

All this is not enough to make even Likud supp-

orters want to die in Lebanon. Sharon himself admitted that the soldiers by and large want to come home. He disclosed that propaganda against the war had prevented the mobilisation of a whole brigade. More than a thousand soldiers have signed a request, promoted mostly by the left, not to be sent to Lebanon.

It is typical of the tribal pressure of the Jewish community that even most of the soldiers who refused to go to Lebanon and were sent to prison, didn't want their names to be published.

The 'Israeli Labour' opposition is no alternative to Begin. Up to the day of the massacre in Sabra and Shatila, 'Labour' leader Perez was going around boasting of being the creator of Israel's Falangist organisation.

General Sharon, anxious to silence criticism of his part in past war crimes, disclosed that Israeli officers under Labour visited Falangist command posts during their onslaught on Tel-el-Za'atari in 1976 which led to the massacre of many thousands of Palestinian civilians, after the fighters surrendered.

'Labour' couldn't deny they supplied the Falangists during and after that massacre, so the responded by accusing Sharon of exposing security secrets.

In all their demonstrations there has not been a single word about justice for the victims of the massacre — the Palestinian refugees. They stress that their protest will help Israel's public relations in the world and prevent the collapse of imperialist support. They say their readiness to cooperate with the Reagan plan and King Hussein is the best way to prevent the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

The main aim of the war, to stabilise a new fascist order in Lebanon, is not yet secure, and the price of the war in Arab and world public opinion and in a mounting crisis in the rule of Zionism in Palestine, may lead to the American, and the Israeli command losing their nerve. They could unleash more fierce attacks, or they could call some withdrawal.

This new phase of open crisis means great dangers, great responsibilities and also some chances for us.

October

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WHAT'S ON

Paid ads 5p per word, £4 per column inch. Send to Socialist Organiser (What's On), 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER North of England day school on 'The International Class Struggle'. Sunday October 31, 10am to 5.30pm at Manchester University Students' Union, Oxford Road, Manchester. Lots of workshops, speakers, discussions, etc. Registration £1.50 waged, 75p claimants, from 78 High St, Atherton, Lancs. Cheap lunch available, creche provided.

NOTTINGHAM Socialist Organiser meets every Friday 7.30pm at the International Community Centre, 61B Mansfield Rd.

NORTH-WEST London Socialist Organiser group discussion meetings. every other Sunday, 8pm (for venue, see SO sellers).

CAMPAIGN against Racist Laws conference. Saturday October 23, 10am, County Hall, London. Details: 56, Edithna St, London SW9.

SOUTH EAST London Socialist Organiser forums. every other Thursday, 8pm at the Queen Victoria, Artillery Place, Woolwich.

October 21: 'The Tebbit bill' — speaker Wendy Mustill.

PALESTINE day school. Saturday October 23, noon to 6pm, at University of London Union, Malet St, WC1. Organised by Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

OUT NOW — 'The Degenerated Revolution — the origins and nature of the Stalinist states'. A new book from Workers' Power and the Irish Workers' Group. £2 plus 40p postage from Workers' Power, BCM Box 7750, London WC1N 3XX.

HULL Socialist Organiser public meeting. 'After the Labour Party conference'. Wednesday October 27, 7.30pm, Trades and Labour Club, Beverley Road.

WOMEN, Immigration and Nationality. conference organised by women involved in immigration law campaigning and the GLC women's committee. Sunday October 24, 10 to 5, County Hall, London SE1. All women welcome.

International 'Debating Socialism' weekend on 23/24 October. Alan Thornett debates Socialist Challenge and Socialist Worker on the unions, Ernest Mandel on the monetary crisis, John Ross debates Duncan Hallas on entrism and the Labour Party; Bernadette McAliskey on Ireland, Frances Morrell, Alan Freeman, and Labour Briefing on the new Labour Left, Ken Livingstone, Hilary Wainwright and Tessa van Gelderen on the lessons of Labour's GLC. John Harrison, Bea Campbell, Valerie Coultas, Mike Davis and more discussions on a socialist programme for the British crisis. Just £4 for the weekend, £2.50 per day at Kingsway Princeton college, near Kings Cross, London WC1. Starts 10am.

GAYS in Education conference: 'Homosexuality in the curriculum'. Saturday and Sunday November 13-14 1982, 11am to 5.30, Health Education Centre, 304 Westbourne Grove, London W11. £2 waged, £1 unwaged. Further info: 112 Broxholm Rd, London SE27.

GREENWICH Socialist Teachers' Group public meeting: 'Gay rights in teaching'. Speakers: Deirdre Wood, John McKay. 8pm, Thursday November 11, Royal Oak, Woolwich New Road, London SE18.

S.E. LONDON Gay Teachers' Group: first meeting, Monday November 1, 8pm, 6 Mays Court, Crooms Hill, London SE10 (858 2701).

HARINGEY Socialist Organiser: fortnightly meetings at Brabant Rd trade union centre. For details phone 802 0771 or 348 5941.

POLISH Solidarity Campaign/Solidarity with Solidarity: protest picket of British Soviet Friendship Society dinner, Ealing Town Hall, Saturday October 23, 6.30 pm. Please show your support for the Polish workers.

SWAPO Women's Solidarity Campaign: meeting with Frieda Williams (SWAPO Women's Council), Amrit Wilson, Candy Udwin, and Valerie Wise. Wednesday October 27, 7pm, Islington Town Hall, Upper St, N1.

New Socialist

TONY BENN debates GIORGIO NAPOLITANO (Parliamentary leader of the Italian CP) on 'Which road to socialism in West Europe?' Contributions from the floor

Friday October 29, 7.30pm, Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1 (Euston tube). Creche available.

Tickets £1 (75p unwaged) at the door, or in advance from: Tickets, New Socialist, 150 Walworth Rd, London SE17. Co-sponsored by New Socialist and Marxism Today.

Labour Committee on Palestine founding conference

Conference open to Labour Committee on Palestine members, delegates from affiliated organisations, and non-voting observers. Details from the secretary, 28 Carlton Mansions, Holmleigh Rd, London N16.

Saturday November 20, 1pm to 5pm at Brixton Town Hall, Acre Lane, London SW2.

What d'you think of it so far?

by Gerry Byrne (Women's Fightback steering committee)

THE Annual General Meeting is upon us. Time to pause and contemplate the past, present and future of Women's Fightback.

At times, through the general blur of exhaustion from newspaper and leaflet production, meetings and conferences, model motions and deadlines, we ask ourselves 'Is there anyone out there? Is anyone reading any of the articles and circulars?'

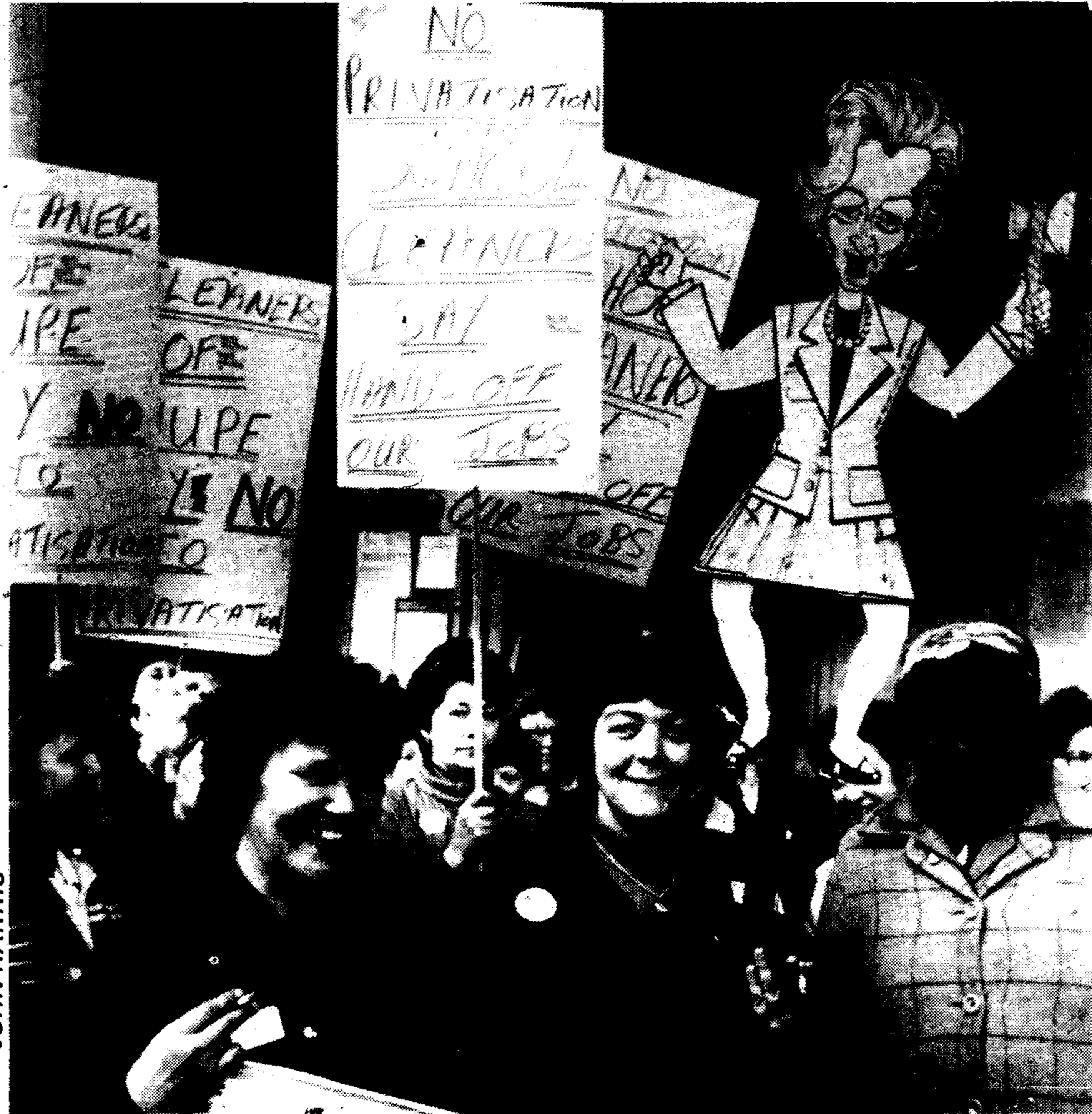
Well, on June 5, there were 5,000 bodies on the streets, demonstrating for a Women's Right to Paid Work. From its first glimmering appearance in a Fightback editorial in a Fightback magazine two years ago, through all the battles to get the call for the demo taken up, to the flesh-and-blood reality on the streets, clearly somebody somewhere is listening and going off to organise.

Consolidation

And from the consolidation of the Action Committee into the Women's Campaign for Jobs, with ambitious plans for campaigns round benefits and getting jobless women to register, for Standing Up and Being Counted, and for a Nationwide March/Tour for Jobs, to the mass of affiliations following the September Women's Campaign for Jobs Conference, there has been no shortage of action and enthusiasm.

On other fronts, some tentative beginnings have blossomed in a way none of us predicted.

At the first Fightback



JOHN HARRIS

Women workers have been in the forefront of the fight against cuts

Conference, almost as an afterthought, we called a workshop for women in the Labour Party to draw up suggestions for what needed changing in order for women's interests to be truly represented. It was packed to overflowing.

We had stumbled on a whole area of politics which nobody had yet taken up. Now, the women's sections

are revealing themselves as one of the most combative sections of the Party, and Fightback supporters are sweeping the board at the Women's Conference in the elections for Conference Arrangements Committee (the only elections that take place at the Conference since the appropriately-named 'block' votes at Labour

Party Annual Conference block proposals for the Women's Conference to elect its own representatives to the NEC).

Would the revival of the women's sections have happened without us? Quite likely, but Women's Fightback was in at the beginning, and helped to give shape to the whole

process.

It hasn't all been plain sailing, even in the Labour Party, where we've made most progress. There has been chronic irritability between Women's Fightback and the CLPD Women's Action Committee. This has consumed energy and duplicated effort which should have been directed towards what are shared goals.

One of the tasks for the Fightback AGM is to come up with proposals which maximise joint work in the Labour Party, so that wasteful competition is eliminated.

And the mood for change sweeping through the Women's Organisation has now come up against the brick wall of the deadlocked until the fight within the unions for democracy and women's representation is radically strengthened.

And here we come to one of the central problems/priorities for Women's Fightback. Despite a large, ground-breaking conference of rank and file women trade unionists earlier this year, the work here is nowhere as advanced as in the Labour Party.

There is a huge pool of enormous support among women trade unionists but so far it has not been organised. Partly because of the more difficult terrain



and the very different problems encountered in different unions, the women's movement in the unions has not so far got clearly worked out aims and strategy for achieving them.

Vast

In some unions the problems are so vast and the bureaucracy so convoluted, it will take years. But whatever the lack of immediate pay off, all our other gains will be ephemeral if we do not build a movement of women in the unions, ready and able to challenge for power and control, and linking up with direct action struggles of women workers.

This one major beacon in this endeavour is the vote by NUPE conference to affiliate to Women's Fightback. Supporters in every NUPE branch must be pushing for this to be implemented, and not just half-heartedly.

It can be used as a jumping-off point for really organising the mass of women in the union through joint meetings and campaigns, discussion of Women's Fightback and feedback from the branches into the paper.

The paper is another area which needs strengthening. Criticisms apart, it is almost universally acclaimed as readable and easy to sell. It has gener-

ated an enormous amount of goodwill for the campaign.

Yet it is produced by a handful of harassed women, at increasingly erratic intervals, with an ever-looming threat of bankruptcy.

Articles promised don't materialise. Deadlines wander closer and closer towards the end of next month. Papers are taken sold, and not paid for. More than any other area of the campaign, on the paper we suffer from the feeling that all our energy is disappearing into some 'black hole out there'.

Solution

The solution must be to strengthen the local groups; elect a committee Steering Committee and Editorial Board; and strengthen the links between the two.

This should produce a regular paper which actually reflects the views and interests of its supporters and in turn enthuses them to go out and build the campaign, thereby strengthening the paper.

If the AGM can generate the commitment to put this into practice, then it will be well worthwhile.

School meals - a fightback?

LAST Thursday in Conway Hall a meeting of 50 or 60 trade union representatives of school meals staff in the London area pledged to fight any moves to break the existing national agreement which gives the women a retainer fee during school holidays.

The fight on this issue is uneven - with the IEA apparently unlikely to break the agreement, while some outer London boroughs see the school meals women as an easy target for further cuts in spending.

Local meetings are being held in many towns to discuss the issue - but no national strategy for supporting action has been put forward by the unions involved.

If you hear of a meeting on the issue in your area, please contact Socialist Organiser (telephone: 01-354 1050).

SCHOOL meals have probably been the butt of schoolboy jokes since their introduction in 1906. Nevertheless we have to recognise the part played by the meals service along with the provision of free milk in reversing the horrors of rickets and other vitamin deficiency diseases amongst the working class.

The value of the school meals service to us all is ably outlined by the Lancashire School Meals Campaign (LSMC) pamphlet, "Now you see them, now you don't". The pamphlet provides us with a precise history of the meals service combined with sharp political insights into why the service is now being run down.

Analogies are drawn with the need to force women back to the home, and the desire of the food processing and baking giants to increase profits through

sandwich and fast food provision.

According to the LSMC, structural changes in our diet are not brought about by evolutionary development or indeed changing tastes, but rather the market demands of Unilever, Birds Eye, Rank Hovis McDougall et al.

"Don't tell me you thought it was pure coincidence that all those lunch boxes, little flasks, booklets on sandwich making, etc., came on the market at the same time as school meals were being cut."

Also outlined is the failure of the major political parties both locally and nationally to recognise the value or fund properly the meals service. Labour's price rises opening the door to the Tories later massive price rises accompanied by minimum provision or complete dismantling of the service.

I am pleased to say the pamphlet does tackle head on all those schoolboy jokes

* Thanks to the Lancashire School Meals Campaign's excellent booklet 'Now You See Them, Now You Don't' - available, with further information on the LSMC, for £1 from Margaret Jones, 17 Marlowe Ave., Baxenden, Accrington, Lancashire.

and complaints about waste, admitting that the meals and service could be improved, but pointing out that the staff can only work with the equipment and provisions they are given.

LSMC admits waste does exist, but more so in the new fast food processed cafeteria lunches, where by-products in manufacturing and packaging are more wasteful than any dustbin full of cabbage.

This is a pamphlet that all activists should read, and Labour Groups should ensure that each of their Councillors is armed with the facts provided here. Sad to say, unless we get moving we may find ourselves having to read "Now you see them now you don't" pamphlets on housing, transport, health and most other services.

J.S. McALLISTER
Hampshire County Councillor (Education Committee)

Two years ago, Women's Fightback's first conference for Labour women stimulated the new growth of women's sections and launched the demands for major reforms. Now we need to get these implemented, and weld the women's sections into a force that can lead in the Labour Party. That's what the second Women's Fightback conference, on November 27th, will be looking at. Register Now!

2nd National Conference for Labour women

November 27th 1982 at Kingsway Princeton College Grays Inn Road, London WC2

Please fill in:

Name

Address

Organisation

Phone

Send, with £2.50 Registration fee (£1.50 unwaged) and s.a.e. for credentials, to: 41 Ellington St., London N7 01-607-5268

SOLIDARNOSĆ

SOLIDARNOSĆ

We need more support from British workers



It would appear from the statements of the Solidarnosc leadership in calling the November 10 strike that they think the banning of Solidarnosc by the military regime was an act of weakness rather than strength. Do you think that is right?

It was an act of strength in the sense that they now feel that whatever reactions they get from the Polish workers, they can still carry on pursuing a policy of repression and a policy of Party rule, which is what they are aiming for and that this is something they can deliver back to the Soviet leadership.

Nevertheless, the fact that they have had to make the decision at this stage and not earlier shows that they are not as much in control of the situation as they would like to be.

I think they were probably hurried into making their decision because of the worry that if the continual stalemate continues, over possible future talks with Solidarity, which still seemed an option before, that possibly they may begin to start losing the argument, that they may begin to lose the moral argument even in their own eyes and in the eyes, perhaps, of some of their friends in the West.

According to press reports the new official so-called unions have had very little success in getting members. Do you think that is likely to continue and if so what is the reaction of the regime likely to be?

I think it is likely to continue. Of course, the regime doesn't really expect these new unions to get underway until next year. But there's no chance that Solidarnosc members will go into them en masse.

Nevertheless, the way the regime has spaced out its timetable for these unions, which is a period of two to three years, makes it possible for them to claim that the situation is developing slowly and they may feel that they can carry on over the next two or three years without any trade unions but still pretending that they are slowly getting off the ground. It will be a holding tactic, I believe.

What picture do you have of the continuing strength of Solidarnosc?

Well it's as strong as you could possibly imagine in a country where there is so much terror and so much

Wiktor Moczynski, chairperson of the Polish Solidarity Campaign, spoke to Socialist Organiser

economic deprivation. There is no doubt that Solidarnosc is relatively well organised in at least four major centres, to the extent that they obviously have a number of factory cells at a given factory, and have a regional structure from that developing to a national structure. They are still able to produce leaflets, there are still something like 6,000 publications of one kind or another in underground Poland, and they obviously still have a considerable amount of support from the workers largely due to the fact that their leaders remain largely undiscovered.

Occasionally we hear a headline about somebody being arrested, but that is now a rarity. And of course the workers do come out on the days that the Solidarnosc leadership ask them to.

Do you think that is a sign of organisation or is it spontaneous once they know the date?

Well, it is a bit of both because you do also have demonstrations and strikes on days which the Solidarnosc leadership does not ask for. But when Solidarnosc does ask for action, it does get it.

Do you have any reports on recent events apart from what has been in the press? Do you think the press reports give a fair picture of what is going on?

On the whole, yes, though it depends which press you are talking about. We've been fairly unhappy at the reporting we've been getting in the Guardian, which seems to give the impression that Solidarnosc is keeling over to an end.

and that the government is reasonable in what it is trying to put forward.

But in general the press does tend to give the impression that the army crushes all attempts at organising demonstrations and that it therefore has got the strength to do this.

What seems to be happening is that there are a lot of unreported demonstrations, which the army and the militia are in no position to repress. This happened particularly on August 31, where demonstrations took place in something like 700 different towns, and the militia were only able to cover 20-30 main ones.

Others took place and there were no counter-measures, and the demonstrations took place peacefully.

They are likely to take place again. Those people have not been terrorised, although the system of terror obviously still exists, but they have not been physically attacked.

It does suggest that the strength of the government is not as complete as the newspapers in the West put over.

There is still going to be a possible critical moment when there aren't enough militia or special units to confront the demonstrators and they will have to rely on ordinary conscript units and these may fail the government at a crucial moment.

What about the economic situation?

It is getting considerably worse for a number of reasons. This is partly due to Western sanctions, partly due to the fact that the workers are working as little as possible - there is a form of unofficial go-slow going on in most factories. At the same time there is an enormous shortage of the appropriate raw materials, particularly in agriculture, which will lead to new food shortages in the winter.

The enormous increase in food prices in February means that although certain foods are now available on the market, they are way beyond the reach of workers' family budgets.

There are also a lot of people out of work and so this is going to be a very difficult period for workers in Poland.

Even the Ministry of Internal Trade has predicted

that there will be a 20% downturn in gross national product this year compared with last.

And last year there was a 40% downturn on the year previous to that.

So what has been the effect on the living standards of the average Polish worker since martial law?

Initially, during February and March, there was more food available. A lot of people had sufficient savings from before February to be able to cope with the food price rises.

There is a shortage of disinfectant and medicine, not just in hospitals but for sale in chemists. There are also shortages of clothing, particularly children's shoes. The enormous cutback in public transport last year continues - something like 60% of rural bus routes were cancelled in the course of the last two years, making it very difficult for people to move about.

These hardships will get worse. The only bright side is that because coal stocks are up, because they can't sell all their coal abroad, there may as a result be more coal available in Poland.

And with the run-down in industry this means that there may be more coal available for domestic energy this winter than there was last winter.

Do you think that this continuing pressure on living standards is one of the factors behind the continuing mobilisations?

Well, the pressure on living standards has existed before and it was one of the causes of Solidarnosc. Now that it is worse, it will make it that much more difficult

for the government to try and put over any programme of political stabilisation which doesn't also bring in some kind of economic improvement.

But on the other hand it will lead to a situation, possibly similar to the Soviet Union, where the bread and butter issues of daily survival become so important that it might undermine people's attempts to get some kind of political reform.

In those circumstances one could envisage the Polish government actually being in favour of such a deterioration of the economic situation because it may eventually cut away the people's enthusiasm for Solidarnosc.

Do you have any picture of the effects of Solidarnosc in other East European countries?

It seems to have galvanised some sort of interest from the intelligentsia and workers in Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

It had been a very popular and very dramatic phenomenon in the Ukraine the previous year when Solidarnosc was still a legal organisation and Polish television news could be picked up in Western Ukraine.

Solidarnosc badges were sold for horrendous prices in that area.

But its effect now would be difficult to judge. There have been workers' strikes in the Ukraine and in Romania, which seem similar in pattern to Solidarnosc, but whether that was because they were following Solid-

arnosc, or whether that was simply the natural way for such developments to occur in those particular countries, I can't say.

The other area where there has been enormous support for Solidarnosc has been the Baltic states within the Soviet Union. There does seem to have been an attempt there - particularly in Estonia - to recreate some of the things that Solidarnosc was doing through industrial action.

What do you think are the most important things to be done in the British labour movement now?

Firstly we would like more evidence of British labour movement support for Solidarnosc. There have been relatively good resolutions at the TUC, there's been a resolution at the Labour Party, supporting the NEC statement, but what I think is going to be necessary, particularly in view of reports in the past in the Polish national press that the TUC doesn't support Solidarnosc, is that that support has got to be more obvious, firstly in terms of some form of demonstration on December 12. The Polish Solidarity Campaign is calling a demonstration at which we would like to see a multiplicity of union banners, which can be photographed - the visual word is even stronger than the spoken word.

And we want banners from Labour Parties, peace organisations and other progressive movements in Britain present there. This will bring home very strongly to the Polish government - which is still sensitive to a certain extent to this kind of pressure - the fact that Solidarnosc does still have the support of the workers in this country.

Solidarnosc still needs material aid, it still needs help to be channelled through the Solidarity Trade Union Working Group as far as this country is concerned.

The campaign for adopting prisoners should be continued. Trade union delegation to the Polish Embassy, we find, embarrass the Polish government. We can prepare lists for any given union of all those arrested from certain sector of industry. So when the NUM went to the Polish Embassy we supplied them with a list of Polish miners who had been interned or sentenced for trade union activities since the introduction of martial law. Shop stewards at Mass Ferguson voted not to touch any goods from Poland which had been produced under the barrel of a gun. And we want the Labour Party and trade unions break links with the state unions and parties in Eastern Europe. We were pleased that the Labour Party NEC voted not to invite Warsaw Pact Communist Parties to this year's Labour Party conference. The TUC has broken links with the East German state unions, but so far it has not extended this to the other countries.

SOLIDARNOSĆ

THE DEBATE ON STRATEGY FOR SOLIDARNOSC

THE dominant strategic idea of Solidarnosc between August 1980 and December 1981 was the 'self-limiting revolution'. Instead of directly challenging the bureaucratic regime for power, Solidarnosc would hollow it out by ever-expanding trade union activity.

The ruling party would continue to rule — but its rule would eventually become more or less nominal, like the monarchy in Britain or the Netherlands. Thus Solidarnosc would be able to gain the substance of its demands while avoiding confrontation.

The fear of a Kremlin invasion acted as an overarching limit on Solidarnosc's perspectives: but as the movement scored victory after victory in 1980-1, Solidarnosc leaders hoped that they had found a way to operate successfully within that limit.

The Jaruzelski coup of December 1981 changed all that. And since then Solidarnosc leaders underground, in internment, and in exile have been debating new tactics.

Some concluded that Solidarnosc had gone too fast. "Within Solidarnosc, the radical workers' current triumphed: the young militants of the big factories set the tone. The experts were pushed aside because of their conciliatory approach... We, the intelligentsia — timorous by nature — did not have the courage to brake the radicalisation..."

For the future: proceed slowly and cautiously. "There are too few killers for hire in this country to reduce 35 million people to slavery... If we are able to react and, instead of again setting the base of the state power against us, if we

begin to draw it towards us, victory is certain without shedding blood". (An anonymous group of militants, late December).

More commonly Solidarnosc militants saw their error as too much naive hope.

"We cherished the hope that perhaps in Poland this historic experiment would succeed, that the system would be transformed in such a way that, while preserving the leading role of the Communist Party and not affecting the alliances of the Republic of Poland with the USSR and the other countries of the Warsaw Pact, it would be possible to increase social control over economic life, to effectively socialise the means of production, to permit the free development of cultural life and to create an authentic territorial self-government..."

This experiment did not succeed and — as we can see only now — it was bound not to succeed... the existence of free trade unions in the Soviet-type totalitarian system is by definition contrary to its nature and as such impossible". (Another anonymous group, early January).

Again: "The 13th December clearly showed that

Poland's workers have risen in revolt against the banning of Solidarnosc. But what strategy to regain their rights? Decentralised erosion of the regime's power, or a coordinated uprising? For a new compromise with the bureaucracy, or workers' power? Martin Thomas reviews the debate in the Polish workers' movement.



Delegates at the Solidarnosc congress last year voted for a 'self-governing Republic' and workers' control

Solidarnosc was completely unprepared for battle with violence. This was, in truth, in complete accord with the underlying principles and statutes of Solidarnosc, but it also demonstrated the naivete of its belief that the ruling apparatus would be averse to the use of force... its belief that a universal social will was enough for democracy to win without the use of force". (Krzysztof Piotrowski, Warsaw, March 15).

And: "At the end of the road inevitably is the general strike. It will be different from December 1981, we will have to be prepared to defend the striking workplaces. That is our ultimate argument... For the government only gives way before force, and always gives way before force" (Bogdan Lis, April 22).

"For many years in my activity in the opposition I argued against all kinds of violence. It is my duty now to say that I consider pre-

paration to eliminate the occupation [i.e. the martial law] through mass action is the lesser evil", wrote Jacek Kuron from his internment camp in February.

In 1980-1 Kuron was one of the most cautious strategists of Solidarnosc. His influence was among the factors which helped disarm the movement politically, leaving it unprepared for the confrontation that had to come.

His recent articles — which have provoked a lot of debate — now represent a more radical tactic than the underground Solidarnosc leadership. But in a curious contradictory way they also continue the strategy of self-limiting revolution.

He points out a key problem with Solidarnosc's programme of becoming a 'co-manager' of society.

"One cannot become a co-manager if the manager does not desire partners. The authorities treated the

programme as an attempted coup d'etat" (letter published July 14).

Force

Yet he proposes in fact to try to force the bureaucracy to accept Solidarnosc as 'co-manager'. He outlines two variants: either "the rulers, or some of them, agree to arrive at a genuine accord with society", or, "the rulers will provoke society into an explosion and society will overpower the leaders".

But he does not believe in the first possibility; moreover, he believes that an explosion or explosions are inevitable.

"No appeal can stop the youth who want to fight... A massive and well-organised resistance is the only hope of the Poles... Only such a movement can limit the wave of terrorism and reduce the risk of a Soviet intervention in the case that

the absence of a compromise initiative provokes the inevitable social explosion" (February letter).

So he proposes that Solidarnosc should consciously organise for a general strike and armed uprising.

"A programme cannot be based on the hope that the generals and the secretaries will willingly accept a compromise. It must be admitted that violence will only retreat before violence, and announced clearly that the movement will not refuse to use force.

In my view, this declaration should be made precise by dating it, for example, for 'the summer' or 'the autumn'...

I imagine that the movement would immediately undertake, by all possible means, agitation among the soldiers and the militia-men...

The uprising we proclaim can, to be sure, take the form of an indefinite general strike. But... it will

be necessary to combine the strike with an attack on chosen centres of power and information, in agreement with those soldiers and militia-men who say they are ready to come over to us..." (Letter published in May).

But the purpose of this revolutionary uprising is — to impose a compromise! In the event of victory, Kuron writes, "there is just a chance of avoiding Soviet intervention: if all institutions endowed with society's trust can rapidly take on responsibility for the situation."

They must immediately appoint a national government composed of people with influence in society and who, at the same time, will not be considered by Moscow as 'brawlers'. This government must instantly compose a declaration on the observance of Poland's alliance responsibilities with the USSR..." (July letter).

Latest issue of Polish Solidarity Campaign News — articles on resistance in Poland and solidarity in Britain and abroad.

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N R SC



Brezhnev congratulates Jaruzelski



The voice of caution and collaboration: an adviser from the Church at Lech Walesa's elbow

authority.

If the situation is very serious, the authorities will, in my opinion, be unable to count not only on the army, but also the militia. When one battalion refuses to shoot... that's what happened in February 1977, when a small unit of Cossacks went onto the side of the demonstrations, and a month later there was no more Tsar".

But the policy developed by the Solidarnosc Coordinating Commission set up in April has been different.

Zbigniew Bujak and Wiktor Kulerski, members of the Coordinating Commission and like Romaszewski members of the Warsaw leadership, have replied to Kuron in the underground press (March this year).

An explosion, says Bujak, would only lead to "a most brutal use of internal force" or "external intervention". So: "I am in favour of a decidedly decentralised movement, adopting the most varied methods of action. Only such a diffuse and multi-form movement will be elusive and difficult to suppress". And it could "allow the creation of a whole social structure independent of the authorities".

Kulerski points to: "a slow decomposition of the system, accompanied by progressive changes which could lead to a reconquest by society of an influence over its destiny... a situation where the authorities control empty shops but not the market; workers' employment, but not their livelihood; state-owned mass media, but not the circulation of information; printworks but not publishing; posts and telephones

but not communications; the schools but not education".

A declaration by the Coordinating Commission dated July 28 sums up this strategy:

"Our aim is to create a self-governing society — a Self-Governing Republic — on the lines adopted by the First National Congress of NSZZ Solidarnosc. In the present situation this aim can be achieved only in the form of an underground society.

We suggest the following basic forms of action: a) organising help for victims of reprisals, for people dismissed from work, for the poor, sick, and all in

need of material or moral assistance; b) organising the flow of uncensored information... c) organising education and self-education... d) organising actions to publicise the existence of the resistance movement... e) economic activity in the form of cooperatives and workshops...

This 'underground society', which "should be decentralised", will limit the regime and push it towards compromise. It "will on the one hand be a form of effective action to secure our immediate aims — the release of political prisoners and internees, an end to the state of war, reactivation of an independent trade union movement — and on the

other to secure the long-term aim, which is a Self-Governing Republic".

They also state (July 9) that still: "We don't want to be either a government or a political party. We want to be an independent and self-governed trade union movement".

The Solidarnosc leaders compare themselves to the resistance to Nazi occupation during World War 2, and describe the martial law regime as "the occupier".

But in many ways the perspective of Bujak and Kulerski is only a slight rearrangement of the same elements as Kuron's.

After arguing against Kuron's proposal of plans for an uprising, Bujak concludes: "And an uprising, if it became inevitable, would be the last resort in the struggle for the national programme of reconstruction of the economy, culture, science, education and independence".

Kulerski, after contrasting his proposal for an "underground society" to Kuron's "underground state", nevertheless concedes that some clandestine centre is necessary. "This embryonic underground state can only be an additional potential threat to the authorities. Its influence could spread within the underground society when that was necessary.

"Thus it is only in the final stage of the struggle that the underground state will find its extension and support in the underground society".

Kuron too, from all the evidence, would consider the uprising a 'last resort': he argues only that it is unavoidable and must be consciously planned for.

Nationalist

Both Kuron, and Bujak and Kulerski, seem to be both 'too nationalist' and 'not nationalist enough' — limited simultaneously by nationalist ideology and by insufficient boldness on Poland's rights as an oppressed nation. They hold back from challenging Poland's subordination to the Kremlin, yet hope for a national understanding 'between Poles' to soften that subordination.

A radical critique of both Bujak and Kulerski, and Kuron, has come from Zbigniew Kowalewski, a Lodz Solidarnosc leader

now in exile.

Compromises with the bureaucrats may well be necessary, he writes (May 1982). "The problem is that Kuron speaks of a strategic (or historic) compromise — an illusion when the regime can only have a totalitarian character. If it reaches a compromise, this will only be to gain time and accumulate sufficient strength to crush the working class and the whole of society.

In the long term, moreover, the working class can only preserve even its limited gains if it uses compromise to gain time and accumulate the strength to solve the question of power in its own favour".

What the rank and file of Solidarnosc think is more difficult to know. R. Kleniewski, a Warsaw activist, did a survey of opinion in his factory. A typical response: "No, I don't want to discuss with them (the authorities) now. Let them lift the suspension of Solidarnosc and then we can discuss, not necessarily with strike action".

Other rank and file contributions to the underground bulletins stress that force is the only language the regime will understand, and complain about the lack of boldness from the leaders. The spontaneous outbreak of strikes on the banning of Solidarnosc would seem to indicate that these contributions reflect the rank and file mood well.

Utopia

For the project of an underground society within the Polish state is surely an utopia. The bureaucracy does not have the solidity and historic function of a ruling class; it is nonetheless something more than just an 'occupying force'. Having imposed the martial law, it involves hundreds of thousands of people bonded by ties of material interest.

All the pressures of everyday life which drive people to accept 'accomplished facts' now work in its favour. It has strong material support from the relatively stable Kremlin bureaucracy.

If Solidarnosc could not slip the threads of power from the bureaucracy's hands in 1980-1 — if the strategy of 'hollowing out' Stalinism did not work

then — how will it work now, when Solidarnosc is underground?

Kuron is surely right that a full-scale revolutionary uprising is the only road to victory for the resistance.

Such a conclusion does not exclude necessary retreats, delays, compromises. But to restrict the uprising, once underway, to a pre-established goal of a compromise with the bureaucracy — which anyway does not want to compromise — is to weaken it.

Such revolutionary mobilisations — as Poland itself in 1980-1 showed — always tend on the contrary to develop from more limited to more radical demands.

To win even re-legalisation of Solidarnosc, Kuron and others conclude, the Polish workers must seize the factories and organise to defend them.

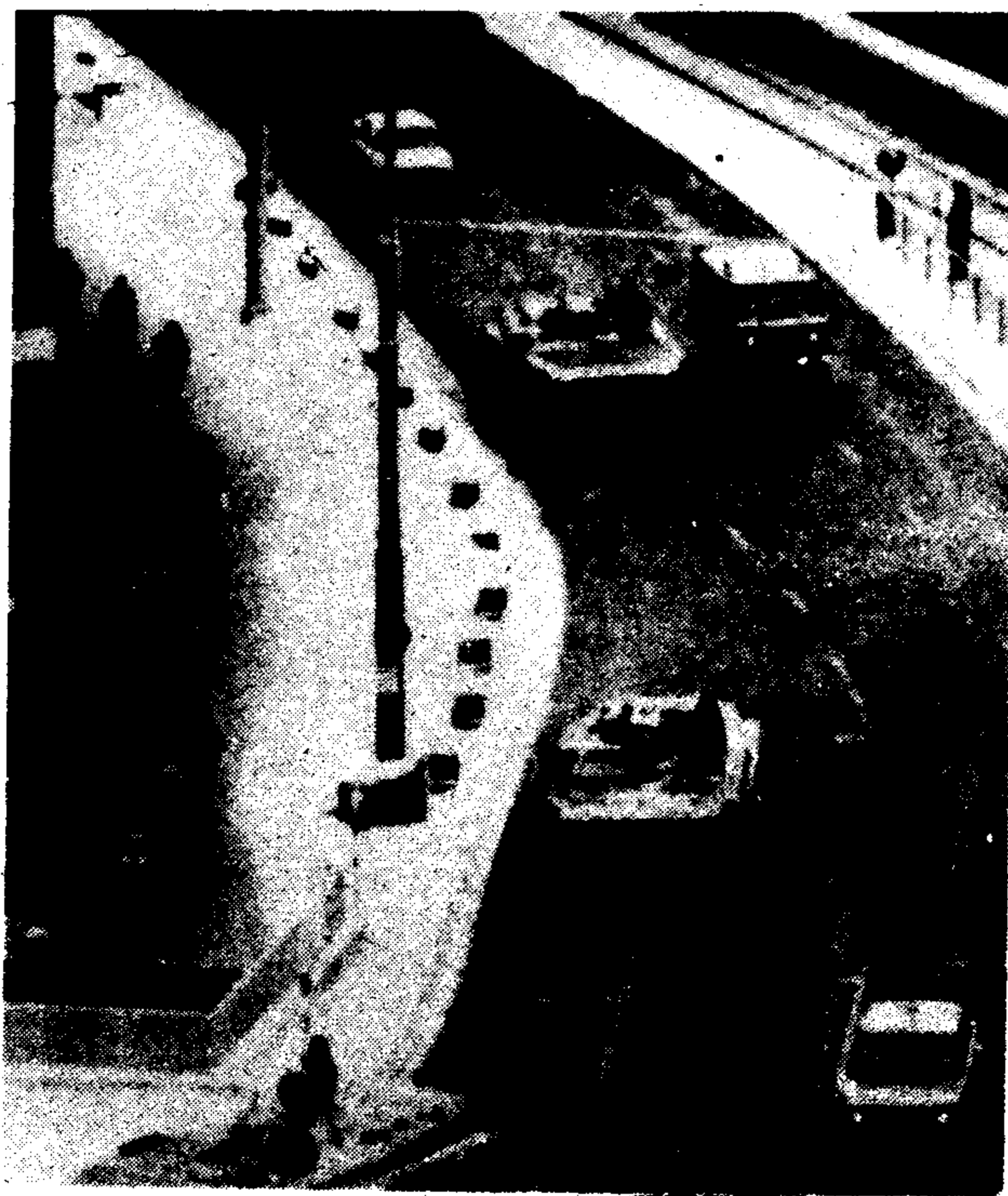
Republic

Having done that, should they give the factories back to the bureaucrats? Or should they on the contrary maintain workers' control and generalise it to workers' democratic planning of the whole economy?

That would mean a republic of workers' councils — which is surely the only possible real form of Solidarnosc's 'self-governing republic'.

Such a republic would face a threat of Kremlin invasion — but no more so than a workers' uprising which limited itself to the aim of compromise. As Kowalewski points out: 'if we allow ourselves to be intimidated by the threat of Soviet military intervention, there will be nothing left for us but to give up the struggle...'

'(We should) give an example of struggle to the workers of other East European satellites and the USSR itself, so that they may follow our path and understand that we can only win through common struggle'.



Solidarnosc activists call martial law 'the occupation'



Waiting for butter at a Warsaw shop

*Quotations taken from 'Voice of Solidarnosc', 'Polish Solidarity Campaign News', 'Solidarity with Solidarity', 'Labour Focus on Eastern Europe', and 'Inprecor', with thanks.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE RAISES AN UNANSWERED QUESTION

AFTER rumbling along uneventfully since July, a series of articles in Socialist Challenge by John Ross has begun to reveal their true purpose — the pursuit of an unspoken debate now under way in the British International Marxist Group and its international umbrella grouping the 'United' Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI).

The article in the current Socialist Challenge is on Iran; but the question at issue is one of more general significance. How do the comrades of the IMG/USFI view the world struggle for socialism? Do they see it as a global contest primarily between 'anti-imperialist' and imperialist regimes? Or do they analyse it — as we do — to be a class struggle in every country, for which the working class requires a revolutionary Marxist leadership?

Camps

The view that the issue is one between the friends and enemies of imperialism is most expressly argued by the leaders and supporters of the American Socialist Workers Party (which is prevented by US legislation from formal affiliation to the USFI).

For the SWP, the world is divided into two "classcamps", and problems of political analysis are reduced to the crude rule-of-thumb that "any enemy of Reagan is our ally".

For the most crass statement of this view, we need only look to the SWP's recent explanation of its position on Iran:

"It is true that the Iranian government is a capitalist government. It is true that it carries out repression against the workers and oppressed nationalities, against left wing groups, and others. But if the Khomeini government had crushed the mass movement in Iran, if repression really were worse today than under the Shah, *US imperialism would be supporting the Iranian government instead of trying to overthrow it.*"

(SWP weekly *The Militant*, Aug 6, 1982)

From this starting point, the SWP go on to argue that the mass opposition to Khomeini, the Mujahedin, are simply a "front" for "imperialist" attacks on the regime. The SWP, they claim, defends the Khomeini regime against attacks by imperialism and other forces.

Anti-imperialism versus imperialism, or labour against capital? Is working class opposition to regimes like Iran — or even Cuba — a sectarian diversion, or necessary for socialists? Harry Sloan reviews a debate.



Nicaragua's Ortega, Grenada's Bishop, Cuba's Castro

More recently The Militant has carried a whole-page, uncritical interview with Khomeini's UN ambassador and reemphasised its support for Iran in its attempts to invade Iraq.

Ross on the other hand puts forward a very different view. He stresses not the "anti-imperialist" but the capitalist character of the Khomeini regime. He expands on Khomeini's actual record of repression against the working class and minorities; and he argues that "the strategic way forward for the working class in Iran, including in the fight against imperialism, lies not in alliance with the Khomeini regime but in their overthrowing it."

What remains to be seen is the extent to which Ross

will extend this broadly correct polemic against the SWP view (which he does not openly mention) to the other areas of world politics where it is plainly relevant.

Because it is the SWP view which at present is gaining ground within the IMG, and which colours the political analysis put forward by the other pages of Socialist Challenge.

Significantly Ross's series of articles began publication shortly after a classic example of this world view caused a stir. A whole-page article by leading SWP writer Mary-Alice Waters was reported in Socialist Challenge.

Written in Havana it gave uncritical and enthusiastic support to the speech at the Non-Aligned States conference by Nicanor Costa

Mendez — Foreign Minister of the Argentine dictatorship.

Socialist Organiser in July pointed out that this gave credence to the fraudulent basis on which the Non-Aligned Movement itself operates. We showed the particularly cynical nature of Costa Mendez' "anti-imperialist" speech, and warned that:

"In giving quite spurious 'anti-imperialist' credentials to the junta, such a position can only politically disarm the Argentine workers whose prime task remains now, as before, to organise their own power for the overthrow of the military regime and establishment of a workers' government."

(SO no. 91, July 1)



Castro with Ethiopian president Mengistu: another anti-imperialist?

revolution in the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

Together with the leadership of the European International Secretariat, they advocated that Marxists should join the proliferation of petty bourgeois guerrillaist groupings in Latin America and Fidelista currents elsewhere.

The SWP and its co-thinkers began to pull back from and criticise this political line in the late 1960s. But the European leadership headed by Ernest Mandel remained committed to its orientation at first towards guerrillaist groupings and then to ultraleft and centrist "vanguard" forces. These differences led by 1974-76 to enormous tensions within the USFI, particularly over the Portuguese revolution.

Eventually in 1977 the Mandelites put forward a "self-criticism" and withdrew from their guerrillaist line.

But the next period saw the SWP revive pro-Castro positions more craven and exaggerated than at anytime since the heyday of the Cuban revolution — under conditions where Castro's leadership in government over some 15 years had plainly consolidated a hardened bureaucratic alliance with the Stalinist chiefs in the Kremlin, and developed its own reactionary diplomatic deals and relationships in this context.

This political adaptation by the SWP developed to even more grotesque levels in the aftermath of the Nicaraguan revolution.

The SWP (which had previously stood aloof from the Sandinista leadership in Nicaragua) opportunistically switched completely, to hail the coalition government — complete with its component of bankers — as a "workers' and farmers' government".

SWP leaders declared themselves opposed to the building of an independent Marxist party, looking instead exclusively to the Sandinistas to carry through the socialist revolution. And they supported the Sandinistas in expelling from Nicar-

agua members of the 'Simon Bolivar Brigade' dispatched by the USFI Argentinian section, the PST.

Similar enthusiastic support for a "workers' and farmers' government" has been extended by the SWP to the New Jewel Movement in Grenada. In both cases the key to SWP "analysis" is the close diplomatic, economic and military alliances between these petty bourgeois nationalist regimes and the Cuban government.

Mexico

And it is uncritical support. The SWP for instance failed to point out that the Sandinistas lent their backing to the main party of the Mexican ruling class, the PRI, in the recent Mexican elections, in exchange for the diplomatic support given by PRI leader Lopez Portillo to Nicaragua.

If "hate Reagan, love his enemies" produces some strange bedfellows for the "Trotskyist" SWP, "love Cuba, love Fidel's friends" is no better as a guide to revolutionary action.

Under its influence the SWP has revised its previously critical stance towards the Vietnamese Stalinist regime, producing eulogistic articles in *The Militant* on its supposedly "revolutionary" achievements since the defeat of US imperialism in 1975, and making no call for the revolutionary political overthrow of the Hanoi leadership which murdered the Vietnamese Trotskyists in 1945. In exchange the Vietnamese ambassadors to the UN have graced the pages of *The Militant* with interviews setting out their politics — without a hint of criticism or question from the editors.

Eritrean

SWP political approval has been extended to the blood-stained Mengistu regime in Ethiopia which with Cuban military backing — is fighting to crush the struggle of the Eritrean



SWP says Khomeini is still continuing the progressive work of the revolution that overthrew the Shah in Iran

people for self-determination.

And a leader of the Stalinist-dominated African National Congress in South Africa has been given a whole page in *The Militant* to set out his organisation's guerrillaist strategy which runs at an isolated tangent from the escalating class struggle of the black proletariat against the apartheid capitalist state - again without a word of criticism.

In each case the common factor is that the regime or leadership concerned can be bracketed in the "anti-imperialist" camp, and is politically supported by the Castro regime, which the SWP regards as following a "working class internationalist foreign policy designed to advance the anti-imperialist struggle and the world socialist revolution."

This leads to problems on the question of Poland. Castro stands, of course, four-square in opposition to the struggles of Solidarnosc, which the SWP notionally supports.

The SWP's answer is as far as possible to separate their references to Castro from those to Poland.

Subsidies

And they remain tactfully silent on the massive economic subsidies provided to Havana by the Kremlin leaders, while seeking to stress the supposed political "differences" between Castro and Brezhnev.

Most ominously, however, for many SWP members - particularly those with any length of experience in the Trotskyist movement - the SWP leadership has now gone even further down the Castroite road. Militant co-editor Doug Jenness has put forward at great length a series of arguments which effectively abandon Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution - a cornerstone of the Marxist programme and perspective.

Instead Jenness espouses the position which Lenin held in the years up to 1917

but then abandoned in the light of the experience of the February revolution in Russia. The quotations and method used by Jenness in this argument echo many of the standard texts used for decades by Stalinists in their efforts to prove that Lenin opposed "Trotskyism".

They are arguments calculated to endear the SWP to Castro - and his Moscow sponsors - and run alongside the SWP's description of the Sandinistas and Grenadan regime as 'workers' and farmers' governments'.

Crisis

This SWP stance has triggered an intensified crisis within the USFI - while the SWP itself argues openly that its prime concern is no longer with its USFI comrades, but with the creation of a new 'international' based on the Cuban, Nicaraguan and Grenadan leaderships.

Such open repudiation of Trotskyist positions by the USFI's oldest-established co-thinking group has prompted a huge crisis - not least in the SWP itself.

Hundreds of members have left the organisation, whose weekly paper has dwindled in size and circulation, and whose international journal has been cut back to fortnightly publication.

The party's leaders seek on the one hand to crack the authoritarian whip to contain the criticisms of members - many of them veteran trade unionists - and on the other to present the SWP as a party firmly rooted in the American proletariat.

Strike

Yet a level of its seriousness can be judged from the recent coverage of the national rail strike in the USA, which was front page story in the *Militant* one week (October 1) and never mentioned again! Having press-ganged half its members into industrial jobs, the SWP leadership has proved

incapable of offering them consistent or coherent policies to fight for in their unions, and effectively reduced them all to simply arguing with individual workers "on the job".

Such politics have also made themselves felt in other USFI sections - not least the IMG, whose weakness in the NHS pay dispute has been linked to their sending members from NHS unions into 'proper' industrial jobs elsewhere.

So how far will John Ross pursue his tacit polemic against the SWP? How far will he be allowed to go by the strong pro-SWP grouping in the IMG?

Will Ross draw the obvious conclusion from the present situation: that the political problems revealed by the SWP's "junking of the old Trotskyism" require a thorough and serious discussion on the programmatic and methodological basis of the Fourth International?

The crisis of the USFI is nothing new or extraordinary.

Scatter

Since the 'Big Bang' split of the Trotskyist Fourth International in 1953, the various national and international 'Trotskyist' galaxies have scattered asunder, emitting their various distinctive signals.

Unstable supernovae, pulsars and quasars and black holes have gone through their own processes of emergence and decay.

Today, the spectrum of groupings claiming to trace their programme and tradition back to the pre-war Fourth International is indeed a wide one.

Unless the political lessons of the past are taken into account, in an open and objective appraisal, there can be no progress beyond the present confusion to a principled fight for reconstruction of the Fourth International.

Will Ross face up to this reality? If not, he will never fully answer the question "What is Trotskyism?", which forms the title of his series:

GUTTER PRESS!

IN Britain we pride ourselves on freedom of speech and freedom of the press. But tear the rhetoric aside, and how real are these freedoms in practice?

Of course, aside from the laws of blasphemy and sedition, we can more or less say and print what we like, except that it is virtually impossible to get socialist ideas into the popular press.

If we do, these ideas are more often than not misrepresented and ridiculed. The individuals concerned are subject to vicious campaigns of personal abuse to discredit them and undermine their public support.

I know because for the last few months I have been on the receiving end of the way in which certain journalists from some of the popular (sic!) press are more concerned with destroying socialists and denigrating socialist ideas than with reporting the news.

Bias

I have long accepted the self-evident right-wing bias of the media, though not crudely blaming all Labour's ills upon the press as some seem to do. But until I actually went through recent experiences myself, I never imagined the ruthless methods and extent of deception, exaggeration, and even outright fabrication, to which sections of the press are prepared to resort.

Peter Tatchell hits back at the smears and fabrications of Fleet Street

Many journalists, whilst not necessarily reporting Bermondsey events in a favourable light, certainly have emerged with their professional ethics intact. Others have not. This article is about them and what they have done to me.

Press attention began in earnest last November following my selection as the Labour PPC for Bermondsey. It has continued on and off ever since, with peaks and troughs of media activity coinciding with the topicality of 'Bermondsey' as an issue.

The constant, insistent phone calls and visits to my flat at all hours of the night and day by journalists who will not take "no" for an answer have perhaps been the least of my worries.

Antics

Of more concern, are antics such as reporters blocking the rubbish chute opposite my flat and sifting through the contents; thereby adding a new

dimension to the term "gutter press".

Sometimes for days and nights on end they have "doorstepped" my flat, sitting in cars with telephoto lens to photograph whoever goes in and out - often without their knowledge, let alone their permission!

Occasionally, I have been surreptitiously trailed on foot, in cars and even on the tube.

Equally, my neighbours on the Rockingham Estate have been constantly subject to press harassment; frequently being called upon late at night and early in the morning for days at a time with the evident intention of wearing down their resistance and forcing them to "tell all" in order to get some peace and quiet. Indeed, those neighbours who have consistently refused to speak to the press have been subject to obscene and racist abuse by some journalists.

Quotes

When these journalists have not been able to get the damning quotes they want from local tenants they have resorted to more devious methods. They have scoured neighbourhood pubs scavenging for gossip and posed as Labour Party members, Southwark Council officers and friends of my family. Even local kids as young as ten years old have been quizzed about intimate details of my personal life.

At North Lambeth Day Centre where I am employed, my co-workers and the single homeless people whom we assist have been put under enormous strain. For weeks on end, reporters have telephoned and walked into the Day Centre uninvited, interrupting our work and demanding to speak to me. At times, the telephone lines have been so jammed with journalists that we have been prevented from carrying on our jobs. When other staff members have quite rightly refused to take this endless stream of press calls for me, they too have been subject to savage abuse and threats by some journalists. In fact, press harassment has so seriously interfered with the operation of the Day Centre that I have been pressured to resign my job.

Sewer

Throughout these last ten months, myself, my family, friends and neighbours, have all been subject to a never-ending stream of false, but very intimidating, allegations. These range from my alleged membership of the Communist Party and the IRA,

monthly trips to Belfast, arrest for terrorist offences, work as a KGB agent etc. and a sewer of allegations about my private life which are frankly so disgusting that I dare not publicly repeat them for fear that they would be quoted from this article by those very same Fleet Street vultures.

Fabricated

A couple of newspapers have demonstrated a single minded obsession to 'prove' that I am not from a working class background. In a Sun article headlined 'Middle Class Past of Working Class Hero', only three 'facts' were offered in the body of the story to substantiate the headline - and even those were wrong!

Perhaps the most extreme examples of misrepresentation were totally fabricated stories in the Sun and Daily Express. The Sun alleged that I had gone to the Gay Olympics in San Francisco. The Daily Express carried a story about myself at the TUC Conference when I was away on holiday and not even in the country!

Related to the Sun story is the 'undercover' methods employed by their reporter Phil Dampier, whom the Sun switchboard now claims does not even exist!

Posing as Phil Wilson, he befriended Bermondsey Labour Party members on the TUC Day of Action. He claimed that he lived locally and wished to join the Labour Party. His masquerade even went so far as to go leafletting with the Young Socialists the following night. Whilst ferreting for information, at no time did he ever indicate that he was a journalist.

It is quite clear that sections of the press are totally unprincipled and without honesty or integrity. They are ready to harass and intimidate individuals and exaggerate and fabricate stories for the politically-motivated purpose of destroying socialists and discrediting the Labour Party.

It is an enormous tribute to comrades in Bermondsey Labour Party and to local constituents that they have stood by me despite the immense media pressure.

It is also a great tribute to the courage and determination of comrades such as Ted Knight, Ken Livingstone and Tony Benn that they have withstood vilification by the press for so many years.

Like them, I will not be intimidated by the lies and smears of Fleet Street. I will continue to speak out for what I believe is right, no matter how controversial!



Peter Tatchell: "I will not be intimidated by the lies and smears of Fleet Street"

JOHN HARRIS

SEXIST "CIRCUS"

HAVING been deprived of the second episode of Smiley's People by appendicitis, I took up the book and by now am enjoying both TV and printed version in parallel. I was therefore interested to read your review (SO, 30 September) though there were times when it sounded as complicated as the original plot.

Missing from the review, though, was any mention of the curiously sexless sexism of the book. True, the women were not conventional sex objects, but neither did they ever seem to be in charge of themselves, or else they were dismissed with contempt as irrelevant, stupid, etc.

Karla's daughter was under observation in a mental clinic. Ex-agent Connie was slowly going senile in the company of the younger Hilary, who had suffered a nervous breakdown. Interesting to note here that the bland self-effacing Hilary of the book had been transformed for TV into a volatile, aggressive woman who accused George Smiley of misogyny.

Scent

When Smiley was on the scent after developing the secret photograph, his wife, Ann, who has cuckolded him before, phones up in reconciling mood, but "no Ann, no false peace, no tainted witness to his actions, should disturb his lonely quest".

And when he looks at the photograph of two naked women and two "scarcely better covered" men, he can think of "nothing very clever to say about either girl" so he "transfers his attention to the men, once more - which was where it had been, if he would admit it, ever since he started looking at it in the first place."

Even Ostrakova, the key female for most of the book, is someone to whom things happen (in this case violence) and these things are perpetrated by men. When Ostrakova goes into hiding, trusting only her concierge, Le Carre's sexism combines with a quite vicious class snobbery as he lifts the flap to allow a couple of "ordinary people" to enter his world of gentlemanly spies and emigres: "At her appointed time, the cretinous, braying concierge had come up, complete with her troglodyte husband..."

Only Stella, early in the book, confronts George with himself: "You're out of date. Whatever you're doing, sooner or later, one side or the other will have to stop. Leave Willem (her husband) alone. He's grown up. He doesn't need you any more."

All the little pinpricks of sexism gradually alienate you from the admittedly well written plot. You begin to react against what is essentially a childishness in all these secret spy games. Then you look at the author's credentials: public school (all male, no doubt), Berne and Oxford Universities, followed by teaching at Eton and then five years in the British Foreign Service. Had this man ever really left school when he came to writing books? The claustrophobic, all male public school atmosphere permeates the book, and the source of the childishness is clear. The disappearance of the public schools will be one of the most welcoming effects of Sloan's "slackening hold of imperialist ideology".

The alienation from the sexism and intellectually elaborate childishness ends you up saying "is that all?" when the plot is finished.

This was my first Le Carre novel and it took aspell in hospital to bring me to it. I think I'll wait until gall stones take me back inside before I bother with another one.

Convalescently yours,
IAN HOLLINGWORTH

Writeback



We invite readers to send us their letters, up to a usual maximum length of 400 words. Send to 'Writeback', Socialist Organiser, c/o 28, Middle Lane, London N8.

NHS stewards' meeting

THE article in SO 101, headed 'After September 22 - Press for all out strike' - needs some comment. Having been present at the meeting of Health Workers for the Full Claim, I must point out that the report does not give an accurate assessment of the discussion that took place on the question of calling for a national conference of delegates from Stewards' Committees and strike committees.

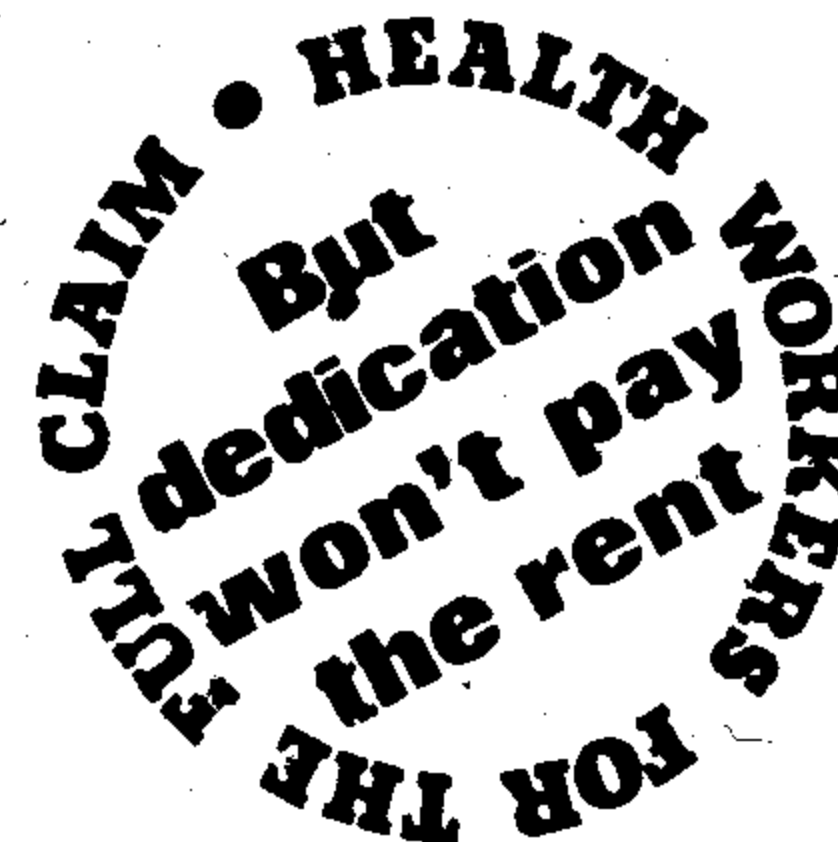
What SO fails to make clear is that leading figures in Health Workers for the Full Claim, such as comrade Anna Lunts, have repeatedly tried to stop the campaign from committing itself to the call for such a conference.

At the October 3 meeting of the campaign it seems that comrade Lunts even went so far as to suggest that calling for such a conference was a diversion from building for the local days of action that the bureaucracy has called.

By glossing over these disagreements that had already emerged at the previous HWFC meeting, SO fails to make its attitude to such a call clear. Myself and other Workers Power supporters in the NHS (as well as

some SO supporters) are not prepared to sit on the fence in this way.

The reason we have fought for a national conference (now actually being called for October 30 by the Leicester Health Services Co-



ordinating Committee and being discussed by the Sheffield Area Joint Shop Stewards' Committee) is because we take seriously the two slogans - take the strike out of the hands of the bureaucrats, all out indefinite strike to win the full claim.

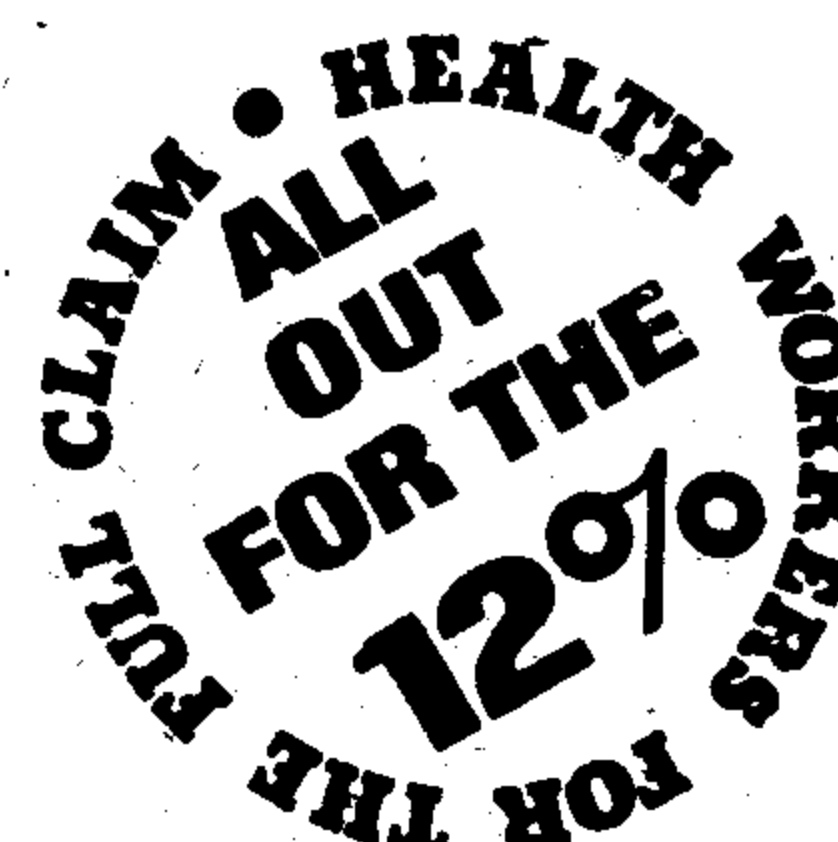
So far SO and HWFC have not given concrete answers as to how to turn these slogans into a reality. As such HWFC runs the risk of becoming a mere discussion circle which tails behind actions called by the bureaucracy.

A conference of stewards offers the possibility of organising on more than just a local basis, all those committed to indefinite strike action. It could be the starting point for a fighting united front that could either force the bureaucracy to call an indefinite strike, or if they won't it could become the unofficial leadership of such a strike. In other words it is an attempt to win the two slogans that HWFC is supposed to stand for.

I sincerely hope that HWFC and SO will now give wholehearted support to the planned conference.

RON GILES,
Sheffield

* See article, page 2.



Students Learn the lessons of Slipman's demise

by Jane Ashworth

Sue Slipman, once the Communist Party President of NUS, defected to the SDP last year. Her article in the Guardian (October 11) explains the shift in her politics as the conclusion from the "new method of work" she learnt on NUS Executive.

Some of the problems Slipman experienced in NUS should be discussed by the left. Her conclusions are wrong and she has left the way of thinking that can solve them behind her.

But nevertheless her drift to the right could well be repeated by generations of student union activists unless the left answers the questions Slipman couldn't.

Trying to hold a national union together through the NUS services crash in 1976 put the CP on the same side as the Tories: against the far left.

Could NUS continue to exist without providing services for its members (primarily cut-price travel)? Should NUS junk services and hope to carry on by point-of-study and external political campaigns alone, as the far left argued?

For Slipman, this problem put into question the roots of student union administration: were the activists who wanted to ditch the services just isolated from those they claimed to represent? Had the left

hijacked NUS, leaving the membership far behind?

She felt it had - control by activists meant alienating the vast majority of the membership. And working with the Tories on the Executive convinced Slipman that it was "possible to develop unity across the political spectrum and through it achieve radical change."

She joins the SDP: she doesn't say what radical changes the Broad Left and Tories did achieve.

Labels

It is not surprising that "conventional labels of left and right no longer have much meaning" for Slipman. She's got lost in the Committee politics of NUS. Ideas and issues were no longer worth fighting over. Beleave them to elected committees to sort out. They will cobble together the ideas of the left Tories and right Labour, keeping both extremes in check and isolated.

Sue Slipman of old knew this to be false. She would have claimed to have industrial class conflict.

Sue Slipman of NUS and the SDP has reduced this to the imagination of the left. If only everyone would dispense with their political organisations then we would all be united.

Of course it was the politics of the Broad Left which kept the involvement of students to a minimum. Whenever students took action, the Broad Left moved quickly to stop spreading. When Slipman was still a socialist, she was her own worst enemy: never giving a lead but fretting over the lack of participation.

We can answer the problem Slipman discussed pushing for unity in action in colleges. If we do this we can pull the rest of NUS behind us and the t... Slipman fell into, of trying to manage NUS by smoothing over political differences in the misconstrued interests of the average, non-political student can be averted.

SCIENCE Labour movement body

John Riley concludes his look at a science column of the 1930s

A confident materialist ran through all J.B.S. Haldane's writings in this pioneering little column. He was certain that the scientific approach provided the only true way of understanding reality. He displayed and described this confidence in many experiments on himself. He used his body as a research centre.

During the war he calmly took notes on himself as he underwent the 'bends' in Admiralty research for divers and submarine escapers. "Even after I had had two fits and crushed some vertebrae I remained more resistant than most. One of my teeth exploded when I decompressed too fast..."

In Science and Everyday Life he describes a masochistic experiment involving drinking an exact quantity of ammonium chloride, "trusting my liver to turn the ammonia to urea..."

Experiments of this kind are quite safe if one treats oneself as a chemical system and makes no mistakes with the calculations... if one makes mistakes of this sort the world contains one bad biochemist less!"

J.B.S. Haldane used the column to put across the Marxist, dialectical approach to scientific research. This scientific method, dialectical materialism, helps us to view

the world correctly, not abstractly, and so concern ourselves with the interconnected nature of processes and look out for their patterns of development via the unfolding of necessary contradictions from one state to another.

It sees the world as a moving picture not as a static snap-photo - the information in the former being a far richer approximation to reality than the latter.

This view of things is quite correctly based on empirical observation, looking for actual, concrete connections instead of speculating on abstract, fantastic ones. Few scientists consciously adopt this dialectical method, but much scientific work, e.g. Darwin's in fact, has a dialectical content.

Haldane was one of the few who could see the value of materialist dialectics and he consistently urged his fellow scientists to look at the method of Marxism more seriously (see his introduction to Engels' "Dialectics of Nature"). "Science and Everyday Life" is dotted with scientific examples of dialectical processes occurring and being discovered by science.

In a 1938 article for the

column on "Nature's Speed Limits" Haldane discussed the probability of aeroplanes breaking through the sound barrier. He noted the quantitative build-up of sound and vibration as propeller driven aircraft increased speed over about 400 mph.

Ultimately this threatened to destroy the plane by making it the centre of a violent hurricane. In response to this quantitative build-up, a qualitative change was required in the means of propulsion if the 750mph sound barrier was to be broken.

He said: "A good Marxist believes that one day man will fly at 1,000 mph but not without a revolution in the means of propulsion."

Such a revolution did occur in aircraft propulsion, of course, with the jet engine, which facilitated the swept wing airframes also needed to break the sound barrier a few years later. Here Haldane was not being a 1930s Nostradamus but using dialectics as a demonstrably valid scientific method.

To be sure this early science page was not without its weaknesses, primarily because of its Stalinist context. There were many naive assumptions made about life

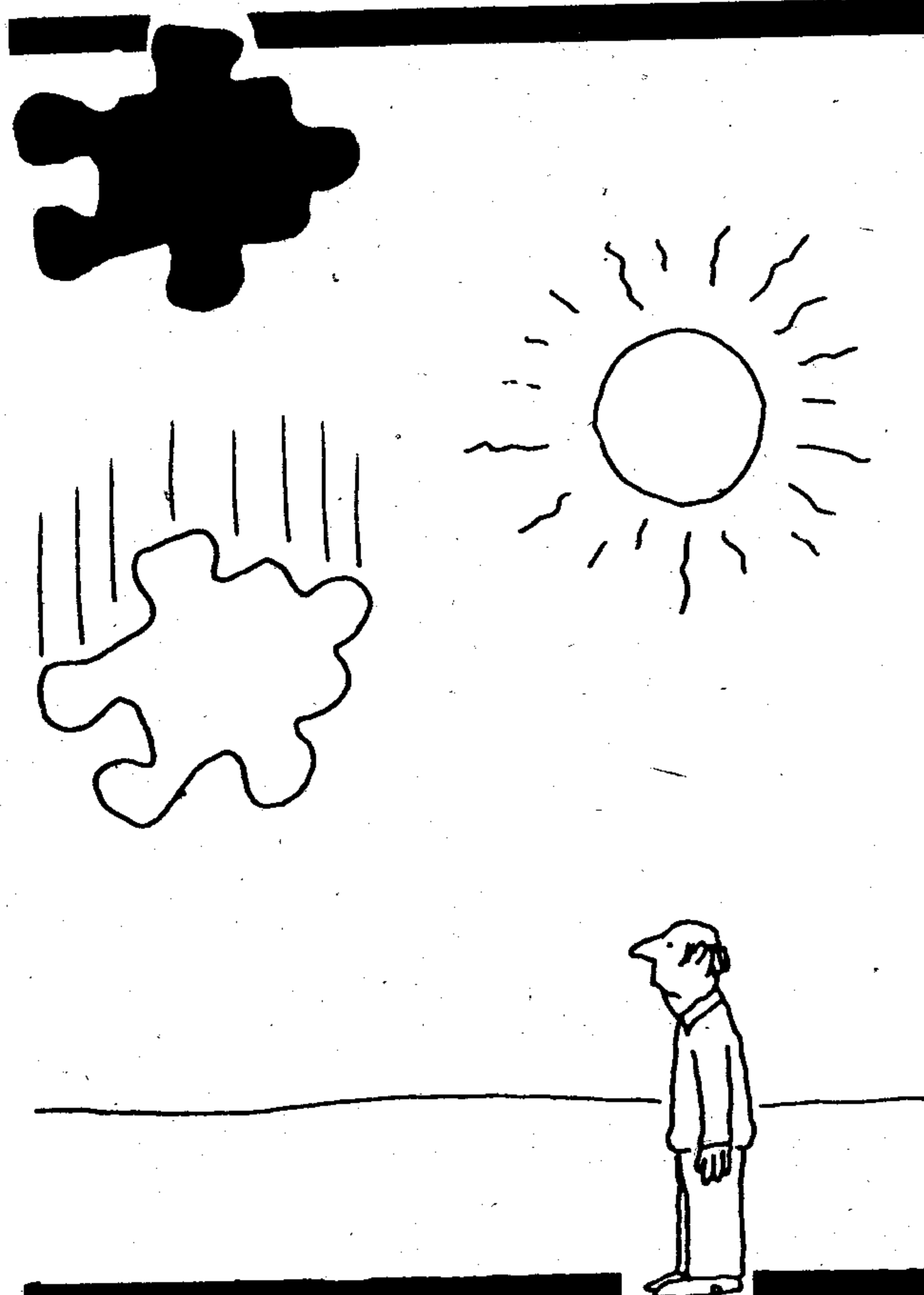
in the Soviet Union. The USSR was model socialism to Haldane in this period, and that was that. Its scientists were necessarily viewed by him as working in the best environment in the world.

The reality was of course different. Quack biologists like Lysenko, whom Haldane devoted a glowing article to, destroyed years of scientific achievement because they had Stalin's support.

When it came to viewing the "Science and Everyday Life" of the USSR, Haldane was not so scientific. To his credit, when he found out more about Stalin's crimes against science and socialism and Lysenko's pseudo-biology, he broke with the CPGB, but that was years later...

Nonetheless the column's approach to science and its wider implications, its efforts at teaching dialectics and its fascinating writer make it a milestone in scientific and Marxist journalism.

Haldane's view that "without a knowledge of science, democracy cannot hope to be effective in an age when science affects our lives continually" is perhaps more valid now than when he wrote it in the late thirties.



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Register: CLPD Campaign for votes for ballot



Democracy

LARC says "no"

THE question of CLPD and the register dominated the CLPD Executive's discussion on Saturday 16th.

The issue was not immediately whether CLPD should apply, because it was accepted that the final decision on this would be taken at the AGM on January 29, 1983, and a letter is being sent to Labour Party general secretary Jim Mortimer to say that the CLPD can't give a reply by the December 31 'deadline'. The discussion at the EC was whether the AGM would be preceded by a 'consultative' ballot of CLPD supporters.

The proposal was eventually carried on the argument that a ballot was the only way to find out the views of all supporters which

the AGM could then 'ratify' or not. Those of us opposed to a ballot argued that it would inevitably pre-empt the AGM, and undermine its right to take the 'final' decision. In Pete Willsman's view, in fact, the AGM would not go against the ballot result.

Ballot

It was also argued that the 'consultative' nature of the ballot, and the fact that CLPD had no local branch structure, made the campaign's own argument, against postal ballot, irrelevant in this case.

Ballot papers will be sent out in early November, together with a discussion

bulletin (the first of two scheduled) containing two articles for registration now by Vladimir Derer, Pete Willsman and Victor Schonfield) and two against (by Chris Mullin, Nigel Williamson and Jon Lansman).

The result of the secret ballot will be announced at the EC meeting on Saturday December 18.

There was no time to discuss the view put by the secretary, Vladimir Derer, that the 'ultra-left' were responsible for the right's victory on the register at Party Conference. But it was unanimously agreed that the CLPD would support the October 30 'CLPs Against the Witch-hunt' Conference, and send a speaker to it, and that there would be an

immediate campaign of support for the Constitutional amendment from Greenwich CLP.

Knock

This amendment is guaranteed to be voted on at next year's Party Conference and would knock a hole through the register. It would amend Clause 2 of the Constitution to give non-affiliated groups the right to organise in the Party, provided only that they conform to the Labour Party constitution and accept Clause IV, and don't stand candidates against Labour.

It would also give an automatic right of appeal to Conference for members of

such groups if the NEC believed they had breached the constitution.

Other model resolutions on CLPD policy will also be shortly circulated (and printed in SO as well). This is specially important not only for forthcoming Regional Conferences (the resolution deadline for the London Labour Party Conference is December 1 for example) but above all for many trade unions, whose 1983 Conference resolution deadlines are coming up shortly.

JOHN BLOXAM
CLPD EC

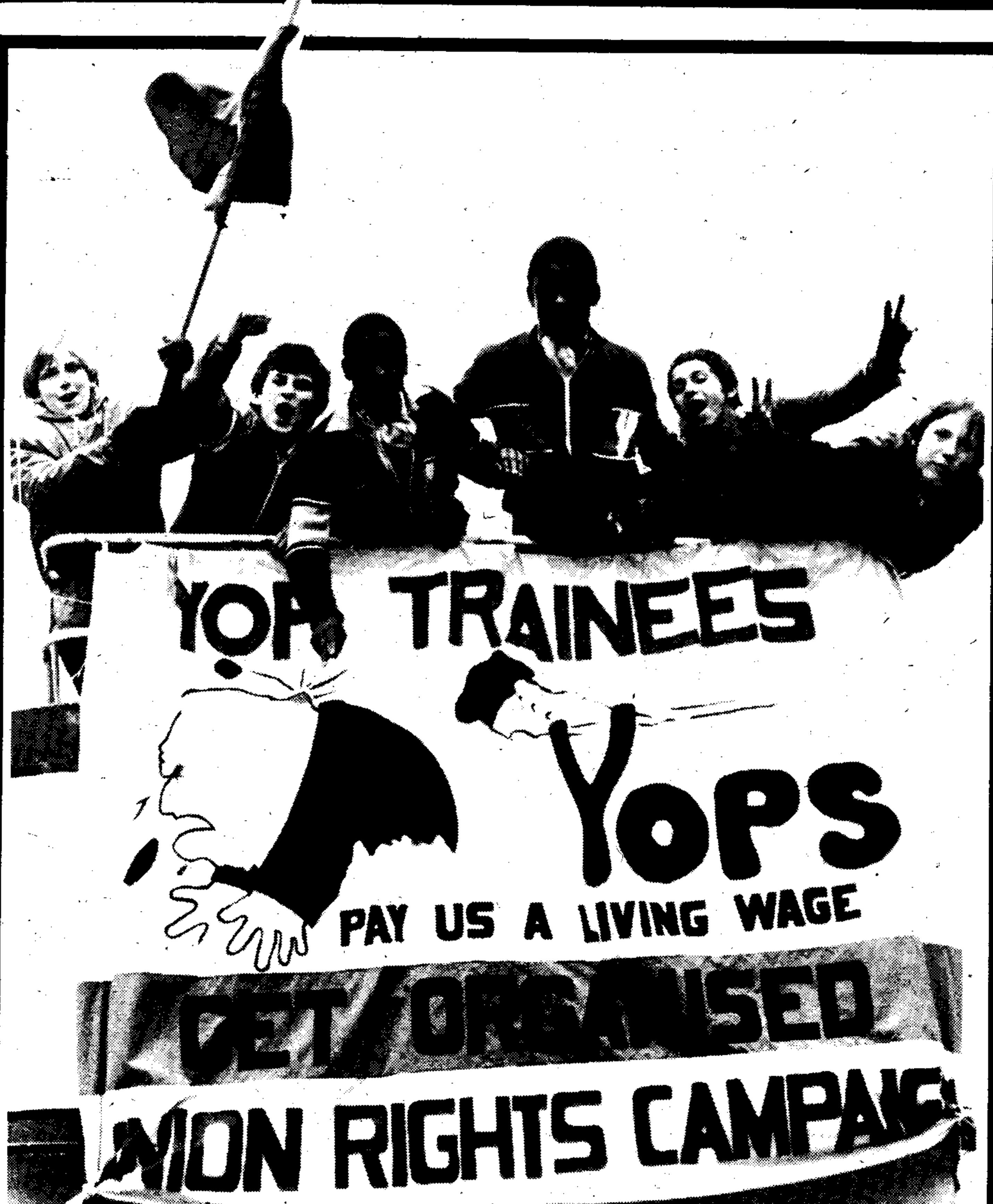
At its Annual General Meeting in June this year, the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign resolved to ballot its membership on whether the Campaign should apply to be included on the National Executive Committee's register of non-affiliated groups within the Labour Party.

The result of the ballot is now known: LARC's members voted overwhelmingly

against registration, thereby supporting the views of the AGM that registration would render LARC totally ineffective as a campaign.

67% of the membership returned ballot papers, 87% of which were opposed to registration.

The General Secretary of the Labour Party has been informed of LARC's decision.



JOHN HARRIS

You'll never march alone!

MAYBE it always rains in Liverpool, or maybe it just always rains on LPYS demos, but the four thousand youth who had gathered to march against the Tories weren't to be stopped by howling gales and torrential downpours. From Sefton Park, through Toxteth, to Pier Head: nobody in Liverpool town centre could fail to realise the LPYS were marching.

Militant supporters were out in force, but in the middle of the march was the huge Class Fighter banner, followed by supporters of the National Left Wing Youth Movement, chanting slogans like 'Jobs Not Bombs!' - echoing the recent YCND march, and trying to be more constructive than the 'If you hate the Tories clap your hands, etc.' heard elsewhere in the march.

For some of us, it was our first sighting of the Liverpool 'community' police. Most amazing, for those of us who had only been on demos in London before, were the huge truncheons they carried. 'Only sergeants get those', explained one local Class Fighter supporter, 'and every car with two aerials is CID'.

The Class Fighter conference, November 20-21, will be discussing how to fight youth unemployment. Also: the Labour Party, women, black youth, YOPs, and much more. It is open to anyone interested: for details ring 01-607-5268 or write to NLWYM, 214, Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

Fight for dead man's shoes

THE DEATH of Frank McElhone, Labour MP for the Queen's Park constituency in Glasgow, has been followed by a less than pleasant scramble for the seat.

Front-runner for the Labour Party nomination is Gorbals regional councillor Jimmy Wray, who of late has acquired a taste for three-piece suits and attempts at immaculate grooming.

Like the late MP, Wray is a Gorbals boy born and bred (even if he has now installed himself in a rather more plush suburb), and seems to reckon that his local background will win him the nomination.

It is difficult to see what else could. On occasion Wray has taken a strong stand on some local issues, but when it comes to politics he is a dark horse.

The other candidate is Chick McCafferty. One-time supporter of the Socialist Labour League, recruited to it by Ted Knight, McCafferty is now a big fish in the pond of Glasgow Labour Party: chair of the District Party, and holding several other positions.

Although McCafferty has taken a clear position against the register, his claims to stand on the left are now ringing increasingly hollow.

He has helped block the CLP from giving support to the 'Stop the Sale' campaign, and he is playing a leading role in the current attack on an SO supporter in the constituency.

Many activists in both the CLP itself, and the local community in general, have the attitude that the by-election is a non-event (because it is a safe Labour seat), and that the major issue is who will become the Labour candidate.

But since there is so little to choose between the two nominees, surely our main job should be to ensure that the by-election is taken as an opportunity to transform the CLP into a genuine fighting organisation, and to build a real active base of support for the Labour Party in the area.

Lothian fights witch-hunt

LOCAL Labour Parties in the Lothian region will be holding their own conference to oppose both the register and any witch-hunts.

At their first post-conference meeting, Haymarket/Tollcross Labour Party agreed to raise this call to other parties in the region to build on what comes out of the Hackney and Stoke Newington conference.

Although the meeting had one of its larger attendances, this was not because everyone came along to defend the right of socialists to organise within the Labour Party.

Certainly our MP, Robin Cook, did not have this in mind.

He argued that the left had won the major debates at conference (obviously he did not consider the women's organisation resolutions to be of any great significance), that we should now unite behind the programme and leadership and that it would be a dangerous precedent for the left to attempt to oppose a conference decision.

His argument did have some support, but more worrying in terms of building opposition was the atti-

tude of some members who are opposed to both the register and the witch-hunt, but who feel that since it is Militant who are under Militant attack, we should tailend any opposition that they put up. To date this has amounted to nothing in Lothian.

The call for this conference came from Socialist Organiser supporters and we will be arguing for opposition to the register, to the witch-hunt, for going out and recruiting to the party and for the changing of Clause 2 of the constitution.

Glasgow victim?

ON Wednesday October 13 the Executive Committee of Queen's Park Constituency Labour Party, Glasgow, voted to recommend the expulsion of SO supporter Stan Crooke to the meeting of the CLP General Committee at the end of the month.

Constitutionally, what Stan Crooke is being expelled from is rather unclear. Given that the CLP is not affiliated to the Labour Party nationally (being nearly £2,000 in debt),

neither Stan Crooke nor the people moving to expel him are technically speaking members of the Labour Party to begin with.

The basis put forward for the recommended expulsion is an article which appeared in issue 99 of SO, which dealt with the history of the Gorbals Anti-Dampness Campaign, the present Stop the Sale Campaign, and criticisms of the local Labour Party and the local elected representatives.

Charges were laid that the 'allegations' were unfounded and that the article had been written with the intention of 'bringing the Labour Party into disrepute'.

Chick McCafferty went one step further by claiming that it had been written for the purpose of driving a wedge between the Labour Party and the current Stop the Sale Campaign.

In reality, Stan Crooke, like the Stop the Sale Campaign, has worked continually - if unsuccessfully - to try to draw the local Labour Party into joint campaigning work. McCafferty himself has been among those blocking that joint work.

The right wing are likely to have little problem in getting the expulsion endorsed by the GC at the end of October, thereby gaining for Queen's Park the dubious merit of being the first CLP to expel a left-winger since the introduction of the register.

The SO supporter is not being expelled for bringing the Labour Party into disrepute. It is the controlling right wing in the CLP who do that. Nor is he being expelled for making unfounded allegations. He is being expelled for telling the truth.

Left victory

LAST week saw a major defeat for the right wing in Nottingham Labour Party when Len Maynard and Ben Allsop the leader and deputy leader of the Labour Group on Nottingham City Council failed to get on the shortlist of candidates for the city council elections in Radford Ward - the ward they represent at the moment.

Both are hardened right wingers and Maynard played a very shabby role in the case of Lou Broady, a black worker found to have been a victim of racial discrimination at the hands of Nottingham City Council.

Two of the shortlist of four are Socialist Organiser

supporters, standing on a platform of resistance to cuts and of no rate rises.

Needless to say William Whitlock, MP for North Nottingham and a fanatical witch-hunter, has reacted with hysterical outbursts about the Militant Tendency having engineered a takeover in Radford, although Militant did little more than turn up and vote.

With some North Nottingham Labourites eager for a witch-hunt, and Whitlock cheering them on, and with the question of resistance to cuts looming, there promises to be a long and bitter struggle ahead to preserve working class living standards.

NUR sheds Weighell

by Pete Firmin

LAST week's recall Special Delegate Meeting of the NUR did the decent thing. Delegates defeated a resolution that "this SDM, in view of the evidence that the General Secretary has always acted in the best interests of the union, calls for him to reconsider his resignation".

Thus Weighell was effectively given the boot, but only by 41 votes to 36. Even though the issue [Weighell blatantly breaking his mandate in casting the union vote at Labour Party conference] was a straightforward one of democracy and accountability, obviously the right recognised what many on the left still fail to see, that this was a political issue and the loss of Weighell would be a serious blow to the right's credibility.

In the end at least enough delegates who had been voting with the right wing [the division on most issues had been 47-30] had either been mandated or

recognised that Weighell had gone too far this time.

But you can't keep a good man down. Weighell bounced back after being made to sit in a back room during discussion of his resignation to convince delegates to vote for the McCarthy Tribunal's recommendations of 4% on pay prior to massive productivity strings with an increase of one day on annual leave. Weighell continued the good work for which Parker and Tebbit had praised him when he announced his resignation, claiming that the ASLEF strike on flexible rostering and the two-day NUR strike had "blasted aside the NUR's case for a substantial increase."

The productivity strings mean a massive extension of single manning on trains and the eventual loss of 12,000 jobs through the abolition of guards and a cut of 20,000 miles in the network as well as a union commit-

ment to cooperate "to further improve productivity".

As the McCarthy Tribunal report points out: "without union cooperation it would not have been possible to cut the labour force over the last 30 years by almost 70% without a similar reduction in services" and that rail workers' pay has fallen by about 30% since 1975 both in real terms and in relation to wage rates in general.

The "common approach" which Weighell has championed on behalf of the BRB has been a disaster for rail workers.

On its second day the SDM decided on what action to take against the 12,500 members who scabbed on the NUR strike in June.

Branch officers who disobeyed the strike call are to be banned from office for life, and others will be considered out of benefit for five years - they will not be

represented at hearings or tribunals, they will not be eligible for branch or national office, they will not be able to represent the union at any level for this time.

A small minority demanded the expulsion of the scabs (and in some branches this had been passed at the same time as a call for a censure of Weighell) but considering the lack of leadership given to the strike - with Weighell campaigning against it - the strike effectively lasted only 18 hours and to go into a fight with BR over the closed shop over this would have been ridiculous.

That Weighell has gone is a victory for the left. But the acceptance of the McCarthy report shows the tasks facing us in the union. We now have to build a strong, effective left based on campaigning local broad left groups. The central issues facing the left in the

coming months are:

1. The campaign to get a left candidate elected as General Secretary.

2. A campaign to ensure an all-out strike on November 8 (transport workers' strike in support of the health workers' pay claim).

3. Solidarity with the miners - no movement of coal - in their strike over pay and jobs.

The latest issue of Left Lines - journal of the Broad Left railway workers is now available, price 10p from 2 Binstead Gardens, Sheffield 6.

Ian Williams, NUR Executive Committee member, said: "The most important thing is to get a commitment from the candidates that they are prepared to stand for re-election in five years' time." It's easy to see why. If, for example, Jimmy Knapp was elected under present rules he'd have the job for 23 years.



Weighell: his departure is a victory for the left

The problem with the election campaign is that the union rules forbid political statements in internal circulars. The only chance of getting politics into the cam-

paign would be getting the candidates to speak to special branch meetings. NUR rules don't (yet) forbid political discussion in branch meetings!

Caretakers strike back

by Kevin Feintuck

AFTER the last council elections in Liverpool, the Liberal Party and their leader, Sir Trevor Jones, ran a classic red scare campaign aimed at both the local Labour Parties and the city council trades unions.

Their main slogan, which was plastered on slogans throughout the city, was "Marxists out, Liberals in".

This smear tactic resulted in the Labour Party making a net gain of two seats at the Liberals' expense.

Since the election, the Liberals, who have continued to run the city with Tory support, have been pushing for cost-cutting exercises in a whole range of departments.

The latest action came in the education section when the council revoked a long-standing agreement and effectively implemented a £10-£15 wage cut for school caretakers.

On October 1 the council summarily ended weekend boiler duty. This duty had previously been worked to ensure that no breakdown of the school heating system occurred during the weekend break.

The work included an important safety aspect, considering the possible results of relighting a boiler which had developed a serious fault.

In response to this challenge the unions instructed their members to refuse to start any boilers on which the necessary weekend checks had not been carried out.

This has resulted in more than 300 schools being left without heating, despite the actions of supervisors and council officers who have been contacting caretakers individually and threatening suspensions.

Support for the caretakers has already come from the District Labour Party and from the local teachers' union.

The NUT has instructed its members to abide by the agreed heating standards and to refuse to work at temperatures of below 52 degrees.

So far approximately 100 schools have been closed because of this action. This dispute will pose important questions for the council joint shop stewards committee. Their success or

failure in bringing out other sections of the council workforce in support of the caretakers could be a telling factor in the dispute.

Messages of support to NUPE, Bro. E. Hollywell, 28 Sydenham House, Liverpool 17.

GMWU, Bro. P. Leonard, Otterspool Special School, Milehead Road, Liverpool 17.

Air India picket

AIR India strikers picketed the Indian High Commission in London on Monday 18th. 91 workers, all members of the TGWU, have been sacked by the airline, which is owned by the Indian state.

The Indian Workers' Association has also or-



Air India: fighting moves to smash their union

ganised pickets of Air India offices in Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds and Bradford, to encourage travellers to boycott the airline.

British Airways engineers at Heathrow voted to 'black' Air India spare parts, and technical and

clerical workers to 'black' the airline's use of a central reservations system controlled by British Airways.

Support is still needed at the regular picket lines at Heathrow and New Bond St. Messages/Money: TGWU Air India branch 1/1305, 7/9 South Road, Southall, Middlesex.

Tapping a reservoir of militancy

STOKE water workers were on strike today for the first time as part of the national water workers' strike.

After taking action in support of health workers in recent weeks, water workers are in no mood to be messed about by their own management.

Graham Atkinson, GMWU steward, explained the background to me.

Two years ago the water workers agreed a pay deal to get parity with gas and electricity workers, to be achieved in three stages. The first stage should have been implemented this year before the settlement date in November.

Now, water workers are being told that there is no money to implement the agreement. Union leaders recommended submitting this year's claim, but the rank and file threw this out,

demanding that the parity agreement be implemented first.

There have been six meetings with the Water Council over the year, but a refusal to negotiate by management.

Monday's one-day strike was intended to show the bosses that water workers are serious before the next meeting with the Water Council. If no agreement is reached it will go to a vote for further action.

Graham Atkinson told me that he thought it would have been better if the one-day national strikes in water, telecoms and steel this week had been combined.

As the build-up to industrial disputes continues, they'll end up being combined, whether the TUC likes it or not, he said.

Socialist teachers organise

by Peter Flack

IF the NUT bureaucrats had ventured into County Hall on October 16, they would probably have felt the same cold, creepy feeling that afflicted them at the NUT conference in Scarborough.

In the dark and cheerless corridors of County Hall, things were moving, plans were being laid.

The Socialist Teachers Alliance (STA) now six years old, was holding its Annual General Meeting.

During those six years STA has grown from a small but determined opponent of the sectarianism of Rank and File Teacher, to a serious left opposition in NUT.

That growth in the influence of STA was reflected in the make-up of the AGM. Most of the main areas - Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, East Midlands, Yorkshire, were represented, with many experienced left activists among them and the

membership was reported 25% up on the previous year.

Transferring that growth into effective groups in each area to actively involve new members was agreed as the major priority as well as improving communications.

The morning session had Phil D'Arcy from the Croxteth Parents Action Committee outlining the fight that they were waging to prevent the closure of the local comprehensive school and the need for support for the occupation of the school which is still being run using volunteer teachers.

While the NUT on Merseyside had expressed support, the biggest question is what the union should actually do.

The AGM agreed to take up the campaign immediately, with both financial and physical support.

There were two sets of workshops during the day, ranging from the left in the NUT and the union rules to gay rights, building STA, and the women's caucus following on from the STA Positive Action conference.

In the final session, the major campaigns for the coming year were discussed.

One of the great strengths of STA in the past year has been its ability to present a principled alternative to the NUT Executive through Bernard Regan and Ken Jones.

In a resolution on general perspectives, Bernard Regan spelt out the absolute centrality to the STA of the developments clearly taking place in the unions, particularly through the health strikes and the importance of fighting through the NUT to clearly unite and identify their struggles with other workers both in Britain and internationally, in Poland, in Central America, etc.

The AGM also agreed to take up a campaign directed towards the 1984 NUT conference on affiliation to the Labour Party around the new STA pamphlet on the Labour Party.

But equally important in terms of the politics of STA was the decision made on sexual oppression. The AGM at last came out with a clear

commitment to take up a fight in the union and particularly at conference on gay rights, centred on reactionary anti-gay laws.

Such a campaign, in alliance with the Gay Teachers Group, is long overdue, given the reactionary stance of the NUT towards gays, which includes expulsion of members convicted of cottaging "offences".

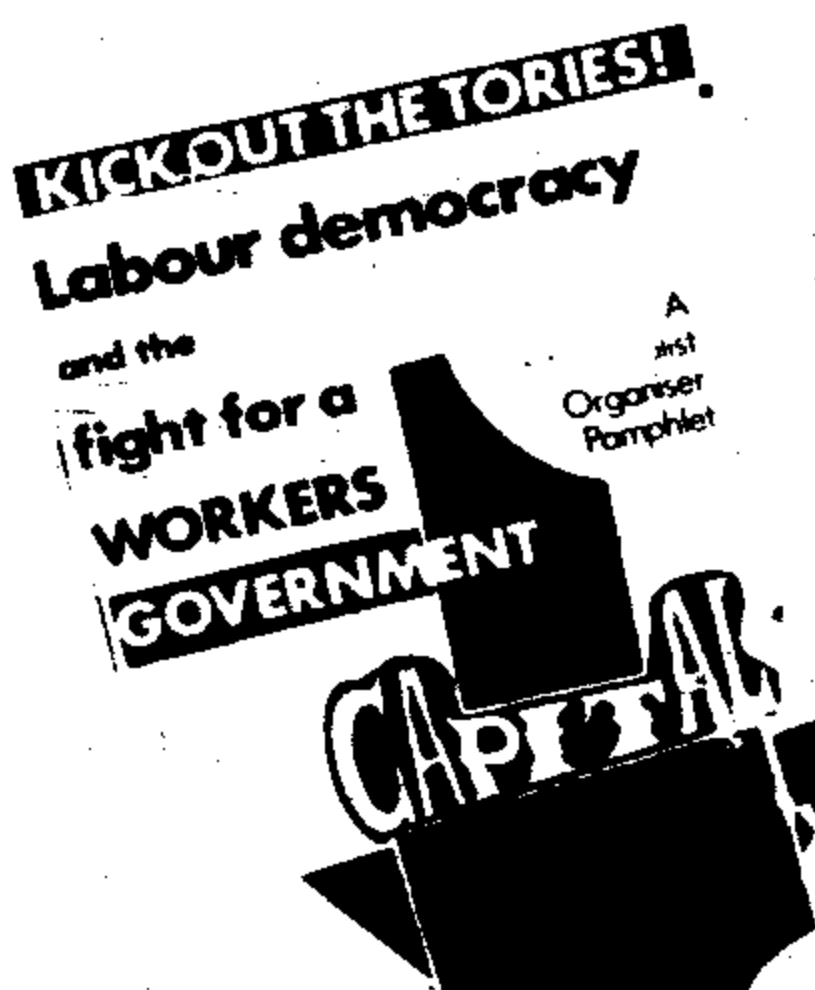
Another major decision was to take up the question of positive action in a more positive way, both in NUT and in the STA itself, concentrating on eradicating the dominance of men in a union in which the majority of the membership are women - a situation still reflected in STA itself.

Finally, the AGM agreed to press for a change to the NUT rules which would allow members to discuss political issues both nationally and internationally and make policies on them. If successful this would be a major breakthrough, ending the ridiculous non-political stance of NUT at a time when all the fundamental

issues confronting NUT members and trade unionists as a whole, are so clearly a question of politics.

The politics of STA now stand clearly as the alternative for teachers to the backsliding right wing executive. Details of STA are available from Peter Flack, 11 Nook Street, Leicester.

Resolutions of support for the Croxteth occupation should be sent to: Phil D'Arcy, 45 Finch Road, Liverpool L14.



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We reached breaking point

OVER 100 members of civil service unions, SCPS and CPSA, who work at the DHSS office at Harcourt House, Oxford, have been on strike for 3 weeks because of staffing levels at the office.

The amount of work the office has to deal with has increased by 25% during 1982, mainly due to rising unemployment, and yet in the same period the number of staff employed in the office has actually been cut.

Those on strike have the support of claimants' organisations, welfare rights groups, social services workers, and probation officers.

ONE of the strikers told Socialist Organiser:

'After Operation Major, which highlighted the problems of an understaffed office, the staff in Oxford believed that the management would act positively towards rectifying the situation. As things stood, working the 37 hour week, we were unable to clear the work with just the present number of staff.'

'Those working in 'callers' (the interviewing section) and those on reception were under the most pressure.'

They have to deal with enquiries there and then and may have to wait hours for claimants' papers to be traced (this problem is

Alan Stephens spoke to an Oxford DHSS striker

increased by the Marston Road office being split into 3 different sites) which causes aggravation for those on either side of the glass.

There's an understanding in the office that someone should be on reception for no more than 3 months at a time, but many are on the 'frontline' for six months or more. It's a vicious circle. If the benefit sections have a lot of work outstanding, the number of enquiries by phone or letter increase, therefore there's more work for the section to clear and therefore more work outstanding.

This then results in an increase of claimants calling in person at reception, therefore joining the forever swelling queue of new claimants.

The final blow came in two parts. Firstly, management offered us only 2 temporary 'volunteers' from an equally hard pressed office in Banbury, and secondly they made an

administrative decision at regional level that we should grant immediate interviews on demand instead of next available appointment.

This would have meant a return to the situation where the interviewing officers would have been interviewing up to 5 pm or later, 1½ hours after the office had been closed to the public.

We had reached the breaking point. It was time for action.

I'm prepared to stay out as long as necessary in order to keep pressure on management to move constructively towards the staffing of the DHSS, to enable us to give the claimants the efficient service they're entitled to.

Fatal

As we've already been out 3 weeks, it would be absurd and possibly fatal to any other office who may take the same stand as us, if we were not to see this strike out to the end.

I hope all offices suffering the same or similar problems will support the lead given by the Birmingham offices and Oxford.

Although the union leadership are recommending a stay of action until the present disputes have been resolved, and understand-

ing our problems of finance, I believe that the decision to grant more staff will be taken at Cabinet level.

I feel therefore that this calls for national action as it clearly is a problem of all DHSS offices throughout the UK.'

Donations to: M. Robertson, 24, Beechcroft Rd., Oxford.

BL new pay offer

MANY BL workers will have read that the national delegate conference to decide on the company's pay offer recorded a 10-1 majority of workers for rejection.

But reading about it is likely to be the extent of most shop floor workers' involvement so far, since right wing convenors - such as the leadership of the Cowley Body Plant - have failed to implement the decision to put the issue to mass meetings.

Since the initial rejection however, things have moved fast. Yesterday's meeting of the Joint Negotiating Committee heard that the company had changed the offer - adding 50p extra on the rate, withdrawing their proposal to scrap the guaranteed week, and making the package a one-year rather than a two-year deal.

A motion to reject this revised offer and call strike action, from November 1 drew a 16-16 tied vote on the JNC - at which point TGWU official Grenville Hawley used his casting vote against it. The JNC will now go without any recommendation into the recalled delegate conference tomorrow (Thursday).

These developments will baffle many shop floor workers in BL, who have still not worked out what the original offer meant in real terms, and have not heard the case for rejection.

Such conditions have been deliberately created by Hawley and the right wing as the best basis to push through a quick settlement.

*Meanwhile management's war of attrition on shop floor organisation continues. A significant victory for AUEW skilled workers at Cowley Body Plant - whose vote for indefinite strike action forced the withdrawal of a final warning against convenor Roy Fraser - came almost simultaneously with management's withdrawal of all recognition from Andy Brown, deputy TGWU convenor in the Cowley Assembly Plant.



Hawley: blocked strike call

No way to defend jobs

Harry Sloan argues against import controls



Cars: a world industry needs an international strategy

RESPONDING to a rare display of firm leadership from their trade unions, Vauxhall workers voted last week for action which they believed would protect their jobs. And they coupled this with rejection of the company's 7.5% pay offer.

13,000 AUEW and TGWU members at Luton, Dunstable and Ellesmere Port voted almost unanimously to strike if necessary to prevent Vauxhall's parent company, General Motors, importing the new Corsa model from Spain for sale on the British market.

It is the first time that the demand for import controls, tirelessly peddled by the Communist Party and by the Labour advocates of the so-called "Alternative Economic Strategy", has secured a commitment to active support from the shop floor.

Indeed it is probably the first time that the demand has been vigorously pressed by union leaders independently - and in this case in conflict with - the employer in the industry concerned.

Previous calls for import controls in textiles, furniture and other industries have been conspicuously supported by at least sections of employers, who have bussed down contingents of workers or provided paid time off work to facilitate demonstrations or lobbies of Parliament.

In such instances it has been easy to see the way in which the call for import controls lines up trade union and Labour leaders alongside the very employers who are forcing down living standards or forcing through closures, in a bid to save "our" industry.

But in the case of Vauxhalls, the demand is for strike action against the employer, to force GM to change its plans, and to invest in plant which will guarantee jobs for British workers. What could be wrong with that?

The first point is that just like any other call for import controls, the Vauxhall strike threat aims at saving 'British' jobs at the expense of jobs lost overseas - in this instance in GM plants in Spain.

The logic is no better than the Ellesmere Port workers striking to prevent jobs being done in Dunstable. When it comes to the crunch, the only answer to such management 'divide and rule' tactics is working class unity - forging links

between workers in Britain and those in Europe.

The transfer of production from one plant to another can only be prevented if action in the threatened plant is linked with persuading workers in the recipient plant to boycott it, and rousing the labour movement as a whole in a campaign to cut off supplies and outlets.

To build such links with car unions in Europe requires not chauvinistic campaigns against "foreign" competition and attempts to force workers abroad to shoulder the burden of redundancies and rationalisation, but a serious struggle for international solidarity and a common fight against General Motors as the multinational enemy.

The fact is that GM's operation in Britain is such a tiny component of its world business that management in Detroit could shut it down without enormous loss: against such a danger Vauxhall workers must be able to call upon the solidarity and support of other GM workers internationally.

The legitimate concern and militancy over jobs in Vauxhall must be understood as part of the fight of car workers in every country to defend their jobs and living standards.

If every threatened section of workers took strike action demanding protectionist import controls then we would be faced with the fragmentation of the international working class into warring national sections of the major industries in which solidarity becomes impossible.



Evans: militant on imports, but not on jobs!

Instead a radically different line of march is needed. The contracting market, the rationalisation of production and internationalisation of models such as the Astra, Cavalier and Corsa demand of trade unions a common policy for defence of jobs.

Collectively they must organise functioning combine stewards committees on an international level. Collectively they must wage the fight for the opening of company books and plans to elected trade union committees, and organise the pooling of all information available. And collectively they must take up the fight to ensure the defence of jobs through the sharing of available work, through the corporation internationally, without loss of pay.

Such action across national frontiers is the big fear of the Tories and the multinationals: it is made specifically unlawful in the Tebbit Bill. That is because only such international action can actually defend jobs against the threats of the 1980s.

For Vauxhall workers, however, the proposal to take action against imports carries other dangers. On the one hand, it does not relate to any actual loss of jobs now - it is vaguely linked to calls for investment by GM in the future.

And it comes from union leaders who have stood back and watched tens of thousands of jobs axed in every part of the engineering industry, and helped impose mass redundancies in BL.

Such factors should cause workers to question whether the demand is serious or simply raised as a diversion from the issue of wages.

It might appear that if this were the tactic of the union leaders, their plan has misfired. Their strangely militant rhetoric, coupled with increased self-confidence among Vauxhall workers in view of the success of the company's improved sales, produced a massive vote for rejection of the pay offer.

But eyes should be kept firmly on the pay negotiations. Instead of the nationalistic demand for an end to imports, workers should demand that the pay settlement include a written guarantee of security of employment on full pay - and begin to prepare the international links that will be necessary in the event of any struggle in Britain against redundancies or closures.

The repeated attacks on car workers in Britain and elsewhere confirm beyond doubt that the anarchy of the present market and international monopolies can only be contained by policies of nationalisation without compensation and the integration of the motor industry, under workers' management, into a planned, socialist economy.

The establishment of international coordination and workers' control would be a giant step towards preparing for this development: the imposition of narrow, nationalistic policies is a dangerous diversion that must be fought by socialists.

SALFORD SCANDAL

THE Labour-controlled Salford City Council has taken over where Michael Edwardes left off.

It has torn up the existing work contracts with its 430 building and maintenance department workers (direct works), and intends to issue new contracts individually to each worker. All union consultation and negotiation has been rejected, and when the new contract lands on a worker's door-

mat, he has ten days to accept, or he is sacked!

The background to this incredible situation is a long wrangle over the bonus scheme in the BMD. Both the council management and the unions have accepted the need for a change in the bonuses to eradicate inefficiency, and a number of changes have been tried.

A joint work study exercise came up with a 46% allowance, while another trial scheme involved 25 to 30% allowances (to cover such things as travel to and from jobs).

Next, the council wanted to go for redundancies. 90 were put forward, and then withdrawn when the leader of the council, Les Hough, called in BMD reps and announced that the allowances would be cut to 5% across the board - i.e. about 24 minutes a day, for jobs which are often many miles away.

Already there has been outrage from the local labour movement. Eccles Constituency Labour Party and Salford Trades Council supported a lobby of the Labour group meeting last Monday.

A move to refer back the report on the BMD was however lost by 8 votes to 27.

Time is now short, as the new contracts will be out in the next couple of weeks.

We need to campaign to kick out the traitors who

are presently masquerading as 'Labour' councillors in Salford. As one of the stewards on the lobby told me, "Never mind another Labour council, there isn't even a Tory council doing this to its direct works department".

DAVE LUNTS

Hostel strike

ARLINGTON House in Camden Town is the largest hostel in Europe, housing 1066 men. TGWU members there are on strike to save their jobs and get a decent wage.

At the beginning of April 1982, the staff at Arlington House (members of the TGWU) went on strike in protest against Rowton Hotels refused to recognise the TGWU. The strike was successful and helped to build a solid union branch in the House.

After many attempts to open pay talks and many refusals by the company, 56 members of the TGWU at Arlington House walked out on September 10.

The company took its revenge by sacking them all.

Donations to: Arlington House Strike Fund, c/o Camden Labour Centre, 8 Camden Rd, London NW1 (485 1100). Help is also needed with picketing.

MAP SHOP FIGHT

PAUL Hobbs, a TGWU shop steward at Stanford's map shop in London, was unfairly dismissed on Wednesday September 29 after management unilaterally altered workers' contracts regarding hours without consultation.

Other union members walked out in protest and were also sacked.

They are demanding reinstatement and recognition for the union. A substantial majority of the staff joined the TGWU in February of this year.

Contact: Strike Committee, c/o 173 Clapham Road, Stockwell, London SW9.

Socialist Organiser

Midlands support

THE WEST Midlands regional day of action for the NHS pay campaign was the strongest for non-NHS support. There were one-day strikes at Massey Ferguson Coventry, and by 3000

construction workers at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham. Half-day strikes took place at Longbridge, Rover Solihull, Rover Tyseley, BL Castle Bromwich, and Triplex.

Other trade unionists and Labour Party members joined health workers on picket lines at most major hospitals, and non-emergency cases were turned away.

In addition, 1000 school caretakers and cleaners in Birmingham struck on the same day in order to link their fight against the Tory council's plan to privatise their work with the health service struggle. The biggest school in Birmingham, Washward Heath compreh-

ensive, was closed, as were at least 20 other schools.

There were rallies in most large towns. At the 5000 strong Birmingham rally, Len Murray was vigorously heckled by rank and file health workers demanding all-out action. Murray was visibly shaken, and attempted to bamboozle the audience by claiming that all-out action would mean 'leaving cancer patients to die'.

Peggy Gilbert, NUPE branch secretary at the Queen Elizabeth hospital, won a standing ovation for a militant speech calling for all-out action and a general strike against the Tory government.



Escalation!

ACTION by health workers in support of their pay claim escalated last week in Manchester. At the Eye Hospital NUPE workers in the theatre sterile supplies unit and CoHSE theatre porters came out on strike.

The action was taken in response to a management refusal to honour an agreement (made after strike action in August) that only accident and emergency cases would be dealt with.

The management attempted to use non-union staff,

but this was immediately answered by a walk-out of porters not only in the Eye Hospital but also in the nearby Manchester Royal Infirmary and St Mary's Hospital. Over 80% of the porters came out on strike at the three hospitals.

The theatre sterile supplies unit and the theatre porters are now on indefinite strike, in an attempt to force the management to stick to the 'accidents and emergencies only' agreement.

TONY DALE

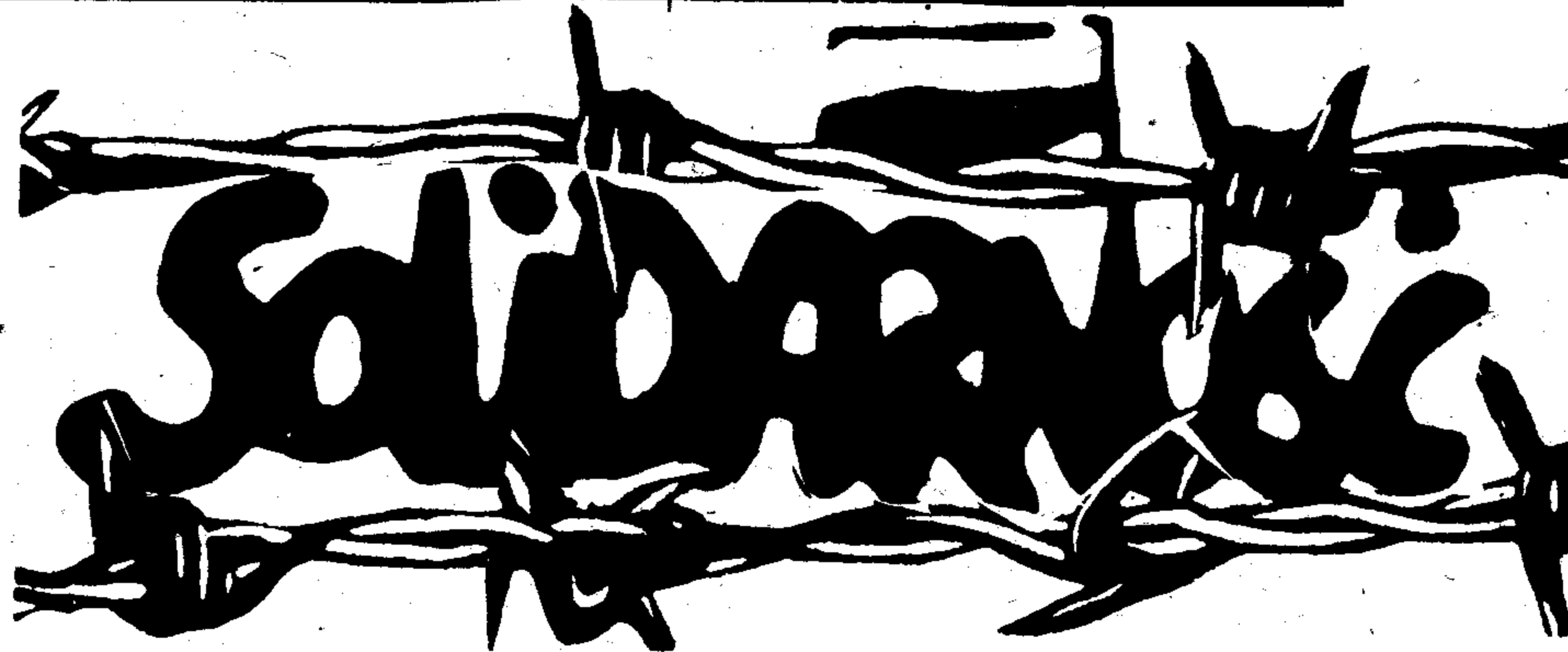
NO LINKS WITH JARUZELSKI'S NEW 'UNIONS'!

THE funeral, on Wednesday 20th, of Bogdan Wlosik, will be another demonstration of Polish workers' resolve to resist the martial law and the banning of Solidarnosc.

Wlosik, a 20-year old worker at Nowa Huta steelworks near Krakow, was shot dead by a plain-clothes policeman on a demonstration last week. The shooting was followed by riots and street clashes in Krakow on Thursday and Friday.

But generally the regime seems to have been able — for now! — to ride out the wave of revolt at the banning of Solidarnosc. Gdansk shipyard workers went back to work after the yard was militarised, and elsewhere the regime did all it could to suppress and isolate workers' action.

Many strikers returning to work, however, insisted



that they would be out for the four-hour general strike called by the underground Solidarnosc leadership on November 10.

Even the official news agency admits that the new stooge 'unions' are being massively boycotted. In Nova Huta the union has 13 members out of the 40,000 workforce, despite the fact that it already has an office and access to the internal steelworks radio.

In the Ursus tractor factory 90 people have joined Jaruzelski's labour front; at the FSC lorry factory in Lublin, 33; at the WSK aircraft works, Swidnik, 20, and at the October Revolution printworks, Warsaw, 11.

Membership of the new 'unions' must be confined almost entirely to supervisors, managers, and careerists — and very thin even among them!

British socialists should make sure that our labour movement refuses to recognise these state unions, breaks links with their counterparts elsewhere in Eastern Europe, and gives all possible support to Solidarnosc.

Salford walkout

AT 1am on Saturday October 16, a scab laundry lorry took away 1000 bags of foul linen which had accumulated at Ladywell hospital in Salford.

On Monday morning the laundry and transport workers immediately walked out. A mass meeting of CoHSE and NUPE members from Ladywell and Hope then voted to stay out for three days. The Skin Hospital and Royal Salford Hospital later joined the strike.

Sympathy action was also taken by workers outside the District Health Authority, with an occupation of the telephone exchange

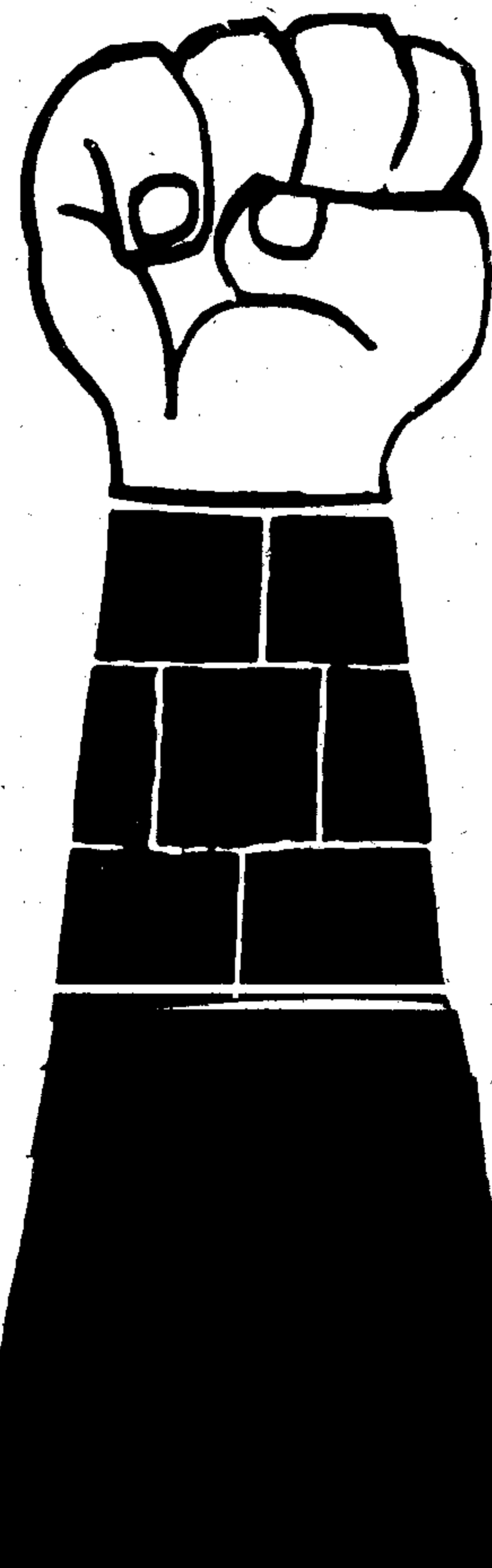
at Crumpsall Hospital and a walkout by porters at Manchester Eye Hospital.

While the members were prepared to act quickly and firmly, the same could not be said for some of the national union leaders. CoHSE actually telexed the Ladywell branch to inform them that they were taking secondary action, that it was unofficial, and that they would not receive any strike pay.



The shooting of a Krakow steelworker prompted streetfighting in...

£6000 fund



If only we could afford the straws, we could draw lots to share out the £13.50 we've had this week. Two Stockport SO supporters send £1.50 when they paid for their papers this week — and Sheffield sent £12 with theirs. Scores so far:

Sheffield	149.50	150%	Coventry	592.55	141%
Stoke	35.00	117%	Nottingham	114.00	114%
Durham	110.00	110%	Birmingham	489.77	98%
Leeds	93.00	93%	Oxford	431.50	85%
Merseyside	174.70	55%	Manchester	183.00	47%
Cardiff	45.00	45%	Basingstoke	45.00	45%
Hull	25.00	42%	Glasgow	44.40	37%
Edinburgh	70.00	22%	Leicester	86.00	22%
London	304.00	14%	Bradford	0	
Windsor	0		Northampton	0	
Misc:	794.51		TOTAL	3905.72	65%

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

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Next Socialist Organiser
delegate meeting: Satur-
day, December 4, 11am
to 5pm, in Sheffield.